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MARYLAND

Historical Magazine



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The Perspective Glass

In September 1818, John Morison Duncan, a twenty-eight-year-old British visitor, arrived in Baltimore to take in the sights. He at once noted that "Baltimore is celebrated for the fineness of its flour" and described the milling machinery. Maryland, too, he reported, "has all along been distinguished by a sedulous attention to the advancement of learning," though he disapproved of one school that operated according to the "Lancasterian plan." It was, he said, "most unnecessarily harsh and repulsive" but unlikely to change because the pedagogue in charge was unhappy with his salary. He visited the hospital with its "splendid collection of anatomical models in wax" and attended the September 12 celebration at Ft. McHenry. "I was highly amused with a corps of old fellows who strongly reminded me of the Edinburgh city guard," in their "long tailed coats and cocked hats, and their hair . . . larded with pomatum and powder." He could barely contain himself as these "venerables" fumbled with their artillery pieces—"to fire and sponge were works of undisguised danger and difficulty."

Duncan then visited the brand-new penitentiary, opened but seven years earlier, and encountered what he expected to find: enlightened reform. "The condition of the prisoners is perfectly comfortable, and to judge from their appearance you would suppose them quite contented with it." Touchingly he relayed how the prisoners "show to visitors the various articles of manufacture in which they are employed, and explain the steps in the process with as much willingness as ordinary workmen, and without any symptoms of shame that they should be found in such a place."

Happily, he then had the opportunity to take in "a spectacle . . . that is more rarely seen in the United States" than at home. Two mail robbers—a crime not usually a capital offense but this pair had threatened the driver and passengers and, worse, were "old and notorious offenders"—were about to be hanged. The gallows stood outside the penitentiary wall, in the courtyard of the city jail, "every part of which is well seen from different parts of the rising ground which environ the city." "No frequenter of such scenes" himself, Duncan the observer nevertheless "was desirous of witnessing the effect of so unusual and tragic an occurrence on an American assembly."

On reaching the brow of one of the hills, he found "every commanding position covered with spectators." They differed from a British crowd at such events in that they appeared to him more respectable. Many were well dressed, "and females of various ages, and apparently all conditions, were not wanting." Duncan had in his pocket a "small perspective glass," which he offered to two young ladies, who "seemed quite pleased with the accommodation." Bemused,

Duncan could not help noticing that “curiosity is quite as active a principle here as at home,” that like the British, Americans indulged “a fondness for tragic spectacles.” Too far away to follow every detail as the men were led up the gallows steps, the visitor concentrated on the spectators. Displaying little sympathy for the condemned, they “gazed toward the fatal spot pretty much as they would have done had it been an eclipse of the moon or a house on fire.” Duncan remained until the bodies were cut down and buried in a corner of the yard.

Penitentiaries and the terrors and evils connected with them are suddenly the rage this season. The wave built gradually at first, with films like *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Dead Man Walking*, and more recently, *The Green Mile*, then gained momentum with Ted Conover’s *Newjack*, and a spate of magazine articles on the rapid growth of the prison industry. The consensus of these works seems to be that prisons are always bad, and putting more people into them is worse. That was not always the way of things. The Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore opened in 1811, in a pastoral setting. The Washington Monument and fashionable Mt. Vernon neighborhood—a scant ten minutes’ walk from this hulking evidence of faith in man’s ability to reform—came a few years *later*. Obviously, sentiments have changed. What is interesting is how, and why.

As luck would have it, the Press at the Maryland Historical Society has just received from the printer, the ink on its pages still warm, the first published history of the very same penitentiary Duncan visited in 1818 and in continuous operation ever since. Written in lively style by *Maryland Historical Magazine* contributor Wallace Shugg, and amply illustrated, “A Monument to Good Intentions”: *The Story of the Maryland Penitentiary, 1804–1995*, is full of surprises. As Americans discuss penitentiaries, punishment, and policy, we in Maryland now have a superb device by which we can better see how matters have taken shape here.

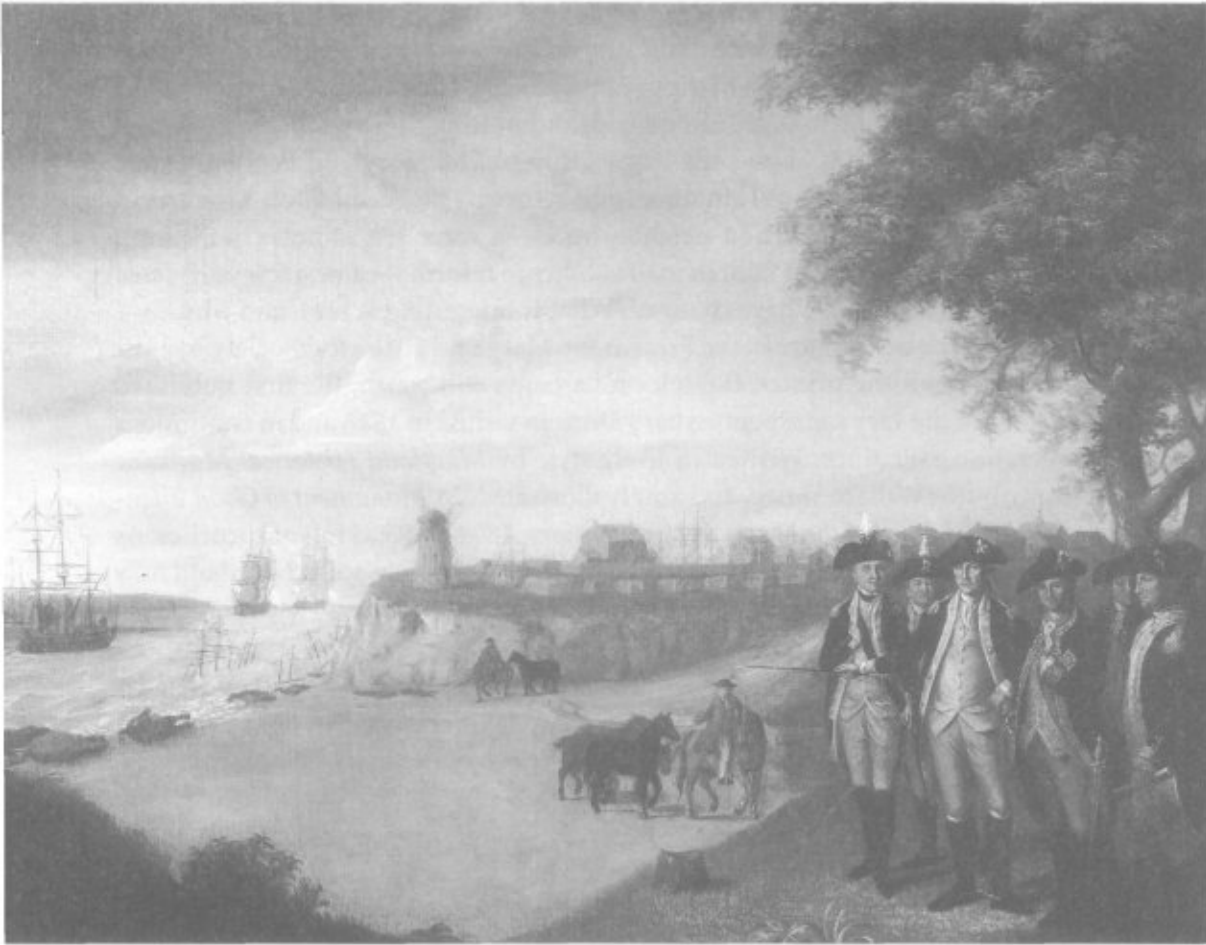
R.I.C.

Cover

Mount Savage, Allegany County, 1889

Named for the adjacent Great Savage Mountain, the Mount Savage Iron Works prospered in Western Maryland during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Amateur photographer Edgar S. Thompson took this picture of F. S. Deekins (under the table) and his friends enjoying a fruit and wine picnic in a coal mine on a hot summer day in August 1889.

P.D.A.



Washington and his generals following the victory at Yorktown. Painting by Charles Willson Peale. (Maryland Historical Society.)

Extraordinary Measures: Maryland and the Yorktown Campaign, 1781

ROBERT W. TINDER

On Tuesday, September 4, 1781, a sleek warship turned out of the Chesapeake Bay into the broad mouth of the Patapsco River and raced toward Baltimore Town. Built for speed and rigged as a cutter, sails spread taut in the brisk wind, its sharp hull knifed through the water. The cutter was the eighteen-gun *Serpent*, and its two-hundred-mile voyage from the lower Chesapeake had taken only two days. The *Serpent's* commander, Captain Amede de la Laune of the French navy, was anxious to reach his destination and deliver his precious cargo. He had been ordered by his admiral to carry to Baltimore military and naval information for General George Washington, commander-in-chief of the rebel American forces.¹

The American struggle for independence from Great Britain was in its seventh year, and de la Laune carried perhaps the most important message of the war, one that would trigger the last phase of the conflict. America, battered and desperate after more than six years of bloody, defensive struggle, was about to seize the initiative. The opportunity to transform the war had arisen only the previous month. In early August British general Charles Lord Cornwallis had moved his army to the town of York, on the Virginia coast of the Chesapeake Bay. The army was large, over eight thousand troops strong, but the move left it vulnerable to assault from both land and sea. When reports of the move reached American headquarters above New York City, General Washington seized the opportunity and ordered a surprise attack on Yorktown.

The campaign would not be an easy one, for American forces were weak in the Chesapeake Bay region. Washington assembled an attack force in New York, planning to rush it five hundred miles to Virginia to surround and capture Cornwallis and his army. But his bold plan lacked one crucial element. He could not launch the strike to Virginia without strong naval support. Naval power was coming from France—a force of warships was on its way to the Chesapeake. Washington, anxious to start the campaign, waited for a signal confirming that the French warships had arrived. The cutter *Serpent* carried that signal.²

Nearing Baltimore, the *Serpent* approached Whetstone Point (the future site of Fort McHenry), which early in the war had been turned into a fort and arsenal, with thirty-eight cannon pointing defiantly from behind earthen breast-

Robert W. Tinder is a professional writer and independent scholar living in Timonium, Maryland.

works. Past the fort, the cutter moved slowly across the harbor to Fells Point, where it docked at about one o'clock in the afternoon.³ Captain de la Laune, clutching a parcel of dispatches, jumped to the wharf and asked to be taken to the military commander of Baltimore.

Brigadier General Mordecai Gist was the ranking Continental Army officer in Baltimore. Born at Shawan in Baltimore County, he had been a merchant and an active patriot before joining Washington's army as a captain in 1775. Thrust into battle almost immediately, Gist quickly earned a reputation as a tenacious field commander. However, during the August 1780 battle of Camden, South Carolina, the Maryland Line had been nearly destroyed when stronger British forces overran American positions. The thirty-nine-year-old general had been ordered home to rebuild his command by recruiting and training two new Maryland regiments. The new formations were almost ready, and Gist was preparing to return with them to the fighting in the south.⁴

Captain de la Laune gave Gist the news that would activate Washington's army: Admiral de Grasse had arrived in the Chesapeake. Gist knew that Washington was waiting to hear those words. Less than a week earlier, Washington had written to Maryland governor Thomas Sim Lee that he had "reason to expect the Arrival of a powerful Fleet of our Allies very soon in Chesapeake." The message had warned Lee that quantities of supplies would be required for the campaign in Virginia, but the start of the campaign depended upon the arrival of the French warships.⁵

After questioning de la Laune about de Grasse's strength in the lower Chesapeake, Gist issued orders to the owners and captains of vessels in Baltimore's harbor. He directed them to set sail immediately for the Maryland town of Head of Elk (Elkton) to assist Washington's army. Located on the Elk River, the highest navigable tributary of the Chesapeake, Head of Elk's inland harbor would soon become a marshaling area for the troops and war supplies heading to Virginia.

Gist grabbed sheets of paper and wrote a message to Washington, summarizing everything de la Laune had reported. He wrote a similar note to Governor Lee in Annapolis, then sent for couriers—express riders—to carry the messages. The rider to Annapolis left Baltimore at three o'clock in the afternoon. Gist noted the time on the outside of the message.⁶ Three hours later another express rider left for Philadelphia in search of Washington. On the message Gist wrote, "Given to the Express 6 of the PM." He also wrote his orders to the rider. He was to deliver the message to "His Excellency General Washington [in] Philadelphia. This Express is required to ride night & day."⁷

As the news spread quickly throughout Baltimore that America's ally controlled the Chesapeake, the town erupted in wild celebration. Denizens of the popular Lindsay's Coffee House on Fells Point raised their cups in continuous toasts—to "King Louis the 16th," "The United States of America," "The Con-

gress,” “The Count de Grasse and his Fleet,” “General Washington and the Allied Army,” “The Marquis de la Fayette,” “The State of Maryland,” “General Greene and the Southern Army.” After these came patriotic sentiments: “May the Alliance between France and America be perpetual.” One toast expressed Baltimore’s hope for an end to the disruption of its business life caused by enemy occupation of the Chesapeake: “May Trade and Commerce flourish in America.”⁸

The Enemy do not Lose Sight of Baltimore

Baltimore, indeed all of Maryland, had more than enough reason to celebrate. The arrival of De Grasse’s warships relieved a suffocating fear that gripped the state. For weeks, Maryland had been living under the threat of a British invasion. Throughout 1781, British forces had ravaged Tidewater Virginia and probed up the bay into Maryland, attacking towns and farms on the Eastern and Western Shores. Raiding up the Potomac, Saint Mary’s, and Patuxent Rivers, they burned farms, harbors and shipyards, plundered property, captured or burned ships and bay craft, and destroyed military supplies and food stores.⁹ On March 14 two British warships took up positions between the Patapsco and Severn rivers, threatening Annapolis and Baltimore.¹⁰

In late May Cornwallis’s troops raided northward to the vicinity of Fredericksburg, only eighty-five miles from Baltimore. Colonel Robert Hooe in Alexandria, who monitored the enemy’s movements for Governor Lee, reported, “[It is] generally believed that Cornwallis means to March through Virginia to Baltimore where a fleet and part of the British Army it is supposed will meet him.” American forces in Virginia were weak, Colonel Hooe wrote. “We are in a miserable situation for want of arms.” Standing between Cornwallis and Maryland was a small corps of Continental Army troops commanded by the young major-general, the Marquis de Lafayette. A Maryland volunteer cavalry unit, Captain Nicholas Ruxton Moore’s Baltimore Light Dragoons, had joined Lafayette. No match for Cornwallis’s army, the Americans retreated as the British advanced. Lafayette warned Lee to prepare for an invasion. “I do not see how it is to be prevented.”¹¹

Fears of invasion increased when captured British dispatches appeared in newspapers. The War Office in London urged British commanders to capture the Chesapeake Bay. “I doubt not you will avail yourself of his [Washington’s] weakness,” Lord George Germaine wrote Sir Henry Clinton on March 7, “and your own great superiority to send a considerable force to the head of the Chesapeake, as soon as the season will permit operations to be carried on in that quarter.”¹²

On August 1 fear turned into panic when Lafayette and his aide-de-camp, Baltimorean James McHenry, sent frantic dispatches to Governor Lee, warning



Mordecai Gist, in Baltimore raising additional regiments for the Continental Army, urgently dispatched couriers to inform General Washington that long-awaited French warships had arrived in the bay. (Maryland Historical Society.)

that the invasion had begun. Cornwallis had loaded two thousand troops, including cavalry, onto forty ships. “The fleet weighed this morning from Cape Henry [and] stood up the Bay; tis certain they are bound to Baltimore (40 sail in number with several large Barges full of Troops).”¹³ Maryland’s nightmare of a British attack seemed about to become reality.

Boldly, the state prepared to meet the enemy. Governor Lee and the State Council ordered militia units from Harford, Washington, Montgomery, Prince George’s, Frederick, and Charles Counties to hurry to Annapolis and Baltimore. Within days nearly three thousand militia had swarmed into Baltimore. Look-outs were posted to watch for enemy ships on the bay. Wagons and teams of horses were ordered to Annapolis and Baltimore “to remove the public stores and papers.” Dire instructions were sent to the leaders of Baltimore. “We no longer doubt of the Designs of the Enemy they are certainly destined for Baltimore Town or the Head of the Bay. . . . This is the Day of trial, now must the State of Maryland exert herself, and prove she is worthy of the inestimable Blessings we are contending for.” Fearful that Baltimore, the burgeoning commercial center, would be sacked and plundered as Virginia towns had been, the council ordered, “The inhabitants of the Town must move out all their Goods and valuable Property.”¹⁴ Baltimore’s newspaper, *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, described the preparations: “The Invasion of Maryland being Part of the Plan of the British Cabinet . . . the late embarkation at Portsmouth [Virginia] of about 2000 British troops, and the subsequent motions of the fleet,

have given just cause of alarm to the inhabitants of this and the counties adjacent, who are now exerting themselves in every district, to take the field at a moment's warning."¹⁵

Maryland waited, but after several days the British fleet failed to appear. On August 10 messages from Lafayette and McHenry broke the suspense—the state had been spared. “Instead of proceeding up the bay the fleet stood into York River. The troops have been landed. . . . York town is made a place of arms. Lord Cornwallis is present and has with him his whole force except the garrison of Portsmouth.” Still, dread and apprehension lingered as Maryland waited for Cornwallis's next move. Lafayette warned, “The enemy do not lose sight of Baltimore; and they may only wait for a more favorable moment.”¹⁶

Lafayette's assessment was off the mark. Washington saw that Cornwallis had moved his army into a dangerous position and, with the help of the French, was preparing to attack him. The welcome news that de Grasse's fleet held the Chesapeake, protecting Baltimore from the threat of British attack, prompted relief, then celebration in the city. Baltimore Town was then but a crescent of buildings and houses hugging the hillside above the harbor basin and reaching around to Fells Point. That evening the hillside was alight in a grand illumination as citizens carried flaming torches and lanterns through the streets and placed them in stands at street corners. Candles glowed in house windows, merchants' shops, coffee-houses, inns, and taverns. Like a glowing arm embracing the harbor, “Fell's Point, in particular, made, on the Occasion, a most brilliant Appearance.”¹⁷

The express rider leaving Baltimore with the precious news for General Washington faced a treacherous night ride of nearly a hundred miles. The road to Philadelphia was narrow, little more than a dirt trail rutted by wagons and carts. For much of the distance it cut through dense woodlands; it passed over rolling hills and dropped suddenly into ravines and valleys. Streams had to be crossed without bridges. When he reached the Susquehanna River, the rider would have to rouse the owner of the ferry at a settlement near the Chesapeake Bay known as Lower Ferry, today's Havre de Grace. If the ferry was not operating, he would have to cross the river at a dangerous ford seven miles to the northwest. Once across the Susquehanna, the courier would have to ride another sixty-five miles to reach Philadelphia and General Washington.¹⁸

Early the next morning, September 5, as the courier from Baltimore hurried to reach him, a deeply worried General George Washington mounted his horse and left Philadelphia. Riding with officers of his headquarters staff, he set off in the direction of Wilmington, Delaware, where the leading elements of a column of soldiers and war matériel were slowly moving toward Maryland. Washington was troubled that he had received no word from de Grasse and his powerful naval force. De Grasse's warships would form the critical element of Washington's

bold strike into Virginia, the naval armament that would block Cornwallis's escape or rescue. The French fleet was more than mere tactical support. America possessed no comparable naval power. Moreover, its army was dangerously weak after six years of war. The British, on the other hand, had a strong army entrenched in New York City. In the Chesapeake region, Cornwallis, although pausing to fortify Yorktown, was ominously poised to sweep through undefended Maryland, capture Philadelphia, and link up with British forces in New York.¹⁹

An offensive operation against the British appeared to be impossible. America had received generous support from France in August 1780, but when General Donatien Rochambeau arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, with an army of five thousand soldiers and a squadron of warships, Washington and Rochambeau had disagreed for months on where to employ the French troops.²⁰ The question was settled by two almost simultaneous events in 1781. In early August Cornwallis moved his army to Yorktown, close to the Chesapeake Bay. Then on August 14 a message arrived from de Grasse. Commanding a powerful naval task force, and under the direct orders of King Louis XVI, de Grasse was on his way to assist Washington's operations against the British. The French admiral wrote that he was headed to the Chesapeake Bay, but time was of the essence. Whatever Washington decided to do he would have to do quickly, for de Grasse planned to leave American waters by October 15.²¹

Washington wasted no time. The next day, August 15, he ordered the attack on Cornwallis in Virginia. Four days later, after hasty preparations, carrying minimal packs and supplies, the army of 2,000 American and 4,000 French troops pulled out of positions overlooking New York and began moving south toward Philadelphia.²² At Newport, French warships and transports weighed anchor, carrying additional troops and General Rochambeau's heavy siege artillery and other equipment that could not be carried overland. The long columns of soldiers with their miles-long trains of artillery, equipment, wagons, oxen, and horses reached Philadelphia on September 2, where they remained for two days, waiting for de Grasse.

The campaign was a gamble. Ambitious and complicated, it was a multi-command operation in which widely dispersed land and sea combat elements were expected to converge on one location and catch the enemy unprepared.²³ Marching an army to Virginia meant further weakening American positions around New York. Although stealth had been used to keep the march a secret, British spies reported the movements of the columns toward Philadelphia. Every day that passed without word of the French task force diminished the element of surprise and increased the chances of a counter move from New York.²⁴

Amplifying the risk was a scarcity of supplies. For months shortages of clothing, food, and other supplies had plagued Washington's efforts to rebuild the Continental Army. Urgent appeals to the states for fresh troops and provisions

had gone unanswered. By May 1781 the American situation had seemed hopeless even to Washington.

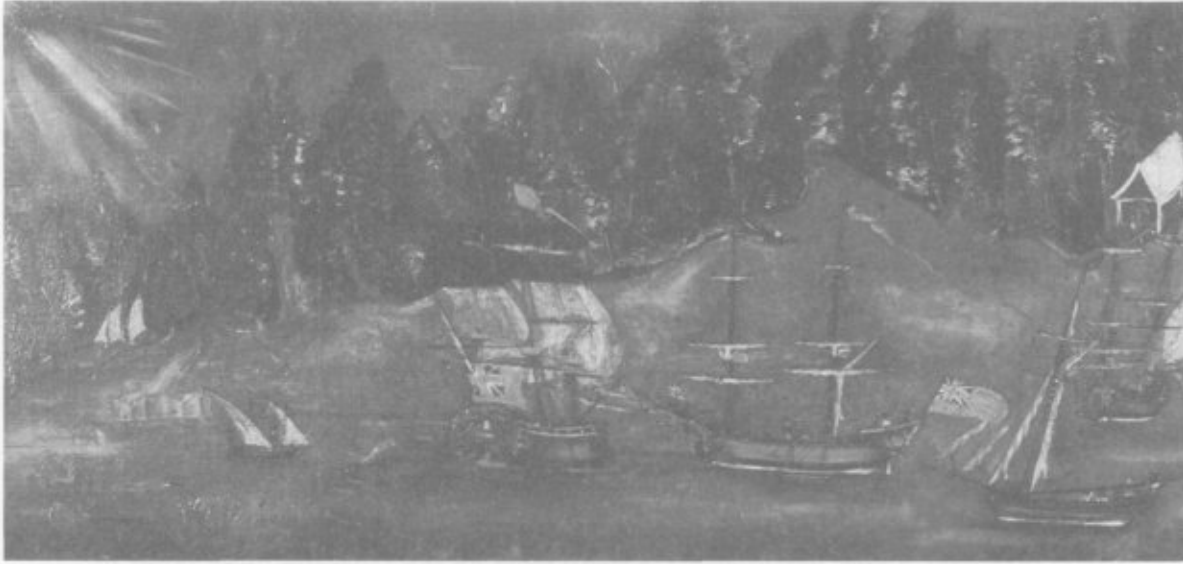
Instead of having Magazines filled with provisions, we have a scanty pittance scattered here and there in the different States. Instead of having our Arsenals well supplied with Military Stores, they are poorly provided. . . . In a word, Instead of having everything in readiness to take the Field, we have nothing and instead of having the prospect of a glorious offensive campaign before us, we have a bewildered, and gloomy defensive one.²⁵

The attack on Yorktown was the desperate move of a commander who was down to his last chance. Washington gambled that supplies would be found for his attacking army, and that Maryland would become his lifeline.

Early on the afternoon of September 5, Washington and his party passed through Chester, Pennsylvania, a small town on the Delaware River about fifteen miles below Philadelphia. Traveling the dusty road, riding past stalled troops and equipment, Washington was anxious. He knew the British were moving to counteract his plan. On September 1 agents watching New York harbor had sent word that a fleet of warships and transports had sailed for the Chesapeake Bay to reinforce Cornwallis. If the British navy arrived before de Grasse, it might thwart the campaign before it began. Washington gave voice to his fears in a letter to his friend, the Marquis de La Fayette in Virginia.

But my dear Marquis, I am distressed beyond expression, to know what is become of the Count de Grasse, and for fear the English fleet, by occupying the Chesapeake (towards which my last accounts say they were steering) should frustrate all our flattering prospects in that quarter. . . . You see, how critically important the present Moment is. . . . If you get any thing New from any quarter, send it I pray you *on the Spur of Speed*, for I am almost all impatience and anxiety.²⁶

About three miles below Chester, at two-thirty in the afternoon, Washington and his officers noticed a lone rider coming toward them at a gallop. It was the express rider from Baltimore. After a determined overnight ride of more than twenty hours and covering over eighty miles, the rider handed Washington Captain de la Laune's dispatches and General Gist's letter. Washington tore open the letter. At Gist's first sentence, the terrible anxiety evaporated. "I have the pleasure to inform you that the *Serpent* cutter, of 18 guns, Captain Amie de la Laune, has this moment arrived here, with dispatches for your Excellency from Count de Grasse, who arrived in Chesapeake with 28 ships of the line, the 26th

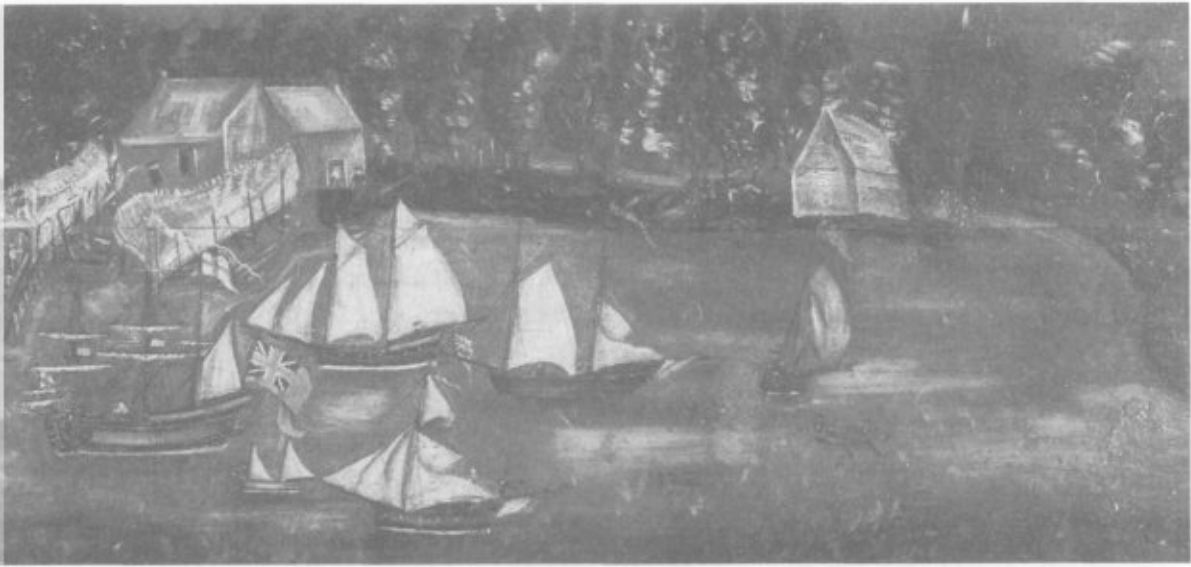


Gray's Inn Creek Shipyard, c. 1765. A similar gathering of baycraft hurriedly assembled to transport a portion of the Continental Army from Head of Elk to the Yorktown Peninsula in Virginia in 1781.

[of August] . . . and the next day landed 3,000 troops on the south side of James river, in order to form a junction with the Marquis de la Fayette."²⁷ De Grasse had reached the Chesapeake, Washington now knew, ahead of the British New York fleet. In addition, the French were blockading the York River, preventing any movement from Yorktown. Cornwallis's lines of communication and reinforcement were severed, and he and his army were isolated behind their fortifications.

Gist had enclosed for Washington an inventory of the various ship types in de Grasse's force. It was a powerful armada of giant ships-of-the-line. Three were armed with eighty-four cannon; nineteen were seventy-fours; four had sixty-four guns. The largest vessel in the fleet was de Grasse's flagship, the *Ville de Paris*, armed with 110 cannon, the most powerful warship afloat. It was reassuring news. Washington issued orders for the Americans to make haste to Head of Elk, then wheeled his horse and raced back to Chester in search of General Rochambeau.

The final sentence of Gist's letter was almost as important to Washington as the first: "I have ordered all of the vessels in this [Baltimore's] harbor to sail immediately for the reception of the Troops at the Head of Elk." For Washington, the overriding urgency was to move the army to Virginia in time to take advantage of de Grasse's naval power. He ordered his aide-de-camp, Colonel David Humphreys, to ride to Head of Elk ahead of the army to begin the preparations for conveying the army to Virginia. The streets of the little town soon filled with arriving troops and equipment. Humphreys worked through the night.



(Maryland Historical Society.)

At one o'clock the next morning, September 6, he sent a courier to Baltimore with orders for General Gist.

You will be pleased to inform him [Washington] by the most rapid conveyance, what number of Transports (and to what amount of tonnage) may absolutely be depended upon to be sent from Baltimore and other parts of the bay, and when they may be expected at this place. . . . As it is of the utmost importance to the general to know with certainty whether sufficient Shipping can be procured to transport the troops, as well as Ordnance, Stores, and Baggage, he entreats you . . . that every nerve may be strained to put all the Vessels in Motion, and make them arrive here at the earliest possible period.²⁸

Baltimore's harbor was already abustle. Bay craft of all types—schooners, sloops, work boats—were leaving their moorings, unloading, or undergoing repairs. Gist described the scene to Humphreys.

