



FLETCHER M. GREEN

WRITING SOUTHERN HISTORY

*Essays in Historiography
in Honor of*
FLETCHER M. GREEN



edited by
Arthur S. Link
&
Rembert W. Patrick

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sant burden of indebtedness while are grateful to the members of the is chairman, Professor Wall, for or their cooperation and patience. l, and Cornelius O. Cathey, all of to every request for information ng, secretary of the Department ky, recorded discussions at' con- ed more than a thousand letters. cards and prepared the detailed g editorial assistance. The Uni- , and the University of Kentucky : of members of their staffs. The isible for whatever errors remain

ARTHUR S. LINK
REMBERT W. PATRICK

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II

The American Revolution: Southern Founders of a National Tradition

Charles G. Sellers, Jr.

THE common experiences of the War for Independence created in the American people from Georgia to New Hampshire a sense of one nationality, a tradition of loyalty to a union deriving its essential character from the liberal ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Translated into a written historiography, this Revolutionary tradition has continued throughout our history to reinforce, against all sectional and illiberal tendencies, the liberal nationalism of all Americans. This Revolutionary historiography had its brilliant beginning in the work of a Southerner, Dr. David Ramsay, who resided in that sometime epicenter of radical Southernism, Charleston, South Carolina.

On July 4, 1778, in the first of all anniversary orations on American independence, Dr. Ramsay eloquently expressed the emotional and ideological content of the Revolutionary tradition. "When I anticipate in imagination the future glory of my country, and the illustrious figure it will soon make on the theatre of the world," he told his fellow Charles-

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Revolution: unders of a Tradition

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War for Independence created in New Hampshire a sense of one union deriving its essential clarification of Independence. Trans- this Revolutionary tradition has reinforce, against all sectional and lism of all Americans. This Revolu- liant beginning in the work of a resided in that sometime epicenter outh Carolina.

anniversary orations on American expressed the emotional and ideo- tradition. "When I anticipate in untry, and the illustrious figure it world," he told his fellow Charles-

tonians, "my heart distends with generous pride for being an American." Ramsay's words make one doubt at the outset whether there could be a peculiarly "southern" historiography of the Revolution. Nowhere does he hint at sectional consciousness or sectional jealousy. Instead he concedes that Pennsylvania and New England have had a larger share of that political freedom for which the Revolution is being fought; and he concludes in a strain of enthusiastic nationalism:

We have laid the foundations of a new empire, which promises to enlarge itself to vast dimensions, and to give happiness to a great continent. It is now our turn to figure on the face of the earth, and in the annals of the world. . . . Ever since the flood, true Religion, Literature, Art, Empire and Riches, have taken a slow and gradual course from east to west, and are now about fixing their long and favourite abode in this new western world. . . . Our Independence will redeem one quarter of the globe from tyranny and oppression, and consecrate it the chosen seat of Truth, Justice, Freedom, Learning and Religion. We are laying the foundation of happiness for countless millions. Generations yet unborn will bless us for the blood-bought inheritance, we are about to bequeath them. Oh happy times! Oh glorious days! Oh kind, indulgent, bountiful Providence, that we live in this highly favoured period, and have the honour of helping forward these great events, and of suffering in a cause of such infinite importance.¹

Ramsay could not have foreseen that the South's "generations unborn" would one day be trying to use history in order to deny their Americanism. If he had, he would have rejoiced that the Revolutionary tradition was the one part of the South's history that refused to be so used. Three quarters of a century after Ramsay's oration, Abraham Lincoln would invoke "the mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land" in his efforts to check the disunionism that stemmed from latter-day Charleston.

While Ramsay's blood-bought inheritance and Lincoln's mystic chords of memory were not enough by themselves to check the forces of sectional chauvinism in the distraught South of 1861, neither could the South, even then in its own thinking, sectionalize the staunchly American tradition of the Revolution. Thus there was never a peculiarly southern historiography of the Revolution, but only an American historiography, which included much writing by Southerners and much specialized writ-

¹ Ramsay, *An Oration on the Advantages of American Independence: Spoken before a Publick Assembly of the Inhabitants of Charlestown in South-Carolina, on the Second Anniversary of That Glorious Aera* (Charlestown, 1778), 14, 20-21.

ing about Revolutionary events and personages within the South.

The American historiography of the Revolution began when the British captured Charleston in 1780 and imprisoned Dr. Ramsay. During his eleven months in a British prison at St. Augustine, Ramsay conceived the idea of writing a history of the Revolution in South Carolina. Upon his release he went busily to work, gaining access to the papers of General Greene and combing through the papers of the Confederation Congress while serving as one of South Carolina's delegates to that body. In 1785 he proudly published his two-volume work,² the first substantial account of any phase of the Revolution and a foundation stone for all subsequent study of the Revolution in the South.

But Ramsay was not satisfied. His volumes sold so poorly that the venture cost him several hundred dollars, and he seems to have perceived the importance of establishing a firm historiographical base for the Revolutionary tradition out of which a new nation was growing. Back he went to his documents and writing desk, and in 1789 he published a general history of the Revolution³ that would stand unrivaled in Amer-

2 Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South-Carolina, from a British Province to an Independent State* (2 vols.; Trenton, 1785).

3 Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1789); Robert L. Brunhouse, "David Ramsay's Publication Problems, 1784-1808," *Bibliographical Society of America, Papers*, XXXIX (1945), 51-67. Ramsay had completed his history by 1787 but delayed publication in order to include an account of the new Constitution.

The only contemporary work remotely comparable to Ramsay's was William Gordon's *History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America* (4 vols.; London, 1788). Gordon's history was of doubtful American origin, its author being an English clergyman who lived in America only between 1770 and 1786. His account of the southern campaigns was drawn mainly, and often copied bodily, from Ramsay's work on South Carolina, which Ramsay had loaned him in manuscript; and the rest of Gordon's volumes depended as slavishly on the accounts in the British *Annual Register*. Americans criticized Gordon for publishing his history in London and charged that he had softened the anti-British tone of his original manuscript to make it more acceptable in England. The *Annual Register* had similarly been the basis for several even less substantial and more derivative histories of the Revolution by British and French authors. But these were not sufficiently impressive or sympathetic to the American cause to win much attention on this side of the Atlantic. O. G. Libby, "A Critical Examination of William Gordon's History of the American Revolution," *American Historical Association, Annual Report*, 1899, I, 367-88; David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America, 1607-1884* (Chicago, 1960), 35-40.

A distinguished competitor to Ramsay appeared when Carlo Botta's history, originally published in Italy in 1809, was translated into English under the title *History of the War of Independence of the United States of America* (3 vols.; Philadelphia, 1820-21).

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ican historiography until George Bancroft's great multivolume history reached the Revolutionary period in the 1850's.

Ramsay's commitment to history came straight out of his liberal nationalism. His most important work was written while he was simultaneously engaged in the campaign for a stronger federal government; and his historical writing was a deliberate effort to enshrine the Revolution as the great unifying experience by which the American people sought to establish a utopian republic on the basis of their common liberal ideals. "The Americans knew but little of one another, previous to the Revolution," he wrote. "A continental army, and a Congress composed of men from all the States, by freely mixing together, were assimilated into one mass." At the same time that he was completing his history, in 1788, he published a pamphlet to refute the sectional objections being urged in South Carolina to the new federal constitution. "Indulge no narrow prejudices to the disadvantage of your brethren of the other states," he exhorted his fellow Carolinians. "Consider the people of all the thirteen states, as a band of brethren, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, inhabiting one undivided country, and designed by heaven to be one people."⁴

The simultaneous and happy culmination of Ramsay's labors on his history and his efforts for a stronger national government only confirmed him in his role as expounder-cum-historian of the Revolutionary tradition of liberal nationalism. "We should, above all things, study to promote the union and harmony of the states," he told another Fourth of July gathering in Charleston in 1794. "Perish the man who wishes to divide us into back country, or low country, into a northern and southern, or into an eastern or western interest. . . . We should consider the people of this country, from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, from New-Hampshire to Georgia, as forming one whole, the interest of which should be preferred to that of every part."⁵

In pursuit of this goal he devoted every minute he could spare from his medical practice and extensive public services to historical writing, and in the process he blazed a pioneering trail for every one of the major historical genres that were to compose the Revolutionary historiography of the nineteenth century. As a biographer and maker of a national

⁴ Ramsay, *History of the American Revolution*, II, 316; *An Address to the Free-men of South-Carolina, on the Subject of the Federal Constitution*. . . . (Charleston [1788]), 11-12.

