

THE JAMES MADISON

*Review of Books*

№ 2 | WINTER 2024



**Anna Bartel, '21**  
Danielle Allen's  
*Justice through Democracy*

**Paul O. Carrese**  
W.B. Allen's  
*Montesquieu and Moderation*

**Tom Rooney, '20**  
Rick Atkinson's  
*Road to Revolution*



COVER: *Landscape with a Water Mill*, François Boucher (1740)

The James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation was established by Congress in 1986 to improve teaching about the United States Constitution in secondary schools. The James Madison Fellowship program strengthens the teaching of the history and principles of the Constitution by supporting master-of-arts level graduate study for secondary school teachers of history, government, and civics.

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**James Madison Review of Books**

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JAMES MADISON  
MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP  
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# Message from the Executive Secretary

You are probably reading this edition of the James Madison Review of Books because of your interest in scholarly reviews of books about the American Revolution, history, and government. You may be a James Madison Fellow or a friend of the Foundation. Or perhaps you are a high school student who picked this magazine up in a classroom or are reading it online. Whatever brought you here, we're glad to have you.

I recently joined the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation as the Executive Secretary/CEO. I have spent my career in public service where I have taken the oath that I will "support and defend the Constitution of the United States." A public commitment to uphold the Constitution and serve the American people. To me this means swearing allegiance to the ideals and values of the most revered form of government ever created. A government based on the principles of liberty, equality, self-governance, and limited power. Our Founding Fathers were truly visionary, and as a public servant today I take my responsibilities seriously. I hope the James Madison Foundation can continue to educate Constitutionally minded citizens like yourself and expand our scope of readers, particularly in America's classrooms. Our mission of educating America's secondary school teachers on the U.S. Constitution is noble and I am honored to serve here and advance this most important cause.



*Julie E. Adams*

Julie E. Adams  
Executive Secretary/CEO

# From the Editor



Guy F. Burnett, Ph.D.  
Chief of Staff and Academics

Of all the Founders, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were the most proficient in the writings of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Jefferson especially loved the Ancient Greeks, his granddaughter remarking, “I saw him more frequently with a volume of the classics in hand than with any other book.” After serving as President of the United States, a weary Jefferson preferred the ancients. In a letter dated 1819 he wrote: “I feel a much greater interest in knowing what has happened two or three thousand years ago than in what is now passing.” I hope, as teachers and students of the American Founding, that you devote time to studying the ancients. As Jefferson knew, it is good for the soul to revisit the classics from time to time.

At the close of the year, I have been reflecting on my own reacquaintance with the classics. Something struck me as I prepared a lecture on Polybius’s *The Histories* for my college course on Western legal tradition. It had been decades since I had first been acquainted with the ancient pro-Roman Greek, and even then, I did not understand his profundity. He is not particularly well-known or even studied in history and political theory courses. However, as I reread him with fresh eyes, I realized that he deeply understood the theoretical foundation of what would become the “mixed” U.S. Constitution. I knew the Enlightenment reintroduced and developed the ideas of checks and balances and the separation of powers, but I had forgotten how far back these ideas went. The best government, he wrote, was one that separated and intermixed its powers.

Later that semester, while preparing a lecture on the Baron de Montesquieu, I had the privilege of diving into Dr. William B. Allen’s monumental new translation of, and commentary on, *The Spirit of the Laws*. Montesquieu, the political philosopher of moderation and the separation of powers, cites Polybius’s *The Histories* no less than seven times. One cannot help but see the connection. Montesquieu was extensively familiar with ancient civilizations, including Ancient Rome (it was only recently I learned that Montesquieu wrote a book entitled *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and their Decline* in 1734, which became a source of inspiration for Edward Gibbons’s much longer and more well-known *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*).

Montesquieu’s political theory of the separation of powers, found in both ancient and contemporary examples, heavily influenced the U.S. Constitution. Indeed, many of the Framers had already read and pondered the “celebrated Montesquieu” years before the Philadelphia Convention, including two of the authors of *The Federalist Papers*: Alexander Hamilton and our own James Madison. Not only did Montesquieu provide the greatest source of inspiration for the Constitution, but, as Allen points out in his commentary, he influenced



James Madison, Class of 1771, James Sharples (before 1811) (Wikimedia Commons).

the Declaration of Independence as well. Dr. Paul O. Carrese points out in an excellent essay in this issue on Allen's new translation: "it is no accident that Allen closes his commentary with an epilogue on Montesquieu and America, strikingly claiming that the French jurist and philosopher is as deep a source for the arguments of the Declaration as is [John] Locke."

Preparing this issue made me reflect on how far the foundational theory of our republican government stretches back in time. Montesquieu developed Polybius's theory of a mixed constitution. Polybius wrote on the contemporary mixed Roman constitution but he also considered it building on Lycurgus's mixed Spartan constitution. Lycurgus, Plutarch tells us, traveled the known world to develop his theory of a mixed constitution, including to Crete, Asia, and Egypt. How those cultures influenced Lycurgus is unclear and lost to the mists of time.

One thing is clear, however: our rich heritage of republican government and a mixed constitution goes back to the most ancient cultures and peoples in history. As we approach the celebration of the 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, I hope you will take the time to acquaint (or reacquaint) yourself with our republican lineage and engage with Montesquieu and the ancients as the American Founders and Framers did while writing our founding documents.

# The Soul of Constitutional Government and Moderation: W.B. Allen's Edition of Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*

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By Paul O. Carrese, Ph.D.

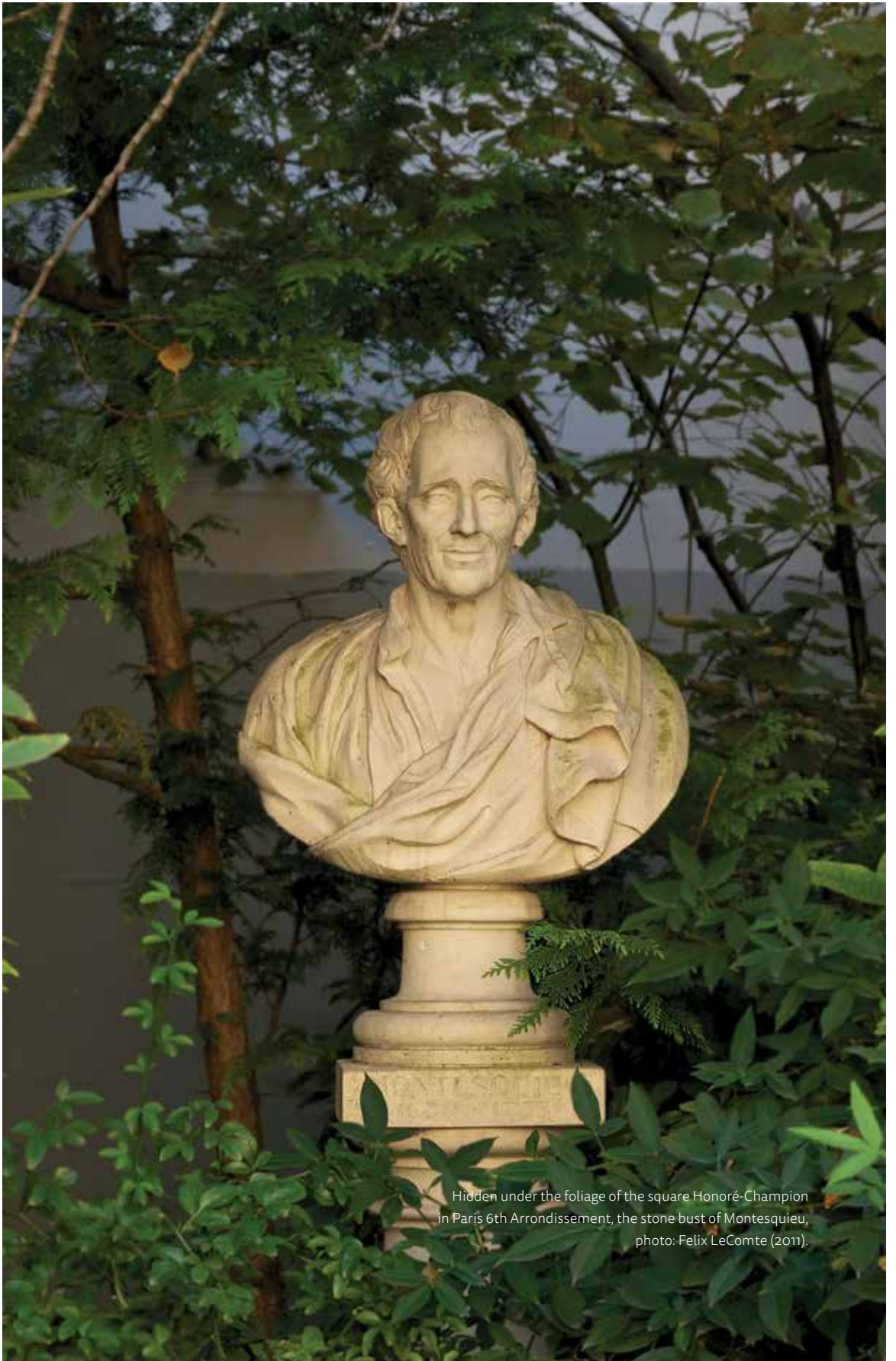
As we approach America 250, with opportunity for renewed learning and debate about the Declaration of Independence and its legacy, it is crucial to have ready access to the philosophical and historical sources which deeply informed the Founders in 1776. Those who have studied the American Founding know that the French philosopher Charles de Montesquieu (1689-1755) was the foremost European authority informing the framing of the 1787 Constitution, and the ratification debates about it. The influence of Montesquieu's masterwork, *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), is most obvious regarding the structural constitutional principles of separation of powers and federalism. No prior philosopher had advocated the full set of principles for establishing a large federal republic (composed of member republics) along with a complex constitution of three separate powers, to include a strong rationale for an upper house in a legislature (bicameralism) and a fully independent judicial power. Yet what does this influence on 1787 have to do with American arguments for independence in 1776?

All students, admirers, and friends of the American founding from 1776 through 1791 (the ratification of the Bill of Rights) are immensely indebted to William B. Allen for his new critical edition of *The Spirit of Laws*, which includes 150 pages of his commentary after his new translation. Allen's commentary only gradually suggests the importance of Montesquieu's bold-yet-moderate political philosophy for those, such as the Amer-

ican statesmen of 1776, seeking to find (or retain) a constitutional liberty they believe is their right – by natural law, their political tradition, or both. The epilogue to his commentary contains a gem for the intrepid reader; 141 pages into Allen's analysis: that Montesquieu was invoked by a Boston printer in his 1755 book, *A Total Eclipse of Liberty*, protesting his arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. Daniel Fowle deployed long excerpts from and frequent citations to *The Spirit of Laws* to condemn the Massachusetts colony government for violating principles of justice and liberty that must guide a decent constitution. Allen claims that “the cause of liberty had a boost from the continent” a decade before “the [English] King and parliament” were so broadly condemned as “liberty's enemies” in the Stamp Act Crisis, the imperial debate, and the path to the Revolution. Indeed, he declares, “In the course of his argument [Fowle] adduced all of the principles which were later to coalesce in the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence” (pp. 888, 893).

I have been studying Montesquieu, and the American Founding and our constitutionalism, for nearly forty years, and had never before heard of Fowle and the inspiration for constitutional liberty he took from Montesquieu two decades before 1776. Nor have I encountered such a profound commentary about Montesquieu as the foremost author of a philosophy of constitutional liberty that shaped America from the 1750s, through 1776, then to 1787 and beyond. Allen insists that our





Hidden under the foliage of the square Honoré-Champion in Paris 6th Arrondissement, the stone bust of Montesquieu, photo: Felix LeComte (2011).

**Montesquieu articulates his new concept of constitutionalism as hybridizing monarchy and republic to achieve the moderation of politics, and the right balance between virtue, liberty, and justice.**

French mentor is *the* philosophical author of what we sloppily call liberal democracy in the modern world. We might consider that the rise, global spread, and predominant if still precarious influence of this form of politics and life clearly is a defining feature of modernity itself across the past half-millennium. We thus have, in Allen's critical edition, an indispensable resource regarding the origins and meaning of America, and about the influence of this philosophy of constitutional liberty on all of human affairs.

I am not as expert in French as is Allen, the former dean of the James Madison College in Michigan State University and a prolific scholar for 50 years on Montesquieu, the American Founding, and themes of human liberty. I will just briefly note what a boon it is for scholars and students alike to have an eminently readable English translation, with the intention (stated in the Translator's Preface) to stay as scrupulously close as possible to a literal rendering in order to most likely convey the author's intended meaning; and further, to include the original French on the facing page, inducing experts and amateurs alike to test the translator's work. I also will note just one point of translation that arguably is Allen's most striking innovation across hundreds of pages; arising in the most famous, widely-read section of *Spirit of Laws*, Book 11. Here Montesquieu addresses constitutions and liberty – and offers the first of two long chapters in the work on England's constitution and politics (Book 11 chapter 6; the sequel is Book 19 chapter 27). Allen's commentary explains that the standard English translation since 1750 of "separation of powers" misses the crucial significance of the use of two different words in Book 11 for power – one connoting raw political "power," and the other, legitimate and constitutional "authority" – which channels, thus moderates, political power. Montesquieu's extensive and emphatic study of English constitutionalism, and later in Book 11 of its less-robust cousins on the continent (in terms of reduced protection for liberty), thus praises the English for their taming of power through a "separation of authorities." The "legislative authority" is clearly distinct from the "executive authority," and both are separate from the "authority to judge" – altogether being "the three authorities" (see pp. 167, 169, 171, 175 in the translation; pp. 772-783 in the commentary).

This hallmark of the Allen translation also is a central point of his distinctive interpretation of *The Spirit of Laws* as a whole. More than any other scholar writing today, Allen emphasizes that Montesquieu's political philosophy is deeply informed by classical political philosophy, particularly Plato and Aristotle, and by Christianity, even while responding to elements of modern political philosophy – particularly Machiavelli and Hobbes. Allen announces this theme in a prefatory note; that Montesquieu is adapting "the tradition that originated with Socrates" (p. xxvii) to the realities of large modern nation states and a global understanding of the varieties of human cultures, geographies, and political traditions. He then devotes the

first half of his commentary to marshaling the evidence in *Spirit* for this revisionist account of Montesquieu as a natural law philosopher who is moderating, tempering, the more individualistic and materialist elements of modern and Enlightenment philosophy.

*The Spirit of Laws* articulates, in Allen's reading, four cardinal human goods (see pp. 747-54). The first three are *virtue*, understood largely as classical philosophy defined it, the moral decency directed by proper understanding of God and of his natural law; then *liberty*, understood more in the terms of the moderate Enlightenment – prizing individual, familial, and communal security, in both physical and psychological senses, against arbitrary and violent power; and *justice*, informed by both ancient, medieval-Christian, and modern ideas, as a morally-substantive principle of human equality guided by basic ideas of virtuous, decent conduct – thus condemning slavery, and also the subjugation of women. The fourth of Montesquieu's cardinal human goods, per Allen, is *constitutionalism*, which harmonizes the first three, seeking to synthesize or at least amalgamate their ancient, medieval-Christian, and modern elements. This is what the English constitution achieves, even if imperfectly, and Montesquieu's portrait of it is his great innovation in political philosophy even as it draws on earlier ideas, while also correcting and moderating them.

This claim about the world-changing invention of a “deliberate,” complex constitutionalism is Allen's elaboration of his distinction between “power” and legitimate “authority” as critical for grasping the larger aims of Montesquieu's political philosophy. Constitutionalism is “the translation of power” into decent, legitimate modes of legal structures, and a moderate spirit of politics working through them. The 31 books of *Spirit of Laws* are carefully designed to articulate and elaborate, first, the foundations of this morally-substantive and legally-complex conception of constitutionalism; then, its main components; and finally, its various historical manifestations and possibilities. Book 1 lays a foundation of natural and divine law to guide human nature away from violence and prejudice. Montesquieu then analyzes in Books 2 through 8 the failure of the traditional forms of

government – monarchy, aristocratic republics, democratic republics – to transcend the modes of despotism, of brutal prejudice and violations of natural justice, which they claim to escape. In Books 9 through 13, Montesquieu articulates his new concept of constitutionalism as hybridizing monarchy and republic to achieve the moderation of politics, and the right balance between virtue, liberty, and justice. Allen argues that Montesquieu's more particular invention of a separate “judicial authority” (I almost wrote power) is crucial for translating power into authority, reducing the role of brute power, fear, and prejudice to achieve an ordered, constitutional liberty. The remaining Books of *Spirit*, well more than half of the work, find Montesquieu testing his new theory of constitutionalism against the varieties of geographies, cultures, and political histories across the globe.

Allen declares that Montesquieu's critique and condemnation in Books 14 to 18 of slavery in its several modes, and of polygamy as subjugation of women, also are innovations in modern secular political philosophy. Allen continues with his own innovative reading of Montesquieu by viewing Books 19 to 25 as a set, devoted to showing how culture and especially religion can be moderating elements of human life and society. He claims Montesquieu is misread if we see him as separating commerce (the focus of Books 20 to 22) from this context in the work, by reducing it to material exchange of goods, money, and services. *Spirit* intends commerce as using these means to achieve larger metaphysical and moral purposes, in an intercourse of peoples; thereby achieving the reduction of prejudices, brutality, and despotic dispositions. Indeed, Montesquieu portrays the commerce of religion, especially the spread of monotheism across the globe, as a milestone in humankind's journey toward the moderating of power; with Christianity discerned as a crucial foundation for developing constitutionalism as it arises in Europe. Allen sees the final books of the work, 26 to 31, as another coherent set – when many commentators see a mishmash of two fairly abstract books about the intersection of law and philosophy (26 and 29) with books about the history of Roman law and medieval Franco-German law (Bks 27, 28, 30, 31). The whole set, he argues,





Digitally altered version of Château de la Brède (Montesquieu), Gironde, France. Montesquieu's birthplace. Photograph by Carole J. (Wikipedia images) (2004).

completes Montesquieu's effort since Book 14 to show that elements of the moderating, humanizing achievement of constitutional liberty can be found in diverse moments of human history and culture. There actually have been moderating statesmen and cultural institutions, albeit rare, which have drawn their societies away from prejudice, discrimination, and brutality. The theme Allen finds in Books 19 to 25 continues here, of Montesquieu's interest to show moments across history when divine law (mostly monotheistic, mostly Christian) is harmonized with the requirements of natural law – to achieve the equal and decent treatment of all humans. This is, in the end, a political philosophy of moderation as human decency. Allen emphasizes, as many commentators do not, Montesquieu's declaration in opening Book 29: "I say it, and it seems to me that I have made this work only prove it: that the spirit of moderation must be that of the legislator [framer or founder of laws]; the political good, like the moral good, is only found between extremes" p. 617).

