Thus the Cry for Canada

How the Desire for Canada Shaped the Early American Empire, 1774-1815

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ABSTRACT

THUS THE CRY FOR CANADA: HOW THE DESIRE FOR CANADA SHAPED EARLY AMERICAN EMPIRE, 1774-1815

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The desire to add Canada to the American Union has been an underrepresented or outright ignored element of early American imperialism. The period connecting the War of 1812 and the American invasions of Canada in 1775 reveals some of the earliest histories of American expansionism. The first designs of an American empire articulated by the American newspapers and the various writings of Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, and so many other Founders illustrate how the nascent republic envisioned the future of the nation and the American continent. Despite being the first 'failed' or forgotten imperialism, the American desire to permanently occupy and control Canada demonstrates the distinct language and themes of American imperialism, expansion, and the creation of an American empire.

Though often overshadowed by the acquisitions from Louisiana, Mexico, Spain, Russian Alaska, or overseas, Canada is just as crucial to the national picture for its failures as those territories are for their successes. Too often the history of the United States reads backwards, focused only on the successful or recent. A study regarding American expansion into Canada counters many nationalist, exceptionalist, and defensive imperialist narratives permeating American expansionism.

This paper also combines sources from American newspapers, letters, official documents, and congressional meetings with their British and Canadian counterparts to expand upon the strictly national interpretations of Canadian-American relations to delve

into British North American reactions to their place bordering the growing United States. Much like the West, gradual American expansion through population growth had Americans assured of an eventual, even peaceful, merging with Canada. Ultimately, the only real difference between the efforts to add Canada and the remainder of early American expansionism is how this northern thrust remained unfinished.

The American desire to permanently occupy and control Canada, expressed frequently and diversely through the period from 1774-1815, contains all the necessary scholarship regarding American empire, despite its unique role as the 'failed' or forgotten imperialism. The reasons Canada fits, and more importantly doesn't fit, into the national narratives are essential to any understanding of the history of the early republic, of imperialism, expansionism, and the formation of the American empire.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Michael and Susan. Thank you for the constant love and support.

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INTRODUCTION

For the United States, Canada occupies a distinct place in the history of foreign relations. Distinct, but not generally utilized. For if there were "ever a prize for the most apparently futile academic study," says Canadian historian Robert Bothwell, "Canadian-American relations would be an earnest contender."[1] Modern relations North of the "unguarded" border scarcely seem to capture the imagination in a field dominated by histories of the Cold War, the southern border with Mexico, or modern overseas interventions. For scholars of American imperialism, looking beyond 1898 is exceedingly rare, and even then, the focus on Manifest Destiny or the Louisiana Purchase overwhelms any mention of Canada. But for the colonial United States, and the nascent early Republic, Canada was a truly exceptional subject in American minds. Canada was the location of the first American invasion, an incursion articulated months before the shots fired at Lexington and Concord struck the tone of Independence and attacked almost a full year before the ratification of the Declaration of Independence. Canada was also the staging ground for the "little war" of 1812, and though it is an often overlooked conflict, there is a surprising consistent debate over the true cause of the war.[2] Canada represents

[1] Robert Bothwell. *Your Country, My Country: A Unified History of the United States and Canada*. Oxford University Press, 2015. Bothwell also refers to Canada as a "state of vagueness on the other side of a 'frontier,' a place where (bad) weather comes from…"

[2] For a general survey, see Warren Goodman. *"The Origins of the War of 1812: A Survey of Changing Interpretations." Mississippi Valley Historical Review. 28 (2): 171–186.* https://www.jstor.org/stable/3738032. *(Accessed July 10, 2019)*. For an older but still very relevant book see Reginald Horsman. *The Causes of the War of 1812*. NY: Octagon Books, 1972. This is also the subject of a later chapter "The Unfinished Revolution"

the first failed expansion of the United States into a foreign nation; its first, and first failed, war of liberation.[3]

With the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 having only recently come and gone, modern scholars throughout various fields are reasserting a strange fact of American-Canadian relations: it just doesn't quite *fit* with either nation's national narrative. The existing themes and historical narratives always seem to fall just short of satisfying, and as such tend to cycle every generation.[4] I believe this is because far too many American scholars have implicitly rejected the premise of imperialism in the early republic, or that those discussions of American imperialism either outright ignore or do not take British or Canadian scholarship as seriously. Yet another issue emerges from the 'transnational turn' of recent American historiography. Canada's place as a transnational boundary, both as Upper and Lower Canada through to the unified Canada after 1867, could stand bolstering. When Herbert Bolton argued for a "broader treatment of American history, to supplement the purely nationalistic presentation to which we are accustomed," the expansion of the United States, indeed American history writ large, should be studied in the same vein as he desired for Europe, and not simply "confined to

[3] Mark Anderson. *Battle for the Fourteenth Colony.* University Press of New England: 2013

[4] This is true in Canadian historiography as well. In his article "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution: The American Civil War in the Making of Canadian Confederation" Phillip Buckner notes the nationalistic push of the 1950's and 60's historians that were not "satisfied with the somewhat benign interpretation of American–Canadian relations" embodied by older histories and that "a number of more nationalistic Canadian historians began to paint a very different picture of the nature of that relationship. They argued that there was nothing inevitable about the evolution of American-Canadian friendship and stressed that the fear of American aggression was one of the most important factors—indeed, perhaps the most important factor—that led to Confederation in 1867." Phillip Buckner. "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution: The American Civil War in the Making of Canadian Confederation." *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 7, No. 4, Crises of Sovereignty in the 1860s: A Special Issue (December 2017), pp. 512-540. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26381475. 512-513

Brazil, or Chile, or Mexico, or Canada, or the United States."[5] There is also the problem of what Rachael St John called a form of "geographic teleology, projecting modern borders backward so that nation building projects that were eventually incorporated into the United States have taken center stage, while those that did not have been relegated to sidebars, condemned as treason, or simply forgotten."[6] This is one of the larger issues for many studies in Canadian-American relations, but is particularly suited for conversation of early American imperialism in Canada. But the American desire to permanently occupy and control Canada, expressed frequently and diversely through the period from 1774-1815, contains all the pieces for scholarship regarding American empire, despite its unique role as the first 'failed' or forgotten imperialism.

This is not to say the American scholarship is unwilling to connect empire and the Founding period, only that such efforts have been thus far insufficient or miniscule in number. Assessments like those present in William Appleman William's *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* are more often simplified to an appropriate thesis: that the United States is currently, and always has been, an empire.[7] But for a discipline which is

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[5] Patrick J. Kelly. "The North American Crisis of the 1860s." *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (SEPTEMBER 2012), pp. 337-368. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26070248. Citing Herbert Bolton on page 337-38, Kelly calls forth Jack Greene's focus on "the larger patterns and processes within which the several societies around the Atlantic functioned and of which they were integral parts," for a more Atlantic World history, or what Bolton called a "greater America."

[6] Rachel St. John. "The Unpredictable America of William Gwin: Expansion, Secession, and the Unstable Borders of Nineteenth-Century North America." *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (MARCH 2016), pp. 56-84. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26070377. St John continues to assert that a national framework continues to restrict the narrative of U.S. expansion, which she says strips "the history of U.S. expansion of its numerous unrealized ambitions and outright failures." St John, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 58

[7] For some examples, see William Appleman Williams. *Empire as a way of life: an essay on the causes and character of America's present predicament, along with a few thoughts about an alternative.* J.A. Thompson "William Appleman Williams and the 'American Empire.'" *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Apr., 1973), pp. 91-104. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27553037. 04-09-2019 20:14 UTC. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. Niall Ferguson. *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire.* New

preoccupied with the modern, only daring to peak back to the 1890's as the birth of American imperialism, new studies must continually push beyond this boundary. To properly examine and ultimately prove this assertion of early American imperialism, additional scholarship needs to go well beyond 1898, past even Manifest Destiny, and back to the foundations of the empire and the country itself. For this to happen, discussions of imperialism need to add the relatively unfamiliar expansionist efforts to acquire Canada. The language, as well as the changing ideas and perceptions concerning the United States' attempted acquisition of Canada, reveals increased opportunities for multiple fields and disciplines. The intersection of narratives regarding the first failed instance of early American imperialism has yet to be added to the larger expansionist discourse.

The ways in which Canada does not fit into the current historiography of American empire are just as important as they ways in which it should. Canada does not factor into the Western frontier thesis, yet played a crucial role in causing that expansion. The American desire for expansion into Canada is also able to counter the defensive imperialism and exceptionalist narratives which continue to spill into any consideration of American expansionism.[8] The United States failed on numerous military campaigns,

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York: Penguin, 2004. Walter LaFeber. *The American Age.* New York: Norton, 1994. Richard Warner Van Alstyne. *The Rising American Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960. William Earl Weeks. *Building the Continental Empire*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996. AND alternative titles by these authors.

[8] The issue of American exceptionalism is seemingly a hard beast to kill, but historians of empire have come to use an interesting retort, in this case by Niall Ferguson: "To those who would still insist on American exceptionalism, the historian of empires can only retort: as exceptional as all the other sixty-nine empires." Ferguson, *Colossus*, 21. As for defensive imperialism, classical and even British scholars have thoroughly assessed the concept. See Eric Adler. "Post-9/11 Views of Rome and the Nature of 'Defensive Imperialism.'*" International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (December, 2008), pp. 587-610. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25691268. Accessed: 20-09-2016 23:45 UTC. In the United States, this concept often ties to the "Empire in Denial" theory, which is also discussed in *Colossus,* but for another recent example, see Michael Cox "Empire in Denial: The Strange Case of the United States." *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 81, No.1 (Jan., 2005), pp. 15-30.

and at the negotiating table, to acquire the remainder of Britain's North American colonies. American imperialism in the early period, especially relating to Canada, can also help solve the linguistic dispute over *empire* and *imperialism* as terminology. While modern scholars may question precisely what an empire is, the diverse opinions of the various Framers and Founders unites around the shameless promotion of a future American empire. They used the very words without concern for context or comparison, often reveling in the association to classical Rome.[9] The injection of American imperialism, expressed through four decades worth of expansionist desires for Canada, significantly alters the existing dialogues while creating crucial discussions for other fields and foci. The American desire to permanently occupy and control Canada, despite its unique role as the 'failed' or forgotten imperialism, is a necessary addition to scholarship of American empire, imperialism, and early American studies.

Chapter 1 will begin with an assessment of the American empire debate. Discussions of empire and imperialism in the early period of the United States were far more prominent and overt than the modern discourse. When George Washington called the United States a rising empire, or a prominent politician compared the American

https://www.jstor.org/stable/3569186. Accessed: 09-07-2019 19:41 UTC. Sidney Lens is another historian who suggests that "if the lines between self-preservation and aggression were blurred in the early days, it became evident in subsequent decades that the acquisitive instinct rather than national security dominated American policy." On that same page Lens says that though "Acquisitiveness was never unchallenged," it was "never vanquished either, and indeed became more fervid with success." Sidney Lens. *The Forging of the American Empire.* (New York: Crowell Company, 1971), 3

[9] Studies of the American Classical tradition are plentiful, but Carl Richard's *Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Harvard, 1995) and Meyer Reinhold's *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Wayne State University Press, 1984) are two of the more influential works. For more on the perceptions of Rome in American culture, see Paul Burton. "Pax Romana/Pax Americana: Perceptions of Rome in American Political Culture, 2000-2010. *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (MARCH 2011), pp. 66-104. Accessed April 4, 2018. www.jstor.org/stable/41474687.

Union to a new Rome, there was little to no critique of terms or definitions. An empire was an empire, and the leading members of the United States seemingly desired to become one, and often spoke of the transformation. Only recently has the label of empire become problematic in the United States. Politicians, citizens, and even historians cringe at the use of the word, but this was not always so.[10] American expansionism has since been described through a myriad of terms; some relate to specific periods while others specific themes such as Manifest Destiny and Picking the Spanish.[11] Both of those, however, came from a post-Canada dialogue, from a United States that had already given up expanding to the North and chose to go West into lands held by Spain and various Amerindian tribes.

How scholars came to reassess empire, and specifically American empire, is the also subject of this chapter. In the early 1900's, the United States had conflicts in Hawaii, Cuba, Guam, and the Philippines and the scholarship reflects those issues. Chapter 1 discusses the transition that reclassified Empire as a negative. As the discourse of an American Empire moved past 1898, analyses adopted a Cold War focus, and covered topics like Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, or Afghanistan. But by the Cold War, or even the Spanish-American War, the American empire already existed; only the context of that word 'empire' changed. As scholars look to earlier conflicts, towards the Mexican-

[10] Ferguson, *Colossus*, vii-xxix (Preface to the paperback edition). Ferguson points out in page viii that this his views of American empire were received negatively by both conservative and liberal Americans; the former repudiated that "the United States is, and indeed, always has been an empire" while the latter was dismayed that an American empire could have positive and negative attributes.

[11] "Picking the Spanish Bone" is a phrase used by James Lewis to describe the way in which the United States expanded through the former territory of the Spanish Empire in the Americas. Lewis, James Lewis. *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829.* Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998. It is also a chapter title in Lens' *The Forging of the American Empire*.

American War, to the genocide of the Amerindians during the Manifest Destiny, to Louisiana and even earlier, the discussion of empire is alarmingly different.[12] In this new context I present Canada, the first target of American imperialism.

Chapter 2 focuses on the period of the American Revolution, especially as viewed around the 1775 Quebec campaign: the first truly 'American' invasion of Canada. This chapter begins with an analysis of the Quebec Act and the causes of the Revolutionary War. The first real action for the forces of the United Colonies came from assaults into Canada which culminated in the siege of Quebec. Much of this chapter details the language expressed by newspaper articles, political speeches, and letters between the relevant politicians and generals on the absolute necessity of conquering Canada. Even after the failures in Quebec cost the Americans General Montgomery, the consistent desire to possess Canada is plainly visible at all levels of discourse, and remained so through the Treaty of Paris and beyond.

Chapter 3 attends to the intermediate period between the wars with Great Britain. As the peace with the British Empire brought recognition of American independence, the leaders of the United States crafted a new nation. The dominant theme of this chapter is Canada's role as a crucial fixture in the rising American empire. Working chronologically from then-President Washington to the end of Thomas Jefferson's second term, this chapter looks at how Canada remained an object of expansionist desire throughout the first three Presidents of the United States. How the various Founders and Framers each discussed and crafted their unique vision of the American empire is a

[12] Reginald Horsman. *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812.* University of Oklahoma Press, 1992; Peter Kastor. *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America.* Yale University Press, 2004.

second theme for this chapter. The chapter concludes with the effects of the Louisiana Purchase, and how American imperialism shifted back to British North America shortly after that acquisition.

Chapter 4 covers the period leading from Thomas Jefferson's presidency to the causes of the War of 1812. As the Napoleonic war consumed Europe, the United States became entangled in the conflict, and eventually engaged the British Empire in war once more. This chapter contends with the most divisive of topics: what actually caused the War of 1812. Why the United States did not declare war in 1807, or 1811, or against France, are each analyzed to some degree. But as each generation of historian seems to add in a new cause for the war, rebuffed by the next generation, this leaves a confusing patchwork of ideas leftover. The narratives of the War of 1812 as caused by the War Hawks, as a result of only maritime concerns, or as 'Mr. Madison's War' are all found wanting, and in this void, I reinsert and redefine one of the original and most frequently debated causes: American expansionism or imperialism. Through British, Canadian, and Spanish scholarship, the initial and unmistakable imperialist desires of an expansionist United States is experienced. Those sources intertwine with the continued proclamations from contemporary Americans that Canada retained the utmost importance towards the formation an American Empire and most certainly influenced the war.

Chapter 5 investigates the War of 1812 itself, from the outbreak of war to the immediate aftermath of the conflict. This chapter reads like an extension of Chapter 2, and that is by design. There are numerous parallels to the way in which the Americans sought Canada, as the United States fought the war under many of the same assumptions as the first invasion in 1775. The second invasion of Canada met with many of the same

issues for both the Americans and the British, but from this war came a few crucial developments for the Canadian people. Even after the failures in Canada, the American desire to add British North America to the Union did not begin to dissipate until well after the Treaty of Ghent, and this chapter concludes with various diplomatic efforts to acquire Canada through treaty rather than force.

Chapter 6 will conclude with two subjects. The first is the immediate period after the Treaty of Ghent. During this time, both the British and the Americans are devising plans, upgrading fortifications and bases, and assembling border troops to prepare for the third iteration of the conflict. It is clear from this period that the desire to possess Canada remained. Though many assumed that conflict would continue to dominate foreign relations, the tensions begin to gradually diminish, but not disappear, after this second war. As Americans realized Canada had one again rejected their Revolution, the depleted Amerindian forces empowered arguments for the thrust West instead. The failed expansions into Canada are precisely *why* the United States now pushed West, and the second section of this chapter will revisit Canada as a case-study for American imperialism. Though animosity would continue well into the Civil War period, when fears of a reunified and potentially reinvigorated expansionist United States emerged once more in Canada, the conflict had changed considerably since the treaties of the late 1810's, and the paper will conclude with some distinctions as to why.

I will often use American as an interchangeable description to describe people of the United Colonies, the first United States under the Congress of the Confederation, and the current United States created by the Constitution. The purpose here is threefold. While simplicity is obvious, this paper uses "Americans" to contrast both the distinct

British/Canadian colonists and citizens just as the term Loyalist is separate from Patriot or Rebel. More importantly, however, using a uniform description for the people of these three governments of the United States, both the politicians and the general populace, helps to create a sense of the unbroken nature of sentiment displayed. It wasn't just the Generals or the political gentry; the *Americans* desired Canada. While there were some Americans that were anti-imperialist or anti-Canada, likely part of the faction which connected the expansion of a republic as the most certain path to disunion or demise, those voices were drowned out by the thoughts and actions of the expansionists in Congress, the early Presidents, and leading citizens of the era.[13]

The injection of early American imperialism, expressed through four decades worth of expansionist desires to permanently occupy and control Canada, expands the existing dialogues while opening various fields to new interpretations. Scholarship in the early and more modern periods, studies of empire and imperialism in the United States, and even American foreign relations stand to benefit from an increased attention to early American imperialism and expansionism. Through this study, the role of Canada is vital to that expanded understanding. As the first target of American expansionism, the first-

[13] For more on the conflict between the expansionist and anti-expansionist factions in the early United States, see: Marc Egnal. *A Mighty Empire*. Cornell University Press, 2010. In Sidney Lens' *Forging of the American Empire,* Lens believes that while there is an anti-expansionist strain, one some say is "so deeply implanted that many have considered it the predominant one," he believes that "the overwhelmingly stronger strain has been expansionist and martial." Americans, Lens says, "have justified intervention and expansion on the grounds that it made their nation "great." Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 12. While there is certainly pushback against the acquisition of Canada in this period, as Lens, Egnal, and the coming chapters will show, the expansionist push was more frequently voiced and acted upon. The American desire to permanently occupy and control Canada was expressed frequently and diversely in this period, be it through war or treaty or osmosis, and with such volume that it completely overshadowed anti-expansionist voices.

and first failed- imperialism, the efforts of to add Canada to the American Union, however articulated, warrants increased academic attention.

CHAPTER ONE

CANADA AND THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

Americans in the early republic had no qualms calling the United States, or even the United Colonies, an empire. Newspapers and Presidents regularly conjured images and descriptions of an American empire. For George Washington, the empire was in the near future, and he often spoke to a *rising* empire. In a 1783 circular to the Governors, Washington insisted that though he was disbanding the Continental Army, "[I]t is only in our united character, as an empire, that our independence is acknowledged."[1] Thomas Jefferson's *Empire of Liberty* is a famous and frequently investigated phrasing, one that pairs well with rival Alexander Hamilton's *Republican Empire*.[2] As historian Marc Egnal put it, expansionism, or the "desire to promote the growth of America," seemed to be the one thing that could unify even the most divisive of rivals.[3]

Somewhere along the way, *empire* became politically charged; it became muddied and confusing when for the Revolutionary generation of Americans, it seemed so simple. The word now conjures notions of unilateral displays of power, of extensive territorial control over once independent nations, and negative callbacks to the British or

[1] George Washington. CIRCULAR LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE GOVERNORS OF ALL THE STATES ON DISBANDING THE ARMY. HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURG, 8 June, 1783

[2] These phrases are so common, they are often titles for studies on Jefferson and Hamilton, resp. See Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson. *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson.* New York: Oxford, 1990; Gordon Wood. *Empire of Liberty.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010; Karl-Frederick Walling. *Republican Empire: Alexander Hamilton on War and Free Government.* University of Kansas, 1999.

[3] Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 332

Roman Empire.[4] As historian Robert Zevin says "the word conveys a strong connotation of ethically undesirable behavior to almost all users and readers" and as such many readers consider it self-evident to them "that the phenomenon to be interpreted does not exist at all or does not exist" except for a few that acknowledge the Mexican-American and Spanish-American Wars and their consequences.[5] Zevin describes the "righteous or offended indignation" of some Americans upon hearing the term American empire.[6]

According to William Appleman Williams, "one of the central themes in American historiography is that there is no American Empire," though he says that if

[4] In his article titled "An Interpretation of American Imperialism," Robert Zevin delves into some of the "moral" issues regarding empire. After noting how there are few words whose mere employment are "capable of throwing American listeners into such paroxysms of righteous or offended indignation" as the words American imperialism, Zevin notes that this reaction is largely "a reflection of the fact that 'imperialism' is one of those words whose implicit domain of meaning is very large and even encompasses mutually contradictory elements." Robert Zevin. "An Interpretation of American Imperialism." *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 32, No. 1, The Tasks of Economic History (Mar., 1972), pp. 316. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2117191. Accessed: 08-03-2020 18:06 UTC.

In his article "The New American Empire?" David Lake suggests like Zevin that empire is all too often seen as "a particular authority relationship in which the rule of the dominant state over both economic and security policy is accepted as more or less legitimate by the members of the subordinate polity." Lake says this definition harkens "back to Rome, which ruled most of its known world for centuries, and the British empire, which ruled the Indian subcontinent for hundreds of years." David Lake. "The New American Empire?" *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (August 2008), pp. 284 https://www.jstor.org/stable/44218551. Accessed: 04-04-2019 19:56 UTC

[5] Zevin, "Interpretation of American Imperialism," 316. Zevin notes that to these potential readers 'imperialism' means the "building and maintaining of territorial empires in the British or Roman sense."

[6] Zevin, "Interpretation of American Imperialism," 316. Zevin also notes how other potential readers will be deterred because of their conception of the word 'imperialism' as "the engine that pulls behind it a whole train of inseparable Marxist indictments and prescriptions," that for those "lost readers, the mere use of the word is objectionable and indicates the user to be naively ignorant, cunningly subversive or some combination of the two." And yet he also notes how "another large class of readers who are the mirror image of those just discussed, the word 'imperialism' is an engine that pulls behind it an inseparable train of theoretical propositions about capitalism and history." Zevin, "Interpretation of American Imperialism," 317

pressed, most historians will admit "that the United States once had an empire."[7] When was this empire founded then? How was it shaped? Where did it go? As historians like Williams consistently show, despite "whatever language is used to describe the situation, the record of American diplomacy is clear in one point. The United States has been a consciously and steadily expanding nation since 1890."[8] Why then is it often suggested that the United States simply doesn't do empire? As former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said, "We don't seek empires. We're not imperialistic. We never have been. I can't imagine why you'd even ask the question."[9] Founded in the shadow of the last great empire, the narrative goes, the United States was anti-imperialist by design. But what if this distinction only meant *foreign* empires? As British historian Niall Ferguson observed, the "great thing about the American empire is that so many Americans disbelieve in its existence," he believes Americans "think they're so different that when they have bases in foreign territories, it's not an empire. When they invade sovereign territory, it's not an empire."[10] But as it happens, the United States was only against anti-European expansion in the Americas, what William Appleman Williams has called imperial anti-colonialism.[11] Of all the misconceptions that need to be dispelled, this is

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[7] William Appleman Williams. "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy." *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Nov., 1955), pp. 379. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3635322. Accessed: 18-02-2020 19:54 UTC

[8] Williams, "Frontier thesis", 379. The focus on 1890 as a chronological boundary for American empire is one that will be consistently explored in later pages.

[9] As quoted by Lake, "New American Empire," 281

[10] Lake, "New American Empire," 281

[11] William Appleman Williams. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. W. W. Norton & Company (50th Anniversary edition), 2009

perhaps the most obvious: that simply because some Americans now say they do not do empire, there cannot be such a thing as American imperialism.

Though it is still unclear as to why, eventually the people of the United States dropped the moniker of "empire" as the Civil War approached.[12] Until then, many Americans professed views akin to Manifest Destiny, the United States created hegemonic policies such as the Monroe Doctrine, and the new nation conquered portions of North America all the way to California and beyond; the Americans achieved the very thing they had desired since the colonial era.[13] But as the Union expanded, the unresolved question of slavery gradually consumed all discussion.[14] Historian Walter LaFeber characterizes this shift as two "explosive forces," the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions, colliding and creating a great debate "over the direction of American

[12] There is a small set of historians who have seen this change and attempted to offer a solution. In *America's Half Century,* Thomas McCormick suggests that the shift in economic systems created a shift in ideology. He says that "Coupled with American economic superiority was a change in its dominant ideology. By 1900, American leaders were moving away from the nationalistic ideology of tariff protectionism and overseas imperialism," towards tariff reciprocity and open-door policy. Thomas McCormick, *America's Half Century:* United States Policy in the Cold War and After. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 19. In this narrative, the Gulf War exists as the "last hurrah" of hegemony at the end of the Cold War, which McCormick sees as the end of one stage of American imperialism (McCormick, 246). In American Age, Walter LaFeber posits the Civil War as the logical climax of post-1815 expansionism- and the resulting fragmentation of the United States. LaFeber, *American Age*, 130

[13] LaFeber suggests that adding California, thus upending the balance of slave and free states, "directly shaped U.S. foreign policy: southern believed that the survival of their society relied on acquiring new land…. Only expansion could give the South new soil to replace worn-out land in the older states. Only expansion could give southerners hope to balance once again the North's power in Congress." LaFeber, *American Age*, 131

[14] I am not alone in this explanation. Historians like Walter LaFeber cites a few reasons for this in *American Age*. The first is an expansionist response, suggesting that American expansion both accelerated after 1815, and seemed out of control by 1850 (LaFeber, *American Age*, 130). He also says that the Civil War factions, pro- and anti-slavery, emerged to control the foreign policies and benefit from the expansion. He cites that "the balance" of states began to crumble with the addition of California, and by 1850 had crumbled (LaFeber, *American Age*, 131)

expansion."[15] In the years leading up to the Civil War, LaFeber suggests that Americans could no longer "conquer new lands and assume that the question of who was to control the area could be worked out peacefully and democratically," without threating war at home in the form of a Bleeding Kansas.[16] To quote noted expansionist William Seward, there were warnings that an "irrepressible conflict" would continue until freedom or slavery triumphed.[17] Slavery threatened to tear the American empire in half, and created generations of discourse more concerned with labels of Free and Slave than Empire or Republic. For William Earl Weeks, the expansion deemed necessary for survival instead proved, ironically, "fatal to the republican experiment," that by the Civil War the "exuberant rhetoric of Manifest Destiny unfolded in parallel to an increasingly bitter debate over the future of the republican revolution."[18]

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[15] LaFeber, *American Age,* 132

[16] LaFeber, *American Age,* 135. Though LaFeber also suggests that something like that would not actually be enough to stop them, and the United States "continued to try to carry out a vigorous expansionist foreign policy." The Gadsden Purchase, he posits, may have been the first time "the Senate refused to accept land offered to it," and may also mark "the end of the conquest of an ocean-to-ocean empire," but could have actually been but "one more step Southward, with many more to follow." LaFeber, *American Age,* 141

[17] LaFeber, *American Age,* 139. Seward is an interesting figure in American expansionism. LaFeber says that Seward "coveted Cuba, Central America, Mexico, and Canada" but switched to Pacific trade and commerce due to the "political price of such expansion in the 1850's." In *The Forging of the American Empire,* Sidney Lens suggest that if Seward had his way, "the United States not only would have established naval bases in the Caribbean and the Pacific but would have added Canada, much of Latin America, and even part of the Artic region to the empire." Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 157. Seward himself once said in 1846 that the American population is "destined to roll its resistless waves to the icy barriers of the north, and to encounter oriental civilizations on the shores of the Pacific." Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 157

[18] William Earl Weeks. "American Nationalism, American Imperialism: An Interpretation of United States Political Economy, 1789-1861." *Journal of the Early Republic,* Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter, 1994), pp. 492. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3124471. Accessed: 12-03-2018 16:21 UTC. Weeks says that the "ongoing differences regarding the direction, pace, and nature of expansionism foreshadowed the collapse of the consensus on which union was founded," and that this was because "there was not one Manifest Destiny but rather several manifest destinies, and by the 1850s the political system could no longer contain the divisiveness of these alternatives."