⁵ Ramsay, *An Oration, Delivered in St. Michael's Church, before the Inhabitants of Charleston, South-Carolina, on the Fourth of July, 1794*. . . . (Charleston [1794]), 20.

hagiology, he wrote the best of the early one-volume lives of George Washington. Then he turned to state history and, following the example of Jeremy Belknap's history of New Hampshire, produced a superior history of South Carolina. "Had we Belknaps in every state," he wrote to a friend, "we might become acquainted with each other in that intimate and familiar manner which would wear away prejudices, rub off asperities & mold us into an homogeneous people loving esteeming and rightly appreciating each other." He expanded his history of the Revolution into a general history of the United States and devoted his last years to creating a vast account of the whole of human experience as culminating in the American republic.⁶

Ramsay's writings, and especially his *History of the American Revolution*, fed the historical imagination and the growing liberal nationalism of several generations of Americans. His fellow Americans resented with him the refusal of the English public to give a hearing to the truths he expounded; and Congress, by special act in 1789, granted him the first copyright extended to an author by the general government. "America has produced a Ramsay," exulted young James K. Polk, who eagerly devoured Ramsay's works while a student at the University of North Carolina in 1817, "the Tacitus of this western hemisphere to transmit to posterity in the unpolished language of truth, the spirit of liberty which actuated the first founders of our republic."⁷

Ramsay's nationalism arose in part from his personal intersectional experience as a native of Pennsylvania, student at the College of New Jersey and in Philadelphia, and member of the Confederation Congress. Yet his nationalism seems to have been highly congenial to the South Carolina community where he was a leading political and intellectual figure throughout his mature years. The final irony was that his funeral eulogy was delivered by none other than the brilliant young

6 Ramsay, *The Life of George Washington* . . . (Philadelphia, 1807); *The History of South-Carolina, from Its First Settlement in 1670, to the Year 1808* (2 vols.; Charleston, 1809); *History of the United States, from Their First Settlement as English Colonies, in 1607, to the Year 1808 . . . Continued to the Treaty of Ghent, by S. S. Smith . . . and Other Literary Gentlemen* . . . (3 vols.; Philadelphia, 1816-17); *Universal History Americanized* . . . (12 vols.; Philadelphia, 1819). The last two works were completed and brought out posthumously by friends for the benefit of Ramsay's destitute family. The quotation is from Page Smith, "David Ramsay and the Causes of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XVII (Jan., 1960), 74.

7 Charles Evans (comp.), *American Bibliography* . . . (14 vols.; Chicago and Worcester, 1903-59), VII, 354; James K. Polk, "The Admission of Foreigners into Office in the United States," MS in "Addresses of the Dialectic Society," IV, First Series, University of North Carolina Library.

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ry . . . (14 vols.; Chicago and "The Admission of Foreigners ses of the Dialectic Society," IV, ry.

Charleston lawyer Robert Y. Hayne, later a firebrand of nullification.⁸

Ramsay's reputation was later clouded for professional historians by exaggerated charges of plagiarism from the *Annual Register*; but the most recent professional evaluation places him "in the front rank of American historians."⁹ The first quality in Ramsay's history that strikes the modern reader is his temperate and insightful treatment of the behavior and policies of the British. Even more impressive is his sensitive assessment of the many factors that contributed to the Revolutionary movement—the relationship between the American environment and the psychology and political behavior of the Americans, the place of economic considerations in the mixture of motives that influenced the patriots, the influence of age and temperament and chance in the flow of events. Finally and most striking of all, Ramsay's interpretation of the Revolution as essentially a struggle over constitutional principles is the view to which historians have been returning after decades of dalliance with less durable interpretations. "Ramsay offered us," concludes Professor Page Smith, "a wiser and better balanced interpretation than the most expert and 'scientific' of his successors."¹⁰

These professional successors, the university-trained professors who aspired to write scientific history, were not to appear until the end of the nineteenth century. In the meantime there was to be a vast amount of

8 Hayne, "Biographical Memoir of David Ramsay, M.D.," *Analectic Magazine*, VI (Sept., 1815), 204-24. This, the fullest biographical sketch of Ramsay, was drawn from Hayne's memorial address. Hayne had married a niece of Mrs. Ramsay; and another later nullifier leader, Henry L. Pinckney, founder and editor of the famous fire-eating newspaper, the *Charleston Mercury*, was the brother of Mrs. Hayne and a nephew of Mrs. Ramsay. David D. Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens* . . . (New York, 1915), 430-31.

Ramsay was born the son of a Scotch-Irish farmer in Pennsylvania in 1749, attended the College of New Jersey, studied medicine in Philadelphia, settled in Charleston in 1773, and died in 1815, having been shot down in the street by a tailor who had earlier been confined on a judgment by Ramsay and another physician that he was insane.

9 O. G. Libby, "Ramsay as a Plagiarist," *American Historical Review*, VII (July, 1902), 697-703; Smith, "David Ramsay and the Causes of the American Revolution," 77. Early historians of the Revolution almost universally relied heavily on the *Annual Register*, whose excellent contemporary accounts of Revolutionary events were often the best available source until fuller documentation became available. Most of these writers, including the illustrious John Marshall, simply pasted together verbatim passages, paraphrases, and condensations from the *Annual Register* and other sources. Ramsay did more of this than his preface suggests, but less than his contemporaries. The important distinction is that Ramsay fitted derivative passages into a superior interpretive framework that was distinctly his own.

10 Smith, "David Ramsay and the Causes of the American Revolution," 73.

writing about the Revolution by doctors, lawyers, clerics, and occasional self-trained college professors, following down one or another of the trails of national history, state history, or biography that David Ramsay had blazed. But before turning to the work of Ramsay's nonprofessional successors, it is necessary to note the substantial contributions made to Revolutionary historiography by those members of his own generation who recorded their memoirs of the war for independence.

Military aspects of the Revolution were particularly illuminated by the efforts of leading officers on both sides to buttress their reputations and justify their conduct. The British generals, Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Charles Cornwallis, had barely returned to England when they and their friends became engaged in a violent pamphlet controversy over responsibility for the Yorktown debacle. Several of the pamphlets produced by the controversy were promptly reprinted in America and provided an inside view of the operations of the British high command.¹¹

The Clinton-Cornwallis feud also stimulated the writing of valuable military histories by lesser British officers. In 1787 Cornwallis' former commander of dragoons, Colonel Banastre Tarleton, published in London *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, in the Southern Provinces of North America*; also in London, in 1794, a former commissary officer in Cornwallis' army, Charles Stedman, published his two-volume *The History of the Origin, Progress and Termination of the American War*. Tarleton's work was regarded as anti-Cornwallis and Stedman's as anti-Clinton. Of the two, Tarleton's is much the more valuable. Written with the aid of his mistress, the celebrated actress Mary Robinson, it provides an absorbing first-hand account of the southern campaign. Stedman, on the other hand, copied extensively from both Tarleton and the *Annual Register*, though some of his material is derived from personal experience and independent sources.¹²

11 The major pamphlets in the Clinton-Cornwallis controversy are conveniently collected in Benjamin F. Stevens (ed.), *The Campaign in Virginia, 1781* . . . (2 vols.; London, 1788). Clinton also completed but did not publish an extensive memoir, which has been edited and published by William B. Willcox under the title, *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of His Campaigns, 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents* (New Haven, 1954). The editor's introduction to this volume contains a fine analysis of the points in dispute between Clinton and Cornwallis.

12 Tarleton's history seems to have been prompted in considerable measure by a running attack on his conduct of the battle of Cowpens, launched in the London press in 1782 by a fellow-officer, Lieutenant Roderick Mackenzie, and carried on as a minor counterpart to the Clinton-Cornwallis controversy. When Tarleton's history appeared, Mackenzie published a pamphlet of *Strictures on Lt.-Col. Tarleton's History* . . . (London, 1787) which was answered by another officer, George

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Thus in the decade following the war, the rivalries of British officers for reputation made available a detailed knowledge of the southern campaigns from the British point of view. American officers, being free from the necessity of shifting the onus of defeat to each other, were much more backward about supplying memoirs. Not until 1802 did Colonel William Moultrie publish his memoirs, telling clumsily about events in which he participated. And it was 1812 before an American officer, General Henry ("Light Horse Harry") Lee, produced an account comparable in value to Tarleton's.¹³

The battle of military reputations on the American side was left to be fought not by the officers themselves, but by their descendants and admirers, as a part of the flood of biography which, during most of the nineteenth century, was the most important form of writing about the Revolution.

No one dared, of course, to question Washington's heroic qualities. Ramsay's biography of Washington remained for many years after its publication in 1807 the soundest brief account, but it was overshadowed by more spectacular productions. "Parson" Mason Locke Weems had brought out the first edition of his flimsy, fanciful, and fantastically successful and influential *Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington* in 1800;¹⁴ and between 1804 and 1807 Chief Justice John Marshall published five ponderous volumes on the subject. For all his verbiage, Marshall added little new knowledge about the Revolution, either in the North or South,¹⁵ but he did inspire a fellow Supreme Court jus-

Hanger, in *An Address to the Army in Reply to Strictures by Roderick M'Kensie*. For the circumstances under which Tarleton wrote his history, see Robert D. Bass, *The Green Dragon: The Lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson* (New York, 1957). Clinton himself attacked Stedman's history in a pamphlet, *Observations on Mr. Stedman's History of the American War* (London, 1794). For a recent evaluation of Stedman's work, see R. Kent Newmyer, "Charles Stedman's *History of the American War*," *American Historical Review*, LXIII (July, 1958), 924-34.

13 Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution, So Far as It Related to the States of North and South Carolina and Georgia* . . . (2 vols.; New York, 1802). Lee, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1812). "Despite occasional prejudice and error," Lee's work "is a classic," writes John R. Alden in *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789* (Baton Rouge, 1957), 412.

14 For a modern edition with an excellent critical introduction, see Mason L. Weems, *The Life of Washington*, ed. Marcus Cunliffe (Cambridge, 1962).