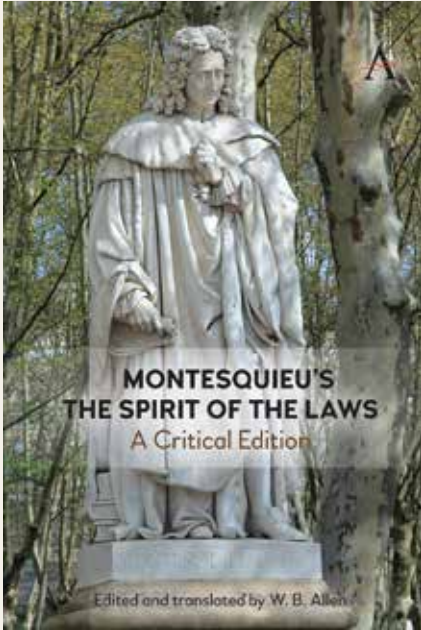
This brings us back to Montesquieu's influence on the arguments for American independence from 1774 to 1776. Allen's translation and commentary illuminate the epic effort in the *Spirit of Laws* to blend and balance the metaphysical and materialistic elements of human reality; as well as the insights of classical, medieval-Christian, and modern philosophy. Such a philosophy can moderate power by finding the higher, reasonable middle ground – the golden mean – that harmonizes these seemingly antithetical elements and ideas. Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, Machiavelli and Hobbes (and Locke) can be mined for indispensable insights such that the metaphysical and material, the communal and individual, the divine and natural, the philosophical and cultural-historical – all can be blended and balanced to achieve a decent constitutional politics of liberty. Montesquieu's effort to show this is an immense task and journey, which is why *Spirit of Laws* is epic (Montesquieu cites Vergil's *Aeneid* in his Preface, and the final lines of the

**A constitutionalism of liberty is a rare and wonderful human achievement, hard to forge, the product of much study, effort, and statesmanship – and perhaps even harder to keep.**

work use a quotation from it). Allen has written a masterful and challenging commentary to match the work's philosophical ambition. Thus, it is no accident that Allen closes his commentary with an epilogue on Montesquieu and America, strikingly claiming that the French jurist and philosopher is as deep a source for the arguments of the Declaration as is Locke. The commentary notes early on that a challenge for any interpreter of *Spirit of Laws* is its categorical silence on Locke, when we know Montesquieu owned several of his works, and in light of the fact that *Spirit* comments incisively on Machiavelli and Hobbes. Allen's critical edition of *Spirit* helps us to see the philosophical moderation and complexity, the rich constitutionalism of liberty, articulated in the text of the Declaration beyond its Lockean elements. Speaking for myself, one could see Allen nudging us to

discern the very Montesquieuan spirit in Jefferson's draft, then in the final revisions by the Continental Congress – adding phrases about the divine source of natural law and justice, and the constitution of liberty the Americans already enjoyed. The document thus is a blend of classical, medieval-Christian, and modern Enlightenment elements forged to announce that King and Parliament are depriving them of their natural rights and historical birthright.

Allen sets us up for a richer commemoration of America 250. We are better equipped to see not only the Declaration's Lockean elements but also the philosophical and theological components arguably nowhere present, or barely present, in Locke's philosophy of a social contract and narrowly-defined individual rights. The final pledge of "sacred Honor;" the rise above materialism also evident in the opening invocation of "the pursuit of happiness;" the *four* references to a divinity as a personal, active source and defender of justice; the iteration of charges in the terms of the traditional Anglo-American common law; and the claim smack in the middle of that bill of indictment that the King and Parliament had "subject[ed] us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution"



**Montesquieu's The Spirit of the Laws:  
A Critical Edition**

ed. W.B. Allen,  
Translation and Commentary

Anthem Press  
984 pgs. | **\$145**

(singular, revised from the plural “constitutions” in Jefferson’s draft): all of this is beyond the four corners of Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*, yet flows directly from the complex argument for a constitutionalism of liberty in *The Spirit of Laws*. America and the Declaration arise not from a single philosopher or source, but from several sources. Appreciating Montesquieu’s foundational role in 1776 is not a displacement of Locke – or the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment, or the common-law practice in the colonies, or even Protestant Covenant theology. Rather, it is an invitation to see the American mind, deeply shaped by Montesquieu from the 1750s onward, amalgamating and harmonizing these elements into a more perfect constitutionalism of liberty than the English, great as their example was, in fact had achieved. The immense philosophical labor which taught the Americans to have such an ambition in turn reinforces an important theme for our coming commemorations: a constitutionalism of liberty is a rare and wonderful human achievement, hard to forge, the product of much study, effort, and statesmanship – and perhaps even harder to

keep. Let it be said during these years of commemoration and long after that Bill Allen did his part with this critical edition – to help Americans, and friends of ordered liberty far beyond, understand the origins, principles, challenges, and blessings of such a politics.



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## BOOK REVIEW

# O, Brother, Where Art Thou?

By Claire McCaffery Griffin, '92 (HI)



**The Times that Try Men's Souls:  
The Adams, the Quincys, and the  
Battle for Loyalty in the American  
Revolution**

By Joyce Lee Malcolm

Pegasus Books  
288 pgs. | \$30

If you were to stop someone on the street and ask them, “When was the American Civil War?”, many people would say something like: “I don’t remember exactly, but I think it was some time in the 19th century.” That response is correct, as far as it goes. America did indeed experience a wrenching civil war from 1861-1865. However, this was not the first time that Americans found themselves fighting against each other, sometimes quite literally brother against brother. The American Revolution, fought less than 100 years earlier, was truly the first American civil war, and the impact of that conflict on several influential families is the subject of Joyce Lee Malcolm’s book, *The Times that Try Men’s Souls: The Adams, the Quincys, and the Battle for Loyalty in the American Revolution*. Malcolm places the conflicting loyalties of these two prominent New England families within the context of the entire Revolutionary Period and creates an eminently readable account of the events of the period, as well as a thoughtful analysis of how individuals and families navigated the shifting and conflicting demands made on their loyalties.



Malcolm, an emeritus professor at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University, is well-suited for such an enormous undertaking. Although she is most known for her groundbreaking and insightful research about the Second Amendment, she has written two well-received volumes about the American Revolution: *Peter's War: A New England Slave Boy and the American Revolution* (nominated for the Pulitzer Prize) and *The Tragedy of Benedict Arnold: An American Life*. As a result of her familiarity with the Revolutionary Period, *The Times that Try Men's Souls* is a well-crafted, straightforward narrative written in lively and spritely style.

Her latest book is organized chronologically, beginning in the early 1760s (when revolution was on no one's mind), and concluding with the 1783 Treaty of Paris (by which time no one had been left unaffected by the Revolution). Malcolm does an artful job of weaving together the stories of well-known historical episodes with lesser-known stories of how these events challenged the political loyalties of the families of Josiah Quincy, Sr. and John Adams (related to the Quincys through his wife, Abigail). At times, political events like the Stamp Act, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the Battle of Saratoga take precedence in the narrative. At other times, personal involvement in historical events is at the forefront, such as when two brothers, Josiah and Samuel Quincy, served as opposing counsel in the trial of the British soldiers after the Boston Massacre. Malcolm's central theme is always the same: "the wrenching pain of families who split along party lines, with husbands divided from wives, fathers from children, siblings and close friends from each other."

One of the most fascinating parts of the book is Malcolm's examination of the lives and loyalties of the absentees: Loyalists who left America in 1775-1776 and moved to England. They left behind their families and their businesses and most of them hoped to return after the war. Men like Thomas Hutchinson (fourth-generation American and former Royal Governor) and Samuel Quincy (attorney and moderate Loyalist) who emigrated to England found themselves strangers in a strange land. They were not warmly welcomed by the British authorities and found themselves treated not quite as foe, but certainly not as friends.

Ex-pats gathered in coffee houses, formed the New England Club, complained about the high cost of living, and hoped for either a position in a government ministry or a generous pension from the Crown. Malcolm notes, "[They] had made a hard-headed gamble to take advantage of the coming war, confident the British were sure to win. The gamble was not without immediate costs, exile from family and friends and reputation. Time would tell whether it was the right move."

For Hutchinson, it was not. He died in England, having given up hope to "lay my bones in my native soil." Quincy, specifically singled out by the Massachusetts Banishment Act of 1778, had his properties confiscated (while his wife and children were still dependent upon their revenues) and didn't reunite with his family until 1782 in An-

Digitally altered version of *The Nation Makers*, Howard Pyle (1902).

OPPOSITE: Digitally altered version of *Battle of Bunker Hill*, Howard Pyle (1897).



tigua. A few years later, he wrote, “nor will I ever visit that country where I first drew my breath, but upon such terms as I have always lived in it.” Such terms were never to be granted, and Quincy died on a return voyage to England in 1789. While other absentees were eventually allowed to return, over 30,000 Loyalists who remained in America during the war eventually left for Canada, attracted to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia by the Crown’s promise of free land.

The book’s shortcomings are few. There is no comprehensive bibliography, although notes indicate the multiplicity of sources used. The book draws heavily on a blend of primary sources like archival collections of family letters and documents, as well as secondary accounts by reputable historians like Mary Beth Norton, Carol Berkin, and Bernard Bailyn. Secondly, while the book’s subtitle might lead a reader to expect that both the Adams and Quincy families receive equal treatment, the Quincy family is clearly in the foreground of the account, although John, Samuel, and Abigail Adams make recurring appearances. Finally, the lack of a Quincy (or Adams) family tree is a significant omission. Malcom notes the difficulty keeping names and relationships straight:

Samuel [Quincy] and his wife Hannah lived in a fine house on South Street in Boston...and soon were parents of three children, sons Samuel and Thomas and daughter Hannah. Hannah was obviously a very popular name, as Samuel’s little Hannah had a grandmother, an aunt, and a mother named Hannah.

The names Josiah, John, Abigail, Edmund, and Samuel were also exceedingly popular in multiple generations and in multiple families, and without a genealogical chart of some sort the reader could struggle keeping everyone straight.

*The Times that Try Men’s Souls: The Adams, the Quincys, and the Battle for Loyalty in the American Revolution* is a fast-paced account of the American Revolution writ large (through events, documents, and battles) and small (through the lives and loyalties of several influential New England families). Illustrated with beautiful color plates, the volume is well worth pursuing for anyone looking for a scholarly refresher course about the American Revolution as well as a better understanding and appreciation of how that conflict and the loyalties it gave rise to shaped the lives of individuals, their families, and the new nation.



*Claire McCaffery Griffin is the 1992 James Madison Fellow from Hawaii. She taught for nearly 30 years and then spent 16 years working with and for non-profit civic education organizations.*

## BOOK REVIEW

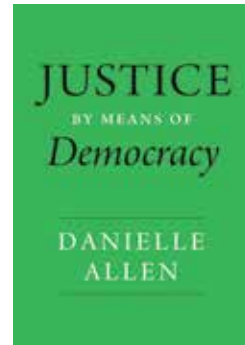
# Participatory Democracy

By Anna Bartel, '21 (CA)

Danielle Allen's 2023 book *Justice by Means of Democracy* seeks to reorient the political, social, and economic organization of the United States upon the ideal of power-sharing liberalism, or the pursuit of justice by means of democracy. Allen's work reads like a treatise, with each sentence, paragraph, and chapter arranged to lead the reader through a series of premises towards her ultimate conclusion. Written as a response to John Rawls' 1971 landmark work, *A Theory of Justice*, Allen challenges aspects of Rawls' theory while reworking our understanding of justice and establishing new rules for action in designing the various structures in which we live.

Allen argues that justice, defined as human flourishing, is achieved in the full and equal exercise of private and public autonomy. Private autonomy refers to the right of the individual to steer the course of their own life through the protection of negative liberties, such as free speech and the right to property. Whereas, public autonomy refers to the right of the individual to participate in politics and collectively shape their community's civic life. Allen draws a stark contrast with Rawls, whose theory tends to prioritize private over public autonomy, or the right of the individual to act individually over the right of the individual to act in community. Rawls' preference for private autonomy led him to conceive of the value of democratic participation as largely instrumental, existing for the purpose of protecting negative liberties. In contrast, Allen argues that democratic participation holds intrinsic as well as instrumental value.

While democracy protects negative liberties, Allen argues, it also provides the means through which public autonomy, or the ability to shape a community's agenda, is exercised. "Well-being resting on autonomy cannot emerge simply from being the author of one's own life," Allen reasons, as each of us operates within the limits of societal constraints. Rather, the only way to fully realize autonomy, is to be a "cocreator of those social constraints," exercising "shared autonomy through political institutions." Through democracy, private and public autonomy is fully realized. Thus, Allen concludes that it is only by means of democracy that human flourishing, or justice, can be achieved.



### Justice by Means of Democracy

By Danielle Allen

University of Chicago Press

288 pgs. | \$21



*The County Election*, George Caleb Bingham (1854).

Allen contends that this understanding of justice is not new, but can be found in the rhetoric of the *Declaration of Independence*. While private autonomy is seen in each individual's right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," public autonomy is realized in the right of the individual to work collectively to "alter or to abolish" tyrannical governments and to instead institute a new government in such a manner as "to them [plural] shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." The Founding Fathers' decision to resist tyranny was about more than the preservation of negative liberties. In signing the *Declaration of Independence*, they acted collectively to fulfill the duty they felt they owed to one another. In writing, "we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor," they were preparing to sacrifice their own liberty, or private autonomy, in support of the public good. In asserting the coequal status of public autonomy, Allen is recovering the revolutionary and ancient conception of man as a political being, having by nature a

need to work collectively to achieve justice.

In the following chapters, Allen drafts her guiding principles for political, social, and economic structures on the foundation of her argument that private and public autonomy constitutes justice, achieved only by means of democracy. Central to her argument are the principles that political equality is of first importance to human flourishing in all areas and that difference without domination can be achieved in politics, society, and economics. When examining political, social, and economic structures, Allen develops guiding principles, rules, and norms specific to each category, which cannot be fully outlined here due to their specificity and complexity. This book is rich in its argumentation, expertly wide-reaching in its reference to thinkers, and totalizing in its scope. Allen's work is best appreciated when discussed with others. In essence, her book calls upon readers to engage with her writing not merely as individuals, but as individuals in community.

The greatest strength in Allen's work lies in its

concluding chapter, where she offers a rich discussion on civic education, which will be of particular interest to educators. As democracies demand high intellectual engagement from citizens, students can perceive political participation as overwhelming and disconnected from ordinary life. However, Allen contends that democratic participation is deeply connected to the fundamental experience of all human beings. To be human is to pursue happiness by making judgements concerning what actions are justifiable for our purposes. Democracy, Allen argues, does not require the development of a skill that is alien to human experience. Instead, democracy empowers citizens to make judgements collectively, for the good of the whole, even as we are already making judgements individually, for our own personal benefit. The job of the civic educator is to make this connection between the personal and the political explicit so that students understand political participation as a natural extension of self-rule, a process in which they are already engaged.

Nevertheless, democratic participation differs from exercising personal autonomy in one essential way. Democracy involves the hard work of forming judgements in community about what justice demands, rather than merely at the individual level. Accordingly, Allen argues that democracy's constructive work must be marked by collective conversation, debate, and deliberation, which "shapes and reshapes the preferences of its community members." The second major challenge of civic education is in teaching students how to empower themselves and others to be cocreators of a pluralistic society. Here, Allen emphasizes the importance of developing skills for respectful disagreement, evaluating multiple perspectives, and forming bridging relationships as well as the ethics of democratic citizenship, including "norms of fair fighting and non-violence." Moderation is an essential virtue for the survival of a democratic system.

The relational challenge of democracy, according to Allen, lies in the work of ensuring that all people are integrated into our democratic systems and have an experience of "ownership, belonging, and equal footing in relation to our political institutions." Beyond removing legal and social pro-

hibitions to political participation, Allen points to Dr. King's expansive view of integration as, "the positive acceptance of desegregation and welcome participation...into the total range of human activities." It is this richer theory of inclusion that Allen sets forth as the type of culture that must be built into our political institutions if the full range of human flourishing is to be achieved. Civic educators are charged with teaching students to recognize the personhood of others, the capacity of all to deliberate, choose, and take responsibility, and to engage in non-injury to others. All must bear the burden of integrating our democracy. For the privileged, Allen argues, this burden lies in "transitioning to fully inclusive decision-making" and for the formerly oppressed, "of responding with non-injurious pedagogy to witting and unwitting efforts to continue practices of domination." All must work to create a culture marked by the calling in, rather than the calling out, of others.

While Allen's book calls for massive changes in how we think about, and operate, our political, social, and economic systems, perhaps her best contribution is in asking Americans to rethink how we view and interact with one another. It is the relational work of democracy that informs Allen's deeply intellectual argument and shapes her vision of creating a more inclusive, pluralist, and just society for all people by the means of democracy.

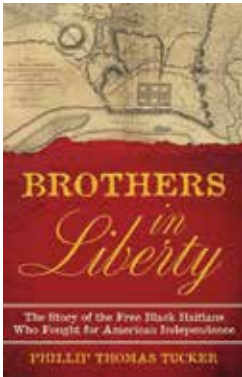


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## BOOK REVIEW

# Haiti's Forgotten Patriots

By Brendan Shaw, '23 (SC)



**Brothers in Liberty: The Forgotten Story of the Free Black Haitians Who Fought for American Independence**

By Phillip Thomas Tucker

Stackpole Books  
352 pgs. | \$35

OPPOSITE: Saint Domingue: Capture of Ravine-à-Couleuvres, Karl Girardet (date unknown).

In his book *Brothers in Liberty: The Forgotten Story of the Free Black Haitians Who Fought for American Independence* historian Phillip Thomas Tucker delivers a compelling narrative that unveils a largely overlooked chapter of American history. Through meticulous research and vivid storytelling, Tucker sheds light on the crucial role played by free Black Haitians in the fight for American independence, challenging the dominant narratives that have long shaped our understanding of this pivotal period.

As a distinguished historian with a focus on the intersection of race and American history, Tucker brings a wealth of expertise to this work. Holding a Ph.D. in history, Tucker has dedicated his career to uncovering the contributions of marginalized groups in shaping the United States. His commitment to historical accuracy and inclusivity is evident in his extensive body of work, which includes multiple books and scholarly writings on topics related to the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and African American history.

Tucker organizes the book into several key sections, each illuminating different dimensions of the Haitian experience during the American Revolution. The narrative begins with an exploration of the socio-political landscape of 18th-century Haiti, setting the stage for understanding the motivations that drove free Black Haitians to join the fight alongside American patriots. Tucker delves into the desire for freedom, the hope for social equality, and the aspirations that contributed to a cause that resonated with their own struggles for liberation.

The book takes readers on a journey through the American Revolution from an often overlooked perspective, introducing free Black Haitians whose bravery and sacrifices shaped pivotal moments in the fight for independence. Among these unsung heroes is Séguier de Terson, a free Black Haitian soldier known for his daring courage in



battle. In one gripping account, de Terson, refusing to retreat, led his men through a hail of gunfire at the Siege of Savannah, rallying his fellow soldiers with cries of “Liberty for all!” Despite severe injuries, he held his ground, inspiring others to do the same in the face of overwhelming British forces.