Expansionism became linked to the slavery question instead of empire; a divisive force instead of a unifying one. Within this period of uncertainty, the once commonplace assertions of an American Empire became secondary, to tertiary, to relatively unused. When previous leaders argued that the "preservation and prosperity of the American system depended on continued land expansion," LaFeber calls forth Abraham Lincoln's suggestion that "no expansion was preferable to expansion that enriched slavery and discriminated against freeholding whites."[19] Only when the United States became engaged in a war with Spain, ultimately resulting in the creation of American colonies and overseas possessions in the style of the former British Empire, did empire return. But by this period, empire had attained its status as a negative. Groups such as the Anti-Imperialist League illustrate how far the United States had changed from Franklin and the Founder's era to the early 1900's.[20] By the time of the Vietnam war, critics of United States foreign policy used the phrase as a weapon, and during the 1980's 'empire' was often used to refer negatively to the Soviet Union.[21]

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[19] LaFeber, *American Age,* 148

[20] LaFeber offers one more look into the post-slavery discussions of imperialism. With regards to the Civil War, 90 years after an independent United States "had set out to settle a continental empire, the territory had been obtained" and with the "issue of slavery decided, a new era opened." LaFeber says the United States would be a "different nation with a different foreign policy." LaFeber, *American Age*, 153

[21] Lake 281. Lake says that by the Iraq War, American empire had once again emerged as a negative descriptor for the United States. But this connection with the Soviet Union is an interesting one, further explored by authors like Richard Saull. Saull says it is only very recently, November 2000 that "the analytical use of 'empire' (and its accompanying term 'imperialism') had been, in the main, effectively marginalized to radical and Marxist accounts of US global power." Saull notes an "apparent sudden reversal in the intellectual fortunes of empire (though not imperialism) as it has moved from marginalization to mainstream popularity," Richard Saull. "On the 'New' American 'Empire.'" *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (JUNE 2004), pp. 250. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26298603. Accessed: 04-04-2020 19:56 UTC

Sometime between the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, empire became a dirty word in the United States. By the revival in the 1900's, any discussion of empire was thus tainted beyond the ways in which the Founders understood it, and remained this way until modern scholars began to reorient the field to reembrace, begrudgingly or otherwise, the acknowledgement of an American empire.[22] If scholarship of early American imperialism is to survive within these fluctuations, we must understand how far empire travelled from the times of Washington and Monroe to the modern. How the definition of empire and imperialism fluctuated in this era makes scholars such as Norman Etherington call it a "very shifty word,"[23] compounded by what he deems the enormous amount of confusion "generated by using empire, colonialism, and imperialism as synonyms" despite a general consensus that almost every historian on the subject "has acknowledged a mixture of casual agencies at work."[24] Weeks calls both American imperialism and American nationalism "conceptional minefields," and follows J.A. Hobson's claim that imperialism is a debasement of nationalism while himself suggesting the two may be "understandable as self-justifying and mutually reinforcing aspects of what is sometimes termed 'Americanism.'"[25]

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[22] From William Appleman Williams *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* in 1959 to more modern accounts from scholars such as William Weeks, assessments of American Studies or Foreign Relations reveals that empire and imperialism are dominating the discourse. See also: Susan Gilman. "The New, Newest Thing: Have American Studies Gone Imperial?" *American Literary History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring, 2005), pp. 196-214. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3568002. (Accessed: 04-09-2019 21:18 UTC)

[23] Etherington, *Theories of Empire.* (NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984), 2

[24] Etherington, *Theories of Empire*, 267. Despite this assertion, Etherington still insists that "Notwithstanding all the problems and confusion, imperialism is worth the attention of historians (4)."

[25] Weeks, Am Nationalism, 485 and 486. Weeks goes on to say that "Imperialism is perhaps even more resistant to precise definition than is nationalism," and that the very use of the term in regards to United States history long has been controversial…. While no one ever has denied the existence of an

Now, empire plays what historians like Paul Kramer call an "indispensable role in bounding the American republic by serving as its outer moral limit," even if using the word now "signals a condition of exception and emergency."[26] According to Kramer, this is "a very strange thing for a historical category to do," and has "something to do with the particular way that 'empire' crosses between the domains of scholarship and public-political expression."[27] But it is Kramer's suggestion that some scholars have "dismissed the utility of the imperial by challenging its 'appropriateness' to the academic setting," suggesting that "it is 'political' in a way that their preferred analytic categories are not," that should garner increased attention.[28]

> This crossing reveals a larger reality, for some an uncomfortable one: that the terms historians think with are informed, both productively and unproductively, by the discursive worlds that surround them. Another explanation for this periodicity points, once again, to republicanism. Within republican thought, empire is a warning, a lexical alarm bell signaling that a moral-political boundary is about to be crossed. Because of this, the cry of empire is most commonly heard in American political discourse in secular jeremiads against overconcentrated, overextended, or corrupting power. From the outset, it is meant to be self-liquidating: if its invocation succeeds, it prevents the (always looming, never quite arriving) collapse of republic into empire, then quietly retires.[29]

American nationalism, until quite recently there was widespread reluctance even to acknowledge the existence of an American imperialism or an American empire." Weeks, Am nationalism 485-86

[26] Paul Kramer. "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Mar., 2002), pp. 1391. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2700600. Accessed: 12-03-2018 16:57 UTC. Kramer also calls empire a "glassed-in fire extinguisher of concepts" that is often "sharpened for occasion use as a weapon against egregious violence and tyranny," in his efforts to advocate for a "sustained U.S. imperial historiography" to shed "necessary, critical light where American power seeks exception." Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons," 1391

[27] Kramer, "Empire, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons," 1390. Kramer says that this crossing has long been, and continues to be, uneasy; "often antagonistic and mutually suspicious" settings (1391).

[28] Kramer, "Empire, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons," 1390.

[29] Ibid

While Kramer's explanation cannot satisfy the question of when, it does help understand just how different the modern and the early-republican understandings of empire can be. Kramer's other work, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," suggests using *imperialism* rather than *empire* to "help avoid connotations of unity and coherence" usually attached to the latter, which also moves "to the side the mostly unproductive question of whether the United States is or has "an empire"—and if so, what type it is, and whether or not it measures up to the rubrics built to account for other empires."[30] This second claim is the more important. What Kramer suggests is that *empire* and even *imperialism* now exist as such loaded terms that historians often get bogged down in the wrong questions, those of semantics, rather than the "particular set of questions—about power, connection, and comparison—that makes imperial history an indispensable tool in the kit of any historian of the United States."[31] But Kramer's theory works well when presented as the first of two vital questions regarding empire.

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[30] Paul Kramer. "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World." The American Historical Review, Vol. 116, No. 5 (DECEMBER 2011), 1349-50. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23309640. (Accessed: 12-03-2018 16:58 UTC). The idea of a rubric of empire has particular weight in the United States, which has continually suffered comparisons—promoted from within and without—to the Roman Empire. In advancing such comparisons, however, Kramer says that "historians need to beware the forceful undertow of prior comparisons, especially those generated by historical actors." See also: Cullen Murphey. *Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. AND Adler, Eric. "Post-9/11 Views of Rome and the Nature of "Defensive Imperialism." International Journal of the Classical Tradition, Vol. 15, No. 4 (December, 2008), 587-610. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25691268.

[31] Kramer, "Empire, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons," 1349-50. "The study of U.S. imperial histories is relevant to those who focus their attention on the United States and those who do not, for both historiographic reasons—that studying U.S. imperial history raises methodological questions that may spark fresh inquiries in other settings—and historical ones— namely the long shadow cast by U.S. power in the past and present (Kramer, 1391).

The first question asks what an empire "is," or what does imperialism actually look like? William Earl Weeks suggested finding "a specific, rather than a general definition for the term," and proposed juxtaposing "the idea and reality of American nationalism with that of American imperialism" to yield new perspectives on the history of the early republic."[32] J. A. Hobson claimed that imperialism is a 'debasement' of nationalism, but there is something resembling a common definition if pieced together gradually.[33] Edmund Burke called empire "the aggregate of many states under one common head, whether this head be a monarch or a presiding republic."[34] For Stephen Howe, "an empire is a large political body which rules over territories outside its original political borders," it has a "central power or core territory-whose inhabitants usually continue to form the dominant ethnic or national group in the entire system- and extensive periphery of dominated areas."[35] According to comparative historian Julian Go, an empire is a socio-political formation, not simply an economic one, "wherein a central political authority exercises unequal influence and power over the political processes of a subordinate society, people, or space."[36] Go's definition does not require a nation to be a

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[32] William Earl Weeks. "American Nationalism, American Imperialism: An Interpretation of United States Political Economy, 1789-1861." Journal of the Early Republic, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter, 1994), 485-87. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3124471. (Accessed: 12-03-2018 16:21 UTC). 485-86

[33] Cited in Weeks, "American Nationalism," 485-86. Richard Van Alstyne also a connection between empire and nationalism, suggesting that the "entire course of American history coincides with the rise of modern nationalism; and, set in the frame of reference, the American Empire, as its founders so conceived it, provides an excellent introduction to the study of international history." Van Alstyne, *Rising*, vii

[34] Walter LaFeber. *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), 1.

[35] Julian Go. *Patterns of Empire: the British and American empires, 1688 to the present*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7

[36] Go, *Patterns of Empire*, 7

so-called “Great Power,” it is only an empire if it exerts its influence to incorporate others as dependents.[37] Historian Dominic Lieve disagrees, stating that “An empire is by definition… not a polity ruled with the explicit consent of its peoples… [But] by a process of assimilation of peoples and democratization of institutions empires can transform themselves into multinational federations or even nation states.”[38] If these definitions are combined into something resembling synthesis, it suggests: An empire can exist as a republic and as a large aggregate of many states, which rules over territories from a central core territory that often retains the original ethnic/national group, and was gained through a process of assimilation of peoples and democratization of institutions in the newly acquired areas. A definition such as this very much resembles the path taken by the United States through Manifest Destiny, the wars with Mexico and Spain, overseas acquisitions like Puerto Rico or Hawaii, and even Cold War imperialisms.

The debate over empire in the United States has two key questions. While the first question, what imperialism is, can be a descriptive minefield, the previous scholars show that a unifying definition is possible. But as previously discussed, it is how imperialism forces discussions of power, connection, and comparison that make empire and/or imperialism the “indispensable tool” Kramer described. What empire does is thus the far more important question. This is best summarized by historian Norman Etherington, who says that empires, “reluctant or not” expand.[39] Michael Doyle's *Empires* took the right

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[37] Go, *Patterns of* Empire, 7-8. This version of empire is very much in tune with the classical *imperium*.

[38] Dominic Lieve as cited in Niall Ferguson. “Unconscious Colossus,” 18

[39] Etherington, *Theories of Empire, 271*

approach when he chose to examine imperialism via "the actual process by which empires are formed and maintained."[40] As such, this paper will not debate the styles of imperialism or the definition of *empire* beyond what has already been presented.[41] After over a century of ambiguity, modern scholarship is warming to the idea that the United States constitutes an empire, and the stigma surrounding that word is slowly fading.[42] In

[40] Cited in Weeks, "American Nationalism," 485-86. Weeks says that "Imperialism is perhaps even more resistant to precise definition than is nationalism. The very use of the term in regards to United States history long has been controversial. While no one ever has denied the existence of an American nationalism, until quite recently there was widespread reluctance even to acknowledge the existence of an American imperialism or an American empire."

[41] Such studies are extensive enough to require singular works of history. For the older definitions, see Etherington's *Theories of Empire*. In 1950, Julius Pratt published *America's Colonial Experiment,* a study of the "rise and decline of imperialist sentiment in the United States, of the acquisition of America's overseas possessions, their governance/government, their economic development and problems, and their political aspirations." Julius Pratt. *America's Colonial Experiment*. (NY: Prentice-Hall, 1950), V. In this text, Pratt marks two types of American expansion during the first century of independence, the step-by-step acquisition of contiguous territory and the belief that the targets of American expansionism were destined to be "admitted to the union of states with all the rights and privileges of the original members." (Pratt, *America's Colonial Experiment,* 1) But like many historians, Pratt was still bound to 1898 as the original of American imperialism, ignoring the Amerindians and all the pre-1898 expansionism. His justification was that after 1898, the differences in race, government, language, etc. created a near impossibility of assimilation. Without the possibility of assimilation as predicted by the Manifest Destiny style expansion, he says this new expansionism was imperialist. This is part of the periphery/metropolis type of argument common to discussions of imperialism, though the distinction between an empire and a "multi-cultural" empire is not. For more on the post-1998 scholarship, see Susan Gilman's article "The New, Newest Thing: Have American Studies Gone Imperial?" In this article, Gilman says the post-1998 "disciplinary call to arms" occurred with the centennial of the Spanish-American War American Studies has sought to "rectify the absence of empire in the study of US culture" (Gillman, "The New, Newest Thing," 198). Gillman also cites Amy Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Harvard 2005), Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (Harvard, 2000), and Walter LaFeber's *The New Empire* (Cornell, 1998) which she says "remains one of the most influential, revisionist studies of the Spanish-American War and the history of US imperialism." (Gilman, "The New, Newest Thing," 198)

[42] Dane Kennedy. "Essay and Reflection: On the American Empire from a British Imperial Perspective." The International History Review, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Mar., 2007), pp. 83-108. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40109892. (Accessed: July 9, 2019 19:43 UTC). Kennedy says that "Commentaries that speak of the United States as an empire have until recently been noteworthy for their rarity in the national discourse. For decades, only a handful of historians and leftist critics of US foreign policy dared to make such a claim. Now pundits of all political stripes are openly talking about an American empire, periodicals are devoting special issues to the subject, professional societies are organizing conferences on it, and publishers are issuing a flood of books that details its workings." Kennedy, "Essay and Reflection," 83. He cites the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as the cause for an increased attention, and brings attention to many of the question for a modern American Empire, such as: "Is an American empire the inevitable out- come of the United States' unrivalled global presence and power, or is it the opportunistic consequence of decisions taken by particular groups pursuing particular ends? Is it the necessary guardian of international order and prosperity or is it the inexorable engine of

the modern reacquisition of *imperialism* in America, the more interesting assertion is not *if* the United States is an empire now, but that it has been so since well before the Spanish American War. Expansionism is a core theme in the history of the United States, especially when discussing the early republic.

The historical narrative of an American Empire thus far was too focused on the modern, on recent imperialisms of the United States. In the traditional nationalist framework, the discourse of empire usually begins with the Spanish American War, conquests in the Pacific, and the presidency of Teddy Roosevelt.[43] This is an America where empire is articulated through the Platt Amendment in Cuba, by the acquisition of colonies like Guam and the Philippines, and by the distinction of Hawaii from Puerto Rico in terms of statehood and development. But by this point the United States had already achieved an empire, it was simply no longer hiding the expansions, merely "speaking softly" in relation to the size of the stick. By the time of the Spanish American War, the United States had already gained its current continental holdings, including Alaska. This narrative of 1898 as the start of an American empire ignores the hard truth that the United States has been walking the path of empire since its Revolution against the British Empire.[44]

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global inequality and conflict? Is it *sui generis* or does it resemble previous empires? Does its imperial reign represent the end of history or does it portend the United States' own end?" Kennedy, "Essay and Reflection," 83

[43] This is a great example of what Rachel St John called a type of "geographic teleology" the "projecting of modern borders backward so that nation building projects that were eventually incorporated into the United States have taken center stage, while those that did not have been relegated to sidebars, condemned as treason, or simply forgotten." St John, "The Unpredictable America of William Gwin," 58.

[44] This is a rough restatement of the William's thesis. Though Williams can speak for himself, the summary by J.A. Thompson seems most simplified: "Baldly stated, the Williams thesis is that the United States has always been an expansionist, imperialist power." Thompson's article assessing William's many works suggests that "until the Civil War this expansion was primarily territorial in form -- the seizure from

Alexander Motyl references the assertions of many modernists by asking "[c]an a full-blown American empire really have emerged in such a short time? Was there really no American empire worth its salt before President Bush's inauguration, or before America's response to September 11 and subsequent invasion of Iraq?"[45] Imperialism, expansion, and empire building have been part and parcel of American discourse and behavior since the country's founding, says Motyl, and as such, this is likely to have continued into the modern era.[46] "Empire is US history," says historian Mathew Jacobson, that it was "the course of empire that turned North America into the global crossroads that it has been over the last five hundred years, imprinting expansionism deeply into US political culture."[47] While some scholars will continue to debate 1898, the Vietnam era, or even the Post-9/11 United States as imperialist, more and more frequently the assertion that the United States has been working at empire since at least

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European powers, Mexico and the Indians of land in North America. Thereafter, and particularly after the apparent ' end of the frontier ' in the 1890s, the mode of expansion was economic - the acquisition of overseas markets for America's ' surplus ' industrial and agricultural production." Since 1898, the United States has generally "preferred the technique of ' informal empire ' - the exercise of control over the economic and political life of other countries without the assumption of direct administrative responsibilities," and the key to this strategy is to be found in the Open-Door Notes. Thompson, "Williams and the American Empire," 92

[45] Alexander Motyl, "Is Everything Empire? Is Empire Everything?" *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Jan., 2006), pp. 229-249. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20433991. (Accessed: 03-05-2015 20:10 UTC), 230

[46] Motyl, "Is Everything Empire," 231. Motyl points out that in the book *Colossus*, Niall Ferguson does a fine job demonstrating this point. Another historian, Sidney Lens, suggests that "the desire for Spanish territory in Latin America underlay the naval war with France in the 1790's, and the desire for Canada and Florida, the War of 1812," and that the war against Mexico in 1846-48 was "a brazen expression of territorial lust, for by now it was obvious that no European power threatened U.S. 'self-preservation.'" Lens, *Forging of the American Empire*, 3

[47] Matthew Frye Jacobson. "Where We Stand: US Empire at Street Level and in the Archive." American Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (June 2013), pp. 265. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43823094. (Accessed: 09-07-2019 19:37 UTC)

1776 has come to the forefront.[48] According to William Earl Weeks, the "transformative aspect of the American Revolution has been rediscovered," and with it comes new interpretations of American imperium as "an international social movement based on an idea about the future, and in that sense the boundaries of the American empire may be said to be anywhere the American idea was (and remains) ascendant."[49]

But this rediscovery goes beyond the Revolution, and it has continued to reinvigorate new interpretations of the early American period. Marc Egnal starts in 1763, when he sees an upper-class faction of expansionists forming in multiple colonies. The colonial and early republican eras are fertile ground for imperialism studies considering almost every so-called Founder or Framer has their own vision of an American Empire akin to Jefferson's famous "Empire of Liberty." Historians such as Niall Ferguson name the Founders as "self -confident imperialists."[50] As Walter LaFeber phrases it, the belief that the United States was a world power at the birth of its independence in 1776, that then, "if not before, the American Age began" is gradually becoming prominent.[51] This is because the United States "already ranked with the great European nations in terms of

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[48] Ferguson, *Colossus*, 22. I would also argue that 1775, not 1776, should be the date given the invasion of Canada. See also: Walter LaFeber. "Foreign Policies of a New Nation: Franklin, Madison, and the 'Dream of a New Land to Fulfill with People in Self-Control,' 1750-1804." LaFeber's *New Empire* (Cornell, 1998) as well; William Appleman Williams. *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*. New York: Wiley, 1972; William Earl Weeks has written on this in at least three texts, *Building the Continental Empire* (Chicago, 1996), *JQA and American Global Empire* (U. Kentucky, 2002), and the *New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, 2013) all reference this. Marc Egnal's *A Mighty Empire* (Cornell, 2010) is also useful in this regard.

[49] Weeks, "American Nationalism," 495. Weeks says that since the "outlines of the fading of United States hegemony are becoming apparent," it may now be possible for "a more candid understanding to emerge both of the nation and the new world order that it wrought."

[50] Ferguson, *Colossus*, 33

[51] LaFeber, *The American Age*, xix

territory, population, economic strength, and natural resources, not to mention ambition."[52] Historians like Peter Onuf claim scholars were held back because of previously narrow "provincial bias" or various ideological approaches which caused them to "neglect problems of imperial organization and international politics."[53] With these scholarly opinions as a base, rather than asking if the United States is an empire, the more pressing question is *when* did it become an empire? What did the pursuit of empire look like in the early period? How was empire articulated? How was it envisioned, how was it attempted, and how was it earned? Such is the focus of the following chapters.

The argument that Americans were born anti-imperialists, and that in the act of revolting from the British Empire they would never desire one themselves, cannot be further from the truth. The statements need not be mutually exclusive, either. There was no discomfort on the part of the Founders in using the term empire, and it was often connected to the imperial tradition through classical antiquity.[54] Even before the creation of the United States, historians like Robert Kagan have identified the sermons of John Winthrop and the "City on a Hill" as imperialistic.[55] Historian Gerald Stourzh calls Benjamin Franklin the first American expansionist, even before the Revolution, and calls

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[52] LaFeber, *The American Age*, xix

[53] Peter Onuf, "A Declaration of Independence for Diplomatic Historians." *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 73. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24913722. Accessed: 04-04-2020 20:01 UTC. Onuf, continues to say that while all of this "might be self-evident to a historian who had not kept up with historiographical trends," the ideological turn in American revolutionary scholarship, the so-called republican synthesis, "led to the general neglect of the political and constitutional issues that most concerned earlier generations of colonial and imperial historians."

[54] Lawrence Hatter. *Citizens of Convenience: The Imperial Origins of American Nationhood on the U.S.-Canadian Border*. (UVA, 2016), 9

[55] Robert Kagan. *Dangerous Nation: America's Foreign Policy from Its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*. (Vintage Publishing, 2007), 7

Franklin's 1751 pamphlet "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind" the "first conscious and comprehensive formulation" of 'Manifest Destiny.'"[56] Samuel Adams believed as early as 1774 that it required "but a small portion of the gift of discernment for anyone to foresee, that providence will erect a mighty empire in America."[57] Contrast these statements from the Founders only one generation further, such as when John Quincy Adams suggested that if the United States sought dominion, "She might become the dictatress of the world."[58]

Contending with the belief that an anti-imperialist animus drove the country, even as it continued to expand across North America, is a distinct challenge for American historians. Sidney Lens devoted an entire book to dispelling this "Myth of Morality" as he calls it, which he said came to be expressed as the belief that the United States avoids war, only engages in defensive conflicts, and that it is anti-imperialist promoter of self-determination for foreign nations.[59] Since the rhetoric surrounding the creation of the United States essentially equated the British Empire with tyranny, it should not come as a surprise that eventually the "imperial dimensions of the nation's history" came to be approached with caution.[60]

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[56] Gerald Stourzh as cited in Weeks, "American Nationalism," 486-87

[57] Bradford Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations.* Volume 1, The Creation of a Republican Empire. (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17

[58] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 150

[59] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 1. Lens says the United States often uses "leadership" to replace control, what he calls the "mask of imperialism," (4) and that one of the biggest boons to the myth has been both the weakness of the enemy and the relatively small military forces used before WWII, which could be demobilized after conflicts (10).

[60] Anderson, *Dominion of War*, xi

Despite the myth of morality, historical consensus is building that at least from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present, "American wars have expressed a certain kind of imperial ambition or have resulted directly from successes in previous imperial conflicts."[61] According to historians like Van Alstyne, the early colonies were no sooner established "than expansionist impulses began to register in each of them."[62] Or put even more simply, as Bradford Perkins did, the "idea of territorial expansion was born when America was born."[63] As John Adams said in 1807, there was nothing "more ancient in my memory" than the observation that the "arts, sciences, and empire had travelled westward" and it had been promoted "since I was a child, that their next leap would be over the Atlantic into America."[64] Edmund Burke once said that the United States possessed the "Policy of Savages," and could feel secure "only by having no other Nation near you."[65] This expansion was not into any empty wilderness or a naked virgin frontier, as promoted in frontier theses.[66] Between 1790 and 1915, the United States fought 52 wars against various Indian tribes, and signed roughly 360 treaties with 200 tribes, often for extirpation of their land claims.[67] According to the compendium of

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[61] Anderson, *Dominion of War*, xiv

[62] Van Alstyne, *Rising*, vii

[63] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 170

[64] John Adams to Benjamin Rush. May 23, 1807

[65] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, 29

[66] See especially: Henry Nash Smith. *Virgin Land: The West as Symbol and Myth.* Harvard University Press, 1970. Frederick Jackson Turner. *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier" and Other Essays.* Edit., John Mack Faragher. Yale University Press, 1999.

[67] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire*, 40-41. One such battle occurring November 4th of 1791 claimed 630 American soldiers and wounded 280 more. Wars against the Seminoles alone, 1835-42, cost the US $20 million and 1500 lives.