15 Marshall, *Life of George Washington* (5 vols.; Philadelphia, 1804-07). The sections on the Revolution consisted largely of copying and paraphrasing, mainly from William Gordon and the *Annual Register*, according to William A. Foran, "John Marshall as a Historian," *American Historical Review*, XLIII (Oct., 1937), 51-64.

tice to an emulation that furnished new information on the Revolution in the South.

Justice William Johnson of Charleston, South Carolina, seems to have been moved by a desire for literary fame, coupled with a desire to furnish an antidote to the anti-Republican poison contained in Marshall's final volume. Since Washington had been "done," Judge Johnson turned to the next most important Revolutionary general, Nathanael Greene. Traveling to New England in 1818 in search of data, he gained access to the general's papers in the hands of the family; and in 1822 he published a two-volume biography.¹⁶ Drawing fresh information from the Greene papers, Johnson's biography ranks with the works of David Ramsay and Henry Lee among the most substantial southern contributions to the early historiography of the Revolution.

It is a striking fact that Charleston produced two of the South's three important early historians of the Revolution, and that both Ramsay and Johnson coupled ardent nationalism with a strong commitment to liberal republican views. Indeed their careers showed many similarities. Both the doctor and the judge were, of course, professional men. Both had sprung from humble origins, Ramsay's father being a Pennsylvania farmer and Johnson's a New York blacksmith who moved to Charleston before the Revolution (in 1780 the elder Johnson was carried off with Dr. Ramsay to the British prison at St. Augustine). Both future historians were educated at the College of New Jersey, and both rose to political eminence in Charleston, Johnson being appointed to the Supreme Court by President Jefferson.

While Judge Johnson was an uncompromising Jeffersonian Republican in his commitment to civil and religious liberties and democratic government, he explicitly denied that the Virginia Republican doctrine of state rights was a central tenet of Republicanism. "State rights, or United States' rights are nothing," he declared in his biography of Greene, "except as they contribute to the safety and happiness of the people." He went out of his way to praise Greene's efforts for a stronger union; and when his biography was challenged, he stated his purposes in writing it as follows: "1, to trace out and to adhere to the historical truth. 2, to im-

16 William Johnson, *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene . . . in the War of the Revolution* (2 vols.; Charleston, 1822). Johnson paid out of his own pocket for the printing of 1,000 sets; but after four years he still had 400 unsold sets on his hands. Donald G. Morgan has written an excellent biography, *Justice William Johnson, the First Dissenter . . .* (Columbia, S. C., 1954); for Johnson's work as a biographer, see pp. 105-106, 143-52. Johnson's biography of Greene followed by several years a much slighter work, Charles Caldwell, *Memoirs of the Life and Campaigns of the Hon. Nathanael Greene . . .* (Philadelphia, 1819).

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18 *Ibid.*, 96-9

mation on the Revolution in South Carolina, seems to have been coupled with a desire to position contained in Marshall's "one," Judge Johnson turned general, Nathanael Greene. Much of data, he gained access to the family; and in 1822 he published fresh information from the works of David Ramsay and other southern contributions to

the two of the South's three sons, and that both Ramsay and Johnson showed a strong commitment to the cause. Both showed many similarities. Both were professional men. Both were the father of a Pennsylvania blacksmith who moved to the elder Johnson was born in St. Augustine). Both were of New Jersey, and both Johnson being appointed to

promoting Jeffersonian Republican liberties and democratic government. "State rights, or United States biography of Greene, "expressed the happiness of the people." He argues for a stronger union; and he stated his purposes in writing it to be the historical truth. 2, to im-

Correspondence of Nathanael Greene (Charleston, 1822). Johnson paid out of pocket after four years he still had 400 copies written an excellent biography, . . . (Columbia, S. C., 1954); for Johnson, 143-52. Johnson's biography of work, Charles Caldwell, *Memoirs of Greene* . . . (Philadelphia, 1819).

press on my countrymen the necessity of hugging to their bosoms the bond which unites us to each other, by exhibiting the toil and hazard to which we were exposed from a want of combined operation and continental feeling in the revolutionary war."¹⁷

Judge Johnson's life of Greene appeared in the very year that Denmark Vesey's slave insurrection plot accelerated South Carolina's ideological somersault from nationalism to state rights, and Johnson made himself unpopular with many of his fellow Charlestonians by trying to calm the hysteria. But he had been denouncing "the wily serpent of disunion" at least since 1812, when he had followed in Ramsay's footsteps as Charleston's Fourth of July orator. "Long may the love of country be the animating principle of the sons of Carolina," he had said on that occasion. So he was ready when the wily serpent came boldly into the open in 1827 in the *Crisis* essays of Robert Turnbull, the bellwether of nullification. Judge Johnson replied with a pamphlet of over a hundred pages, calling on Americans "to strengthen and consolidate the Union of the States . . . and thus build, on a firm basis, a lofty national character and a permanent national prosperity." Only thus, he predicted, would the United States be prepared to play its destined role in the coming climax of the great world struggle between tyranny and freedom.¹⁸

Although Johnson's book on Greene furnishes further impressive evidence of the importance of the Revolutionary tradition in resisting the South's drift into sectionalism, and though its research findings were an important contribution to knowledge about the Revolution, it was not a popular success. Johnson's prose was too ponderous, and his bluntly expressed prejudices—against High-Church Episcopalianism and Count Pulasqui among others—invited counterattacks. Historiographically the most productive of Johnson's attacks were on the Virginia Lees. In 1824 Henry Lee, Jr., responded to the judge's animadversions on the accuracy of his father's memoirs by publishing in Philadelphia a weighty account of *The Campaign of 1781 in the Carolinas; with Remarks, Historical and Critical on Johnson's Life of Greene*. . . . A year later another Lee, Richard Henry, answered Johnson's insinuations that his grandfather and namesake had been involved in the Revolutionary machinations against Washington by publishing in Philadelphia a two-volume *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee*. . . . Despite their tendentiousness, the embattled Lees further illuminated both the military and the civil side of the Revolutionary struggle in the South.

¹⁷ Morgan, *Justice William Johnson*, 150-51, 152n.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 96-97, 297.

Meanwhile two Southerners had been clothed with the mythic qualities of secondary heroes. The new military hero was the semiliterate, sometimes ruthless, and always daring partisan commander, Francis Marion, whose midnight forays from the swamps had kept American resistance alive after the British overran lowcountry South Carolina. Around 1806 that master myth-maker Parson Weems encountered one of Marion's former lieutenants, Peter Horry, who had been collecting materials and painfully trying to construct a biography. Weems seems to have recognized instantly the romantic appeal of Marion's exploits; and Horry incautiously turned his manuscript over to the famous biographer of Washington with a request that he "make it read grammatically" and also "embellish" it. When Weems published the "embellished" work in 1809, Horry was horrified. "A history of realities turned into a romance. . . . a fictitious invention of the brain," he complained to Weems. "You have carved and mutilated it with so many erroneous statements, your embellishments, observations and remarks, must necessarily be erroneous as proceeding from false grounds. Most certainly 'tis not MY history, but YOUR romance." The plain old soldier was additionally disturbed because he was made to appear the sole author in some of the early editions.¹⁹

Efforts to correct Weems's romanticizing of Marion failed to overtake the parson's imagined dialogue, invented adventures, and flashing prose.²⁰ The dashing Swamp Fox, along with Washington, moved into

19 The first edition of *The Life of Gen. Francis Marion* . . . (Philadelphia, 1809) listed no author. For bibliographical data on this and subsequent editions, see A. S. Salley's introduction to the reprint edition of William D. James, *A Sketch of the Life of Brig. Gen. Francis Marion* . . . (Marietta, Ga., 1948) and Paul Leicester Ford, *Mason Locke Weems: His Works and Ways*, ed. Emily E. F. Skeel (3 vols.; New York, 1909), I, 97-127. Horry's complaint is quoted in William Gilmore Simms, "Weems, the Biographer and Historian," *Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction, Second Series* (New York, 1845 [1847]), 136.

20 Another South Carolinian who had served under Marion, William D. James, published at Charleston in 1821 *A Sketch of the Life of Brig. Gen. Francis Marion* . . . , which was unadorned and unexciting. Over two decades later the South Carolina novelist, William Gilmore Simms, sought to paint a truer picture of Marion, drawing on both Weems and James and checking them against other histories and unpublished documents. Simms admitted that Weems "had rather loose notions of the privileges of the biographer," but concluded that "in reality, he has transgressed much less in his Life of Marion than is generally supposed." Simms, *The Life of Francis Marion* (New York, 1844), 8. A modern biographer, Robert D. Bass, after comparing Weems and James with an even wider range of previously unused sources, has similarly concluded that "the two biographies have about equal validity." Bass, *Swamp Fox: The Life and Campaigns of General Francis Marion* (New York, 1959), 247.