Another notable figure is Captain Vincent Oliver, a Haitian commander who left a life of relative comfort to join the cause. An experienced sailor, Captain Oliver’s knowledge of maritime tactics was crucial during naval skirmishes along the American coast. In one encounter, he used his intimate knowledge of the region’s waters to outmaneuver a British vessel, buying valuable time for American forces to regroup. Oliver’s tactical skill and quick thinking made him a beloved leader, and his resilience became legendary among his men.

By weaving together personal narratives like those of de Terson and Oliver with broader historical contexts, Tucker paints a vivid picture of the interconnected histories of Haitian and American independence. Through meticulous research and primary sources, he reveals how these individuals not only shaped key battles but also inspired a spirit of resistance and solidarity across borders.

One of the standout features of *Brothers in Liberty* is the author’s ability to challenge the dominant narratives surrounding the American Revolution. He highlights the contradictions between the ideals of freedom and the realities of slavery and racial inequality, encouraging readers to reflect on the diverse voices that have shaped the nation. Through this lens, Tucker advocates for a more inclusive historical narrative that recognizes the contributions of marginalized groups, such as the free Black Haitians who fought for American independence.

While the book is an enlightening and impactful read, some critics have noted that the narrative occasionally lacks a cohesive flow as it shifts between various stories and historical contexts. Additionally, some readers may have hoped for a more comprehensive analysis of the broader implications of these contributions on both American and Haitian history. However, these minor critiques do not diminish the overall significance

of the book. It is a seminal work that challenges us to rethink the traditional narratives of the American Revolution. By shining a light on the forgotten stories of free Black Haitians, Tucker invites us to confront the uncomfortable truths about the complexities of liberty and the contradictions that have long plagued our nation. This book is not merely a historical account; it is a call to action, urging us to engage in a deeper and more nuanced understanding of our past to build a more just and equitable future. Tucker’s work sheds light on the contradictions and hypocrisies that plagued the revolutionary ideals, as the fight for independence was often juxtaposed with the continued oppression of enslaved and marginalized communities. This critical examination encourages readers to grapple with the complexities of this historical moment and to question the selective memory that has obscured the contributions of free Black Haitians and other marginalized groups.

One of the most compelling aspects of Tucker’s work is his ability to humanize the experiences of free Black Haitians during the American Revolution. Rather than presenting them as mere footnotes in history, he brings their stories to life, highlighting their individual motivations, struggles, and acts of heroism. Take, for instance, André Rigaud, a free Black Haitian of mixed race, whose fervent commitment to the ideals of freedom led him to join the fight. Rigaud, who would later play a significant role in Haiti’s own battle for independence, risked his life on foreign soil out of a deep-seated belief in the right to self-determination. Tucker’s portrayal of figures like Rigaud allows readers to empathize with their courage and sacrifices, fostering a deeper appreciation for their invaluable contributions to the American cause.

Tucker’s exploration of the socio-political context of 18th-century Haiti provides valuable insights into the complex web of colonial power dynamics and the aspirations for freedom that were shared across the Atlantic. By situating the Haitian experience within the broader geopolitical landscape, the author invites readers to consider the interconnectedness of the struggles for liberty and self-determination that were unfolding on both sides of the ocean.

One of the book’s most thought-provoking as-



pects is its exploration of the broader implications of the free Black Haitians' involvement in the American Revolution. Tucker delves into the ways in which their participation not only shaped the course of the war but also had far-reaching consequences for the future of both the United States and Haiti. For instance, he examines how the Haitian soldiers' presence on American soil sparked conversations among both Black and white Americans about freedom and equality, subtly challenging the institution of slavery even as independence was won. These soldiers' experiences returned with them to Haiti, fueling a spirit of resistance that would later ignite the Haitian Revolution. By considering the intersections of race, freedom, and nation-building, Tucker invites readers to ponder the legacies of this history and its continued relevance in the present day.

As we grapple with the ongoing struggle for racial justice and the need to acknowledge the contributions of marginalized communities, the book stands as a powerful testament to the resilience and determination of those who have fought for the ideals of freedom, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. Tucker's dedication to honoring the legacy of free Black Haitians ensures that their contributions will not be overlooked in the ongoing journey toward a more inclusive historical narrative.

This book is a must-read for history enthusiasts, educators, and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the American Revolution and its legacy. It challenges us to confront the uncomfortable truths about our past, to recognize the diverse voices that have shaped our nation, and to engage in a more nuanced and inclusive dialogue about the meanings of liberty and justice. By amplifying the stories of the free Black Haitians who fought alongside American patriots, *Brothers in Liberty* invites us to reconsider the dominant narratives and to embrace a more comprehensive and equitable understanding of our shared history.

**Tucker advocates for a more inclusive historical narrative that recognizes the contributions of marginalized groups, such as the free Black Haitians who fought for American independence.**



*Brendan Shaw is the 2023 Senior James Madison Fellow from South Carolina and teaches at Stratford High School.*

# Abraham Lincoln and the Union of Sentiments

## A Review of *His Greatest Speeches: How Lincoln Moved the Nation* by Diana Schaub

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By J. Michael Hoffpauir, Ph.D.

In *His Greatest Speeches: How Lincoln Moved the Nation*, Diana Schaub, Professor Emerita of Political Science at Loyola University Maryland, works directly from Lincoln's words to clarify and reinvigorate our sense of the promises of America—the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the promises we must uphold as democratic citizens. All students of Abraham Lincoln and America should read this book. Not only does it contain the full texts of the Lyceum Address, the Gettysburg Address, and the Second Inaugural, but it also contains careful, detailed, and remarkably insightful commentaries on every line of these speeches.

According to Schaub, Lincoln's greatest speeches matter as much today as they did when he first uttered them, for today "the republic does not stand as sturdily or as undivided as all would hope." The man who understood the dangers and injustices wrought by disunion also understood the blessings of union. Yet one ought to think beyond the security of the physical union (cf. *The Federalist Nos. 3-8*). One ought also to think of the union of sentiments or, more precisely, the union of Americans regarding the principle of human equality and the promise of American constitutional government.

For Lincoln and Schaub, words—Lincoln's words as known through his great speeches—are

meant for his audience to understand themselves, the challenges they face, and what they must do. To materialize the principle of liberty that is entwined about our hearts, we must act. To act well, we must deliberate and choose well. Therefore, the prudent statesman articulates and frames these choices as he persuades us to choose as he would have us choose. Persuasion and compulsion are the stuff of politics. Among a free people who are called to give the last full measure of devotion so that others may live freely, the statesman must be conscious of the "way in which our saying leads to our doing." While the link between speech and deed is discernible in free and unfree regimes alike, Lincoln teaches the importance of rationally persuading the American people of the rational ground of our equality. This rational ground is the basis of our just love of equal liberty and hatred of the injustice of slavery.

The struggle for liberty against the forces of tyranny is not isolated to the mid-19th century. It is a struggle that began well before the birth of Lincoln and will persist long after our deaths. Lincoln's reflections on three punctuation points in American history help us better understand liberty and what it takes to secure it for all: the Lyceum Address reflects on 1787, the date of the writing of the Constitution; the Gettysburg Address reflects on 1776, the date of the nation's Declaration of In-



Abraham Lincoln's return home after his successful campaign for the Presidency of the United States, in October, 1860, Rees Print and Litho. Co. (1898).

dependence; and the Second Inaugural Address reflects on 1619, the date of the beginning of slavery on the North American continent.

The Lyceum Address shows that the difference between an assembly of people and a mob is the difference between peace and violence or reason and passion. In the wake of the turmoil of the past several years, Americans have assembled in large numbers to petition the government for change. Self-restraint is required for peace on such occasions, but this is daunting given that outrage often spurs public assemblies in the first place. Lincoln's Lyceum Address helps us understand our right of peaceful assembly by helping us understand the dangers of mob rule.

Lincoln gives an account of mob rule through an account of lynchings that occurred in Mississippi and St. Louis. In Mississippi, mobs first lynched gamblers (gambling had just become le-

gal), then lynched enslaved people, then lynched white men who were supposed to be leagued with enslaved people, and then, finally, lynched visitors from other states. Mobs produce strange fruit. According to Lincoln, this process of hanging went on "till, dead men were seen literally dangling from the boughs of trees upon every roadside; and in numbers almost sufficient, to rival the native Spanish moss of the country, as a drapery of the forest." He employs this forest imagery again at the end of the Lyceum Address, speaking there of "the forest of giant oaks." This "doubling" is not an accident. According to Schaub, "The nation's degeneration over time is captured in these twin images, as the majestic oaks (emblem of the revolutionary generation)—now "despoiled," "shorn," and "mutilated"—are replaced by the corpses of the innocent."

This disease is not peculiar to the trees of Mis-

Mississippi, for in St. Louis, says Lincoln, a man named McIntosh “was seized in the street, dragged to the suburbs of the city, chained to a tree, and actually burned to death; and all within a single hour from the time he had been a freeman, attending to his own business and at peace with the world.” Lincoln then breaks from detailing these tragic events to speak to his audience, noting they are perhaps wondering what this mob violence has to do with the perpetuation of our political institutions, the subject of the Address. Lincoln adopts this rhetorical technique so he can speak directly to any objector while also gaining the audience by making his argument their own.

Anger is the passion fueling any mob that lynchings and burns men. “Anger is a potent sign of a thirst for justice, a thirst powerful enough to send human beings outside the law, especially when the law is slow or unreliable or simply wrong.” Lincoln understands that those in the grips of anger are also likely in the grips of fear. This sort longs for sympathy for themselves, as Schaub notes, and not for sympathy for their victims. To show these angry and afraid citizens that mob violence will erode our institutions, Lincoln partially agrees with them—at first. He goes on to say the gamblers in Mississippi are “worse than useless” and we would be better off without them. The view of that scene in Mississippi is now reversed.

According to Schaub, “we move from a description of the Mississippi hangings as ‘revolting to humanity’ to the thoughts that these deaths are ‘never matter of reasonable regret.’” Lincoln enacts a similar reverse with the tale of McIntosh; McIntosh was not in fact at peace with the world but had committed murder. “Had he not died as he did, he must have died by the sentence of the law, in a very short time afterwards. As to him alone, it was as well the way it was, as it could otherwise have been,” Lincoln argues. This sounds hardhearted, Schaub rightly notes, but this is what persuasion calls for. Sympathy for the victims has no emotional purchase here. “Lincoln is indicating that any approach that focuses only on the direct effects of mob rule is bound to be unproductive, since the wider public (some small part of which is acting as a mob) basically welcomes the outcome: gamblers and murderers quickly dis-

pensed with.” One gains an audience to one’s side by showing them that one is on their side. In this case, Lincoln accomplishes this feat by vindicating the audience’s “instinctive hostility to wrongdoers.” He may then move from this point to appeal to his audience’s self-interest, for it would now seem he shares their interest. And the audience must come to understand that law-abidingness is in their self-interest. But, before getting this far, one should note he also criticizes the audience by omitting the violence in Mississippi against allegedly conspiring slaves, the whites with whom they were supposedly in league, and those outside visitors. By omitting these injustices, Schaub argues, Lincoln does nothing to diminish his initial account of those deaths.

We must understand the dangers of mob rule. The mob makes mistakes and may very well exact its justice on the innocent. And in this case, to whom would one appeal? Further, once the mob exacts its justice and goes unpunished, those who are “lawless in spirit” see this free pass as an invitation to be “lawless in practice.” No matter if it claims the mantle of justice, the mob’s lawless acts breed greater injustice and lawlessness. Finally, those good citizens who are law-abiding in spirit become disaffected with their ineffective government. “According to Lincoln, the endpoint of this erosion of confidence will be regime change. Left unopposed, mob rule results in the overthrow of popular government.” We must, therefore, oppose mob rule with every resource at our disposal.

A civic religion that is reverent to the Constitution and laws is to stymie mob rule. As Lincoln says, “let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay, of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.” According to Schaub, “Reverence uproots disrespect and thereby negates both the direct and indirect consequences of mob rule.” The state of feeling wrought by reverence for the Constitution and laws reveals the limits of reason and the power of passion. Reverence (awe and fear) in service of reason must be used to counter the passions (anger and fear) that generate mob rule. Hence, Lincoln “endows democratic theory, which establishes the binding character of consent-based law, with a sacred character.” Religious

language serves the political purpose of sanctifying the Constitution and laws. Even though, or especially because, we made the Constitution and laws, we must esteem them to the level of the unassailably sacred if we are to safeguard the liberty they are meant to secure. As Schaub says, “The solution is absolute law-abidingness.”

Mob rule destroys trust in government, which, in turn, opens the space for demagogues to rise to power. We the people are the only restraint upon those demagogues belonging to the “family of the lion” or “tribe of the eagle” who would overturn our constitutional order. Indicative of the conceit of these incipient tyrants, argues Schaub, “is the fact that the very question the lion in the fable roars at the hares when he dismisses their harangue for equality—“where are your claws and teeth?”—could just as legitimately be asked by the demos of the aspiring tyrant when he asserts that he is so superior as to be a law unto himself.” A people reverent to the Constitution and the laws can resist these proud types.

Reason must preside over passion in the souls of each individual American, for “self-government in the collective depends on self-government within the self.” Sober reason is to guide us to political reverence, and as such, perpetuate a reverent attachment to our institutions and to reason itself. For this to occur, says Lincoln, cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason must “be moulded into *general intelligence, sound morality, and in particular, a reverence for the constitution and laws.*” This “sound morality” should be a *shared morality* that, when coupled with general intelligence and constitutional reverence, can provide a legal, moral, and prudential guide through the injustice and mob rule of Lincoln’s time and our own. The union of sentiments guided by, grounded in, and reverent to reason is essential for the perpetuation of the institutions meant to secure liberty.

Moving forward to 1863 and the Gettysburg Address, one might note that familiarity can breed an expectation of behavior and even boredom. It

is for this reason that Schaub calls for a patient, even naïve reading of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. A consistent feature of Lincoln’s political speeches throughout the 1850s, a time of tremendous expansion of slavery in America, is his understanding that the principles of the Declaration of Independence are the proper countermeasures to the spread of this evil. The Gettysburg Address reminds the Union of the principles for which it is fighting and means to stoke the resolve to stay the course. The prudent statesman shows his citizens what they ought to do and why they ought to do it. Yet this speech has a “highly abstract character,” observes Schaub. Lincoln’s immediate audience

could likely place the specifics of “four score and seven years ago,” “our fathers,” “this continent,” and “a great battlefield,” but the point remains that “no specifics are given. There isn’t a proper noun to be found, with the single exception of God.” This is deliberate. Lincoln’s abstract language underlines the applicability of the Declaration to all people of all places of all times.

The Gettysburg Address opens, “Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” 1863, the year of the Gettysburg Address, minus 87 (“four score and seven years ago”) equals 1776. According to Schaub, this math and rhetoric enshrines and elevates 1863, the Gettysburg Address, this great battlefield, those who gave the last full measure of devotion, and the principles to which they were devoted. We should look to those who gave that last full measure and remember. We should look up to them as models who were devoted to the proposition that all men are created equal. This speech reminds all lovers of liberty of the principles we love. It stirs our sense of duty and devotion to stay faithful. It aims at invigorating our willingness to fight—and die—for our principles.

Lincoln summons all of this in us while himself receding into the background. As Schaub notes, there is no mention of “I” in this address. There

**We should look to those who gave that last full measure and remember. We should look up to them as models who were devoted to the proposition that all men are created equal.**



are, however, ten instances of “we,” three instances of “us,” and two of “our.” In helping his people understand what they must do and why they must do it, the statesman leaves it to them to act. This is the trust a leader must place in a people who are by nature free; this is the duty of a people who are by nature free to secure that freedom for all, including especially those who do not enjoy its blessing. “Remarkably, [Lincoln] manages to summon and direct collective resolve while remaining nearly invisible himself, placed among and subsumed within the ‘we’...His speech displays the transcendence of self that he hopes to bring forth in others.” American government is of, by, and for the people. As Schaub underlines, it is not government over the people. “Over” is a term reserved for descriptions of abuse and unfairness. The statesman is here not out of vanity and a desire to lord over us. The statesman, instead, is here *with us*, modeling dedication to the common good, as is just among equals. The statesman is here with us, highly resolving “that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, *under God*, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth (emphasis added). Schaub writes:

According to Lincoln, the superintendence of God plays a role in the new birth of freedom. The divinity, of course, is present in the opening proposition that ‘all men are created equal’...One can believe in species-based human equality without believing in divine Providence or God’s ongoing benevolent care for his creation. Lincoln’s civic religion, however, brings God closer.

In the search for meaning, we can turn to principles—we can turn to a divine order. Lincoln makes such a turn here at Gettysburg, as the principles for which these men died are not principles produced by man. These principles are a benefaction from the God who is over this nation. Securing these principles requires a shared devotion not only to the principles but also to the Constitution and Union capable of securing them.

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OPPOSITE: Statue of Abraham Lincoln in Lincoln Park, Chicago, photograph by Andrew Horne (Wikipedia images) (2011).

The Second Inaugural Address continues something of this view. According to Schaub, this address displays Lincoln’s teaching that a providential order sets limits on human action. These limits are visible in Lincoln’s openness to the Civil War coming as divine retribution for the injustice of slavery. Based on the principles of 1776, the actions of 1619 are by all means unjust and against the dictates of the Creator, who made all human beings equal. According to Schaub, the Second Inaugural is Lincoln’s peace speech and his 1619 address.

In the third paragraph of the Second Inaugural, Lincoln offers a hypothetical about God’s will and divine reparations. A punishing God, “an angry God,” as Schaub argues, “might require the war’s continuance” until, as Lincoln says “all the wealth piled up by the bond-man’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword.” Again, Lincoln’s math is essential to his argument. Subtracting 250 from 1865 results in 1615. “Lincoln’s approximate date is not far off the actual date of 1619,” which is the origin date of American slavery in the Jamestown Colony. Schaub notes that “bond-man” is a term that highlights the personhood of those enslaved to create this wealth. Moreover, “bond-man” also has Biblical resonance, which could liken the enslaved people in America to the children of Israel and America to the Pharaoh, whom God smites (Deuteronomy 24:18). We must see that Lincoln does not assign moral blame to the South alone; America is collectively guilty of the sin of slavery, and the Civil War should be viewed as divine punishment for the crime. Collective guilt is not the only point here, for Lincoln’s turn to 1619 reaches beyond the facts of history and the assigning of moral blame to lay “a path through divine reparations to human charity.”

In 1865, the Civil War had already been long and bloody, but Lincoln admits that it may continue until God’s punitive justice is satisfied. If the War continues, then “as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether.’” This quotation is from Psalms 19:9. It takes us further

into the past, well before the advent of American slavery 250 years prior. Psalms 19:9 is dated to 1015 B.C., which makes Lincoln's chronology of three thousand years ago basically accurate. According to Schaub:

Lincoln has re-situated the civil conflict of 1861 through 1865 within the wider horizon inaugurated by the events of 1619 and then resituated that historic wrong within the widest imaginable horizon, beginning from the expulsion from Eden. His four direct quotes from the Bible (Genesis 3:19, Matthew 7:1, Matthew 18:7, and Psalms 19:9) sketch a way of thinking about offense and judgment.