Charles C. Royce, the Amerindian lands were roughly equivalent to 720 "small empires."[68] The endless tide of population growth and migration drew such comparisons that the argument essentially became that anything short of the Great Wall of China could not stop American expansion.[69]

In his volume of the *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations,* Bradford Perkins called the central theme of American foreign relations "The Creation of a Republican Empire."[70] Citing William Appleman Williams, Perkins wrote that the United States has always been "expansionist," and that even as British subjects, "they strongly supported imperial expansion." [71] He also compares the Russian expansionism under the Tsars as the nearest parallel, because such "massive expansion into contiguous areas is not common."[72] This core belief in expansionism and empire lasted so long "and became so embedded in the American outlook that they seem unremarkable today,"[73] but as contradictory as it may sound, historians continually remind us that the Founders of this

[68] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire*, 41

[69] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation,* 74. Kagan also states that the core argument for American survival became one of expansion, and Franklin especially saw securing room for the people as priority one (25).

[70] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 1

[71] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 6-8. Americans, "at least many of them," certainly were expansionist, before independence and after, "even before most of them thought of 'America' as more than a geographical term (7)."

[72] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 8

[73] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 10

nation, the "leaders of a new republic fighting an expansive overseas empire," felt they "were destined to establish an empire of their own."[74]

Since at least 1775 and the invasion of Canada, the American Union promoted "a search for security, combined with anti-colonial, revolutionary zeal and the advance of American pioneers across the Alleghenies, [which] had fueled the desires of American expansionists."[75] The historical consensus is building to accept that, like in the work of William Earl Weeks, "empire was, along with enhanced security, the chief motive for the creation of a union of states."[76] But the nature and character of this empire could still be a distinctly American construction, and historians argue this was a necessary outlook for the United States. They would create an empire, but it would be markedly different from that of Great Britain.

Before the eventual outbreak of the Revolution, the Americans made frequent attempts to encourage the British Empire to understand their grievances. In these complaints the Americans were actually arguing for a different conception of empire than the British model, one that "provided for autonomy and equality among the various parts."[77] Put in the words of Thomas Paine, "You have nothing further to fear from them

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[74] Lens, *Dangerous Nation,* 2. "If the lines between self-preservation and aggression were blurred in the early days, it became evident in subsequent decades that the acquisitive instinct rather than national security dominated American policy (3)."

[75] Reginald Horsman. "The Dimensions of an 'Empire for Liberty': Expansion and Republicanism, 1775-1825." *Journal of the Early Republic,* vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1989); 3

[76] Weeks, *Building the Continental Empire*, ix

[77] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation,* 33. Kagan thinks it notable that this "American federative principle was invented not after the Revolution but in the imperial struggle that preceded it." Kagan, 33. See also Carl Richard. *The Founders and the Classics.* Harvard University Press, 1995 AND Meyer Reinhold. *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States.* Wayne State University Press, 1984. Both books offer insights into the models and antimodels, to use Richard's terms, that the Americans utilized in this formative period.

[Britain]. Go, then, and awaken the Congress to a sense of their importance; you have no time to lose…. But I forbear to reason any further with you. The decree is finally gone forth. Britain and America are now distinct empires."[78] The Union of the States, eventually a federation of equal members, would advance the idea of an American continental empire. Some prominent Founders advocated creating a republican empire through a strong federal system which considered the consent of the governed as essential.[79] Disunion became equated to the end of the republican experiment, and expansion as the only method of survival. If Washington's successors "allowed the character of that empire to be defined on the periphery by the disorderly, instinctive expansionists who lived there" the general belief became that "all hopes for America's future would be lost."[80] The drive for territory in the United States is also said to have "derived essential strength from the prism of cultural values," which allowed Americans to see themselves as "bringing progress and improvement" to the targeted areas.[81]

However the early Americans viewed their empire, it was understood that preserving their prosperity and individual freedom "required a new kind of empire," not an "overbearing metropolitan authority" like England.[82] By the conclusion of the Treaty

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[78] Thomas Paine: "A Dialogue, Part XVIII." Cited in Thomas Paine. *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, Collected and Edited by Moncure Daniel Conway (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1894). Vol. 1. 6/7/2019. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/343#Paine_0548-01_438

[79] Peter Onuf and Eliga Gould. *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World.* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 35. Empire and Nation dedicates special attention to this idea, especially in Chapter 2.

[80] Anderson, *Dominion of War*, 204. This belief has also led to a trend in which some historians posit the Civil War as the end, or failure, of the great American Experiment.

[81] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 13

[82] Onuf and Gould, *Empire and Nation*, 5

of Paris, the United States could claim to be the fourth largest country in the world, and remains so today.[83] But the American Empire was not built in a day. Creating a more perfect union takes time, cunning, and luck to accomplish. Explaining why the Myth of Morality persists over that of an American empire, Lens concluded that the United States has always fought against minor powers with inconsequential military might or great powers which were enervated or preoccupied elsewhere.[84] The combination of low casualties compared with other nations, an anti-militarist tradition extending to at least World War II, and vocal antiwar and pacifist minorities keeps the myth maintained.[85]

The focus of early American historiography also contributes to the lack of attention on imperialism. The dominant narratives of the period always yield to the West, to the frontier and the coming of Manifest Destiny. There is not enough attention focused on precisely why the United States began to move westward, but through an investigation into early American imperialism, the answer appears to be that they could no longer go North. The War of 1812 also served to weaken the last powerful confederation of Amerindian tribes, easing the way for western expansion. Canada was more than a means to an end; it was an unfinished link in the chain of American continental hegemony. Efforts to add Canada to the United States came with the same authority, expressed in the

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[83] William Earl Weeks, *New Cambridge History of American foreign relations.* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 40

[84] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 7-8

[85] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 7-8. Statistics show that the casualties in the Civil War, estimated 620k are nearly equally to all other American wars up to Vietnam combined (~644k). In *Dominion of War,* Anderson makes a point to remind which wars have monuments in the National Mall and which do not. We have monuments for Revolution, Civil War, Korean War, Vietnam War, and WWII, but not the War of 1812, Mexican-American War, Spanish American War, WWI, or the various conflicts in the Caribbean or with the Amerindians. Anderson, *Dominion of War*, x

same language, and with similar military force as any of the other American expansions. American newspapers covered Canada with the same fervor as when claiming the Floridas or the regions added in the Louisiana Purchase. Security and foreign policy wonks feared invasions from the North and Great Britain more than from Spanish or even English Florida, though they described each as easy targets. American leaders and citizens even expressed possession of Canada in terms of an "unfinished" revolution with Great Britain until the War of 1812 made that conflict reality. Much like the West, gradual American expansion through simple population growth had Americans assured of an eventual, even peaceful, merging with Canada. Canada is unique in that it was a semi-independent region of the British empire; therefore, it does not fit the narrative of "Picking the Spanish Bone." Canada remained a frequent target of American imperial expansionism, but also as a hiccup in any narrative promoting American exceptionalism considering how many times American efforts failed. Canada operates within the lenses of imperialism, borderlands and frontier studies, or foreign relations. The only tangible difference between the efforts to add Canada and the remainder of early American expansionism is that the Americans failed to finish their northern thrust. I contend that this is one of the dominant reasons the American desire to possess Canada has not garnered the same level of historiographic attention.

Long before the imperialism of the 1890's, Americans had been involved in the affairs of Canada, Spanish Florida, South America, Latin America, and even Hawaii. In his book on the *New Empire,* Walter LaFeber appropriately summarized American imperialism in Canada. In its first moments of independence, the "United States had struck quickly and unsuccessfully in an effort to bring into the new nation the territory

north and east of the Great Lakes," and they failed "no less miserably in their second try during the War of 1812." But LaFeber points out that "two strikes were not out," and time and again in the first half of the nineteenth century Americans "tried more subtle measures for adding Canada to the Union."[86] The mission was always the same, Canada remained a crucial piece to the future American empire, only the tactics changed. As Benjamin Franklin worded in his autobiography, the position of the early United States can be summarized in three words. An American spin on a Roman classic: *Canada delenda est.*[87]

[86] LaFeber, *New Empire*, 3

[87] Benjamin Franklin. "I. SKELETON SKETCH OF THE TOPICS FOR THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY." https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2452#Franklin_1438-01_156. Franklin lists his outline ideas, and one line reads: "Project for paving the City. I am sent to England Negotiation there. *Canada delenda est.* My pamphlet. Its reception and effect."

CHAPTER TWO

CANADA AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

In 1775, the forces which would eventually become the United States of America embarked on a military expedition into Canada. Though still calling themselves the United Colonies, this group of Americans was clearly different than those Englishmen that had invaded Canada in the French and Indian Wars. Only a few short months after Lexington and Concord, the United Colonies moved to acquire Canada even before declaring Independence from Great Britain. In the short time since 1763, there had been a great many changes in the colonies, and the interplay between the Canadian colonies and the thirteen colonies is crucial to understanding the late colonial period and the first decisive year of the American Revolution.

The American desire to possess Canada was not born from the Revolution. Like a great many things, the colonists inherited this concept from the British, and in the years leading up to 1776, many began to craft their own image of American destiny; an image which clearly linked an American empire with the conquest of then-French Canada. While the leaders now called the Founders and Framers of the United States certainly led the charge, they were not alone in professing an expansionist colonial mindset. In the decade or so before the Revolution, the American colonists displayed an increasingly well-defined and determined expansionist desire, and Canada was a centerpiece.

Though 1763 functions as an obvious delineation for the colonists, as it concludes the French and Indian Wars and marks the loss of a major French province in the Americas, there were grumblings of empire, expansionism, and even rebellion years

before. One of the earliest examples came from a young John Adams.[1] Even as a young man, Adams began to express doubts about the necessity of the British ruling an American empire. After first commenting how "Immortal Rome" began as but a village, Adams said of English immigration to America during and after the Reformation, that "perhaps this apparently trivial incident may transfer the great seat of empire into America." Adams then remarks that if the population growth of the colonies continued at current pace, within a century that "with all the naval stores of the nation in our hands, it will be easy to obtain the mastery of the seas; and then the united force of all Europe will not be able to subdue us." Adams believed that the "only way to keep us from setting up for ourselves is to disunite us. *Divide et impera*. Keep us in distinct colonies, and then, some great men in each colony desiring the monarchy of the whole, they will destroy each others' influence and keep the country *in equilibrio*." The process which John Adams described in 1755 would eventually become the standard dialogue for American expansion. The belief that American population growth would quickly allow her to eclipse Britain, that the seat of a great empire would transfer to American in the process, are two key features in the American imperialist attitude. The significance of these attitudes and beliefs cropping up two decades before the invasion of Quebec is decidedly noteworthy.

While the words of a young Johns Adams may be surprising, it should be no surprise that Benjamin Franklin played a key role during the Revolution, and is one of the

[1] John Adams to Nathan Webb. Worcester, 12 October 1755. John Adams and Charles Francis Adams. *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations, by his Grandson Charles Francis Adams*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1856

better-known expansionist minds in American expansionist discourse. But his role in the years before the Revolution, even before Great Britain acquired Canada, is equally interesting. In a 1760 letter to Lord Kames, Franklin suggests more pillars of nascent American imperialism.[2] "I have long been of opinion," Franklin says, "that the foundations of the future grandeur and stability of the British empire lie in America; and though, like other foundations, they are low and little now, they are, nevertheless, broad and strong enough to support the greatest political structure that human wisdom ever yet erected. I am, therefore, by no means for restoring Canada." If kept, Franklin suggested that, "all the country from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi will in another century be filled with British people," but if the French remain in Canada, "they will continually harass our colonies by the Indians, and impede if not prevent their growth; your progress to greatness will at best be slow, and give room for many accidents that may for ever prevent it." While Franklin was still a loyal Briton at this point, he began to map out some exceptionally relevant topics later Americans will project back upon the British as Franklin does here to the French. The strength of American foundations for a great empire, the rapid population growth of the English or "British people," and the boundary line of the Mississippi are each important elements in the expansionist dialogue, but the Indian threat may be more important yet. Franklin suggests that if an *enemy* possesses Canada, in this case France, they would use the Indian peoples as a weapon. The absence of Canada might impede colonial expansion, and "many accidents" might occur as a

[2] Benjamin Franklin to Lord Kames. London, 3 January, 1760. Benjamin Franklin, *The Works of Benjamin Franklin, including the Private as well as the Official and Scientific Correspondence, together with the Unmutilated and Correct Version of the Autobiography, compiled and edited by John Bigelow* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904). The Federal Edition in 12 volumes. 6/7/2019. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2614

result.[3] This is a crucial development for the pre-1763 colonials. Canada is already a looming specter in the American mind, linked to the very same topics that will haunt it from 1775-1815 and beyond.

Adams and Franklin account for extensive additions to the language of an American empire, but some might argue that these men, as Founders and Framers, are exceptional cases. Even as the discourse approaches 1763, the expansionist faction in each of the colonies could be far different than Franklin's Pennsylvania or Adams Massachusetts, but modern scholarship has shown that each colony had a similar faction. Each colony possessed a vocal group dedicated to expanding the greatness of the colonies, and in the years leading to 1775 they were vital for structuring, designing, and advancing the belief in a future American empire.[4] In his 2010 work, Marc Egnal outlines the expansionist mindset present in key states. These Americans, he says, were more than just the elites, as the "common people grew increasingly articulate and self-conscious."[5] While Egnal says that the eventual reality of Independence forced the non-expansionists in America to the periphery, an important realization gained from his text is just how ingrained expansionism became to shaping the new nation, especially in the years leading

[3] Benjamin Franklin to Lord Kames. London, 3 January, 1760

[4] The account of Marc Egnal has been an indispensable reference for this period. Egnal argues that in "each colony the revolutionary movement was led by an upper-class faction whose fervent commitment to fostering America's rise to greatness was evident well before 1763." Egnal, *A Mighty Empire,* 1. Defining expansionism as the "fervent belief in America's potential for greatness," and not simply a desire for territorial growth, but American ascendancy allows for a far more flexible understanding of American motivations. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire,* 6-7

[5] Egnal, *A Mighty Empire,* 8

to revolution.[6] While it should come as no surprise that the "affluent patriots often disagreed bitterly with one another," Egnal points out that "stronger still was their shared desire to promote the growth of America" and this is vital aspect of American expansionism.[7] No matter how bitter the disagreement, and there would be many in the future of the colonies, expansionism was a strong enough unifying cause. Before the language of Unionism, the Constitution, or even the Revolution could unify Americans it was the idea of empire, the goal of expansionism, and the belief in shared destiny to spread across the continent that joined hearts and minds from 1763 to the outbreak of hostilities with Britain.

Just as expansionism generally motivated the common force of the American ideology in the colonial era, so too did Canada represent one of, if not the first, principle target of that expansion. The irony is that in their efforts to secure Canada, the British may have hastened their disconnect with the lower colonies while expediting American

[6] Egnal, *A Mighty Empire,* 15-19. Before 1763, Egnal says that the expansionist views were embedded in the "vigorous concern for the defense of the colonies." Expansionists were focused on a glorious future destiny while the anti-expansionists glimpsed a dark terror of conflict with Britain. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire,* 273-74. In describing each colony, Egnal maps out the following: Franklin often "broadcast the tenets of expansionist thought" through his writings. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire,* 85. The focus on preparedness, and taking Canada when the time was right, was a vocal opinion of expansionists from New York. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 67. By 1770, expansionists in New York are connecting American ascendancy with British decline. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire,* 189-90. In this period Robert Livingston predicted that Britain would overextend her empire, disaffected her colonies, and would likely fall into "decay and finally be ruined by the superior power of her European enemies." Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 189-90. By 1763, Virginia was essentially voicing imperial designs for America in the open, basking in America's glorious future and seemingly endless bounty. These men would become Virginia's major players in the Revolution. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 100-101. In 1770, George Washington is predicting the inevitability of westward expansion despite the 1763 proclamation forbidding it. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 225-226. South Carolina was gradually expanding into Indian territory, caring little for the Creek Indians which inhabited those lands. Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 122. In 1769, Christopher Gadsden is "openly flirting with the idea of securing foreign allies and establishing an independent New World nation." Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 244-46

[7] Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*, 332

expansionism.[8] There are two significant items to this conjecture: The 1763 conquest of Canada by the British and the resulting Quebec Act. Just as the American colonies began to realize their worth to the British Empire, resulting from the wars against France, the British created the terms for the eventual rebellion by attempting to avert it. As the colonies began formulating ideas of their own that did not necessitate the inclusion of said empire, the British continually underestimated American demands for inclusion, representation, and their desire to expand.

THE QUEBEC ACT AND THE REVOLUTION

The Quebec Act is a curious little document with numerous interpretations by American, British, and Canadian scholars. The act itself was meant to provide a more permanent government for the recently conquered areas of North America when Canada changed hands from France to Britain, but in doing so, the Act had to define precisely which areas were to be reorganized. The Quebec Act nullified many of the recent colonial gains in the Ohio River and Mississippi River valleys in addition to causing religious animosity between French Catholics and English Protestants.[9] By contrasting British, Canadian, and American historians, the role of the Quebec Act in fostering the revolutionary spirit remains a heavily debated topic. Canadian historian Gustave Lanctot claims the Act was "conceived and formed" in a "sympathetic spirit," but was still "opposed by the majority of Britishers and was received with suspicion by the rural

[8] Among modern scholars, Alfred L. Burt said it most simply, "The British conquest of Canada precipitated the American Revolution." Alfred Leroy Burt. *The United States, Great Britain, and British North America: From the Revolution to the establishment of peace after the War of 1812*. (NY: Russell and Russell, 1961), 1

[9] Lands in what is now Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota were ceded to the new Canadian provinces. The Act was also largely seen as the project of Guy Carleton, which surely added to the animosity and distrust many Americans harbored for him during the Revolution.

population."[10] Alfred L. Burt, another Canadian historian, rejects both that the Quebec Act begat the Revolution or that the revolutionary spirit necessitated the Act. Burt believes that the Revolution would have "probably" come independently of the Act, and the conditions in Canada had been set before the Act actually passed.[11] In contrast, Victor Coffin called the Quebec Act "one of the most unwise and disastrous measures in English colonial history," a mistake "founded on the misconceptions and false information of the Provincial officials."[12] Coffin believes the Quebec Act was simply "not effectual in keeping the mass of Canadians loyal," and worse yet for Britain, "what effect it did have was in exactly the opposite direction."[13] Even Burt admits that the Quebec Act did "innocently revive the terror of by gone days and thereby caused the American Revolution at the very outset to thrust a fiery arm up into Canada."[14] But when viewed through the lens of American expansionism and imperialism, it becomes clearer why the Quebec Act became listed among the "Intolerable Acts" which caused the Revolution.

Quite simply, the Quebec Act hemmed in the American colonists at a time when they had begun to expand into newly conquered lands. While the Proclamation of 1763 theoretically limited Americans to one side of the Appalachia, they had been gradually

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[10] Gustave Lanctot. *Canada and the American Revolution*, 1774-1783. (Harvard University Press, 1967), 42. Lanctot's account is very Pro-Canadian, he often attempts to refute the blame garnered by the Quebec Act as undeserved.

[11] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America,* 2. Burt was born in Ontario, he taught at the University of Alberta and the University of Minnesota.

[12] Victor Coffin. *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution.* (University of Wisconsin, 1896), v. The Quebec Act is the central piece of Coffin's work.

[13] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 481. See also

[14] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America,* 4

pushing into western lands anyway, especially in Ohio.[15] The first provision of the Quebec Act redefined and mapped the new lands claimed from France, and the inclusion of most of Ohio as part of Canada was a clear message to Americans.[16] To many Americans it appeared as if Britain was attempting to limit their expansion westward, to surround them, and with the other "intolerable" acts of 1774, squeeze them into submission.[17] Though Canada had been an English possession for almost decade, the old fears still existed, and Canada was not permitted to "command the back doors of the thirteen colonies," because it had "long inspired fear in American hearts, and continued to do so."[18] According to historian W.L. Morton, Canada stood for "continental

[15] The Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763. This essentially remaps the "extensive and valuable acquisitions in America" gained from France. Quebec, followed by East and West Florida, are the first territories remapped. *Proclamations of the Governors and Lieutenant Governors of Quebec and Upper Canada, 1760-1840: Fourth Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario*. Edit., Alexander Fraser. Toronto: Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1907.

[16] An Act for making more effectual Provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec in North America. The Quebec Act, 7 October, 1774. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/quebec_act_1774.asp. See also Robert Falconer. *The United States as a Neighbor: from a Canadian Point of View.* (Cambridge University Press, 1925), 103. "When therefore in 1774 the Quebec Act was passed by the British Government, virtually establishing the Roman Catholic Church, the French Civil Law and the French language upon the continent, it became a grievous irritant to the American colonies then in the incipient stage of revolt, and the aggravation was heightened by the extension of the boundaries of the province to the far West, made with the definite purpose of encircling the thirteen colonies by French settlements."

[17] Of course this added to American fears and anger, but many Canadian historians continue to argue, as W.L. Morton did, that as the Quebec Act was coupled with the Intolerable/Coercive Acts, "it was impossible for the colonists to see the Quebec Act for what it was, an attempt to do justice to the Canadians and to provide a further temporary government for the Northwest Indian frontier. To them, the Imperial parliament had revived the French and Indian menace to coerce them, and had disrupted the empire of 1763." W.L. Morton. *The Canadian Identity.* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), 18-19. Also, a quick note on Morton. Morton is considered one of the more "important and influential historians of their generation," by historians like Phillip Buckner, but he should also be noted for becoming "increasingly anti-American" after the 1960's according to Buckner himself. In an oft-quoted remark, Morton lamented "the present condition of Canada, in which the country is so irradiated by the American presence that it sickens and threatens to dissolve in cancerous slime." Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 518

[18] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 1.

encirclement," even as a British colony, and was largely held "in order that it and its wild hinterlands might be suppressed within the Anglo-American empire," as doing so made the British empire safe from "the border warfare and continental encirclement for which Canada had stood."[19] Even to the British, Canada stood for continental encirclement, leaving little wonder why that reputation lingered. As Alfred Burt put it, "Britain seemed to have stepped in the shoes of France," a statement that becomes truer when viewed within early American imperialism.[20]

The truth of that statement becomes even more apparent when added to the justification provided by Canada's Guy Carleton. As both Governor of Quebec and Governor General of British North America from 1768 to 1778, Carleton was a key force in the British defense of Quebec in 1775, but also served as a vocal propogandist for Britain and the Quebec Act. He frames the Act, and the later additions forcing militia service and imposing Martial Law, as being "framed upon the principle of securing the dependence of this province upon Great Britain, of suppressing that spirit of licentiousness and independence that has pervaded all the British colonies upon this continent, and was making, through the endeavours of a turbulent faction here, a most amazing progress in this country."[21] That the Quebec Act helped spark the Revolution, or at the very least spread the revolutionary spirit in Canada, becomes increasingly evident as more and more British officials came to contend with it. In a 1774 letter to Lord

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[19] Morton, *Canadian Identity,* 15

[20] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America, 1*

[21] Guy Carleton as quoted in Falconer, *The United States as a Neighbor,* 104. Falconer also asserts that Carleton knew Americans "would be quick to detect and resent this policy" but carried it out nonetheless. The role of Carleton as propogandist will be covered more in the following section.

Dartmouth, the Quebec Act is directly cited by a local as "fuel for the fire," he reflects the spirit in the colonies "to be a spark which with prudence and wisdom might have been extinguished, is now a flame that threatens to ruin both the parent and child." The spirit of the people, it is said, "gradually rose to when it might have been expected to decline, till the Quebec Act added fuel to the fire... and now the people are generally ripe for the execution of any plan the Congress advises, should it be war itself."[22] Though Carleton would later deny it, reports surfaced that the Quebec Act, and the accompanying martial law, ignited cries of rebellion in Quebec.[23] Historians may debate which provisions of the act riled up the Canadian and American colonists most, but as Canadian historian G.F.G Stanley words it, the Quebec Act and Great Britain were a common enemy, "designed to do injustice to them by preventing the spread of American settlement and American liberties over the whole of the American continent."[24] Stanley says the Quebec Act was viewed through the "dark and distorted lenses of a growing hostility towards Great Britain," but more importantly, the Americans had "already embarked on the road which would lead them to rebellion and complete independence."[25] If this is true, why did the

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[22] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution,* 481. Cites a letter from Joseph Reed to Lord Dartmouth; Philadelphia 9/25/1774.

[23] Mark Anderson. *The Battle for the Fourteenth Colony: America's War of Liberation in Canada, 1774–1776.* (University Press of New England, 2013), 81. Anderson says that the Quebec Act had "become the first object of their discontent and dislike." Anderson, *14th Colony*, 86

[24] George F. G. Stanley. *Canada Invaded, 1775-1776*. (Toronto: Samuel Stevens Hakkert, 1977), 16-17. Stanley posits the "restoration" of New France's boundaries, which stripped Ohio from the Americans, as arousing the greatest resentment. Victor Coffin lists the Act as the "Main cause of the disaffection of those who otherwise would have been at least quiescent." Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 513. W.L. Morton says the American reaction was both "instant and illuminating," calling the invasion of Canada a "prior war" to the Revolution, instead fought "for the unity of the Anglo-American empire." Morton, *Canadian Identity,* 19

[25] Stanley, *Canada Invaded,* 16

colonies invade Canada? Was it to free the Canadians of the Quebec Act? To free all North America from British tyranny and rule? Was it to unbind the path of American expansionism? There are yet more factors at play.

The Quebec Act was not the only factor influencing the Americans against Canada. While it is one of the key legislative stimuli, there are two more crucial incentives. The most commonly referenced factor for claiming Canada, by both contemporary Americans and historians of this period, is natural population growth. Already alluded to in previous sections and quotations, the Americans were exceedingly conscious of their ever-growing population. But one of the important factors in their population growth was also American emigration. As the original colonies filled, the narrative goes, Americans gradually pushed West. But what that narrative omits is that they pushed North as well. The colonists of the coastal states consistently migrated North before, during, and after the Revolution, continuing to push forth in droves right up until the War of 1812 abruptly ends that trend. Canada was filling up with Americans, and doing so faster than any other group.[26] There was widespread assumption in Upper Canada that the "spread of American settlement… would lead naturally and irresistibly to its incorporation into the United States," that it was "virtually an overflow of the

[26] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America,* 5 notes that much of Canada's English-speaking population was from the "old" colonies to the South. Before the War began, Historians like Pierre Berton suggests that 3/5ths of Canada's population was from American immigration. If that influx continued, Berton says that "the province would almost certainly have become American by osmosis." Pierre Berton. *Flames Across the Border: 1813-1814*. (Anchor Canada, 2001), 23. Bradford Perkins has the number at 4 of every 5 Canadians were of American descent, only a small portion of which Loyalist refugees. Perkins, *Prologue to War: England and the United States; 1805-1812*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 196), 286. Allan Taylor says ~30k left to settle in Upper Canada, 1792-1812. Allan Taylor. *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies*. (Reprint. Vintage, 2011), 8.