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the foreground of the American consciousness of the Revolution. Weems's books, said William Gilmore Simms, "were among my earliest treasures"; they "have had a vast circulation, have exercised a wondrous influence over the young minds of the country, have moulded many of our noblest characters."²¹

While the military exploits of Weems's Marion were captivating the young, their elders were being treated to the legendary civil exploits of another hero of the Revolutionary South. About the time that Parson Weems encountered Peter Horry, an ambitious young lawyer of humble origins, William Wirt, was trying to climb into the leadership of class-conscious Virginia. As part of his campaign for social acceptability, Wirt sought to add a literary reputation to his flashy oratorical attainments. Originally he planned to write a series of sketches of famous Virginians. But one of his projected subjects, like himself a man of modest birth and spectacular rhetorical abilities, so absorbed Wirt that he devoted years to preparing a biography of Patrick Henry. Though Wirt did not, like Weems, put imagined conversations into the mouths of his characters, he did presume to reconstruct verbatim texts of Henry's celebrated orations from the recollections of aged witnesses. Moreover the theme of Henry's rise from obscurity to leadership was so important to Wirt that he exaggerated both the lowliness of Henry's origins and the aristocratic splendor of the Virginia ruling class. Most important, he seized upon the developing strain of Romantic assumptions in American thought to interpret Henry as a force of Nature, a natural genius whose greatness was greatness of soul. This view enabled the biographer to gloss over his subject's intellectual and moral shortcomings, or even to turn them into Romantic virtues. John Taylor of Caroline called Wirt's biography of Henry "a wretched piece of fustian," and even Henry's admirer, John Randolph, thought it "a splendid novel." But these men were anachronistic in an increasingly Romantic society, which quickly adopted Wirt's Henry as its leading civil hero of the Revolutionary movement. And once again the Revolutionary tradition had exercised its nationalizing spell over a southern writer. Patrick Henry, in life the exemplar of Virginia provincialism, emerged from Wirt's pages as a man of national vision.²²

²¹ Simms, "Weems, The Biographer and Historian," 125, 127.

²² Wirt, *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry* (Philadelphia, 1817). For a suggestive interpretation of Wirt as biographer see William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York, 1961), 67-94; the quotations are from p. 69. Though I derive my view of Wirt from Taylor's insights, I cannot see the basis for his central contention that Wirt's interpretation of Henry was significantly "southern."

By the 1840's the development of a popular market for biography had evoked readable but unoriginal accounts of several southern Revolutionary figures;²³ and the 1850's saw publication of a series of more substantial biographical works based on previously unused sources and comparable to Johnson's study of Greene in their contribution to historical knowledge.²⁴ Following the Civil War this tendency toward fuller documentation culminated in a series of voluminous biographical works that unfolded their subjects' lives through masses of letters and other documents strung together by minimal narrative connections.²⁵

These nonprofessional biographers greatly expanded historical knowledge of the Revolutionary South, but they also exhibited some less happy characteristics of nineteenth-century historical writing. Their works were motivated in part by intense state pride, by a desire to claim for their respective states a larger share of the glory of the Revolution. Kate Mason Rowland dedicated her biography of George Mason "To VIRGINIA the Illustrious, the Dearly Loved Old Dominion"; and the biographer of James Iredell asserted in his preface his purpose to "vindicate the claim of North Carolina to a place in the front rank of the foremost states in the War of the Revolution." This effort to glorify the heroes of one's state was often reinforced by a more directly filio-pietistic impulse. Biographies of Richard Henry Lee, Nathanael Greene, and Patrick Henry were written by their grandsons, that of William Pinkney by a nephew, that of James Iredell by the husband of a granddaughter, those of Edmund Randolph and George Mason by more distant kinsmen, and that of Charles Carroll of Carrollton was commissioned by his descendants. "I resolved that nothing should prevent me from

23 In addition to his biography of Marion, William Gilmore Simms wrote *The Life of Nathanael Greene* . . . (New York, 1848); and Jared Sparks included in his *Library of American Biography* (25 vols.; Boston, 1834-48) accounts of William R. Davie by F. M. Hubbard, Nathanael Greene by George W. Greene, Patrick Henry by Alexander H. Everett, Benjamin Lincoln by Francis Bowen, and William Pinkney by Henry Wheaton.

24 William Pinkney, *The Life of William Pinkney* (New York, 1853); Griffith J. McRee, *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell* . . . (2 vols.; New York, 1857-58); Henry S. Randall, *Life of Thomas Jefferson* (3 vols.; New York, 1858); and James Graham, *The Life of General Daniel Morgan* . . . (New York, 1859).

25 George Washington Greene, *The Life of Nathanael Greene* . . . (3 vols.; New York, 1867-1871); Moncure D. Conway, *Omitted Chapters of History Disclosed in the Life and Papers of Edmund Randolph* (New York, 1888); William Wirt Henry, *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches* (3 vols.; New York, 1891); Kate Mason Rowland, *The Life of George Mason, 1725-1792* (2 vols.; New York, 1892); Kate Mason Rowland, *The Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, 1732-1832, with His Correspondence and Public Papers* (2 vols.; New York, 1898); Charles C. Pinckney, *Life of General Thomas Pinckney* (Boston, 1895).

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telling the full story of my grandfather's life, and claiming for him the gratitude which is his due from all generations of his countrymen," declared George Washington Greene in the preface to his work. Even Moncure Conway, a notorious dissenter and virtual exile from his Virginia background, felt called upon to defend his remote forbear, Edmund Randolph, at every turn, partly perhaps because he felt that Virginians had unjustly maligned both Randolph's reputation and his own.

Yet in another respect the familial connections of so many of the nineteenth-century biographers with their subjects were an advantage. Often a biography was undertaken partly because the family had the subject's papers; and the biographer made available a mass of precious documentation which might otherwise have been lost and on which historians have depended ever since. In addition to the documents that were lavishly reprinted in the biographies, there were separate editions of the papers of several southern Revolutionary leaders.²⁶

The biographers' interest in documents was only one phase of a large-scale movement for documentary collection and publication, which was one of the most important forms of American historical activity in the nineteenth century. The Revolution was a primary focus for this documentary activity. "The more I look into it," declared Jared Sparks, New England minister-turned-historian, in 1827, "the more I am convinced that no complete history of the American Revolution has been written. The materials have never been collected; they are still in the archives of the states, and in the hands of individuals." Sparks made this observation in the course of a three-year documentary survey that took him to all the states and to London and Paris. He never produced the great comprehensive history of the Revolution that was his original aim, but he did help inaugurate a notable era of documentary collection and publication. Sparks himself published the diplomatic correspondence of the Revolution and the papers of Washington, Franklin, and Gouverneur Morris. Simultaneously the federal government embarked on a series of ambitious documentary publication projects, the most important of which for Revolutionary historiography was Peter Force's vast uncompleted

26 Thomas Jefferson Randolph, *Memoir, Correspondence, and Miscellanies, from the Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (4 vols.; Charlottesville, 1829). Congress later purchased the Jefferson papers and underwrote a more complete edition, H. A. Washington (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* . . . (9 vols.; Washington 1853-54). The first of two projected volumes of the *Correspondence of Mr. Ralph Izard* . . . (New York, 1844) was brought out by the subject's daughter, Anne Izard Deas; and William Gilmore Simms edited *The Army Correspondence of John Laurens in the Years 1777-1779* (New York, 1867). Besides these American publications there was Charles Ross (ed.), *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis* (3 vols.; London, 1859).

American Archives project, of which nine great folio volumes were eventually published.²⁷

The great national projects of Sparks and the federal government were paralleled by countless state and private documentary enterprises; and of these the southern states had a large share. In 1841 a Georgia historian, Dr. William B. Stevens, echoed Sparks by complaining that the Revolutionary history of his state "has hitherto, for the want of authenticated documents, been a blank page in our written and traditionary annals." But by this time Georgia and other southern states were well along toward remedying the deficiency. Georgia, in fact, had led the way for the American states by designating Joseph V. Bevan as its official historiographer in 1824 and subsidizing his project to collect and publish documents relating to the state's history. Bevan gained access to the British archives in London for the purpose of copying documents relating to early Georgia history, but he died before any substantial progress was made. The legislature authorized appointment of another agent in the 1830's, and by 1839 he had brought back from London twenty-two folio volumes of transcripts. It was from these materials that Dr. Stevens was able to present in his address to the Georgia Historical Society in 1841 the first accurate and amply documented account of Georgia's role in the coming of the Revolution.²⁸

Georgia's discovery of the documentary riches of the British archives prompted other southern states to similar activity. In 1825 the North Carolina legislature authorized a lottery to aid Judge Archibald D. Murphey in his project of gathering documents for an exhaustive history

27 On Sparks, Force, and the documentary movement in general, see John Spencer Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians* (New York, 1917); the quotation is from p. 92. Sparks's principal documentary compilations were: *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* (12 vols.; Boston, 1829-30); *The Life and Writings of George Washington* (12 vols.; Boston, 1834-37); and *Correspondence of the American Revolution: Being Letters of Eminent Men to George Washington . . .* (4 vols.; Boston, 1853). Peter Force's volumes appeared under the title *American Archives . . .* (4th series, 6 vols.; 5th series, 3 vols.; Washington, 1837-53). There were several earlier and less ambitious efforts to publish the more important Revolutionary documents: Hezekiah Niles, *Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America . . .* (Baltimore, 1822); and Jedidiah Morse, *Annals of the American Revolution . . .* (Hartford, 1824). A later general compilation of enduring value was Frank Moore, *Diary of the American Revolution: From Newspapers and Original Documents* (2 vols.; New York, 1860).

28 Stevens, "Discourse Delivered before the Georgia Historical Society, at the Celebration of Their Second Anniversary [Feb. 12, 1841]," Georgia Historical Society, *Collections*, II (Savannah, 1842), 1-36; quotation from p. 2; Stevens, *A History of Georgia . . . to . . . 1798* (2 vols.; New York, 1847; Philadelphia, 1859), I, viii-ix; Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 105-106.