A list of the vessels that have sailed from this port for the head of Elk amounting on the whole to 1,012 tons . . . about 300 tons of shipping are now in the Harbor unloading their Cargoes, including a Galley of four 18 pounders, belonging to the Merchants of the town, who have had her some time under repair. She is not yet completed and is with-

out hands but I have requested the Captain of the French Cutter to put an Officer and 14 hands on Board to take her to the Head of Elk to receive the Troops.”²⁹

Annapolis and other harbor towns were also rushing vessels to Head of Elk. Months of British raids had swept large ships from Maryland waters, and it was almost impossible to assemble enough of the shallower draft bay craft to transport an army of six thousand men and their equipment and heavy artillery. On August 30 Governor Lee and the State Council had explained to Washington the scarcity of shipping. “We are sorry to inform your Excellency, that since the Enemy has had Possession of the Bay, our Number of sea Vessels and Craft has been so reduced by Captures, that we are apprehensive what remains will not transport so considerable a Detachment.”³⁰

Nevertheless, vessels swarmed up the bay to Head of Elk. Washington reached the town on September 6, hoping for sufficient ships, but soon realized that the vessels coming from Baltimore and other ports would carry only part of his army. After consulting with Rochambeau, he designated some units to move to Virginia by water. The rest of the columns he ordered to cross the Susquehanna River and march overland to Baltimore. A quick dispatch notified de Grasse of the army’s deployment.

The Van of the two Armies, the French and American, consisting of about 2000 Men, (there not being Transports for the whole) will be embarked in about two Days, and will fall Down the Chesapeake to form a Junction with the Troops under the Command of . . . the Marquis Lafayette.³¹

The winding river and Head of Elk’s narrow harbor were soon jammed with vessels. They had sailed from Annapolis, from Baltimore, from the rivers and streams of the Chesapeake Bay where they had been hidden for months from British and Loyalist raids, crewed by Marylanders—watermen, who with just a few days’ notice had set sail in answer to Washington’s call for help.

The vessels formed a forest of masts and sails as they waited to take on the troops that filled the narrow streets and the heavy weapons and ammunition piled on the docks. One soldier, Corporal Joseph Plumb Martin, recalled marching into Head of Elk and finding “a *large* fleet of *small* vessels waiting to convey us and other troops, stores, &c. down the bay. We soon embarked. . . . I was in a small schooner called the *Birmingham*.” Another witness, army surgeon James Thacher, counted the vessels and recorded the feverish efforts to load them. “About eighty vessels are in readiness, great activity prevails, embarkation has commenced . . . [I] take passage on board a small schooner, with 4 other officers

and sixty men. She is . . . deeply laden with cannon, mortars and other ordnance.”³² Enough vessels had arrived to transport the American artillery and the French siege equipment and two thousand troops—30 percent of the allied army. It was only the beginning of the help Washington would receive from Maryland.

On September 7 he wrote to Lafayette in Virginia that he was pleased with the progress of the campaign. “Every thing has hitherto succeeded agreeable to my desires and expectations; the want of a sufficient number of Vessels to transport the whole of the Troops, Ordnance and Stores at once, is only a misfortune that could not be avoided. We shall have Transports enough, I believe, to embark the heavy cannon, necessary Stores, and the Van of the American and French Armies, consisting of 1000 Men each by to Morrow.”³³ Early the next morning, Saturday, September 8, Washington left Head of Elk, eager to reach Baltimore. He began the journey with his staff officers and French generals Rochambeau and Chastellux, but Washington spurred his horse to a gallop, setting a pace that soon wearied his companions, and they fell behind as he charged ahead.

That afternoon, on the outskirts of Baltimore Town, a large crowd gathered along the road that led north to Philadelphia, the same road taken by the express rider four days earlier. Part of the crowd was a formation of about forty uniformed men on horseback, Captain Moore’s troop of Baltimore Light Dragoons. They had raced home from Virginia in August to help defend the town against the expected British invasion. The civilians and mounted soldiers waited expectantly through the heat of the September afternoon, perhaps sensing that they were about to witness a moment in history.

Off in the distance a rider appeared on the dusty road, his horse moving at a gallop. Wearing a dark blue and buff general’s uniform, the rider was instantly recognized, and the crowd cheered as Washington drew near. The mounted dragoons came to attention, forming an honor guard. With the crowd following, they escorted him to the Fountain Inn on Market (Baltimore) Street. Nearby on Calvert Street, the artillery companies had set up carriage guns on the grassy common of the courthouse (the future site of the Battle Monument honoring the city’s dead in the 1814 repulse of the British). The cannon thundered a salute, a rolling volley that boomed across the town and harbor.

Washington was besieged with visitors, “the inhabitants, in general, seemed to vie with each other in testifying their Respect and Affection for his Person and Character.” Celebrating continued into the evening. For the second time in four days, “every part of town was elegantly illuminated.” At Lindsey’s Coffee House in Fells Point, a banquet was held in Washington’s honor, at which a committee of five community leaders presented a proclamation.

The Citizens and Inhabitants of Baltimore, impressed with the warmest sentiments of Respect and Esteem, and with the most lively sense of

the important service, rendered by you to them and their country, beg leave, through us, to congratulate your Excellency upon your Arrival in this town, and to Express the general Joy, diffused through every Breast at the Return of your Excellency to this Place. . . . Our Prayers are for your Excellency's Preservation, that you may continue approved by heaven, esteemed by virtuous men, and dreaded by tyrants.³⁴

The Army is in Distress at this Moment

One member of the committee was James Calhoun, who in 1797 would become Baltimore's first mayor. At the moment he was Maryland's commissary-general for the Western Shore. Within a few days Calhoun would coordinate a major part of the supply effort for the allied armies. From Baltimore he directed a system for purchasing, marshaling, transporting, and storing grain supplies and livestock from western, central, and southern Maryland farms for the use of the Maryland government, what were called the "public stores." Acting under the direct orders of Governor Lee and the State Council, he arranged for grain to be milled into flour and shipped to locations where it was needed. He coordinated the sale of the flour to raise money for arms and equipment for Maryland's defense and to outfit Marylanders serving outside the state in the Continental Army. In the coming days of the campaign, Calhoun would be under great stress to collect and transport food and supplies for the allied army.

General Washington left Baltimore early the next morning, September 9, anxious to see Mount Vernon for the first time in more than six years. Before leaving, he thanked the committee and the town for their joyous welcome and for their prayers, and he offered prayers and well wishes of his own. "May the Author of all Blessings aid our united Exertions in the Cause of Liberty and universal Peace—and may the particular Blessing of Heaven rest on you and the worthy Citizens of this flourishing Town of Baltimore."³⁵

The exuberant reception in Baltimore had buoyed Washington's spirits. From Mount Vernon, he sent a letter to Governor Lee in which he openly revealed his hope that Maryland would become his lifeline for food and supplies. "I am exceedingly pleased to find, as I passed through your State that a Spirit for Exertion prevails universally in such a Manner as gives me the happiest Prospects of receiving very effectual support from you." The army was ominously short of food. From Williamsburg, Lafayette had sent a frantic appeal for supplies. Washington turned the problem over to Lee. The request was only the first of several increasingly dire messages that laid responsibility for the logistics of the campaign squarely upon Maryland. "Great Attention is necessary to be given to the Article of Supplies," the general told the governor. "I mention this Circumstance, as I am just informed from below, that the Army is in Distress at this Moment

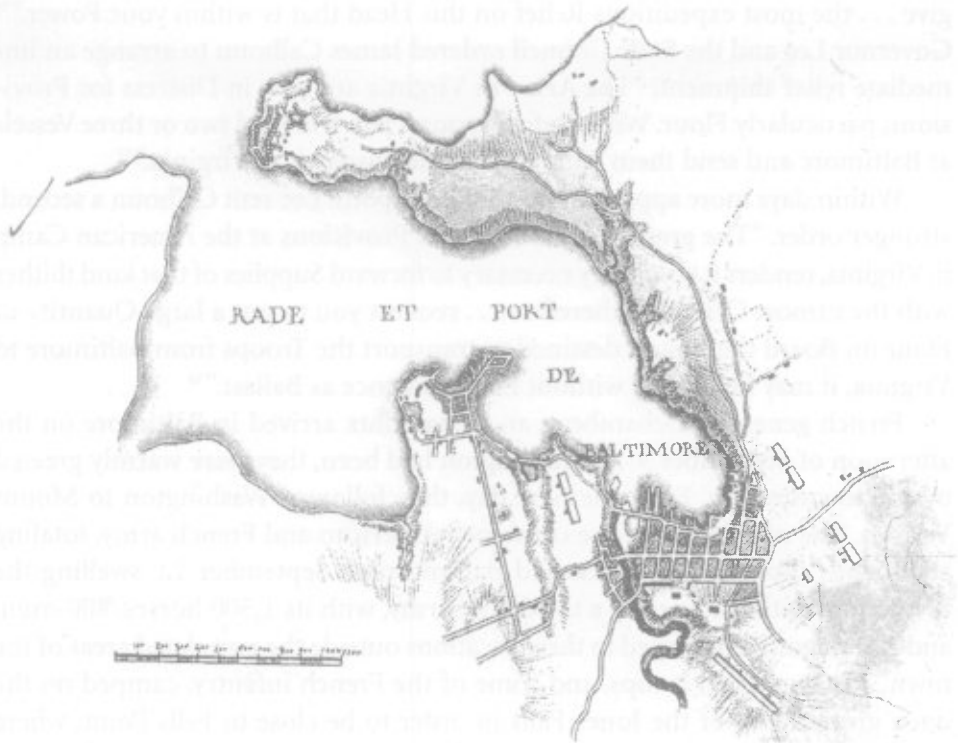
for Want of Provisions—particularly Flour. Let me entreat your Excellency to give . . . the most expeditious Relief on this Head that is within your Power.”³⁶ Governor Lee and the State Council ordered James Calhoun to arrange an immediate relief shipment. “The Army in Virginia are now in Distress for Provisions, particularly Flour. We therefore request you will load two or three Vessels at Baltimore and send them with all possible Dispatch to Virginia.”³⁷

Within days more appeals arrived in Annapolis. Lee sent Calhoun a second, stronger order. “The great Scarcity of Bread Provisions at the American Camp in Virginia, renders it absolutely necessary to forward Supplies of that kind thither with the utmost Celerity. I therefore . . . request you to put a large Quantity of Flour on Board the Vessels destined to transport the Troops from Baltimore to Virginia, it may be carried without Inconvenience as Ballast.”³⁸

French generals Rochambeau and Chastellux arrived in Baltimore on the afternoon of September 9. As Washington had been, they were warmly greeted by the townspeople. Early the next day, they followed Washington to Mount Vernon. The main force of the combined American and French army, totaling about four thousand men, reached Baltimore on September 12, swelling the town’s population by nearly a third. The army, with its 1,500 horses, 800 oxen, and 220 wagons, encamped in three locations outside the populated areas of the town. The American troops, and some of the French infantry, camped on the open ground east of the Jones Falls in order to be close to Fells Point, where vessels were expected to arrive to carry them to Virginia. The main body of the French column, along with the wagon trains and artillery, passed through Baltimore and built two large camps on the western and northern outskirts. The largest was on the hilltop at the end of Market (Baltimore) Street, along the line of today’s Howard Street, extending south to present-day Camden Yards. A smaller camp was on the hilltop north of Saratoga Street, near the present site of the Catholic Basilica of the Assumption.³⁹

An order from Washington suddenly halted the march in Baltimore. Dispatches from Virginia reported that de Grasse’s fleet had left the Chesapeake. When the British New York fleet arrived off the entrance to the Bay, de Grasse sallied into the Atlantic to attack it. After a heated battle, the British warships limped back to New York.⁴⁰ Upon receiving word of de Grasse’s return to the bay, Washington ordered the march resumed. The American troops left Baltimore on September 17 aboard vessels that had arrived at Fells Point. The French units had begun marching in stages the previous day, the infantry tramping south to Annapolis to await warships sent from de Grasse’s fleet. The cavalry, artillery, and wagon trains marched overland to Virginia, another 230 miles.

Disciplined and orderly, and wearing magnificent, colorful uniforms, the French soldiers provided the inhabitants of Baltimore and Annapolis a rare spec-



*This map, "Roadstead and Harbor of Baltimore, 1781," was made by Captain Louis-Alexandre Berthier, of the French forces camped near Baltimore. Fells Point, where Captain de la Laune's cutter docked on September 4, 1781, is at center. (From *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.]*

tacle during their stay. These were soldiers of the European monarch, Louis XVI—foreign soldiers of the old regime. Their uniforms and banners carried the markings of proud regiments with ancient names: Bourbonnais, Soissonnais, Royal Deux Ponts, and Saintonge infantry; the Duke de Lauzun Cavalry Legion; and the Auxone Regiment of the Royal Corps of Artillery.

In this army of the old order was a young officer, twenty-seven-year-old Captain Louis-Alexandre Berthier, a cartographer and quartermaster for General Rochambeau, who would literally redraw the political map of Europe during the upheaval that followed the American Revolution. Berthier, a general by age forty-two, would become the chief-of-staff for twenty-seven-year-old Napoleon Bonaparte, a partnership that conquered most of Europe. A tireless worker, Berthier had a keen ability to remember details. During short visits to Baltimore he, or artists under his supervision, produced strikingly accurate reconnaissance maps of the town and harbor. Two 1781 maps, and two others

made in 1782, closely depict the original street pattern, which still exists today. Three maps show the earthen fortifications and gun batteries at Whetstone and Fells Points.⁴¹

Once he had made the decision to attack Cornwallis in Virginia, Washington had alerted the Maryland government that quantities of supplies would be needed for the army when it marched through the state. But his notification left little time to prepare, and there was no forewarning of the campaign's critical and continuing dependence on the state for supplies. Maryland possessed an efficient logistics system, managed by state and county commissary officers. Governor Lee and the State Council were determined that Maryland would do its part. On August 30 they ordered James Calhoun, the commissary officer for the Western Shore, to coordinate the supply effort for most of Maryland.

We are called on in the most pressing and earnest Manner for every kind of supplies to complete our continental Quota, which are to be delivered without Delay at the Posts of Baltimore, George Town [on the Potomac River] and the Head of Elk. We most earnestly entreat you to collect with Expedition all the Flour and flesh Provision within your district belonging to the Public, and have it deposited at the above mentioned places. . . . You will also have a sufficient Quantity of Forage laid in at the Posts of Baltimore and George Town.⁴²

To speed the gathering of food supplies, the council also sent orders directly to the commissary officer of each Maryland county. They were ordered to immediately collect grain and beef cattle. Each county was given a quota of beef, the state total amounting to 5,800 cattle. The commissaries were to pay for the supplies using paper money or promissory notes based on the currency. However, since the currency had little value, the council expected that some farmers and merchants would not cooperate. If met with resistance, the commissaries were ordered to seize the food supplies.⁴³

Five days later, on the evening of September 4, General Gist's courier reached Annapolis with the letter announcing de Grasse's arrival. The letter had the same galvanizing effect on the governor and State Council that it would have on Washington the following morning. Suddenly, the army's imminent march through Maryland became an emergency, Maryland's second crisis in as many months. Express riders rushed from Annapolis with stronger orders to the county commissaries.

There never has been a Time which required the Exertions of the State more than the present. The Fate of Lord Cornwallis and his Army will in a great Measure, depend upon them. Relying therefore on your

Patriotism, Zeal and Activity, we trust you will do every Thing in your Power to procure the Cattle heretofore ordered. Not a Moment is to be lost.

The commissaries were ordered to accept no resistance in carrying out their duties. "You may employ Persons to assist you, and call on the Lieutenant of your County whom we have directed to order out as many of the Light Horse Militia to aid you in the Execution of this Order, as will be necessary."⁴⁴

Within a few days the supply system roused into activity. Baltimore, where the army on the march expected to find a stockpile of supplies, was the first focus of concern. The newly appointed commissary for Baltimore County, Captain George Keepports, who also commanded the fort at Whetstone Point, was ordered to "collect cattle in your County by Seizure, if the Owners will not freely and readily part with them." The council warned Keepports not to fail. "You must be sensible that a Failure in furnishing the Post at Baltimore with Provision for the Troops that will pass through in a Few Days, must be attended with disagreeable and distressing Consequences to the Inhabitants for the Army cannot and will not suffer, and Parties of Men will be ordered out to obtain the necessary Supplies."⁴⁵

Pressure to collect and ship supplies to Virginia mounted, as it became clear that Maryland's role in the campaign would be greater than simply provisioning an army passing through the state. British forces had systematically ravaged the Tidewater region of Virginia. The state's supply system was barely functioning. Washington was appalled to find that the Virginia militia troops were "almost totally destitute of Clothing . . . in consequence of which upwards of one third of them are rendered at present unfit for service."⁴⁶ The beleaguered state's governor, Thomas Nelson, described in a letter to Governor Lee Virginia's attempts to "procure abundant & permanent Supplies of Provisions." However, he asked Lee to send flour, "considerable quantities of it immediately sent down the Bay."⁴⁷

The State Council once again turned to James Calhoun in Baltimore, ordering him to broaden his efforts. "By information this Day received from Governor Nelson of Virginia, the Article of Flour will be immediately wanted for the combined Forces in Virginia. You will therefore use every Exertion to have as much as possible collected." Calhoun was to obtain additional grain from Frederick and Washington Counties and have it "immediately manufactured into good Flour and waggoned without Delay to George Town" for shipment to Virginia by water.⁴⁸

Food was not the only provision in short supply. Washington needed artillery and military stores. Before leaving Baltimore on September 9, he had asked General Gist to forward cannon and other equipment to the army. The heavy

weapons were the property of the state and under the control of Governor Lee. "The Commander in Chief has put into my hands this morning a list of Ordnance and Stores wanting for the intended operations in Virginia, amongst which are 10 18-pounders mounted on travelling or Garrison Carriages." Washington had told Gist that the "cannon will be essentially necessary in his operations." Lee ordered the weapons released, and "a Vessel should be procured . . . to carry the Guns to York."⁴⁹

The attack on Yorktown was to be a European-style siege. Lines of zig-zag trenches would be dug across the battlefield under enemy fire to within infantry-assault range of the British fortifications.⁵⁰ The deep trenches would serve as protected avenues of attack for allied soldiers rushing to storm the British redoubts. Suddenly, lumber and entrenching tools were important instruments of war. On September 11 Brigadier General Henry Knox, commander of the Continental Army's artillery corps, arrived in Annapolis to ask Governor Lee for lumber, "an immediate supply of Thirty thousand feet of white oak plank." There was no question of asking another state. "The difficulty and indeed impracticability of transporting this article from any other quarter has induced a full dependence for it on Maryland." Knox also needed gunpowder for his cannon. "The Board of War in Philadelphia informed me of eight tons of Powder, belonging to the Continent at Frederick Town in this state, which I also pray may be transported, as soon as possible."⁵¹

By the time Washington reached his headquarters in Williamsburg on September 15, the food shortages Lafayette had described had worsened. Again, Washington turned to Governor Lee with an urgent request for food. "I am Distressed my Dear Sir, to find on my arrival, that the Supplies for the Army collecting here, are not in that desirable Train, that could be wished; they have already experienced a Want of Provisions and are greatly apprehensive in future, particularly in the Article of Bread. All the Flour within your Reach, should be immediately forwarded." As General Knox had said, the army had only Maryland to rely upon. Washington pleaded for more support in the most urgent and ominous terms. "I beg Sir, that not a Moment may be lost in furnishing us with every Supply within your Power. . . . An Army cannot be kept together without Supplies; if these fail us, our Operations must Cease, and all our high Hopes will vanish into Disappointment and Disgrace."

In addition to the lumber and gunpowder that Knox had requested, the army needed hand tools for cutting down trees, digging trenches, and constructing gun emplacements. In the same letter, Washington begged Lee for those implements as well. "If your Excellency can assist us in procuring some Axes or Hatchets and Intrenching Tools of all kinds, it will be a great Advantage. We shall have much occasion for tools of this sort, and I find almost a Total want here."⁵²

On September 19 the State Council sent Washington a long report summarizing Maryland's efforts to supply the army. Its vigorous activity was hampered only by transportation difficulties. "We feel your Excellency's Distress from an apprehension that your operations may cease or be impeded for want of Provisions and the more so because we can't instantly furnish you." The first priority continued to be moving the troops to Virginia. "All the Vessels belonging to the State being impressed and now employed in transporting the Troops to the Point of Destination puts it out of our Power to forward the Flour immediately. As soon as they return we shall order them on that Service."

Upon their return to Maryland ports, the vessels would find stockpiles of provisions awaiting transportation. Food supplies were beginning to fill the warehouses and wharves at the collection points.

Mr. Calhoun the Commissary for the Western Shore has informed us that 1185 barrels [of flour] are at George Town, and the public wheat in Washington and Frederick Counties now manufacturing and transporting to that Post, will, we are satisfied afford from fifteen hundred to two thousand Barrels more. There are at Baltimore Town about four hundred and fifty Barrels and at the Head of Elk three hundred Barrels which last Quantity must be greatly augmented in a short Time.

However, the tools Washington had asked for posed a problem. The council warned that none were available. "Your Excellency may rely on our making every possible Exertion to supply you with every Thing in this State that you may want, but we wish you would not depend on us entirely for Axes, Hatchets and entrenching Tools." In the quantities needed, the tools would have to be manufactured. Finding someone to take on the task seemed an insurmountable problem, because the state was paying for its requisitions in the weak Continental currency. Maryland commissary officers had discovered that they were competing with representatives of the French army and navy for the purchase of supplies. "The Credit of our new Money, our only Medium, has been greatly wounded and the Circulation in some Measure stopped, since the French Contractors have been in the State." The French were paying in gold for their purchases, and they had plenty to spend. "They . . . have parted with their Specie with great Liberality, and we expect for some Time to meet with Difficulties in obtaining what is required."⁵³

Nevertheless, Maryland soon forwarded a large shipment of tools to Washington. A Maryland citizen, Dr. Ephraim Howard of Elk Ridge, had the tools made and delivered to Annapolis. The council notified Washington on October 3 that Maryland "yesterday sent under the Care of Capt. Stephens 107 shovels,

40 Spades, 54 pickaxes, with a parcel of Augers and other Tools, and there is a good Prospect of forwarding in a very little Time, a much larger Number with some Dozens of Axes and Hatchets." A second shipment brought the total of tools supplied by Dr. Howard to 489.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the desperate need for food and supplies continued as the allied camps around Yorktown swelled. With new arrivals, French ground forces totaled 7,800. American forces (including Lafayette's corps, which now contained troops of the Pennsylvania Line) numbered 5,700 Continental Army regulars and 3,200 Virginia militia. De Grasse's armada had grown to sixty ships-of-the-line and transports, manned by fifteen thousand sailors and marines.⁵⁵

Maryland's transportation resources were overburdened. To accelerate shipments to the south, the State Council gave David Poe martial law powers to move the supplies out of Baltimore. Poe, Edgar Allan Poe's grandfather, was the Continental Army's deputy quartermaster-general for Baltimore. "You are hereby authorized and directed to impress as many Vessels as are necessary to transport Flour and Salt to Head Quarters in Virginia and Wagons to transport the Public Salt to Baltimore Town," the council informed him. "Both Flour and Salt are much wanted by the Army and we request you to lose no Time in forwarding every Barrel of Flour you can procure; you will apply to Mr. Calhoun to turn over all in his Possession."⁵⁶

Other problems plagued the logistics operation. Commissary James Calhoun fell ill for part of September. Unable to travel, he wrote orders to county commissary officers from his sickbed.⁵⁷ Fortunately, the State Council had already sent strong orders to the county officials. Problems even hampered Maryland's wagon trains once they reached Virginia, where officials confiscated wagons and teams of horses to haul grain from the interior, delaying their return to Maryland for additional loads.⁵⁸

Perhaps the most frustrated Maryland official was Colonel Henry Hollingsworth, commissary-general for the Eastern Shore. Based at Head of Elk, Hollingsworth was the Eastern Shore counterpart of James Calhoun in Baltimore. Isolated at the northern end of the bay, Hollingsworth was in constant need of transport vessels and wagons to move the supplies he had collected. Even worse, he was plagued with bureaucratic snags and poor communication. On one occasion, he tried to deliver two hundred head of cattle to an army quartermaster. The quartermaster refused to receive them, telling Hollingsworth that the army wanted beef—slaughtered, salted, and barreled—not cattle. Even the weather worked against Hollingsworth. By late October he had a large quantity of wheat ready to be milled into flour. But there had been a drought, and lowered water levels in Eastern Shore streams prevented the milling. "Our streams are now the lowest they ever were in the memory of the oldest man, of course many Mills not able to

work." In spite of his difficulties, the indomitable Hollingsworth delivered a large supply of flour. "The quantity of flour I have been able to deliver since the first of September is about one thousand Barrels at this Post."⁵⁹

Removing Every Apprehension of Want

Every vessel in the extraordinary fleet that gathered at Head of Elk had been jammed with troops and equipment. They made their way down the Elk River to the Chesapeake Bay in a succession of convoys beginning September 11. On the bay their passage was slow as the overburdened craft struggled against strong head winds and crashing waves. Some were swamped and overturned, spilling soldiers and weapons into the rough waters. On the evening of September 12, with crews and passengers fatigued by the harrowing voyage, they turned into the Severn River and the safety of Annapolis harbor, where they remained for three days. The fleet sailed again on the fifteenth and after a voyage of eight days reached the area of operations on the twenty-third.⁶⁰

Washington noted the fleet's arrival in a letter to the president of Congress. "The Vessels from the Head of Elk are now debarking their Troops and Stores, except some few, which are not yet arrived, but are accounted for from the Dullness of their Sailing, and may be hourly expected." Emptied of its first cargo of troops and equipment, the fleet of transports set sail back up the bay, headed for Baltimore, Annapolis, George Town, and Head of Elk to take on the food and other supplies piling up in warehouses and on wharves. Washington told the president he was still "embarrassed for Want of sufficient Stores of Provisions and means of Transportation," but with the first wave of vessels unloaded, he predicted that the food and supply situation would soon improve. "By superior exertions, however, I hope to surmount these Difficulties, and in a few days to find myself before the Enemy's Works at York and Gloucester."⁶¹

Soon French transports joined the logistics operation. In early October de Grasse ordered several ships to move up the bay to the supply collection points in Maryland. Having much greater cargo capacity than the Maryland vessels, the French ships dramatically boosted the flow of supplies. Washington had asked de Grasse to send the ships, advising him that supplies were available on both the Eastern and Western Shores. Aware of the shortages caused by the British blockade, he told the admiral that "flour will be thankfully given in exchange for the Rum at Annapolis."⁶²

On October 6 the long column of wagons, artillery, and cavalry that had passed through Baltimore and marched overland reached allied headquarters in Williamsburg. Wagons, horses, and oxen were rushed to the river landings six miles away, where they began to haul inland Rochambeau's siege artillery and heavy equipment that had arrived by water only to be stalled by lack of teams. As the hour of battle drew near, Washington sent a confident report to the presi-

dent of Congress: "We made slow progress until the arrival of the Wagons and Teams from the Northward; but it being the opinion of the Engineers that we now have a sufficient stock to commence operations, we shall this night open Trenches."⁶³

One month and a day had elapsed since Washington had received General Gist's letter announcing de Grasse's arrival in the Chesapeake. That evening he ordered the troops to begin digging the lines of siege trenches in the direction of the British fortifications. As one relay of soldiers dug, others with weapons stood watch to protect the workers from a sudden assault from the British lines.

Among the forces facing Cornwallis's army were the two new Maryland regiments General Gist had recruited. Totalling 1,200 troops, the Marylanders were placed in the center of the battle line, near the junction between the French and American forces.⁶⁴ The 4th Maryland regiment had marched from Maryland shortly after Washington passed through Baltimore. On September 13 the *Maryland Gazette* proudly announced its departure from Annapolis.

On Friday last the 4th Maryland regiment . . . marched from this city to join the marquis la Fayette. This regiment is completed to its full complement, consisting of upwards of 600 rank and file; and it has been generally observed, that they are the best men enlisted in this state since the war. The short time in which the 3d and 4th regiments have been raised and the excellence of the men, give an additional testimony of our increased ability to prosecute the war, to the perfect establishment of our sovereignty and independence.

A few days later the 3rd Regiment followed; Washington noted its arrival in his diary on September 22, then he named the two regiments the Maryland Brigade.⁶⁵

General Gist, in Baltimore arranging shipments of supplies and equipment for the new units, longed to join the attack on Cornwallis, who had commanded the British forces that overwhelmed his Marylanders at the Battle of Camden in August 1780. It was now Cornwallis's turn, and Gist wanted to be with the Maryland troops for the next round. He sent an express rider from Baltimore on September 24 with a final report to Washington, then sailed to Yorktown on a supply vessel. "There remains only one vessel (exclusive of the French prize ship) in this port. She begins to take in flour today, and will sail with 400 bbls by the 26th. My Baggage will go on tomorrow and will be followed by myself immediately after." When Gist arrived at Yorktown, Washington placed him in command of the Maryland Brigade and renamed it Gist's Brigade.⁶⁶

For several days and nights the Maryland troops, rotating duties with other units, worked on the siege trenches that crawled inexorably, under constant cannon and musket fire, toward the enemy's fortifications. By October 9 sufficient



Baltimore, ca. 1796, looking southwest. French troops camped on the hillside east of Fells Point (far left) in 1781. (Maryland Historical Society.)

gun emplacements had been constructed for Washington to give the order to open fire on the British positions. Under a crisscross canopy of flying shells and bullets, the trenches crept across the battlefield and closed on British strong points. American and French infantry stormed out of the trenches and one by one captured enemy redoubts. As more batteries were completed, their cannon joined the bombardment, pounding the British fortifications night and day. The constant, concentrated bombardment destroyed British batteries and reduced the bastion to rubble. Finally, on the morning of October 17, Cornwallis asked for a cease-fire. Two days later, he surrendered his army.⁶⁷

The surrender at Yorktown was a stunning defeat that all but ended the Revolutionary War and assured American independence. In one lightning campaign, Washington had captured almost 25 percent of the British occupation force in America. His only major offensive of the war had been an unlikely operation, born out of desperation at a moment when American strength was nearly exhausted. It had required a massive investment of troops and naval power by France. And it had required a massive logistics operation centered in Maryland.

Something more than geographic coincidence had, in General Henry Knox's

words, “induced a full dependence . . . on Maryland.” A frustrated Knox had confided to Governor Lee the sorry state of the Continental Army’s supply system. “The extreme imbecility of any continental arrangements will, I hope, be a sufficient apology for troubling your excellency.” Maryland had an efficient logistics system, and the state’s leaders fully appreciated Washington’s desperate situation: “An Army cannot be kept together without Supplies; if these fail us, our Operations must Cease.”⁶⁸

By extraordinary measures, Maryland rose to the challenge. Faced with the enormous needs of the allied forces, its leaders mounted an intensive internal campaign to obtain supplies of every kind and move them to the battlefield. Maryland, which a month earlier had braced for a devastating invasion, joined Washington’s attack against Cornwallis. Governor Thomas Sim Lee and the State Council mobilized Maryland’s network of commissary officers, propelling local officials and citizens into energetic action and bay watermen into a heroic convoy operation.

Maryland had more than fulfilled Washington’s hopes, had vigorously joined in his gamble, had become the campaign’s lifeline. In May, Washington had lamented that lack of support from the states precluded offensive operations. Five months later, Maryland’s vessels and de Grasse’s supply ships were busy hauling plentiful supplies from Maryland ports. Around Yorktown the allied forces held the British garrison in a closing ring.