American frontier, which seemed destined to absorb it."[27] According to the *City Gazette,* the Upper Province of Canada was "settled for the most part by emigrants from the Eastern states," and through that population the province was "almost already ours—we shall soon possess both that and the lower Province…. Instead of receiving the enemy on our own shores we will march to Canada: the way is open."[28] One historian, J.M.S. Careless, suggests that Western Quebec attracted so many immigrants that by 1787 it was "impossible to tell who was a genuine loyalist and who was just a land-hungry immigrant."[29] Even after the Revolution, Anglophone immigration to Quebec rose 10% in the first six years.[30] Careless also shows that this trend was not only noticed by the British government, but occasionally encouraged, as he says Chief Justice William Smith promoted Loyalist immigration as a way to keep Quebec populated enough to actually defend itself.[31] Another historian, Pierre Berton, puts Canada's population before the War of 1812 as 3/5ths American immigrants, concluding that "if that influx had continued, the

[27] Morris Zaslow. *The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812*. (Toronto: McMillan of Canada, 1964), 3. Such sentiments were occasionally advocated as the "peaceful" invasion of Canada through gradual osmosis rather than military invasion, until the 1812 invasion united the Canadians through common defense. One American newspaper summed up the feeling that, "as clear as demonstration can make it, that our *population and empire is travelling to the westward…*. Moving from one part of our empire to another," and that once Canada is added to American numbers, one should consider that China feeds a population of 333 million with only half the land. *Weekly Aurora*. August 24, 1813

[28] *City Gazette*. June 10, 1812

[29] J.M.S. Careless. *Colonists and Canadiens, 1760-1867*. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1971), 51

[30] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 51

[31] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 54

province would almost certainly have become American by osmosis."[32] American migration had become irreversibly coupled with population growth, and Canada was the first assumed target of assimilation. Canada is thus the first true tangible case study in a phenomenon traditionally tied to the gradual westward expansion, to Manifest Destiny and continental hegemony. Even after the Revolutionary invasion of Canada fails, the Americans-- and indeed many Canadians-- simply assumed the natural osmosis Berton references.

This is the second factor that pushed American colonists into Canada. The assumption of an eventually integrated Canada fit squarely within the notion of early American imperialism. Consider this segment from Alexander Hamilton's "A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress."

> The Farmer, I am inclined to hope, builds too much upon the present disunion of Canada, Georgia, the Floridas, the Mississippi, and Nova Scotia from other colonies. A little time, I trust, will awaken them from their slumbers, and bring them to a proper sense of their indiscretion. I please myself with the flattering prospect, that they will, erelong, unite in one indissoluble chain with the rest of the colonies. I cannot believe they will persist in such a conduct as must exclude them from the secure enjoyment of those heaven-descended immunities we are contending for.[33]

This response to A.W. Farmer, a penname for Bishop Samuel Seabury, contains the full spectrum of claims for an early American empire. Written in 1774, it maps out the future territorial desires of the United States, starting in the North with Canada and Nova Scotia and ending with Georgia and Florida to the South. The American assumption of Canadian

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[32] Berton, *Flames Across the Border*, 23. This has become a relatively common assertion, with far too many historians of the period concluding that unlike the 1775 invasion, the War of 1812 actually ended the last chance for peaceful integration of Canada.

[33] Alexander Hamilton. "A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress." December 15th, 1774.

acquiescence was part of the larger desire to add Canada to the United Colonies, to the Union, to the rising American empire. Such sentiments utilize both nuanced and aggressive language. Americans such as Charles Lee represent the subtle branch, simply stating his desire to add Canada to the patriot cause in 1774.[34]

But often times the American desire was less than subtle, such as when John Adams wrote that the "unanimous voice of the Continent is Canada must be ours; Quebec must be taken."[35] Even before the siege of Quebec, Adams was already divining the important question of Canadian government. In his October letters to James Warren, Adams notes that the Americans cannot govern as Carleton did, by martial law, but posits a House of Representatives, Council, and Governor well before the Americans had even adopted the Articles of Confederation.[36] Without actually sending representatives to the Canadians, and having yet to receive them in Congress, Adams illustrates that the Americans assumed the Canadians must be motivated by the same forces. The Congress assumed the rights they enumerated would be desirous to all, that British tyranny would incite rebellion everywhere, and the revolutionary spirit was obviously necessary to counter Britain's rejection of colonial representation or any real effort at reform. In

[34] The letter itself has apparently never been found, but is referenced in other letters. Anderson, *14th Colony*, 13

[35] John Adams to James Warren. February 18, 1776. See also *The Letters of the Delegates to Congress*, Volume 3, 275-76

[36] John Adams to James Warren, October 8th, 1775. "If We should be successful in that Province, a momentous, political Question arises—What is to be done with it? A Government, will be as necessary for the Inhabitants of Canada, as for those of the Massachusetts Bay? And what Form of Government, shall it be? Shall the Canadians, choose an [sic] House of Representatives, a Council and a Governor? It will not do to govern them by Martial Law, and make our General Governor. This will be disrelished by them as much as their new Parliamentary Constitution [Quebec Act] or their old French Government. Is there Knowledge and Understanding enough among them, to elect an Assembly, which will be capable of ruling them and then to be governed by it—Who shall constitute their Judges and civil Officers?"

Washington's letter "to the Inhabitants of Canada," he tells the Canadian people that the "cause of America, and of liberty, is the cause of every virtuous American citizen…. Come, then, ye generous citizens, range yourselves under the standard of general liberty, against which all the force and artifices of tyranny will never be able to prevail."[37] In October 1774, before the outbreak of any hostilities, Congress had invited the Canadians to join the Americans in resisting British abuses. "Your province," it told them, "is the only link wanting to compleat [sic] the bright and strong chain of union."[38] But the Canadians would not openly support such notions, and the American colonists who marched north after 1783, turning their backs on the Revolution, had to justify "their great refusal, had to explain why they did not support independence."[39] Other critics of the Revolution labeled it a "rebellious war… for the purpose of establishing an independent empire"[40] Later authors have called it the first war of liberation, wherein "American liberators sought to bring their own concepts of freedom to a foreign culture."[41] Be it a war for Independence alone, a war for liberation, or a war for conquest,

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[37] George Washington to "The Inhabitants of Canada"

[38] *Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec*

[39] Seymour Martin Lipset. *Continental Divide. The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada*. (NY: Routledge, 1990), 14-15. Lipset, like most Canadian historians, struggle to accept such language. Lipset called these notions an assumption of moral superiority, echoing the Canadian sentiment that "freedom wears a crown," that Canadians are against popular sovereignty and are an "elitist democracy"

[40] Robert Hatch. *Thrust for Canada: the American Attempt on Quebec in 1775-1776*. (Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 146. Cites an unknown contemporary critic.

[41] Anderson, *14th Colony,* preface.

the American Revolution created what some call “a political and religious crisis” in Canada, marking a crucial period in that country’s history, and our own.[42]

While the Quebec Act could have pushed the colonies towards eventual rebellion, something the Intolerable Acts surely expedited, the role of Canada in the months preceding the Revolution merits serious attention. At this point in 1774, the First Continental Congress was still in session, there are nearly sixteen months before Lexington and Concord, and the Americans are still debating peaceful means of resistance. Canadian officials do not declare the colonies in a state of “open and declared war” until September 22nd, 1775, a full month after King George declares the colonies in state of “open and avowed rebellion.”[43] Many scholars speculate how if this period had gone differently, the American Revolution may have never occurred, or at the very least would have been postponed.[44] Far more interesting is how the path towards dissent and rebellion from Great Britain turned into an invasion of Canada almost a full year before actually declaring independence.

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[42] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution*, 225.

[43] King George’s “A Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition,” August 23, 1775. This proclamation declared the American colonies in a state of "open and avowed rebellion,” and ordered officials of the British Empire "to use their utmost endeavours to withstand and suppress such rebellion." Dartmouth would issue a similar letter on September 22nd, 1775. Interestingly enough, the British War Office records actually calls Massachusetts, which had yet to even vote on the boycott of British goods let alone Independence, to be in “open and avowed Rebellion” by at least October 4th, 1774. Letter marked #31, Whitehall 22 September 1775, MG23 B1, WO-1/2, #43-43. Dartmouth Letters Fond. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[44] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America, 4:* “The invasion of Canada might never have occurred and the Revolution might had been nipped in the bud if the British government had been intent on using Canada against the old colonies,” citing Carleton’s 1767 plan to link the older forts at Crown Point, Ticonderoga, and Ft. George with new forts at Quebec and New York.

There are two fronts at play in this development: one in Canada, and the other in the United Colonies regarding Canada. In Quebec, the opposition of the British party fed into the American understanding that Canada was just as rebellious, and willing to aid in the coming revolution. Put in the words of historian Mark Anderson, the "British Party's brazen Quebec Act opposition, and reports of the habitant anti-administration rebellions, led the United Colonies to see their Canadian neighbors as a people begging to be liberated- a nation poised to join the rest of British North America, if just given the chance."[45] This theme will continue to dominate American discourse on the invasion, and Canada generally, until they return in 1812.

In contrast to the British Party, the actions of Guy Carleton surely incited American rage and distrust. American letters and journals, especially during the siege of Quebec, often reference Carleton as a villain. The "Arch Villain Carleton" is poisoning the minds of the people, he lies to the locals, or calls the Americans bandits; the Americans cite all manner of efforts used by Carleton to suppress the revolutionary spirit which began to permeate Canada in this period.[46] While this spirit grows exponentially after the military invasion of Canada, the role of Carleton in the propaganda wars begins in 1774. In addition to declaring Martial Law, forcing militia service on the locals, and mobilizing Indian tribes, Carleton regularly wrote his peers detailing his efforts to suppress Canadian news and pro-American sympathies. Carleton censored the press to block a "campaign to help establish a 'foundation of shared [patriot] experience' and a

[45] Anderson, *14th Colony*, 347

[46] Collected letters by the Canadian archives say that the "Arch Villain Carleton" is poisoning the minds of the locals with lies, and that Carleton is a "Villain" for making people think of the Americans as mere bandits. See: Collected letters. 12/7/1775. CO5/1107. #137 and #119-120 resp. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

'collective commitment to the revolution.'"[47] Carleton described the danger of the Massachusetts town meetings reaching Canada, "breathing the same spirit, so plentifully gone forth through the neighboring provinces," and speaks to the necessity of guarding "against the consequences of an infection… spread abroad by the Colonists here."[48] Governor Carleton believed that the British subjects are "still exerting their utmost endeavors to kindle in the Canadians the spirit that reigns in the Province of Massachusetts," and pointed to the Quebec Act.[49] American Elisha Phelps summarized the situation when he wrote to the General Assembly of Connecticut that the Canadians were "in a deplorable situation, being deprived of all their Liberties and Privileges… afraid to speak or Act relative to public affairs."[50] The fear that Canadians would join the Bostonians was a very real, very tangible, very unsettling fear for Carleton, and his actions speak to that even before hostilities began.

In the coastal colonies, the reports out of Canada all seemed to mimic the same language, often along the lines of the report from the New Hampshire Indian scouts that the "Canadians are waiting anxiously for the appearance of the Continental forces."[51] In this pre-war period, American efforts to gain Canadian representatives to the Continental Congress become the second instrumental development. The American Congress will

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[47] Anderson, *14th Colony*, 48

[48] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 483

[49] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 485. Cites Carleton letter from January 12, 1775

[50] Elisha Phelps Letter to the General Assembly of Connecticut, 16 May 1775. Cited in Anderson, *14th Colony*, 87

[51] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 494.

publish multiple letters and messages meant for the Canadian people, starting in October 1774. The *Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec* explains how the delegates of the Colonies see five "invaluable rights" which Britain is "striving, by force of arms, to ravish from us, and which we are, with one mind, resolved never to resign but with our lives."[52] Then the people of Quebec were "invited to accede to our confederation" and send representatives to the Second Continental Congress, as the Americans saw "the violation of your rights, by the act for altering the government of your province, as a violation of our own."[53] The Letter concludes with a statement of solidarity, ceasing all imports and exports with Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies "unless the said grievances are redressed."

Little came from the first letter. Circulated in secret, Carleton prevented the local paper from publicizing it.[54] By the end of the year, certain colonies began to contemplate additional measures. On December 6th, 1774 Massachusetts created the "Committee for Correspondence to Canada," but with members Sam Adams, Joseph Warren, Ben Church, and John Hancock at the helm, the Committee was decidedly busy with other efforts.[55] On February 15th, 1775 they created a new committee to determine the

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[52] *Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec* by the First Continental Congress, October 26, 1774. The rights include government by law and consent, trial by jury, *habeaus corpus*, ease of rent and not forceful property laws, and freedom of the press. They are described as defending: the poor from the rich, the weak from the powerful, the industrious from the rapacious, the peaceable from the violent, the tenants from the lords, and all from their superiors.

[53] This is another reference to the Quebec Act, which did not allow for representative government.

[54] Nelson, Paul David. *General Sir Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester: Soldier-Statesman of Early British Canada*. (Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press, 2000), 59

[55] Provincial Congress of Massachusetts. *The journals of each Provincial congress of Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775, and of the Committee of safety, with an appendix, containing the proceedings of the county conventions-narratives of the events of the nineteenth of April, 1775-papers relating to Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and other documents, illustrative of the early history of the American revolution.* Boston, Dutton and Wentworth, 1838.

"sentiments and determination of the inhabitants" of Quebec, and resolved to send their own letter.[56] The Boston Committee of Correspondence sent John Brown to assess the situation in 1775, and while he found increasingly pro-American sentiments, the Canadians seemed unwilling to risk rebellion at this stage. Montreal attempted to elect representatives to the Continental Congress, to no avail.[57] The Americans would eventually send a delegation including Benjamin Franklin, but not until 1776.

As 1774 gave way to 1775, the American Revolution advanced quickly. The shots at Lexington and Concord occurred April 19th, and in less than a month came the capture of Ticonderoga and then Crown Point. A week after Crown Point, the forces under Colonel Benedict Arnold raided Fort St. Jean in Quebec. As soon as the Americans captured British ordinance, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold called for a Canadian invasion.[58] The Americans had finally gone on the offensive. More importantly, they had targeted the northern frontier and Canada with their first assaults, setting the stage for the campaign to come. After the Crown Point and Ticonderoga attacks, "Canada was no longer a sword of Damocles" against the Americans.[59] Though the Americans still assumed British invasions would come down from upper New York and Canada, they would be far more difficult with the loss of those forts. Many of Canada's remaining forts and strongholds were also "in a state of advanced neglect," and severely lacking in

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https://archive.org/details/journalsofeachprma00mass/page/n8. (Accessed July 25, 2019); AND Anderson, *14th Colony*, 52

[56] Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, 98-100

[57] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 485

[58] Hatch, *Thrust for Canada*, 29

[59] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America, 6-7*

manpower.[60] The opening salvo of the Canadian campaign seemed well-timed and advantageous to the coming Revolution.

Great Britain's refusal to grant colonial representation to the American colonies, and the results of Lexington and Concord, would eventually lead to the American Revolution. But at this point in the conflict, the invasion of Canada could still be averted. The true demeanor of the Canadians was not yet known, nor was it adequately sought. On June 1st, 1775 the Continental Congress actually passed a resolution which would refrain from sending any expeditions into Canada.[61] It appeared as if the United Colonies may focus on their own defense first; after all, even Georgia had yet to join the Continental Congress so why waste more resources in Canada? But as with all things relating to Canada in the early period, the Americans said one thing and did another. By July 27, the invasion of Canada had truly begun.

THE 1775 INVASION OF CANADA

The American leaders were very careful to set the terms of the invasion when first articulating the conquest of Quebec. They were to act as a liberating force, always operating with the consent of the locals, ever vigilant to befriend their northern brethren. Samuel Chase called the friendship of the Canadians "a previous condition, a *sine qua non*, of marching into Quebec."[62] Benedict Arnold said the goal of his expedition was to

[60] Hatch, *Thrust for Canada,* 34

[61] Lanctot, *Canada and The American Revolution*, 63

[62] Samuel Chase to General Philip Schuyler, Aug. 10, 1775. Canadian historians have a different understanding of the politics of the American message. G.F.G. Stanley, for example, has said that "political victory was likely more important in the long run for the Americans in Canada," and the Continental Congress was "always particularly sensitive to the importance of the political aspect of the invasion," Stanley, *Canada Invaded*, 113.

"frustrate the unjust and arbitrary measures of the ministry and restore liberty to our brethren of Canada."[63] In his letter to Hector Cramahè, Arnold referenced the "unjust, cruel and tyrannical acts of a venal British parliament" which "tending to enslave the American Colonies" have used every artifice to "make the innocent Canadians instruments of their cruelty, by instigating them against the Colonies, and oppressing them on their refusing to enforce every oppressive mandate."[64] When George Washington gave Arnold his marching orders, he repeated the "necessity of preserving the strictest order," during the march through Canada, that his men must understand "the shame, disgrace, and ruin to themselves and their country, if they should by their conduct turn the hearts of our brethren in Canada against us."[65] Arnold's command was labeled one of "utmost consequence to the interest and liberties of America," marching "not through the country of an enemy, but of our friends and brethren."[66] Though the Americans assumed Canadian sentiments were in favor of their cause, Washington did

[63] Benedict Arnold to John Manir. 10/13/1775. Also cited in Kenneth Roberts, *March to Quebec.* (NY: Doubleday, 1945)

[64] Benedict Arnold to Hector Cramahè, November 14, 1775

[65] George Washington to Col. Benedict Arnold. Cambridge, 14 September, 1775. Washington went on to say that "Should any American soldier be so base and infamous as to injure any Canadian or Indian, in his person or property, I do most earnestly enjoin you to bring him to such severe and exemplary punishment, as the enormity of the crime may require. Should it extend to death itself, it will not be disproportioned to its guilt, at such a time and in such a cause." Washington also forbade plundering during the Quebec campaign, a decision he maintained throughout the Revolutionary War.

[66] George Washington to Col. Benedict Arnold. Cambridge, 14 September, 1775. Washington himself told the inhabitants of Canada that "the grand American Congress have sent an army into your province, under the command of General Schuyler, not to plunder, but to protect you; to animate, and bring into action those sentiments of freedom you have disclosed, and which the tools of despotism would extinguish through the whole creation." Washington's Letter to the Inhabitants of Canada.

warn Arnold that if the locals proved averse to this expedition, they should not irritate them into belligerency.[67]

The Americans pitched their efforts in Canada as preserving liberty, as an effort towards extending the revolution, and as an intervention all but formally requested by the inhabitants. Not only do the missives to the Canadians illustrate this, but so do the efforts of John Hancock to retain the architect of the Canada campaign, General Schuyler, who wished to retire to due health concerns. Hancock wrote Schuyler to reconsider his decision, first appealing to his prior commands, then to liberty itself, asking him to "Consider that the Road to Glory is seldom strewed with Flowers," and that when the "black and bloody Standard of Tyranny is erected in a Land possessed by Freemen, Patriots cease to remain inactive Spectators of their Country's Fall."[68] Schuyler, Hancock says, had "hitherto risen superior to a Thousand Difficulties in giving Freedom to a great and oppressed People," in his Northern campaign efforts. Because of these efforts Schuyler would remain in service of the colonies as a tactician, though his health concerns would thrust command of the expedition to Richard Montgomery.

The situation that greeted those American forces seemed to illustrate the American message was well received. The people of Canada aided the Americans throughout the expedition. Letters from soldiers regularly comment on the polite and hospitable disposition of the locals, which often provided the soldiers with supplies or

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[67] Ibid

[68] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 2, 415-416; Letter from Hancock to Schuyler, November 30th, 1775

outright joined the colonial army.[69] In one such letter, Arnold wrote to John Manir expressing that his forces "have been very kindly received by the inhabitants who appear very friendly, and willing to supply us with provisions."[70] Arnold frequently updated Washington of Canadian aid and integration with his forces.[71] The journal of Isaac Senter, from Arnold's expedition, tells of groups of Canadians bringing supplies such as cattle, horses, mutton, and tobacco.[72] In a letter to the Continental Congress, Arnold writes that though Carleton had used "every artifice" to "procure provisions, and induce the Canadians to take arms against us," it was to no effect.[73] In another letter to George Washington, Arnold describes the British force as one frigate and two transports with 150 British recruits, "except the Inhabitants, very few of whom have taken up Arms, & those by Compulsion, who declare (except a few English) that they will lay them down whenever attacked."[74]

Perhaps it is far more telling how little the Canadians aided the British against the Americans, even when threatened with expulsion and martial law. Though the invasion of

[69] The letters from the Arnold expedition abound with such accounts, though the new troops don't always come armed or supplied, said Arnold's letter to General Wooster, 1/4/1776. "We have a number of Canadians joined us, most of them without arms, which are much wanted." The reports of American agents are also cited in Hatch, *Thrust for Canada,* 33

[70] Benedict Arnold to John Manir. 11/7/1775 in Roberts, *March to Quebec*

[71] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 502-503. On January 11th, 1776 "The disposition of the Canadians is very favorable." On February 27th he writes of 400 reinforcements of Canadians, with more incoming daily. On June 5th he mentions the despair of the people when the Americans left and joy upon their arrival "The Canadians are flocking by hundreds to take part with us."

[72] Roberts, *March to Quebec,* 219. Journal of Isaac Senter, November 2nd, 1775.

[73] Benedict Arnold to the Continental Congress. 1/24/1776

[74] Colonel Benedict Arnold to George Washington, 8 November 1775

Quebec did not begin until July 27th, 1775 Carleton took to raising the militia and declaring martial law on June 9th, shortly after the Ticonderoga, Crown Point, and St. Jean incidents.[75] By September, another proclamation required all persons to report their "place of abode" when they entered Quebec, and declare why they were entering, or they would be "considered and treated as Spies," after two hours.[76] When Carleton declared martial law, he also proclaimed that inhabitants must join the militia or leave, and the results were less than enthusiastic. For the November 22, 1775 proclamation, only 53 men joined the militia as demanded, and this was countered by 170 members of the militia leaving, joined by a "large number" of English notables.[77] Only 70 men joined Carleton's Quebec militia, a "clear indication of their leanings," given the number of abstentions.[78] John Brown, sent as a messenger for the Massachusetts Committee of Correspondence, believed the Canadian expedition "may be done with great ease and little cost, and I have no doubt the Canadians would join us. There is great defection among them."[79]

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[75] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 94; Carleton's proclamation of 9 June 1775 which raises the militia and institutes Martial Law in response to the American rebellion, which was also deemed treason.

[76] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 94; Issued by Lt. Gov Cramahè on 16 September 1775

[77] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution, 102-103*

[78] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution*, 99. American journals and Canadian official reports collaborate this. The journal of Isaac Senter, November 26th, 1775 is one such example cited in Roberts, *March to Quebec*, 227

[79] John Brown to Governor Trumbull; Aug 14th, 1775. Jared Sparks. *Correspondence of the American Revolution: being letters of eminent men to George Washington, from the time of his taking command of the army to the end of his presidency.* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853)

As the Canadian historian Gustave Lanctot put it, disaffection almost made Quebec an American state.[80] In his *Military History of Canada,* Desmond Morton believed that with the level of disaffection in Canada, and that half of its population was from New Englanders, Nova Scotia should have been the fourteenth colony to revolt."[81] Montreal had become the hotbed for pro-American activity, what was called the "home to Canada's most outspoken patriots."[82] In Montreal, the forced militia service was met with "widespread hostility," and even under martial law, habitants of Montreal left the city in droves rather than join than Canadian militias.[83] Carleton and the British leaders in Canada clearly had issues suppressing the effects of the Revolution in their provinces, but Montreal contained a decidedly pro-American leaning. In the government's own proclamations, they mention how a bust of the King had been "maliciously disfigured" there. Worse yet, that vandalism included a note the British leaders deemed to be "False and Scandalous Libel in Writing, tending to lessen him in the Esteem of his subjects, weaken his government and raise jealousies between him and his people."[84] They do not, sadly, provide any copy or sample of the content.

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[80] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution,* 225

[81] Morton, Desmond. *A Military History of Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 43

[82] Anderson, *14th Colony,* 200

[83] Anderson, *14th Colony,* 128 and Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 36

[84] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 93. A letter from Thomas Gamble to Major Sheriff, from September 6th, 1775 says the minds of the Canadians "are all poisoned by emissaries from New England and the damned rascals of merchants here and at Montreal…. The Quebec bill is of no use, on the contrary the Canadians talk of that d—d [sic] abused word liberty."

Acadians throughout Canada had begun to openly advocate a Franco-American invasion.[85] So too was the French-Canadian citizenry. French Canadians by and large simply refused "to take up arms against the colonies," a sign which the Americans took to mean that "they wish and long for nothing more than to see us, with an army, penetrate their country."[86] Frederick Haldimand, Quebec's Governor from 1778 to 1786, noted how the Canadian inhabitants had generally "become adherent to the united cause of France and the Americans."[87] Worse yet for the British, Haldimand believed that the "general disposition of the inhabitants" favored rebellion; Canada was only waiting for the appearance of an enemy, which "would be followed by the revolt of a great part of the province."[88] In Halifax, authorities feared their "bitter bad subjects" would flock to the American side.[89] "If Carleton had reason to harbor doubts about the depth of French Canadian professions of fidelity and willingness to serve the king," wrote historian G.F.G Stanley, he had even more reason to doubt the "sincerity of the loyalty of the English-speaking population concentrated in the two strategic centers of the country, Quebec and

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[85] Careless. *Colonists and Canadiens,* 24. A July 25th, 1778 letter from Haldimand is cited in Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 509: "The Canadians are not to be depended upon especially if a French War breaks out." This is repeated later in October as well.

[86] John Brown to Governor Trumbull; Aug 14th, 1775. In Sparks, *Correspondence of the American Revolution*

[87] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 510. Cites Haldimand letter from June 7th, 1779. Stanley, Canada Invaded, 109; "one of the assumptions which underlay the American offensive of 1775 was that the bulk of the French-speaking population of Canada would welcome the American invaders as liberators, and that they would also seek political affiliation with the Continental Congress."

[88] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 510. Cites Haldimand letters from June 18th, 1779 and October 25th, 1779 resp.

[89] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 26

Montreal."[90] French or English, be they in Quebec or Montreal, each group contained strong pro-American, and anti-British, sentiments which the Americans would consider as the only justification needed to proceed with the invasion. By all appearances, Canada seemed poised to join the United Colonies, and with little to no resistance or regret from the local populations.