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Georgia Historical Society, at the Feb. 12, 1841], "Georgia Historical -36; quotation from p. 2; Stevens, 1845; New York, 1847; Philadelphia, *America's Past*, 105-106.

of the state. Like Georgia's Bevan, Murphey died before materials could be secured from London, but not before he had collected at home a valuable body of documents relating especially to the Revolutionary history of the state. Meanwhile the governor had secured from British officials an index to North Carolina documents in the London archives, which the state finally published in 1843. South Carolina sponsored an agent who spent three years in London locating and copying materials relating to that state. William W. Hening's superbly edited *Statutes at Large* gave Virginia a magnificent corpus of source material for the colonial and Revolutionary periods, and the state's Revolutionary legislative journals were also published.²⁹

The movement for state-sponsored historical activities, beginning in the 1820's, was followed closely by the organization of state historical societies. Virginia's historical society was organized in 1831, North Carolina's in 1833, Georgia's in 1839, Maryland's in 1844, and South Carolina's in 1855; and by 1860 there were historical societies in nearly every southern state. While some of these societies were only sporadically active, those in the seaboard southern states made substantial contributions to Revolutionary historiography through the collection and publication of source materials. The North Carolina society maintained and expanded Judge Murphey's collection of documents; the Georgia society built up a library and commissioned a history of the state by Dr. Stevens; and the societies of Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland issued extensive documentary publications.³⁰ In addition to the documentary activities of the states and the societies, an individual

29 Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 103-107; Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians*, 240-42; Guion G. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1937), 819; William W. Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from . . . 1619* (13 vols.; Richmond, Philadelphia, 1819-23). Virginia published the journals of its Senate for the years 1778-79 and 1785-90 (2 vols.; Richmond, 1827-28) and the journals of its House of Delegates for the years 1776-1790 (4 vols.; Richmond, 1828).

30 Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 97-98. The Georgia society issued three volumes of *Collections*, 1840-48; the South Carolina society sponsored publication of Plowden C. J. Weston (ed.), *Documents Connected with the History of South Carolina* (London, 1856), and then issued three volumes of *Collections*, 1857-59; the Virginia society issued a single volume of *Collections*, 1834, published historical contributions regularly in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, 1835-37, revived publication 1848-53 through a quarterly *Virginia Historical Register*, and *Literary Advertiser* issued by its secretary, and then published an annual *Virginia Historical Reporter*, 1854-60; and the Maryland society published in pamphlet form many historical addresses delivered at its meetings as well as some documentary contributions. See Walter Muir Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies . . .* (Boston, 1962), 134, 163, 177, 184.

compiler published a notable collection of documents on the Revolutionary history of South Carolina.³¹

Though cut short by the Civil War, this flourishing documentary activity showed remarkable hardihood, and by the 1870's and 1880's was being pushed even more vigorously under the same kind of political and nonprofessional auspices as it had begun. The Georgia Historical Society resumed publication of its *Collections* in 1873 and the South Carolina society in 1884; and during the same period both the Virginia and Maryland societies began extensive publication programs. The most notable development of this period was the inauguration of two great documentary publication projects: the *Archives of Maryland*, published in Baltimore since 1883, edited by William H. Browne and successors, which would run to over sixty volumes by the 1960's; and the twenty-six volume *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina* published in Raleigh and Goldsboro from 1886 to 1906, edited by Secretary of State William L. Saunders and Chief Justice Walter Clark. Virginia began copying from the London archives, publishing in Richmond from 1875 to 1893 an eleven-volume *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, edited by W. P. Palmer *et al.*, and obtaining twenty-two additional volumes of unpublished transcripts. Spurred by the example of Virginia and North Carolina, South Carolina in the 1890's employed its neighbors' archival agent, W. Noel Sainsbury, to collect thirty-six volumes of transcripts. Georgia, which had pioneered in the collection of documents, lost its London transcripts by fire in the 1850's; and not until the twentieth century did it revive its documentary publication.³²

The vast store of source materials so industriously accumulated was not very fully utilized by the nonprofessional historians of the nineteenth century for studies of the Revolutionary South. Aside from their important contributions in biography, what writing they did was mainly in the area of state and local history. Much of this writing was motivated

31 Robert W. Gibbes (ed.), *Documentary History of the American Revolution* (3 vols.; New York, 1853-57).

32 Allen D. Candler (ed.), *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* (26 vols.; Atlanta, 1904-16), and *The Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia* (3 vols.; Atlanta, 1908). For surveys of the documentary situation at the end of the nineteenth century, see Stephen B. Weeks, "On the Promotion of Historical Studies in the South," *Southern History Association, Publications*, I (Jan., 1897), 13-34; Appleton P. C. Griffin, *Bibliography of Historical Societies (The United States and the Dominion of Canada)* in *American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1905*, II (Washington, 1907); and Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies*, 136, 163, 177, 185.

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by state and local pride, but the best of the state histories proceeded from
an intelligent recognition of the legitimacy and importance of the state
as a unit for historical analysis and came close to the standard that a
historian of Maryland set for himself. "As a loyal son of Maryland,"
wrote J. Thomas Scharf, "the writer feels a natural pride in her honor-
able history; but he has never (to the best of his belief, at least,) allowed
himself to be moved from the straight path of truth by any bias in her
favor."³³

Again it was David Ramsay who had shown the way, having followed
his pioneering work on the Revolution in South Carolina (1785) with
a general history of the state (1809) that remains today unexcelled
among state histories for detachment and critical insight. Less critical
but also notable among the early state histories was the history of Vir-
ginia by the expatriated Irish Republican and playwright, John Daly
Burk. Burk wrote partly to combat the custom of contrasting Virginia's
"yielding policy with the sturdy patriotism of New-England"; but his
Virginia patriotism was far overshadowed by his enthusiasm for Ameri-
can republicanism. He viewed the period of the French and Indian War
as a "new and more splendid aera," when the American provinces,
"driven into an union by the sense of common danger, . . . sink their local
prejudices and lay the foundation of an American character." Burk's
closing paragraph was a paean to "the glory of the Revolutionary morn-
ing," when "souls of ethereal stamp flocked from the remotest regions,
and rallied round the first pure altar, raised to the worship of liberty."³⁴

Georgia and North Carolina early had unimpressive histories that
were useful in the absence of anything better;³⁵ but in the 1830's and
1840's better state histories began to be written. Maryland's celebrated
and choleric Whig orator, John V. L. McMahon, published in 1831 a his-

³³ Scharf, *History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day* (3
vols.; Baltimore, 1879), I, vii.

³⁴ Burk, *The History of Virginia, from Its First Settlement to the Present Day*
(3 vols.; Petersburg, 1804-05), II, 233; III, 167, 468. Burk died before he com-
pleted his project, and his three volumes extend only to 1775. In 1816 there was
published at Petersburg a fourth volume extending to 1781, entitled *The History*
of Virginia Commenced by John Burk and Continued by Skelton Jones and Louis
Hue Girardin.

³⁵ Hugh McCall, *The History of Georgia . . . to the Present Day* (1784) (2
vols.; Savannah, 1811-1816), was a derivative work with many errors, written by
an army captain who retired to the Savannah jailorship. Hugh Williamson, *The*
History of North Carolina (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1812), was a clumsy stringing
together of documents which barely reached the Revolution. A better researched
but still poorly written work by a French immigrant to North Carolina who later
became a distinguished jurist in Louisiana was Francois Xavier Martin, *The*
History of North Carolina from the Earliest Period (New Orleans, 1829).

torical analysis of government in Maryland that to this day commands the respect of professional scholars. Maryland got a more conventional history, a fervent and thinly researched narrative, by James McSherry in 1849; and in 1846-48 Robert R. Howison published a solid history of Virginia extending into the nineteenth century.³⁶

By all odds the most distinguished state history written before the Civil War was the history of Georgia published in 1847-59 by Dr. William Bacon Stevens. This versatile New Englander practiced medicine in Savannah after completing his studies at Dartmouth in 1837; entered the Episcopal priesthood and taught for a time at the University of Georgia; moved to a large church in Philadelphia in 1848; and later became Bishop of Pennsylvania and a principal founder of Lehigh University. Dr. Stevens was the major force behind the organization of the Georgia Historical Society at Savannah in 1839 and edited the first two volumes of its *Collections*. It was in response to his notable address on Georgia's role in the Revolution that the society in 1841 requested him to write a history of the state. Dr. Stevens sought to write "not by the secondary helps of former histories, but by the careful study of original, contemporary, and official documents." The result was two detailed, dispassionate volumes, published in 1847 and 1859, which stood until the mid-twentieth century as the most authoritative account of Georgia's history to 1798.³⁷

The genre of state history, following the direction set by Dr. Stevens, reached its ultimate development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a series of enormously detailed, reliable, and usually unimaginative narratives. These works represented a merging of non-professional into professional scholarship. Four of them were written by Confederate veterans: Maryland's J. Thomas Scharf, sometime lawyer, newspaperman, and public official; Georgia's Charles C. Jones, Jr.,

36 McMahon, *An Historical View of the Government of Maryland from Its Colonization to the Present Day* (Baltimore, 1831); McSherry, *A History of Maryland from Its First Settlement in 1634 to the Year 1848* (Baltimore, 1849); Howison, *A History of Virginia . . . to the Present Time* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1846, and Richmond, 1848).