On October 12 a grateful Washington paid tribute to Maryland for its generous support. With his siege trenches within three hundred yards of Cornwallis’s breastworks and his victory certain, Washington wrote to Governor Lee words of praise that are rare among his wartime communications. “Give me leave to return you my sincerest thanks for your exertions on the present occasion. The supplies granted by the State are so liberal, that they remove every apprehension of Want.”⁶⁹

NOTES

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2. For concise yet thorough descriptions of the events leading up to Washington’s decision to attack Cornwallis, see Barbara W. Tuchman, *The First Salute* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 222–44; Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 442–48; Burke Davis, *The Campaign That Won America*, 17–32.
3. Scott S. Sheads, *Fort McHenry: A History* (Baltimore: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1995), 2; *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, September 11, 1781.

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7. Mordecai Gist to George Washington, September 4, 1781, *The George Washington Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1964), Microfilm, Series 4, 4.
8. *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, September 11, 1781.
9. British raids in 1781 are reported in *Archives of Maryland*, vol. 47. For example, see Daniel Jennifer, Port Tobacco, to Governor Lee, April 8, 1781, 172; Joseph Wilkinson, Lower Marlboro, to Governor Lee, April 10, 1781, 178; J. Rogers, Thos. Contee, Joseph Sim, Upper Marlboro, to the Council, April 11, 1781, 180; W. Bordley, Chester Town, Kent County, to Matthew Tilghman, President of the Eastern Shore Council, April 12, 1781, 181.
10. State Council to Governor Thomas Jefferson (Virginia), March 15, 1781, in *Archives of Maryland*, 45:352.
11. Robert F. Hooe to Lee, May 31, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:261; Lafayette to Lee, July 30, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:374.
12. Lord George Germaine to Sir Henry Clinton, March 7, 1781, enclosed in Thomas McKean to George Washington, July 17, 1781, in Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789*, 17 vols. to date (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1990), 17:414. See also Richard Potts to Thomas Sim Lee, July 17, 1781, *ibid.*, 17:417; and Daniel Carroll to Thomas Sim Lee, July 17, 1781, *ibid.*, 17:410. *Pennsylvania Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, July 25, 1781.
13. Lafayette and McHenry to Lee, August 1, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:382–83; Scharf, *History of Maryland*, 2:452–53.
14. Council to Andrew Buchanan (Baltimore County), August 4, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 45:543; Circular to Lieutenants of Washington, Montgomery, Prince George's, Frederick, and Charles Counties, August 4, 1781, *ibid.*, 544; Council Circular to Collector of Horses for the Western Shore, August 4, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:542; *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, August 14, 1781.
15. *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, August 7, 1781.
16. Council to Andrew Buchanan, August 10, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 45:554; Lafayette to Governor Lee, and Lafayette to General Gist, August 6, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:393; and McHenry to Lee, *ibid.*, 47:394.
17. *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, September 11, 1781.
18. Clarence Gould, *Money and Transportation in Maryland 1720–1765* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1915), 125–36.
19. Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 438–39; Tuchman, *First Salute*, 212–13.
20. Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence* (New York: The Macmillan

- Company, 1971), 379; Bruce Lancaster, *The American Revolution* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987), 311; Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, 5:178; Tuchman, *First Salute*, 223.
21. Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, 5:309; Tuchman, *First Salute*, 242–43; Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 448.
22. Davis, *The Campaign That Won America*, 10, 23; Tuchman, *First Salute*, 246; Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 449; Henry Johnson, *The Yorktown Campaign and the Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781* (1881; repr., Washington, D.C.: Eastern Acorn Press, 1990), 87–88.
23. Tuchman, *First Salute*, 245, refers to the operation as “miraculous.” Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 448, compares it to “Napoleon’s famous march from the English Channel to Bavaria in the Ulm campaign of 1805.”
24. Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, 5:314, note 100; Davis, *The Campaign That Won America*, 48–51.
25. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 22:23. See also John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Diaries of George Washington*, 4 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925), 2:356.
26. Washington to Lafayette, September 2, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:77.
27. Gist to Washington, September 4, 1781, *The George Washington Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1964), Microfilm, Series 4, 4; Mordecai Gist Papers, Microfilm Edition, MS. 390, MdHS. The exact time that the express rider handed Washington the letter was noted the next day by Colonel David Humphreys, Washington’s aide-de-camp, in a letter to Gist. “His Excellency the Commander in Chief had the pleasure to receive your favor announcing the arrival of the Count De Grasse, at 1/2 past two o’clock PM near Chester.” See note 28, below. At 3 p.m., Washington sent Gist’s letter to the president of the Continental Congress. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:87.
28. Colonel David Humphreys to Gist, September 6, 1781, *The George Washington Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1964), Microfilm, Series 3B, 2; Mordecai Gist Papers, Microfilm Edition, MS. 390, MdHS.
29. Gist to Washington, September 6, 1781, Mordecai Gist Papers, Microfilm Edition, MS. 390, MdHS.
30. Council to Washington, August 30, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 45:588.
31. Washington to de Grasse, September 6, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:93.
32. Joseph Plumb Martin, *Private Yankee Doodle* (1962; repr., Washington, D.C.: Eastern Acorn Press, 1997), 224; James Thacher, *Military Journal during the American Revolutionary War, 1775-1783* (1862; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), quoted in Earnest McNeill Eller, ed., *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution* (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1981), 510.
33. Washington to Lafayette, September 7, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:97.
34. *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, September 11, 1781; Scharf, *History of Maryland*, 2:457–59.
35. Washington to the citizens and inhabitants of the Town of Baltimore, September 9, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:107; *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, September 18, 1781.
36. Washington to Lee, September 11, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:112; *Archives of Maryland*, 47:487.
37. Council to Calhoun, September 13, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 45:613.

38. Lee to Calhoun, September 15, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:613.
39. *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, September 11, 1781; Howard C. Rice Jr., and Anne S. K. Brown, ed., *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972) 1:54, 2:83, 153, maps 80–81.
40. Washington to Governor Lee, September 15, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:115.
41. Rice and Brown, *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army*, 1:200; 2:153–54, maps 80–81, 129–30.
42. Washington to Lee, August 27, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:57; Robert Morris to Lee, August 28, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:453; Council to Calhoun, August 30, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:589.
43. Council to the Commissaries of the several Counties, August 30, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 45: 590.
44. Council to the Commissaries of the several Counties, September 5, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:603.
45. Council to Keepports, September 6, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:606.
46. John E. Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia, 1775–1783* (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988), 296–300; Washington to the President of Congress, September 15, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:117; Washington to the Virginia Board of War, September 16, 1781, in *ibid.*, 23:121.
47. Thomas Nelson Jr. to Lee, September 2, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:473. Nelson's request was repeated on September 12, *ibid.*, 47:492.
48. Council to Calhoun, September 7, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:609.
49. Gist to Lee, September 9, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:482; Council to Gist, September 10, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:611.
50. Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 458; Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, 5:352; Tuchman, *First Salute*, 280.
51. Knox to Lee, September 11, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:488.
52. Washington to Lee, September 15, 1781, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:115.
53. Council to Washington, September 19, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 45:618.
54. Ephraim Howard to Lee, September 24, and October 1 and 8, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:502, 512, 517; Council to Washington, October 3 and 9, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:632, 637.
55. Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence*, 382; Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 455; Lancaster, *The American Revolution*, 329.
56. Council to David Poe, September 22, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 45:622.
57. Calhoun to the Gov. & Council, September 26, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:504.
58. Council to Governor Nelson of Virginia, September 27, 1781, *ibid.*, 45:628; George Webb, Council Chambers, Virginia, to Lee (enclosure from Virginia quartermaster), October 11, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:520–521.
59. Hollingsworth to Lee, September 15, 25, and 28, and October 11 and 23, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:494, 503, 509, 519, 531.
60. James Thacher, *Military Journal*, quoted in Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 510; *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, September 18, 1781.
61. Washington to the President of Congress, September 23, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:128.
62. Washington to de Grasse, September 15, October 1, 1781, *ibid.*, 23:116–17, 163–65.
63. Washington to the President of Congress, October 6, 1781, *ibid.*, 23:188.

64. Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 458; Freeman, *George Washington; A Biography*, 5:359; Fitzpatrick, *The Diaries of George Washington*, 2:423, 424.
65. *Maryland Gazette*, September 13, 1781; Fitzpatrick, *The Diaries of George Washington*, 2:421; General Orders (Order of Battle), September 27, 1781, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:146–47.
66. Gist to Washington, September 24, 1781, *The George Washington Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1964), Microfilm, Series 4, 2; General Orders, October 9, 1781, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:204; Johnson, *The Yorktown Campaign and the Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781*, 109, 115.
67. Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 458–64; Tuchman, *First Salute*, 280–88.
68. Knox to Lee, September 11, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:488. Washington to Lee, September 15, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 23:115.
69. Washington to Lee, October 12, 1781, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 209; *Archives of Maryland*, 47:521; Scharf, *History of Maryland*, 2:462.

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AN ENQUIRY
INTO THE CAUSES OF THE
Present Commercial Embarrassments
IN THE UNITED STATES.

WITH
A PLAN OF REFORM OF
THE CIRCULATING MEDIUM.
IN TWO LETTERS,

Addressed to the Secretary of the Treasury.

BY AN ANTI-BULLIONIST.

LETTER I.

SIR,

THE wealth and commercial resources of the United States are evidently wasting away. Our industry and enterprise are paralyzed. The causes of such calamity must call forth the attention and concern of every one. All classes of the community, especially the productive ones, participate in this adverse state of things. Is our decline the necessary consequence of general peace, and therefore incurable? Is it justly chargeable on our national policy, and therefore susceptible of correction? Are we, from the experience of a few past years, to look forward to the future with hopeless dismay? From the past gradual accumulation of mercantile embarrassments, must we continue to look for its augmentation and perpetuity, or may we expect a change?

In investigating this subject, we have taken the freedom to address our observations to the Head of the Treasury,—satisfied that, as a distinguished citizen, you cannot but feel the deepest concern for the gloomy state of our commercial and pecuniary affairs, and that, in your official station, a lively interest is necessarily excited.

As the Panic of 1819 devastated fortunes and ruined thousands of small businessmen, Americans struggled to find answers for the disaster, blaming both those who made financial policy and those who had failed. (Maryland Historical Society.)

“To be harrassed by my Creditors is worse than Death”: Cultural Implications of the Panic of 1819

SARAH KIDD

In the summer of 1820 North Carolina Superior Court Judge Archibald Murphey wrote a series of worried letters to friend and legal colleague Thomas Ruffin. Several years of land speculation had caught up with him. Almost frantic, Murphey was trying to sell property or borrow money to pay escalating debts. Yet despite his dismal financial status, Murphey worried more that his debts were public knowledge, a development more embarrassing than the debts themselves. “Now the Cup of my Humiliation is full to the Brim,” he wrote. “After a Life of incessant Toil, and as I hoped, of honourable exertion, to be degraded in the World and pointed at even by the Common Vulgar, is a Condition, to say the least of it, not to be envied.” Murphey planned to work hard, pay his debts, “avoid Society as much as I can,” and move to another state “to inspire a Confidence which somehow I have failed to inspire here.”¹

Unfortunately, Murphey’s situation did not improve. He managed to borrow enough money from Ruffin to delay lawsuits, but the bulk of his accounts remained unpaid. With his insolvency a subject for local gossip, Murphey’s creditors stepped up their actions and repeatedly pushed him for complete payment. After contemplating his debts, Murphey concluded “To be harrassed by my Creditors is worse than Death to me. . . . I must get out of the way of these Men, if I can.” Although he hoped to earn more on his legal circuit, Murphey asked Ruffin for yet another loan. “I cordially hate the Approach of a Man I owe,” he wrote. “For God’s Sake, enable me, if you can, to dispense with the Presence of Creditors.”²

Archibald Murphey and the rest of the country were trapped in the worst depression to date, the Panic of 1819. Despite receiving relatively little attention from historians, the Panic had a significant impact on the American landscape in a variety of ways.³ It forced leading Americans to rethink state and national government regulations on banking, commerce, and insolvency relief. It brought attention to the new subject of “political economy” and sparked reevaluations of

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credit, spending, and investing. In the longer view, the Panic influenced the origins of the second political system and energized religious and moral reform organizations.⁴ The Panic also had more subtle implications for American culture.⁵

This essay seeks to examine the Panic's cultural impact on the success ethic in the early American republic and, in particular, on the stigma of failure. A bitter irony for those who found themselves in dire straits lay in the fact that their financial misfortunes occurred at a time when society lauded financial success and the efforts of the self-made man. Historians have addressed the prominence⁶ and contradictions⁷ of the success ethic in the early nineteenth century, but little work has been done on the stigma of failure for those who once fit the success mold but proved unable to maintain their position.⁸ The Panic of 1819 provides an opportunity to analyze failure, because Archibald Murphey was just one among thousands struggling to recover from severe financial losses.⁹ Coming so soon after the War of 1812, the Panic raised further doubts about the greatness of the American republic and for its victims challenged popular notions that success was relatively easy to attain. An analysis of the stigma of failure within this depression reveals the underside of the self-made man ideal, an underside that lent a dark hue to America's self-portrait as a land of unlimited prosperity.

Failure in the early nineteenth century was more than simply the opposite of success. In basic economic terms, "to fail" came to mean losing money and material possessions, but the stigma of failure went well beyond strict numbers and the loss of tangible wealth. The individuals in this study were among the middling groups of Americans who attempted to reap the profits following the War of 1812.¹⁰ Rather than fulfilling dreams of independence, fortune, and glory, they found themselves struggling to maintain their lifestyles in the wake of this economic bust. To "fail" was to demonstrate an absence of the character traits necessary for success: honesty, perseverance, industry, and temperance. For those who saw themselves as having these qualities, falling down the social ladder was an immensely troubling problem previously seen as applicable only to dishonest scoundrels and the "lower sort" of people.¹¹

The trauma of failure occurred amidst a complex success ethic that combined moral character, profit incentive, and individual will. In the decades following the Revolution, the protestant ethic of work as a heavenly endeavor gradually gave way to a capitalist ethic emphasizing profit as the intended result of labor.¹² The rise of a market-oriented economy and culture brought what seemed easy opportunities for anyone in America to achieve his own financial goals. As a world view embracing both a liberal ideology of self-interest and the ambitious, rational pursuit of profit, this "market revolution" not only justified the pursuit of wealth but supposedly made it possible.¹³ While the popular rags-to-riches hero found in Horatio Alger novels was several decades away, a similar

ethos commending the honest, diligent, successful entrepreneur appeared in the early republic. Pamphlets, newspaper editorials, and even children's literature praised those who rose to prominence through hard work, individual determination, and self-control. Moral stories inevitably taught that good values and honest conduct brought financial rewards while immorality, cruelty, or greed resulted in grim poverty and community rejection. Along with monetary compensation, the self-made man gained the respect and admiration of friends, neighbors, and peers.¹⁴

Defining "success" in the early nineteenth century is a slippery endeavor since it had a relative quality depending on the person, family, or region. It could mean great riches, basic financial security, debt-free ownership of property, or the ability to make improvements on existing possessions. Despite its sometimes vague nature, success was generally equated with financial independence and the capacity to make decisions without considering a creditor or investor's influence. As Boston businessman Walter Channing explained to his younger brother Henry, "Employ with independence however moderate is the chief engagement of happiness here."¹⁵ Whatever its definition, a common thread was the belief that honesty, perseverance, industry, and temperance were the ways to wealth. The market could provide the means, but ultimately, character was the method.

Contemporaries stressed the connection between morality and profit. In preparing his son for college, Louisville businessman John Brown sent copies of Benjamin Franklin's "Chart of Moral Perfection" to his son Orlando in order "to furnish you with every means calculated to promote your success and happiness."¹⁶ Maryland physician Washington Duvall argued that the path to success was to pursue a "course with resolution and vigor . . . escape from the silken chains of the syren idleness and break away from all the entanglements which luxury and guilty pleasure throw around." The reward, Duvall concluded, was "long wealth and prosperity." Bostonian Samuel Gardner advised his college-bound son to devote six hours a day to his studies and to avoid idleness, "trifling pursuits," "mechanical employments," "cards and dice," smoking, drinking, and "the society of the vicious, the idle, and the vulgar." Such behavior "[will] insure you success" and "lead to wealth, distinction, and [most importantly] . . . self-satisfaction."¹⁷

In addition to the need for character, people also understood the significance of will and determination. The pursuit of self-interest placed a great deal of pressure on one's ability to succeed. Virginian John Campbell urged his younger brother James not to squander his youth: "Waste the next five years and you can be nothing. Employ them as you ought and you may be anything. The field of wealth and fame is fairly before you." John offered similar advice to his older brother David: "The road to immortality is now before you and your destiny is in your own hands."¹⁸

A final component to analyzing failure stems from what one historian has

LOOKING-GLASS.

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WILLIAM AND THOMAS; OR THE CONTRAST BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND INDOLENCE.

In a village at a small distance from the metropolis, lived a wealthy husbandman, who had two sons, William and Thomas, of whom the former was exactly a year older than the latter.

On the day that the second son was born the husbandman set in his orchard, two young apple-trees of an equal size, on which he bestowed the same care in cultivating, and they throve so much alike, that it was a difficult matter to say which claimed the preference.

As soon as the children were capable of using garden implements, their father took them, on a fine day, early in the spring, to see the two plants he had reared for them, and called after their names. William and Thomas having much admired the beauty of these trees, now filled with blossoms, their father told them, that he made them a present of them in good condition, and that they would continue to thrive or decay, in proportion to the labour or neglect they received.

termed the "commodification of character."¹⁹ While character was not a tangible commodity to be bought and sold in the market, early nineteenth-century Americans did tend to measure character in terms of financial success. Robert Owen wrote to his cousin John Campbell about a female relative's choice for a husband. Owen praised the young man as having "a good capacity-industry-sobriety-address in business. . . . He is worth good property and makes money very fast." In another scenario, a Virginian's visit to Philadelphia made the connection between wealth and social position. While strolling the city's streets, the visitor asked about a passing uniformed soldier. "He is the gallant—who distinguished himself during the late war," came the reply. "He is a fine fellow, but I do not know how it happens he does not move here in the first circles." When the visitor asked about another gentleman, the second man's description was "One of our wealthiest merchants who came to this country an apprentice boy . . . and has amassed a large fortune—he has a fine carriage—drinks good wine and keeps the best company."²⁰

The accepted notion of reputable character and individual determination as prerequisites for financial gain and the habit of measuring character in monetary terms are critical elements in understanding failure. Enterprising Americans embraced the success ethic and scorned those who could not achieve it. As it happened, the Panic of 1819 turned many success stories into case studies of failure and created new categories for those judged to be outside the lines of financial stability.

Obviously there is never a good time for an economic depression, but the Panic's timing could not have been worse. Financial failure was not a new condition, but in the past those with troubles could usually point to certain events in explaining their decline: war, for example, a controversial government policy, or natural disaster. Yet the Panic occurred after several years of economic growth and a renewed belief in America's divinely ordained status. General prosperity and a heightened sense of civil religion strengthened the belief that proper character would insure financial well-being. Those who failed during the Panic did so at a time when it appeared that hard work and moral behavior would insure financial security within an expanding economic arena.

From 1815 to 1819 America's economy entered what one historian has called a "transitional" period and experienced an apparent economic boom. With the end of the War of 1812 and the conclusion of several decades of European wars, domestic manufacturing, which had seen a dramatic rise during the war, had to compete with a flood of European imports and a heavy demand for English

Opposite: As the Panic descended on American life, more literature emphasized the concept that good values and honest conduct brought financial reward, while greed resulted in failure. (From Arnold Berquin, The Looking-Glass for the Mind or the Juvenile Friend [Philadelphia, 1819; repr. Baltimore, 1852].)



Archibald DeBow Murphey as a young man. Murphey was an enthusiastic proponent of internal improvements in North Carolina. (From The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey [Raleigh, N.C., 1914].)

goods. Foreign demand for American products dropped. Still, prices for domestic goods remained high in most areas, and American agricultural exports rose to record levels. Regarding the nation's commercial health, William Crawford commented to Albert Gallatin, "In many respects the nation was never more prosperous. Domestic articles of almost every description bring the highest prices, and many of the articles of foreign growth or manufacture are sold at first cost."²¹ The growth of internal markets and the "transportation revolution" caused many American merchants to transfer foreign investments into new internal improvement projects designed to link economic centers. The huge expanse of cheap public land in the West and South sparked these regional economies as thousands of people moved away from more settled eastern areas. The southern economy particularly benefited from New England's need for cotton, and a dramatic rise in cotton prices helped fuel the desire for larger tracts of workable land. With a growing population and more demand for goods and services usually found along the Eastern Seaboard, commercial hubs in New Orleans and Cincinnati emerged on the southern and western frontiers.²²

A demand for more banking services accompanied geographical and economic expansion—in particular, easy credit for those investing in land, manufacturing, and transportation. The number of banks had steadily increased since the early 1810s from eighty-eight in 1811 to 392 in 1818. Kentucky alone chartered forty new banks in its 1817–18 legislative session. Deciphering the policies and regulations of numerous independent state and local banks is a murky chore

"The Schedule of Real and Personal Property of the United States." Niles' Weekly Register, December 2, 1815. (Maryland Historical Society.)

NILES' WEEKLY REGISTER	
Schedule of the real and personal property of the United States.	
Lands, lots and buildings, in the U. S. and their territories, subject to tax	2,740,000,000
Lands and buildings not subject to tax	30,000,000
Public lands—400,000,000 acres, many millions of which are among the most valuable lands in the world, and, if carefully managed, will produce five times the sum now estimated	800,000,000
Slaves—1,200,000, at \$200	240,000,000
Shipping, public and private	50,000,000
Banking and insurance companies, and other monied institutions for turnpike roads, bridges, canals, &c.	150,000,000
Manufactories of all sorts—capital invested, and stock of goods and materials on hand	200,000,000
Articles in the hands of agriculturalists, merchants and mechanics—household furniture, farming utensils, mechanical tools and implements, wearing apparel and money, &c. at \$350 for each family, say 1,200,000	420,000,000
Stock—horses 2,000,000; horned cattle 6,000,000; sheep 8,000,000; swine 6,000,000; and all other domestic animals	220,000,000
	4,850,000,000
Mr. Blodgett's valuation for 1805, was	2,505,500,000
dollars. <i>Economica</i> p. 96.	

as charter requirements varied from bank to bank and state to state. But the demand for credit created a nationwide trend of relaxed lending practices. While the Bank of the United States supposedly offered some kind of structuring process for the nation's finances, its liberal lending policies filtered down to other banks. With the BUS expanding credit, state and local banks did so as well, which resulted in a tremendous surge in the amount of circulating paper money. Subsequently, speculation increased in numerous avenues like public land, internal improvements, factories, and investment banking.²³

Yet the Panic's rotten timing is due to more than just an economic surge following the War of 1812. If the end of the war marked the rebirth of the American republic along liberal lines, it also marked a reawakening of faith in the American character and the country's exalted position as a city upon a hill.²⁴ In comparing America before and after the war, Henry Clay measured the nation's progress. "Let any man look at the degraded condition of this country before the war. The scorn of the universe, the contempt of ourselves; and tell me if we have gained nothing by the war? What is our present situation?" he asked. "Respectability and character abroad — security and confidence at home . . . our character and constitution are placed on a solid basis never to be shaken . . . and in spite of cavils and sneers and attempts to put it down, it will finally conduct this nation to that height to which God and nature have destined it." Fellow Warhawk John C. Calhoun shared Clay's sentiments and pointed to the energy and national pride the war had created. "We have exhibited, during this war, a power and an

energy of character” and American rights “are secured and settled by the vigor and energy of the American people.” Calhoun ultimately concluded that “In the late war, this nation has acquired a character which will secure respect.”²⁵

Taken one step further, praise for the reenergized American character usually translated into renewed prosperity and opportunity. Even for those who never fully recovered from wartime problems, the postwar boom appeared to give everyone a chance to acquire a piece of the spreading wealth. Travel accounts documented prosperity’s return to established towns, the rise of economic activity across the country, and waves of people emigrating to the west with dreams of finding personal and financial happiness.²⁶ The country’s escalating wealth prompted a general sense that a vast array of opportunities existed for anyone willing to work. Hezekiah Niles exemplified the popular position that American economic growth was inevitable due to the “simple facts” of individuals working to get ahead. He elaborated that the “road to wealth is open to all classes” and “the sober laboring man, with a prudent and industrious family . . . can live as *full* as the man of ten thousand a year.” Surrounded by an abundance of natural resources, an American’s biggest advantage was “he is always cherished and sustained with the *hope* of bettering his condition” and “always looks to the improvement of his condition and calculates on future wealth.” Amidst “the almost *universal ambition to get forward*,” Niles decided that there were very few who did not “*calculate* on a day of independence and ease; and tens of thousands once of this class, are now among the most substantial people we have.”²⁷

While celebratory rhetoric flooded correspondence and newspapers, there were still those who had reservations about ambition and wealth even while commemorating America’s road to riches. After an extended tour of the country from New England to New Orleans, Estwick Evans concluded “the love of money . . . is conspicuous” and “this spirit is too prevalent throughout the United States.” “The love of wealth in this country is making rapid inroads upon the love of principle,” he remarked, “and nothing can retard its progress but the exclusive patronage of virtue and talents.” While rejoicing at the war’s end, Able Flint delivered a sermon asking citizens to thank God for His blessings in securing America’s triumph. He also issued a stern warning against secular greed: “Be not elevated by the arrogance of returning prosperity; and do not, by ingratitude, provoke the Lord to renew his chastisements. Maintain a conduct,” he went on, “consistent with your obligations, as a highly favoured people; —maintain a conduct consistent with your distinguished privileges as Christians.”²⁸

Perhaps the postwar ambiguity regarding rising wealth and upright character is best illustrated in a series of letters from Philadelphian Robert Walsh to Lexington attorney Robert Wickliffe. “The sea-bord is full of life and hope owing to the briskness of foreign trade,” Walsh reported. “The war seems almost to be forgotten and all sorts of politics are in some degree merged in the eagerness

of commercial speculation. With trade, everything else flourishes." Walsh paid particular mention to the West, which he called "the chosen land, the Canaan of the Union."²⁹ While he celebrated the United States as the "theatre of security and abundance and destined to become . . . the seat of empire and the arts," Walsh admitted his reservations regarding "the increase of luxury." Still undetermined about its "mischievousness," he commented that "its spread and height are astonishing."

Were you but to see the articles of furniture, clothing and exotic delicacies with which the shops of our great cities are now loaded and the avidity with which they are purchased at enormous prices by persons of every profession and class, you would tremble for the national morals. The war appears to have whetted the public appetite for all forms of luxury to the utmost pitch of voracity and epicurium.³⁰

The celebration of American energy, character, ambition, and prosperity suffered a serious setback when the Panic arrived. If there were nagging questions about prosperity and moral decline before the Panic, these questions came to the fore shortly after the depression settled in. This debate is especially important for the Panic's cultural implications and the traumatic experiences of failing professionals. If the war was a sign of divine blessing, and the subsequent prosperity provided upstanding citizens with the opportunity to succeed, then why had the Panic happened at all? Few people actually understood the basic financial mechanics behind the depression. Attention focused instead on individual character flaws as a more likely cause.

Lasting roughly from 1818 to 1823, the Panic seemed to arise from causes unknown and came as a shock to a nation supposedly in the midst of an economic boom. It stemmed from a number of intertwined factors relating to the postwar economic readjustment and liberal credit. Much of the economic boom was artificial wealth connected to the rising prices in domestic markets and foreign exports and the speculation in land, trade, and manufacturing. This speculation led to heavy borrowing, which in turn created a chain of unstable and uncontrolled credit from various banks with little specie basis. Dealing with its own shaky business practices, the Bank of the United States, and the United States Treasury, had the additional problem of making a \$3,000,000 payment in specie to the debt from the Louisiana Purchase. When foreign markets began to stagger, British banks terminated specie payments to the United States. Subsequently the BUS called in loans from private borrowers and other banks. These smaller banks in turn issued immediate payment notices to their borrowers. Prices dropped, paper money plummeted in value, and those caught up in seemingly secure business deals tried to collect money from debtors to pay their creditors.³¹

When Americans struggled to come to grips with the causes of “hard times,” bank directors, reckless speculators, and base rascals were early targets. For these individuals, failure was self-inflicted and a just punishment. In his predictions that the “bubble of speculation” in Alabama would burst, Tennessee lawyer James Campbell admitted, “I cannot but say that I am ever gratified to see the sufferings of some individuals of that place in consequence of their voracious insatiable thirst for speculation.” When he heard about two men who failed under the specter of a bank scandal, John Badollet of Vincennes, Indiana, described them as “equally cunning, hypocritical and . . . wallowing without disgust in the slough of infamy to make a dollar . . . it is however comfortable to learn that one is sunk never to rise again and the other is sinking.”³²

Yet individual accountability began to include other figures besides the speculator and swindler. The Panic exposed a diverse network of debtors ranging from simple farmers to high profile businessmen that had developed after years of utilizing an apparently safe credit system. A flurry of editorials criticized the trend of people borrowing money rather than saving until they had enough cash for various endeavors. Vast numbers of people were now grouped together as being responsible for their own financial troubles. The fable of “The Fox and the Goat,” a story reprinted in the *Richmond Enquirer*, exemplified the widening scope of personal responsibility. As the story went, a fox jumped into a well to get a drink and found he could not get out. He asked a passing goat to climb in and help him out. The goat obliged, jumped into the well, and reared its front hooves up onto the side of the well’s walls. The fox crawled onto the goat, scaled its back until perched on the goat’s horns, and then jumped out. Now finding himself trapped in the well, the goat asked the fox how he would get out. The fox replied: “If you had had only as much brain as beard, you would never have jumped into a well without thinking how you were to get out.” The moral was: “Never do you go into a Bank without seriously thinking how you are to get out of it.”³³

With responsibility for one’s financial ruin taking on broader implications, initial reactions to the Panic focused on disordered commercial relationships. Trust became a valuable commodity, as early optimistic predictions of economic recovery spiraled downward into pessimism and visions of financial doom. After learning of two high profile bank scandals in Virginia, merchant John Patterson thought there was “roguery everywhere, confidence among men is entirely lost and integrity an empty friend.” When the first wave of bankruptcies hit Boston, agent Gideon Snow kept a record of almost daily failings and remarked, “Every body appears alarmed and feels very anxious—all fear to trust his neighbor and where it will end is not known.”³⁴

Amidst increasing scrutiny and suspicion, reputable individuals suddenly came under charges of fraudulent conduct and blame for their inability to satisfy financial commitments. Those facing debts and impending bankruptcy found

themselves in the uncomfortable and confusing position of being on the other side of success. Supposedly the market and the revered image of a self-made man rewarded risk-taking, because if the risks worked one was esteemed as the ideal citizen. But if the risks fell through, the only achievement was a reputation as a rascal, a scoundrel, and a confidence man.³⁵ The distinction between dishonest speculator and ordinary market participant became blurred, and failure became synonymous with moral deficiency and confidence-man behavior.