Lincoln offers an interpretation of the Civil War that would "unite whites, North and South, in humility before God's judgment upon American Slavery and that would, in consequence, create the civic space in which Blacks could unite with whites." The sense of moral superiority in the North, the sense of hatred and desire for vengeance in the South, and the rage felt by the millions of human beings formerly held in slavery were to be overcome by the sense of collective guilt shared by all humankind. Taking us back to Eden and Original Sin opens us to the union of sentiments and the possibilities raised in the final paragraph of the Second Inaugural.

It is one thing to stifle Northern righteousness and extend an olive branch to the South. It is another thing to ease the relations between the races. Lincoln's use of "bond man" is significant, as

"in no uncertain terms, whites are told that God was all along on the side of the bondsmen." God has been on the side of the enslaved, and Lincoln himself implies, "God would be justified in exacting eye-for-eye vengeance on their behalf." But this does not mean that those formerly enslaved should resign themselves to whatever political fate God intends for them. One need only look to the Emancipation Proclamation and Lincoln's August 26, 1863 Letter to Conkling to see otherwise.<sup>1</sup> "In effect, Lincoln puts whites on notice that blacks have an inalienable right to life and liberty that they themselves may vindicate should police protection fail them."

If we understand the Civil War as punishment for collective sin, then we might be open to charity for all, or at least open to malice toward none. Schaub is clear: Lincoln's theological interpretation has the political postwar purpose of healing the national divide. There is no victory here. There is only shared national suffering, resulting from shared national guilt. And there is no "I" here. The word "we" occurs six times in the Second Inaugural, and the word "all" is the most frequently used word, occurring ten times in total. Three of those instances are in the final, "universalizing" sentence. There, Lincoln tells us all what we are to do and how we are to do it. He says:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have

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<sup>1</sup> "And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages. And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service" (Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863).

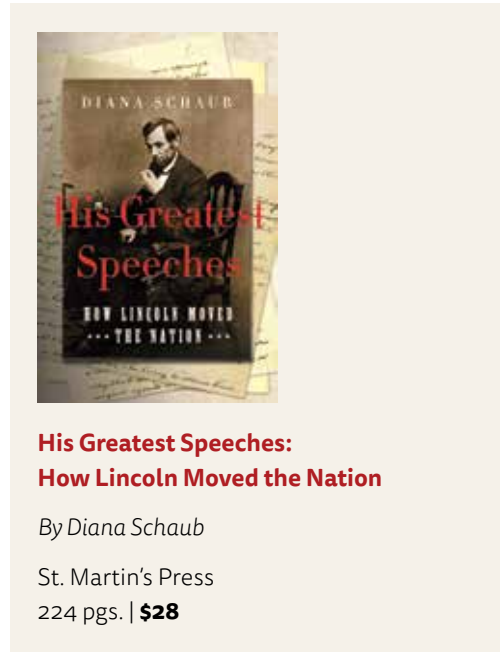
"Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among free men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost. And then there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation, while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they strove to hinder it" (Lincoln, Letter to James C. Conkling, August 26, 1863).



borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

The core of this sentence is Lincoln’s imperative, his demand, “let us strive on.” He tells us how to strive on: “with malice toward none; with charity toward all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right.” He tells us exactly what to do to strive on: “to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.” According to Schaub, “the order of the modifiers is deliberate. Before charity is possible, malice must be overcome.” One cannot be charitable if one has hatred in one’s heart, no matter if that hatred stems from moral righteousness, anger and vindictiveness, or rage at injustice. And although we are to strive on with “firmness in the right,” knowledge of our fallibility is to temper this firmness. We are to strive on “with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right.” No matter our fallibility—or precisely because of our fallibility—Lincoln’s call to action lifts us up to the realm of charity and responsibility.

We cannot strive on unless we first “finish the work we are in,” which means win the Civil War. But even this work will not be finished until we bind up the nation’s wounds. This is difficult work, for “the wounds here are intangible—the sectional wounds of the nation’s attempted suicide and the psychological wounds of mastery and slavery.” And we must also care for the tangible, lasting wounds suffered by those families whose loved ones died in the War. Finally, Lincoln calls us “to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.” For Schaub, Lincoln’s use of “cherish” means that, to have peace, we must hold peace dear. This is Lincoln’s call for benevolence. “The nurturing spirit in which we ‘do all’ matters. ‘Cherish’ also echoes ‘charity.’ Significantly, both words are derived from the same Latin root: *carus* (dear). Placed in between ‘charity’ and ‘cherish’ is ‘care’...the meanings of the three [words] overlap,



**His Greatest Speeches:  
How Lincoln Moved the Nation**

By Diana Schaub

St. Martin’s Press

224 pgs. | \$28

reinforcing the call for benevolence.” We are to do all that brings about peace, and Lincoln’s call is universal, reaching all human beings in all nations. As was said in 1865, so still it must be said: to bind our nation’s wounds and secure the blessings of peace and liberty, we must be dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, protect the Constitution and Union, and act with malice toward none and charity for all.

The words of Lincoln match the deeds of Lincoln, who himself gave the last full measure of devotion to his country. We must study the words of Lincoln to come to know Lincoln, yes, and we must study Lincoln to come to know America, to come to know ourselves, and to have the union of sentiments required for ensuring that “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” *His Greatest Speeches* by Professor Diana Schaub is an invaluable resource for this most important task.

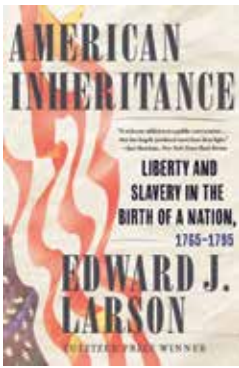


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## BOOK REVIEW

# Complex Views of Slavery in an Enlightened World

By Darcy Daniels, '02 (NJ)



### American Inheritance: Liberty and Slavery in the Birth of a Nation

By Edward J. Larson

W.W. Norton & Co.

367 pgs. | \$15

“There are but two sorts of men in the world,” John Adams once wrote, “freemen and slaves.” In his groundbreaking book, *American Inheritance: Liberty and Slavery in the Birth of a Nation*, Pulitzer-Prize winner Edward J. Larson explores the differences in thinking that many of the Founding Fathers had about the word liberty. To some of them, liberty meant the freedom of all people, but to others, liberty meant the freedom to own people. These differences are explored throughout the Colonial Period between 1765-1795, during the lead up to the Revolution, the war itself, and the framing of the U.S. Constitution. The book divides itself in half nicely, with the first half addressing the colonial period and the second half considering the successes and failures of the new republic with regards to addressing slavery. Larson begins with the reflection of who was considered to be an American, and the entrenched idea that the worst thing to be was a slave. According to Larson, Whigs freely used “slavery” as a metaphor for a lack of political liberty or agency. For the Sons of Liberty in Boston, Massachusetts, the withdrawal of rights, the inability to participate in government, and the lack of self-determination was tantamount to slavery, and therefore, it was the duty of citizens to fight against this oppression. This line of reasoning, however, did not extend to those who were *actually enslaved*. Larson quotes James Otis, Jr. who stated “enslaved blacks have ‘the same right to freedom and the sweet enjoyment of liberty and life as their unrelenting taskmasters’ but that did not make them Americans.”

The ideas of liberty and oppression were all quite theoretical for a group of colonies on the other side of an ocean from its colonial power. It was during this time in the 1760s that a troublemaking group of Boston lawmakers began agitating the crown about natural rights while the rest of the colonies observed the results and stayed below the fray. The turning point for some was when the *Somerset Case* was decided in 1772, in England. With the decision, some colonists realized that their time as owners of other people could come to an end, especially in combination with the Declaratory Acts, which allowed

OPPOSITE: *A Slave Auction at the South* [originally in Harper’s Weekly, July 13, 1861], Theodore R. Davis (1861)

Parliament the right to legislate directly over the affairs of the colonies. It came to a moment of realization (and terror for some) with *Somerset* that declared slavery was illegal in England in 1772. How long would slavery stay legal in the colonies?

Suddenly, enslavers were not free to travel back and forth to Great Britain with their enslaved workers, for fear that the enslaved workers would claim asylum. The Declaratory Act which stated that Parliament had “full power and authority to make law and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America, subjects of the crown of Great Britain, in all cases, whatsoever,” further frightened the colonists by allowing Parliament to make any law and have it enforced in any of Great Britain’s territorial holdings or colonies. The only way to protect their property, some enslavers argued, was to break with Great Britain and its combination of banning slavery and all-encompassing jurisdiction over the colonies. With the coming of the Revolutionary War, therefore, many slave-owning colonists fought to not be enslaved by an oppressive gov-

ernment, in order to own slaves without fear of losing them.

During the Revolution, states were initially reluctant to arm enslaved workers and add them to their militias, but with the rise of troop quotas some of the smaller states like Rhode Island had no choice but to open up their rosters to enslaved workers with a promise of freedom upon their return. By the end of the war, five thousand black troops served in the Continental Army, nearly ten percent of total troops. In contrast, the British military actively advertised emancipation for enslaved people who left their owners and joined with them, which some former slaves did, especially in the southern colonies. However, when the British evacuated, they prioritized white loyalists over black soldiers, leaving some of them behind to be re-enslaved by new owners. Larson writes, “If war is hell, then Yorktown became the ninth circle of that inferno for the Blacks trapped there.” When the British surrendered, the articles of capitulation allowed Americans to reclaim their lost property, including any runaway, captured,



or confiscated enslaved Blacks who still survived. As a result, many enslavers recovered those who thought themselves to be free and fought for that right alongside the British. George Washington recovered two freedom seekers; Jefferson recovered five.

After the Revolutionary War ended, one of the many failings of the Articles of Confederation was that because it had no effective central government, various states addressed the lingering issue of slavery differently. They made their decisions based on what they perceived themselves to be: independent republics working within a confederation of sovereign states. Post-Revolutionary Massachusetts, through a reading of the Commonwealth's new Constitution (written by none other than John Adams) declared that all men are born free. This quickly led to a series of lawsuits from enslaved workers like Mum Bet and Quock Walker successfully suing for freedom. Other New England states as well as Pennsylvania in the 1780s and 1790s gradually abolished slavery until there was a block of states that would be a safe place an enslaved worker could escape with the right opportunity. Meanwhile, Virginia and the southern states continued to increase their slave population to turn crops into profit.

By the time of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the states were divided into different interests not by size, but rather whether or not they relied on slaves, and they took these biases with them to the convention. The need for slave labor was what led to the showdown of representation and taxation, ending in the three-fifths compromise that portioned representation at every five enslaved people counting for three free citizens for representation purposes. Even though the compromise was reached, Larson points out that no one in the room who agreed to the compromise believed that the enslaved population would actually be represented in any substantive way. Instead, the three-fifths compromise would only benefit enslavers who would also be representatives in Congress. In addition, a clause was put into the Constitution that allowed for the return of runaway slaves if they escaped from a state that allowed slavery, to one that had made slavery illegal, that was unanimously voted upon by the con-

vention, leading to the later Fugitive Slave Act of the Nineteenth Century.

*American Inheritance* reveals the complex interplay between liberty and slavery during the founding of the United States. The Founding Fathers' conflicting interpretations of these concepts had profound implications for the nation's future, setting the stage for the Civil War and the ongoing struggle for racial justice. This is not just a re-hashing of the three-fifths compromise, but a look into the entrenched beliefs surrounding freedom, property, and slavery from colonial times to the new republic.



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## POETRY

Scottish poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796) is the poet for this issue. Like all Britons, Burns was acutely aware of the revolution in the American colonies. He saw the victory of the United States as a victory for liberty and self-government across the world. As much as he admired America and its ideals, he knew he could not voice his views freely in the climate of Great Britain in the late 18th century. He also saw the success of the Revolution as a hope for independence for his native Scotland. - Ed.

# Ballad on the American War

By Robert Burns (1784)

When Guilford good our pilot stood  
An' did our hellim thraw, man,  
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,  
Within America, man:  
Then up they gat the maskin-pat,  
And in the sea did jaw, man;  
An' did nae less, in full congress,  
Than quite refuse our law, man.

Then thro' the lakes Montgomery takes,  
I wat he was na slaw, man;  
Down Lowrie's Burn he took a turn,  
And Carleton did ca', man:  
But yet, whatreck, he, at Quebec,  
Montgomery-like did fa', man,  
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,  
Amang his en'mies a', man.

Poor Tammy Gage within a cage  
Was kept at Boston-ha', man;  
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe  
For Philadelphia, man;  
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin  
Guid Christian bluid to draw, man;  
But at New York, wi' knife an' fork,  
Sir-Loin he hacked sma', man.

*hellim*: helm; *thraw*: thwart  
*Ae*: one

*maskin-pat*: tea-pot  
*jaw*: pour

*slaw*: slow

*whatreck*: of what avail  
*fa'*: fall

*knowe*: high ground



Burgoyne gaed up, like spur an' whip,  
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;  
Then lost his way, ae misty day,  
In Saratoga shaw, man.  
Cornwallis fought as lang's he dought,  
An' did the Buckskins claw, man;  
But Clinton's glaive frae rust to save,  
He hung it to the wa', man.

Then Montague, an' Guilford too,  
Began to fear, a fa', man;  
And Sackville dour, wha stood the stour,  
The German chief to thraw, man:  
For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,  
Nae mercy had at a', man;  
An' Charlie Fox threw by the box,  
An' lows'd his tinkler jaw, man.

Then Rockingham took up the game,  
Till death did on him ca', man;  
When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,  
Conform to gospel law, man:  
Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise,  
They did his measures thraw, man;  
For North an' Fox united stocks,  
An' bore him to the wa', man.

*shaw*: forest  
*dought*: was able

*glaive*: a sword

*stour*: dust

*lows'd*: unloosed; *tinkler*: tinker



The Death of Major Peirson, 6 January 1781,  
John Singleton Copley  
(Wikimedia Commons) (1783).

Then clubs an' hearts were Charlie's cartes,  
He swept the stakes awa', man,  
Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,  
Led him a sair faux pas, man:  
The Saxon lads, wi' loud placads,  
On Chatham's boy did ca', man;  
An' Scotland drew her pipe an' blew,  
"Up, Willie, waur them a', man!"

Behind the throne then Granville's gone,  
A secret word or twa, man;  
While slee Dundas arous'd the class  
Be-north the Roman wa', man:  
An' Chatham's wraith, in heav'nly graith,  
(Inspired bardies saw, man),  
Wi' kindling eyes, cry'd, "Willie, rise!  
Would I hae fear'd them a', man?"

But, word an' blow, North, Fox, and Co.  
Gowff'd Willie like a ba', man;  
Till Suthron raise, an' coost their claise  
Behind him in a raw, man:  
An' Caledon threw by the drone,  
An' did her whittle draw, man;  
An' swoor fu' rude, thro' dirt an' bluid,  
To mak it guid in law, man.

*cartes*: cards

*placads*: cheers

*waur*: worst

*slee*: sly

*graitb*: harness

*bardies*: poets

*Gowff'd*: golfed/struck like a golf ball

*coost*: cast; *claise*: clothes

*raw*: row

*fu'*: full; *bluid*: blood

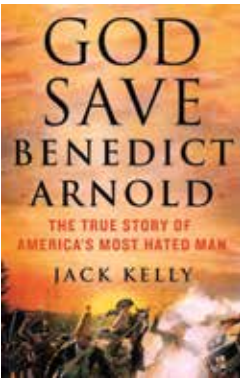
## BOOK REVIEW

# Most Enterprising and Dangerous

A Review of *God Save Benedict Arnold: The True Story of America's Most Hated Man* by Jack Kelly

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By Rob Schulte, '19 (NJ)



**God Save Benedict Arnold: The True Story of America's Most Hated Man**

By Jack Kelly

St. Martin's Press  
320 pgs. | \$29

**OPPOSITE:** Digitally altered version of *Benedict Arnold Commanding the First Naval Battle on Lake Champlain* [interior panel at the Robert T. Stafford U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Rutland, Vermont], Stephen J. Belaski (artist), David Suckley (assistant), and Pierre Zwick (assistant) (1937).

Describing Benedict Arnold, British Lord George Germain once wrote in June of 1776, “of all the Americans, he is the most enterprising and dangerous.” Little did he know at the time that these words would soon ring true on both sides of the Atlantic, a story told in a new biography of Benedict Arnold by Jack Kelly. Germain’s description would come to pass over the following months, as Arnold led American troops through the northern front of the Revolution and into Canada, carving a trail of gallant military actions, leaving behind tales of bravery and leadership (some reckless), and would ultimately end in perilous deceit against his native home. Kelly’s newest book, *God Save Benedict Arnold: The True Story of America’s Most Hated Man*, presents an honest picture of a complicated figure; a man daring for greatness but sensitive to slights, a man with a tendency to antagonize those around him, and a man who held personal grudges he would never forgive or forget.

In 1775, Benedict Arnold was quick to join the patriot cause and he was immediately thrown into some of the most significant action early in the War for Independence. While taking Fort Ticonderoga, he was quick to fight with other commanders such as Ethan Allen who had arrived simultaneously to the engagement, and even with his superiors over how to handle the Fort. Joining the Quebec campaign, he quibbled with officers over supplies while he narrowly survived his first gunshot wound to the leg. His brilliance and military acumen kept him at the forefront of the Army in the north, even as Congress slighted him for promotions and seniority.

By 1776, he had built a small naval force on Lake Champlain and would lead one of the most daring military maneuvers in the entire history of the United States at the Battle of Valcour Island. As 24 British ships sailed south from Canada to assault Arnold’s ramshackle





**If the day is long  
enough, we'll have  
them all in hell  
before night.**

navy, they assumed the colonists would flee. Arnold cleverly tucked his boats into a narrow bay along Valcour Island - much to the surprise of the British - who sailed past only to receive raking fire from their rear! The descriptions of battles in the book are where Kelly's writing really shines and you can practically hear the ships cannons echo across the mountains surrounding the lake, as Arnold stands fast on the deck of his flagship, cannonballs whizzing past him smashing into his ship, killing and wounding his sailors and marines nearby. Arnold had fought the greatest navy in the world to a draw, and in doing so greatly improved the morale of the Continental Army, and severely delayed the British, aiding the American success in upstate New York through the following year. As his ships slipped away in the night after their stunning attack, they landed on a small patch of land on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain in modern day Vermont still today known as Arnold Bay, one of the few places left in the United States that hasn't erased his name.