37 Stevens, *A History of Georgia*, I, x. By the 1840's a popular market for state histories was developing, especially for use in the schools. William Gilmore Simms, *The History of South Carolina . . .* (Charleston, 1840), was a well written summary, based on the best secondary authorities. The versatile literary hack, Timothy Shay Arthur, best known for his temperance tract *Ten Nights in a Barroom and What I Saw There*, collaborated with W. H. Carpenter on a series of state histories including *The History of Virginia from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (Philadelphia, 1852) and *The History of Georgia from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (Philadelphia, 1852).

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Maryland that to this day commands the attention of the people. Maryland got a more conventional rich narrative, by James McSherry. Howison published a solid history of the nineteenth century.³⁰

He had state history written before the Georgia published in 1847-59 by Dr. Stevens. The versatile New Englander practiced law, teaching his studies at Dartmouth in New Hampshire and taught for a time at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1848; he was a principal founder of the American Historical Society at Savannah in 1839 and edited the *Annals of the American Revolution*. It was in response to his notable work on the Revolution that the society in 1841 elected him to the state. Dr. Stevens sought to write a series of state histories, but by the careful study of original documents." The result was two volumes published in 1847 and 1859, which are today as the most authoritative account

of the Revolution. Following the direction set by Dr. Stevens, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more detailed, reliable, and usually more works represented a merging of nonpartisanship. Four of them were written by J. Thomas Scharf, sometime lawyer, and in Georgia's Charles C. Jones, Jr.,

Government of Maryland from Its Colonial Period to the Year 1831 (1831); McSherry, *A History of Maryland from the Year 1848* (Baltimore, 1849); Howison, *The American Revolution* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1846, and

By the 1840's a popular market for state histories in the schools. William Gilmore Simms, a Charlestonian (1840), was a well written summary. The versatile literary hack, Timothy S. Arthur, wrote *Ten Nights in a Barroom* and W. H. Carpenter on a series of state histories from *Its Earliest Settlement to the Present* (1852). *History of Georgia from Its Earliest Settlement* (1852).

lawyer and one-time mayor of Savannah; South Carolina's Edward McCrady, lawyer-legislator from Charleston and nephew of Justice William Johnson; and North Carolina's Samuel A. Ashe, lawyer, editor and politician. The transition toward academic historians is exemplified by North Carolina's Robert D. W. Connor, school teacher and administrator who had a year of graduate study at Columbia long after he had embarked on historical scholarship and who eventually became a university professor and the first Archivist of the United States. The last and best of the lengthy narrative state histories was written by South Carolina's David D. Wallace, who earned a Ph.D. degree at Vanderbilt in 1899 and taught at Wofford College. Whatever the shortcomings of the earlier of these works, they brought the coverage of the Revolutionary South by nonprofessional historians to a high point of comprehensiveness and authority; and Connor's and Wallace's volumes remain today the fullest and best accounts of the Revolution in the Carolinas. In addition, Wallace attained a degree of critical objectivity about his state that had not been reached since David Ramsay's history of South Carolina more than a century earlier.³⁸

A final category of nineteenth-century writings about the Revolutionary South consisted of a variety of works dealing with particular areas or episodes and usually resting heavily upon oral tradition. Justice William Johnson's brother Joseph, a physician, wrote one of the most valuable and interesting books of this type, emphasizing upcountry South Carolina during the Revolution. A similar useful contribution was made by a Virginia Presbyterian minister, William H. Foote, who published several volumes relating to the Presbyterian settlements in Virginia and North Carolina, with emphasis on the Revolutionary

38 Scharf, *History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day*; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The History of Georgia* (2 vols.; Boston, 1883); Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719* (New York, 1897), *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719-1776* (New York, 1899), *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1783* (2 vols.; New York, 1901-02); Samuel A. Ashe, *History of North Carolina* (2 vols.; Greensboro, 1908, Raleigh, 1925); Connor, *The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods, 1584-1783*, Volume I of Connor et al., *History of North Carolina* . . . (6 vols.; Chicago and New York, 1919), *North Carolina: Rebuilding an Ancient Commonwealth, 1584-1925* (4 vols.; Chicago and New York, 1929); Wallace, *The History of South Carolina* (4 vols.; New York, 1934). The works by Connor and Wallace included, in addition to the historical narrative, volumes of biographical sketches for which the principal authors were not responsible. Besides the state histories, Connor published a biography of the Revolutionary leader *Cornelius Harnett* . . . (Raleigh, 1909), and Wallace made a major contribution to Revolutionary historiography in *The Life of Henry Laurens* . . . (New York, 1915).

period. A prominent North Carolina politician, John H. Wheeler, published a brief history of the state, to which he attached a lengthy series of county sketches containing much local history and biography. The Virginia historian Hugh Blair Grigsby published an able discourse on the Virginia convention of 1776; and the pioneer collector of frontier Americana, Lyman Draper, finally published in 1881 an account of the battle of Kings Mountain, based on manuscripts and recollections he had been gathering for half a century. After the Civil War, county histories began to appear, some of them like A. S. Salley, Jr.'s history of Orangeburg County, South Carolina, making a substantial contribution to Revolutionary historiography. The works mentioned here had many less distinguished imitators which, in spite of their patent biases and credulity, preserved useful information about local events and personages.³⁹

The local pride that was so evident in all nineteenth-century historiography was at its most blatant in some of these local historians. One writer took up his pen because "my heart burned with indignation at the many misrepresentations, of the people of North Carolina, which had so long gone unchallenged." Therefore as "a dutiful son of North Carolina," he "determined to write this book in defence of his native state, and in vindication of the honor and patriotism of her people." Yet the pride and touchiness of the South's Revolutionary historians about their states had in it nothing that was sectionally divisive. On the contrary, southern writers sought to claim for their respective states a larger share in the glorious Revolutionary tradition of liberal nationalism.

39 Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South* . . . (Charleston, 1851); Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina* . . . (New York, 1846) and *Sketches of Virginia* . . . (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1850-55); Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* . . . (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1851); Grigsby, *The Virginia Convention of 1776* . . . (Richmond, 1855); Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes* . . . (Cincinnati, 1881); and A. S. Salley, Jr., *The History of Orangeburg County, South Carolina* (Orangeburg, 1898). Other works of varying usefulness and reliability are, in chronological order: John Drayton, *Memoirs of the American Revolution . . . As Relating to the State of South Carolina* . . . (2 vols.; Charleston, 1821); Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the American Revolutionary War* . . . (2 vols.; Charleston, 1822-28; reprinted, 3 vols.; Brooklyn, 1865); Joseph Seawell Jones, *A Defense of the Revolutionary History of the State of North Carolina from the Aspersions of Mr. Jefferson* (Boston, 1834); George White, *Statistics of the State of Georgia* . . . (Savannah, 1849) and *Historical Collections of Georgia* . . . (New York, 1854); Eli W. Caruthers, *Revolutionary Incidents . . . in the "Old North State"* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1854-56); Cyrus L. Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina* . . . (Raleigh, 1877); David Schenck, *North Carolina, 1780-'81* . . . (Raleigh, 1889); and Major William A. Graham, *General Joseph Graham and His Papers on North Carolina Revolutionary History* . . . (Raleigh, 1904).

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sonalities in all nineteenth-century historiography. One of these local historians. One whose heart burned with indignation at the people of North Carolina, which had been treated as "a dutiful son of North Carolina" in his book in defence of his native state and patriotism of her people." Yet the Revolutionary historians about the Revolution were sectionally divisive. On the one hand, for their respective states a larger tradition of liberal nationalism.

Sketches Chiefly of the American Revolution. Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina* . . . 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1850-55); *North Carolina* . . . (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1851); . . . (Richmond, 1855); Draper, *King's* (1881); and A. S. Salley, Jr., *The History of North Carolina* (Orangeburg, 1898). Other works of local history in chronological order: John Drayton, *Sketches Relating to the State of South Carolina*; Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the American Revolution*, 1822-28; reprinted, 3 vols.; *Defense of the Revolutionary History of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1834); *Georgia* . . . (Savannah, 1849) and *History of Georgia* (New York, 1854); Eli W. Caruthers, *Revolutionary Georgia* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1854-56); *North Carolina* . . . (Raleigh, 1877); David L. Russell, *North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1889); and Major William A. Rouse, *Papers on North Carolina Revolutionary*

David Ramsay had made the developing tradition of liberty central to his interpretation of South Carolina history. "The love of liberty had taken deep root in the minds of Carolinians long before the revolution," he wrote; the "similarity of state and condition" produced by the early settlers' struggle to subdue the wilderness had "inculcated the equality of rights" and "taught them the rights of man." Ramsay's successors simply echoed this theme with greater competitive stridency on behalf of their respective states. "There is no state in our Union whose early history is marked by purer patriotism, more unsullied devotion to liberty, or more indomitable opposition to every form of tyranny than North Carolina," wrote John H. Wheeler in 1851. Indeed William Gilmore Simms had gone so far in his younger days as to admit that "The Yankee is the man, who first hung out the banner of liberty . . . and determined to be free."⁴⁰

As a matter of fact, a modern reader could almost go through the whole corpus of southern writings about the Revolution without finding any evidence that a southern sectional consciousness ever existed or that a sectional war ever took place. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalization. As early as 1835 the *Southern Literary Messenger* attacked Bancroft's first volume on the ground that it was "intended to dispose us to acquiesce in the new notion 'that the people of the colonies, all together, formed one body politic before the Revolution.'"⁴¹ Richard Hildreth also drew attacks from southern reviewers;⁴² but over against these sectional reactions to national histories written by sometimes unsympathetic Northerners must be set the fact that a southern historian could dedicate his work to Bancroft as "the only historian who has done justice to North Carolina"; while another Southerner could himself write an impressive national history showing little sectional consciousness and acknowledging special indebtedness to Bancroft.⁴³

⁴⁰ Schenck, *North Carolina, 1780-81*, 12, 471; Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, II, 384; Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina*, xvii; Simms, quoted in John Higham, "The Changing Loyalties of William Gilmore Simms," *Journal of Southern History*, IX (May, 1943), 211.