Descriptions of debtors provide biting commentary on how the Panic accentuated the moral component of failure. Philadelphia merchant John Allen referred to a Kentucky family who had defaulted on loans as "a very bad breed." In his unsuccessful attempts to collect a fifty-dollar debt, E. J. Osborn of Charlotte, North Carolina, complained: "I am at a loss to guess from what code the Dr. derives his notions of honor . . . a little plain old-fashioned honesty will answer all my present purposes." Philadelphian Cornelious Comegys saved his strongest words for his debtors and remarked after being "reduced almost to beggary by men void of Common honesty," he thought "better of a highway robber who steals to keep from starving."³⁶

Older traditional republican fears of monied corruption also lent a particular urgency to criticism of failures. The depression seemed to validate long-standing fears of personal greed and the quest for luxury.³⁷ *Niles' Weekly Register* offered a blistering denunciation of reckless individualism: "People were wild—they acted as if a day of reckoning never would come . . . despising industry and economy and indulging themselves in all sorts of extravagance [by] thousands striving to get to the top of the wheel." A Kentucky judge pointed to the "corruption" and "degeneracy of moral sentiment" as severe problems, but "selfishness appears to be the main spring of the actions of man and that the public good is swallowed up in individual interest."³⁸

Scorn for unpaid debts and rabid self-interest created a tenuous environment for those in need of financial help. With the Panic came an intense desire to disassociate one's self from the con-man image. Debtors' insistence that they retained good character served a dual purpose: to buy time to try to pay debts and to defend their reputations against damaging gossip. As a result, when pressed debtors turned to family and friends for short-term loans or asked for more time to pay existing ones, they knew they had to request relief delicately to offset charges that their misfortune had resulted from improper behavior. Joseph Bush, a young artist in Philadelphia, begged his creditor Henry Clay for more time to pay his debts. "I am ashamed to ask you again," Bush explained and requested Clay not to view his behavior as "set down in malice." Philadelphian John Babrach asked Mathew Carey for a small loan and admitted "I stand guilty of ten thousand sins . . . however the crime of selfishness will never be fairly laid to my charge."³⁹

Aware of the criticism surrounding failure and its attached moral stigma, those struggling against decline were understandably mortified. After moving to Alabama with grand dreams to make a fortune in land sales, William Harris had to sell his land for less than half of what he originally paid for it and faced a \$15,000 debt. He wrote his brother Fred: "The embarrassment of mind I have suffered for some time past causes reflections which almost unmans me, those feelings I hope you never may experience."⁴⁰ R. J. Stewart of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, facing an immediate payment of \$2,000 after co-signing a note for an insolvent friend, begged Huntington Bank president William Orbison for more time. After unsuccessful attempts to collect \$9,000 from his own debtors, Stewart admitted that he was "very much ashamed" and prayed he would never have to ask for money again because "to ask any indulgence is awkward. . . . I have never been accustomed to it."⁴¹

For those who lost everything, being forced into debtors' prison was the ultimate insult. Prisons, almshouses, and work camps were considered dens of vice filled with dangerous social outcasts, and to be placed in one was to face the heretofore unthinkable. Mathew Carey received an urgent plea from J. M. Connor, a recent addition to debtors' prison who needed thirty-five dollars to buy his way out. "God knows," Connor groveled, "that to a sensitive and honorable man in a place like this, it is productive of the most agonizing mortification." Connor assured Carey that he still retained his "honor and integrity." *The Remembrancer*, a short-lived New York magazine devoted to abolishing debtors' prison, offered some enlightening words on the inmates' embarrassment. "That the meritorious, intelligent and enterprising citizen suffers the mortification of seeing his name enrolled upon the goalers' register with the black-hearted destroyer of private virtue and public peace" was an "oppression and injustice of the present system."⁴²

Being placed in the same company as a "black-hearted destroyer of private virtue" was the most agonizing issue for failing Americans. Poverty and destitution were appropriate only for lazy drunkards who lacked the work ethic necessary to bring themselves out of debt.⁴³ With the Panic though, the dark and largely unknown side of a capitalist downturn thrust many citizens into insolvency, a state that decent hard-working people never expected to enter. The failure of individuals who embodied good character and habits came as an especial shock to onlookers and peers. When his business in North Carolina began to fail, Larkin Newby sought help from James Williams Walker, a childhood friend and prominent figure in Alabama. Walker's reply reflected his surprise and worry that such a fate had overcome one with such "standing and reputation as a merchant" as Newby.

Judge then what pain and surprise this carnal and unexpected turn of fortune has given me . . . but when I look at the failure of such a man

as you—so prudent, so industrious and so enterprising:—and above all when I force myself to look at the exacting pressure, which thrusts its medusa front into all faces and fastens its tentacles on all classes of the community—I tremble for myself and my friends, whose heads are still above water some are already sunk and gone. Others are still tottering—and a breath overwhelms them.⁴⁴

Americans reacted differently to their new status as failures. Given public disdain, their initial and probably instinctive course often was to remain silent and hope for a quick recovery. John White explained that although he had done well financially at his Charleston dry goods business, his profits were "inadequate to my wishes; unfortunately for me I began to speculate . . . I was not deterred . . . [but] ill-success was the fate of my exertions." White never told anyone of his insolvency until "from the protraction of the period I blushed to assume the pen." White's situation was particularly painful because along with his own money he had also lost his brother's savings. White's brother subsequently moved from Charleston to Savannah to avoid "the sickly season" but contracted yellow fever and died anyway. White moved to Baltimore and went to great lengths to keep his bankruptcy and his brother's death from his aging parents. He concocted a story saying that he was doing well, but his brother had become ill, moved to France, entered a convent, and consequently would be unable to write for some time. Ultimately, White concluded, "God knows I strove hard for success, but I could not command it."⁴⁵

Boston lawyer David Stoddard Greenough Jr. followed a similar course when he found himself in trouble. Greenough's failure rocked the financial community because he was a member of a very wealthy and respected family and the son of powerful attorney David Stoddard Greenough Sr. After trying to hide his financial embarrassments, he sought the advice of a friend, Benjamin Guild, who replied, "your situation is not in the least suspected and if . . . it can never be known, you will be able by your industry and your character to acquire a sufficient support for yourself." However, Guild continued, "if it once becomes the subject of doubt and conversation it will be much more difficult for you to do anything to support yourself hereafter." In that event, Guild advised David to confess to his father and plead for massive parental assistance.⁴⁶ Ultimately David told his father who repossessed David Jr.'s property and paid off his creditors.⁴⁷ In looking back at his problems, David Jr. remarked, "It is too true that a great portion of a man's comfort in this world depends upon cultivating a close intimacy with such shining characters as appear in the shape of dollars and doubloons."⁴⁸

Debt-ridden individuals were wise to try and keep their problems from public view. Given the era's relaxed lending policies, creditors rarely asked for anything resembling a credit report or even secured collateral for loans. One's character

or that of his family connections and business partners was usually enough evidence that the loan would be secure. As long as creditors were unaware of the debtor's actual financial condition, the relationship between creditor and debtor usually remained amicable. However, once a debtor's inability to pay his notes became general knowledge, many creditors wasted little time in either pressing for payment or filing lawsuits to foreclose on the debtor's property.⁴⁹

The case of William Oliver Vaughan, of Hallowell, Maine, is an example of what could happen when debts were made public. Vaughan had seemingly prosperous businesses shipping timber and milling flour, and he served as an administrator of the local Hallowell and Augusta Bank. A member of an established Maine family, Vaughan had a credible reputation both as a man and entrepreneur, but a spate of bad luck created business difficulties and exposed flawed bank activity. Two of his flour mills exploded and burned to the ground, killing several workers. Without fire insurance on either structure, both were a total loss. At the same time, changing industry regulations and unstable freight rates for shipping timber from the mid-Atlantic states to St. John and London delayed his regular trips and increased his out-of-pocket expenses. Timber shipments were delayed for extended periods in Wilmington, North Carolina, and Norfolk, Virginia, before heading to foreign ports. These delays left the cargo vulnerable, and several shipments rotted while awaiting transport. An acquaintance allowed Vaughan to use a warehouse to store yet another delayed shipment, but that supposedly protected shipment was stolen. Other shipments were delayed due to striking crews or the captain's refusal to sail until Vaughan had paid bills and damages the crew members had incurred at local taverns.⁵⁰

With his timber and flour businesses struggling, Vaughan experienced additional problems resulting from some questionable bank operations. Although the record is unclear, it appears that he purchased Boston bank notes with his own bank's less valuable paper in order to put more Boston money into his holdings. When the Panic squeezed the Boston banks, their directors pressed Vaughan to clear his accounts. The Hallowell and Augusta Bank had to close, and in addition to crippling its account holders, the closing brought the inevitable for Vaughan. Unable to gain adequate income from his timber and flour businesses, word of Vaughan's dismal personal finances and the Hallowell and Augusta Bank's demise leaked out. Shortly thereafter, Vaughan "protested" paying his notes to several merchant and banking houses in Boston. Gideon Snow, Vaughan's Boston agent, tried to cover for him, but in May 1820 Vaughan's insolvency went public.⁵¹

Upon learning of his condition, Vaughan's creditors acted immediately to secure payment or collateral and demanded an explanation. Gideon Snow, who dealt with Vaughan's Boston creditors on a daily basis, warned Vaughan, "you will recollect *on your name* all dependencies was placed for funds." Vaughan's

creditors had not forgotten either. The firm Wally and Foster tersely informed Vaughan that they had relied on his "reputation . . . as much as on his property" and hoped Vaughan could secure collateral for his debt to them. Another creditor, Phineas Foster explained, "When I purchased the bill I did not know you personally, but the name of Vaughan had always stood so high, I took it without making much inquiry." Lewis Tappan bluntly informed Vaughan, "I relied on the great respectability of your family more than anything else when I purchased the Bill. Should it not be paid therefore I put a confidence that you will be able to explain in satisfactory answer the occasion of your drawings and of my loss."⁵²

Vaughan hired negotiators to meet with his angry creditors. These representatives held several tense meetings with creditors who claimed Vaughan intentionally tried to steal money from them and concealed property to avoid losing it in foreclosure. On several occasions, the creditors accused Vaughan's representatives of taking part in Vaughan's schemes as well. Vaughan bristled at insinuations that he had acted illegally but was forced to defend himself from Hallowell because his creditors had issued arrest warrants for him if he ever came to Boston. Roughly a dozen creditors jockeyed to claim Vaughan's estate to cover combined recorded debts of over fifty thousand dollars. Particular attention went to Vaughan's ships, which were divided among the most influential creditors. Vaughan lost all his business property and pledged to repay as much of a percentage of his debts as possible, although many creditors remained adamant that Vaughan repay the full amount. In late summer 1821, his creditors reluctantly agreed that Vaughan could never pay everything and finally accepted an offer that he pay approximately half of each account.⁵³

Highly publicized cases like Vaughan's clarified the damage one's reputation might suffer and put many failures on the defensive. The typical explanation was that personal failure came at the hands of defaulting debtors. While many such arguments were indeed true, the failing individual was still hard pressed to justify why these loans or investments were initially given to scoundrels or gambled in speculative ventures. Ultimately, creditors rarely gave debtors much sympathy for their predicament. Philadelphia hardware merchant Joseph Horner argued that he did everything possible to avoid failure and blamed his insolvent debtors. Prior to the Panic, Horner had put a large sum of money into a steamship, and once the depression hit, he unsuccessfully tried to sell the ship to pay his debt. Horner pressed his debtors and became increasingly angry when his collection letters returned with excuses instead of money. In 1821 his creditors foreclosed, and he lost everything. "I have struggled very hard to get along and have sacrificed all my comforts in the trial," he remembered. "If I fall it will not be my fault."⁵⁴

Despite being portrayed as immoral examples of the Panic's origins, failures rarely rejected the market and its related components of monetary stan-

dards, entrepreneurial efforts, and ambitions to improve one's lot in life. They often expressed regret either for their past actions or at the unfair relationship between money and social respect. The typical course of action was to start over by returning to the basic principles of hard work and economical living with hopes for a better second outcome. This determination reflected popular conclusions about correcting the Panic and returning to prosperity. However, it also highlighted a confusing and ambiguous area in the culture of the early American republic.

The focus on the Panic's moral roots created popular stereotypes for failures as fraudulent, greedy, indulgent, or recklessly ambitious and sparked searches for moral remedies. If the Panic resulted from the "love of money" and its dangerous path to luxury and laziness, then "industry" and "frugality" were upheld as the moral elements to reverse the Panic's course. Failures often took up the cause to work harder and spend less. But there was a hidden complexity when advocating "industry" to correct the Panic, since "industry" contributed to the accumulation of wealth—an accumulation that contemporaries argued helped cause the Panic. Failures and their critics often missed an inherent ambivalence between the values of hard work and the dangers of corrupting wealth. As John Adams aptly asked: "Will you tell me how to prevent riches from becoming the effects of temperance and industry? Will you tell me how to prevent riches from producing luxury? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, Vice, and folly?"⁵⁵

The path from work to wealth to vice was a complicated one indeed, but seeking a moral remedy for the Panic's immoral causes proved troublesome. Hezekiah Niles served as one example. Despite earlier praise for American ambition and prosperity, Niles favored the popular conclusion that basic greed had created the Panic. He routinely criticized borrowing and luxury, and even argued that the Panic could be a solution to money's dangerous influence. It would force failing individuals to end a life of "insignificant pageantry and shew" and transform their princely homes into "barns, stables and pig-styes" to serve as "monuments of the folly or fraud of the times through which we have just past." Niles accompanied this argument with nostalgia and suggested a return to bartering. Since no one had cash money to pay for goods and services, "people have returned to the original principles of business" which would ultimately benefit the entire country. Nevertheless, to keep his own business accounts in good standing Niles used a different argument. He printed a front-page notice urging all delinquent subscribers to pay their bills immediately and only with paper money drawn from banks paying specie.⁵⁶

When recovering from unsuccessful ventures, some individuals sought consolation for lost property and status in their love for family and a renewed, albeit forced, admiration for a plain lifestyle. Such consolation was perhaps a last

resort, because these people routinely criticized bad habits in others even as they had begun to fail for many of the same reasons. While living on Philadelphia's fashionable Chestnut Street, Rebecca Gratz witnessed several failures during the Panic and smugly commented that they were the results of an extravagant lifestyle. In one instance, the personal belongings of the wealthy Waln family had been put out onto the street for public inspection before being sold to the highest bidder in a foreclosure auction. “[T]he luxuries which wealth and ambition and taste had combined to render [were] the most beautiful I ever saw,” she commented. “[Mrs. Waln’s] . . . french carpets were this day trodden by many a clownish foot—and her mirrors reflected objects, which it would have shocked her nerves to witness in the retirement of her dressing room.” Rebecca reasoned that Mrs. Waln would be happier after the bankruptcy because she “is more sensible of her powers to make comforts, than she formerly was, to enjoy them—activity has restored health, and adversity produced an energy she never called into action before.”⁵⁷

While Mrs. Waln's exact reaction is not known, her husband, Robert, certainly offered a different version from the one Rebecca Gratz imagined. Robert Waln was a member of one of Philadelphia's oldest families, a respected merchant heavily involved with domestic and foreign trade, and a prominent civil leader and philanthropist. Waln began to feel the Panic's squeeze when western markets collapsed, his eastern businesses closed, and he became responsible for his partner's bad debts. After desperate attempts to collect the western debts, Waln petitioned for bankruptcy and turned his possessions over to assignees to sell and distribute the money among his creditors. Regarding this humiliating display to his neighbors, Waln lamented to business colleague Gideon H. Wells:

This last shock has . . . nearly overcome me. . . . that the last cup of bitterness was administered by hands which for many years had been sustained and supported and encouraged by me with more than Brotherly and paternal affection. The path before me is dreary . . . when I look to my youthful family, my Heart sinks within me. . . . When I reflect on what I have been and what I am, what I have suffered and what I fear I am yet to suffer, my feelings are [indescribable].⁵⁸

Rebecca Gratz confronted the same situation as Robert Waln's family when her brother Simon's merchant house failed. The Gratz business suffered heavy losses during the Panic but limped along until 1826, when it finally went under. During the business' slow decline, Rebecca reported, “Poor Simon's distressed countenance almost broke my heart, the more so as I dared not speak a word on the subject of his impending ruin.” The business' failure forced Rebecca to contemplate “whether poverty be so great an evil, as it is represented to be—time

may enable me to form a judgement, at present I must confess my ignorance." Eventually, the Gratz family had to sell their large home and moved into one so small that the rug which only covered the back room in their Chestnut Street home, covered both front rooms in the new house. The Gratz brothers did not take the events well and became moody, depressed, and isolated. While she felt immense sorrow for their troubles, Rebecca ultimately decided that "we must not expect to always to have the things we wish for in the world but . . . to make the best of what we have."⁵⁹

Whatever course failed individuals and their families pursued, very few people actually questioned the validity of the success ethic. People recognized the Panic's halt to financial progress, but the reality of the self-made man image never seemed at issue. The closest scrutiny usually came with doubts about how easy success would supposedly come. Under pressure to provide for a growing family and salvage a fledgling printing business, New Yorker Jedediah Howe complained that he had "not seen many happy hours for want of the ability to make myself so—for the learned say it depends upon ourselves whether we are happy or miserable. But," he went on, "I do not make myself or I should have try to give myself a more happy disposition."⁶⁰ Howe eventually moved to Philadelphia and established a prosperous printing house, but continued to assert how hard it was to start and to maintain a successful business. Others challenged previous notions that banks and liberal credit could ease one's way to financial security. William Lee recounted to Mathew Carey the story of Jonathan, a Massachusetts farmer and state legislator who reached a colorful conclusion about using credit and banks to get ahead. Despite his fear of banks and credit, a bank man persuaded Jonathan to approve a local bank charter and to take out a short-term renewable loan to build a barn and purchase livestock. The farmer took the loan only after receiving assurance that it could be extended as long as necessary. When the Panic arrived, the bank foreclosed on the farmer's barn, and he had to mortgage his entire farm to pay the note for the barn. The farmer finally understood this "business" and concluded: "It is like in November a man pissing [in] his breeches on a cold day to keep his arse warm—very comfortable at first but I dare say how it feels afterwards."⁶¹

All the elements of the stigma of failure—shame, embarrassment, and public scrutiny—appear in Archibald Murphey's case. His flight from creditors is particularly painful given his initial success and stature within North Carolina. He had a distinguished career as a state senator, professor at the University of North Carolina, and from 1819 to 1821 a judge of the North Carolina Superior Court. He also directed several projects to build an extensive canal system to bolster North Carolina's interior growth. He frequently expressed anger and disdain for those who did not see a canal's benefit. While working with the Cape Fear Navigation Company, Murphey complained to Judge Thomas Ruffin, "You

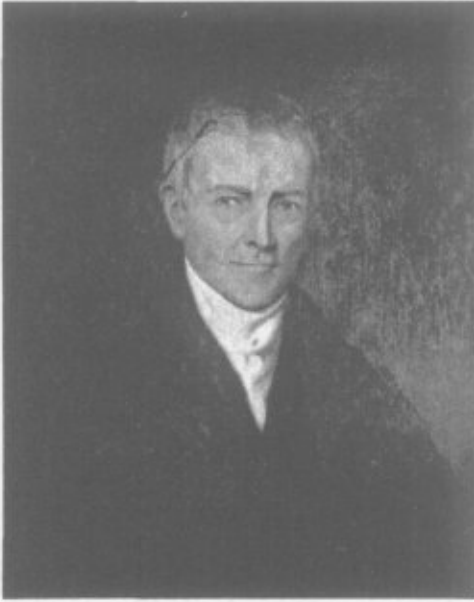
have no Idea of the Obstacles, which Folly, and Perverseness, constantly throw in our way."⁶² Disgusted with apathy from the rural population, the very people Murphey believed would benefit from the canals, he concluded, "I had no Idea that we had such a poor, ignorant, squalid Population. . . . the Mass of the Common People in the Country are lazy, sickly, poor, dirty, and ignorant."⁶³

Whatever Murphey's dreams of building canals, he also believed in individual opportunity and bought thousands of acres in both farmland and housing lots near the planned canals. Like many others, he frowned on rampant land speculation and outside "men of capital" but never colored his own investments as merely speculations. Instead, Murphey fancied himself a town planner with local ties who cultivated community development by encouraging market growth in outlying areas. He also envisioned his projects as a means to earn a comfortable income that would allow him to resign his seat on the bench. Ultimately he hoped for more leisure time to spend at home with his children and ailing wife. A private law practice would provide basic necessities, but his land deals would insure lasting security for himself and his family.⁶⁴ He could not have been more wrong.

It is hard to determine exactly the total amount of Murphey's debts, but it is fair to say they approached \$100,000. He entered into them with grand hopes of handsome profits, and his initial deals proved fruitful investments. He bragged to Ruffin that some plots purchased in 1815 for \$5,000 sold for \$22,100 in 1817.⁶⁵ However when the Panic hit North Carolina, banks failed, agricultural prices plummeted, land values dropped, and paper money became worthless. Banks issued immediate payment notices for loans Murphey had incurred when purchasing his property, and without available cash to meet his obligations, Murphey unsuccessfully tried to sell the debt-ridden properties. He also had additional pressure from assuming the debts of several relatives to save them from debtors' prison.⁶⁶

Initially, Murphey kept his debts private. Some banks allowed him to extend loans, and his friend Thomas Ruffin lent him hundreds of dollars to meet his more pressing family obligations. By late 1819, however, many of his peers knew about Murphey's financial crisis, and he lamented having such large debts even though, according to him, most of them were to save his relatives. In the spring of 1820 Murphey had to put most of his property in a trust which directors would sell when various debts came up for payment. This trust included 6,086 acres of plantation lands, nine town lots, forty-three slaves, and his library. Shortly afterward, Murphey quit his job as Superior Court judge because of its low salary and traveled around North Carolina's legal circuit as a private attorney to "make Money" and "to be out of the Way of Talkers and Whisperers, who take a Pride and a Pleasure in seeing a Man in difficulty." Admitting that he was a "perfect Adventurer in professional Life," Murphey reasoned that "I shall labour to tread the Path of Uprightness and Rectitude, and do deserve good fortune."⁶⁷

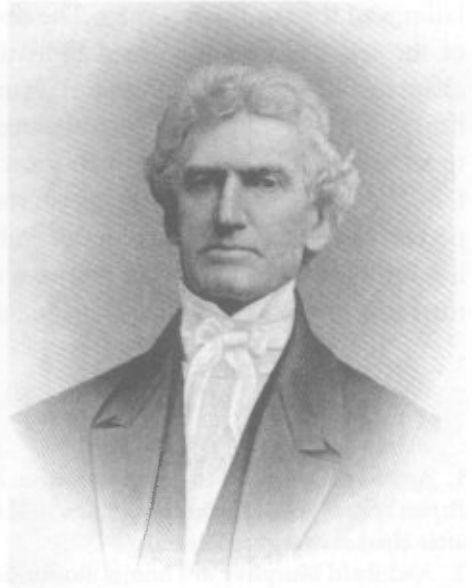
Unfortunately, when Murphey's lands went into the trust, the arrangements



*Archibald DeBow Murphey in later life.
(From The Papers of Archibald D.
Murphey [Raleigh, N.C., 1914].)*

were published in the local newspaper. Everyone in town knew who and how much he owed. His family's financial troubles continued to haunt him when his brother-in-law defaulted on a loan that Murphey had co-signed. The creditor, Jacob Hubbard, hired a young lawyer to collect, and this lawyer sued Murphey for his client's legal fees. Highly offended at being sued by a fellow member of the bar, and more importantly a younger man, Murphey called the attorney and Hubbard the "Twin Brothers in Meanness" and told the youngster he could "still prowl about Taverns, and talk of my debts, and boast of having ordered a [suit] against me" but such conduct would surely lead to the young man's disgrace.⁶⁸ Ruffin paid the fees and kept Murphey out of jail.

Despite his anger at the upstart attorney, Murphey fretted the most about the public disclosure of his debts. His peers, friends, and enemies all knew about his insolvency, and their stares and gossip stung his pride and felt like betrayals to his distinguished career. He often confided in Ruffin about his troubles and argued he had "enough to contend with to run a Man crazy. Continued Domestic Affliction, Pecuniary Perplexities, and what is worse than all, the Uneasiness which my Friends suffer on my Account, create and keep alive Anxieties that torture me without Ceasing." When the University of North Carolina asked him to write a state history, Murphey admitted to being flattered but could not commit to the venture. Shortly before learning of the university's request, he had received yet another notice from the Fayetteville BUS branch asking for a payment, and the history project paid virtually nothing. "In the midst of the most painful anxieties, my Mind is unfitted for such a Work, nor Can I get Time to



Thomas Ruffin. (From The Papers of Thomas Ruffin [Raleigh, N.C., 1920].)

attend to it, whilst my Debts press me," he wrote Ruffin. "I am threatened with Ruin not because I have not estate, but because I can't sell it and get Money."⁶⁹

In 1823 Murphey appeared to be making an admirable recovery. He spent several months in Tennessee selling some family lands and helping the University of North Carolina with land disputes. He bragged that after being over \$70,000 in debt the year before, he would soon have a surplus of almost \$30,000. He was so optimistic that he repurchased some property from the 1820 bankruptcy trust with the terms that if he did not pay off the land by 1828, it reverted back to the trust directors.⁷⁰ However, in 1826 he became ill and for the next two years only had sporadic employment. In the summer of 1828 he lost the land he had repurchased five years earlier.⁷¹ He asked Ruffin, "What have I done that Heaven has singled me out for such misery in this life? I complain not of the dispensations of Providence; I exert all my Patience and Fortitude; yet I feel confident, if my debts were paid and my poor Wife provided for I should incessantly pray that Death would relieve me from my Sufferings." In 1829 Murphey returned to work but while arguing a case in court he was arrested and jailed for a debt of \$2,128. He stayed the mandatory twenty days, took the pauper's oath, and was released. He borrowed enough money from acquaintances to rent a house and lived on a minimal legal income and handouts until his death in 1832.⁷²

Failure in the early nineteenth century was a difficult and complex concept for Americans to grasp. This condition, according to prevailing cultural and ideological norms, applied to those deemed "unable" to succeed in the market because of character flaws such as intemperance, a weak work ethic, or the moral

failings of the confidence man. The dominant value of success and the example of the self-made man seemed to assure middling Americans that upstanding character would result in financial security and independence. The Panic of 1819, however, upset the existing definition of failure and cast a new moral burden on those thought to be above such vice. For middling Americans, the stigma of failure provided a painful lesson on their frail position in a fickle market. Once perceived as positive indicators of stability and financial prosperity, these failing individuals learned that the path to a self-made man might take a wrong turn and instead end in a self-made failure.

NOTES

1. Archibald Murphey to Thomas Ruffin, August 13, 1829, in William Henry Hoyt, *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey* (Raleigh, N.C.: E. M. Uzzell & Co, 1914), 1:173-74 (hereinafter cited as *Murphey Papers*).
2. Archibald Murphey to Thomas Ruffin, September 30, 1820, *ibid.*, 174.
3. The older standard works on the Panic are: Murray Rothbard, *The Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Samuel Rezneck, "The Depression of 1819-1822: A Social History," *American Historical Review*, 39 (1933): 28-47; and Thomas Greer, "Economic and Social Effects of the Depression of 1819 in the Old Northwest," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 44 (1948): 229-47. See also, Thomas Bard Jones, "Legacy of Change: The Panic of 1819 and Debtor Relief Legislation in the Western States" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1968).
4. David Lehman, "Explaining Hard Times: Political Economy and the Panic of 1819 in Philadelphia" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1992); Andrew Cayton, "The Fragmentation of 'A Great Family': The Panic of 1819 and the Rise of the Middling Interest in Boston, 1818-1822," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 2 (1982): 144-67; Dewin Perkins, "Langdon Cheves and the Panic of 1819: A Reassessment" *Journal of Economic History*, 44 (1983): 455-61; Gary L. Browne, "Baltimore and the Panic of 1819," in Aubrey C. Land, ed., *Law, Society and Politics in Early Maryland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977): 212-17; Janet A. Riesman, "Republican Revisions: Political Economy in New York After the Panic of 1819," in William Pencak and Conrad Wright, eds., *New York and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1989): 1-44. A number of works do not specifically focus on the Panic but do analyze its importance within larger cultural, social, or political developments in early America. See Sandra Francis VanBurkleo, "'That Our Pure Republican Principles Might not Wither': Kentucky's Relief Crisis and the Pursuit of 'Moral Justice,' 1818-1826" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1988); Matthew Schoenbackler, "The Origins of Jacksonian Politics: Central Kentucky, 1790-1840" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 1994); and Daniel Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).
5. While this approach may seem out of the ordinary, I think the Panic had a significant impact on American culture just as it did on financial issues. Furthermore, I share the conclusions from a recent economic history meeting urging economic and cultural historians to be more sensitive to each other's work. See Peter Temin, "Is it Kosher to Talk About Culture?" *Journal of Economic History*, 57 (1997): 267-87. I have defined "culture" to mean

values, beliefs, customs, behavior, or simply put, what made people act and think the way they did. One historian has termed culture as the "resources" people used to function in their own particular social arena. See Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890–1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 2–3.

6. For a broader look at the culture of success and the praise for the self-made man in the early nineteenth century, see John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953); Irvin G. Wyllie, *The Self Made Man in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1954); Marvin Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957); John Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); and Rex Burns, *Success in America: The Yeoman Dream and the Industrial Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1926).

7. Edward Pessen's work challenged the notion that the levels of success discussed by both contemporaries and historians were not as accurate as first thought. He argues that success was not easily achievable, and most wealth of this era derived from remnants of earlier family fortunes. For more of Pessen's arguments, see Pessen, *Riches, Class, and Power Before the Civil War* (Lexington, Mass.: D. D. Heath, 1973); and Pessen, "The Egalitarian Myth and the American Social Reality: Wealth, Mobility, and Equality in the 'Era of the Common Man,'" *American Historical Review*, 76 (1971): 989–1034. Other works treating the difficulty of achieving financial independence and climbing the social ladder include: Robert A. Mago and Georgia C. Villaflor, "The Growth of Wages in Antebellum America: New Evidence," *Journal of Economic History*, 47 (1987): 873–95; Donald Adams, "Wage Rates in the Early National Period: Philadelphia, 1785–1830," *Journal of Economic History*, 28 (1968): 404–17; Lee Soltow, "Economic Inequality in the United States in the Period from 1790–1860," *Journal of Economic History*, 31 (1971): 822–39; James Henretta "The Study of Social Mobility: Ideological Assumptions and Conceptual Bias," *Labor History*, 18 (1977): 165–78; and Clyde Griffen, "Occupational Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America: Problems and Possibilities," *Journal of Social History*, 5 (1971–1972): 310–30.