Carleton had recognized his precarious position early, writing in August 1775 that the Canadian militia is too difficult to utilize, that it was "inadvisable to attempt assembling any number of them, except it become absolutely necessary to try and that measure for the defense of the Province, and that there is no other resource whatsoever."[91] That November, Carleton famously summed up his position as "The enemy without is not so formidable as that within," and the "unprecedented defection" of the people was a clear sign of their disaffection for British rule.[92] Carleton's efforts to rule by force and fear had mixed results. His efforts at enforcing militia service have shown disastrous, but so too was his propaganda campaign, which was said to actually stir "the agitators to even greater organizational frenzy in the back county" and did little to neutralize the pro-American arguments.[93] A member of Arnold's expedition declared that it was "very evident" that the Canadians had "overwhelmingly declared in favor of the invaders from the first down till the disaster at Quebec," but even after, the a

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[90] Stanley, *Canada Invaded,* 11

[91] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution* ,498 cites Carleton letter from August 14th, 1775

[92] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution,* 499. Cites two separate Carleton letters, November 5th and 22nd, 1775 resp. In another letter, Carleton is quoted as saying: "We have so many Enemies within… I think our Fate extremely doubtful." Anderson, *14th Colony,* 169

[93] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens*, 35

"considerable number" of Canadians clung to the colonial cause; and were still ready "at any moment to attach themselves to any enterprise of vigor sufficient to give any promise of success."[94] He does admit, however, that Carleton's declaration of martial law was the only thing that prevented public demonstrations.[95] If all of Canada had acted like the patriot forces in Montreal, public demonstrations may have shifted the tone of the war and incited the Americans to continue chipping away at Quebec.

The British propaganda campaign in Canada was intense, but this may have been by necessity. American reports insisted Carleton was telling the locals "to believe that this Armament was sent to Plunder, Pillage, ravage, ransack, etc., rather than to protect and support the Canadians."[96] Letters to Lord Dartmouth illustrate how even in the days before the Declaration of Independence, the British were casting the revolution in terms of plundered property for all those who did not join the Americans.[97] The British Colonial Office has numerous letters discussing anarchy in Canada, of a spreading "malignant Spirit" of revolutionary fervor.[98] There are also regular updates to Acts for punishing rioters, as well as preventing tumults and "riotous assemblies" throughout

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[94] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 504

[95] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 506

[96] Collected Letters. CO5/1107, #139-140. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Letters like those of August 14th, 1775 were sent out to scare the locals, warning them of rebels on the borders and denouncing friends of the Rebellion. Collected letters. CO43/13, #89. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[97] Letter to Lord Dartmouth, August 7, 1775. CO5/1106, #260-61. Colonial Office Fond. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[98] Collected Letters. CO5/1107, #339. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Canada.[99] The most interesting piece of Carleton's efforts to spread disunity and discord between the Americans and Canadians is a Proclamation issued June 12th. In this proclamation Carleton pardons all wrongdoing thus far, with two notable exceptions. The actions of these two men were "too flagrant a nature to admit of any consideration than that of condign punishment."[100] John Hancock and Samuel Adams were set apart, likely in an effort to directly connect their names to that "malignant" revolutionary spirit Carleton so detested.

For all the *intent* in which the Americans derived from the Canadians, they never seemed to be wholly willing to risk joining the American rebellion either. Fear of Great Britain appeared to be a greater force than the desire for independence. The letters of the Generals and politicians of the period confirm such feelings. Colonel Ethan Allen wrote to General Schuyler that many feared the United Colonies were simply not strong enough to protect the Canadians from the British, and Carleton's threats kept them complacent.[101] Before Allen's expedition failed, others claimed that the Canadians were as high as "nine tenths for the Bostonians," though Arnold never had the number higher than half for Quebec alone.[102] There was a general feeling that though the "Yankee" Canadians

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[99] A letter from the British Colonial Office lists one such Act with the quoted material. Collected Letters. CO5/1353, #74. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[100] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 12 June 1775. Carleton also redeclares the Martial Law. In a letter dated July 1st, 1775 Carleton appeals to the "Loyalty and Fidelity" of the King's subjects, and for their "resistance to support Rebellion." Carleton letters. CO43/8 #80. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[101] Colonel Ethan Allen to General Schuyler; Sept. 14th, 1775. Sparks, *Correspondences of the American Revolution*.

[102] Brock Watson to William Franklin, Governor of NY; Montreal, October 19th, 1775 in Sparks, *Correspondences of the American Revolution*. Arnold To Continental Congress. January 11, 1776. Arnold's letter also confirms that the strict watch of Guy Carleton was likely keeping the Canadians in line. Another letter of November 30, 1775 to Montgomery suggested the "The inhabitants of Quebec are much

"would have welcomed an army of invasion," they did not want to openly participate in an independent insurrection.[103] The British military presence in Canada may have been weak enough to allow acts of vandalism like in Montreal, and even allowed for soft aids such as supplying American colonists. It very well could have been the "root of Canadian neutralism" when mixed with American propaganda.[104] But the total might of the British Empire, or at least the fear of reprisal, appeared to have been just dreadful enough to prevent a full insurrection in Canada. However, that *any* defection occurred in the face of the British military, the proclamation of martial law, the involuntary militia services, or the Quebec Act "must be taken as the strongest proof that the Canadians were neither timid nor indifferent."[105] The Americans desired Canada, and the Canadians, for their part, did what little they could to aid the invaders and resist the British.

The Americans seemed to believe their expedition in Canada lacked enough force to completely balance the scales of British reciprocity. As much was said by General Montgomery, who wrote to Schuyler that the Canadians "will not relish a union with the Colonies, till they see the whole country in our hands," and mostly importantly, their country must be defended "by such forces as may relieve them from the apprehensions of again falling under the ministerial lash."[106] Quite simply, Montgomery believed the

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disunited and short of provisions. We have many friends there, and if the place is attacked with spirit, I believe will hold out but a short time." Arnold to Montgomery, 11/30/1775

[103] Carless, *Colonists and Canadiens*, 26

[104] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution*, 75

[105] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 506

[106] Montgomery to Schuyler. December 18, 1775. Sparks, *Correspondence of the American Revolution*

Canadians would not join the Union "till we have a force in the country sufficient to insure it against any attempt that may be made for its recovery."[107] In a letter to Schuyler, which occurred days before his death, Montgomery detailed his fears that the Canadians would not "relish a Union with the Colonies, till they see the whole Country in our Hands and defended by such a Force as may relieve them from the Apprehensions of again falling under the Ministerial Lash."[108] This was the great fear of most Americans regarding Canada, that until they were completely removed from British hands the Canadians would stay complacent.

Congressional leaders agreed, and their exchanges with Montgomery, Arnold, and Schuyler document their support. John Hancock dubbed the reduction of St. John's and Montreal to be a "[c]ontravention to the ministerial System of enslaving the extensive Territory of Canada," and calls Montgomery "instrumental in preserving" liberty against a "corrupt Parliament intended to annihilate every Appearance of Freedom in America."[109] Richard Henry Lee wrote to Washington that the "Ministerial" dependence on Canada "is so great, that no object can be of greater importance to North America than to defeat them there. It appears to me, that we must have that Country with us this winter cost what it will."[110] Washington wrote to the President of the Congress that the

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[107] Montgomery to Schuyler. December 26, 1775. In Sparks, *Correspondence of the American Revolution*

[108] Major General Richard Montgomery to Major General Philip Schuyler, December 18th, 1775

[109] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 2, 414; Hancock to Montgomery on November 30th, 1775.

[110] Richard Henry Lee to George Washington, October 22-23, 1775. The phrase "cost what it will" is very interesting, considering money may have also been a problem for the United Colonies. John Hancock believed that Canada would not join the others until it could be proved the Colonies were not bankrupt, it was "improper to propose the Federal union of this Province with the others." Hancock, cited in Hatch, 192.

"reduction of Quebec" is an object of such great importance that "I doubt not the Congress will give every assistance in their power for the accomplishing it this winter."[111] Washington was especially careful to consistently remind both generals and politicians of Canada's true value, going as far as calling the Canada campaign the "salvation of our bleeding country."[112]

Feeling the weight of their decision to invade the Canadas, the Second Continental Congress authored an additional letter in the style of the Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec. This new effort, dubbed the Letter from Congress to the Oppressed Inhabitants of Canada, was issued to the alarming "designs of an arbitrary ministry to extirpate the rights and liberties of all America," and to remind the Canadians they are both subjects of the cruel, despotic, tyrannical administration of Great Britain.[113] Through the "present form of tyranny, you and your wives and your children are made slaves," the letter said, adding that the formerly French-Canadian peoples "have nothing that you can call your own, and all the fruits of your labour and industry may be taken from you whenever an avaricious governor and a rapacious council may incline to demand them." The Americans remind the former denizens of New France of the weakness of monarchy, that "should a wicked or careless king concur with a wicked ministry in exacting the treasure and strength of your country, it is impossible to conceive

[111] George Washington to The President of Congress. December, 4th 1775

[112] Washington attempts to ensure the immeasurable importance of Canada in multiple letters. Letters to Schuyler on 10/26/1775, 11/5/1775, and 12/5/1775; to Richard Henry Lee on 11/27/1775 and 4/4/1776; to the President of Congress, 6/17/1776. Washington to Major-General Schuyler, Cambridge 26 October, 1775: "I look upon the interest and salvation of our bleeding country in a great degree to depend upon your success."

[113] Letter from Congress to the Oppressed Inhabitants of Canada

to what variety and to what extremes of wretchedness you may, under the present establishment, be reduced." The American colonists proclaim they are "determined to live free, or not at all," and assume the mostly French-Canadians "have not lost all sense of honour," or have become so "degenerated as to possess neither the spirit, the gallantry, nor the courage of their ancestors," that they will not resist the British. The letter concludes with a reminder that the Americans are friends, not enemies, that the taking of Ticonderoga and Crown Point were acts of self-preservation, and that American "concern for your welfare entitles us to your friendship, we presume you will not, by doing us an injury, reduce us to the disagreeable necessity of treating you as enemies."

Through letters and actions as described above, it is clear that Congressional commissioners were urged to do everything they could to promote Union between the United Colonies and Canada; Congress was "fully convinced of the absolute necessity of keeping possession of that country."[114] Canada retained the utmost importance to the Americans. A pillar of the Revolution was not only the rejection of the British in the thirteen colonies, but establishing Canada as the fourteenth colony and beyond. The situation in Canada was a conundrum for the American colonists. Canada exhibited all the signs of a disgruntled populace seemingly ready to revolt, to join with the other colonies against the Quebec Act or the British themselves. But while some Canadians defected to the American armies or supplied their troops, the effort was always just short of open rebellion. This could relate to Carleton's iron fist, or fears of British reprisal or

[114] Hatch, *Thrust for Canada*, 218. Cites the Journal of the Continental Congress. May 24-25, 1776. Hatch says that "Many in Congress had come to feel that the colonies should invade Canada for their own protection," and that invasion was the "only way to prevent a southward thrust by British troops." Hatch, *Thrust for Canada,* 32

French tyranny, or even a lukewarm acceptance of the Revolution's values. The reason matters less than the result however, which was that without a complete upheaval of British rule like that of Boston, the Americans would need to bring a liberating force to Canada. Every American knew what that meant, for in the words of Montgomery, "until Quebec is taken, Canada is unconquered."[115]

The build up to Quebec was promising for the Americans. The community at Three Rivers capitulated before Montgomery even arrived.[116] Despite the first assault on Montreal-- a surprise assault on September 24th led by Ethan Allen and Canadian sympathizers, resulting in the capture of Ethan Allen-- Montgomery was able to capture St. Jean on November 3rd.[117] Though victorious at Montreal the first time, Carleton's forces had still been depleted by Allen, enabling Montgomery's forces to enter the city on November 13th against little to no opposition. Even failures were yielding positive results at this point in the expedition. When he arrived in Montreal proper, Montgomery was greeted by "grandiloquent phrases" saluting the General who "brought liberty to Canada," while also condemning those citizens of Montreal who "refused, in their pride and contempt, to participate in any 'fraternal union.'"[118] Unfortunately for the Americans, Carleton had already abandoned the city and fled to Quebec, narrowly escaping capture.

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[115] Letter from Richard Montgomery to Robert Livingston. 23 November 1775

[116] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution,* 95

[117] This was the same Ethan Allen who wrote to Congress that "Should the colonies forthwith send an army of two or three thousand men and attack Montreal, we should have little to fear from the Canadians and Indians and would easily make a conquest of that place…" quoted in Hatch, *Thrust for Canada,* 29. The sympathizer, Thomas Walker, was later arrested for high treason.

[118] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution,* 95

The Canada campaign would now only come to an end only after a long and arduous winter siege of the Quebec.

Thus far, the Americans were met with happy cries of liberation. Some Canadian citizens wrote to Congress that their "chains are broken," that Canadians can return to a "happy freedom" and assured Congress that their "hearts always desired union," and they embrace the Continentals as their own.[119] Congress was consistently receiving positive news, news of both Canadian defection and American victories, and they responded as if the campaign was already won. "We consider this as having determined the fate of Canada," wrote Thomas Jefferson regarding the capture of St. John's Island, and by November 21st the accounts of Arnold led Jefferson and many in Congress "hoping [Arnold] into possession of Quebec, as we know Carleton to be absent in the neighborhood of Montreal."[120] As such, the fall of Montreal led to what some historians have deemed overconfidence, for when Montgomery and Schuyler requested supplies or reinforcements, the calls always seemed to fall on deaf ears.[121] Jefferson exhibits such confidence in his letter to John Randolph from November 29th, which reads:

> "I have it in my power to acquaint you, that the success of our arms has corresponded with the justice of our cause. Chambly and St. John's were taken some weeks ago, and in them the whole regular army in Canada, except about forty or fifty men. This day, certain intelligence has reached us, that our General, Montgomery, is received into Montreal; and we expect, every hour, to be informed that Quebec has opened its arms to Colonel Arnold, who, with eleven hundred men, was sent from Boston up the Kennebec, and down the Chaudière river to that place. He expected to be there early this month. Montreal acceded to

[119] Anderson, *14th Colony,* 158. November 14th letter to Montgomery from the Citizens of Montreal

[120] Thomas Jefferson to Francis Eppes. November 21st, 1775. Jefferson also notes that a committee is being sent to Canada to "improve circumstances, so as to bring the Canadians into our Union."

[121] Anderson, *14th Colony,* 349-51. Anderson also points out the benefits of sending an earlier political committee to Canada could have had, especially at this point in the invasion.

> us on the 13th, and Carlton set out, with the shattered remains of his little army, for Quebec, where we hope he will be taken up by Arnold. In a short time, we have reason to hope, the delegates of Canada will join us in Congress, and complete the American union, as far as we wish to have it completed."[122]

Quebec had not opened the gates to Arnold, however, and what the United Colonies pitched as the final battle for Canada served to be so only in an ironic sense.

Carleton's resistance to this final siege was both fortunate and ferocious. An outbreak of smallpox had struck the American army, which was already short on provisions and winter clothes. What supplies the locals had procured for the American soldiers thus far had run out, and in winter, they could scarcely request more. As the Americans approached Quebec, low on supplies and facing a winter siege, Carleton is said to have cannoned the houses of his citizens, allegedly with people inside, rather than leave them to the Americans for shelter.[123] His previous efforts at painting the Americans as bandits and invaders, and suppressing all opinions and literature to the contrary, had seemingly paid off.[124] Carleton had begun prepping Quebec since the first raids on St. Jean, and in his absence, Lt. Governor Hector Cramahé ensured Quebec's fortifications and militia continued to improve.

The Battle of Quebec finally took place on December 31st, 1775, and was the first major defeat of the American Revolution. The battle came with heavy losses. Richard

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[122] Thomas Jefferson to John Randolph. November 29th, 1775

[123] Journal of Isaac Senter, December 10th, 1775 as found in Roberts, *March to Quebec*

[124] A similar proclamation as the one issued by Lt. Gov Cramahé on 16 September 1775 was issued before the siege. Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 94. Though the numbers are unverified, this forced enrollment mixed with the remaining volunteers across Canada put the militia upwards of one thousand men. An unsigned letter from December 7th, 1775 calls Quebec Carleton's "Last resort," and labels the man himself a "Villain" for making people think of the Americans as mere bandits. Unsigned letter. CO5/1107, #119-120. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Montgomery died, Benedict Arnold injured, and the British took over 400 soldiers prisoner.[125] The Siege of Quebec ended in failure, and though the Americans did not yet know it, so ended their first invasion of Canada. As G.F.G Stanley wrote, the "first effort to incorporate Canada into a continental union was defeated at Quebec," for though the Revolution would go on for almost another decade, the Americans would never put together another serious expedition.[126]

THE ONLY BAR OF CONSEQUENCE IS QUEBEC

After the death of General Montgomery, command of the Quebec expedition fell to Benedict Arnold. In his letters to the Continental Congress, Arnold still believed the conditions in Canada were much the same as before. For Congress, the desire to possess Canada remained the same, despite the setback at Quebec. Arnold wrote that he intended to stick to the plan, to "conciliate the affections of the Canadians, and cherish every dawning of liberty which appears among them," but also, and more importantly, to assure them of the "friendship and protection of the Congress; and to endeavor to form, on a lasting basis, a firm union between them and the Colonies, by forming a Provincial Congress, and, from that body, giving them a full representation in the Grand Continental

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[125] A retelling of the Siege can be found in the *Journal of the most remarkable events which happened in Canada between the months of July 1775 and June 1776.* Individual Collection. MG23-B7, R9767-0-4-E. Volume/box number: 1, 2. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[126] Stanley, G.F.G. *Canada Invaded, 1775-1776.* ix. Stanley's history is one of the harsher accounts of the Quebec campaign, and is often prejudiced to the British and Canadian accounts. Stanley recasts the Revolutionary dispute as a "straight-forward financial matter," that was "dragged into the charged atmosphere of party politics," which struck the heart of the "American colonists' nascent nationalism and the growing sense of their own self-importance." Stanley, *Canada Invaded,* 13. In Anderson, *14th Colony,* Anderson believes that the Quebec campaign has "generally remained a footnote in the histories of both the United States and Canada." It does "not fit comfortably in either countries notational narrative," as is often ignored or widely misinterpreted. Anderson, *14th Colony,* 1

Congress."[127] Montgomery had been a key force in swaying the Canadians, and his death left a void in the campaign Arnold swore to fill, but Quebec stood in the way.[128] Arnold insisted to Congress that "the disposition of the Canadians is very favorable to your wishes," but reiterated that the only "bar of consequence" was Quebec; and if that bar were removed, Arnold believed that "every other obstacle to a firm and lasting union with Canada, will, of course, be removed."[129]

The leaders in Congress continually repeated the desire and the need for Canada to join the United Colonies. Two months after the death of Montgomery, Arnold and George Washington exchanged letters wherein both men intimated the vast importance of Canada. Washington mentioned the "great importance of this place, and the consequent possession of all Canada, in the scale of American affairs," believing the very balance of the war rested in Canada, an object that would become "impactable" if allowed to remain neutral for through the winter.[130] Arnold agreed, assuring Washington "my utmost exertions will not be wanting to effect your wishes, in adding it to the United Colonies."[131] In February, Congress sent a new delegation to Canada. The "prime mission" for this group was to make it known that American troops invaded only to

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[127] Benedict Arnold to Continental Congress. January 11, 1776. As quoted in Roberts, *March to Quebec*

[128] Even some of the harshest historians of the "American Invasion" recognized the efforts of Montgomery. G.F.G Stanley admits Montgomery made a favorable impression in Montreal. Stanley, *Canada Invaded*, 110

[129] Benedict Arnold to the Continental Congress. January 11, 1776. Cited in Sparks, *Correspondences of the American Revolution* and Roberts, *March to Quebec*.

[130] George Washington to Colonel Benedict Arnold. Cambridge 27 January, 1776

[131] Benedict Arnold to Washington, 2/27/1776. Roberts, *March to Quebec*

"defend the freedom of the Thirteen Colonies and to make it possible for the Canadians to win their own freedom."[132] That this needed to be said at all illustrates the effectiveness of British, and especially Governor Carleton's, propaganda.

After the failures of Quebec Congress issued another letter, this one addressed to Inhabitants of the Province of Canada, in January of 1776.[133] This letter began by first addressing the other letters, which intimated American rights, grievances, and the continued desire to show that Canadian liberty, honor, and happiness was "essentially and necessarily connected with the unhappy contest which we have been forced into for the defence of our dearest privileges." The letter notes the with "inexpressible joy the favourable manner in which you have received the just and equitable remonstrances of your friends and countrymen," and thanks the Canadians for the services already rendered to the common cause. But the most important part of this letter is the assurances of the Congress that "We will never abandon you to the unrelenting fury of your and our enemies," that "generous souls, enlightened and warmed with the sacred fire of liberty, become more resolute, as difficulties increase; and surmount with irresistible ardour every obstacle that stands between them and the favourite object of their wishes." Hoping for continued support and assistances toward the "preservation of American liberty," the letter concludes warmly. The Americans promised to send as much force as required, hoping to convince the Canadians that "nothing is so essential to guard our interests and liberty as efficacious measures to combine our mutual forces, in order that by such a

[132] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution*, 127; Delegation of Franklin, Chase, C. Carrol, and J. Carrol sent to Canada on February 15th, 1776 (Cites Journal of Cont. Cong., 20 March 1776

[133] Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Canada

union of succour and counsels, we may be able to baffle the endeavours of an enemy who, to weaken, may attempt to divide us." After flattering the "prospect of the happy moment when the standard of tyranny shall no longer appear in this land," the finalized letter went to the Canadians.

After sending a political delegation, another flattering letter, and with American leaders consistently reaffirming their desire to possess Canada, the next logical step was to replace General Montgomery. As Arnold was still injured, and Schuyler's health prohibited his direct involvement, this effort required new blood. Seeking a replacement for Montgomery, some floated the idea of Charles Lee as a natural successor. Lee was described as the "only General officer, on the Continent, who can speak and think in French," and some already considered him as Second in Command of the Continental Army.[134] Sending him to spark the populace of Quebec back into resistance seemed to all, Lee included, quite sensical. Lee was, however, sent South instead. Perhaps Lee really was needed elsewhere, but if the Canadian lands were truly as desired as Congress repeatedly intimated, sending Lee North would have surely aided the American efforts.

After the failures in Quebec, however, Canada seemed to occupy diminishing importance compared to the remainder of the Revolutionary War. The desire to possess the province, however, remained a vocal fixation for colonial leaders. In January, Washington wrote letters to Schuyler and Lee that insisted Canada remained an important target for the Americans. To Schuyler, Washington said that the "possession of Quebec, and entire reduction of Canada this winter so as to have Leisure to prepare for the Defence of it in the Spring, is of such great and extensive importance to the well-being of

[134] Anderson, *14th Colony*, 233

America…" a sentiment he knew Schuyler would understand.[135] His letter to Lee held the same, that Quebec is an "object of such vast importance, that it will be madness not to strain every sinew" for possessing it.[136] Every sinew, it seemed, was too busy holding off the British counter assault and defending the mainland colonies to spare the forces now required to take a fortified Quebec.

As the reality of possessing Canada slipped further from grasp, many colonial leaders began to investigate *how* they had failed so spectacularly to possess a region they claimed was eager to join their union. John Adams penned an extensive list of causes for what he deemed to be an unjustifiable defeat. The "Causes of our Misfortunes and Miscarriages in Canada," he wrote, are so "numerous are of So long Standing, and have been So incessantly increasing," that he would require a very long letter to develop them.[137] Among the causes Adams lists: raising the siege too early, smallpox, provisions, Congressional delusions and diversity of opinions, lack of General to replace Montgomery, and a myriad of wants and needs for supplies from medical to practical.[138] The list is truly extensive. One such article from Adams' plentiful list focused on the fact that the army has "have never had any regular Returns of Men, Arms, Cannon,

[135] George Washington to Major-General Schuyler, 27 January 1776

[136] George Washington to Major-General Lee. Cambridge, 26 February, 1776

[137] John Adams to Samuel Cooper. June 9th, 1776. Adams also says that the Siren voice of reconciliation deluded too many, and slowed the American cause to a point he called them petrified.

[138] John Adams to Samuel Cooper. June 9th, 1776. In another letter from John Adams to Archibald Bullock on July 1, 1776, Adams says that "smallpox has ruined the American army in Canada, and of consequence the American cause."

Ammunition, Clothing, Provisions, Money, or any Thing else."[139] The necessary supplies were always too few or partitioned elsewhere, and the invasion of Canada suffered for it.

John Hancock penned his own reasons to George Washington, summarized simply as "there has been very gross conduct in the management of our affairs in Canada."[140] Hancock's letter also illustrates the trend that blamed American soldiers and officers for poor behavior, and requested an inquiry into the matter.[141] Hancock may have received such ideas from General Schuyler, who wrote in January of 1776 that he intended to retire not only due to failing health, but also from disorderly troops.[142] Montgomery concurred, calling New England troops "the worst stuff imaginable for soldiers," that were also jealous of their commanders and often homesick.[143] When Washington responded to Hancock's request for an investigation, he never specifically blames a region, but does concur with the sentiments expressed by Montgomery and Schuyler.[144]

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[139] Ibid. #5 is intelligence. #6 is Medical professionals and supplies. #7 is monetary needs and credit.

[140] John Hancock to George Washington. June 21-22, 1776

[141] John Hancock to George Washington. June 21-22, 1776

[142] Philip Schuyler to John Hancock, referred to Wythe & Committee, 22 January 1776. Schuyler is still recommending his plans for future invasions of Canada at this junction. Schuyler's health was an important consideration in the plans for Canada, as seen when Washington wrote him February 27th, 1776, instantly connecting improving health with his hopes Schuyler would return to take command in Canada.

[143] Richard Montgomery to Robert Livingston, October 31st, 1775. The Stocking journal from Roberts, *March to Quebec,* also shows how New England troops began to hate Arnold for attempting to maintain discipline "more rigid" than they "were willing to submit to" Roberts, *March to Quebec,* 561. Another group from New England refused to march on Quebec until they were given a month's pay. Roberts, *March to Quebec,* 651

[144] George Washington to John Hancock. July 30th, 1776

As 1776 drifted into April and May, there was still no real plan for returning to Canada, though it did retain considerable significance to the Congress. Hancock wrote to Washington promising resolutions which would "quiet the Minds of the Canadians and to remove the Sources of their Uneasiness and Discontent," and send six more battalions from New York to Canada.[145] Writing to the Commissioners in Canada, Hancock told them that Congress was sending more troops to "allay the Fears and Apprehensions of the people" in Canada.[146] This fits squarely within the American narrative that Canadians needed proof of American arms before they would risk rebellion, though the Continental Congress never sends another truly sizeable force into Canada.