⁴¹ Quoted in Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 117. For another southern attack on Bancroft, see James P. Holcombe, *Sketches of the Political Issues and Controversies of the Revolution* (Richmond, 1856).

⁴² For a condescending reference to the South, see Richard Hildreth, *The History of the United States of America* (Rev. ed.; New York, 1856), III, 97. DeBow's *Review* commented of Hildreth that "Never before was history so prostituted to gratify personal or party malevolence." Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 140n.

⁴³ Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina*, v; George Tucker, *The History of the United States . . . to . . . 1841* (4 vols.; Philadelphia, 1856-57).

Only once did the debate over the Revolutionary contributions of the respective states degenerate into a rancorous squabble over the relative merits of North and South. In 1853 William Gilmore Simms published a 177-page reply to certain animadversions on South Carolina's Revolutionary record by Lorenzo Sabine, and the quarrel reverberated through the rest of the decade. This was the same Simms who in a series of lectures to the Georgia Historical Society in 1841 had asked, "where in *our* history, are the epochs, and what the materials, which, in the hands of the future poet and romancer, shall become the monuments of our nation—shall prove the virtues of our people,—declare and assert, to the unborn ages, the fame of our achievements?" Simm's novels, as well as his biographies of Greene and Marion and his history of South Carolina, were part of his effort to create through poetry and romance a historical tradition more national than sectional. Only under the extreme pressure of sectional crisis, and then only in polemical settings, could southern writers escape the powerful influence of the tradition of liberal nationalism in dealing with the Revolution. In their historical writings they continued to assume, with Dr. William B. Stevens, that the Revolutionary age was "The heroic age of American history," and that "To trace the progress of free principles in America would be to epitomize her whole history," including the history of the southern states.⁴⁴

At least three antebellum southern historians, Eli Caruthers, Robert R. Howison, and George Tucker, followed out the logic of the Revolutionary tradition by publicly denouncing slavery. Of those who lived through the Civil War, all whose positions have been discovered opposed secession, except Charles C. Jones, Jr., and Edward McCrady. After the Civil War, the Revolution lost its place as the primary object of historical interest. But in the writing about the Revolution that did appear, the note of sectional bitterness was sounded only through General Fitzhugh Lee's preface to Kate M. Rowland's biography of George Mason. "The withdrawal of some of the States from the Union in 1861 was in accordance with the theories of the Fathers of the Government, endorsed in the earlier history of the republic by the great masses of the people . . .," wrote this unreconstructed Confederate. "We have before us the life of a patriot who labored by tongue and pen to erect a

44 A Southron [W. G. Simms], *South-Carolina in the Revolutionary War* . . . (Charleston, 1853); quotations from W. G. Simms, *Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction, First Series*, ed. C. Hugh Holman (Cambridge, 1962), 47; and W. B. Stevens, "Discourse before the Georgia Historical Society," 1-2.

Revolutionary contributions of the ncorous squabble over the relative William Gilmore Simms published a sions on South Carolina's Revolu- d the quarrel reverberated through : same Simms who in a series of ociety in 1841 had asked, "where what the materials, which, in the r, shall become the monuments of f our people,—declare and assert, achievements?" Simm's novels, as Marion and his history of South eate through poetry and romance an sectional. Only under the ex- d then only in polemical settings, verful influence of the tradition of e Revolution. In their historical ith Dr. William B. Stevens, that ic age of American history," and rinciples in America would be to ling the history of the southern

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bulwark between Federal power and State rights, so strong, that the hand of an oppressor could never take away the liberties of the people."⁴⁵

Lee's comment with regard to one of the great codifiers of Revolution- ary liberalism reminds us that the South's Revolutionary experience was always susceptible to a particularistic, sectionally chauvinistic interpreta- tion. The failure of the general's sentiment to find an echo anywhere in the vast body of southern Revolutionary historiography is conclusive evidence of the pervasiveness and power of the Revolutionary tradition of liberal nationalism for Southerners as for other Americans.

By the time General Lee composed his anachronistic preface in 1892, there was even less room for a southern historiography of the Revolution than before. The writing of southern history was being taken over by men who had gone north to seminars at Columbia and Johns Hopkins to receive Ph.D.'s before returning to teach in southern colleges and universities. These professional scholars and their multiplying successors belonged emphatically to a national community of inquiry; and what they wrote about the Revolutionary South was guided by the seminal ideas current among all American historians.

At Johns Hopkins by the end of the century the seminal idea was Professor Herbert Baxter Adams' preoccupation with the evolution of political institutions. Adams was not particularly concerned with the Revolution or the South, but his colleague Professor J. C. Ballagh en- couraged investigations into southern history. These twin influences stimulated a series of monographs that constituted the earliest substantial body of professional scholarship on the Revolutionary South. John A. Silver led the way in 1895 with a study tracing the evolution of Mary- land's Revolutionary government "from its germ in the non-importation agreements of 1773 and 1774 through its gradual exercise and assertion of sovereign authority until it found itself the only power in the Colony." Over the next several decades, other Hopkins-trained scholars extended Silver's study of Maryland's Revolutionary government; made similar studies for other southern states; explored church-state relations, an aspect of institutional history that especially interested Adams, in Revo- lutionary Virginia; and wrote broader accounts (one of them in the form of a biography of a royal governor) of the Revolution in several southern areas.⁴⁶ Several similar institutional studies of government in

⁴⁵ Rowland, *The Life of George Mason*, I, x-xi.

⁴⁶ Most of these studies were published in the "Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science" (Baltimore), as follows: Silver, *The Provisional Government of Maryland (1774-1777)*, XIII, No. 10 (1895), quotation from p. 60; Bernard C. Steiner, *Life and Administration of Sir Robert Eden*, XVI, Nos.

the pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary South came from the seminars at Columbia.⁴⁷

By the end of the First World War the burst of scholarly energy in the area of institutional history had about run its course, and other approaches were competing for the attention of historians. Frederick Jackson Turner was emphasizing the frontier experience and the development in colonial times of a democratic "Old West" whose conflicts with the more conservative coastal settlements had had an important bearing on the course of Revolutionary events. A new emphasis on economic causation reached Revolutionary historiography with the publication of Arthur M. Schlesinger's *Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* in 1918. Schlesinger pictured the Revolutionary ferment as arising from the economic objections of colonial businessmen to British policies, reinforced by agitation from democratic-minded lower orders in the colonial towns. And a 1924 book by Allan Nevins, *The American States during and after the Revolution*, explored internal conflicts and political and social changes of the period.

Southern historians were surprisingly slow to utilize any of these approaches, and in fact the 1920's and 1930's were lean years for publications about the Revolutionary South. Schlesinger's economic emphasis found an echo in 1926, when Isaac S. Harrell published a doctoral dissertation on Virginia Loyalism, urging the importance of planter debts as a cause for Revolution. Schlesinger's theme was even more directly explored by two studies of the mid-thirties on commerce in North Carolina and in Charleston. Southern students of the Revolution did not do

7-9 (1898); Enoch W. Sikes, *The Transition of North Carolina from Colony to Commonwealth*, XVI, Nos. 10-11 (1898); William Taylor Thom, *The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Virginia: The Baptists*, XVIII, Nos. 10-12 (1900); Steiner, *Western Maryland in the Revolution*, XX, No. 1 (1902); Beverly W. Bond, *State Government in Maryland, 1777-1781*, XXIII, Nos. 3-4 (1905); James M. Leake, *The Virginia Committee System and the American Revolution*, XXXV, No. 1 (1917). Published outside the series were: Hamilton J. Eckenrode, *Separation of Church and State in Virginia* (Richmond, 1910), and *The Revolution in Virginia* (Boston, 1916); Percy S. Flippin, "The Royal Government in Georgia, 1752-1776," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, VIII (1924), 1-37, 81-120, 243-91; IX (1925), 187-245; X (1926), 1-25, 251-76; XII (1928), 326-52; XIII (1929), 128-53. Steiner's *Sir Robert Eden* and Eckenrode's *Revolution in Virginia* were particularly comprehensive accounts for Maryland and Virginia respectively. Beverly W. Bond, in addition to his monograph on Maryland, wrote a careful study of *The Quit-Rent System in the American Colonies* (New Haven, 1919), which included much material on the colonial and Revolutionary South.

47 W. Roy Smith, *South Carolina As a Royal Province, 1719-1776* (New York, 1903); Charles R. Lingley, *The Transition in Virginia from Colony to Commonwealth* (Columbia University, "Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law," XXXVI, No. 2 [New York, 1910]).