8. For a first-rate analysis of failure for the entire nineteenth century, see Scott Sandage, "Deadbeats, Drunkards, and Dreamers: A Cultural History of Failure in America, 1819–1893" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1995). While Sandage's work does include the Panic of 1819, it gives more coverage to the 1840s and later. However, his conclusions about the Panic have heavily influenced my own study in terms of its overall effect on the culture of the early American republic. For an earlier and gendered analysis of failure, see Toby L. Ditz, "Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Journal of American History*, 81 (1994): 51–80. Despite the scarcity of studies that really analyze what it meant to be a "failure" in cultural terms, there are several works that do analyze topics such as debt and bankruptcy. For a thorough discussion of this historiography, and a broader look at the changes in the definition of failure, see the "Introduction" in Sandage, "Deadbeats, Drunkards, and Dreamers," 1–30.

9. It is impossible to determine with any precision how many people either had losses severe enough to result in total bankruptcy or moderate losses that were eventually recovered. Regardless of how many people actually declared bankruptcy, Americans in the early nineteenth century certainly believed a tremendous percentage of the country was in serious trouble. Contemporary estimates for the Panic of 1819 stipulated that from one-third to one-half of households experienced total ruin. These assumptions contributed to their explanations of failure and evaluating failures within their own social context. See Sandage, "Deadbeats, Drunkards, and Dreamers," 43–49.

10. I use the term “middling groups” because a structured middle class with similar values, backgrounds, and expectations was not yet established to the point of calling it a “middle class.” For more information on the growth of the middle class in the nineteenth century see: Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1790–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); and Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeepers Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).

11. Focusing on these entrepreneurial groups is not to dismiss the growing working class. While they also experienced hardships primarily due to unemployment and the reduced state of poor relief organizations, I focus on those higher up the social scale. These middling groups provide a unique view of the stigma of failure because they never thought themselves vulnerable as long as they followed current advice about a strong work ethic. For more information on the working class during this period see: Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800–1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); Herbert Gutman, *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987); Leon Fink, *In Search of the Working Class: Essays in American Labor History and Political Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); and David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market During the Nineteenth Century* (New York: University of Cambridge, 1993).

12. The transition was certainly not an easy one as Americans wrestled with conflicts between virtue and money-making. For works on this dilemma see: Paul Goodman, “Ethics and Enterprise: The Values of a Boston Elite, 1800–1860,” *American Quarterly*, 18 (1966): 437–51; J. E. Crowley, *This Sheba Self: The Conceptualization of Economic Life in Eighteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (New York: W. W. Norton for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1980); Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); and James Henretta, “The Weber Thesis Revisited: The Protestant Ethic and the Reality of Capitalism in Early America,” in Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism: Collected Essays* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 35–70.

13. The historiography of the rise of the market and its various facets is reaching gargantuan proportions, and, as the recent program for the Annual Meeting of the Historians of the Early American Republic indicates, that interest is by no means declining. For more on the “market revolution” and its relationship to other cultural and social trends see: Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Michael Merrill, “Putting ‘Capitalism’ in its Place: A Review of the Recent Literature,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 52 (1995): 315–26; “Capitalism in the Early Republic,” Special Issue, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 16 (1996); James A. Henretta, “The ‘Market’ and the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 18 (1998): 289–304; and Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds., *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800–1880* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996). A particularly spirited debate concerns the market’s impact on farm families, especially in the northeast. For a critique of the principal works and theories of this debate, see Naomi R. Lamoreaux, “Accounting for

Capitalism in Early American History: Farmers, Merchants, Manufacturers, and Their Economic Worlds,” 1999 Annual Meeting of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, copy obtained from the SHEAR webpage at www.h-net.msu.edu.

14. For examples see: Charles Atmore, *Serious Advice from a Father to his Children* (Philadelphia: Cunningham, 1819), Early American Imprint (EAI) #47024; Caroline Baker, *Little Emma and her Father* (Philadelphia: M’Carty and Davis, 1819), EAI #47045; Caroline Baker, *The Brother and Sister, or the Advantages of Good Behavior* (Philadelphia: Lewis, 1819), EAI #47044; Arnold Berquin, *The Looking-Glass for the Mind or the Juvenile Friend* (Philadelphia: Bioreu, 1819), EAI #47205; Robert Hare, *Defence of the American Character or an Essay on Wealth as an Object of Cupidity or the Means of Distinction in the United States* (Philadelphia: 1819), EAI #48166; and *Niles’ Weekly Register*, November 25, 1820.

15. Walter Channing to Henry Channing, March 10, 1823, in Walter Channing Business Papers, Box 13, 1822–1823, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), Boston. See also, Daniel Vickers, “Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 47 (1990): 3–29, and those works cited in note 6.

16. John Brown to Orlando Brown, February 15, 1819 and John Brown to Orlando Brown, February 4, 1820 and August 22, 1826, Brown Family Papers, Special Collections, Margaret King Library, University of Kentucky (UK), Lexington.

17. Dr. Washington Duvall to Dr. Benjamin Carter, May 13, 1820. Pope-Carter Family Correspondence, Box 1. Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University (DU), Durham, North Carolina. Samuel Gardner to John Gardner, September 23, 1819, Box 1, Gardner Family Papers, MHS.

18. John Campbell to James Campbell, November 30, 1815, and John Campbell to David Campbell, January 21, 1815, Campbell Family Papers, DU.

19. Sandage, “Deadbeats, Drunkards, and Dreamers,” 248–326. Sandage applies this term to the establishment of credit bureaus, starting with Lewis Tappan’s Mercantile Agency in 1841. I would argue that this phrase also fits the period surrounding the Panic. In the 1810s and even earlier, character was measured in varying degrees based on financial success even though there were few established institutions such as credit agencies.

20. Robert Owen to John Owen, February 1821, Campbell Family Papers, DU; “Letter from a Virginian,” *Richmond Enquirer*, June 16, 1818. The author is simply noted as “H.”

21. William Crawford to Albert Gallatin, October 9, 1816, in Henry Adams, ed., *The Writings of Albert Gallatin* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1879), 2:11.

22. For a complete look at the economic, geographical, and transportation expansion in early America, see: Douglas C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1869* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), 61, 122–76; Rothbard, *The Panic of 1819*, 1–10; J. Van Fenstermaker, *The Development of American Commercial Banking: 1782–1837* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1965), 1–4; and George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815–1860* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1951), 3–73.

23. For more information on bank development and practices during this era, see Van Fenstermaker, *Development of American Commercial Banking*, 4–53; Naomi Lamoreaux, *Insider Lending: Banks, Personal Connections, and Economic Development in Industrial New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11–30; and Bray Hammond, *Banks and Politics in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 227–85.

24. The authority on the War of 1812 and American culture is Steve Watts, *The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). Watts’s argument of America’s renewed energy and confidence following the war

heavily influenced my conclusions about the importance of the Panic's timing.

25. Henry Clay, "Speech on the Direct Tax and Public Affairs, January 29, 1816," in James F. Hopkins, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), 2:148–49; John C. Calhoun, "Speech on the Results of the War," February 27, 1815, in Robert L. Meriwether, ed., *Papers of John C. Calhoun* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1959), 1:280, 282.

26. Certainly not everyone was raking in massive profits in the economic boom, and many areas never fully recovered from the problems created by a wartime economy. But there was a general sense of optimism, that anyone willing to go after his fortune, either by creating a new business, moving to a new location, or making new investments, could follow the popularized possibilities of wealth. See William Darby, *A Tour From the City of New York to Detroit in the Michigan Territory . . .* (New York, 1819, 2nd ed.; repr. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1962); Estwick Evans, *A Pedestrious Tour of Four Thousand Miles*, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Thwaites Early Western Travels*, volume 8 (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904); James Flint, *Letters from America, 1818–1820* in *Thwaites Early Western Travels*, volume 9, 1904; Timothy Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* (Boston: Cummings, Hiliard, and Co., 1826); and Thomas Hulme, *Hulme's Journal of a Tour in the Western Countries of America* in *Thwaites Early Western Travels*, volume 10, 1904.

27. "To Mr. Cobbett," *Niles' Weekly Register*, November 2, 1815.

28. Evans, *A Pedestrious Tour of Four Thousand Miles*, 346–47; Abel Flint, *A Discourse, Occasioned by the News of Peace* (Hartford: Sheldon and Goodwin, 1815), 10, EA1 #34705.

29. Robert Walsh to Robert Wickliffe, August 12, 1815, Wickliffe-Preston Papers, UK.

30. Robert Walsh to Robert Wickliffe, November 29, 1815, *Ibid.*

31. For a broader discussion of the Panic's economic causes, see Rothbard, *The Panic of 1819*, 1–23; Lehman, "Explaining 'Hard Times,'" 254–59; North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 182–88*; Van Fenstermaker, *Development of American Commercial Banking*, 53–55; and Taylor, *Transportation Revolution*, 334–38. There is some disagreement on the exact payment on the Louisiana Purchase debt. I use \$3,000,000 because is it the figure BUS director Landgon Cheves used in Langdon Cheves to William Crawford, April 2, 1819 in *Report on the Condition of the Bank of the United States by the Committee of Inspection* (Philadelphia: William Fry, 1822), p. 52.

32. James Campbell to David Campbell, April 20, 1819, Campbell Family Papers, DU; John Badollet to Albert Gallatin, September 10, 1823, in Gayle Thornborough, ed., *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin, 1804–1836* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1963), 260. See also, James Campbell to David Campbell, April 20, 1819, in Campbell Family Papers, DU.

33. *Niles' Weekly Register*, May 5, 1819; June 5 and 12, 1819; April 17, 1819; December 23, 1820; February 2, 1821; and *Richmond Enquirer*, May 22, June 12, 19, and 23, 1818.

34. John Patterson to Thomas Smith, Esq., January 16, 1820 in William Patterson Smith Letters, DU; Gideon Snow to William Oliver Vaughan, May 12, 1818, Vaughan Family Papers, Box 5, MHS. See also Snow's letters to Vaughan on May 11, 12, 14, and 18, 1819.

35. The best treatment of the con-man image is Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*. While Halttunen's study focuses on a period after the Panic, the distrust for debtors and borrowers that the Panic created in turn helped develop the con-man. If Halttunen is correct in her assessment that the confidence man developed out of a time when the middle class experienced great turmoil in determining its own place in American culture, the Panic certainly contributed to the confusion.

36. John Allen to Robert Wickliffe, January 19, 1824, Wickliffe-Preston Papers, John Allen

- and John Bulmer File, UK; E. J. Osborn to James Iredell, March 20, 1817. James Iredell Letters, DU; Cornelius Comegys to Robert Wickliffe, June 19, 1829; October 1, 1829, Wickliffe-Preston Papers, UK. See also Comegys to Wickliffe, October 18, 1828.
37. The republicanism/liberalism debate in historical scholarship stretches over several years and several hundred works. For the historiography of the discussion see: Special Issue, *American Quarterly*, 37 (1985); Robert Shalhope, “Toward a Republican Synthesis; The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 29 (1972): 49–80; Shalhope, “Republicanism and Early American Historiography,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 39 (1982): 334–56; Daniel T. Rodgers, “Republicanism: The Career of a Concept,” *Journal of American History*, 79 (1992): 11–38; and Steven Ross, “The Transformation of Republican Ideology” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 10 (1990): 323–30.
38. *Niles’ Weekly Register*, June 12, 1819; R. A. Curd to John Hunt, April 9, 1822. Hunt Morgan Papers, UK. See also Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, November 7, 1821, in David Philipson, ed., *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1929), 48–49.
39. Joseph Bush to Henry Clay, June 18, 1817, *Papers of Henry Clay*, 2:283; John Babrach to Mathew Carey, February 6, 1820, Mathew Carey Papers, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Box. 88, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), Philadelphia.
40. William Harris to Fred Harris, April 25, 1821, Fred A. Harris Papers, DU. Harris’ remark that his financial worries “almost unmans me” is indicative of a possible trend concerning a challenge to masculinity. If men were to be the aggressors in the market, to fail could have been considered effeminate. Another suggestion about this query is a feeling of a lack of control over one’s life. Being controlled by unpaid bills not only went against the pursuit of individualism but also threatened the ability of a man to provide for his family. For similar conclusions, see, Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier*, 63.
41. R. J. Stewart to William Orbison, October 9, 1817, James Martin Bell Letters, DU.
42. J. M. Connor to Mathew Carey, June 21, 1819, Mathew Carey Papers, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Box 88. HSP; *The Rembrancer, or Debtors Prison Recorder*, April 17, 1820.
43. For more on the attitudes toward poverty and debtors prison, see: Peter J. Coleman, *Debtors and Creditors in America: Insolvency, Imprisonment for Debt, and Bankruptcy, 1607-1900* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1974); Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); and David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971).
44. James Williams Walker to Larkin Newby, January 2, 1820, Larkin Newby Papers, DU. Newby died in 1821 leaving his wife and five children responsible for thousands of dollars of unpaid loans. For further analysis of Walker’s own situation in his reply to Newby, see Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier*, 63. For more on the dilemma of an industrious man’s failure, see Lehman, “Explaining Hard Times,” 265–66.
45. John White to David Stoddard Greenough Jr., September 22, 1817, David Stoddard Greenough Papers (DSG), Box 25, MHS.
46. Benjamin Guild to David Stoddard Greenough Jr., May 1819, *Ibid.*, Box 26, MHS.
47. For David Sr.’s repossession of David Jr.’s property and payment of his son’s debts, see Bills of Sale from David Greenough Jr. to David Greenough Sr., May 17, 18, and 28, and June 6 and 14, 1819; Agreement between David Stoddard Greenough and John Callender, January 20, 1820; Summons of Circuit Court of Common Pleas, June 19, 1820; Note of Indenture, December 25, 1820; and Bill of Sale December 25, 1820, *Ibid.*, Boxes 26 and 27, MHS.
48. David Stoddard Greenough Jr. to John Morland, July 10, 1922, in David Stoddard

Greenough Jr. "Letterbook," DSG v. 61. In his own diary, David Jr. never commented on his decline and there is a gap between June 16, 1818, and January 1, 1824, with the simple explanation: "Many unpleasant occurrences are consequently omitted." David Stoddard Greenough Jr., "Diary," 1816–1824, DSG, v. 70, MHS.

49. The structural responses to failure, including changes in lending policies and the developments in credit agencies or reports, is a dominant theme throughout Sandage, "Deadbeats, Drunkards, and Dreamers." See also, Barbara Allen Mathews, "'Forgive Us Our Debts': Bankruptcy and Insolvency in America, 1763–1841" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1994).

50. Vaughan's story is compiled from numerous letters between him and his family and business contacts. They are all located in his papers held at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston. William Oliver will be cited simply as "Vaughan." While the references to his troubled business are endless, key letters about his timber business are: Maryhan (first name omitted) to Vaughan, undated, 1818; Thomas Millidge to Vaughan, January 1, 1818; W. C. Fleming, to Vaughan, June 25, 1818; Kettell and Sewall to Vaughan, November 22, 1818; and Moses Myers to Vaughan, October 29, 1819. For the flour mill explosions, see Robert Gardner to Vaughan, April 8, 1818, and Benjamin Vaughan to Vaughan, January 8, 1820.

51. Petty Vaughan to Vaughan, May 13, 1819, and March 14 and May 29, 1820; Gideon Snow to Vaughan, June 22 and 24, 1819, March 10, April 12, May 6, and May 17, 1820; Gideon Snow to John Merrick, May 20, 1820; and Samuel Bradley to Phineas Foster, June 1820.

52. Gideon Snow to Vaughan, May 9, 1820; Wally and Foster to Vaughan, May 10, 1820. For other creditors who recently learned about Vaughan and pressed for immediate payment see S. Kingsbury to Vaughan, March 14, 1820; E. Frothingham to Vaughan, May 9, 1820; Tappan to Vaughan, May 9, 1820; Hall J. House and Co, to Vaughan, May 9, 1820; J. F. Wingate to Vaughan, May 10, 1820; M. L. Parker to Vaughan, May 11, 1820; and Israel Mimson and Barnard, to Vaughan, May 11, 1820. See also Phineas Foster to Vaughan, June 26, 1820, and Lewis Tappan to William Vaughan, June 2, 1820, William Oliver Vaughan Papers, MHS.

53. The circumstances and events involved in Vaughan's bankruptcy are pieced together from numerous letters. They include: Gideon Snow to John Merrick, May 20, 1820; John Agry to Vaughan, June 1, 1820; Gideon Snow to Vaughan, May 30, June 1, August 14 and 22, September 7, December 12, 13, and 18, 1820, and July 28 and 31, 1821; William Sullivan to Vaughan, June 6 and 27, July 1 and 25, August 11 and 12, September 23, 1820, and May 4, 16, 23, and 31, 1821; Petty Vaughan to Vaughan, June 17, 1820; John Richardson to Vaughan, July 1, 1820; and Vaughan to Nathaniel Curtis, September 8, 1821, Vaughan Papers, MHS.

54. Joseph Horner's story quoted from Sandage, "Deadbeats, Drunkards, and Dreamers," 33–34.

55. John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, December 21, 1819, in Lester J. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (rev. ed.; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 551.

56. *Niles' Weekly Register*, April 29, June 17 and 24, 1820.

57. Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, November 7, 1821, in Philipson, ed., *The Letters of Rebecca Gratz*, 48–49.

58. Robert Waln to Gideon H. Wells, October 20, 1821, Waln Collection, HSP. For more on Robert Waln's business background, see, Lehman, "Explaining Hard Times," 270–72.

59. Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, September 6, 1826, in Philipson, ed., *The Letters of Rebecca Gratz*, 83–84; Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, August 3, and September 10, 1826, in *ibid.*, 87–88, 91–92.

60. Jedediah Howe to Jonah Howe, May 30, 1822, Solomon Howe Letters, DU.

61. John Lee to Mathew Carey, April 12, 1819, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Mathew

Carey Papers, Box 88, HSP. This same letter is also used in Lehman, “Explaining ‘Hard Times,’” 267, but there is some a slight difference in how we use it. Lehman uses the letter to analyze changing attitudes towards credit and banking since taking the credit was what got the farmer into trouble in the first place. I agree with how Lehman uses this evidence, but I am taking it one step further in explaining dissatisfaction with success. Credit was touted as a way to “get ahead” and the farmer did that to improve his property. However, success to the farmer was just as distasteful as the credit that supposedly would allow him to obtain it.

62. Archibald Murphey to Thomas Ruffin, March 29, 1819, *Murphey Papers*, 1:130–32. Murphey and Ruffin had an extended correspondence and will be referred to simply as “Murphey” and “Ruffin.”

63. Murphey to Ruffin, April 25, 1819, *Murphey Papers*, 1:138–39. For more information on Murphey’s projects and plans, see: Murphey, *Memoir on the Internal Improvements: Contemplated by the Legislature of North Carolina on the Resources and Finances of that State* (Raleigh, N.C.: J. Gales, 1819), in *Murphey Papers*, 2:103–95; and R. D. W. Conner, *Ante-Bellum Builders of North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Normal and Industrial College, 1914).

64. Murphey to Ruffin, December 9, 1818, *Murphey Papers*, 1:123.

65. Key letters about Murphey’s land speculation and their relation to his canal plans are: Murphey to Ruffin, April 11, 1817, *Murphey Papers*, 1:93; Murphey to Ruffin, March 26, 1818, *Murphey Papers*, 1:105–8; John Haywood to Murphey, March 12 and May 3, 1818, *Murphey Papers*, 1:103–5, 115–16; Murphey to Ruffin, March 26, 1818, *Murphey Papers*, 1:105–8; and Benjamin Latrobe to Joseph Gales, April 16, 1818, *Murphey Papers*, 1:109–14.

66. For Murphey’s declining finances through bank notices and family debts see: Murphey to Ruffin, March 29, 1819, *Murphey Papers*, 1:132; Murphey to Ruffin, February 18, 1819, *Murphey Papers*, 1:128–29; Benjamin Ragsdale to Murphey, April 2, 1819, *Murphey Papers*, 1:133; Murphey to Ruffin, April 4, 1819, *Murphey Papers*, 1:134–35; and Murphey to Ruffin, August 14, 1819, *Murphey Papers*, 1:151–52.

67. The property listings and the primary creditors are listed in Murphey to Ruffin, April 8, 1820, *Murphey Papers*, 1:160–61. The properties did not sell until December 1821. Murphey to Ruffin, August 4, 1820, *Murphey Papers*, 1:169.

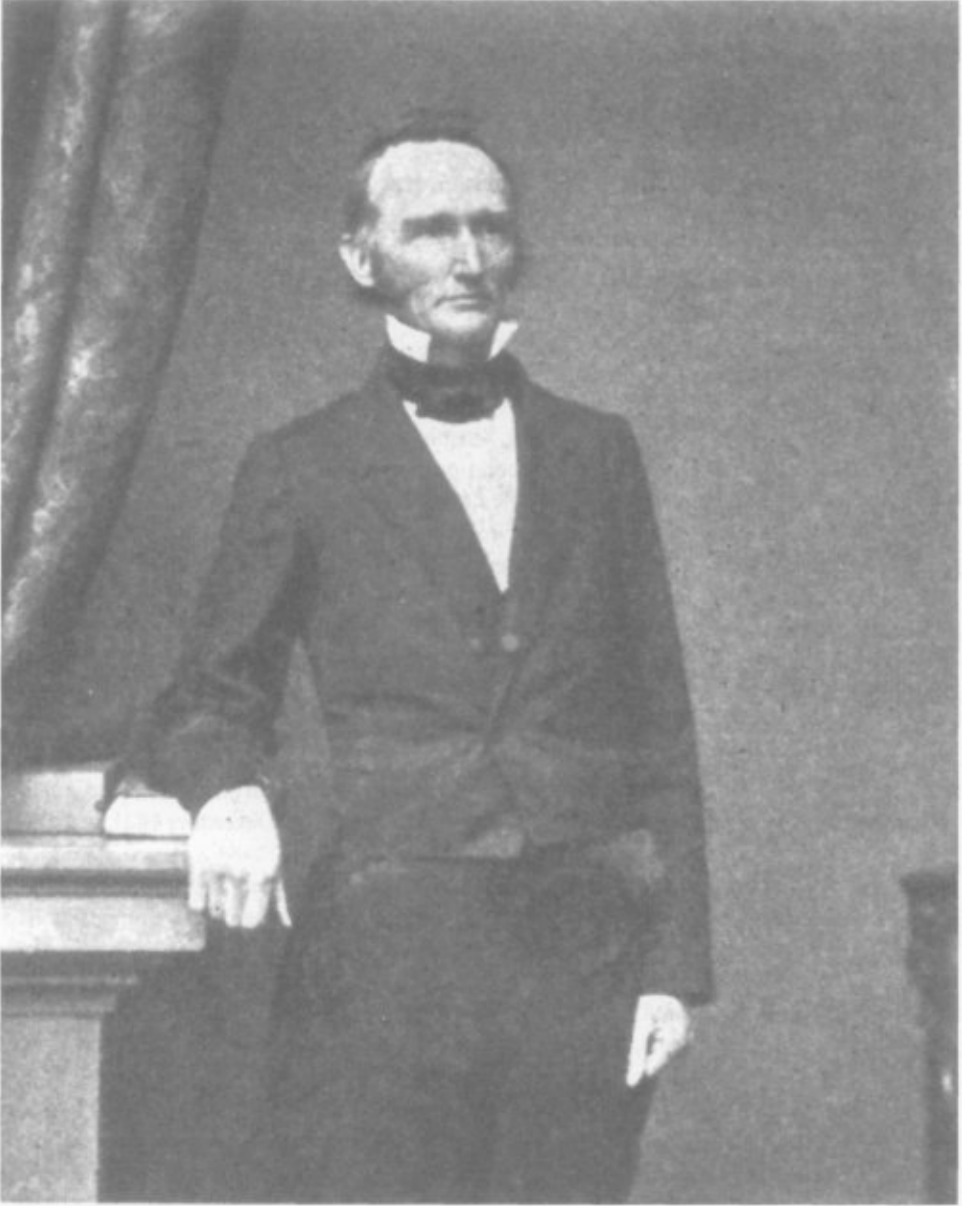
68. Archibald Murphey to [unknown], December 20, 1820, *Murphey Papers*, 1:180–82. The young attorney is never named in Murphey’s correspondence. It seems the young man had important family connections, and Murphey was afraid to actually write his name, thus risking a suit for slander.

69. Murphey to Ruffin, May 19, 1821, *Murphey Papers*, 1:207–8; Murphey to William Polk, July 24, 1821, *Murphey Papers*, 1:216. See also Murphey to Ruffin, May 19, 1822, *Murphey Papers*, 1:240–41.

70. Murphey to Ruffin, August 22, 1822, *Murphey Papers*, 1:261–63; Murphey to Herndon Haralson, January 24, 1823, *Murphey Papers*, 1:279–80; Murphey to John Haywood, January 29, 1823, *Murphey Papers*, 1:281; and Murphey to Ruffin, August 14, 1823, *Murphey Papers*, 1:287.

71. For Murphey’s second failure, see: Murphey to William Polk, May 1, 1825, *Murphey Papers*, 1:308; Murphey to Ruffin, July 24, 1825, *Murphey Papers*, 1:311; and Murphey to Ruffin, August 8, 1826, *Murphey Papers*, 1:336–35.

72. Murphey to Ruffin, May 31, 1828, *Murphey Papers*, 1:377; Murphey to Ruffin, November 18, 1829, *Murphey Papers*, 1:385; Murphey to William Duffey, January 2, 1830, *Murphey Papers*, 1:385.



*Like Abraham Lincoln, in whose cabinet he loyally served for more than three years, Montgomery Blair did not impress many observers with his undistinguished features. One historian described Blair as “unprepossessing in appearance, with a mean, hatchet face.” (See David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 264. Photograph from William Ernest Smith, *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1933.)*

The Meanest Man in Lincoln's Cabinet: A Reappraisal of Montgomery Blair

MICHAEL THOMAS SMITH

On September 23, 1864, Abraham Lincoln notified Montgomery Blair, one of only four remaining members of his original cabinet, that “the time [had] come” for Blair to step down. Lincoln informed Postmaster General Blair that his dismissal, or rather the belated acceptance of his earlier offer to resign, proceeded “from no dissatisfaction of mine with you personally or officially.”¹ Faced with a difficult election in November, the president could simply no longer afford to retain in his cabinet a man who was so widely distrusted and even despised. Many Northerners, especially Radical Republicans, regarded Blair as a reactionary, proslavery Confederate sympathizer who opposed the earnest prosecution of the war. Thaddeus Stevens, the leader among Republicans in the House of Representatives, asserted that he knew “of no rebel sympathizer who has charged such disgusting principles and designs on the republican party as this apostate.”² Noah Brooks, the Washington correspondent of the Republican *Sacramento Union*, regarded the postmaster general as “the meanest man in the whole government,” whose views were “fossiliferous [sic] . . . and narrow-minded.”³ Radical Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson warned Lincoln earlier in September, “every one hates” the postmaster general, and if he was not dismissed “tens of thousands of [votes] will be lost to you.”⁴

The reaction to Blair's departure amounted to all Lincoln could have desired. The mere promise of his dismissal convinced John C. Frémont, who had entered the presidential race representing elements of both the Republican and Democratic parties dissatisfied with the Lincoln administration, to withdraw from the race.⁵ Maryland Congressman Henry Winter Davis, a bitter enemy of Blair and critic of Lincoln, performed an about face and grudgingly endorsed the president whose administration he had recently publicly condemned.⁶ The often critical *Chicago Tribune* related with satisfaction the “pleasing intelligence” that Blair had “evacuated” his office, over which “the loyal portion of the country will shed no tears.”⁷ Blair himself conceded in a letter to his wife that his departure would “operate well” on public sentiment. “I am sure it is for the best all around,” he assured her.⁸ Thousands of his critics obviously agreed.