This is the challenge author Jack Kelly faces in *God Bless Benedict Arnold*: re-evaluating a legacy that long ago decided to erase any positive view of its subject. His previous book, *Valcour*, had forced the author to wrestle with Arnold's impact on American military actions thanks to the daring naval battle, but this book considers the complicated legacy of Benedict Arnold much more seriously. It's clear that Kelly does not want to salvage a tattered reputation, but instead through painstaking research, he wants to provide nuance and context to the story of Benedict Arnold. Kelly proves that Arnold is a complex figure filled with numerous contradictions and that he was heavily influenced by a number of people and events who pushed him towards one of the most vile acts of treachery in history.

The Continental Congress was forced to grant Arnold a well-deserved promotion from Brigadier General to Major General for his heroic leadership in Quebec and the naval battle of Valcour Island. However, the notoriously slow Continental Congress delayed the promotion which put him lower in seniority to other less-distinguished officers. Arnold never forgot the perceived slight, and it would fundamentally alter the trajectory of American history. His continued aggressive tactics proved vital as the British army moved south to the critical juncture of Saratoga. The already sensitive Arnold found himself in a weeks-long feud with American commander Major General Horatio Gates, who wrote letters to Congress quietly taking credit for Arnold's tactics. When the main force of the British Army was bearing down on the Continental Army, Arnold turned to Gates and said, "it is late in the day, but let me have men and we will have some fun with them before sunset." Arnold's men secured a nearby hill and poured musket volleys and grape-shot into the British lines, and men under his command stormed out of the nearby woods onto the smoke-covered fields overwhelming their foes. Outnumbered and outmaneuvered, British General Burgoyne called for his men to fall back to their defenses. Arnold pursued the retreating

redcoats as night fell where he turned to his men and uttered a perfect one-liner: “if the day is long enough, we’ll have them all in hell before night.” Shortly thereafter, a bullet smashed through Arnold’s shin bone, and blood began pouring from his wound as his horse was shot out from under him and pinned him to the ground. The battle was won, but at what cost? Horatio Gates would bask in the glory of victory as Benedict Arnold lay in agony in a hospital bed – yet another slight to the man risking life and limb for his country.

Kelly compares Arnold’s life to other influential figures around him, from great leaders like George Washington, to compatriots such as Joseph Warren and Richard Montgomery, who both died as heroes early in the war. Each comparison highlights the intersection of their service, and by comparing these figures, asks the reader to contemplate Arnold’s legacy. If Arnold had died earlier in the war, like Warren or Montgomery, he would continue to be hailed a hero with his legacy untarnished. Kelly asks us to consider what might have been and forces us to consider just how indispensable Arnold had been to the cause of Independence before his treason.

*God Bless Benedict Arnold* spends a surprisingly short amount of time on Arnold’s descent into infamy. Other books on Arnold, such as Nathan Philbrick’s *Valiant Ambition* use similar methods of comparison, with Philbrick charting the differences between Arnold and Washington, but spend much more time on Arnold after Saratoga. Stephen Jacob and Mark Case do much of the same in their book, *Treacherous Beauty*, comprising most of the story on Arnold’s fall after Saratoga while centering the work on his suspected loyalist wife, Peggy Shippen, whose story is largely missing here. Kelly only spends approximately 30 of his 270 pages on the betrayal, including meeting the head of British intelligence Major John André, and spending over 15 months in a life-or-death game of chance, sneaking information to the British and finalizing a deal to hand over West Point in exchange for \$4 million dollars in current money. A final meeting with the British would catch up with Arnold, as Major Andre’s capture would send Arnold fleeing to the British lines, doomed to fight against his home and settle in England after the war.

There is a lot to like in this book, even if this is well-trod ground. Casual fans of history will appreciate the quick pace and engaging tales of heroism in battle, and serious historians will likely find new information in the well-researched details in between those set pieces. After centuries as America’s first villain, it is appropriate to ask if re-evaluating this story was even necessary. Arnold himself tried to control the narrative after the war, writing that it was the “ingratitude” of his own countrymen that brought him to defect; their thankless views of him reinforced by generations of historians who have told only the tale of his betrayal. *God Bless Benedict Arnold* leaves us no longer regretting this Judas-like defection, but instead lamenting the fall from grace and the unrealized potential greatness in Arnold. Kelly rightly portrays Arnold as a villain, but he also points out that he was a victim of circumstance and his own arrogance. In the end, this work leaves the reader wishing, as Arnold’s friend Eleazer Oswald wrote, that “the ball which pierced his leg at Saratoga, [had] been directed thro’ his heart.” Only such divine intervention could have saved Benedict Arnold, and his notoriety, in the months and years that followed.



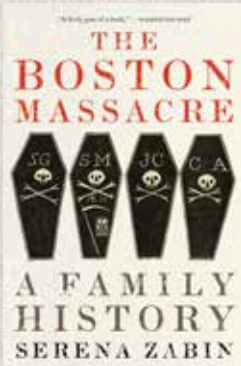
*Rob Schulte '19 (NJ) is an award-winning educator, curriculum writer, professional development presenter and historian. He has spent 19 years as a teacher at the secondary level, currently at Reynold Middle School in Hamilton, NJ and spent 12 years as a National Park Ranger at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, PA.*

## BOOK REVIEW

# Billets and Bullets in Boston

## *The Boston Massacre: A Family History* by Serena Zabin

By: Laura Curioli, '23 (ME)



**The Boston Massacre:  
A Family History**

By Serena Zabin

Mariner Books  
320 pgs. | \$22

Serena Zabin's book *The Boston Massacre: A Family History* offers a new perspective on the March 5, 1770, shooting on King Street in Boston, Massachusetts, where British soldiers of the 29th Regiment fired on colonists who had encircled the soldiers near the Custom House, killing five and wounding six. The massacre has previously been studied as an event of military history or political consequence, but with little consideration of social aspects and effects. As Zabin describes, the social effect of the massacre on the Boston community would have been less potent had it not been for the aspect of social interactions between colonists and regiment families that occurred as a result of the long period of quartering of troops in Boston.

In many ways, Serena Zabin, a professor in the Department of History at Carleton College in Minnesota, is uniquely qualified to write this book. One of her earlier books, *Dangerous Economies: Status and Commerce in British New York*, looks at New York's commerce system in the eighteenth century and the effect of race and gender on social hierarchies within that system. Her area of expertise is in early American social relationships in various Northeast urban regions.

This quartering of troops in Boston was unlike any previous North American occupation by the British military. Previous occupations, such as those in the Canadian provinces, had created only a minor sense of coexistence between local communities and British troops, but the Boston occupation that began in 1768 was different. Instead of a coexistence, it socially integrated British troops with the residents of the city. The regiments that occupied Boston brought approximately 2,000 men, 380 women, and 500 children to the city.

This was a large influx for the Boston population, which stood at about 10,000 residents. In previous occupations, for every 600 men in a regiment, 60 women were allowed to accompany them, and a few accompanying children. Military occupations were never family matters. The occupation of Boston, however, had a much higher ratio of women and children to men than that of previous occupations. The troops did not simply occupy the city; rather, the men and their families socially integrated with the families of Boston.

Zabin emphasizes how this social integration in Boston defined the reaction to the massacre. Although there had been disputes during previous occupations, and even within Boston, the shooting on King Street was felt much more harshly by the colonists because they had spent two years coming to regard the troops and their families as neighbors, not as threats. Most colonists until then considered themselves members of the British Empire and did not view the British as an enemy. The shooting on King Street eventually alienated military families from the colonists in Boston. The soldiers and their families were no longer perceived by all colonists as neighbors: to some, they were simply a militant political tool of the British government and could no longer be trusted in the community.

Boston Massacre [Reproduction Engraving from an Original Painting], Alonzo Chappel (1878).



BOSTON MASSACRE.

With permission of the Library of Congress, based on the original painting by Alonzo Chappel.

Illustration by Alonzo Chappel, New York

The shock of the shooting meant that the soldiers would have to be removed from the city and be quartered at Castle Island in Boston Harbor. The integration of the military with the community, however, complicated the matter. For example, some soldiers had arrived with families of their own and some had married into local families, so the removal of a soldier became the removal of himself and his wife and any children. Some women attempted to remain in the city to be near their natal families when their soldier-husbands were removed to Castle Island, but issues such as affordability of housing and food insecurity forced them to leave as well.

The months following the shooting enabled speculation, as uncertainty accompanied the sorrow over the event. The narrative of an oppressive occupation emerged as a result of the trial held months later. The eight soldiers who fired their weapons were tried separately from their commander, Captain Thomas Preston. Preston and the soldiers were all defended by John Adams—Bostonian, staunch American patriot, and second American president. Preston was acquitted of the charge that he ordered his soldiers to fire, which shifted the blame onto the soldiers. In his defense of the soldiers, Adams blamed the British government. Had the troops never been stationed in Boston as “wretched conservators of peace,” the massacre would never have happened. In his telling, it was inevitable that the presence of British troops would breed mobs and indefinitely threaten the community. The eight soldiers were found guilty of lesser charges or acquitted outright, and Adams had revised the story of the occupation of Boston from that of a relatively peaceful integration to an unnecessary governmental interference that had threatened and taken the lives of American colonists.

Zabin’s work relies on a variety of primary documents. In addition to the two interpreted and published town records and commissioner notes she lists in her endnotes, she has also referenced records from archives in Massachusetts, Nova Scotia, Northern Ireland, and England, such as marriage records, population records, court records, and letters. She notes in her acknowledgments that her research process took more than ten years of dedication and travel to retrieve the

necessary records that could put together the social background of the early Revolutionary period.

*The Boston Massacre* provides new insight to the importance of social context in history. Zabin does a wonderful job of providing social and political context for each group of people involved in the story. She frequently draws comparisons between the previous occupations in the Canadian provinces and the occupation of Boston. Canada was a newly acquired territory under the 1763 Treaty of Paris and bore a similarity to the American colonies with respect to their distance from the British homeland and need for policing. However, the military occupation of Canada did *not* involve social integration, an important difference from Boston. Zabin emphasizes the social context of these occupations, so the reader can comprehend just how unique it was that soldiers and their families assimilated with Boston residents, and how that assimilation caused a much harsher social effect in the community than if the shooting had happened in a situation similar to the occupation of Canada’s provinces.

Zabin’s descriptive narrative of the events that occurred during the Boston occupation makes her work attractive to the popular reader. The reader is occasionally left uncertain, however, about how the emotions, rationales, or viewpoints of those who lived through the two years of the occupation were ascertained.

*The Boston Massacre* appeals to a wide variety of audiences. Zabin’s retelling of the massacre as a social history shifts the narrative from the classic military and political lens that dominates the research. It can be used in upper-level secondary history courses and college courses that focus on early American history. Not only does her work appeal to those in the Academy, but her writing style makes her research accessible to even casual readers of history.



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POETRY

# An Ode to Liberty

## Part I — A Vision

By Robert Burns (1794)

As I stood by yon roofless tower,  
Where the wa'flower scents the dewy air,  
Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,  
And tells the midnight moon her care.

*howlet*: owl

The winds were laid, the air was still,  
The stars they shot along the sky;  
The fox was howling on the hill,  
And the distant echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its hazelly path,  
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's.  
To join yon river on the Strath,  
Whase distant roaring swells and fa's.

*fa's*: fall

The cauld blae North was streaming forth  
Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie din;  
Athwart the lift they start and shift,  
Like Fortune's favors, tint as win.

*cauld*: cold; *blae*: blue

*lift*: sky  
*win*: wind

By heedless chance I turn'd my eyes,  
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see  
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,  
Attir'd as Minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,  
His daring look had daunted me;  
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain,  
The sacred posy -- "Libertie!"

*stane*: stone

*posy*: garland

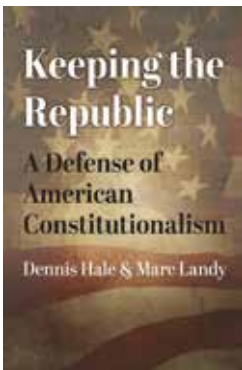
And frae his harp sic strains did flow,  
Might rous'd the slumb'ring Dead to hear;  
But oh, it was a tale of woe.  
As ever met a Briton's ear!

*sic*: such

## BOOK REVIEW

# A Republic, If You Can Keep It

By Jennifer Jolley '10 (FL)



### Keeping the Republic: A Defense of American Constitutionalism

By Dennis Hale and Marc Landy

University Press of Kansas  
280 pgs. | \$55

OPPOSITE: Detail from *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States*, Howard Chandler Christie (1940).

After the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Elizabeth Willing Powel asked Benjamin Franklin the question: “Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin famously replied: “A republic, if you can keep it.” Franklin’s wisdom is worth pondering, especially as we consider how the American Framers crafted a constitutional system in less than four months. The U.S. Constitution — ratified by the states and the people after intense Federalists and Anti-Federalists debates — has endured for over 230 years and since its inception, political voices have continued to challenge our constitutional order.

Is this not what a republic demands — people challenging our system of government?

Dennis Hale and Marc Landy’s book, *Keeping the Republic: A Defense of American Constitutionalism* (2024), offers both a history lesson and a defense of the purpose behind a constitutional republic. The book reminds readers that the primary goals of our constitutional order are designed to achieve liberty, equality, justice, security, prosperity, and civic comity. Hale and Landy argue that critics of our constitutional system often misunderstand it, expecting our government to function as a majoritarian democracy when it is, in fact, a mitigated democracy. They emphasize that the objective of a constitutional republic is to “discourage impulsive democracy” and “discipline popular rule by restraining public action.” The United States functions as a republic, not a democracy, which is majority rule without minority rights. James Madison defended republicanism in *Federalist No.10*, with the understanding that the new Constitution would safeguard liberty by mitigating factions that could “concert and execute” under a democracy. Madison explained a large republic would provide a remedy to factions. “Extend the sphere,” he





wrote, to reduce the influence of those who might infringe on the rights of others.

Hale and Landy, both political science professors at Boston College, have spent four decades researching, teaching, and writing about the Constitution. They have co-edited two volumes of essays by French political scientist Bertrand de Jouvenel and have published numerous articles. Hale's most recent work is *The Jury in America: Triumph and Decline* (2016), while Landy authored *The Environmental Protection Agency from Nixon to Clinton: Asking the Wrong Questions* (1994) and co-authored several books with Sidney Milkis, including *Presidential Greatness* (2000). During the summer, Landy teaches graduate courses for Ashland University's Master of Arts in American History and Government (MAHG) program, where this author has personally taken two of his classes.

There is no doubt that Hale and Landy are experts in their field. *Keeping the Republic* spans 203 pages, with an additional forty-five pages of citations, a ten-page bibliography, and an index, clearly making it an impressively well-researched work. The book begins by discussing how republican government and human nature were defined by thinkers like Aristotle, Hobbes, and Locke, and how the Framers adapted these concepts for a modern state. Another chapter outlines criticisms of the Constitution from the Anti-Federalists to

the modern era, including figures such as Henry David Thoreau, William Lloyd Garrison, Edward Bellamy, Herbert Croly, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and the New Left of the 1960s.

Hale and Landy point to 19th century writers as being not only anti-slavery, but also anti-Constitution. After the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, Thoreau spoke out adamantly against the union questioning if this country, with slavery, deserved his obedience. Thoreau's rhetoric and abolitionist convictions placed him as secessionist, "Massachusetts can find no respectable law or precedent which sanctions the continuance of such a union for an instant." Likewise, many white abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Horace Greeley welcomed secession, instead of maintaining the union.

Conversely, the authors highlight an anti-slavery, but pro-Constitution voice during this time – Frederick Douglass. Hale and Landy explain that Douglass, in his speech "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" excoriates the Constitution of slavery, but not Americans. Summarizing Douglass, "*Americans* need to accept the shame of slavery as their *own* shame, chosen by themselves – including the current and disgraceful Fugitive Slave Act – and not forced upon them by the Constitution or by the Framers."

**The authors emphasize that “the primary job of the citizen under the American Constitution is to choose.” This is the essence of a republic.**

The authors explain how the Constitution was originally designed to mitigate the risks of popular government and majoritarian democracy, ensuring that the majority could not deprive minorities of their rights without violating the Constitution. Examples of majoritarian restraints include the original format of the Senate, the amendment process, federalism, the Electoral College, and the independent judiciary.

Another chapter critiques the policies of the Progressive era, the New Deal, the Great Society, and the New Left as anti-Constitution measures that transformed rights in American society. With the birth of modern progressivism, there developed a rise of the national government. In a span of less than seven years (1913-1920), the Progressive era ushered drastic changes to the structure of the Constitution with the ratification of four amendments. The passage of the Seventeenth Amendment (Senate popular vote) completely changed the original intent of the Founders. All of these amendments (Income Tax, Prohibition, Women’s Suffrage) responded to the popular, or national referenda, embraced by Theodore Roosevelt and others. Another change affected how Americans voted by redistributing power from political party leadership directly to the people – the primary. Over 100 years later, because of the primary system, presidential candidates (and other offices) are selected by the people, not necessarily because of their political ideology, party congruence, or experience. Therefore, the selected candidates may not be the party leadership’s first choice (1972’s George McGovern and 2016’s Donald Trump) and political parties that were locally controlled, deteriorated. Majoritarianism reigns.

Likewise, the New Deal and the Great Society led to stronger national political and economic authority and a devolution of state powers due to national mandates. Hale and Landy suggest these majoritarian policies have changed the way Americans view government’s role. “As the public is taught that a major purpose of government is to provide them with goods and services, to which they are entitled as a matter of right, the list of programmatic rights can only grow.” They critique Social Security, affirmative action, the War on Poverty, Medicaid, federal grant-in-aid, Medicare, expanding bureaucracy, environmental policies, national voting laws, deficit spending, and the national debt as examples of anti-Constitution political and economic programs. Hale and Landy offer a remedy – Congress has the constitutional power to rein in deficit spending and curtail unsustainable economic programs.

The authors emphasize that “the primary job of the citizen under the American Constitution is to choose.” This is the essence of a republic. Republican responsibility stresses the importance of deliberation, forbearance, compromise, and for civic comity – warning against the polarization that comes with a lack of respect for opposing views.

Overall, the strength of the book lies in its detailed research and

historical analysis of the breakdown of the American constitutional system. However, this focus might also be seen as a weakness, as the authors primarily target Democrat administrations, portraying them as the culprits of Constitutional decline. Given the politically charged environment, especially during an election year, this book was challenging to read because of its one-sided perspective. Conservatives are likely to appreciate it, while liberals may find it off-putting.

Hale and Landy end their book with a definition of *forbearance* — a republican virtue: “the action of retraining from exercising a legal right.” They remind political leaders to model civic comity and to refrain from inflammatory political rhetoric. Calling members of a political party morons, racists, or deplorables does not foster civil discourse. We must listen, and speak, to those with opposite views for our republic to prosper.

While this author agrees with the premise of the *Keeping the Republic* — that changes in policies over the last century have impacted our constitutional order — it is difficult to embrace the authors’ negative assertion that these policies we have come to expect (i.e., Social Security and Medicare) should dissolve. The balance of power may have swung toward more majoritarian policies in the last century, but it is this author’s belief that the Constitution’s frame is still strong — protecting the “apple of gold” that Lincoln penned. In closing, consider Franklin’s wisdom as he considered the sun on George Washington’s chair at the Constitutional Convention. “But now at length I have the happiness to know that is a rising and not a setting sun.” As a proud patriot, one can only see the bright future of this country.