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much with Turner's interest in the West until Turner's disciple Charles H. Ambler issued a study of Washington and the West in 1936. This was followed in the next year by Thomas P. Abernethy's exhaustive (and exhausting) study of land speculation in relation to the Revolution, which seriously qualified some of Turner's assumptions. Meanwhile, Nevins' pioneering work on internal political developments during the Revolutionary era had been followed by Fletcher M. Green's study of constitutional development in the southern states.⁴⁸

The golden age of scholarly writing about the Revolutionary South dates from 1940. Since then almost every year has seen the publication of several good books. Some of this outpouring has been devoted to the themes of economic causation and sectional and class conflict introduced to Revolutionary historiography by Turner, Schlesinger, and Nevins. Following Merrill Jensen's overenthusiastic statement of the internal-conflict thesis in 1948, Elisha P. Douglass impressively documented, with heavy emphasis on the southern states, the vigorous contest over the degree of democracy in the new state governments created during the Revolution. Carl Bridenbaugh briefly adduced new evidence of a split between conservative and liberal wings of the Virginia gentry, and Robert D. Meade pushed this view even further in his biography of Patrick Henry. The question of Virginia planter debts has been further debated, the latest conclusion being that Virginians did not rebel for the purpose of fleecing their creditors. Finally Richard Walsh's study of the Charleston artisans reinforced Schlesinger's claims about radical pressure from the lower echelons of colonial society, though Walsh did not seem to credit fully these implications of his data.⁴⁹

48 Harrell, *Loyalism in Virginia: Chapters in the Economic History of the Revolution* (Durham, 1926); Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1934); C. C. Crittenden, *The Commerce of North Carolina, 1763-1789* (New Haven, 1936); Ambler, *George Washington and the West* (Chapel Hill, 1936); Abernethy, *Western Lands and the American Revolution* (New York, 1937); Green, *Constitutional Development in the South Atlantic States, 1776-1860* (Chapel Hill, 1930).

49 Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation: An Interpretation of the Social-Constitutional History of the American Revolution* (Madison, 1948); Douglass, *Rebels and Democrats: The Struggle for Equal Political Rights and Majority Rule during the Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1955); Bridenbaugh, *Seat of Empire: The Political Role of Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, 1950); Meade, *Patrick Henry: Patriot in the Making* (Philadelphia, 1957); Lawrence H. Gipson, "Virginia Planter Debts before the American Revolution," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXIX (1961), 259-77; Emory G. Evans, "Planter Indebtedness and the Coming of the Revolution in Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XIX (Oct., 1962), 511-33; Walsh, *Charleston's Sons of Liberty: A Study of the Artisans, 1763-1789* (Columbia, 1959).

Yet the bulk of recent scholarship about the Revolutionary South has been little concerned with any particular thesis. Through a variety of specialized approaches to the Revolutionary era, scholars have delineated a pattern of such diversity and complexity that overarching generalizations seem, by implication at least, to be ruled out.

One group of modern historians has carried forward the work of the older state historians by analyzing with greater detail and sophistication the varying patterns of Revolutionary events in the individual states.⁵⁰ Another group of historians has illuminated Revolutionary events through the highly perfected modern form of historical biography. The distinguished biographical works by Brant, Malone, Freeman, and Mays have been followed in many less ambitious but scholarly and revealing studies of secondary Revolutionary figures.⁵¹ Still other his-

50 For Maryland: Charles A. Barker, *The Background of the Revolution in Maryland* (New Haven, 1940); Philip A. Crowl, *Maryland during and after the Revolution* (Baltimore, 1943). For Georgia: Albert B. Saye, *New Viewpoints in Georgia History* (Athens, 1943), and *A Constitutional History of Georgia, 1732-1945* (Athens, 1958); W. W. Abbot, *The Royal Governors of Georgia, 1754-1775* (Chapel Hill, 1959). For North Carolina: Alonzo Thomas Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace* (Chapel Hill, 1955), and the series of more detailed and fully documented articles from which the book is drawn, in the *North Carolina Historical Review*, XIX-XXIII (Apr., 1942; Oct., 1943; Jan. 1945-Oct., 1946); Charles G. Sellers, Jr., "Making a Revolution: The North Carolina Whigs, 1765-1775," in J. Carlisle Sitterson (ed.), *Studies in Southern History in Memory of Albert Ray Newsome . . .* (Chapel Hill, 1957), 23-46. For Virginia: Freeman H. Hart, *The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1942); Thad W. Tate, "The Coming of the Revolution in Virginia: Britain's Challenge to Virginia's Ruling Class, 1763-1776," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XIX (July, 1962), 323-43.

51 Irving Brant, *James Madison* (6 vols.; Indianapolis, 1941-61); Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time* (3 vols.; Boston, 1948-); Douglas S. Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography* (6 vols.; New York, 1948-54); David J. Mays, *Edmund Pendleton, 1721-1803: A Biography* (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1952); Richard H. Barry, *Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina* (New York, 1942); Bass, *The Green Dragon: The Lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson*, and *Swamp Fox: The Life and Campaigns of General Francis Marion*; Thomas Boyd, *Light-Horse Harry Lee* (New York, 1931); North Callahan, *Daniel Morgan, Ranger of the Revolution* (New York, 1960); William M. Dabney and Marion Dargan, *William Henry Drayton and the American Revolution* (Albuquerque, 1962); Chalmers Davidson, *Piedmont Partisan: The Life and Times of Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson* (Davidson, N.C., 1951); Hamilton J. Eckenrode, *The Randolphs: The Story of a Virginia Family* (Indianapolis, 1946); Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (Columbia, 1931); Don Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan, Revolutionary Rifleman* (Chapel Hill, 1961); Aubrey C. Land, *The Dulany of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1955); Meade, *Patrick Henry*; Samuel W. Patterson, *Horatio Gates, Defender of American Liberties* (New York, 1941); Blackwell P. Robinson, *William R. Davie* (Chapel Hill, 1957); Theodore Thayer, *Nathanael Greene, Strategist of the American Revolution* (New York, 1960); Alice Noble Waring, *The Fighting Elder: Andrew Pickens (1739-1817)* (Columbia, 1962).

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torians have approached the Revolution through some of the significant social groups involved: the Loyalists, Virginia's officeholding gentry, and North Carolina's Highland Scots.⁵² And one historian has explored Indian policy on the colonial frontier as it related to the coming of the Revolution.⁵³ Finally the military history of the Revolution in the South has been receiving renewed attention from able scholars.⁵⁴

By 1957, when John R. Alden undertook to integrate this wealth of modern scholarship into a single comprehensive volume, the picture he painted was one of baffling diversity and complexity. It was not even clear that an identifiable "South" existed at the time of the Revolution. Alden himself could marshal only scant evidence for his contention that "By the end of the Revolutionary era . . . the South had emerged as a section and the Southerners as a people different from Northerners"; while another able historian asserted flatly that "In 1776 there was no South; there never had been a South," and that the people of the area were "without question the least homogeneous human group in all America."⁵⁵

Whether historians thought of a "South" or of a "South-that-was-to-be," they were equally confused about the nature and meaning of the Revolutionary transformation that had now been so fully delineated for the region. Insofar as a trend in interpretation was observable, they seemed to be following the lead of Edmund and Helen Morgan in viewing the Revolution as a struggle over constitutional principles and home rule. Indeed the most substantial recent contribution to southern Revo-

52 Robert O. DeMond, *The Loyalists of North Carolina during the Revolution* (Durham, 1940); Joseph W. Barnwell, Jr., "Loyalism in South Carolina, 1765-1785" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1941); Charles S. Sydnor, *Gentleman Freeholders: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia* (Chapel Hill, 1952); Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776* (Chapel Hill, 1961). This category also includes two works cited earlier: Harrell, *Loyalism in Virginia*, and Walsh, *Charleston's Sons of Liberty*.

53 John R. Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier . . . 1754-1775* (Ann Arbor, 1944).

54 In addition to the biographies of military figures cited above, see: William B. Willcox, "The British Road to Yorktown: A Study in Divided Command," *American Historical Review*, LII (1946), 1-35; John R. Alden, *General Gage in America* (Baton Rouge, 1948); Alexander A. Lawrence, *Storm over Savannah: The Story of Count d'Estaing and the Siege of the Town in 1777* (Athens, Ga., 1951); Eric Robson, "The Expedition to the Southern Colonies, 1775-1776," *English Historical Review*, LXVI (1951), 535-60.

55 Alden, *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789*, 2; Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (Baton Rouge, 1952), vii. Alden argues for the early emergence of a distinctive South more explicitly if not more convincingly in *The First South* (Baton Rouge, 1961).

lutionary historiography, announced for publication while this essay was being written, is Jack P. Greene's study of the long struggle for autonomy by the southern colonial assemblies.⁵⁶

Thus by the 1960's, the sophisticated professional American historiography of the Revolution seemed to be finding its way back to the interpretation that had been so impressively thought out in a British prison by that southern father of American Revolutionary historiography David Ramsay. Having survived a century of southern sectionalism and three generations of critical professional scholarship, Ramsay's Revolutionary tradition of liberal nationalism may long impart to Americans, from Charleston to Honolulu, a livelier and truer sense of who they are and what they are about.

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1 Alden, *The*
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56 Edmund S. and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1953); Jack P. Greene, *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1689-1776* (Chapel Hill, 1963).