Despite Montgomery Blair's widespread unpopularity and unceremonious “decapitat[ion],” as he described his removal, Lincoln retained great confidence in

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*Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland, home of the Blair family. (From William Ernest Smith, *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics*.)*

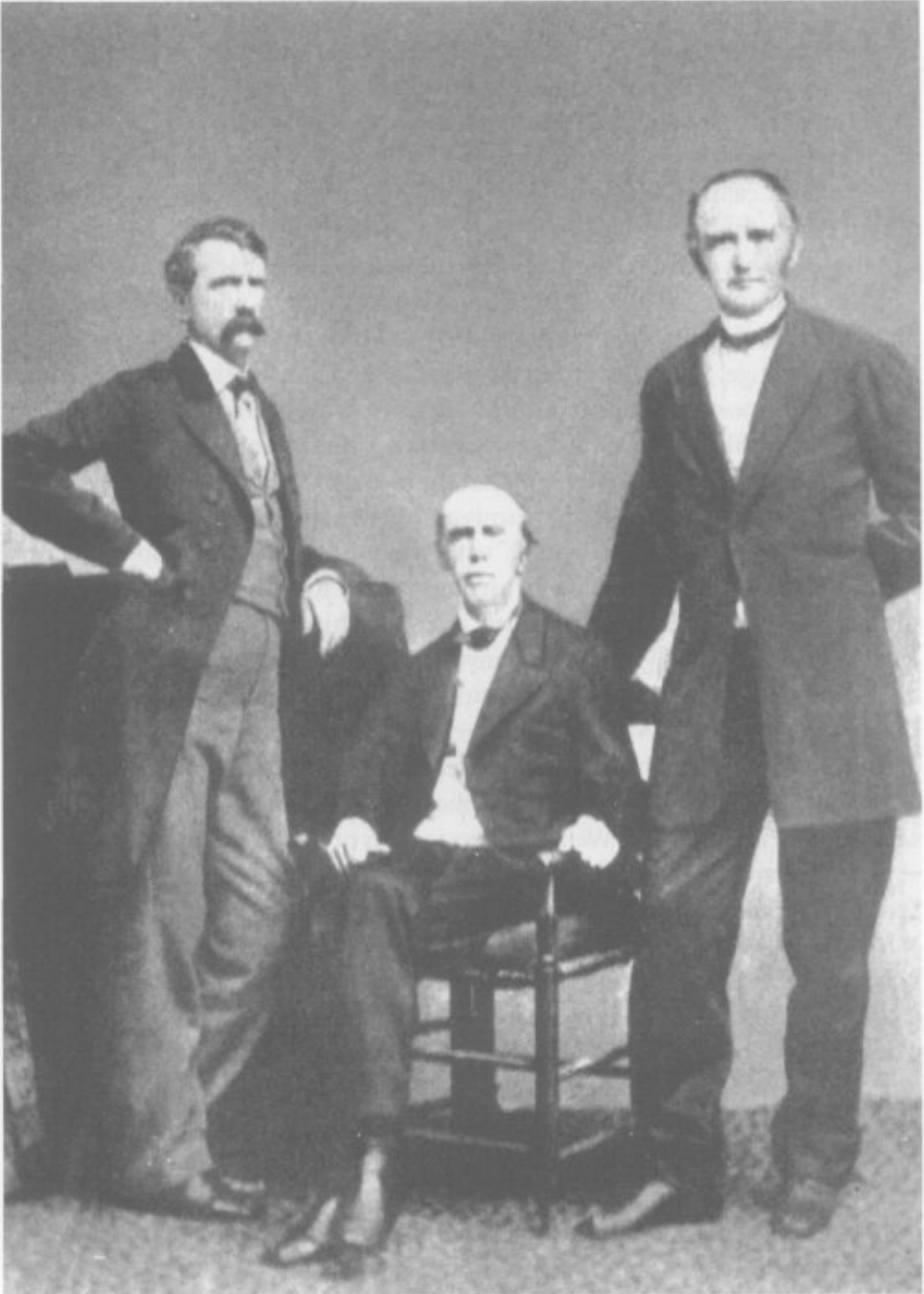
him and chose as his successor a close friend of Blair's, former Ohio Governor William Dennison, who had his predecessor's strong endorsement.⁹ Lincoln continued to consult Blair on important issues even after his departure from the cabinet; as the Radical *Boston Commonwealth* feared, Montgomery Blair "remain[ed] . . . an influential member of the [informal] Kitchen-Cabinet," as his father had been during Andrew Jackson's administration. Blair "warmly urge[d]" the retention of his good friend Gideon Welles in the cabinet, despite Radical calls for a new head of the Navy Department nearly as intense as those that had contributed to his own ouster.¹⁰ Demonstrating his continued respect, Lincoln in December asked for Blair's written views on the restoration of the southern states to the Union. The ex-postmaster general responded with a fifteen-page letter, in which he averred that Lincoln's policy of requiring oaths of future loyalty and then allowing native southern whites to reorganize their state governments with only

minimal federal oversight was “well calculated to accomplish the end proposed.” President Lincoln’s private secretaries John Hay and John Nicolay later wrote in their history of the Lincoln administration that Blair “still retained his friendly and confidential relations with the President,” even in the final months of Lincoln’s life.¹¹

Historians have not always recognized Montgomery Blair’s prominent role in the Civil War cabinet. He was the last cabinet member invited to join Lincoln’s official family, and he occupied probably the least prestigious of the departments. Compared to his distinguished cabinet colleagues, particularly former Senators William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, and Simon Cameron, and 1860 presidential aspirant Edward Bates, Blair (like Lincoln) had little administrative experience or national prestige. Some historians have not looked beyond these facts and have portrayed the postmaster general as a nonentity. John M. Taylor, in an admiring biography of William H. Seward, saw Blair as a prime example of the “mediocre” elements in the cabinet and thought that the idea that Lincoln might rely on Blair as his principal advisor could “be dismissed out of hand.” Allan Nevins described Blair as “quarrelsome and malignant” with “a gift for sowing dissension,” and portrayed Lincoln as simply waiting for an opportunity to rid himself of this troublesome underling. Others have routinely dismissed him as “controversial and dis-tempered” or as “bitterly opposed to anyone who might stand in the way of his, or his family’s, advancement.”¹² Some historians, then, essentially have agreed with Blair’s enemy Thurlow Weed in characterizing the postmaster general as “at best a dangerous friend,” hardly a useful member of the administration.¹³

In reality, Lincoln counted Montgomery Blair among his most trusted advisors. Secretary of the Navy Welles, always jealous of the president’s suspected favoritism toward his colleagues, noted with dismay the president’s great liking for Secretary of State Seward and obvious respect for Secretary of the Treasury Chase. Nevertheless, Welles felt that “on important questions, Blair is as potent with the President as either, and sometimes I think equal to both.” As Welles had great confidence in the postmaster general’s ability, integrity, and judgment, he applauded this closeness and worried after Blair’s dismissal that the president no longer had as able an advisor in his cabinet. The perceptive American correspondent of the *London Times*, William Howard Russell, similarly realized that Blair was “a person of much greater influence than his position would indicate” who had “the reputation of being one of the most determined Representatives in the ministry.”¹⁴ A number of factors contributed to the postmaster general’s often unrecognized importance to the administration and value to his chief.¹⁵

Lincoln realized that the distinct, sometimes discordant elements in the young Republican coalition had to be equally represented in his administration. His policy, therefore, as he frequently said, was to provide “justice for all” in the distribution of patronage. Montgomery Blair and his influential family represented several important groups that the administration would be wise to recognize.



*Montgomery Blair, right, poses with his brother, Frank, a Union major general and leader of the Missouri Republican Party, and father, Francis Preston Blair Sr., one of the most influential newspaper editors and political strategists of the antebellum era. (From William Ernest Smith, *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics*.)*

This important factor contributed to both the president's initial appointment of Blair and their subsequent working relationship.

Montgomery Blair was the oldest son of Francis P. Blair Sr., a veteran Maryland Democratic turned Republican editor and politician. After years of loyally supporting and advising such Democratic stalwarts as Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and Thomas Hart Benton, the senior Blair joined the Republicans after their organization in 1854, bringing his sons with him. "Old Man Blair" had become particularly angry the previous year when Franklin Pierce failed to include Montgomery in his cabinet as attorney general. The disappointed former editor may have thought that the new party, in addition to advocating the free-soil views he supported (despite owning slaves), was likely to be more receptive to his requests for patronage. This proved to be a shrewd move.

Montgomery's younger brother, Frank Jr., became a leading Missouri Republican and a strong contender for election as the first Republican Speaker of the House in 1861.¹⁶ Although Frank did not attain that powerful position, he did become chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs in 1861 and played a leading role in drafting and securing passage of legislation creating the Union's volunteer army. He subsequently distinguished himself in the field as a division and corps commander under Generals Grant and Sherman. Frank also returned briefly to Congress in 1863 at Lincoln's request, where he further won the president's gratitude by attacking Salmon P. Chase, the president's main rival for the 1864 Republican nomination. In several speeches he harshly accused Chase of disloyalty to the administration and of corruption. The Blair family represented a formidable, if controversial, political force within the Republican Party, whose support Lincoln carefully courted and cultivated.¹⁷

Lincoln knew that it was particularly important to recognize former Democrats with prestigious appointments. Although former Whigs like Lincoln made up the majority of the Republican Party's leadership and rank-and-file, former Democrats nevertheless were a vital source of strength, without whom future electoral victories would be unlikely. Crafty New York political boss Thurlow Weed, who had long opposed the Blairs, informed Lincoln prior to the 1861 inauguration that no one except Montgomery Blair's father desired Blair's appointment to the cabinet and later ruefully stated that he "never did find out" what "reasons and influences" led to the president's selection of Blair.¹⁸ In fact, however, former Democrats actively advocated Blair as a cabinet selection. Even such former Democrats and future Radicals as Senator Charles Sumner and Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts pressed for his inclusion. Blair's influence, at least initially, therefore stemmed from his family's earlier allegiance to and stature in the Democratic Party.¹⁹

Montgomery Blair also represented another crucial group whose support the president needed: border-state Unionists. Presidents had traditionally balanced their cabinet selections between the North and the South and, to a lesser extent,

between the East and the West, in order to ensure broad national support for their administrations. Such a balance was difficult to attain in 1861. The Republican Party was practically nonexistent in the slave states except for Missouri. Kentucky and Maryland had but small, weak party organizations. In 1861, however, the border states' importance loomed large because of their crucial locations. Ensuring their doubtful loyalty during the secession crisis was vital to the preservation of the Union, from both a political and a military point of view. If they were not represented in the cabinet, the administration would possess an unprecedented northern sectional tilt that would seriously weaken Unionists in Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri. Lincoln may also have believed that such an appointment would partly mollify upper South states like North Carolina and Virginia whose loyalty was even more doubtful. Furthermore, if the North lost the border, Confederate armies thereby would gain access to considerably more material and manpower and could easily enhance their strategic position. Were Maryland to secede, the nation's capital would be surrounded and all but indefensible, a potentially humiliating and disastrous situation for the government.²⁰

Edward Bates of Missouri, a prominent former Whig, agreed to join Lincoln's cabinet as attorney general, ensuring the inclusion of one representative from a border state. This appointment pleased the Blairs, for Bates had been their original choice for president in 1860.²¹ Only after the Chicago convention chose Lincoln as the party's standard-bearer did Frank and Montgomery give their support to the Illinois "Rail Splitter," although thereafter they actively campaigned for him. Toying with the idea of including a cabinet member from a slave state not bordering a free state, Lincoln also tendered a position to John A. Gilmer, a popular North Carolina Whig congressman. Gilmer's declination, however, after a period of hesitation, ended the chance that any prominent leader from either the upper or lower South would align himself with the Republicans.

Lincoln next turned to Maryland for a cabinet representative, recognizing the state's vital strategic importance. As the *New York Times* noted, "The propriety of giving a Cabinet appointment to that State is very generally recognized." Montgomery Blair seemed to be the logical selection from that state, as he had led its small Republican Party. The *Times* regarded him as "evidently well seasoned timber for a Republican cabinet," while the *Boston Courier* credited him with "talents of the first order, profound learning, . . . the most energetic industry, . . . and a moral character entirely above reproach." Blair's aforementioned stature among former Democrats also weighed in his favor and provided a balance to the selection of the Whig Bates for the other border-state cabinet position. Although such former Whigs as William H. Seward and Thurlow Weed pressed for the selection of Maryland congressman Henry Winter Davis instead of Blair, Davis's Whig antecedents, flirtation with nativism, failure to support Lincoln during the presidential campaign, and the fact that Maryland Republicans bitterly opposed him killed

his chances. Geographical as well as political influences thus made Montgomery Blair an important ally to the new president, in 1861 and later.²²

Blair also brought important personal qualities and experience to the administration that made Lincoln value him as a colleague and adviser. Even a bitter critic regarded Blair, a widely respected lawyer, as "the best scholar in the cabinet."²³ A graduate of West Point and briefly thereafter an officer in the regular army, Blair was the only cabinet member with a military background. He was well acquainted with a number of Union and Confederate military leaders through his own past, his father's connections, and the naval experience of two of his brothers-in-law. The selection of Gustavus V. Fox, his wife's able brother, as assistant secretary of the navy probably further contributed to Blair's influence. Particularly in the early days of the war, when Lincoln and his cabinet were acutely aware of the difficulties facing them and their own unfamiliarity with military matters, Blair's background made him invaluable. Lincoln and Blair's cabinet colleagues came to see him, historian John Niven wrote, "as something of a military expert."²⁴ His support of Generals George B. McClellan and John C. Frémont for high commands contributed to their early promotions and assignments. These generals both proved to be disappointments, however, and Blair eventually lost confidence in them. Frémont's downfall he attributed to "his vixen of a wife."²⁵ Nevertheless, Lincoln did not blame his postmaster general for their failures, and he continued to value Blair's judgment on these and other matters.²⁶

Blair also won the president's respect through his effective administration of his department, which most observers traditionally viewed as a political sinecure with the primary function of overseeing routine patronage matters. Although Blair did not overlook patronage, he also ably carried out his administrative duties. The president, a former postmaster himself, had good reason for regarding Blair as the finest postmaster general in the nation's history. He worked diligently to eliminate overpriced mail contracts with railroads and other companies and tried to ensure that his department gave contracts only to the lowest or most efficient bidder. He created special army post offices to ensure the quick delivery of mail and packages to soldiers in the field. This measure was crucial for maintaining morale among homesick volunteers in the rapidly expanding army. He oversaw the initial use of indelible ink for the cancellation of stamps, which prevented the reuse of stamps. The illegal recycling of stamps had previously been possible simply by washing the ink off with water. Through the cooperation of his brother and other congressmen, Blair secured the passage of a bill abolishing the franking privilege of postmasters, which had heretofore been greatly abused. He similarly saw to the creation and implementation of the nation's first postal money-order system and the first program for free home-mail delivery in cities. Through hard work and skillful supervision, he converted a ten-million-dollar deficit in his department in 1861 into a surplus of eight hundred thousand dollars in 1864.²⁷

Blair's efficiency, occurring during wartime, impressed the president and contrasted greatly with the unspectacular efforts of most of his colleagues. Lincoln ruefully noted that the war "[did] not seem [so] greatly to add to the difficulties" of the post office as it did the other departments.²⁸ Two of Lincoln's initial cabinet members, Secretary of War Simon Cameron and Secretary of the Interior Caleb B. Smith, were hardly equal to the management of their departments. Lingering scandals in the wake of their early departures from Washington caused the president considerable embarrassment.²⁹ Although Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase worked hard to overcome his limited knowledge of national financial affairs, his eventual alienation of many bankers, financial leaders, and congressmen caused him grave difficulties in raising money and securing the passage of legislation.³⁰

Even Secretary of State Seward, who ultimately gained Lincoln's respect, early embarrassed himself and annoyed Lincoln. His unsuccessful attempts to dictate the selection of his fellow cabinet members before the inauguration, and then to wrest control of the administration from the president, deeply concerned Lincoln. Seward's written submission to the president of an ill-conceived plan to conciliate the disaffected southern states by provoking war with France and Great Britain also undermined Lincoln's faith in his judgment, at least initially. Seward had to contend with the hostility of Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Charles Sumner, who had wanted Seward's office for himself and to whom Lincoln increasingly looked for more judicious counsel on foreign policy matters. Furthermore, Seward's public and private comments provoked anger in Great Britain, where many considered him hostile and dishonest. Grave difficulties in Anglo-American relations subsequently threatened on several occasions to result in British recognition of the Confederacy, or even entrance into the conflict on the southern side, although neither of these dire contingencies came to pass.³¹

Also, in contrast to Blair, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles earned a perhaps undeserved reputation as an "old fogey," resistant to necessary changes, and struggled to overcome repeated accusations of scandal in his department. The bitter opposition of John P. Hale, chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, also hampered the secretary of the navy's efforts to administer his department until his fellow Republicans ousted the senator in late 1864. The difficulties of blockading thousands of miles of southern coast, among other responsibilities, severely taxed the former editor. Ultimately he managed quite well, although his critics would never concede that he had been an effective department chief. Lincoln, with no executive experience, worked hard to supervise his overworked and occasionally inept (or, like Cameron, corrupt) subordinates. Blair's effective leadership of the post office therefore largely contributed to Lincoln's liking and trust for his postmaster general.³²

Blair also proved his worth with advice on several crucial occasions. Early in his administration, baffled and overburdened by the pressures of the presidency

and the problems caused by the secession of the states of the lower South, Lincoln found it difficult to develop a policy regarding Union forts in what had swiftly become Confederate territory. Seward, upper South Unionists, and General-in-Chief Winfield Scott recommended the abandonment of Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor in order to avoid overt conflict and keep the upper South in the Union. Many Republicans warned that this concession would make the administration appear weak and ineffective, and would in any event not avert a war or prevent more states from seceding. When Lincoln initially presented this problem to his cabinet soon after taking office, only Montgomery Blair unambiguously recommended holding and reprovioning the fort and defying southern demands for its surrender. "Every new conquest made by the rebels strengthens their hands at home and their claim to recognition . . . abroad," he insisted. His colleagues in the cabinet, impressed by his arguments and beginning to doubt General Scott's unfavorable assessment of the chances of holding the fort, soon swung over to the postmaster general's position, reinforcing Lincoln's own determination to maintain this symbol of the Union in the seceded states. Despite the fact that this hard line resulted in the bombardment and surrender of the fort, the policy was in some ways successful. The Confederate attack on Major Robert Anderson's men united the North in defense of the flag and cast Jefferson Davis, not Lincoln, in the role of the aggressor. Lincoln subsequently and often expressed his appreciation for his postmaster general's wisdom during this crisis.³³

The administration soon faced a series of crises as war broke out between the sections, and later in 1861 Blair again distinguished himself by his steady judgment and keen perception. Captain Charles Wilkes, the impetuous captain of the U.S.S. *San Jacinto*, a man Blair knew personally and held in low regard, boarded a British ship at sea off Cuba in early November and removed two Confederate commissioners, John Slidell and James Mason. This action met with widespread approval; embattled northerners viewed it as a blow to the Confederacy and a gesture of defiance toward Great Britain, the nation's opponent in its first two wars. The Republican-dominated House of Representatives passed a resolution congratulating Wilkes. When the cabinet first discussed this matter, however, Blair "said at once that they [Mason and Slidell] must be surrendered"³⁴ because their removal violated international law. The United States should release them and send them on their way to Europe. The postmaster general realized that Great Britain, the world's most powerful nation, would be no more willing to accept this sort of insult than the United States had been fifty years earlier, when similar incidents led to the War of 1812. No one in the cabinet initially concurred with this assessment, but it soon became clear that the British were willing to go to war over this so-called "Trent Affair." Ordinarily even-tempered, Prime Minister Palmerston informed his cabinet that he would be damned if he would stand for it. Lincoln and his cabinet reluctantly agreed with Blair, and the president ordered the pris-

oners released. Again the postmaster general had demonstrated his worth to the president as a discerning adviser.³⁵

Lincoln and Blair, despite their varying backgrounds and temperaments, were philosophically compatible in many ways, another factor that contributed to their excellent working relationship. In 1860 the two men, unlike the reputedly more antislavery Seward, both opposed compromise measures intended to pacify the South by retreating from the Republican Party's opposition to the expansion of slavery. Blair and Lincoln also agreed in opposing Radical Republican calls for emancipation and confiscation of rebel property early in the war. They viewed these measures as unconstitutional, unless carried out under the authority of the president's war powers, and likely to alienate northern War Democrats and border state Unionists. Although Lincoln and Blair both supported emancipation, they wanted to wait until public sentiment and the military situation favored it. In 1862 Lincoln determined that the Emancipation Proclamation was a necessary war measure; Blair, after initially doubting that the time was right, steadfastly supported the president's decision. In a public letter, Blair insisted that attempting to evade the necessity for emancipation would be "like debating whether the rain that is falling is needed" and warned of the potentially "disastrous results of attempting to dodge the Slavery question. . . . Let us meet it like men."³⁶

Both men also intended to provide compensation to loyal slaveowners, a plan that met with little favor in Congress or from leaders in the border states. To make emancipation palatable, the president and the postmaster general supported the colonization of the country's African American population, perhaps to Latin America or the Caribbean. Although Blair and Lincoln both opposed slavery on moral grounds, neither felt that blacks and whites could coexist harmoniously on terms of civil equality in the United States, at least at that time. Blair in fact argued in an 1861 letter to the president that colonization following emancipation would be "absolutely indispensable to prevent unspeakable horrors" and expressed in an 1864 letter to William Lloyd Garrison his belief that "history proves" the impossibility of "freedom and equality . . . for masses of blacks and whites in the same country." These contentions echoed Lincoln's 1858 assertion that "there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality."³⁷

Blair also supported Lincoln's attempts to restore the occupied southern states to the Union quickly, a policy unpopular among Radical Republican leaders. Blair believed that "the mass of the people at the South and of the [Confederate] Army have but little share in the guilt [for starting the war] and should not be held responsible for its horrors" and opposed any punitive measures that would fall equally on all southerners. Neither Blair nor Lincoln condoned Radical demands for postwar confiscation of rebel property or the execution of Confederate leaders. Both favored generous amnesty terms that, they believed, would speedily win



This engraving, made from an 1864 painting by Francis Carpenter, portrays Lincoln and his cabinet at the first reading of the Emancipation Proclamation two years earlier. Montgomery Blair stands second from right. (Maryland Historical Society.)

the renewed allegiance of southern whites after the successful termination of hostilities. They both contended that the president, not Congress, was responsible for supervising the political reorganization of southern state governments. In fact, Blair vigorously championed Lincoln's Reconstruction plan and his vituperative attack on the Radical opponents of the president's "safe and healing policy" in a speech at Rockville, Maryland, in October 1863 was probably the decisive event in forcing his ouster from the cabinet. Radical Republicans, outraged by Blair's race-baiting accusations that they intended to "make the manumission of the slaves the means of infusing their blood into our whole system" and "treat . . . loyal men of the South worse than slaves" thereafter intensified their demands for the postmaster general's ouster. Although the president understandably did not want to dismiss his loyal subordinate simply for championing his policies intemperately, political realities forced his hand as the election of 1864 approached. Retaining Blair became too politically costly, the benefits of removing him too obvious to ignore. Blair's dismissal certainly does not imply that any substantial ideological split had occurred between the two men. If anything, Blair had proven to be in closer agreement with the president on policy matters than any other cabinet member.³⁸

If Lincoln appreciated Blair's political support, as he surely did, he probably appreciated his personal loyalty even more. Blair's loyalty to Lincoln distinguished



Blair wrote that Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton “dislikes me personally and with good reason.” (From *The Civil War Through the Camera* . . . [New York: Patriot Press, 1914].)

him in the cabinet, many of whose members—and prominent Republican leaders—conspicuously lacked this quality. Chase, hoping to undermine Lincoln’s chances for reelection in 1864, used his position in the administration to build support for himself as a presidential candidate.³⁹ The president regarded Secretary of War Cameron as “utterly selfish” and “openly discourteous.” Cameron’s successor in the War Department, Edwin M. Stanton, loudly rejected the idea that he should be personally loyal to the president, informing a fellow cabinet member that he “knew of no particular obligations he was under” to Lincoln for his appointment. Conservative cabinet members Edward Bates and Caleb B. Smith increasingly felt alienated by what they perceived as Lincoln’s radical policies, such as emancipation, and his failure to consult them on important matters. Both would resign before the beginning of the president’s second term. Prominent congressional Republicans like Henry Winter Davis, Ben Wade, Thaddeus Stevens, Zachariah Chandler, and James W. Grimes belittled Lincoln and opposed his re-nomination. Charles Sumner, although personally friendly to the president, vigorously challenged his Reconstruction policy.⁴⁰

During the cabinet crisis of December 1862, when Radical senators attempted to force Lincoln to dismiss Secretary of State Seward and reorganize the administration, Blair took a firm stand. At a meeting attended by the cabinet and a delegation of senators Blair pointedly insisted that the president alone could legitimately direct the administration. Despite his personal dislike for Seward and acknowledging that he disagreed with him on many issues, Blair staunchly defended the secretary of state. At the time he probably knew that he, too, would have been

Thurlow Weed, a political power in New York and a long-time enemy of the Blairs. (From Thurlow Weed Barnes, The Life of Thurlow Weed [Boston, 1884].)



forced to leave the cabinet in any reshuffle intended to conciliate the Radicals. (Mary Todd Lincoln, for one, favored a cabinet reorganization in which the president retained only Montgomery Blair, as she perceptively considered him the president's most loyal adviser).⁴¹ Again, in this grave political crisis, Lincoln doubtless appreciated his lieutenant's vigorous support. Understandably, the president came to see in Blair a "true friend."⁴² After Blair's ouster from the cabinet, Lincoln informed an old acquaintance that "Blair is a good fellow. I like him. They have not treated him as well as they should, and I am sorry for it."⁴³

Although a valued and trusted adviser, Montgomery Blair possessed drawbacks that by 1864 limited his usefulness to the president and weakened his influence. Shifting political alliances caused by the stresses of the war and the development of radical Unionism in the border states seriously undermined his political base and made his retention in the cabinet less advantageous. His family's power in Maryland and Missouri waned as the war progressed. In Maryland, Henry Winter Davis outflanked Blair by converting from the Constitutional Union/Whig party to Radical Republicanism, a change to a great extent prompted by hatred for Blair and Lincoln. Davis then led the successful Radical opposition to Blair's candidacy for a U.S. Senate seat in 1865, all but ending his rival's political career less than a year before his own untimely death. The Conservative Republican Blair increasingly found himself portrayed as a reactionary, proslavery man in his own state, when in fact he had for years supported emancipation in the face of overwhelming opposition.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, in Missouri, Frank Blair found himself in a similar situation. His

cousin and former political ally, B. Gratz Brown, joined with John C. Frémont to lead a Radical faction that even took over the newspaper he controlled, the *St. Louis Missouri Democrat*. As a result of this wartime political shift toward radicalism in the border states, Lincoln realized that the political position of the Blairs was “somewhat anomalous.” Frank Blair’s political fortunes in Missouri particularly concerned Montgomery and his father, for they saw him as a potential presidential candidate and the family’s “hope and pride.”⁴⁵ Under growing attack from their new Radical enemies, the Blairs felt compelled, in turn, to strike at the Radicals. The strategy won them new Conservative supporters but in the process alienated a significant portion of the Republican Party.

Montgomery Blair’s penchant for engaging in protracted feuds also seriously tried Lincoln’s patience and undermined the postmaster general’s influence. Blair did not get along with Seward, whom he derided in his private correspondence as “Billy Bowlegs.” Within a few months of Lincoln’s death, Blair, who strongly supported Lincoln’s successor, Andrew Johnson, attacked Seward’s foreign policy, accusing the secretary of state of failing to check French aggression in Mexico.⁴⁶ For his part, Attorney General Bates felt that Blair opposed any measure he proposed in the cabinet simply in order to foil him. Bates confided to his diary that Blair was a “tricky politician” who “[did] not have the first conception of statesmanship.”⁴⁷ Lingering animosity existed between Chase and Blair, especially after Frémont treacherously published private letters in which Blair accused the treasury secretary of preferring to see “soldiers killed” rather than “Treasury notes below par.”⁴⁸

Blair’s relations with Edwin M. Stanton were particularly poisonous, although both men were old Democrats. Blair regarded Stanton as without “heart & courage” and informed his brother that “the nation [was] going to ruin for the want of a proper head to the War Dept.”⁴⁹ Blair acknowledged to a relative in 1863 that the secretary of war “dislikes me personally and with good reason.”⁵⁰ The two men did not speak or otherwise acknowledge one another’s presence at cabinet meetings, and Blair increasingly had to turn to his “personal friend” Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt as an intermediary between himself and Stanton.⁵¹ Blair’s dismissal in 1864 so delighted the dour secretary of war that he expressed regret that he had not joined Radical Zachariah Chandler in “ha[ving] a good drunk” to celebrate.⁵² Blair also feuded with, among others, Speaker of the House Schuyler Colfax, Congressman William D. Kelley, and Governor Andrew G. Curtin of Pennsylvania, his old friend Charles Sumner, and General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck.⁵³ Lincoln on one occasion gently rebuked Blair for allowing “hot blood” to cause him to “imput[e] to public men motives which they do not avow.”⁵⁴

Certainly the president regretted the tendency of his loyal, valued subordinate to engage in the type of bitter personal conflict he himself took pains to avoid.

According to John Nicolay and John Hay, the president's private secretaries, Lincoln displayed "growing fatigue and impatience" toward Blair's relentless infighting and "denunciations" of his adversaries. Although he may at times have appreciated the value and usefulness of such a sturdy "hatchet man" to wield against his political opponents, Blair was simply too aggressive and indiscriminating in his attacks, and made too many enemies. Blair's contentious personality made these feuds almost inevitable, and it is remarkable that even the extremely tolerant Lincoln did not find these traits personally offensive. Hay and Nicolay later referred to Blair's "natural pugnacity,"⁵⁵ perhaps not the ideal disposition in an adviser at any time, but particularly not when the president needed to weld various factions together and unite the North's disparate political elements behind the war effort.

Lincoln's often overlooked personal and political closeness to Blair suggests that the president was more conservative than historians have often proposed. As Lincoln's difficult personal and political dealings with the Radical Republicans indicate, he did not belong to their faction, although at times he approved policies or made appointments to retain their support. His closeness with such Conservatives as Seward, Blair, and Orville H. Browning, and his stance on such issues as colonization, Reconstruction, emancipation, and the enlistment of black troops, mark him as a member of that faction. As Professor T. Harry Williams noted, "Lincoln . . . was on most matters a conservative. . . . But he was not the kind of conservative who . . . blandly rejected change when it could not be denied."⁵⁶ Although he certainly made an effort to represent all of the Republican Party's disparate elements, Abraham Lincoln's close relationship with the conservative Blair, as his Radical opponents realized, was no accident.

Montgomery Blair, however, was not the reactionary that his critics claimed. As already noted, he was an early opponent of slavery, although in 1862 he briefly "questioned the expediency" of federally imposed emancipation measures, understandably fearing their effect on the loyalty of the border states. He did not, as the *Boston Commonwealth* charged in early 1865, "think that justice [was] a superfluity in a republic" or "that the plans and laws of the Almighty may be easily defeated."⁵⁷ Montgomery Blair had in fact risked his legal and political career defending the freed slave Dred Scott before the Supreme Court in 1857. Like most observers he probably realized that Chief Justice Roger B. Taney and his proslavery colleagues would certainly rule against him, but he nevertheless persisted in his anti-slavery course, which won him few friends in the South or among Democratic supporters of Stephen A. Douglas or President James Buchanan in the North. Even in the summer of 1864, when Radical criticism of Blair was at its zenith, William Lloyd Garrison expressed his belief that "the most cruel injustice has been done to Mr. Blair" by those who questioned his dedication to emancipation.⁵⁸

Blair's surprisingly friendly relations with such Radicals as Benjamin Butler and Charles Sumner also indicate that he was not ideologically far from the mainstream of the Republican Party.⁵⁹

Although Blair was certainly a contentious man, historians, following the lead of his Radical Republican contemporaries, have exaggerated his supposed meanness and vindictiveness. The Civil War era was a time of high political stakes and bitter partisan clashes, and such Republicans as Benjamin Wade, Henry Winter Davis, Thaddeus Stevens, James W. Grimes, Benjamin Butler, Zachariah Chandler, Lyman Trumbull, George Julian, and Horace Greeley hardly displayed less meanness or bitterness in attacking Lincoln than Blair showed in defending the president and attacking them in turn. Perhaps the time has come to look past the stereotypical image of Lincoln's postmaster general as an angry nonentity in order to understand what made Montgomery Blair a valuable and effective part of the wartime administration.

NOTES

1. Abraham Lincoln to Montgomery Blair, September 23, 1864, Blair Family Papers, Library of Congress. Blair's response of the same date, in which he thanks Lincoln for "the uniform kindness which has marked your course towards [me]," is located in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Papers, Library of Congress.
2. Thaddeus Stevens to Salmon P. Chase, October 8, 1863, Beverly Wilson Palmer, ed., *The Selected Papers of Thaddeus Stevens*, 2 vols. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 1:413.
3. Michael Burlingame, ed., *Lincoln Observed: Civil War Dispatches of Noah Brooks* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 79, 97–98.
4. Quoted in John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, 10 vols. (New York: Century, 1886–90), 9:339.
5. David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 534–35; Andrew Rolle, *John Charles Frémont: Character as Destiny* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 232.
6. Donald, *Lincoln*, 533–35; Gerald S. Henig, *Henry Winter Davis: Antebellum and Civil War Congressman from Maryland* (New York: Twayne, 1973), 214–25.
7. *Chicago Tribune*, September 26, 1864.
8. Quoted in William Ernest Smith, *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 2:288. [Hereafter cited as Smith, *Blair Family*.] Attempting to put the best face on the matter, Blair publicly proclaimed that he had "retired by the recommendation of his own father to the President . . . [as] he would not permit a son of his to stand in the way of the support of the loyal and patriotic chief magistrate." *Speech of the Hon. Montgomery Blair at the Cooper Institute, N.Y. to Ratify the Union Nominations, September 27, 1864* (New York: Daniel W. Lee, 1864), 2.
9. Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles: Secretary of the Navy Under Lincoln and Johnson*, 3 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 2:156; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:253, 290.
10. *Boston Commonwealth*, October 8, 1864; *Boston Commonwealth*, December 17, 1864; *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 2:155, 183–84.