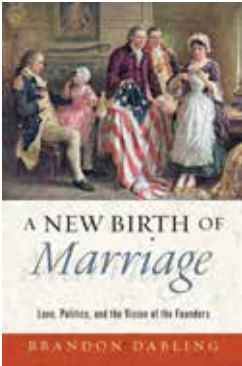


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## BOOK REVIEW

# Rewriting Our Own Vows: Marriage in the American Founding

By Abbylin Sellers, Ph.D.



**A New Birth of Marriage: Love, Politics, and the Vision of the Founders**

By Brandon Dabling

University of Notre Dame Press  
294 pgs. | \$55

OPPOSITE: *The Peale Family*, Charles Wilson Peale (ca. 1773-1809).

The era of the American Founding is not generally lauded for its stability. The decision to defy, fight, and break away from the mightiest empire in the world generated no small challenges for thirteen semi-governed colonies. While the economic and institutional structures of all levels of government brought the young nation to the precipice of failure, the institution of marriage provided a steadiness that is worthy of reflection. Marriage and the family were indispensable to creating and sustaining a free society and helped set the new nation on a positive course. Brandon Dabling offers a thoughtful evaluation of the Founders' conception of a liberalized marital unity and its practical application in *A New Birth of Marriage: Love, Politics, and the Vision of the Founders*. This exploration is intended to demonstrate how the Founders could find compatibility of liberalism's individual natural rights with marriage, and how the actual praxis of this view has shifted over time, particularly through the 20th century Progressive Era.

Dabling juxtaposes two models of liberalized marital unity: courageous love or marital love, and liberationist love. Courageous love posits that in order for an individual to flourish, this is most likely to take place "within communities that properly honor marital unity and... do not erect barriers to its attainment." In contrast, liberationist love removes the communal element in the pursuit of one's individual happiness. The move from an understanding of what is good for society as a whole to what is good for the individual has had a profound effect on the role of the marital relationship in American society. Dabling takes his reader through an historical examination of the legal basis and norms of society regarding marriage in the eighteenth century; how the understanding of "consent" generated tension in

the understanding rights to divorce; the government's response to the practice of polygamy in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and how that further solidified monogamous marriage; and how the Progressive Era's views on no-fault divorce laws has fundamentally altered marital unity, and the consequences society is now faced with as a result.

The societal and legal norms for marriage at the time of the Founding were rooted in English Common Law. A fairly important point that can easily get lost among the copious amount of information provided in this book is the clarity brought to how the modern depiction of coverture's legal ramifications where women had to forfeit property rights and her identity, undermines its moral "effectual truth." Dabbling clarifies that coverture was "a union of persons that effected a bringing together of persons," rather, a community of interest. This means that the man needed to serve the union's interest and can only remain the authority if that is performed. Coverture was not a means to demean women, but instead its intent was to elevate marriage. The Founders conceptualized marriage amidst the backdrop of proclaiming and codifying the natural inherent rights of human-

kind. He suggests this as marital statesmanship and points to the linkages of informed consent in the marital relationship that saw a liberalization following the Declaration of Independence, such as states allowing for fault-based divorce as a right. Prior to 1776, it was much more difficult to divorce on grounds of adultery, incapacity, and willful abandonment. One of the more prominent Founders to speak on the principle of equality in relation to marriage and the proper role between men and women is James Wilson from Pennsylvania. A brilliant legal mind, Wilson acknowledges the Declaration of Independence created a complicated situation with respect to women's rights and their role in the young republic. It was not something that could be ignored. This plays out in private correspondence between Abigail and John Adams where Abigail does not mince words about male dominance in the home and how coverture could harm women. Her famous request for John to "remember the ladies" in the newly framed government, leaves John to consider "the delicate balancing of natural rights and political order." Ultimately, marriage during the American founding became more egalitarian and helped advance the role of women as political agents in society.



Alexis de Tocqueville was able to observe the strength of American society in the 1830s, the domestic sphere and the family being one of the two great social pillars, the other being the public sphere. He praises American married women in their sacrifice to raise civically responsible children: "If one asked me what do I think one must principally attribute to the singular prosperity and growing force of this people, I would answer that it is the superiority of its women." Tocqueville recognizes the marital union as being one of equals, where men and women could fulfill both their marital and civic obligations. The strong familial unit is what leads to a strong community and, for Tocqueville, this ultimately leads to strengthening the republic at large.

Dabbling pinpoints the philosophical shift in the prevailing notion about courageous love to more liberationist love with the women's suffrage movement. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's attack of marriage in the Declaration of Sentiments from the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, sacrifices marital unity for the advancement of the women's movement. Her fellow contemporary, Sarah Grimke, disagreed. This prompted an insightful debate among the major players who were active in support of women's suffrage, but had differences of opinion on whether marriage needed to be fully reconstituted. Stanton's position was to allow individuals to make marriage what they wanted, including separating it from enduring love and child rearing as well as making it more fully private. The notion of individual sovereignty and one's own happiness were to triumph over everything else. She did not want marriage to be constrained by societal norms or state regulation, especially in the case of an abusive marriage. Grimke did not denounce the need for the law to provide the means for women in abusive unions to be stuck in them; however, she focused on making the marital union more equal. She supported the complementarian nature of marriage bearing "the purest and most unselfish love, the spontaneous giving away of oneself to the only loved one, and the receiving that other to ourselves in return."

The end of the book reveals how the "sexual progressive intellectuals" pushed America's institution of marriage into the era of full liberationist

love and away from courageous love. Advanced by the progressive advocacy of Margaret Sanger, women needed to be finally freed from the "biological, social, and moral chains" they had been unduly bound to for centuries. The idea of sex as a public good for procreation and raising children, which before had been seen as a means of strengthening communities, had now changed.

Dabbling submits that progressive freedom has taken the Lockean principle of "liberty" to a radical end and he offers a rather hard-hitting reality check of where society is today because of abandoning marital unity, such as the decrease in the number of married adults over the past fifty years (69% in 1970 compared to 47% in 2020), as well as the declining birthrate and rising number of children born to unmarried mothers. Whether you agree with his premise or not, the factual data on marriage, divorce, declining birth rates, and out-of-wedlock births, speaks for itself. The social ramifications regarding marriage should not be brushed aside. One prescriptive solution Dabbling suggests is, "Lawmakers must embrace a role in making couples more aware of the consequences of divorce and provide them the time and means to deliberate." Ultimately, how we think about marriage and what we do with it in a free society is up to us. The question is if we will be courageous enough to make the choices that will advance the betterment of our communities and society at large.



*Dr. Abbylin H. Sellers is Associate Professor of American Politics at Azusa Pacific University and an Honored Graduate Visiting Professor with Ashland University's MAHG program. She also serves on the Faculty at the Summer Institute on the Constitution at the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation.*

## BOOK REVIEW

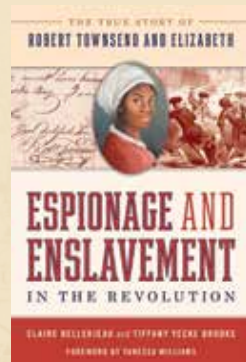
# Beyond Generals and Kings: The Untold Story of Robert and Elizabeth

By Anne Walker, '19 (VA)

Claire Bellerjeau and Tiffany Yecke Brooks are the authors of *Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution*, an eye-opening book that brings to life the story of Liss, an enslaved woman who became involved in espionage during the American Revolution. Bellerjeau, a historian with years of research experience, spent countless hours digging through archives to uncover Liss's story, revealing her courage and her role within the complex web of war-era intrigue. Brooks, a skilled storyteller, helps bring Liss's journey to life, crafting a gripping narrative of espionage, bravery, and survival. Together, Bellerjeau and Brooks share an important and often overlooked piece of history, showing how enslaved people like Liss shaped the fight for independence in ways rarely told.

On May 26, 1779, Robert Townsend wrote his father a letter, detailing the British Queen's Rangers withdrawal from their Oyster Bay home on Long Island, where they had wintered. In his letter he writes, "The Queen's Rangers are now beyond King's Bridge. When I see any of the officers, I will make an inquiry for Liss - 'Tho I think there is no probability of you getting her again- believe you may reckon her amongst your other dead losses.'" Until the early 1930s it was assumed "Liss" was a dairy cow carried off by the occupiers.

"Liss" was actually Elizabeth, an enslaved sixteen-year-old who was born in the same Townsend house Robert grew up in. She had been thought to be more "fond of the British officers" using the Townsend home as their winter headquarters than the family thought prudent. She spent any spare time she had with the officers, chatting with them unabashedly. "Even her work must have seemed pleasurable to her, as she washed and mended Colonel Simcoe's clothing and bedding, emptied his chamber pot, attended officers' meetings in the



**Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution: The True Story of Robert Townsend and Elizabeth**

By Claire Bellerjeau and Tiffany Yecke Brooks

Lyons Press  
287 pgs. | \$27

Townsend house, provided beverages, and kept the fireplace burning. These duties offered Liss a more intimate connection with him than any of the young white ladies enamored with their guests could have hoped for. When Colonel Simcoe was ordered to take his men north of the city, he bid a respectful farewell to the Townsend family, clearing out his belongings. The Townsends were unaware that, packed neatly with the supplies needed for 350 men on the march, was Liss.

Robert Townsend, the author of the letter, spent little time in Oyster Bay. His life was in New York City, where he was a well-known Loyalist coffee shop owner and merchant with a dry goods store. On the side he worked as a freelance society journalist, reporting on the British occupiers' society gatherings. The Loyalists knew Robert as a son of one of Long Island's most prominent families, a neighbor and genial shop owner. The most questionable fact about Robert, and the one most likely to be a source of gossip, was his bachelorhood. If the colonists who fled New York had an opinion of Townsend, it is lost to time, and George Washington certainly never mentioned him, at least by name. Washington definitely knew of Townsend, if not by name, then by the pseudonym "Culper, Jr." or "723." He was one of the most valuable members of the Culper Spy Ring. Based in New York, the Ring operated successfully in and around New York City for five years, during which time no spy was ever unmasked.

Bellerjeau and Brooks offer their readers several important facts about Elizabeth and Robert. First, despite being in New York with access to many newspapers and publications, Robert curiously never placed an advertisement to find Elizabeth, who was his father's legal property. Instead, he encouraged his father to consider her lost.

In June 1779, right after Elizabeth traveled beyond King's Bridge with Colonel Simcoe and the Queen's Rangers, Washington started receiving valuable information from Culper Jr., who had organized his own (unidentified) ring of informants.

Among the messages sent by the Culper Spy Ring was one dated August 15, 1779, which used the code "355" (meaning "lady"). In this letter, "355" was described as the key that would allow the colonists to "outwit them all."

Was Elizabeth the mysterious 355? Was Townsend an accomplice to her escape? To this day, no one knows. Certainly not the authors of this book. They propose several possible scenarios for Elizabeth's escape. These range from Simcoe, an abolitionist, secretly helping Elizabeth flee to the unlikely possibility that both Robert and his father acquiesced to her disappearance.

What is known is that a pregnant Elizabeth appears in Robert Townsend's New York townhome ledger in 1782 when he purchases "a thimble and thread for Lis." Further, in August 1782, Robert's father accepted a £70 payment from Robert, noted "for Lis." By August of the following year, Robert began looking for a better place for Elizabeth and her six-month-old son. Unwilling to manumit Elizabeth, or unable to pay the £200 (approximately \$18,000 today) Robert sold Elizabeth and baby Harry, to a widowed neighbor, on the condition they be kept together and, if the widow no longer wanted them at any point, she would offer them back to Robert for the sale price. The widow remarried and shortly after Elizabeth was sent to Charleston where two years of her life remain mostly unaccounted for. However, Robert enlisted extended family and friends to track down Elizabeth and smuggle her back to Oyster Bay.

Robert's story remained unknown until the 1920s, and Elizabeth's incomplete story was pieced together much later. Bellerjeau and Brooks completed extensive research to tell this story, with sources ranging from Oyster Bay's historical records, family Bibles, runaway slave ads, and even window etchings. The authors attempt to tell a complete narrative without having access to the complete story. Much of what they present is conjecture, although they are transparent about this, and they provide evidence that leads them in each direction.

Regardless of the title, this is not a story of espionage or enslavement. The espionage the Culper Ring engaged in is only barely mentioned, and Robert's contributions are not specifically noted, aside from showing that his contributions coincided with Elizabeth's movements. It is also not an account of enslavement. Robert is described simultaneously as an enslaver and an abolitionist. He may have been behind helping her escape en-



slavement but also purchased and sold her. He is unwilling to manumit Elizabeth's son Henry (whose paternity is the subject of extensive discourse) but instead sells him to a cousin with the promise that the child will be manumitted at age 24. Although Robert was still alive when Henry reached the age of twenty-four, there is no documentation about whether the promise was kept or not. This is also not a story of Robert and Elizabeth, rather the Townsend family acts as the common thread for this narrative.

The heavily footnoted publication is filled with quotes and contemporary accounts. Despite this, it reads like a novel, creating suspense without falling into a mere recitation of facts. The authors attempt to provide relevant background information for each new character that might explain their motives for later actions.

Through this, the reader learns that Elizabeth and Harry's new enslaver, Anne, was a shrewd businesswoman in her own right, which may explain her choice to remarry. It was Anne's new husband who later sold Elizabeth, breaking Anne's prior agreement to offer mother and child back to Robert if she no longer wanted them. Steering into tedium at times, some information seems to have been included in order to demonstrate how much research had been accomplished.

The epilogue informs the reader of the fates of various characters, tying up loose ends where the authors were able. It was quite disappointing that after becoming invested in the story of Elizabeth and her son Harry, the conclusion was presented as mere speculation due to a lack of written sources, rather than a satisfying resolution. It should be noted the 2023 paperback edition advertises a new chapter highlighting recent discoveries about Elizabeth's freedom and later life. As frustrating as this might be to readers of the hardbound edition, historians are all too aware that history is forever changing and can hardly fault the authors for their continued research into the lives of Robert and Elizabeth. Although their specific story may not find its place in history textbooks, it serves as a poignant reminder to those who enjoy the benefits of the Revolution that this period was not solely about generals and kings. Instead, it involved real men and women who lived beyond the immediate political sphere, individuals whose experiences and struggles are equally vital to understanding the broader narrative of history. People like Elizabeth and Robert.

**Was Elizabeth the mysterious 355? Was Townsend an accomplice to her escape? To this day, no one knows.**



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*Anne Walker is the 2019 James Madison Senior Fellow from Virginia. She is a dedicated high school Dual Enrollment History and Government teacher in Prince William County, Virginia, and she is a member of the Virginia Council for Social Sciences and represents the Secondary Schools Board of the National Council for Social Studies.*



## POETRY

# An Ode to Liberty

## Part II — An Irregular Ode to General Washington's Birthday

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By Robert Burns (1794)

No Spartan tube, no Attic shell,  
No lyre Æolian I awake;  
'Tis liberty's bold note I swell,  
Thy harp, Columbia, let me take!

See gathering thousands, while I sing,  
A broken chain exulting bring,  
And dash it in a tyrant's face,  
And dare him to his very beard,  
And tell him he no more is feared—  
No more the despot of Columbia's race!  
A tyrant's proudest insults brav 'd,  
They shout—a People freed! They hail an Empire saved.

Where is man's god-like form?  
Where is that brow erect and bold—  
That eye that can unmov'd behold  
The wildest rage, the loudest storm  
That e'er created fury dared to raise?

Avault! thou caitiff, servile, base,  
That tremblest at a despot's nod,  
Yet, crouching under the iron rod,  
Canst laud the hand that struck th' insulting blow!  
Art thou of man's Imperial line?  
Dost boast that countenance divine?  
Each skulking feature answers, No!

*caitiff*: coward

George Washington (cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* on July 5, 1919),  
J.C. Leyendecker (1919).

But come, ye sons of Liberty,  
Columbia's offspring, brave as free,  
In danger's hour still flaming in the van,  
Ye know, and dare maintain, the Royalty of Man!

Alfred! on thy starry throne,  
Surrounded by the tuneful choir,  
The bards that erst have struck the patriot lyre,  
And rous'd the freeborn Briton's soul of fire,  
No more thy England own!  
Dare injured nations form the great design,  
To make detested tyrants bleed?  
Thy England execrates the glorious deed!  
Beneath her hostile banners waving,  
Every pang of honour braving,  
England in thunder calls, "The tyrant's cause is mine!"  
That hour accurst how did the fiends rejoice  
And hell, thro' all her confines, raise the exulting voice,  
That hour which saw the generous English name  
Linkt with such damned deeds of everlasting shame!

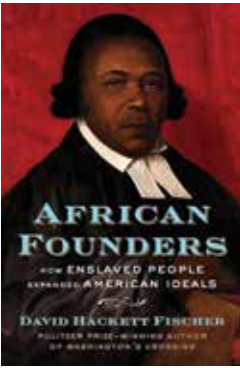
Thee, Caledonia! thy wild heaths among,  
Fam'd for the martial deed, the heaven-taught song,  
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;  
Where is that soul of Freedom fled?  
Immingled with the mighty dead,  
Beneath that hallow'd turf where Wallace lies  
Hear it not, WALLACE! in thy bed of death.  
Ye babbling winds! in silence sweep,  
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,  
Nor give the coward secret breath!  
Is this the ancient Caledonian form,  
Firm as the rock, resistless as the storm?  
Show me that eye which shot immortal hate,  
Blasting the despot's proudest bearing;  
Show me that arm which, nerv'd with thundering fate,  
Crush'd Usurpation's boldest daring!—  
Dark-quench'd as yonder sinking star,  
No more that glance lightens afar;  
That palsied arm no more whirls on the waste of war.

An Irregular Ode to General Washington's Birthday *was written in 1794 but was left unpublished until after Burn's death. It was not until 1873 that it was published first in the United States after an American bookseller purchased Burns's manuscript in London.*

## BOOK REVIEW

# Recasting the Founders

By Troy Petrie, '14 (TN)



### African Founders: How Enslaved People Expanded American Ideals

By David Hackett Fischer

Simon & Schuster  
960 pgs. | \$40

In the May 15, 1782 edition of William Bradford's *The Pennsylvania Journal*, advertised among offers of cash rewards for missing livestock and wine, spirits, and groceries, a bookseller listed two sermons by an author who only described himself as "African American." While it is likely not the first use of the term, the African author was referring most immediately to a person of African origin who supported the American War of Independence, but also beyond. The term also describes an ethnic identity that would soon take hold in major cities across the United States and be embraced by formerly enslaved people as an instrument of agency and autonomy.

This example is but one of many in David Hackett Fischer's latest volume, *African Founders: How Enslaved People Expanded American Ideals*. The book examines what happened when Africans and Europeans arrived in North America during the rise of racial slavery, and how that mixed with the burgeoning ideas of freedom and liberty. Fischer successfully and consistently demonstrates African Americans as agents of social, political, cultural, religious, and economic change in the colonies-turned-nation.