As the Revolution approached June 1776, there was still no action in Canada, and Hancock felt the weight of such dithering. Some now thought that invading Canada was a pre-emptive measure, necessary to prevent a Northern invasion from the British and their Indian allies. In his letter to John Thomas, Hancock cites the importance of Canada to the welfare of the United Colonies. Hancock believed "the loss of Canada will not be all," as the frontiers of New England and New York would then be exposed to the Indians and the British, who were "not less savage and barbarous" than the former.[147] This is repeated a few more times, such as Hancock's letter to General Schuyler, wherein he believed the enemy may have all the Canadians and Indians invade if Canada remains unconquered. "It is not conceivable in my Mind," Hancock wrote, that "there was ever a Time or

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[145] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 3, 573-74; John Hancock to George Washington, 4/23/1776

[146] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 3, 582; John Hancock to the Commissioners to Canada, 4/26/1776.

[147] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 4, 68; John Hancock to John Thomas, 5/24/1776.

Situation that called for more Vigilant and decisive Measures than the present in Canada."[148]

This became the pattern for Congress after Quebec. They would attempt to stir the Canadians with a letter or delegation and a small number of troops, ever hoping the Canadians would join the Revolution of their own volition and bolster the ranks. But after Quebec, the Canadian population began to sour on the Americans.[149] There was a second "siege" of Quebec in May, but it never came to blows given the fortified city also outnumbered the paltry American effort. George Washington wrote to Major-General John Thomas, who commanded the withdraw from Quebec, with an unfortunate realization. He did not scold Thomas, who had lost a cannon and lifted the siege, but instead told Thomas the "unfortunate affair has given a sad shock to our schemes in that quarter, and blasted the hope we entertained of reducing that fortress and the whole of Canada to our possession."[150] Weeks later, Washington wrote to General Schuyler recollecting the recent losses, commenting on the dire situation, and concluding that the "most vigorous exertions will be necessary to retrieve our circumstances there, and I am hopeful you will strain every nerve for that purpose. Unless it can be now done, Canada

[148] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 4, 67; John Hancock to General Schuyler 5/24/1776

[149] While the evidence for this is unclear, such claims do circulate, as they did in Burt, *U.S., G.B., B.N.A*, 8-9

[150] George Washington to Major-General Thomas. Philadelphia 24 May, 1776. In the mind of A.L. Burt, this is where Carleton should have done precisely what the Americans feared. In the early summer of 1776, Burt believes that Carleton "held the fate of the [British] Empire in his hands," but says that his "statesmen" instincts overwhelmed and overruled his soldierly ones, thus Carleton was too slow to act offensively. Burt, *U.S., G.B., B.N.A*, 10-11.

will be lost forever; the fatal consequences of which everyone must feel."[151] But Canada was all but lost by this point, and the retreating Americans did not instill any sense that they could turn the invasion around. On May 18th, an American commander surrendered to a numerically inferior force at what would become known as the Battle of the Cedars. The two men in charge were famously court-martialed, cashiered, and widely denounced for cowardice. John Adams called it "the first Stain upon American Arms," and recommended "most infamous Death" for a "most infamous Piece of Cowardice."[152]

The second effort to assail Quebec was more humiliating than the first, and from that realization it appears as if Congress abandoned the prospects of another invasion during the Revolution. Though they would continue to gain Canadian favor and induce them into rebellion, the invasions were all but over. It had become quite clear that although they would very much desire to possess Canada, or at the very least unsettle British rule there, "Congress never made effects adequate to the degree of importance attached to the enterprise by leading military authorities."[153] Though the Congress regularly pronounces "the absolute necessity of keeping possession of that Country [Canada]," their efforts never quite seemed to match.[154] To quote Benedict Arnold, "The junction of the Canadians with the colonies- an object which brought us into this country- is now at an end."[155]

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[151] George Washington to Major-General Schuyler. New York, 7 June, 1776

[152] John Adams to John Sullivan. June 23rd, 1776

[153] Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution*, 515

[154] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 4, 388; May 24th, 1776

[155] Benedict Arnold as quoted in Hatch, *Trust for Canada,* 219

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE FUTURE OF CANADA

After the second failure in Quebec, and British reinforcements, forced a gradual American retreat the American leaders put the quest for possession of Canada on hold. Significant events in the colonies would also change the course of the American Revolution. While the British gradually began pushing back the initial invasion of Canada, the American patriots were planning the two most important steps yet taken by the Second Continental Congress. In July, that Congress issued the Resolution for Independence, and affirm it two days later in the Declaration of Independence. The timeline for events thus far warrants reconsideration. The invasion of Canada began in June 1775 and concluded May 1776. Britain declared the colonies to be in a state of rebellion August 1775, but it was not until June 7th of 1776 that the Congress began debating the resolution of Richard Henry Lee, which asserted colonial independence. On June 11th the Congress appointed a committee of five: John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston, Roger Sherman, and most famously Thomas Jefferson to draft a declaration which affirmed their desire for independence. This desire was formally affirmed July 2nd, and the document chosen to announce this to world, the Declaration of Independence, was approved July 4th. With this formalization of intents, a rebellion officially became a revolution. What did that make the previous invasion of Canada?

Since the first American boots stepped foot into Canada, the aim was to conquer or claim the northern colonies as part of the United Colonies system. There had been no sign of giving Canadian lands back to Britain, nor was there mention of an independent union of Canadian colonies. This was not an invasion to harass or annoy, as previous sections illustrate, the Americans came to conquer. They articulated a desire to possess

Canada, and this did not change with the affirmation of independence. John Adams quipped in July that if "a declaration of independence had been declared seven months ago… We would be in possession of Canada."[156]

But at this point in 1776, the American Revolutionary War had only just begun. The United Colonies had not even become the United States as yet. Having reaffirmed their ideological position against Great Britain, Congress and the leaders in America also began to realize the level of neglect they had paid Canada since the first siege of Quebec on New Year's Eve. "Canada has been neglected too much," John Adams said to his "infinite Grief and Regret," and wrote to John Sullivan that the Americans have "thrown away Canada, in a most Scandalous Manner."[157] Many believed this was something which needed rectification. Fearing the British might finally mount a Canadian offensive, Adams proposed a proper return to Canada, that the Americans "must maintain our Power in Canada" before the British control of the region led to a myriad of undesirable outcomes.[158]

The Canadians themselves had yet to write off the Americans completely, and resurgences in support for the Continental armies shows that there was fertile ground for the rebellion in Canada.[159] At this stage in the Revolution, the Americans had been on the offensive and they could be painted as invaders or looters, as Governor Carleton had been

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[156] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 38 quotes Adams in July 1776

[157] The first quote is from John Adams to William Cushing: June 9, 1776. The second is John Adams to John Sullivan from June 23,1776.

[158] John Adams to James Warren: June 16, 1776. Adams suggests British regulars would have full navigation of the Great Lakes, and free communication with the Indian tribes along the border- which they will induce to "take up the Hatchet, and Spread Blood and Fire" against the colonists.

[159] Anderson, *14th Colony,* 352. Paraphrased.

prone to suggest. But Carleton has been criticized for a great many things since his successful defense of Quebec.[160] Knowing he could not trust the militia to do anything except defend their own homes, Carleton wisely stayed on the defensive. Critiques of his "softness" would lead to the command of General John Burgoyne. The invasion *from* Canada which the Americans so feared was finally underway. Burgoyne was able to develop his own plan for invasion, and commenced the attack on June 14th, 1777. But the invasion was doomed before it began. Burgoyne moved slowly, and after two small skirmishes near Saratoga, he surrendered his entire army on October 17th. This astounding victory by the American forces was instrumental for the future of the Revolution. Not only did it win the foreign aid the colonies so required, it also rekindled the idea of another invasion of Canada.[161] With the arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette, French assistance suddenly appeared as the perfect spark to reignite the American passion for Canada, and their belief in Canadian consent. French support, however, came with a new set of issues for American invasions into Canada.

After the establishment of a Franco-American alliance, it followed that both nations would want to claim, or reclaim, Canada. For France, the sting of 1763 was still fresh, though perhaps not as recent as the American invasion, the French had at least

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[160] Guy Carleton is heavily criticized for his actions in this period, some of which have been detailed already. In *Canada Invaded,* G.F.G Stanley utilizes two of the more common criticisms. First, for always believing in the ultimate goodwill of the French-Canadian population; towards himself and British policy generally. Stanley says that "it is astounding to the modern soldier that Carleton failed to take full advantage of the victory he had gained on June 8th" at Three Rivers." Stanley, *Canada Invaded*, 129. Though other historians have pointed this out in critiques of Stanley, but defense was all Carleton could muster given the state of the militia troops. Stanley cites other historians for his "delays and softness" in responding to the American arms. Stanley, *Canada Invaded*, 124

[161] Stanley, *Canada Invaded*, 145. The American-French alliance was signed a few months later: February 6th, 1778. Lanctot, Canada and the American Revolution, 168: The defeat of General Burgoyne only served to "reawaken the Colonial's hopes of conquering Canada," Congress appointed a new committee with a French copy of the Articles of Confederation and an invitation to join the other colonies.

possessed Canada outright. Stripping those lands from Great Britain was a boon to both France and the newly renamed United States of America. British officials had long feared the French would aid the Americans, and now they would have to contend with renewed uncertainties regarding the loyalties of their citizenry.[162] As historian A.L. Burt put it, the "entry of France into the war revived the project of conquering Canada," because it gave the Americans hope that what they "had not been able to do themselves, they might accomplish with the aid of their ally."[163]

While Montreal continued as the center of the patriot cause, other Canadian communities soon joined in. The River Penobscut community and the surrounding islands agitated in the days leading up to June 15, 1779. We know this because on that date British officials in Canada issued a proclamation seeking their re-adoption of the English constitution, and a voluntary "Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity to his Majesty."[164] Events such as this sparked Governor Carleton, in a letter to Haldimand, to list the "unsettled temper of the people," as one of the "great disadvantages" of a defensive war against the Americans.[165] The presence of France had seemingly revitalized the patriot cause in parts of Canada, as well as the invasion efforts from the United States.

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[162] These fears have already been touched upon in this chapter. As a reminder, Governor Haldimand believed the Canadians had generally "become adherent to the united cause of France and the Americans," that their general disposition favored rebellion, and that these fears included both French and English-speaking Canadians. Haldimand letters of June 7, June 18, and October 25 (all 1779, resp.)

[163] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & B.N.A.*, 11. From Lanctot, Canada and the American Revolution, 179: The Canadian delegates arrive at Philadelphia in February of 1779, saying they will join the war when France did.

[164] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 114. Proclamation of 15 June, 1779

[165] Guy Carleton to Frederick Haldimand, 10 June 1778. MG11/38, #42. Guy Carleton Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

The new ally to the Revolutionary cause had more soldiers than naval-focused Great Britain, but perhaps more importantly it also possessed "a fleet that qualified her command of the sea, and the ability to exert a tremendous pull upon the Canadian people, who were bound to her by ties of race and religion."[166] An alliance of such force also brought about renewed claims for Canada. George Clinton, future anti-federalist and two-time Vice President, penned the importance of maintaining possession of Canada as of "so great importance it deserves your utmost attention."[167] Massachusetts delegate Samuel Adams took such sentiments a step farther than most of his colleagues, promoting the belief that the United States "shall never be on solid Footing till Britain cedes to us what Nature designs we should have, or till we wrest it from her."[168]

Congress apparently shared the sentiments of Mr. Adams, for in January 1778 they resolved "[t]hat an irruption be made into Canada," and authorized "every necessary measure for the execution of the business… and apply for such sums of money as may be thought by them proper and requisite for the expedition."[169] The following month they charged Marquis de Lafayette with a future expedition into Canada.[170] Though they tasked Lafayette with such an "irruption," there was no actual plan for the invasion. Nor

[166] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & B.N.A.*, 11-12

[167] George Clinton letter to unknown recipient. November 4, 1778. CO5/1089, #155. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[168] Samuel Adams to James Warren. November 3, 1778. According to Sidney Lens, by 1778 "Samuel Adams, leader of the left wing of the Revolution, proposed to his compatriots that they set their sights beyond the thirteen original colonies toward the acquisition of Canada, Nova Scotia, and Florida as well." Lens, Forging of the American empire, 2

[169] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 10, 190; January 22nd, 1778

[170] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 10, 193; February 24, 1778

would there be for many more months. By March 13th, Congress suspended the Canadian invasion, and reordered Lafayette to join the main army.[171] In just a few months the tune changed from France providing the spark for a renewed invasion to Lafayette's 'irruption' cancelled and the commander relocated. What changed? Why did the United States not jump on this opportunity?

In what will be an exceedingly important development, George Washington may have axed the invasion. In his letter to the President of Congress only days later, Washington believed there to be "no prospect of prosecuting the intended expedition into Canada," and cited a likely defensive enemy with "little to be dreaded."[172] His letter to Major-General Armstrong was far clearer: "I shall say no more of the Canada expedition, than that it is at an end. I never was made acquainted with a single circumstance relating to it."[173] Washington was not quite ready, it would seem, to commit to another expedition just yet. But with the French alliance pitched in such promising terms, was Washington stalling or was he not yet vocalizing his concerns?

It would be many months before someone promoted another Canadian expedition. In October Gouverneur Morris, John Witherspoon, and William Drayton drafted a "Plan of attack upon Quebec." The trio believed that the United States "can never expect a more favorable Opportunity to dispossess the Enemy of Canada than the present," and included evidence of strong pro-American sentiments from the French-Canadians for

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[171] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 10, 253; March 13, 1778

[172] George Washington to the President of Congress. HEAD-QUARTERS, VALLEY FORGE. March 16, 1778

[173] George Washington to Major-General Armstrong. Headquarters, Valley Forge. March 27, 1778

good measure.[174] Another plan emerged that same month from Benjamin Franklin, read into session October 22nd. The importance aspects of his plan promoted peace on the frontiers, secure finances, the addition of two more states to the Union, a security of commerce, additional resources for the navy, and to secure the fisheries to the exclusion of Great Britain.[175] The Americans finally seemed determined enough to invade Canada once more. They had not one but two possible plans. As with the first invasion, they generally assumed Canadian desires for their intervention based on reports of local sentiment. They also promoted the necessity of the invasion, and the outright desire to possess Canada.

With the plans still in the drafting stages, however, a curious problem emerged. This problem illustrates precisely how much the Americans desired to possess and maintain Canada themselves. It is both a symptom of nascent American imperialism as well as a testament to American expansionism. When it seemed that the United States would finally be able to invade Canada once more, and they would surely conquer it with the aid of the French, the French themselves appeared to some as an obstacle to American expansionism. The Morris, Drayton, Lovell Plan was read into session December 5th, but so too was a response from George Washington.[176] This letter, a copy of which was sent to Mr. Henry Laurens, details Washington's fears that the French could occupy the city of Quebec with "intention to hold Canada, as a pledge and surety for the debts due to France from the United States, [or, under other specious pretences hold the place till they can

[174] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 10, 83; October 22, 1778

[175] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 11, 1042-48; October 22, 1778

[176] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 11, 1190. December 5, 1778.

find a bone for contention]."[177] The United States, Washington believed, could not contend with such a dispute, but even if the French did "not choose to renounce our friendship by a step of this kind," the risk of losing Canada under a joint invasion was deemed too great.[178]

After hearing both opinions, the Congress decided once more to suspend their efforts concerning the Canadian invasion. As with the March plan, the reason remained the same: fears of sharing the territory with France or losing Canada altogether. The importance of this development cannot be understated. Washington, and some other key Congressional leaders, saw sharing Canada as a path to losing Canada. The British province was deemed so important that the alliance with the French actually hindered American expansionist desires while simultaneously pointing to the truth of the Canadian expeditions. The United States wanted Canada to such a degree that even momentarily sharing it with France was out of the question. Perhaps the French claim on Canada appeared stronger than the British, or at least the Americans thought it so, and thus threatened the long-game plans of an American empire in North America. As such, Congress temporarily suspended these new plans as they awaited a plan that did not include French arms.

The following January, there was still some debate on the "plan proposed by Congress for the emancipation of Canada, in cooperation with an armament from France," which was the "principle subject" of the January 1st session.[179] Since at least

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[177] George Washington to Henry Laurens. November 14, 1778

[178] George Washington to Henry Laurens. November 14, 1778

[179] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 13, 11; January 11, 1779

before the October plans were nixed, Washington and others in Congress had been promoting their fears that the French might not be willing to share Canada, and this halted all cooperative efforts. The Americans must possess Canada outright, and they were evidently willing to wait for a time when they could accomplish the task themselves. Though Washington would publicly call the campaigns too expensive, or complex, or ill-timed, he privately intimated fears of sharing Canada with the French.[180] Even the plan directly proposed by Lafayette in August of 1778 came under such scrutiny. Henry Laurens privately assured Washington the plan did come from Lafayette himself, and "with purest motives," though he admitted there would be likely and "eventual mischiefs" when it came to sharing the territory afterwards.[181] A report from the Committee of Foreign Affairs expressed the same feelings from Washington, noting that though Congress had resolved to attack Canada next campaign, Washington opposed the plan submitted to him in this report due to fears of the French retaining Canada.[182]

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[180] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & B.N.A.*, 11-12. This even included a plan proposed by Lafayette directly. In a letter to the President of Congress, Washington said of the plan: "I am always happy to concur in sentiment with Congress, and I view the emancipation of Canada, as an object very interesting to the future prosperity and tranquility of these States; but I am sorry to say, the plan proposed for the purpose does not appear to me to be eligible under our present circumstances. I consider it as my duty, and what Congress will expect from me, to give my reasons for this opinion, with that frankness and candor, which the importance of the subject demands; and in doing this, I am persuaded I shall not fail to meet with their approbation….. On the other hand, if we were certain of doing our part, a co-operation by the French would, in my opinion, be as delicate and precarious an enterprize, as can be imagined." George Washington to the President of Congress. HEAD-QUARTERS, 11 November, 1778

[181] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 10, 229. Henry Laurens to George Washington. Washington's November 14, 1778 response intimates the same.

[182] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 10, 130; Committee of Foreign Affairs to George Washington. October 27, 1778. See also George Washington to the President of Congress. December 13, 1778. Multiple historians have come together in such assertions, some of which can be found in Conrad, *A Concise History of Canada,* 90. In Stanley, *War of 1812: Land Operations*, Stanley claims that a 1778 plan to attack Detroit, Niagara, Oswego, and Montreal by Congress was only scrapped by George Washington's fears of France not yielding Canada. Stanley, *War of 1812*, 29

The only thing that stopped a mutual Revolutionary invasion of Canada was the question of who would rule it afterwards.

The fears of sharing Canada prevented another expansionist effort, and the Revolutionary War marched on without another serious Northern campaign. The Americans still spoke of Canada in the same terms as they had since 1774, and continued to threaten Great Britain with the prospect of a unified invasion. These threats had decidedly engrossed the British leaders, and in October 1780 they sent a familiar messenger to the colonies to address the Franco-American situation. The proclamation of the now traitorous Brigadier General Benedict Arnold aimed to inspire the officers and soldiers of the Continental Army "who have the real interests of their Country at heart, and who are determined to no longer be the tools and dupes of Congress or of France," to join him.[183] British Colonial Office letters show that the British assumed the Americans planned to invade Canada multiple times after allying with the French, without realizing they ironically shared fears of French conquests with their former colonies. Haldimand regularly assumed American invasions, often exposing his fears of American expansionism. In July 1778, Haldimand wrote that the Americans were about to invade with "all the force they can collect," that the lower parts of Canada "most probably, will be lost to Great Britain forever," and laments the rotting fortifications of Quebec, the defenseless forts and posts, and that the "Canadians are not to be depended upon, especially if a French War breaks out."[184] Like Haldimand, Carleton also frequently

[183] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 119-121; Proclamation of Brig. Gen. Arnold. 20 October 1780

[184] Haldimand letter, 28 July 1778. In Haldimand's letter of 12 April 1781, he suggests returning Vermont as a British subject "must have the greatest effect in extinguishing the Rebellion." Haldimand

suspected an additional American campaign into Canada, but so did many other British officials.[185] One such letter from November 1780 shows that the British assumed an invasion was destined for the summer of 1781, reasoning that as the situation with the southern colonies worsened, "the more they will find it necessary to use every effort to make themselves Masters of Canada."[186] Canada is also referenced as the American last resource, which when captured could be used to fund additional campaigns.[187]

During the August session of 1779, the Congress resolved that if Great Britain continued to "obstinately persist in the prosecution of the present unjust war," the Congress instructed the American ministers to ally with France, offensively and defensively, under the conditions of taking "Canada, Nova Scotia, and Bermuda."[188] After adding the Floridas to the initial proposal, the vote passed in the affirmative, 24:6.[189] The leaders in the United States continually assumed their eventual invasion of Canada was both desired by the citizens of the country and would inevitably succeed. One such account comes from the letter of James Lovell to John Adams, commenting with respect to Canada that "they will fall to us of Course. I wish to have them acquaint

letters. 28 July 1778, B34:132-134 AND 12 April 1781, B35: 28-31 resp. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[185] In one such letter, Carleton was writing to warn of a future American incursion only to receive news of the peace treaty. Guy Carleton letters. 14 April 1783. Colonial Office Fond. CO5/109; #102. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[186] Colonial Office letter from 28 November 1780. CO4/14; #25. Colonial Office Fond. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[187] Ibid

[188] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 14; August 5, 1779

[189] Ibid

with the nature of our union. But I would not wish to be bound to carry an Expedition into their Country till their Friendship was certain and quite General."[190] As with the first invasions, the Americans responded to the regular resurgences of patriot spirit in Canada with claims of local support which could advise on the "practicality of uniting the Province with the Confederated States."[191] The American plans to possess Canada had not ceased completely with the rejection of French support, but they had shifted further away from military means.

THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION AND PERPETUAL UNION

As fears of sharing Canada with the French dampened the latest efforts of a military invasion, the American plans shifted back towards legislative efforts. Just as the Declaration of Independence was viewed as a tool for encouraging Canadian support, so too was the other crucial document passed by the Second Continental Congress. Having failed to garner interest through the various letters to the Canadian inhabitants, the newly created Articles of Confederation also included a measure for securing Canada to the Union. Created in November of 1777, though not ratified until March 1, 1781, the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union essentially justified the governing actions of the Congress in a formalized text. The Articles of Confederation was an intensely flawed document from the outset. The inability of the government created through the Articles to actually accomplish meaningful reform or governance is often the loudest

[190] Letters of the Delegates to Congress, Volume 8, 362; James Lovell to John Adams. December 1, 1777

[191] Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 25, 890; Samuel Adams letter read into session on February 4, 1783. The name of the informant is left blank

critique, one that persists until the eventual creation of a new Constitution of the United States.

Article XI warrants special attention, however. The document states in clear and obvious language that Canada, if it so desired, was the only colony entitled to instantly join the current United States of America with all existing advantages and without the required consent of the other states.[192] A few things merit attention here. In the first matter, Canada is the only colony outside of the original thirteen to warrant this special attention. East and West Florida could have become the 14th and 15th colonies, but both had remained loyal to Great Britain. Canada also garnered an exception to the polices of the Articles. One of the many drawbacks to this form of government was that it required unanimous consent of the states to accomplish any task; but granting Canada automatic admittance assumes that this measure gained such consent. An additional object of attention regarding Article XI is the required Canadian accession to Confederation. The wording of this article suggests that the Americans had given up persuasion by force, for the moment anyway, but they still desperately desired Canada. As the United States granted no other potential territorial addition the same exceptions or privileges, this clearly demonstrates the American desire to possess Canada was still appealing even after the failures in Quebec. It also illustrates that Canada unequivocally retained its place as a future object of American expansionism.[193] The first governmental document of the

[192] The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. 1777. Articles created November 15, 1777 and ratified March 1, 1781. https://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/articles-of-confederation

The full Article reads as follows: Canada acceding to this confederation, and joining in the measures of the united states, shall be admitted into, and entitled to all the advantages of this union: but no other colony shall be admitted into the same, unless such admission be agreed to by nine states.

[193] An older, but no less interesting, interpretation of this comes from Murray Lawson's 1952 "Canada and the Articles of Confederation" article. In comparing the wartime Articles to the peacetime

United States included Canada in its plan for future "Perpetual Union," and granted it a special place in their designs.

After the creation and ultimate ratification of the Articles, the American Revolution began to march towards eventual victory and independence. But before the final surrender of Cornwallis in 1781, the Americans were still formulating plans to once more invade Canada. In 1780, the people of Connecticut met to "urge the acquisition of Canada as a measure of protection for the frontiers," stating that conquest would be easy considering, they said, the Canadians desired it and it would "destroy the effects of the Quebec Act."[194] Many Americans still believed in the eventual uprising of the Canadians, and of their ultimate addition to the United States, but the direct means of instigating such a result were still unclear. The proposals incorporating French-support had failed, largely due to the fears of George Washington regarding the difficulties from a joint-occupation of Canada. Rather than risk a future fallout with the French, Washington was planning another American expedition that would not require the aid of France. Stating that the annexation of Canada was a matter of "great concern," to the United States, in 1781

Constitution, Lawson suggests "the fear that the Revolutionary cause would be imperiled if Canada were permitted to return to its former French role as a base of anti-American military and Indian operations" (Lawson, "Canada and the Articles of Confederation," 39) was the cause for Article XI, which "had its origin in the tense military situation of the first few years of the Revolutionary struggle, when the harassing fear that Canada might become 'a nest of hornets on our backs that will sting us to the quick' was rife, it is not at all surprising that the Constitution, which was conceived in a time of peace, does not contain any provision for the admission of Canada into the Union" (Lawson, "Canada and the Articles of Confederation," 53). Murray Lawson. "Canada and the Articles of Confederation." *American Historical Review*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Oct., 1952), pp. 39-54. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1844786 (Accessed: 30-05-2019 17:39 UTC)

[194] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution*, 194. August 30, 1780 meeting.

Washington had created a new plan for a Canadian expedition.[195] Washington was, however, too late to actually implement the plan. Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown on October 17th, 1781 and effectively ended the British efforts to quell the American Revolution. But the fact that it was Washington who had yet to abandon the invasion plans is particularly significant. Washington's refusal to invade with the help of the French does not mean he had abandoned the northern colonies in Canada. It simply means he saw far too much danger in *sharing* the spoils of Canada with the French, who had very recently controlled the territory themselves.

Despite whatever plans the Americans retained, and despite their hopes for inspiring Canada to join the Revolution, with the surrender at Yorktown the military portion of the war had concluded. But this does not mean the American desire to possess Canada had been sated, nor did it mean the Americans were out of plans to acquire the Canadas. The United States still held one final card in their negotiations with their former mother-country, one which lay at the heart of their invasion and the fears of the British Empire. The British assumed that the Americans would not be satisfied unless Canada joined the Union, and the Americans assumed Great Britain did not have the means to secure Canada from them without extensive, and ultimately pointless, costs.