11. Montgomery Blair to Abraham Lincoln, December 6, 1864, Lincoln Papers; Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, 9:349.
12. John M. Taylor, *William Henry Seward: Lincoln's Right Hand* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 211; Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union*, 4 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959–71), 4:82, 94; Stephen B. Oates, *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 432; Donald, *Lincoln*, 400.
13. Weed quoted in John G. Nicolay to Abraham Lincoln, March 30, 1864, in Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 vols. and 2 supplements (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953–55), 7:268 [hereafter cited as *CWL*]. Reflecting the low esteem in which most historians have held the postmaster general, Blair and Caleb B. Smith are the only two of Lincoln's seven initial cabinet members not to have been the subject of a full-length biography.
14. Quoted in Rita Lloyd Moroney, *Montgomery Blair: Postmaster General* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), 31.
15. *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 1:205.
16. Montgomery Blair to Nathaniel P. Banks, July 1, 1861, Nathaniel P. Banks Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University.
17. Elbert B. Smith, *Francis Preston Blair* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 211–14, 218–20; William E. Parrish, *Frank Blair: Lincoln's Conservative* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 112–14, 183–95.
18. Harriet A. Weed, ed., *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884), 1:607.
19. Donald, *Lincoln*, 264; Smith, *Blair Family*, 1:513–14, 2:241.
20. Harry J. Carman and Reinhard Luthin, *Lincoln and the Patronage* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), 17–20, 186–88, 204–12; Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 221–229; Donald, *Lincoln*, 297–99.
21. Montgomery Blair to Benjamin Gratz, February 29, 1860, Henrietta Clay Papers, Transylvania University Library, Lexington, Kentucky.
22. *New York Times*, February 12, 19, 1861; *Boston Courier*, March 8, 1861; *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed*, 611, 614; Donald, *Lincoln*, 263; Smith, *Blair Family*, 1:514–15; Henig, *Henry Winter Davis*, 140–42, 151–53.
23. Burlingame, *Lincoln Observed*, 48–49.
24. John Niven, *Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 327.
25. Montgomery Blair to Frank Blair, September 27, 1861, Blair Family Papers. Blair's changing attitude toward McClellan is noted in David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 118.
26. Smith, *Blair Family*, 1:97, 101–2, 2:1–3, 63–64, 142–44.
27. Moroney, *Montgomery Blair: Postmaster General*, 19–30. See also the portion of Lincoln's 1862 annual message dealing with the U.S. Post Office in *CWL* 5:524–25 and Phillip Shaw Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 287. An article praising Blair's administration of his department appears in the *New York Times*, October 3, 1864.
28. Abraham Lincoln to Montgomery Blair, September 23, 1864, Blair Family Papers.
29. Donald, *Lincoln*, 325–26; Carman and Luthin, *Lincoln and the Patronage*, 129–32, 137–39. A particularly damaging episode of corruption and inefficiency in the Interior Department's management of Indian affairs in Minnesota resulted in the outbreak of hostilities between

settlers and Sioux and left hundreds dead on each side. Alvin M. Joseph Jr., *The Civil War in the American West* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 105–11.

30. Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase*, 255–58.

31. Donald, *Lincoln*, 281–82, 289–90; Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 100–101; Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 106–9, 116–17; Burton J. Hendrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946), 201.

32. Donald, *Lincoln*, 400; Niven, *Gideon Welles*, 348–49, 465, 480; *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 1:482–83, 485–88.

33. Montgomery Blair to Abraham Lincoln, March 15, 1861, Blair Family Papers; Montgomery Blair to Gustavus V. Fox, January 31, 1861, in Robert Means Thompson and Richard Wainwright, eds., *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy 1861–1865*, 3 vols. (New York: Naval History Society, 1920), 1:5; Donald, *Lincoln*, 285–96; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:4–10. Francis Preston Blair Sr. also strongly urged Lincoln to reinforce Fort Sumter. Francis Preston Blair Sr. to Montgomery Blair, March 12, 1861, Lincoln Papers.

34. John Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, 5 vols. (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1909–13), 1:399.

35. Donald, *Lincoln*, 320–23; Niven, *Gideon Welles*, 444–47; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:129, 194.

36. *New York Times*, April 5, 1863; Robert Gray Gunderson, *The Old Gentlemen's Convention: The Washington Peace Conference of 1861* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), 18, 84; Donald, *Lincoln*, 269–70, 314–17; Montgomery Blair to Abraham Lincoln, September 23, 1862, Lincoln Papers.

37. Montgomery Blair to Abraham Lincoln, November 11, 1861, Lincoln Papers; (Boston) *Liberator*, July 1, 1864; Lincoln quoted in Robert W. Johannsen, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 162; Donald, *Lincoln*, 343–48; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:53–89; Janet L. Coryell, “The Lincoln Colony: Aaron Columbus Burr’s Proposed Colonization of British Honduras,” *Civil War History*, 43 (1997): 9.

38. Montgomery Blair to Abraham Lincoln, May 6, 1864, Lincoln Papers; *Speech of the Hon. Montgomery Blair on the Revolutionary Schemes of the Ultra Abolitionists and in Defence of the Policy of the President Delivered at the Unconditional Union Meeting Held at Rockville, Montgomery Co., Maryland, on Saturday, October 3, 1863* (New York: D. W. Lee, 1863), 17, 4, 16; William C. Harris, *With Charity for All: Lincoln and the Restoration of the Union* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 230–44, 320; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:227–45.

39. Michael Burlingame and John R. Turner Ettlenger, eds., *Inside Lincoln's White House: The Complete Civil War Diary of John Hay* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997), 103.

40. Quoted in Donald, *Lincoln*, 325; *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 1:98; Donald, *Lincoln*, 379; Marvin R. Cain, *Lincoln's Attorney General: Edward Bates of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1965), 212–13, 311–15; Donald, *Lincoln*, 476–78; T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 306–33.

41. Donald, *Lincoln*, 427. Mary Todd Lincoln may have been favorably inclined toward Blair due to the fact that they were distantly related. Montgomery Blair to Benjamin Gratz, June 7, 1860, Henrietta Clay Papers, Transylvania University Library, Lexington, Kentucky.

42. *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 1:194–98; quoted in Donald, *Lincoln*, 534.

43. This statement was recalled by James Singleton and reported in the *New York Times*, June 25, 1865.

44. Jean H. Baker, *The Politics of Continuity: Maryland Political Parties from 1858 to 1870*

- (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 96–102; Reinhard H. Luthin, “A Discordant Chapter in Lincoln’s Administration: The Davis-Blair Controversy,” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 39 (March 1944): 25–48. The failure of Blair’s senatorial candidacy is discussed in the *Boston Commonwealth*, March 4, 1865.
45. Parrish, *Frank Blair*, 125, 146–49; Burlingame and Ettlinger, eds., *Inside Lincoln’s White House*, 123–24.
46. Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:194. The text of Blair’s July 12, 1865, speech castigating Seward is located in the miscellaneous files of the Blair Family Papers.
47. Howard K. Beale, ed., *The Diary of Edward Bates, 1859–1866* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), 291; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:191.
48. Quoted in Virginia Jeans Laas, ed., *Wartime Washington: The Civil War Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 106. Nicolay and Hay later asserted that “these letters, being printed, came up like impertinent ghosts between the Postmaster-General and his colleagues at the Cabinet table.” Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, 9:335.
49. Montgomery Blair to Frank Blair, September 13 and 17, 1862, Blair Family Papers.
50. Montgomery Blair to Benjamin Gratz, October 11, 1863, Henrietta Clay Papers, Transylvania University Library, Lexington, Kentucky.
51. Montgomery Blair to Ann Coleman, May 14, 1863, John J. Crittenden Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University.
52. J. K. Herbert to Benjamin F. Butler, September 26, 1864, Benjamin F. Butler, *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler during the Period of the Civil War*, 5 vols. (Norwood, Mass.: Plimpton Press, 1917), 5:168; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:231–34, 288–89; Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, 9:337.
53. Abraham Lincoln to Cornelius Walborn, June 18, 1864, CWL 7:400; Smith, *Blair Family*, 2:241; Burlingame and Ettlinger, eds., *Inside Lincoln’s White House*, 115; Donald, *Lincoln*, 534; Hendrick, *Lincoln’s War Cabinet*, 389; Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man*, 139–41.
54. Burlingame and Ettlinger, eds., *Inside Lincoln’s White House*, 254.
55. Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, 9:335, 340.
56. T. Harry Williams, “Lincoln and the Radicals: An Essay in Civil War History and Historiography” in *The Selected Essays of T. Harry Williams* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 62.
57. Montgomery Blair to Abraham Lincoln, September 23, 1862, Lincoln Papers; *Boston Commonwealth*, January 14, 1865.
58. (Boston) *Liberator*, July 1, 1864.
59. Smith, *Blair Family*, 1:380–97, 2:244–45; Benjamin F. Butler to Montgomery Blair, June 6, July 29, 1861, Blair Family Papers; Hans L. Trefousse, *Ben Butler: The South Called Him BEAST!* (New York: Twayne, 1957), 86, 92. After Confederates burned Blair’s Maryland home in the fall of 1864, Butler ordered troops under his command to burn the home of former Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon in retaliation. Blair thanked his friend for his “consideration” in thus attempting “to resent my wrongs,” but regretted that he had taken this hasty action. Montgomery Blair to Benjamin F. Butler, August 10, 1864, in Butler, *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler*, 5:32. On this episode, see also Howard C. Westwood, “Benjamin Butler’s Naval Brigade,” *Civil War History*, 34 (September 1988): 268.

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Since 1975 the *Maryland Historical Magazine* has published regular compilations of books, articles, and doctoral dissertations relating to Maryland history. The following list includes materials published in 1999 as well as earlier works that have been brought to our attention.

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Book Reviews

Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766. By Fred Anderson. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. 887 pages. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$40.00.)

Not since the appearance of Lawrence H. Gipson's massive fifteen-volume history *The British Empire Before the American Revolution* has such an ambitious book considered the consequences of the Seven Years' War for the North Atlantic world. In an engaging narrative, supplemented by nine detailed maps illustrating operational theaters in North America, Europe, and India, Anderson argues that this global conflict inadvertently created the matrix for the birth of the United States by expelling the Bourbon powers from New France and Florida. The civil unrest that followed the Treaty of Paris resulted from native and American efforts to shape Whitehall's postwar policies "in terms acceptable to themselves" (xx). The author takes issue with determinists who perceive the Spirit of '76 in every mid-eighteenth-century dispute between London and the colonies by interjecting an element of contingency into the debate about the causes of the first empire's disintegration. The magnitude of England's victory during the Seven Years' War ensured that Britons on both sides of the ocean would repeatedly try to redefine the imperial relationship within George III's greatly expanded dominions until armed rebellion finally severed the tie. *Crucible of War* also provides a corrective to previous analyses of the pivotal years between 1754 and 1766 by introducing a strong cast of Amerindian characters whose consequential deliberations have often been minimized by writers focusing upon the activities of courtiers at St. James, Versailles, or Sans Souci.

Two themes evident in Anderson's earlier award-winning book *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) provide the exegetical framework for this latest effort. First, the distinctive contractual relationships between the government of Massachusetts Bay and its troops seems to provide the archetype for the "negotiated system" projected upon Whitehall and the Americas through the period under study (xix). Second, the author amplifies his notion that war is "a theater of intercultural interaction," where combatants create stereotypes about allies and enemies alike, by extending this principle to governmental leaders as well as to soldiers in the field (xx). Influential London administrators, therefore, developed negative impressions of the colonists because of their refusal to march in lockstep with imperial initiatives and decided to exert greater political control over the periphery after Canada and Florida were ceded to the Hanoverian kings.

The early British military reverses of 1754–57 and Amerindian-colonial disenchantment with London's policies between 1763 and 1766 are neatly explained by Anderson's collaborative model. Braddock, Loudoun, and Abercromby suffered defeat because their auxiliaries resented being treated as inferiors by "Butcher" Cumberland's sycophants. Consequently, American levies refused to serve under regular officers, colonial assemblies spurned metropolitan demands to sustain redcoats in the field, and native war parties abandoned British expeditionary forces with fatal results. Pontiac's Rebellion and civilian unrest following the Treaty of Paris were indicative of local disaffection for a central authority that did not yet appreciate the aspirations of its trans-Atlantic dependents.

Discounting the conclusions of Richard Middleton's seminal work *The Bells of Victory: The Pitt-Newcastle Ministry and the Conduct of the Seven Years' War, 1757–1762*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), the author credits William Pitt for the unparalleled military triumphs of Amherst, Wolfe, Forbes, Monckton, and Albemarle because he alone realized that local cooperation was essential for victory in the New World. The Great Commoner's subsidy policies and his confidence in provincial military measures harnessed the dormant power of British North Americans because they now believed that "they were full partners in Pitt's imperial venture" (322). Unfortunately, the bloom in Anglo-American relations could not survive apart from its creator; Pitt's resignation from office in 1762 reduced his bilateral policy to a deadhead because subsequent ministries, especially the Grenville regime, tried to raise colonial revenues through coercion.

Students of Maryland's past will be surprised to read that the inhabitants of Lord Baltimore's proprietary "sat out the war" and contributed little to the British victory (615). This is a puzzling assertion because the Annapolis legislature was one of the few provincial assemblies to support the imperial war effort during the early years of the struggle against New France. The General Assembly's decision to raise three hundred men for the 60th (Royal American) Regiment of Foot, its gift of £2,000 to feed regular soldiers in New York during the winter of 1756–57, and the recompense of Maryland masters whose servants enlisted in the ranks prior to January 1, 1757, are not mentioned in the text. Despite these oversights, however, Dr. Anderson and his publisher are to be commended for producing a detailed history of the Seven Years' War that will certainly become the standard North American account of this event.

ALEXANDER V. CAMPBELL
 University of Western Ontario

Cast-Iron Architecture in America: The Significance of James Bogardus. By Margot Gayle and Carol Gayle. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998. 272 pages. Appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.50.)

In the 1862 *Men of Progress* painting that hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., James Bogardus appears in the background among eighteen other then-living American inventors. The group included Peter Cooper, iron founder and philanthropist; Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph; and Richard Hoe, creator of the rotary press. The label cites Bogardus for his contribution to cast-iron, fireproof buildings. There is more to it than that of course, and with this splendid combined biography and technological history by the mother-daughter team of Margot and Carol Gayle, the modest inventor steps appropriately into the foreground while his considerable accomplishments are placed in the context of the nineteenth-century building arts.

Even now, more is known of what Bogardus did—he invented the cast-iron front and the metal-framed building in America—than of who he was. Nevertheless, the Gayles have given us as full a sketch as they could of a retiring individual. James Bogardus (1800–74), of Dutch extraction, was born on a farm near Catskill, New York. Having shown some mechanical aptitude, he left school at fourteen, became an apprentice to a local watchmaker, and later took over the business. He spent a few years in Savannah, Georgia, working as an engraver before returning to Catskill and setting up a business in both trades. His first invention was an eight-day clock with an unusual mechanism for which he won an award from New York's American Institute, an organization (similar to Philadelphia's Franklin Institute and Baltimore's Maryland Institute) that promoted domestic technology and industry.

Shortly after that, Bogardus moved to New York, where he met and married Margaret Maclay. She was the daughter of a Baptist minister and a professional painter of miniature portraits. (There were no children.) Over the next two decades, Bogardus invented and/or patented other devices, most notably an eccentric grinding mill (whose principle is still in use today for grinding and polishing large diameter telescope mirrors, for example), a gas meter, and an engraving machine. His last patent was for innovative construction techniques that advanced cast-iron architecture.

In an attempt to protect the gas meter patent abroad, Bogardus went to England in 1836, and, finding ready employment for his engraving machine in London, decided to stay. Two years later his wife joined him and continued her work as a portrait painter. Bogardus had an opportunity to see cast-iron columns used in London buildings by architect John Nash and engineer Thomas Telford. When he and his wife toured the Continent before they returned to America, stopping in Paris, he may also have seen the great cast-iron and glass dome of the Halle au Ble, now the Bourse de Commerce. In Italy, Bogardus was strongly impressed by Renaissance architecture and shortly determined, in the good old American way, to mass-produce it in metal.

His first such venture, back in New York, was a five-story building in 1848

for Dr. Milhau, a pharmacist originally from Baltimore. America's first cast-iron front went up in an amazing three days. The next year he built the Laing Stores, with two facades of cast iron, and nearby in Lower Manhattan, his own factory. The latter had an iron frame as well as an iron front. In 1850, Bogardus was granted a patent for his new methods of constructing metal-framed buildings.

At this point, Baltimore enters the story in an especially significant way. The *Sun* Iron Building, built for the progressive owners of the *Baltimore Sun*, was the first major commercial application of Bogardus's new principles of all-iron construction. The five-story, metal-framed and fronted building was completed in 1851 on the prominent corner of Baltimore and South streets. Bogardus and Robert G. Hatfield, a New York architect, designed it in Renaissance Revival style and decorated its two cast-iron facades at the fifth-floor level with life-sized statues of Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin. Daniel Badger, a New York founder, supplied the rolling iron shutters for the storefronts, but the *Sun*'s owners insisted on employing local foundries for most of the ironwork. Adam Denmead and Benjamin S. Benson, Baltimore locomotive builders, respectively contributed the metal frame and the cast-iron front. Richard Hoe's new rotary presses occupied the basement.

The influence of the *Sun* Iron Building was profound. It received a great deal of publicity at the time and today ranks with London's Crystal Palace, designed by William Paxton for the great London exposition of 1851, as one of the most significant metal and glass structures of the nineteenth century. It inaugurated the architectural foundry business in Baltimore. Hayward, Bartlett & Co., which had supplied the heating plant for the *Sun* Iron Building, became the leading local producer of architectural ironwork, fabricating and shipping complete ironfront buildings to several American cities. When Bogardus designed the 1854 Harper Brothers Building in New York (often cited, for example in Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time, and Architecture*, as a significant early example of metal and glass construction), Baltimore's Hayward, Bartlett & Co. supplied the iron facade, complete with the statues. Bogardus used the same *Sun* Iron Building patterns in other buildings he designed for publishers elsewhere.

Bogardus's buildings for the *Sun* and Harper Brothers were more quickly erected and more utilitarian than masonry structures; the metal frame allowed more usable space inside and the iron front with its large glass windows filled the interior with light. They were fireproof, or as nearly so as it was possible at the time to make them (insulating the metal columns and beams against the effects of fire was yet to come). Bogardus's system employed mass production and interchangeable parts, prefabrication and modular construction, terms applicable to modern assembly lines and methods of building, in the mid-nineteenth century. Cast-iron front buildings changed the face of the American city—Baltimore once had more than a hundred of them—and prefigured the sky-

scraper. The major differences between Bogardus's iron-framed buildings and modern highrises were those of material (the advent a century ago of cheap, mass-produced steel) and scale.

The *Sun* Iron Building, two others that Bogardus built in Baltimore, and most of the rest of the city's cast-iron fronts, went down in the great fire of 1904. Urban renewal and downtown redevelopment projects claimed more; now just a handful remain, concentrated on West Baltimore Street. It is the same story in most other American cities.

Not, however, in New York where three of Bogardus's buildings still stand. The SoHo district contains the greatest collection of cast-iron architecture in the world. In the 1960s Robert Moses planned to run the Lower Manhattan Expressway through the area until cooler heads, including the formidable Jane Jacobs and the author of this book, prevailed. They hired a Princeton planner who concluded that SoHo's "large lofts and cheap rents encouraged small businesses and other activities that were economically, socially, and culturally valuable for the city." The SoHo district, placed on the National Register and designated a New York City landmark, was eventually rescued as recounted by the Gayles. Today, with its galleries, restaurants, and stores, SoHo is a tremendous urban economic engine. The analogy with the threatened west side of downtown Baltimore is obvious.

Cast-Iron Architecture in America opens with a brief and instructive survey of the early European structural and architectural uses of cast iron in bridges, mills, train sheds, conservatories, etc. and concludes with some outstanding American examples of "one of the characteristic forms of nineteenth-century architecture . . . a legacy that was nearly lost." The book's last photograph is of Baltimore's 1869 Fava Fruit Company Building, taken down in the 1970s and re-erected in 1996 as the facade of the Blaustein Building of the Baltimore City Life Museums (now closed, unfortunately).

Margot Gayle, the author of the 1974 *Cast-Iron Architecture in New York* and a preservationist whose efforts have been recognized with several awards, has probably done more than anyone living to promote and protect this uniquely American building form. The fact that Sigfried Giedion's statement, "in spite of its contemporary importance and its very real merit the work of Bogardus is almost unknown today," no longer applies is due largely to her. Margot Gayle's many years of scholarly investigation of cast-iron architecture and labor in the preservation trenches and Carol Gayle's astute judgments as a historian are reflected on every page of this eminently succinct, informed, and readable new work. James Bogardus, the unprepossessing and previously unheralded inventor, has indeed been fortunate in his admirers.

JAMES D. DILTS
Baltimore

The Antietam Campaign. Edited by Gary W. Gallagher. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999. 335 pages. Endnotes, bibliographic essay, maps, illustrations, index. \$32.50.)

The Battle of Antietam or Sharpsburg, the bloodiest one-day battle in American history, was fought September 17, 1862, in the hills of rural western Maryland. More than 23,000 Union and Confederate soldiers became casualties in what was the culminating event of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the North. Having lost around a fourth of his army in the bloodbath, Lee was forced to withdraw to Virginia. Robert E. Lee's failure in Maryland was the most significant in a series of Confederate losses that fell along a one-thousand mile front. This, and other factors, such as the battle's influence on Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, have caused modern historians to speculate whether Antietam was not the true turning point of the Civil War.

A momentous event such as Antietam should surely have been the basis for hundreds of published studies, as has been the case with the other major battle fought north of the Potomac—Gettysburg. Yet in modern times, only two books; *The Gleam of Bayonets* (1965) by James Murfin and *Landscape Turned Red* (1983) by Stephen Sears, have stood the test of time as credible scholarly studies of the campaign and battle. Joseph Harsh's *Taken at the Flood: Robert E. Lee and Confederate Strategy in the Maryland Campaign of 1862* (1999) has probably surpassed these two books as the definitive examination of the campaign. Along with these major studies, a trickle of supplemental books focusing on various sub-themes of Antietam have made their way into print. These titles have covered such diverse topics as medical care, photography, and the Sharpsburg civilians.

In *The Antietam Campaign*, Gary Gallagher has put together a team of nine first-rate scholars who contribute ten cutting edge essays on various sub-topics regarding the battle and campaign. These are all well-researched pieces on subjects such as the opposing armies, the relationship of politics to the campaign, and Confederate and Union leadership. This collection also contains several excellent micro-tactical studies.

While all the essays are worth reading, a number stand out. Keith Bohannon's examination of Confederate logistical problems in the Maryland Campaign provides vivid insights into an army that one southern commander reported had never been "so dirty, ragged, and ill provided for" as in the fall of 1862. Not only were Lee's men in ragged uniforms and subsisting on a diet of green corn and apples, they were also indifferently equipped with a variety of shoulder arms that included a high percentage of .69 caliber smoothbore muskets. While these were ostensibly archaic weapons for the 1860s, when "state of the art" Springfield and Enfield rifles dominated the battlefield, many commanders felt that smoothbores were as good as any for close-quarters combat.

Much is often made of the fact that McClellan outnumbered Lee more than two-to-one yet failed to crush the Army of Northern Virginia along the banks of the Antietam and possibly end the war. D. Scott Hartwig's essay, "Who Would Not Be a Soldier: The Volunteers of '62 in the Maryland Campaign," argues that this may not have been an option. While McClellan had the numbers, his force was not the Army of the Potomac that gained fame and glory at Gettysburg and other battles but an amalgam of disparate commands from several different armies. What is more, Hartwig writes, "nearly one-quarter of McClellan's infantry had undergone little or no training."

The inexperience of these troops manifested itself in a number of ways. Green troops generally do not march as well as veterans, thus McClellan's pursuit of Lee was slowed. In the Battle of Antietam some of the new recruits performed bravely. However, many of the new units were simply not ready for combat, and their participation actually worked against Union success. For example, the author points out that the 16th Connecticut had only been in the service for three weeks. Unfortunately, they were exposed on the far left flank of the Union army when General A. P. Hill's Confederate division arrived on that part of the field to save the day for Lee. For the Connecticut regiment, the results were sadly predictable: Hill's veterans overran their position, causing a chain reaction that checked the entire Union advance on that part of the field.

"Defending Lee's Flank" by Robert E. L. Krick is a seminal work that explores the role of Confederate icons, J. E. B. Stuart, and John Pelham and their coordination of artillery on Nicodemus Heights. Traditional accounts have placed the defense of this sector strictly in the hands of Stuart's Horse Artillery. Krick's research reveals that Stuart and Pelham utilized guns from various batteries under "Stonewall" Jackson's command in an ad hoc fashion to protect the Confederate left flank.

Although most of the essays in this book deal with the campaign and battle, one of the more important pieces is contributed by military historian Carol Reardon and deals with the role of the battlefield as classroom. Reardon reminds us that "National Battlefields" such as Antietam were established both as memorials to the men who fought there and as living classrooms for future leaders. Thus developed the "staff ride" wherein classes from the Army War College took a sort of field trip to Antietam and other sites to study terrain, leadership, and tactics.

People often ask me what I consider the best books on Antietam. To understand the campaign and battle Murfin and Sears remain the standards. Harsh's new book is the most detailed campaign analysis. Gallagher's *Antietam Campaign* is the best supplemental study to date and will no doubt remain so for a long time.

TED ALEXANDER
Antietam National Battlefield

Prohibition and Politics. By Robert A. Hohner. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999. 468 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.)

From a post-Civil War Salisbury, Maryland, boyhood in a storekeeper's family, to a 1930 assertion by *Baltimore Evening Sun* columnist, H. L. Mencken, that then-Southern Methodist bishop James Cannon Jr. (1864-1944) had become "the chief figure in American life today," covers an impressive distance by an intriguing personality.

This scion of a pious home, extraordinarily benefited educationally, was destined by hard work and exceptional physical and psychial endurance to become "probably the most influential Southern churchman between the Civil War and World War" avers Professor Hohner of the University of Western Ontario. Along the way, Cannon's combative temperament, Princeton education, labors in the cause of Prohibition, and effectual campaign against presidential candidate Al Smith in 1928 earned him many enemies among "wets" and loyal Democrats, not to mention bishops and members of his own church.

Weakened by arduous high school studies, Cannon was restored to health by farm labor, and prepared for law at Methodist Randolph Macon College, where he excelled in scholastics and edited the college magazine. His future wife, Lura Bennett, daughter of the college president led him to religious conviction, church membership, and a call to the ministry. At Princeton Seminary he was imbued with orthodoxy, learned to preach, acquired an ecumenical outlook, and experienced a desire to evangelize the world while achieving profitable proprietorship of the seminary bookstore, a prelude, certainly, to his multifaceted ministerial career.

Found insufficiently strong for foreign mission service, he married Lura in 1888 and very successfully pastored several Virginia churches, the only seminary graduate among 235 Virginia Conference pastors. Soon dubbed an "up-start," Cannon as editor of a district church paper, contended for reforms, including limits on presiding elders. The Methodist establishment reacted with charges, but as was to happen subsequently in many venues, Cannon was twice exonerated, and younger preachers elected him to the law-making General Conference of 1902. In 1903 he acquired the *Baltimore and Richmond Christian Advocate* and as editor until 1918 used its pages to promote reform, temperance, higher education, and himself.

Awakened to the dangers of alcoholism during his college days, he headed the Virginia Anti-Saloon League from 1904, launching the tremendous career against "demon rum." But another major theme of this busy life was already in place since he left the pastorate in 1894 to become principal of the unfinished and unpromising Blackstone Female Institute, and, using his own funds, opened its doors in September 1894 with twenty-nine students and six teachers. His

tireless recruitment by 1907 made its three hundred boarding students the largest private school in Virginia. In 1915 it became a four year college. Blackstone became the longtime home of Lura and their growing family of eight children whom she often parented alone besides overseeing many school activities. Cannon later was the Conference leader in keeping Randolph Macon within the Methodist fold and as a bishop headed a churchwide Educational Advance.

Before that time his financial acumen and personal resources were called upon (1911–18) to develop the Lake Junaluska Assembly near Asheville, which ultimately became the denominations premier gathering place in the Southeast.

With President Wilson's coming to office, Cannon added lobbying for the Anti-Saloon League of America to superintending the Virginia League, editing the *Baltimore and Richmond Christian Advocate*, owning the *Richmond Virginian*, building Junaluska, and again heading Blackstone. He had offices in four cities, perhaps the only American preacher so versatile. Friend and foe alike marveled at his zeal, which was to prove invaluable in the attainment of National Prohibition.

Noticed in *Who's Who in America* as early as 1908 and mentioned in 1910 as a potential bishop, Cannon at the 1918 General Conference was but a runner-up until a nominee declined the ecclesiastical office, whereupon Cannon was elected, to the consternation of some churchmen. The senior bishops assigned him to superintend in Texas and Mexico, but he remained in the temperance struggle although finally relinquishing Blackstone and the paper. In 1920 two Alabama Conferences were added to his workload and he was also dispatched to the interior of the Congo, an arduous trip of four months replete with hazards. Ultimately African malaria would break his health.

Even as the Prohibition amendment was winning approval in Congress, American servicemen were landing in Europe, and reports of moral conditions there prompted Cannon to secure approval of the secretaries of war and the navy for an overseas inspection trip. He met General Pershing, British political and temperance leaders, and toured bases in France, finding drink and vice rampant despite Pershing's orders.

Virginians had voted their state "dry" in 1914 after the Anti-Saloon League had elected enough senators to secure a referendum on liquor. In the national effort headed by Cannon, his Virginia friends in Congress were very helpful, but it was the preaching, pamphleteering, and logical testimony of Cannon and others that carried the day and left him with a host of enemies. Even before America went dry he was involved with the alcohol problem overseas, but the export of the American experiment in social control via a World League against Alcoholism enjoyed no success. But, as chair of the Social Service and Temperance Commission of Southern Methodism, Cannon aided Armenian and Near East Re-

lief, traveled to Russia, and crossed the Atlantic sixty times from 1901 to 1937. He lamented the rise of Hitler and the Japanese invasion of China.