Written as a companion to Fischer's seminal work, *Albion's Seed*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning professor emeritus of history at Brandeis University follows a similar blueprint in *African Founders*. Fischer takes a regional approach to his inquiry, providing a chapter for each of the six hearth regions: New England, Hudson Valley, Delaware Valley, Chesapeake Virginia and Maryland, Coastal Carolina and Georgia, and Louisiana, Mississippi, and the Gulf Coast. Three frontier regions are also explored, constituting the Western Frontiers, Maritime Frontiers, and the Southern Frontiers. Fischer illuminates how both free and enslaved Africans had a distinctive character in each region that developed out of their West and West Central African ethnic origins as they interacted with the white Europeans on the new continent, through their own volition or otherwise.

Writing social history, and particularly histories of enslaved people, can often pose a challenge regarding source material. This is

particularly true when writing the history of enslaved people with limited or non-existent records. Fischer's approach, however, is exemplary in his expansive source material and approach, combining "new digital methods...with old-fashioned *Sitzfleisch* in a library chair." The result are endnotes from traditional primary and secondary sources, but also from empirical databases like Davis Eltis and David Richardson's Trans-Atlantic Slave Database, Gregory O'Malley's Intra American Slave Trade Database, onomastic and linguistic evidence, as well as oral slave histories from the Library of Congress.

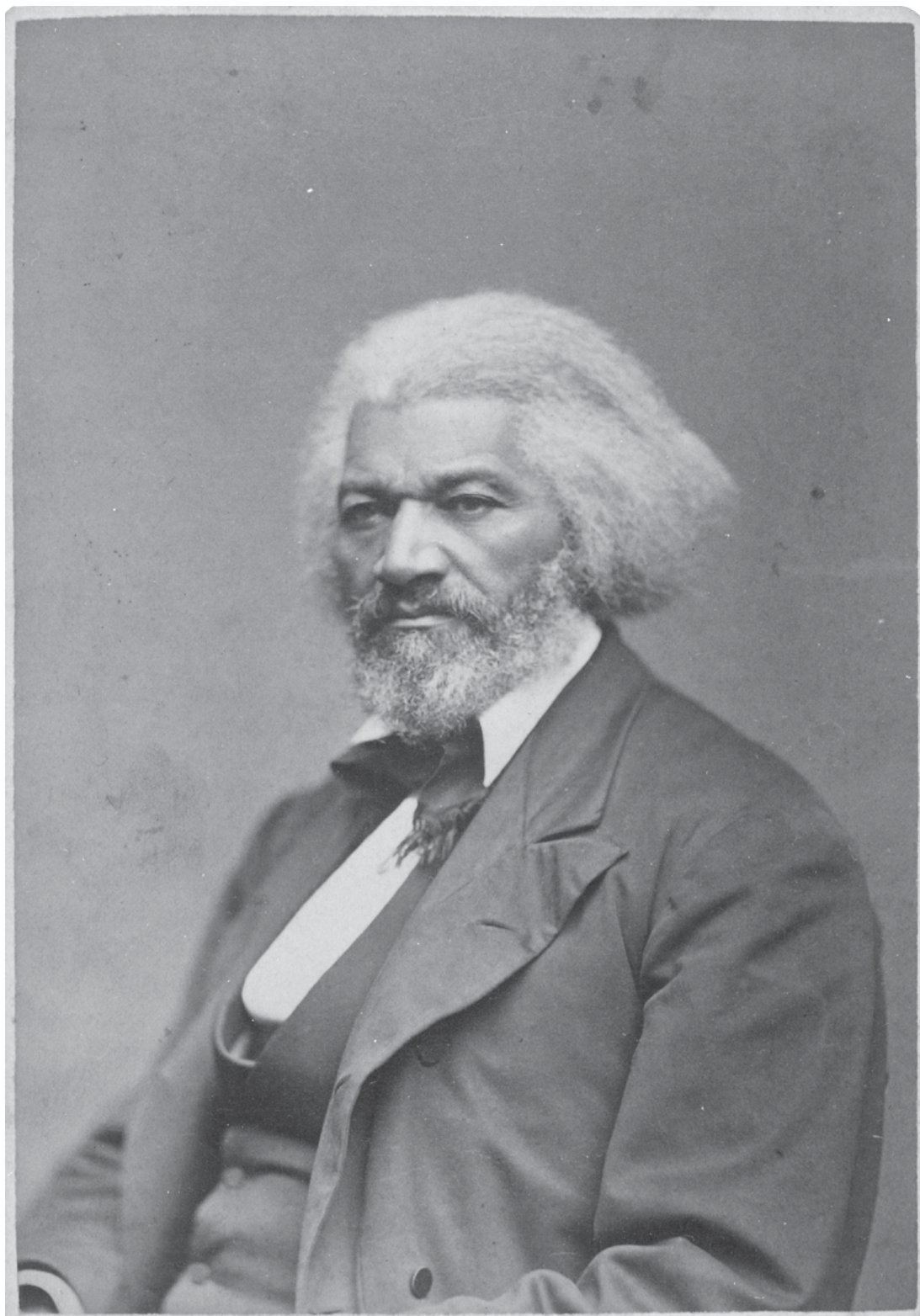
Fischer's narrative is chronological by each hearth region, but the progression through each region is not consistent, and is compressed at times and expanded at others in the service of exploring each. For example, his examination of Chesapeake Virginia and Maryland begins with the founding of the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1619 and progresses up to the Antebellum era, but the chapter on Coastal Carolina, Georgia, and Florida begins with Henry Brayne's arrival near present-day Charleston and reaches into the 21st century with discussion of the roots of the former First Lady Michelle Obama. The three frontier regions are approached from a thematic standpoint, focusing on the standout contributions of cattlemen and women, seafarers and shipbuilders, and the Black Seminoles. The connective tissue, and the most engaging aspect of his narrative, are the vignettes of the eponymous African Founders whose stories Fischer employs to buttress his analysis and substantiate his claims.

Attention is also paid to the histories of the more well documented and examined African Founders, such as the "heirs to a tradition of leadership" that were born out of the Chesapeake region, including Harriett Tubman, Dred and Harriett Scot, and Frederick Douglass. Others also rose to prominence and are renowned for their leadership and influence in Early America, such as Absalom Jones, Elizabeth "Mumbett" Freeman, and Phyllis Wheatley. It is the narratives lost to history that Fischer incorporates, however, that create his rich



[Portrait of Harriet Tubman] / Powelson, photographer, 77 Genesee St., Auburn, New York.

portrait of Early America and illuminate just how prevalent and impactful the contributions of free and enslaved Africans were. Such narratives as those of Paul and John Cuffe's navigation of the legal system to secure voting rights to free male citizens of any race in Massachusetts, James Forten's wealth and social standing used to help fund Garrison's newspaper *The Liberator*, the subversive acts of Peter the Doctor, and the self-emancipation of Jenny Slew that influenced the antislavery position of John Adams. While Fischer is unequivocal about the abhorrent realities of the American system of chattel slavery and anti-Blackness, he also presents the lived experience of African Americans by emphasizing their agency, acts of resistance, emotions, and contention.



Frederick Douglass, photograph by George Kendall Warren (ca. 1871).

On the micro level, *African Founders* has much to offer in terms of the Black historical experiences and voices while on the macro level it demonstrates the impact these experiences and voices had on America's Founding. A self-described Whig historian, Fischer's broader argument borders on the teleological as he seeks to thread the needle between "political correctness" and "a growing disregard for truth, and a cultivated carelessness of fact and evidence" in today's public discourse. The ways in which African Americans advanced liberty and freedom is predicated on the race-based system of forced enslavement and, while Fischer acknowledges as much, implicit in his argument is the notion that these ideals were greater because of slavery, not in spite of it.

Spanning over 900 pages, *African Founders* is a colossus that creates a tapestry of Early America and weaves together the African American experience in the Founding Era through their many creative contributions that shaped the developing nation and continue to show themselves today. Fischer has compiled a masterful history that would serve any student or teacher of history who seeks to gain a fuller understanding of a "founder" as well as the ideas, traditions, cultures, and people who made America.



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Robert Burns, Alexander Nasmyth (1787).



# Robert Burns and the American Revolution

by Gustave Carus

The health of William Pitt had been proposed and drunk with a will when Robert Burns startled the company with the words “A bumper to the health of a much greater man—General Washington.”

The Treaty of Paris, formally ending the American Revolution, was hardly ten years old, and all loyal and proper British subjects still regarded the seceding colonists as rebels and traitors. Yet the poet, at a private dinner at which he was a guest, expressed thus his approval of one who had been only a short time before at war with the country.

It was a time of extreme reaction in Great Britain. The French Revolution just across the Channel frightened all people with conservative leanings; even those who normally had liberal tendencies went over to the conservative camp, understanding, as they did, nothing of the political or social meaning of the great events of the time and able only to see and fear the Reign of Terror. Any liberal move, even a mild one, even the words “freedom” and “liberty,” were looked on as dangerous.

Robert Burns was a passionate lover of liberty, and in those days of reaction and repression made no secret of his sympathies, which he expressed in conversations, letters, and poems. His too freely expressed approval of the cause of the French Revolution seems to have been the cause of most of his troubles.

His biographers have given the impression that his unpopularity with the people of Dumfries, where he lived during the last four years of his life,

was due to his intemperate habits and his association with low company. But we know that intemperance was so general, even among the gentry, that it could hardly have made him objectionable. By “low company” was meant, most likely, people, not with bad habits, but with objectionable opinions, people who were sympathetic with enemies, who were pro-French, pro-American and pro-revolutionary. Men like Maxwell and Syme, whose opinions today would be called radical, were his frequent companions, and out of the enthusiasm shared with these men he wrote the *Tree of Liberty*, half humorous ballad of the French Revolution. The good citizens of Dumfries were decidedly shocked by the conversation and opinions of this group.

The poet’s poverty made him dependent on his position in the Excise Service. Faithful and zealous service was not enough; to make his position secure, it was necessary not to offend his superiors, including the party in power in Parliament, by political opinions or conduct. Burns’ independent spirit made this difficult.

The following episode is typical of his troubles. A smuggling brig was seized in the Solway by the excisemen. Burns took part in this dramatic affair. Before making the attack while waiting for a re-enforcement of dragoons, it is told that the poet became impatient and composed *The Devil’s awa wi’ the Exciseman*. When re-enforcements arrived, he led the party and was the first to board the ship, distinguishing himself for his courage. He would have been promoted for his part in this sei-

zure but for what followed.

The brig was condemned and sold at auction the next day, with all her stores and arms, among which were four carronades which the poet bought for three pounds. These small cannon he sent to the French Assembly with a letter expressing his sympathy, an unwise performance, since both the guns and the letter were intercepted at Dover. Diplomatic relations with the French Republic were strained; war actually came some time later. Either this event or his too freely and vigorously expressed opinions led to an official investigation of the poet-exciseman's political conduct and ruined his chances for promotion.

But other forces were pressing toward his undoing.

A group of super-patriots organized a society which they called the Loyal Native Club, "for preserving Peace, Liberty, and Property, and for supporting the Laws and Constitution of the Country." Commissary Goldie of Dumfries was president and Francis Sprott, the town clerk, was secretary. During the summer of 1793 this society paraded through the streets of the town with two effigies of Tom Paine which they burned while the crowd applauded. The ladies of the town prepared beautiful bandeaux of blue satin ribbon, embroidered with the words "God Save the King!" and distributed them to the Loyal Natives to wear on their hats for the parade, and across their breasts at the ball held that evening.

These patriots made Burns and his liberal friends the chief object of their animosity. One member wrote these lines which someone handed to the poet over the table at a convivial meeting:

Ye sons of sedition, give ear to my song,  
Let Syme, Burns and Maxwell pervade every throng.  
With Cracken, the attorney, and Mundell, the quack,  
Send Willy, the monger, to hell with a smack.

On seeing these words, Burns at once wrote this reply:

Ye true "Loyal Natives," attend to my song,  
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long;  
From Envy and Hatred your core is exempt,  
But where is your shield from the darts of Contempt?

On another occasion he wrote the following:

On Commissary's Goldie's Brains  
Lord, to account who dares thee call,  
Or e're dispute thy pleasure?  
Else why within so thick a wall,  
Enclose so poor a treasure?

Lockhart relates an anecdote of this period, which Carlyle refers

to as significant. He tells how David M'Culloch found Burns walking alone on the deserted side of the street, "while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. Mr. M'Culloch dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said 'Nay, nay my young friend, that's all over now.' "

That Burns tried hard to be more discreet, as was expected of a servant of the Government, although he was not fully successful, can be seen from his letter to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, of January 2 and 5, 1793, in which he says:

.....I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled supervisor [of Excise] was ill, or aged; but this hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious, devil has raised a little demur on my political principles....I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you, I must breathe my sentiments....The board had made me the subject of their animadversions; and now I have the pleasure of informing you, that all is set to rights in that quarter. Now as to these informers, may the devil be let loose to—but hold! ....Alas! how little do the wantonly or idly officious think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless blabbing. What a difference....the amiable circle I so lately mixed with at the hospitable hall of Dunlop, their generous hearts,—their uncontaminated, dignified minds—their informed and polished understandings—what a contrast, when compared.... with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him, and with

*Lincluden Abbey, Dumfries, Scotland*  
[Photochrome Print Collection],  
Detroit Publishing Co. (1905).



a grin of satisfaction see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife, and prattling innocents turned over to beggary and ruin!

But, that all was not set right can be seen from his letter to John Francis Erskine, Earl of Mar, (who, although he was a stranger to Burns, all unsolicited, offered his aid;) where we read:

You have been misinformed as to my final dismissal from the Excise; I am still in the service. —Indeed, but for the exertions of... Mr. Graham....I had without so much as a hearing, or the smallest previous intimation been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. Had I had any other recourse probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismissal...one of our supervisors-general, a Mr. Corbett, was instructed to enquire on the spot, into my conduct, and to document me, —“that my business was to act, not to think; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be silent and obedient.”

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven: only, I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted.



Even his patriotism for Scotland was not entirely free from suspicion. His Scots Wha Hae would be irritating in some quarters, and the Jacobite cause, which inspired many of his best poems, among which are the *Lament of Mary Queen of Scots*; *It was a' for our Rightful King*; *The Lovely Lass o' Inverness*; *Charlie, He's my Darling*; *Bannocks o' Bear Meal*, and *Oh I am- come to the Low Country*, was in disfavor in official circles. The memory of the Jacobite uprising was still fresh enough to suggest disloyalty.

His loyalty, in his poems, to the house of Stuart is often criticized as inconsistent with his love of liberty. His position is explained in his letter of November 8, 1788, to the editor of the *Star*, a liberal London paper, in which he gives the reason for his lack of enthusiasm for the centennial celebration of the Glorious Revolution. He says:

The “Bloody and tyrannical House of Stuart,” may be said with propriety and justice, when compared with the present royal family, and the sentiments of our days; but is there no allowance to be made for the manners of the times? Were the royal contemporaries of the Stuarts more attentive to their subjects’ rights? Might not the epithets of “bloody and tyrannical” be, with equal justice, applied to the House of Tudor, of York, or of any other of their predecessors?....

Kilchurn Castle, photo. MHosier (Wikimedia Commons) (2018).



**This same Glorious Revolution, which gave the country the Bill of Rights, left in Scotland the painful memory of the massacre of Glencoe.**

The Stuarts only contended for prerogatives which they knew their predecessors enjoyed, and which they saw their contemporaries enjoying; but these prerogatives were inimical to the happiness of a nation and the rights....

The Stuarts have been condemned and laughed at for the folly and impracticability of their attempts in 1715 and 1745. That they failed, I bless GOD; but I cannot join in the ridicule against them....

To conclude. Sir, let every man who has a tear for the many miseries incident to humanity, feel for a family, illustrious as any in Europe, and unfortunate beyond historic precedent: and let every Briton (and particularly every Scotsman), who ever looked with reverential pity on the dotage of a parent, cast a veil over the fatal mistakes of the kings of his forefathers.

This same Glorious Revolution, which gave the country the Bill of Rights, left in Scotland the painful memory of the massacre of Glencoe.

The religious controversy, which was then going on between the "Auld Lights" and the "New Lights", found Burns supporting the liberal party. He wrote a number of satires on the narrow Calvinism of his day, among the best known of which are *The Holy Fair*, *The Ordination*, *Holy Willie's Prayer*, *The Kirk of Scotland's Alarm*, and *To the Unco' Guide*, which latter has given a by-word to our everyday vocabulary.

His love for freedom was all-embracing and even included that of the outcast. He would have had the same contempt for the cringing beggar that he had for the titled sycophant, but he had a spontaneous fellow-feeling for the lusty vagrant, which he expressed in the final song of the *Jolly Beggars*:

A fig for those by law protected!  
Liberty's a glorious feast!  
Courts for cowards were erected,  
Churches built to please the priest.

The story is told, that during the war between Great Britain and the French Republic, Burns was almost forced into a duel by an officer who took offence at the witty toast: "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause."

Burns was, however, a loyal British subject. Although he was ready to criticize the government or the party in power, he had faith in the principles of the British Constitution. In a letter to John Erskine of Mar, he said:

In defence to their accusations, I said, that whatever might be

my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain, I abjured the idea! — that a CONSTITUTION which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society; it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory.

But he did not blindly accept the British Constitution as perfect or final. When he presented to the Subscription Library in Dumfries, a number of books, including, a copy of *De Lolme on the British Constitution*, he wrote in it this inscription: “Mr. Burns presents this book to the library, and begs that they will take it as a creed of British Liberty — until they find a better. - R. B.” Fearing that this might give offence, he called next day and pasted the fly leaf against the back of the frontispiece, hiding his inscription. The volume can still be seen in the library and by holding the pages to the light, the inscription can be read.

While the French Republic was defending herself against aggression he applauded, but when she turned aggressor, he disapproved, as he wrote his friend, Robert Graham:

As to France, I was her enthusiastic votary in the beginning of the business. When she came to show her old avidity for conquest, in annexing Savoy, etc., to her dominions, and invading the rights of Holland, I altered my sentiments.

When during the war with France, an invasion threatened, he joined the corps of volunteers which was formed in Dumfries, and rehabilitated himself in the eyes of the townspeople to a great extent. For the occasion he wrote *Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat*, which became the song of the Dumfries Companies.

Scottish Highlands, 2018, photo. Azerifactory (2018) (Wikimedia Commons).



His patriotism never became chauvinistic. This poem is a rallying-cry for the defence of the native land and contains not one word encouraging or approving the invasion of a foreign, even an enemy country. Characteristic of it are the lines:

The kettle o' the kirk and state,  
Perhaps a clout may fail in't.  
But deil a foreign tinker loun  
Shall never ca' a nail in't  
Our fathers' blude the kettle bought,  
And wha would dare to spoil it?  
By Heav'n's! the sacrilegious dog  
Shall fuel be to boil it!