Thus was born the idea that the United States would request the additional territory of Canada along with their independence. Canadian historian W.L. Morton summarized the American position as wanting "independence and the unity of the British North America of 1763, together with the resumption of trade and re-entry into the

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[195] Lanctot, *Canada and the American Revolution,* 207. Schuyler's letters illustrate how a complete lack of any real plan for the Canadian invasion was ever issued from Congress. It was Washington or Schuyler himself. Anderson, *14th Colony*, 119

northeastern fisheries," which the cessation of Canada (including Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Hudson Bay territories) could have easily accomplished three of those four requests.[196] Benjamin Franklin was a forceful advocate of the policy, and may have been the first to openly promote. As early as September 1776, Franklin had drafted a set of possible peace terms which included a provision for the British cession of the Canadian provinces, East and West Florida, Bermuda, and the Bahamas. "It is absolutely necessary for us to have them," he wrote, "for our own security."[197] Franklin is quoted as suggesting that "there could be no dependence on Peace and good Neighborhood," while Canada was under a different government," and he regularly brought up the opinion during letters with his British counterparts.[198] In his conversation with the British representative Richard Oswald, Franklin gave two sets of peace recommendations, and his "advisable" terms to true reconciliation included all of Canada.[199] While there is some debate on how amiable Mr. Oswald was to this idea, British Secretary Earl Shelbourne was decidedly not sympathetic, and thus only the proposals Franklin deemed necessary made it to the documents of October 4 and November 30, 1782.[200] In his letters with John

[196] Morton, *Canadian Identity,* 22

[197] Benjamin Franklin, *Memoirs*, 45. Sketch of Propositions for Peace, 1776.

[198] Mary A Giunta, Dane Hartgrove, and Mary-Jane M. Dowd. *The Emerging Nation: A Documentary History of the Foreign Relations of the United States Under the Articles of Confederation, 1780-1789*. (Washington, DC: National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 1996), 505-09. Cites the letters between British representative Richard Oswald and British Secretary of State for the Americas the Earl of Shelbourne, August 11 and 13, 1782. In Franklin's letters, the 3rd Necessary article reads: "A confinement of the boundaries of Canada; at least to what they were before the last act of Parliament, I think in 1774, if not to a still more contracted state, on an ancient footing." In the Advisable category, 4th listed is: "Giving up every part of Canada."

[199] Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 38. Stanley, *War of 1812,* 30.

[200] Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 44. Perkins says that though Oswald was indeed sympathetic to Franklin, and considered a cessation of Canada, Earl Shelbourne quashed such ideas quickly. Carleton was also of alleged support to the cessation of Canada. In a letter

Adams, we can glean more of the story. Adams retells of his speculation with a British official on the very suggestion of Franklin, if there could be peace while the British retained Canada. Adams suggested that there was "no motive that we had to be anxious for a peace," and if the nation was not "ripe for it upon proper terms, we might wait patiently till they should be so."[201] After confirming Franklin's agreement, in his next letter Adams wrote that if "there is a real disposition to permit Canada to accede to the American association, I should think there would be no great difficulty in adjusting all things between England and America, provided our allies are contented too."[202] Though Adams backed down on forcing this as an article in the peace treaty, his intentions, and Franklin's, are clear.

This dichotomy of *necessary* versus *advisable* articles of the peace treaty is an interesting one. In one letter, the American peace commissioner was given formal instructions to ensure Canada and Nova Scotia were ceded if possible, but a "desire of terminating the war hath induced us not to make the acquisition of these objects an ultimatum on the present occasion."[203] If the Americans so desired Canada, why did they not hinge the peace on such resolutions? Why had Franklin and Adams been so adamant

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from James Madison to Edmund Randolph, Madison tells of how Carleton, through proxy, mentions that Canada "would probably be given up as a fourteenth member of the Confederacy." James Madison to Edmund Randolph. August 13, 1782. According to W.L. Morton, however, the proposal "was not thought audacious and was reported by the British representative," but it was actually "the protests of George III, the need to preserve a refuge for the loyalists and to maintain in Quebec and Halifax a strategic check on the new republic," which combined to block so simple a solution. Morton, *Canadian Identity,* 22

[201] John Adams to Benjamin Franklin. April 16, 1782

[202] John Adams to Benjamin Franklin. May 2, 1782. Franklin wrote in-between on April 20th. A summary of the three letters is also found in Giunta, *Emerging Nation*, 338 and 371

[203] Lawson, "Canada and the Articles," 51-52.

that peace could not occur without Canada, only to remove such intimations from the treaty? The answer had been the same as before the Revolution: The Americans assumed their merger with Canada was inevitable. Be it from population growth and migration, a future treaty, or perhaps even another war, the Americans had not given up Canada. On the contrary, they continually referenced Canada as the 14th Colony. British peace commissioner David Hartley summarized the international belief when he suggested "Canada has always been in their thoughts" that the United States "would give anything to acquire the remaining part of America, now in British possession, to make their own station complete."[204]

The 1783 Treaty of Paris concluded without the acquisition of Canada, though it is said that neither side considered the agreement final.[205] Carleton and British leaders requested reinforcements, additional ordinance, and building projects to upgrade their forts and build new ones to hold key points against the next barrage.[206] Efforts by the Canadians to create an Assembly, perhaps inspired by the Revolution, were deemed to be poisonous ideas, and British officials debated ways to place Canada on "better footing" than the American states to secure both their loyalty and the jealousy of the United States

[204] Giunta, *Emerging Nation,* 860. Cites David Hartley to Charles James Fox. June 5, 1783. A series of letters between Chevalier de la Luzernete and the Comte de Vergennes suggests that the international community felt the same as the Americans. Samuel Adams is cited as being continually in favor of attacking Canada (103), and that all of his "resources and intrigues" would push "towards the conquest of Canada and Nova Scotia" Giunta, *Emerging Nation,* 313-314

[205] Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 47

[206] Letters of British Officials. WO1/3; #204, 214, 276, and 304. British War Office Fond. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

instead.[207] The British also began a policy for Loyalist relocation. Many officials suggested New England, especially Vermont, should be the target "under the pretense of protecting the frontiers," while advocating a secret treaty to recognize the disgruntled colony as British once more.[208] Official government proclamations stated that Quebec would be the lands given to Loyalists and non-commissioned officers in 50-acre plots.[209] The decision to not only allow but promote American migration to Canada would be a heavily criticized decision in the coming years. The Americans had already assumed one path to Canada was through migration, and these proclamations curiously enabled such a route in the years leading to the War of 1812.

For many in North America, the American Revolution remained unfinished. British North America had fractured, but the future of the new United States of America, indeed of the entire North American continent, was wildly uncertain. The American Revolution had accomplished its most important goal, independence, but just as Upper and Lower Canada remained unconquered so too did Great Britain remain firmly entrenched on the continent. Even as the Paris Treaty was signed and the plans to annex Canada through treaty failed, there was little to dull American expansionism. As the United States filled in the lands stripped by the Quebec Act, it soon longed for lands

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[207] Letters of British Officials. CO42/17; #138. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[208] Letters of British Officials. CO42. MG11, B26:128. Colonial Office Fonds. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[209] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 126. The Additional Instructions to Haldimand, 16 July 1783. Feb 28, 1786 also issued yet another proclamation for pardoning desertion. Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 133. 28 Feb 1786 Proclamation of Henry Hope, Lt. Gov of Quebec. Canada was also promoted in the Address and Petition of the Loyal Inhabitants and Refugees of New York, 10 August 1782. Various letters. CO5/82; #319-325 Colonial Office Fond. Library and Archives of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

West, beyond the Mississippi. But as the new republic spread out, Canada remained that Sword of Damocles, that symbol of continental encirclement and clear reminder that their former colonial masters remained dangerously close. As the next chapters will show, Canada retained its significance as a desire of American expansionism for various reasons, but mostly importantly as a key piece of the future American empire many Founders hoped to build.

CHAPTER THREE

EMPIRE IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

The conquest of Canada held a pivotal place in the early designs for the American empire. To the leaders of the American Revolution, it "seemed a matter of first importance to bring about the union of Canada with the revolting colonies," and controlling Canada was "necessary for our own security" at the very least.[1] Independence without Canada was perceived as creating a major security problem for the future United States. The Union was considered "yet incomplete, & will be so, until the inhabitants of all the territory from Cape Breton to the Mississippi are included in it."[2] Canada was essential, because "as long as Great Britain shall have Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas, or any of them, so long will Great Britain be the enemy of the United States, let her disguise it as much as she will."[3] Though issues of security are often coupled with expansionism, Americans have continually underestimated the extent to which many in the young United States assumed a future continental destiny, how frequently they advocated empire and expansionism, and the integral role of Canada in such constructions.

Expansionism had been a built-in feature of the early United States. Many leaders, even George Washington, saw it as a matter of national survival.[4] Washington is said to

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[1] Julius Pratt. *Expansionists of 1812.* (P. Smith: 1949), 17-18

[2] George Mason to R.H. Lee. July 21, 1778

[3] John Adams to Samuel Adams. July 28, 1778

[4] Dale Van Every, *Ark of Empire: The American Frontier, 1784-1803.* (NY: William Morrow and Company, 1963), 7. Especially westward expansion.

have "devoted all of the first years of his public life to opening the first way west," and many of his letters after the Revolution illustrate how expansionism and policy were intertwined.[5] While it is a sort of truism that all nations seek to expand, the United States had a plan, a specific vision, which went well beyond the basic extension of borders. For Washington and many of the other Founders, the growth of an American empire was an essential element of statecraft. Washington worried that as the United States expanded, the West might become disconnected from the coastal states and split off, and form their own interests and connections. To avoid this dilemma, he advocated a "project which I think is big with great political, as well as Commercial consequences to these States," which was to extend inland river navigation.[6] In this same letter, Washington envisioned not only the future past the Mississippi, but even "the country of California" as a potential border conflict. The empire would expand, and he devised methods to ensure that the coastal states remained connected to the new additions no matter how far away they stretched.

One of the more interesting debates between the early states was which state would be honored with the "seat of the empire." In their efforts to keep the United States centered and connected to the ever-growing empire, the location of the nation's capital was crucial. Creating a new capital was not such a simple decision, however. Debates over a central location created fears of isolating New York and Virginia. The New Jersey cities of Princeton and Trenton both briefly served as the capital, and Trenton was also considered as a permanent locale. Washington had rebuffed suggestions regarding the

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[5] Van Every, *Ark of Empire*, 8.

[6] From George Washington to David Humphreys. July 25, 1785

banks of the Delaware as "demonstrably wrong," as that location was "very improperly placed for the seat of the Empire."[7] A pair of newspapers, one in Philadelphia and the other New York, contained a small spat over which of the two cities should be the seat of the American empire after the constitutional debates, only to learn that Washington, D.C. was founded with that honor.[8] The creation of an imperial metropolis brought out the sectionalism that many Americans feared could split their new republic, but compromise saved the day for the moment.

As was often the case for the young United States, there was no fear or rejection regarding labels of empire; they assumed such a creation as inevitable. That no matter how "unimportant America may be considered at present, and however Britain may affect to despise her trade," American leaders like Washington knew there "will assuredly come a day, when this country will have some weight in the scale of empires."[9] Other founders made sure to consider policy decisions in light of two important factors: Would it preserve the unity of the empire, and did it support "the dignity and splendor of the American empire" as they saw it.[10] Ben Franklin related the United States to a young Hercules in his cradle, strangling two serpents with France acting as Minerva, and wanted

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[7] Washington to Richard Henry Lee, President of Congress. MOUNT VERNON, 8 February, 1785 and Washington to William Grayson. MOUNT VERNON, 22 June, 1785

[8] *New York Gazette*, 1/16/1789. Papers in New York and Philadelphia dual over who should be the "seat of the American empire." *The Herald, Gazette for the Country*, February 2, 1795. D.C. has been founded as the seat of empire.

[9] George Washington to the Marquis De Lafayette. August 15, 1786

[10] *The Debates on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution in the Convention held at Philadelphia in 1787, with a Diary of the Debates of the Congress of the Confederation as reported by James Madison, revised and newly arranged by Jonathan Elliot. Complete in One Volume. Vol. V. Supplement to Elliot's Debates* (Philadelphia, 1836). https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1909. The quotes come from February 21 and July 7 sessions.

to have the image struck as a medal because it "gives a presage of the future force of our growing empire."[11] George Washington often referenced a "rising American empire," and used the language in everyday letters as well as his official will.[12]

In many of his publications, including his Federalist papers advocating the adoption of the Constitution, Alexander Hamilton often referenced the American empire. Hamilton has remained one of the more popular expansionists, and through his advocacy for a "Republican Empire," created a term for the future United States almost as expressive as Jefferson's Empire of Liberty or Washington's rising American Empire. Karl Frederick Walling, a noted Hamilton historian, classified the interpretations of Hamilton as a mix between government based on consent and the Latin *imperare*, to rule.[13] For scholars like Walling, Hamilton is a hawk yet not a militarist, as he actively promoted avoidance of war when possible, fought to preserve both civil and political liberties during wars, and yet "was most responsible for the unprecedented ability of the United States to combine great power and liberty."[14] Hamilton can then be presented as a Founder which saw no "viable alternative to transferring the United States into a great

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[11] Benjamin Franklin to Robert Livingston. March 4, 1782. Franklin's classical allegories did not always present the United States in a strictly positive situation. In a letter to David Hartley, he describes the Americans as the Sabine girls were France and England to form a compact of friendship. While he meant it as the country would be "uniting in perpetual peace her father and her husband," the imagery of the Rape of the Sabines is less than flattering. Benjamin Franklin to David Hartley, October 16, 1783

[12] The Will of George Washington. George Washington. *The Writings of George Washington*, collected and edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1890). Vol. XIV (1798-1799). Accessed 4/8/2019. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2418#lf1450-14_head_125

[13] Karl-Frederick Walling. *Republican Empire: Alexander Hamilton on War and Free Government.* (University of Kansas, 1999), 96 and 97

[14] Walling, *Republican Empire,* 5. Walling calls the view of a militarist Hamilton a "caricature" of his statecraft, which was paradoxically "much more like Machiavelli... and at the same time fundamentally opposed to a kind of politics that we usually call Machiavellian." Walling, *Republican Empire,*15

empire," often using America's "sense of themselves as a quasi-chosen people" to create firm emotional bonds to the Union.[15] Through the ideas of men such as Alexander Hamilton, the United States was able to openly advocate empire while retaining their advocacy for liberty and the consent of the governed. According to historians like Walling, Hamilton spent most of his career "trying to reconcile the necessity of empire with the moral authority of consent."[16]

Any of Hamilton's many works could readily illustrate such efforts, but they are extensively present in the portions of the *Federalist* he authored. Opening with *Federalist #1*, Hamilton calls the United States "an empire in many respects the most interesting in the world," which most now decide the fate of "nothing less than the existence of the UNION, [and] the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed."[17] Other essays, notably numbers 13, 22, and 23, each spoke of the Union of the United States as an empire.[18] Hamilton's contributions to the Federalist Papers presents options for the

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[15] Walling, *Republican Empire,* 14-15

[16] Walling, *Republican Empire,* 154. Walling says that for Hamilton the fundamental question of 1787 was if "a representative democracy, a term which he may well have coined, could generate the leadership required to build and sustain a great empire." The fate of the republic and the empire were mutually dependent for Hamilton. Walling, *Republican Empire,* 116

[17] *Federalist* #1. The works of Alexander Hamilton are contained in two sources. Hamilton, Alexander. *The Works of Alexander Hamilton,* ed. Henry Cabot Lodge (Federal Edition) (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904). In 12 vols. 6/7/2019. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1712. AND Hamilton, Alexander. *The Revolutionary Writings of Alexander Hamilton,* edited and with an Introduction by Richard B. Vernier, with a Foreword by Joyce O. Appleby (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008). 6/7/2019. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2121

[18] *Federalist* #13 speculates upon the dismemberment of the empire, noting that the arguments "seem generally turned towards three confederacies—one consisting of the four Northern, another of the four Middle, and a third of the five Southern States." #22 says that "The fabric of American empire ought to rest on the solid basis of the consent of the people. The streams of national power ought to flow immediately from that pure original fountain of all legitimate authority." #23 argued in in favor of an energetic government; "for any other can certainly never preserve the Union of so large an empire."

United States on how to become a great power without turning to military despotism.[19] But they also open the path to empire. Hamilton suggests land powers could use "accidents of geography" to expand and so proposed sea power, like that of Great Britain, as a way to preserve the union, reduce the reliance on a large standing army, protect free-trade and commerce, but not have the imagery of a standing army.[20] In this example, scholars such as Walling point out that such a system gave Britain an empire, and Hamilton gave no examples of how "Americans could lead the New World without dominating it like an Old World Empire."[21] Worse yet, without an army the militia system put the conquest of Canada "as out of the reach of a militia operation," for Hamilton.[22] In other essays and letters, Hamilton spoke of the United States as the "embryo of a great empire," that with a little time even some of the individual states would become powerful empires themselves.[23] In an 1802 letter to Charles Pinckney, Hamilton wrote that "the unity of our empire and the best interests of our nation require that we shall annex to the United States all the territory east of the Mississippi, New

[19] Walling, *Republican Empire* 95

[20] Walling, *Republican Empire* 109-110

[21] Walling, *Republican Empire* 115

[22] Alexander Hamilton. *Americanus* I. February 1, 1794. In this essay, Hamilton believes the militia, while an "excellent auxiliary for internal defence [sic], could not be advantageously employed in distant expeditions, requiring time and perseverance. For these, men regularly engaged for a competent period are indispensable."

[23] Alexander Hamilton. *Camillus* No. II and Hamilton to James Duane. September 3, 1780. This is an assertion which attained a great degree of truth given the contemporary state of California as the 5th largest GDP in the world as of 2018.

Orleans included."[24] Hamilton even dubbed members of Congress as not only legislators, but says that each man should be regarded as "a founder of an empire."[25]

Such expansionist terms or plans like those of Hamilton were quite common for the Founders and other notable American leaders. James Madison suggested in 1785 that if anyone looks at the Mississippi as "an object not to be sought or desired by the United States," he believed they "frame their policies on both very narrow and very delusive foundations."[26] Two years later he penned a letter to Thomas Jefferson informing him that the "Spanish project sleeps," that the desire to take control of the Mississippi was being led by the local populations which "are already in great agitation and are taking measures for uniting their consultations."[27] Madison suggested that even in 1787, certain "British partisans are already feeling the pulse of some of the West settlements."[28] John Rutledge, who would eventually succeed John Jay as Chief Justice, pitched debates in 1787 as though the members "are laying the foundation for a great empire," and as such "ought to take a permanent view of the subject and not look at the present moment only."[29] Gouverneur Morris called the general attitude of American imperialism a "lust for dominion," which some have called a precursor to Manifest Destiny.[30]

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[24] Alexander Hamilton to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. December 29, 1802

[25] Alexander Hamilton: Publius Letter #3. November 16, 1778

[26] James Madison to Marquis de Lafayette. March 20, 1785

[27] James Madison to Thomas Jefferson. March 19, 1787

[28] James Madison to Thomas Jefferson. March 19, 1787

[29] James Madison, *The Debates on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution in the Convention*. Wednesday August 29, 1787.

[30] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation,* 131

Newspapers in frontier states printed reports mentioning the Great Lakes on the "boundaries of the American empire," as targets of expansion, and also how the population of Canada will "embrace the cause of the United States with pleasure" if ceded.[31] The presence of frontiersmen, which are often characterized as possessing an "insatiable rage" at having their expansion "checked and kept within the bounds set for them by the general government," certainly aided the situation for American leaders.[32] Even if the frontiersmen would be characterized as "generally the most disorderly of the people," emboldened into committing offences against their neighbors given their distance from the government, such offenses often gave the American leaders a necessary excuse. In this case, it was Ben Franklin suggesting that since the frontiersmen would behave in such a way, and as the "territory of the United States, and that of Canada, by long extended frontiers, touch each other," it would be "practicable" to remove such situations which "may give occasion for future wars." The unruly nature of frontiersmen meant that Canada should be a gift to the United States to "make a peace durable."[33]

CANADA AFTER THE CONSTITUTION

After the American Revolution, the United States struggled under the government they had created during the war. The Articles of Confederation were essentially justifying the actions of the Continental Congress, but without the unifying force of the Revolution, partisan politics threatened to undue recent gains. The United States had accomplished what is often called an "unparalleled feat of successful rebellion against the world's

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[31] *Carlisle Gazette*, 10/25/1786

[32] Van Every, *Ark of Empire*, 25. Quotation belongs to James Seagrove, Agent to the Creek.

[33] Ben Franklin. "Notes for Conversation (Volume IX)"

mightiest empire,"[34] but could quickly crumble under the numerous inadequacies of the Articles; most notably the requirement for unanimous consent. The shift from the Articles to the Constitution was another miraculous step in solidifying the future of the United States, but it also represented a shift in ideologies of expansionism and the possible extent of a republic.[35] The expansion of the Union, strengthened by the Constitution, came with the belief that empire and liberty were not mutually exclusive. In an article from the *Gazette of the United States,* the author outlines such principles in their challenge to critics of the federalized Union of States: "By Union we conquered, and by Union alone can the glory of the American empire be established."[36]

Articulating the subject of transforming the United States into something bigger or stronger, into a more perfect Union, found varied expressions in the years after the Revolution. There are simple examples, discussing the new United States as both an American and a federal empire.[37] There are predictions of which neighbors the United States should absorb next as the foundations of their empire: Canada was often joined by Louisiana and Florida.[38] Many simply took an active interest in creating the empire, such as when John Adams dubbed the rising of an empire of liberty in America his "hobby-

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[34] Weeks, *Building the Continental Empire,* 14

[35] The theories of Montesquieu were consistently brought up as a countermeasure to the Federal Constitution. The proper size of a republic was still argued to be small, that if the empire became too large, the United States could not govern it effectively while maintaining the principles it had thus far created. While much of the Federalist Papers refute such assumptions, often citing a diversity of interests or the equality of states, expansionism was also promoted as a solution to sectionalism. See Book IX of *Spirit of the Laws.*

[36] *Gazette of the United States*. June 16, 1790. p492

[37] *New York Packet*, 2/30/1786

[38] *Massachusetts Gazette*, 4/17/1786. Lists Louisiana, Florida, and Acadia as the logical targets.

horse."[39] The Union is often expressed as the unique foundation of the American Empire,[40] and July 4th as the day which "gave birth to the American empire."[41] Foreign visitors to the young United States marveled at the "prospect of the grandeurs of the American empire."[42] Some papers as early as 1789 began calling George Washington the "illustrious President of the American Empire," which fit in nicely with the creation of Washington, D.C. in 1790.[43] There exists an endless and myriad list of expressions used by Americans of all classes to go with the more popular expressions of the Founders themselves. For every description of a rising American empire or hope to create an Empire of Liberty there were more direct assertions of conquest. In his letter to James Warren, Sam Adams sought the conquest of the Floridas, Canada, and Nova Scotia on the grounds that "We shall never be on a solid Footing till Great Britain cedes to us what Nature designs we sh[ould] have or we wrest it from her."[44]

Intertwining notions of security with foreign borders is nothing new, nor is the belief in "natural" boundaries of states and peoples. But for the United States, the "Problem of Neighborhood" as historian James Lewis calls it, extended well beyond the

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[39] John Adams to Count Sarsfield. February 3, 1786

[40] *New Hampshire Spy*, September 30, 1788

[41] *New Haven Gazette*, July 10, 1788. *The Pennsylvania Evening Post* of July 29, 1777 dubbed the previous July 4th as the "first anniversary of the glorious formation of the American empire." Toasts recorded in the *Salem Mercury*, July 8, 1788 cheered to the hope that "May Liberty ever be preserved in this American Empire."

[42] *Boston Evening Post*, August 9, 1783. *The New Jersey Journal*, January 4, 1792 reprints a French piece calling the United States an empire.

[43] *New Hampshire Gazette*, 4/22/1789. Contains a "brief account of the illustrious President of the American Empire."

[44] Samuel Adams to James Warren. November 3, 1778

norm.[45] When one considers an entire continent their natural right, certain borders become less of a barrier and more of an excuse. In the early United States, the difference between a good neighbor and a bad neighbor was a simple one: the Americans desired to be the only powerful empire on the block. During the early national period, much of the common ground between leading policymakers arose from "their broadly shared ideas about the American union and its place in the world."[46] Many leading policymakers promoted ideas which assumed that "multiple sovereign nations, whether individual states or partial confederations, in a single neighborhood could not coexist peacefully."[47] A popular notion became that to preserve the Union against the local empires of Britain, Spain, and possibly France, it must expand to match them: preferably at the expense of those empires.[48] A strong federal union of states became our answer to this "problem of neighborhood," scholars like James Lewis suggest, and the United States would be able to expand as the only independent nation in a continent filled with colonies and loosely collected groups of Amerindians.

Before the United States set its aim on the lands of the crumbling Spanish empire, it looked to the neighbors to the North for conquest and to address the issue of

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[45] One of the best and most lasting interpretations of this problem comes from James Lewis. *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829.* Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998.

[46] Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood,* 3

[47] Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood,* 5

[48] Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood*, 5-6. "Finally, the Founders recognized the importance of union for the goal of territorial expansion." Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood*, 8. Consider the size of territory the United States acquired. The Louisiana Purchase is roughly 828k square miles, the Mexican Cession was 529k, Texas real border are too disputed but are currently 268k. Quebec and Ontario would have added 527k and 354k square miles respectively. Alaska is also roughly 663k square miles.

neighborhood with the British province. During these first year of the early United States, there were important developments in Canada as well. The creation of Upper and Lower Canada formally occurred in February 1791.[49] As their American neighbors continually expressed desire to spread into the North and West, the British rulers in the two Canadas noticed an alarming trend: The spirit of the American Revolution had not eroded. In 1789, the Colonial Office called the demeanor of the Canadians a "calamity that threatens them," and British officials "found the whole country so infected as scarcely to leave a hope of assembly from the new subjects."[50] The real problem for the British in Canada was actually one of their own making. In the later years of the Revolution, Britain suggested Loyalist migration, both to increase the population (and thus possible defenders) of Canada and to gradually fill the frontiers with loyal subjects. But this migration would prove to be double-edged. Worse yet, it attracted American immigrants not strictly defined as Loyalist. Upper Canada's Lt. Governor Simcoe essentially encouraged American immigration in 1791 by raising "interesting questions in the provincial legislature" as to the legal status of Americans in Canada.[51] Upper Canada was "being flooded by immigrants from south of the line," who were focused only on land and seemingly did not care which flag they lived under.[52] In actuality, this deluge of Americans was pushing the frontier into Canada as Loyalist settlement pulled it further

[49] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 157-58. Creates Upper and Lower Canada on February 25, 1791.