Leading breakaway Democrats in 1928, he contributed greatly to the defeat of Al Smith, which was to give his enemies more than ample reason to hound him in congressional committees and to secure a Corrupt Practices Act indictment which was finally unproven in 1934. Meanwhile, his wife died in 1927 and his involvement with Helen McCallum (a widow whom, he hired, but then fell in love with and married) gave enemies an opportunity to charge him with adultery, of which the church found him not guilty. Another charge brought against him involved his stock trading with a broker (later imprisoned) but again he was exonerated of wrongdoing.

The latter days of the Cannons included exile to service on the Pacific Coast until his retirement in 1938. After his confrontations with congressional opponents, a strange relationship ensued with H. L. Mencken, who often entertained the Cannons in Baltimore and corresponded with them in a friendly manner. This did not deter the unbeliever from both condemnation and some appreciation of Cannon after the bishop's death.

This biography, the product of decades of study, appears to have overlooked no source. However, a time line graphing the enormous range of Cannon's simultaneous roles would have been helpful. Hohner adequately documents Cannon's immense contributions to Prohibition reform via political and practical means and does not overlook flaws in Cannon's character. But the successes in this sacrificial ministry—Blackstone, Junaluska, Prohibition, journalistic output—outweigh the failures such as backing Methodist reunification 1920–24 (not achieved until 1939) and failure of alcoholism control in Europe. Perhaps other readers will agree with Hohner's final assessment that the "dominant thread" was belief that the "Lord's work required constant sacrifice and struggle and that only an aggressive and militant Christianity could transform . . . the world."

REV. EDWIN SCHELL

United Methodist Historical Society

Shouldering the Burdens of Defeat: West Germany and the Reconstruction of Social Justice. By Michael L. Hughes. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1999. 198 pages. Notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95.)

To understand Michael L. Hughes's treatise on a very specific topic, the general reader must recognize some basic facts of World War II and post-World War II German history. More than twice the 1990 population of Maryland were forcibly removed from their German homes between 1944 and 1946. They were East Prussians, Pommeranians, Silesians, Sudeten Germans, and German ethnics

from Eastern and Southeastern Europe. They were the victims of Soviet and later Polish and Czech occupation of their homeland. They were, next to the bombed-out German population, the citizens who initially assumed the debt for Nazi Germany's aggression in World War II. Of some eleven million Germans, approximately two million died as the consequence of their flight from Red Army soldiers and their soon-to-follow expulsion. Their fate was confirmed during the post-World War II Potsdam meeting with Churchill (Attlee), Stalin, and Truman as representatives of the victorious powers. Some few of those Germans, expelled from their native provinces, eventually found new homes in Maryland. The book by Michael L. Hughes, professor of history at Wake Forest University, deals largely with the economic fate of these millions of East Germans who were largely resettled in the western provinces of Germany, which in 1949 became the Federal Republic Germany.

Surprisingly the National Socialists realized after the early allied air raids on German cities, which caused loss of human lives and property, that it was an obligation of the government to compensate the victims of those raids. The Nazis, of course, believed during the first years of World War II that victory for them was assured and that the defeated enemy would pay for the losses incurred. It was easy for them to decide on compensation. But the Nazis miscalculated; they lost the war and with that the conceived economic basis of compensation for the war-damaged population. German land east of the Oder-Neisse Line, one-fourth of German territory in 1937, became Germany's initial payment for damages inflicted upon Soviet people, Poles, and Czechs.

Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's first post-World War II (West) German government during the 1950s and 1960s faced the challenge of balancing as much as possible the material losses of World War II. Germans who had not suffered materially during the war were to share the burdens with those who had lost either all or a part of their possessions, the refugees/expellees and victims of Allied air-raids. The term coined for this process was *Lastenausgleich*, "equalization of burdens." Expellees/refugees and bomb-damaged citizens created their own parties, notably the *Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* (League of Expellees and Disenfranchised). They adhered to the democratic, parliamentary principles as they had been created through the *Grundgesetz*, "basic law," which is the Germans' term for their constitution. Through challenging parliamentary discussions, in which all democratic parties realized that some kind of "equalization of burdens" had to be brought about, the goal was achieved. What helped the process was the success of the currency reform of 1948, which formed the financial basis for West Germany's remarkable economic growth that some refer to as the German *Wirtschaftswunder*, or "economic miracle." Expellees/refugees and other war-damaged citizens were provided with economic and financial help to purchase basic necessities of life and to lay the foundation

of a productive existence. Even though the support provided for the war-damaged of all categories did not entirely satisfy their demands, compromises were forged which proved to be acceptable, a notable success for the fledgling West German democracy. As it turned out, the refugees/expellees/other war-damaged developed into a noteworthy contributory factor for West Germany's successful economy and democracy. They were a formidable part of West Germany's population which was eager to rebuild their economic, social and political life. They became producers and consumers. Native West Germans, who had suffered little from the war, initially rejected the expellees/refugees/war-damaged as a burden but came to recognize that these citizens who had lost everything were actually an asset.

Michael Hughes should be complimented for this opus. He succeeded through meticulous research, evidenced through notes and an extensive bibliography and a firm understanding of the German post-World War II situation to explain a phenomenon that, at least according to this reviewer's expertise, has no parallel in history.

The book is valuable for the specialist of post-World War II West German developments during the Konrad Adenauer era. It sheds light on the tragedy and eventual success story of German refugees/expellees/war-damaged, a significant part of West Germany's postwar population and thus a significant part of German war and postwar history.

ARMIN E. MRUCK
Towson University

The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War. By Mark E. Neely Jr. and Harold Holzer. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. 266 pages. Notes, index. \$45.)

The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War is the second book by Mark E. Neely Jr. and Harold Holzer to address the subject of Civil War prints. Their first book, co-authored with Gabor S. Boritt, is entitled *The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). Throughout this second book, Neely and Holzer offer insight into unique, yet representative, prints created by northern print-makers during the Civil War and the years immediately following Reconstruction. From Fort Sumter to Appomattox, views of Union popular culture are depicted through the selected prints. A cogent, informative, and well-written work, *The Union Image* can be appreciated by the Civil War pundit and general reader alike. In addition, this book is also worthwhile for those specifically interested in the field of print history, as the Union perspective of the Civil War marks a definitive period for this artistic medium.

More thematic than chronological, *The Union Image* outlines various facets of the North during the war. The introduction, seven chapters, and epilogue, each possessing an over-arching theme, weave together symbols, meanings, events, and people into both a textual and visual format. Ideologically, the authors provide inclusive accounts and interpretations that address social, cultural, and political aspects of these prints. The interpretations are imparted in a clear and linear fashion, which, as a result, prevents each print from becoming overanalyzed. The concise captions for each print reinforce the descriptions and assessments expressed in the text, reconciling the visual image and the cognitive analysis.

Together, the chosen images also offer the reader a reflection of popular northern notions, namely that of Union patriotism. Since critics have traditionally denounced prints as aesthetic models and inaccurate depictions, the authors point out that these prints reveal the Union ideology, upheld by soldiers as well as the citizens. Coupled with the iconographical analysis are descriptions not only of the different types of prints, but also of the artists, print-makers, and prints companies, such as Currier and Ives.

The main body of the work contains images of famed military heroes and martyrs, even if their fame was short-lived—yet military victors, such as Grant and Sherman, were also honored through prints, leaving a lasting impression on subsequent generations. Wider subjects, like the camp life of soldiers, the role of women, and the 1864 presidential election, are highlighted as well. The subject of naval prints, often overlooked and not as popular, in particular show a technological turning point in warfare. The epilogue discusses African Americans as emancipated people who fought in order to maintain their freedom. Finally, the period of the 1880s and the 1890s is covered to a certain extent, as many prints produced during this time recollect the war through chromolithographs, or color enhanced prints, of battle scenes. Neely and Holzer strike a balance between prints that have already been thoroughly studied and those they feel require more attention.

One major theme found throughout the book is the question of whether prints or photographs are more representative of the Union perspective as a visual art form. Intermittently, the differences between the romance and symbolism of prints and the realism of photography are demarcated. Neely and Holzer, however, stress the significance of prints as a reflection of popular culture, as they were widely distributed. Unlike other visual media, prints also reflected existing values and impacted public opinion.

Although Neely and Holzer acknowledge the historical importance of photographs and their important role in the process of print-making, they appear to be overly defensive about prints as valid historical and artistic statements. Additionally, since the authors have already published a book about Confeder-

ate prints, a short discussion of major similarities and differences between the two subjects would have been illuminating. Without a contrasting perspective (though photography to some extent may have filled this role), and especially within the realm of Civil War scholarly literature, no topic can be fully defined, appreciated, or understood.

Despite these minor concerns, *The Union Image* is a useful and interesting tool for comprehending many aspects of the Union cause. Commonly held Union convictions and the ways in which cultural perceptions were shaped are embodied in the text and the selected prints. This symbiotic relationship between image and society furthers our understanding of the Civil War North mentalité.

EMILY CLOSE

Maryland Historical Society

Southern Folk Medicine, 1750–1820. By Kay K. Moss. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999. 275 pages. Appendix, notes, index. \$29.95.)

In a period when disease constantly threatened health and professional physicians were infrequently consulted, most southerners relied on homespun remedies to treat illness and injury. Kay K. Moss resurrects the domestic medical practices of early southerners through her investigation of twelve repositories of personal papers she calls “commonplace” books. These manuscripts included documents such as sermons, personal letters, and collections of healing recipes. Penned by white men and women of diverse regional influences, the commonplace books reflect their authors’ awareness of a variety of medicinal concoctions and healing practices. The collections of curative advice guided southerners in their efforts to treat ailments ranging from toothaches to malaria. Paying particular attention to backcountry settlements in the Carolinas, Moss demonstrates the ways in which southerners cultivated their own expertise in matters of health.

Moss peppers her discussion of southern healing practices with numerous excerpts from the commonplace books. She preserves idiosyncrasies of spelling and grammar to present the texts as early southerners created them. Moss also illustrates the dynamic nature of these documents, highlighting additions, commentary, and amendments to old notes to show that users continually reconciled prescriptive advice with their own medical experiences.

Using only a dozen commonplace books, Moss argues that medical information passed fluidly through regions and among individuals. Healing advice found in popular health books and city newspapers found its way into even backcountry journals. Southerners were great collectors of curative practices, gathering and mixing information from every source available, including midwives, neighbors, Native Americans, and slaves. Moss also demonstrates the eclectic

tic nature of southern folk medicine; healing recipes often called for practitioners to blend common ingredients like snakeroot with exotic components from across the Atlantic. Her sampling of commonplace books reveal a limited diversity among southern medical practices, highlighting divergences in remedies between upland settlers and residents of the low country. Overall, these personal healing manuscripts demonstrate that southerners (like domestic practitioners throughout America) shared a common faith in the efficacy of bleeding and purging as well as the curative qualities of natural ingredients.

Despite its virtues, Moss's study of southern domestic medicine contains some shortcomings worth mention. Moss states early on that she chooses to investigate only folk practices documented in the commonplace books. But her focus on these manuscripts places domestic healing in the hands of southerners unlikely to rely on folk medicine; southerners with the means to pen healing advice for themselves were more inclined to seek professional medical care. Many true folk practitioners simply lacked the ability or desire to commit their curative knowledge to paper. Also, many folk practices significant to southerners do not appear in the commonplace books. For example, Moss's study does not explore religious belief in relation to healing and pays scant attention to the superstitious rituals so important to many domestic healers. Although she draws broad and at times insightful conclusions about southern folk practices from these documents, Moss's discussion of domestic medicine is not comprehensive. A world of folk healing exists beyond her dozen commonplace books.

Southern Folk Medicine will satisfy readers intrigued with the details of curative practices. An extensive guide to medicinal ingredients in the appendix provides further information regarding the specific uses of, and perceived healing powers of, natural elements. In all, this is a useful though somewhat limited introduction to documented medical practices in the early South.

TRACEY BIRDWELL
University of Delaware

The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828. By Saul Cornell. (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1999. 343 pages. Appendices, notes, index. \$55.00 cloth; \$19.95 paper.)

It seems clear that in the battle over the Constitution the pro-Constitution Federalists won and their opponents, the Anti-Federalists, lost. In *The Other Founders*, Saul Cornell makes the case that if the Anti-Federalists indeed lost the battle they may have won the war. "If the structure of American government was crafted by the Federalists," he argues, "the spirit of American politics has more often been inspired by the Anti-Federalists" (1). Americans' localism, op-

position to big government, and emphasis on original intent in constitutional interpretation reflect “a distinctively Anti-Federalist vision of politics” (304). Suspicious of centralized authority, Anti-Federalists trusted in state and local governments, strict construction (or interpretation) of the Constitution, and a public sphere of free and rational political debate to protect individual rights and restrain the power of the federal government. Americans owe their tradition of political dissent to the Anti-Federalists, who successfully transformed themselves from a potentially subversive anti-Constitution party into a loyal opposition.

Cornell begins by bringing order to the chaos of Anti-Federalism, explaining what united and divided the opponents of the Constitution. He argues that they shared a fear that centralized government would lead to aristocracy and a belief that federalism, “constitutional plain style,” and a vibrant public sphere were necessary to protect individual liberty. Nevertheless, class and regional differences divided Anti-Federalists. Elite, middling, plebeian, commercial, and agrarian Anti-Federalists disagreed on definitions of key concepts like democracy, aristocracy, liberty, and the public sphere. After ratification, these internal tensions broke apart the Anti-Federalist coalition. Frightened by plebeian radicalism, elite and middling Anti-Federalists adopted a more moderate position and worked within the new government.

Cornell goes on to examine the persistence of Anti-Federalist ideas in political dissent in the early republic. Democratic-Republicans argued that Alexander Hamilton’s nationalist economic policies impinged on the rights of states and that his supporters manipulated the language of the Constitution to expand federal power. They criticized the Alien and Sedition Acts, because they believed the acts threatened the public sphere by restricting the freedom of the press. Opponents of the Supreme Court’s *McCulloch v. Maryland* decision, which expanded the federal government’s power over the states, reiterated Anti-Federalist arguments for states’ rights and strict construction. Cornell concludes with John C. Calhoun’s 1828 defense of states’ rights to nullify federal laws they deemed unconstitutional. By using Federalist texts and ideas to support his arguments, Calhoun departed from the Anti-Federalist tradition of dissent, while Martin Van Buren continued that tradition with an argument that bears a striking similarity to Cornell’s.

Although he emphasizes the common threads in the American dissenting tradition, Cornell does not argue that early nineteenth-century political dissent slavishly imitated Anti-Federalist arguments. Democratic-Republicans and other critics of the federal government selected different texts to support their arguments, interpreted Anti-Federalist writings in ways never intended by their authors, and created new texts to justify political dissent. They revised definitions of Anti-Federalism and reassessed its role in the creation of the Constitution.

Recognizing that the concept of Anti-Federalism itself evolved in the early republic, Cornell bases his analysis of Anti-Federalist thought on the texts most popular during the debates over ratification. He suggests, in fact, that much of the confusion about Anti-Federalism in the scholarly literature may be due to a tendency to focus on the most well-argued or well-written Anti-Federalist documents, rather than the most influential ones. In his approach and use of sources, Cornell reminds historians to consider the historical significance of their sources and to appreciate the ways in which concepts such as Anti-Federalism change over time.

Not surprisingly, Cornell does not answer every question about Anti-Federalism. Some readers may wonder what became of the plebeian dissenting tradition, which fades from Cornell's analysis. There is some confusion about the distinction between Anti-Federalism and Democratic-Republicanism; the two often seem synonymous even though Cornell admits they are not. The author is also a bit overzealous in his claims for Anti-Federalism's legacy. Although he demonstrates that Anti-Federalism was an important influence on the American tradition of dissent, it is not clear that it was the preeminent influence. That Calhoun could make a states' rights argument out of Federalist texts suggests that Anti-Federalists did not have a monopoly on the ideas by which Cornell defines them.

Those who are new to the political history of the early republic may find Cornell's arguments difficult to follow, but the reward is a greater understanding of American political culture and its roots. Cornell makes a compelling case for Anti-Federalism's influence on early American politics and constitutionalism, amply justifying his christening them America's "other founders."

EVELYN D. CAUSEY
University of Delaware

Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776. By Jon Butler. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. 324 pages. Notes, index. \$27.95.)

When and how did America become modern? Was it in the crucible of twentieth-century science and industry? Or was it, as Louis Hartz once argued, in the liberal cultural baggage of the first settlers? Perhaps it was in the democracy that Frederick Jackson Turner located on the frontier? Or perhaps, as Gordon Wood has recently argued, it was in the forces released by the American Revolution?

In this fine new synthesis, Yale University historian Jon Butler offers another possibility, the late colonial period, wherein he locates many of the roots of modern America. This provocative thesis and the vigor with which Butler argues it is one of his book's many strengths. But in the end it is also the book's greatest weakness, because it only partially convinces and because it leads But-

ler to smooth over the fascinating nuances and tensions of his period.

Becoming America's greatest strength lies in Butler's adroit ability to pull together hundreds of disparate studies into an impressively coherent synthesis. He organizes this material into five areas in which the colonies were "becoming American" between 1680 and 1770: immigration, economics, politics, material culture, and religion. In each of these realms Butler makes use of the most recent literature, in many cases drawing heavily from books and articles published within the last five years.

The chapters on immigration and religion do an especially good job of describing the complexity and diversity which Butler convincingly describes as the "modernity" of late colonial North America. Here, amidst a population never much more than that of modern metropolitan Baltimore, lived Puritans, Quakers, Catholics, Anglicans, Jews, Moravians, Huguenots, Dutch, English, Ibo, Ashanti, Iroquois, Catawba, and many, many more. As Butler notes, "Between 1680 and 1760 the people of America became the American peoples, the multi-hued, multi-voiced men and women who have distinguished American society ever since" (49).

Other chapters are less successful. The discussion of economics, for example, fails to explain how the late colonial economy was appreciably more "modern" than what preceded it. True, as Butler notes, it was more complex. But if market activity is taken as the hallmark of modern economies, seventeenth-century colonies such as Maryland were intensely modern in their dependence on international markets for their very survival. To follow the Maryland example further, one might even argue that the early eighteenth-century economy, with its reliance on slave labor, its declining social mobility, and its widespread economic stagnation, was even less modern than the earlier period.

Similarly, the chapter on politics does not entirely convince. The "neo-Whig" school of historians exemplified by Bernard Bailyn, J. G. A. Pocock, and Gordon Wood has argued for three decades that the politics leading up to the American Revolution were rooted in classical Republican philosophy rather than the more modern liberalism derived from John Locke. Yet Butler devotes little more than a page to republicanism, arguing instead that increased political jostling, weakening hierarchies, and the growth of popular politics pre-figured a more modern polity. Butler may well be right, but he needs to explain more convincingly how these developments coexisted with the traditions of republicanism that influenced the Revolutionary leaders.

These criticisms suggest the major flaw of this work: Butler's dogged focus on modernization leads him to compress a complex and dynamic multi-dimensional period into something much flatter and less interesting. The otherwise excellent chapter on religion offers a good example. While Butler persuasively discusses the fascinating complexity of late colonial religion, he provides

only one hint of the persistence of the supernatural, and even this tidbit exemplifies “a vital supernaturalist tradition in American evangelical revivalism that would extend into the nineteenth century . . . [and] to the twentieth century’s Father Divine, A. A. Allen, and Oral Roberts” (202). Apparently even superstition can be “modern.” A comparison of this chapter to Butler’s own examination of magic and the occult in his earlier book, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, demonstrates how much nuance can be lost to the modernization thesis.

Such problems are endemic to syntheses, which must flatten and simplify in order to make sense of mountains of monographs, articles, and dissertations. And despite these criticisms, *Becoming America* is a first-rate book that allows us to step back and take notice of an important mass of scholarship. Although flawed, Butler’s emphasis on the modernity of late-colonial society does provide a useful corrective to some recent scholarship that has perhaps overstated the “pastness,” the anti-modernity of this period. Like the best syntheses, this one should open up new questions and new paths of inquiry for scholars while serving as an excellent starting point for members of the general public interested in its subject.

LAWRENCE A. PESKIN
Morgan State University

“Perfectly Delightful”: The Life and Gardens of Harvey Ladew. By Christopher Weeks. (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. 288 pages. Epilogue, appendix, notes, index. \$32.50 cloth.)

Christopher Weeks’ superbly organized life of Harvey Ladew begins by portraying a fun-loving, energetic, multitalented youngster and continues through a middle life overflowing with unusual action and extraordinary experiences. It concludes with an elderly man, still fun-loving, but tired and worried about how he will ensure the perpetuation of one of his greatest achievements, a horticultural masterpiece.

Weeks colorfully portrays—with extended conversations and a fine choice of photographs—the young Harvey growing up in a wealthy New York family during the late Victorian period, passionate about so many things, especially hunting. Though only moderately talented in the arts, he was constantly exposed to dance, drawing, painting, photography, theater, etc. classes, and to the most notable members of society. Thereby he developed, the keen appreciation, interest, and refinement that eventually allowed him to develop one of the country’s first and greatest, and most unusual, horticultural attractions, Ladew’s Topiary Garden. Weeks argues that this topiary work contained elements of a complex and colorful personality, and certainly the original horticultural piece incorporated parts—color, design, motion, sound, texture—from Ladew’s ex-

periences in the arts. Its garden rooms entertained his notable friends and acquaintances and one of its strongest themes derived from images of the animals he loved: horses, dogs, and foxes.

Weeks does a wonderful job of describing Ladew's personal life with his mother, father, and beloved sister; his absorption in and dedication to his many loves and travels; and his passion for fox hunting and the accompanying social life. On the other hand, the sheer number of names cited sometimes made this reader's head spin. Harvey sought out the company of people like T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia), Elsa Maxwell, Cole Porter, Edna Ferber, the Prince of Wales, Beatrice Lille, Clifton Webb, and Charlie Chaplin, to mention only a few.

As a horticulturist I was of course interested in how Weeks would handle Ladew's horticultural approach to Pleasant Valley Farm in Monkton, Maryland. Ladew took an approach, that of topiary, that was new to the Free State. Although this reader never visited the original garden when Mr. Ladew was alive, he has visited more than once since and believes that Ladew indeed incorporated all of his life experiences into the place. Throughout the book, Weeks hints that Ladew had gardening interests and a snippet of gardening experience throughout his life, but it is clear to me that Ladew was soaking in more about garden design than the author revealed or perhaps even realized. Ladew planned and implemented the topiary garden and rooms so quickly after purchase of the land in 1929 that he must have had these ideas catalogued in his head for years. So deep was his love of the gardens that the end of his life was driven by anxieties (real or perceived) about how he would perpetuate his creation. Ironically, a person surrounded by wealth all of his life, with friends who traveled in the highest social circles, had difficulty putting together a financial package to support his masterpiece.

The book should have a broad appeal to those interested in history, hunting, and horticulture. I have and will continue to recommend this book to my horticultural colleagues.

JAMES E. SWASEY
Longwood Gardens

Books in Brief

Feast of the Dead: Aboriginal Ossuaries in Maryland is the first synthesis of a century-long investigation into the practice of multiple reburials in communal graves. Maryland Historical Trust archaeologist Dennis C. Curry presents a detailed examination of the excavated data and how it reflects the spiritual, social, and political beliefs of Maryland's tidewater Native Americans.

The Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc. and the Maryland Historical Trust Press, \$15.00, paper

John F. Wing's *"Bound By God . . . For Merryland": The Voyage of the Constant Friendship 1671–1672* is the fourth in a series entitled Studies in Local History created under the auspices of the Maryland State Archives. This volume is the illustrated account of the square-rigged English merchant ship *Constant Friendship* as recorded by navigator and ship's mate Edward Rhodes. Rhodes' journal, recently rediscovered at Oxford University, is the centerpiece of this work and provides a rare and valuable look at maritime life during the years of the transatlantic tobacco trade.

Maryland State Archives and the Maryland Historical Trust Press, \$9.00, paper

Burnside's Bridge: The Climactic Struggle of the 2nd and 20th Georgia at Antietam Creek by Phillip Thomas Tucker is the first detailed account of Brigadier General Robert Toombs' 2nd and 20th Georgia regiments and their efforts to hold off nearly thirty federal regiments for five hours during the bloodiest single day of war in American history, September 17, 1862. The author moves away from traditional interpretations that underplay the Georgians' role in the struggle for the little stone bridge. This new study of previously unexamined primary sources also dispels Toombs' legacy of having "the lowest reputation of any general in the Army of Northern Virginia" (ix).

Stackpole Books, cloth, \$24.95

The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction: Reconsiderations addresses the history of the Freedmen's Bureau at the state and local levels during Reconstruction in the South. This well-documented volume examines the diverse working conditions at each bureau and describes the range of personalities of bureau agents. Editors Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller also offer insight into the thoughts and actions of southern planters and former slaves as both learned how to live in a profoundly different world.

Fordham University Press, cloth, \$35.00

John A. Carpenter's 1964 *Sword and Olive Branch: Oliver Otis Howard* is back in print with a new introduction by Reconstruction historian Paul A. Cimballa. Howard advanced rapidly through the United States Army's ranks during the Civil War and went on to accept a commission as the first, and only, head of the Freedman's Bureau. During his tenure with the Freedmen's Bureau Howard stood at the center of controversy between northern Radicals who charged him with not doing enough to aid the newly freed slaves, and southerners who criticized him for doing too much. Howard spent the remainder of his life promoting African American education, first with the bureau and later as founder and president of Howard University.

Fordham University Press, \$35 cloth; \$19.95 paper

Does every increase in the power of government entail a loss of liberty for its citizens? James H. Read addresses this question of how to reconcile activist government with the liberty of citizens in *Power versus Liberty: Madison, Hamilton, Wilson, and Jefferson*. Read demonstrates how four of the Founders with different ideologies wrestled with this question during the first two decades of the American republic by examining such issues as the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, freedom of the press, and popular sovereignty.

University Press of Virginia, \$47.50 cloth; \$16.50 paper
P.D.A.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

The Maryland Historical Society, and its magazine, claim to be, and usually are, a source of authentic and important carefully researched records of Maryland history.

I am therefore perplexed and moderately astonished by the lead article in your Winter 1999 issue, "Women and the Catholic Church in Maryland," by Beatrix Hardy.

Although the article runs twenty-one pages, including seven pages of "notes," it contained more "weasel words" or disclaimers than any historical essay I have encountered. Here are a few examples: "probably" or "perhaps" (19 appearances); "we do not know" or "we know nothing" (6); "could have, likely, may have, seem to" (19); "although we have no evidence" (3). Total conjecture – 47.

Were you and the editorial staff asleep? Or just Episcopalians?

The subjects were entirely appropriate for your learned publication. The article was heavy on disclaimers.

Sincerely,

John M. Nelson (Episcopalian)

Editor's reply:

We suggest that rather than half-empty, this glass should be considered half-full. Dr. Hardy has brought into view a pair of obscure figures from Maryland history, skillfully drawing partial portraits of two women from vastly different backgrounds who shared one great historical disadvantage: the colonial world in which they lived left few records about them. In doing so, Dr. Hardy has obeyed one of the first laws of writing responsible history and stayed within the evidence. As additional records are discovered and made available, more information *might* (weasel word) appear to flesh out these sketches. On the other hand, *perhaps* this is all we will ever know about them.

Notices

Library Company of Philadelphia Program Prizes

The Library Company of Philadelphia's Program in Early American Economy and Society is pleased to announce the recipients of its prizes for outstanding articles in early American economic history published in 1999. The winners are Peter Mancall and Thomas Weiss, "Was Economic Growth Likely in Colonial British North America?" *Journal of Economic History* 59 (March 1999): 17-14; Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman, "The Economy of British North America: Miles to Travel, Miles Still to Go," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56 (January 1999): 9-22; and Robert Wright "Bank Ownership and Lending Patterns in New York and Pennsylvania, 1781-1831," *Business History Review*, 73 (Spring 1999): 40-60. For more information about PEAES, visit the website at www.librarycompany.org or write to The Library Company of Philadelphia, 1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-5698.

H-Net List on Maryland History and Culture

H-Maryland, a refereed, interdisciplinary discussion list, provides a means of communication for those persons who research, write, read, teach, and preserve Maryland history and culture. The list also serves those who work in cultural institutions within Maryland. H-Maryland will post reviews of books, exhibits, audio-visual materials, and electronic presentations. H-Maryland seeks to share information and ideas about the state. Some of these issues relate to cultural resource management, funding, and legislative efforts that affect the maintenance of the state's historic legacy. H-Maryland is free and open to anyone interested in state history. The address is <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/>

National History Day Discussion Forum

National History Day has teamed up with H-Net to provide a discussion list for educators participating in National History Day. H-History Day is a forum for teachers, professional historians, librarians, archivists, museum staff, and other educators who participate in National History Day programs each year. For additional information visit the website at www.nationalhistoryday.org or by postal mail at National Day, 0119 Cecil Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.

American Quilt Study Group Conference

The American Quilt Study Group is hosting their twenty-first annual conference October 13–15 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Activities will include roundtable discussions, book sales and signings, silent and live auctions, and a quilt sale to benefit the AQSG's educational programs. The keynote speaker will be studio quilt artist Michael James whose talk is titled "In the Beginning: Musings on the Birth of the Studio Art Quilt Movement." For information contact Judy J. Brott Buss, AQSG, 35th and Holdrege, East Campus Loop, PO Box 4737, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68504-0737 (402-472-5361).

Archaeology Dig at Historic St. Mary's City

Historic St. Mary's City is presenting a "Tidewater Archaeology Dig" July 29–30. This event is a hands-on opportunity to be an archaeologist for a day at this National Historic Landmark site, sifting and screening for Maryland artifacts. For directions and visitor hours call 1-800-SMC-1634 or 301-862-0990.

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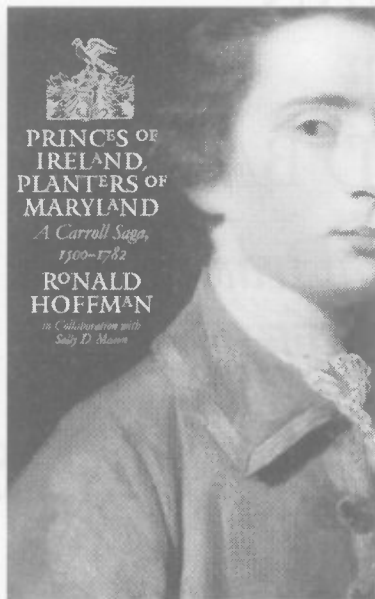
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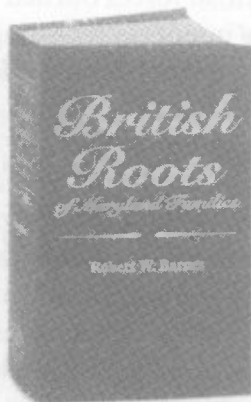
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