It was quite natural that the American Revolution should appeal to Burns. He often expressed his disapproval of the British policy in the Colonies, his sympathies for the Americans and his admiration for George Washington. His *Ballad on the American War* is believed to have been written in 1784, but was not included in the Kilmarnock Edition of 1786 (the first edition) but was included in the Edinburgh Edition (1787). The ballad forcefully gives the views of the liberals. One reader, Dr. Blair, remarked "Burns' Politics smell of Scotland on the war in the Colonies." It seems to have attracted little attention in America.

In his letter to the editor of the London Star, Burns sets forth his opinions, saying:

...who would believe, Sir, that in this, our Augustin age of liberality and refinement, while we seem so justly sensible and jealous of our rights and liberties, and animated with such indignation against the very memory of those who would have subverted them—that a certain people under our national protection should complain, not against our monarch and a few favorite advisors, but against our WHILE LEGISLATIVE BODY, for similar oppression, and almost in the very same terms, as our forefathers did of the House of Stuart! I will not and cannot enter into the merits of the cause; but I dare say the Ameri-

can Congress of 1776, will be allowed to have been as able and enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us, as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed House of Stuart.

To Mrs. Dunlop he wrote, much in the same vein, (November 13, 1788):

Is it not remarkable, odiously remarkable, that tho' manners are more civilized, and the rights of mankind better understood, by an Augustin Century's improvement, yet in this very reign of heavenly Hanoverianism, and almost in this very year,<sup>1</sup> an empire beyond the Atlantic has had its REVOLUTION too, and for the very same maladministration and legislative misdemeanors in the illustrious and sapientipotent Family of H---- as was complained of in the "tyrannical and bloody House of Stuart."

Burns' finest tribute to the American Revolution is his *Ode to Liberty*. The poem is in two parts, the first is called *The Vision* and the second is the Ode proper. A first version of the first part was published in Johnson's Musical Museum, in 1796, set to music, under the title *The Minstrel at Lincunden*, it included the following chorus:

A lassie all alone, was making her moan,  
Lamenting our lads beyond the sea  
In the bluidy wars they fa", and our honor's  
gane an' a'.  
And broken-harted we maun dee.

and this stanza concluded the poem:

He sang wi' joy his former day,  
He, weeping, wail'd his latter times;  
But what he said—it was nae play,  
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.

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<sup>1</sup> 1788, the centenary of the expulsion of the Stuarts.



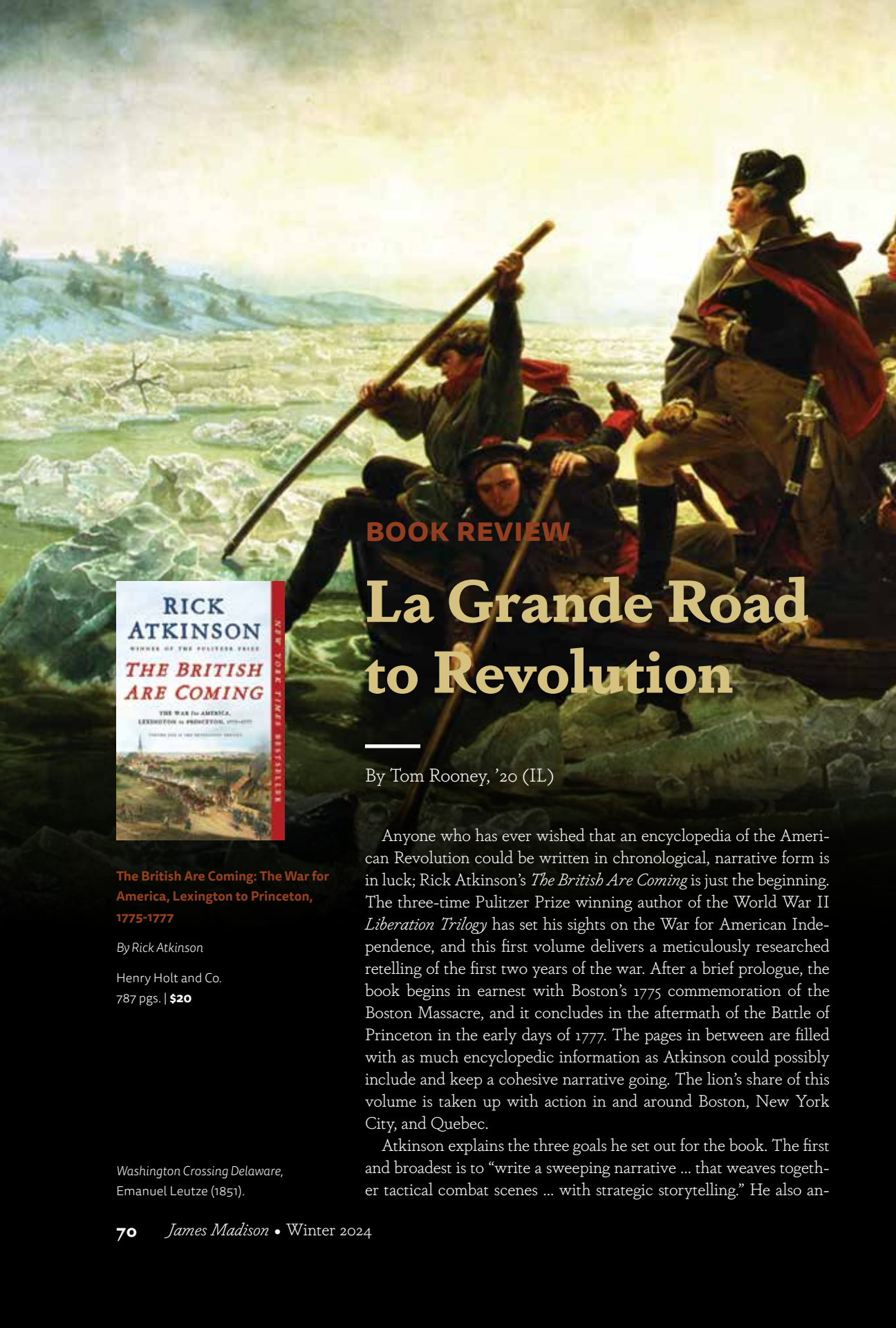
A second version of this part appeared in the edition of Burns' works edited by Dr. Currie (London, 1800) with the title *A Vision*. Here the chorus was omitted. It was believed by most editors and critics that Burns had written the song of the minstrel but had suppressed it and substituted the stanza given above. It seems that both parts of the poem were written about the same time, at the period of his life while he was suffering under the odium of his supposed lack of patriotism. During this time he spent many hours alone, at the Lincluden Ruins, a romantic and beautiful place, where the Clunden and the Nith join. Of the first part he made the two versions mentioned, one he sent to Johnson's Museum where it appeared during his life, the other was published by Dr. Currie after Burns' death.

The second part, *The Ode to Liberty*, the "Song the Minstrel Sang," he withheld from publication. He recited it to some of his friends and sent a copy to Mr. Perry of the *London Morning Chronicle*, with the suggestion that it might be published anonymously. This seems not to have been done. This manuscript was sold to Robert Clark in 1872 after Mr. Perry's death. At the sale it was described as "The original MS. of the Ode on the American War, in 62 lines, in three leaves written on one side only, in good condition, bound in red Morocco cover by Pratt, and lettered 'The American War' by Burns." A fragment of it, beginning "Thee Caledonia," he included in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop (June 25, 1794) where he says its subject is Liberty, and that he intends it as "an irregular ode to General Washington's birthday."

This second part, or the "Ode" proper, was first published in William S. Douglas' edition (Kilmarnock, 1876) but independent of *The Vision* which appeared separately in the same edition. In 1886 Mr. George Gebbie, in preparing his Complete Edition of Burns established that the Ode was the missing Song of the Lincluden Minstrel. These poems seem not to be as well known in America as they deserve, and it is hoped that the future will grant them the recognition they merit.

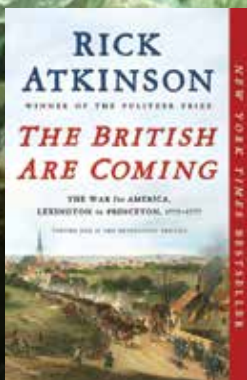
We know Burns as the poet of labor and the plow, of love and sadness, we know him as the singer of conviviality, and as the Bard of Scotland. We should know him as the lover of liberty and freedom, the friend of the American Colonies, and the admirer of George Washington.

**I dare say the American Congress of 1776, will be allowed to have been as able and enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us.**



**BOOK REVIEW**

# La Grande Road to Revolution



**The British Are Coming: The War for America, Lexington to Princeton, 1775-1777**

By Rick Atkinson

Henry Holt and Co.  
787 pgs. | \$20

By Tom Rooney, '20 (IL)

Anyone who has ever wished that an encyclopedia of the American Revolution could be written in chronological, narrative form is in luck; Rick Atkinson's *The British Are Coming* is just the beginning. The three-time Pulitzer Prize winning author of the World War II *Liberation Trilogy* has set his sights on the War for American Independence, and this first volume delivers a meticulously researched retelling of the first two years of the war. After a brief prologue, the book begins in earnest with Boston's 1775 commemoration of the Boston Massacre, and it concludes in the aftermath of the Battle of Princeton in the early days of 1777. The pages in between are filled with as much encyclopedic information as Atkinson could possibly include and keep a cohesive narrative going. The lion's share of this volume is taken up with action in and around Boston, New York City, and Quebec.

Atkinson explains the three goals he set out for the book. The first and broadest is to "write a sweeping narrative ... that weaves together tactical combat scenes ... with strategic storytelling." He also an-

*Washington Crossing Delaware*, Emanuel Leutze (1851).

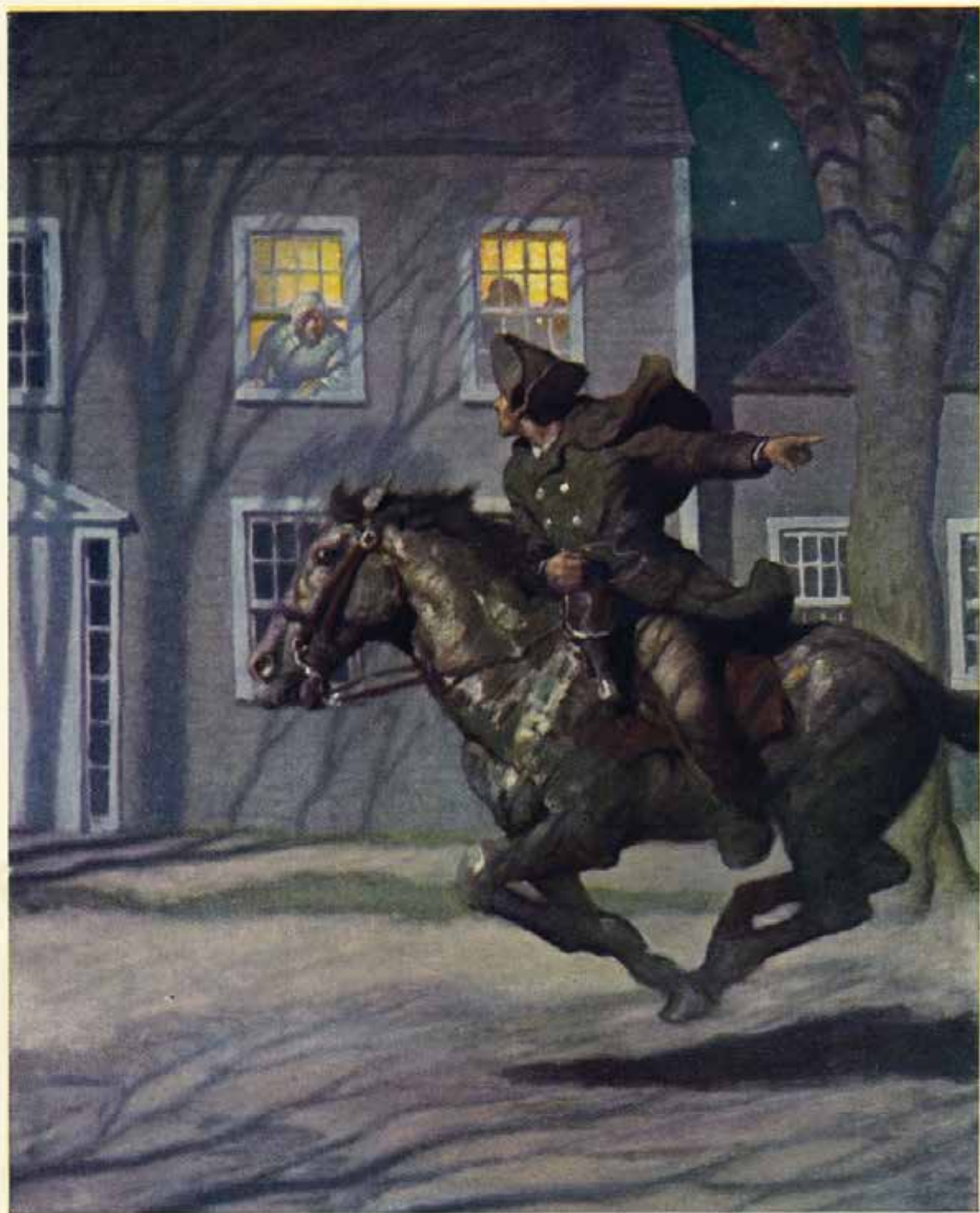


nounces his intention to “tell the story from both sides,” and he expresses his desire to “restore the emotional connection between 21st Century readers and those who took part in this great struggle almost 250 years ago.” This last goal is the hardest to achieve, especially since two-and-a-half centuries separate us from them, and the information needed to understand them and their war can be overwhelming. Atkinson’s brilliance shines through in many places, however, but at times the narrative can be crowded out by so much information.

Atkinson’s undergraduate (East Carolina University) and graduate (the University of Chicago) degrees were both in English. After a nearly twenty-year career in journalism at the Washington Post, Atkinson took leave from the Post

to try his hand at military history. Over the next fifteen years he produced *The Liberation Trilogy*, a sweeping survey of America’s participation in World War II, for which the first volume won the Pulitzer Prize. Atkinson had previously won a Pulitzer for journalism in 1982 and for public service in 1999. His other works include a book on D-Day and another on the Persian Gulf War.

While working on *The British Are Coming*, Atkinson was one of a limited number of fellows in the Georgian Papers Program who were granted access to the papers of George III, held in Windsor Castle. He paints a full and balanced picture of the monarch which is a considerable strength of the book and a valuable addition to the historic record. He traces the fall of George’s considerable popularity among the colonists once he acceded



*Paul Revere*, N.C. Wyeth (1922).

to the throne. Beyond this rare research opportunity, as Atkinson relates, he “spent years trolling through archives large and small in search of primary sources, diaries, letters, official and unofficial records, unpublished memoirs, [and] newspaper dispatches.” These wide-ranging components of his research span over forty pages of sources and a bursting 140-page notes section.

The result of Atkinson’s research is a tremendous level of detail throughout. Readers who have long been well-acquainted with the Revolution will find a wealth of new information to add to their knowledge. He provides a march down the well-trodden road to independence pointing out both tactical complexities and interesting support stories. Along the side roads, readers may be surprised to discover the second-best death-on-a-toilet scene in a book (fans of the *Game of Thrones* series know the best such scene, but that one is just fiction). The death of an unnamed sergeant at the Battle of Quebec is particularly poignant, as are a few choice exchanges of letters between soldiers and their wives. The better moments of this level of detail fit what Ben MacIntyre of the New York Times called “pointillism history,” - assembling the small dots of pure color into a vivid, tumbling narrative.”

At times, however, the narrative can be slowed down with too much detail. An abundance of detail can slow down a story, and Atkinson spends some time walking the edge. Equipment lists and other ephemera such as the distribution of General Montgomery’s personal effects, continually pepper the narrative. While the larger engagements can withstand the highly detailed “tactical combat scenes” that Atkinson often portrays well, the smaller engagements sometime get mired down in them. An overused phrase of praise for books is “I couldn’t put it down,” some readers of this book will periodically need to put it down to let all of the information sink in.

The *British Are Coming* is best suited for anyone wishing to gain greater mastery of the details of the American Revolution, both the battles and the personalities of those behind the war. The process of research can often be disjointed and feel like sifting through mounds of documents, but Atkinson’s book is a much more pleasurable way to research the intricacies of the War for Independence. Readers can expect to be well-instructed and given a balanced account.



*Tom Rooney '20 (IL) has taught history and economics at the Leyden High Schools since last century, as well as having dabbled in local and state politics for over fifteen years.*



## *Le dernier mot*

The past year was one of transitions at the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation. The last of the original staff who had been with the Foundation since the beginning, President Lewis F. Larsen retired on September 30. We know many of you knew and loved President Larsen and he genuinely took an interest in each and every James Madison Fellow. Throughout my years of conversation with him and others who were there in the beginning, I learned a lot about the purpose of the Foundation and its genesis from inception to becoming the premier fellowship for teachers of U.S. civics and history.

Every organization needs funds to operate, and a variety of different methods were used to secure funding for the Foundation in those early years, including creating and selling a James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation coin through the U.S. Mint. You can still find them online on coin collectors' websites and if you stop by our offices in Alexandria, we have them on display. In addition to the coins, relationships with important and influential individual donors and organizations were fostered and these helped provide funding for many James Madison Fellowships over the years. All of the fundraising efforts had the same goal (which is also the mission of the Foundation): "to improve the teaching of the U.S. Constitution in secondary schools throughout the nation."

The Summer Institute on the U.S. Constitution, which has long been the jewel of the James Madison Fellowship, has continued to improve over the years. We strive to uphold the high standard set in the earlier Summer Institutes under the direction of Dr. Herman Belz, including an unmatched academic rigor combined with interesting and informative lectures from scholars all over the nation. Site visits have also changed over the years, and Fellows now visit even more sites than ever before. The format of the annual James Madison Lecture by a noteworthy national scholar continues to evolve each year, but always remains faithful to the continued scholastic tone of the Summer Institute.

We are excited for what the future holds for our James Madison Fellows network. We plan on reaching out more to our Fellows and providing them with opportunities to learn about, share, and teach others about the Constitution. We also plan to have even more of our Fellows meet each other or reconnect and continue their lasting friendships and professional associations.

We are grateful to those earliest staff members who established the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation and set it on the path to where it is now. We know the future is bright for the Foundation and our James Madison Fellows.



# SUBMISSIONS

*The James Madison Review of Books* encourages James Madison Fellows, teachers, academics, researchers, and the Constitutionally-minded public, to submit ideas for book reviews, essays, art, and poetry.

Book reviews should be focused on a book published within the last five years on the subjects of the U.S. Constitution, the Colonial Era, the Founding Era, the Civil War, or other political and historical topics centered around the Constitution.

Please contact the editor, Dr. Guy F. Burnett, at [gburnett@jamesmadison.gov](mailto:gburnett@jamesmadison.gov) for more details.



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