[50] Colonial Office Fond. CO4/14; #212. Second quote from is from Lord Dorchester cited in Burt, 168

[51] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America,* 182-83

[52] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America,* 182-83

North.[53] So long as the Amerindian peoples blocked westward expansion, the comparatively empty lands of Canada seemed a far more tempting target.

Beginning in 1794, an unexpected string of events occurred which illustrates just how influential the new American immigrants were to Canada. In April of 1794, Montreal experienced a riot which "paralyzed the local magistrates," causing Lord Dorchester to write to London that "Lower Canada is more exposed to inroads since peace by increase of population and mutual intercourse on all sides."[54] He also reported a rumor that the people of Vermont had "offered to conquer Canada if they were allowed to plunder it," referencing the general fears of British officials that Ira Allen and the Green Mountain Boys were plotting to overthrow the British in Canada.[55] Increased outbreaks of violence in Canada continued into 1796, showing that United States was an "uncomfortable and possibly dangerous neighbor to Canada" and Quebec's British government.[56] When Great Britain and Revolutionary France went to war, the umpteenth iteration of the Anglo-French wars brought with it an expansive set of problems, some of which would spill over into the United States. The old fears of a unified Franco-American invasion naturally resurfaced in Canada, but the discourse in America had not changed much since 1775. Canada was still the prize, that much had not changed. This new war, and the resulting conflict with Napoleonic France, would bring with it a fairly

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[53] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America,* 181

[54] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 168

[55] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 168 and 170-71. This "persistent suspicion," was especially problematic when Allen was caught with arms the Canadians assumed were for conquest.

[56] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 170

sizeable distraction, and a unique opportunity to expand the United States to the tune of 828,000 square miles.

EMPIRE OF LIBERTY: THE JEFFERSONIAN ERA

President Washington contended with the first uncomfortable eruptions from the French Revolution in the United States, especially those instigated by Citizen genet, and the problems caused by the French Revolution bled into the term of John Adams as well. From the XYZ Affair to the Quasi War with France, there had already been considerable disruptions in the United States before the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. But from the Presidency of Jefferson one can clearly see that the expansionist impulse had become thoroughly ingrained in the fabric of the Union. Once a Democratic-Republican bent on limiting federal powers and adhering to a strict interpretation of the Constitution, Jefferson as President swiftly embraced the practicalities of Federalism and behaved as if, to quote Peter Onuf, he truly "cherished an imperial vision for the new American nation."[57]

Jefferson has become infamous for the duality of his thoughts, but a noteworthy combination is how Jefferson's agrarian "yeoman farmer" vision for the nation coupled so easily with an expansionist's mindset. Jefferson believed that the United States would "remain virtuous" so long as they are "chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant lands in any part of America."[58] Add those sentiments to the beliefs expressed in his letter to Archibald Stuart that "Our confederacy must be viewed as the nest from which all America, North & South is to be peopled," and it is easy to see why

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[57] Peter Onuf. *Jefferson's Empire*. (University of Virginia Press, 2000), 1

[58] Thomas Jefferson to James Madison. December 20, 1787

an expansionist vision of the country fit Jefferson.[59] This was a man who believed that the United States was the "solitary republic of the world, the only monument of human rights... the sole depository of the sacred fire of freedom and self-governance, from hence it is to be lighted up in other regions of the earth, if other regions of the earth shall ever become susceptible to its benign influence."[60] For historians like Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson, Jefferson is held as the "great exemplar" of the national conviction "that we have rejected an ancient reason of state, that we stand for something new under the sun, and that our destiny as a nation is to lead the world from the old to the new." [61] For Peter Onuf, Jefferson's vision allowed the United States to create a republican empire.[62] The main source of Jefferson's continuing appeal, writes Tucker and Hendrickson, "lies in the facility with which he evoked the meaning of the American experiment in self-governance."[63]

Jefferson's ideas for republican empire, what will eventually be renamed as the Empire of Liberty, is also viewed as a "righteous justification for an expansionist territorial policy" by historians like Peter Onuf.[64] His ideas have been recast as the belief in the necessity of territorial expansion, facilitated by the conviction that no constitution

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[59] Thomas Jefferson to Archibald Stuart. Paris, January 25, 1786

[60] Thomas Jefferson letter from March 4, 1809 as cited in Tucker, *Empire of Liberty,* 7

[61] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty,* 11

[62] Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, 58. Onuf marks the key to Jefferson's vision as removing the metropolis/colony dynamic. He says Jefferson's expectation was to create a Republican empire through a federal union (11), an empire without a ruling class (45).

[63] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty,* 6

[64] Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire,* 45. Onuf is more specifically referencing Jefferson's inaugural address.

was as well suited as America's for "extensive empire and self-government."[65] A French contemporary assessed "the first fact" of Jeffersonian politics was to "conquer without war."[66] In a time when empire was what Peter Onuf termed a "protean concept,"[67] a bundle of emergent-- and potentially contradictory—definitions, through Jefferson the United States could promote itself as the "Enlightenment vision of a benign imperial order," promoting progressive expansion of the Union.[68]

Jefferson was not alone among the Founding Fathers in wanting to have both empire and liberty. His belief that the United States could have one without sacrificing the other was not peculiar, but Jefferson is said to have advocated for both in what is dubbed "novel terms."[69] Jefferson's imperial aspirations, "as reflected in the objectives he embraced on both sea and land, were ambitious- more expansive, indeed, than Hamilton's- yet his distrust of power and its auxiliaries rivaled that of the most confirmed anti-Federalists."[70] It is the creation of an American empire which "provided the conceptional framework for an emerging consciousness of American nationality,"[71] and for Jefferson, this meant what Onuf called a rising empire "sustained by affectionate

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[65] Tucker, Empire of Liberty,17

[66] Citation of the French diplomat Turreau from Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 18

[67] Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, 60

[68] Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, 53. The role of Count Buffon and the thesis of American degeneracy is expanded upon early in Onuf's book (5). In this assessment, many in the Americas sought to prove that the New World was not feeble compared to the old. They sought to counter Buffon's notion that the degeneration of species and races was at all factual, as well as the implication that living in the Americas made one lesser than their European counterparts.

[69] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 20

[70] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 20

[71] Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, 76

union, a community of interests, and a dedication to the principles of self-government," like those set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and not an empire built on force, as in Britain.[72] Put simply by another historian of Jefferson, expansion was the solution to the crisis of neighborhood.[73]

The addition of the Louisiana Purchase is an essential element to this expansionist desire. According to Drew McCoy, it was the purchase of Louisiana that made Jeffersonian ideas of a republican civilization possible, at least for a time.[74] The lands surrounding the Mississippi had been desired by the United States since its first years, and the common narrative was simply expressed that United States must possess the Mississippi "or the American empire must be dismembered."[75] Though there was a great debate about the ethics and legality of such a vast purchase of land, given the underlying expansionist sentiments in the United States at the time; acquiring the territory along the Mississippi was inevitable. While some historians have presented the Louisiana Purchase as a "different lesson from the traditional vision of American continental empire,"[76] emerging from the challenges of expansionism, others have used it to mark the true nature of American expansionism. For historians like Peter Kastor, the Purchase

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[72] Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, 1

[73] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 25

[74] McCoy, Drew. *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America.* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1980), 197

[75] *Connecticut Journal*. January 27, 1803

[76] Peter Kastor. *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America.* (Yale University Press, 2004), 9. One of Kastor's larger contentions is that frontier and borderlands studies have "systemically overstated the ease of American expansionism" (8). This paper does not care for the ease or difficulty of the expansion, only that it was desired and executed according to the larger system of American expansionist thought.

reconfigured "the domestic and intellectual order in the same way it transformed the borders of North America," but it can also be used to contend Jefferson was "perhaps the greatest expansionist" of the Founding Fathers.[77]

Jefferson's expansionist desires did not always include the lands West of the Mississippi, as evidenced by his claim in 1787 to never have "any interest Westward of the Alleghaney; & I never will have any."[78] But only three years later, Jefferson responded to the question of how the United States should attain the right to navigate the river in clear and simple terms: "(A): By Force."[79] He asserted the right of the United States, by nature and treaty, to navigate the river, but more importantly that the river was "necessary to us. More than half the territory of the United States is on the waters of that river. Two hundred thousand of our citizens are settled on them, of whom forty thousand bear arms."[80] Should the locals demand trade with foreign markets rather than use the means then-currently available to the United States, Jefferson foresaw only three outcomes: To force them to acquiescence. To separate from them, rather than take part in a war against Spain. Or to preserve them in our Union, by joining them in the war. Only the third option was viable to Jefferson, though it was this letter in which he stated the United States did not desire to cross the Mississippi "for ages," and that conquest was not in our principles and was inconsistent with our government.

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[77] Kastor, *Nation's Crucible,* 3 and Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 159

[78] Thomas Jefferson to James Madison. January 30, 1787

[79] Thomas Jefferson: HEADS OF CONSIDERATION ON THE NAVIGATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI, FOR MR. CARMICHAEL. August 22, 1790.

[80] Ibid

As Jefferson gradually came to realize the error in those assessments, his opinions on expansionism changed. When elected to the presidency, Jefferson began to look to the future that he would build. In 1801 he had come to believe that despite "[h]owever our present interests may restrain us within our own limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits, & cover the whole northern, if not the southern continent, with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, & by similar laws; nor can we contemplate with satisfaction either blot or mixture on that surface."[81] In the early days of 1803, Jefferson was even weighing war to claim the port of New Orleans. He believed that the "agitation of the public mind on occasion of the late suspension of our right of deposit at N. Orleans is extreme," that the desire for New Orleans "proceeds from a desire for war which increases the mercantile lottery," and even accused Federalists "generally and especially those of Congress" of trying to force the country into war.[82] If the United States could not purchase New Orleans to "insure to ourselves a course of perpetual peace and friendship with all nations," Jefferson believed war could not be distant.[83]

As previously stated, Jefferson's commitment to expansion has been characterized as one "that was strongly rooted in the equation of expansion with the security and well-being of a republican America" largely because he believed that through expansion, "the republican character of the Union would be preserved."[84] But Louisiana also solved a few

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[81] Thomas Jefferson to the Governor of Virginia (James Monroe). November 24, 1801

[82] Thomas Jefferson to the Special Envoy to France (James Monroe). January 13, 1803

[83] Ibid. See also James Madison to Robert Livingston and James Monroe on the Louisiana Purchase. July 29, 1803

[84] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*,161-162

lingering problems in the expansionist model. It could be the solution to a perceived "Indian Problem" as much as the solution to the Jeffersonian agrarian models and the need for free open lands. As the ever-growing population of the United States gradually pushed the bounds of her territory, the need for more land ran into one troubling fact: the lands were, at present, already occupied.[85]

David Miller has suggested that Jefferson hoped to have cessions along the eastern border of the Mississippi river "to advance his concept of surrounding the Indians and forcing them into smaller and smaller areas" with the increased expansion of settler territory to surround them.[86] Jefferson was authorized to help "exchange" lands with Amerindian groups east of the Mississippi shortly following the Purchase. In his efforts to move the Creek Indians, Jefferson said that it was in the Creeks interest "to cede land at times to the United States, and for us thus to procure gratifications to our citizens from time to time, by new acquisitions of land."[87] In his letter to John Breckenridge, Jefferson proposed that not only should the inhabitant parts of Louisiana soon be a State, but "above that, the best use we can make of the country for some time, will be to give establishments in it to the Indians on the East side of the Missipi [sic], in exchange for their present country, and open land offices in the last, & thus make this acquisition the means of filling up the Eastern side, instead of drawing off it's population."[88] When the

[85] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 30 presents Louisiana as the solution to both issues, whereas in Kastor, 61, the author states the surging population of the U.S. pressing on under-defended borders was more useful than any military or money for Jefferson.

[86] David Miller. *The Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast: A History of Territorial Cessions and Forced Relocations, 1607-1840*. (McFarland and Company, 2011), 102

[87] Miller, *Taking of American Indian Lands,* 99

[88] Thomas Jefferson to John Breckenridge. August 12, 1803

United States finally filled the eastern side, then Jefferson switched gears, seeking to "lay off a range of States on the Western bank from the head to the mouth, & so, range after range, advancing compactly as we multiply."[89] This emphasis on the rapid multiplication of the American population was crucial to Jefferson's vision as an expansionist and a promoter of agrarian values. The need for more land was "triggered by an increasing population in the South," which during Jefferson's presidency alone, Miller has data claiming that "Tennessee's population grew by more than 100%, Georgia by about 55%, Kentucky's almost 85%, and Mississippi by 312%."[90]

Through the Louisiana Purchase, scholars like Tucker and Hendrickson suggest Jefferson gained half the continent without war, but also created an unintended crisis.[91] One consequence of the Purchase was a noticeable determination by the Americans, and Jefferson himself, to then possess Florida. Expansion begat more expansion. The American claims to the Mississippi, Jefferson said, "will be a subject of negociation [sic] with Spain, and if, as soon as she is at war, we push them strongly with one hand, holding out a price in the other, we shall certainly obtain the Floridas, and all in good time.[92] Jefferson's instructions to Livingston and Monroe regarding the Mississippi, and eventually Louisiana, clearly include the Florida's as an eventual necessity.[93] But in this

[89] Thomas Jefferson to John Breckenridge. August 12, 1803

[90] Miller, *Taking of American Indian Lands,* 100

[91] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 132-133. In Kastor, *Nation's Crucible,* 35-36, he notes that the treaty met with some pushback because it never actually defined " Louisiana" and fueled disputes over boundaries, executive powers, and the future of the nation.

[92] Thomas Jefferson to John Breckenridge. August 12, 1803. He also shot down any notion of trading lands for Florida, assuming its eventual annexation.

[93] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 108-109. Other historians disagree, suggesting that "Livingston and Monroe's instructions expressed only modest territorial objectives. They were not a blue print for Manifest

letter and others, enemies were classified as those who impeded American expansion; "any power, even America's oldest ally, was a danger" if it held New Orleans or blocked Americans from the Mississippi.[94] Jefferson wrote to Livingston in 1802 that France's acquisition of the Louisiana territory meant "placing herself in that door assumes to us the attitude of defiance." Spain might have retained those lands quietly for years, and Jefferson hoped Spain's "pacific dispositions, her feeble state, would induce her to increase our facilities there, so that her possession of the place would be hardly felt by us, and it would not perhaps be very long before some circumstance might arise which might make the cession of it to us the price of something of more worth to her."[95] But France, a strong power in control of territory desired by the United States, was now "placed in a point of eternal friction with us... these circumstances render it impossible that France and the U. S. can continue long friends when they meet in so irritable a position."[96]

Fortunately, the Louisiana Purchase temporarily abated the expansionist desires of the United States, and fulfilled those of President Jefferson. But while the Purchase solved one pressing concern, it inadvertently created two more. The previously expressed desire for Florida is what some historians have called the largest national concern of the United States after 1808, though such a narrative ignores the other problem created by the

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Destiny. Kastor, *Nation's Crucible,* 40. Kastor believes that connecting the Purchase through an unbroken chain of expansion ignores the complexities of expansion in 1803 and changes which followed in the next half century. I agree, most historians ignore the twice-failed conquest of Canada, which certainly presents a flaw to the "unbroken" chain of expansion.

[94] Kastor, *Nation's Crucible,* 57

[95] Jefferson to Livingston. April 18, 1802

[96] Ibid. Jefferson even went as far as advocating the United States "must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation. We must turn all our attentions to a maritime force... and having formed and cemented together a power which may render reinforcement of her settlements here impossible to France,"

Purchase.[97] Put in the words of A.L. Burt, the Louisiana Purchase "may be regarded as the first step, albeit an unconscious one, toward the War of 1812."[98] Not long after the Purchase, Jefferson told a visitor that "if the English do not give us the satisfaction we demand, we will take Canada, which wants to enter the Union."[99] If the Louisiana Purchase created a demand for Florida simply by it being the only unclaimed strip of borderland, the previously invaded Canada certainly resumed its place as a target of early American expansion. It is said that the conditions in Louisiana "may well have fueled the administration's unrealistic expectations," that Madison "approached the invasion of Canada in much the same way he had originally conceived of a Louisiana Purchase."[100] Though Canada might have conjured the same fears as Louisiana, that such a large extent of land could prove to be a dangerous step towards disunion, most plans for American expansion included it and Florida.[101] As a Tennessee politician wrote to Thomas Jefferson in the Fall of 1807, "it will be a sublime spectacle to spread liberty and civilization in that vast country, Canada."[102]

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[97] This claim belongs specifically to Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 37 which says "The War of 1812 temporarily relegated the dissolution of the Spanish Empire to a secondary place in American policymaking by shifting federal resources and attention toward British Canada (38)."

[98] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America*, 225. In *John Quincy Adams and American Global Empire*, William Earl Weeks perceives the boundaries and legitimacy disputes surrounding the Louisiana Purchase as part of a larger dispute for dominance of the Hemisphere. William Earl Weeks. *John Quincy Adams and American Global Empire.* (University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 22

[99] Quote is from July 1807 as cited in Reginald Horsman. "On to Canada: Manifest Destiny and United States Strategy in the War of 1812." *Michigan Historical Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Fall, 1987), pp. 1-24. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20173101 (Accessed: 29-05-2019 22:07 UTC), 9.

[100] Kastor, *Nation's Crucible,* 155-156

[101] Tucker, *Empire of Liberty*, 207

[102] Arthur Campbell to Thomas Jefferson. October 10, 1807

CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

As the 30th anniversary of the invasion of Quebec approached, the American desire to possess Canada had not dulled. After 1803, the United States had nearly doubled in size since the American Revolution. The old frontiers were gradually filling, and the Americans began to test the bounds of the Louisiana Purchase. Many leaders from the Revolutionary generation were still in offices of power, and the second term of President Jefferson had just begun for the 1805 anniversary. Three decades after the start of the Revolution, many Americans retained aggression and animosity towards Great Britain, and perceived their struggles against the British empire as unfinished. As John Quincy Adams told his Father in 1811, he believed the entire North American continent was "destined" to be peopled by one nation, with one language, religion, and system of political principles to guide them: and for "the common peace and prosperity of all," this must be "one federal Union."[1] This discussion between John and John Quincy Adams illustrates the belief of many Americans. Though the thirteen colonies had successfully thrown off the shackles of the mother-country, they did not liberate all Britain's colonies in North America. Spain had since regained control of East and West Florida, but Canada remained in a position very similar to 1775.

While some say the Americans effected a "clean break" with the Revolution, that they had become "two distinct peoples" as the British and the Americans, the fact was

[1] John Quincy Adams to John Adams. August 31, 1811. Quincy also references the "all important and all absorbing principle of Union" to his father.

that the Canadian question remained unsettled.[2] Many Americans were of the opinion that the conflict with the British Empire remained unfinished so long as Britain controlled American colonies. Thomas Jefferson strongly expressed such an opinion in 1808 when the President suggested that it was one of the objects of his government "to exclude all European influence from this hemisphere."[3]

Though there were many Americans who shared Jefferson's sentiments, the war did not come under his term of office. That is not to say the United States was not tested in that period. Numerous potential sparks filled the years between 1805-- the 30th anniversary of the Quebec invasion-- and the actual commencement of the war in 1812. But as with the Revolution, the demand for Canada and the demand for war were "intimately connected" with Anglo-American relations from 1803-1812, and not a sudden interest.[4] As early as the Fall of 1807, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn secured a "detailed description of Upper Canada, including particulars of military strength at various forts," and Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin drew up a financial plan for the war.[5]

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[2] Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 8. In Bothwell's *Your Country, My Country* the author says that many Americans saw an unfinished conflict with the British, which would not end "until the British were completely expelled from North America" Bothwell, *Your Country, My Country*, 79-90

[3] Thomas Jefferson as quoted in Falconer, *The United States as a Neighbor*, 107

[4] Reginald Horsman. *The Causes of the War of 1812.* (NY: Octagon Books, 1972), 157. Horsman is actually citing Julius Pratt here. The two men represent some of the more aggressive proponents of the belief that maritime causes began the War of 1812. Though both reject the expansionist thesis, essentially advocating that the desire for Canada caused the war, neither historian can deny Canada remained a consistent demand for the United States.

[5] Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 170. Patrick Cecil Telfer White. *Nation on Trial: America and the War of 1812*. (Toronto, 1965), 105: Cites *Annals of the 12th Congress*, 1st Session, 416, 519, 646, 533 and William Randolph of Virginia as well.

Two events explain Dearborn and Gallatin's actions in 1807. The first began in 1805, when the British government changed polices in response to the war with Napoleon. The British began seizing American merchants, ships, and cargoes while enforcing impressment upon American sailors. With such blatantly disrespectful and debatably legal enforcement of pre-Revolutionary maritime policy, historians like A.L. Burt argue that a "violent explosion should have been touched off from the United States when, without any warning or explanation, the news of these wholesale seizures arrived."[6] Even the British Minister Anthony Merry expected and dreaded such an outcome, but while the Americans were enraged, the calls for war were relatively few.

In 1807, a second act of British aggression could have also brought the United States and Britain to war before 1812. On June 22, what would become known as the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair occurred. On this day off the coast of Virginia, the crew of HMS *Leopard* pursued, attacked, and boarded the American frigate USS *Chesapeake*, allegedly looking for deserters. This was nothing short of a "hostile attack on the United States" by the British Empire.[7] The effect on the Americans was immediate, and not "since the days of the Revolution had the United States been so united; never gain was it so solidly opposed to Britain."[8] The Chesapeake Affair "touched off an explosion of protest in the United States, even in Federalist areas," and sparked alarm throughout North America.[9] In Canada, Isaac Brock immediately began defensive preparations for

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[6] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 230

[7] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 242-43

[8] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 242-43

[9] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 125

war, having read reports which indicated "every American town formed an association to attack the neighboring British providence."[10] Governor Craig spent "hundreds of thousands of pounds" on fortifications, mainly around Quebec.[11] There were also reports that during the Chesapeake Affair Britain had been using "active interference with the Indians in American territory," to use them as a buffer defense for Canada, in case of an invasion.[12]

In the words of President Jefferson, the "affair of the Chesapeake put war in my hand. I had only to open it and let havoc loose."[13] But the President did not call for war, instead allowing the Embargo and Non-intercourse Acts to influence policy with Britain. It is unclear why the calls for war were not as loud as in 1811-1812, but the Chesapeake Affair did manage to ignite some Americans. 1807 sees a renewed interest not only in conflict with Britain, but also in the conquest of Canada. In the weeks following the Affair, newspapers across the country began to conjure plans to once more invade Canada. One article in the *Democratic Press* contained all the reasons summed up in one article. Citing American emigration from New England, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee the author suggests the "conquest of Canada ought therefore in the first instance to be the

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[10] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 247. According to Reginald Horsman, Brock is said to have feared American immigrants to the point that he attempted to pass a measure which would require all militiamen to "abjure all foreign powers" and suspend habeas corpus; both measures were initially denied. Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 27

[11] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens*, 98. The British government also issued yet another proclamation pardoning Revolutionary deserters in August 25, 1808. Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 242.

[12] Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 167

[13] Thomas Jefferson to James Maury, April 25, 1812. Historians have suggested that war was avoided in 1807 only because Jefferson chose economic sanctions (Horsman, War of 1812, 11). The 1812 Bill to increase the size of the navy failed 62-59, with the argument shifting to conquering Canada instead (Horsman, War of 1812, 19)

object of this country."[14] The invasion itself would be "easily accomplished either from the state of Ohio or the New England states."[15] Even though the United States did not declare war, the article reminds the reader that even in peace, "it becomes the duty of every American citizen, not only to prepare himself against invasion, but for invasion, and for the conquest of those territories which are in the power of the United States to obtain."[16] Another article suggested asserting the rights and independence of the United States. It requires but "the voice of Congress," the paper suggests, to "extinguish *foreign influence*, and to unite a whole people in asserting the rights and independence of America. HERE WE ARE NOW!"[17] Papers began to circulate suggesting that the Canadians remained friendly to the United States "and only wait a favorable opportunity to tear asunder the shackles of English tyranny."[18] Some suggested that the Americans "make ourselves and posterity forever secure by the expulsion of the English from North America."[19] The drumming for war became louder in 1807, but not yet loud enough.

The damage of the Chesapeake Affair would last well beyond 1807, for just as it seemed the American desire for war had quieted, another intrigue from that event emerged. In March 1812 news began to spread that a British spy, one John Henry,

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[14] The *Democratic Press.* July 22, 1808. Some historians like Reginald Horsman have suggested that the demand for Canada did not emerge until 1810. Horseman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 159. But articles like this and the previous chapter suggest one inescapable fact: such demands never actually dissipated.

[15] The *Democratic Press.* July 22, 1808

[16] Ibid

[17] *The Public Advertiser*. October 28, 1807.

[18] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 97

[19] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 97

entered the United States during the Affair. The letters seemed to prove that "the British government, working through the representative of the crown in Quebec, had been intriguing with the Federalists to disrupt the Union."[20] While such speculations fell apart after the release of the full publication, the initial fervor was "like a bursting bomb which threatened to blow the United States into war right away."[21] Though the war did not come because of the John Henry letters, some argue that by this point in 1812 the conflict was already inevitable. Such is the claim of Alfred Mahan, who believed the war was assured by June 1811.[22] By that December, even certain Federalists began to push "war measures so zealously that they embarrassed the hesitant government and alarmed the British minister."[23] This would eventually cause Gouverneur Morris, a New York Federalist, to question if his party must, "at the bidding of our masters, march to the conquest of Canada?"[24] In the months before the actual declaration of war, papers were calling for the United States to occupy Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia while the entire

[20] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 300

[21] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 300

[22] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 298

[23] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 299. One Federalist paper from Boston suggested that it was the "duty of the Federalists to prepare for the war they have endeavored incessantly to avert." This is an obvious departure from the traditional response of the Federalists. Their opinion was usually more in line with the *Alexandria Gazette's* assertion that "we can see no advantages that would result from the incorporation of Canada into the union: on the contrary, the disadvantages appear to be great and numerous." *Alexandria Gazette*. September 28, 1811.

[24] Gouverneur Morris. An Address to the People of the State of New York on the Present State of Affairs (1812). Morris questioned the belief of those who "urge a hot prosecution of the war," and sought to "add the northern star to our constellation" and conquer Canada. He asks "is Canada worth conquering? Time was that the British government would have given it, if asked for in a friendly way, because in truth it is a costly appendage. On what principle can it be accounted for, that the rulers of a country, great part of which is uninhabited; a country whose government, and almost every man in it, has land to sell; a country in which husbandry and the arts languish for want of men; that the rulers of such a country should endeavor to purchase land with the lives of its citizens?"

frontier may have been insisting the British were to be expelled from North America.[25] If not because of any of these factors, why did the United States and Great Britain finally go to war, and why did it take until June 1812?

The historiography for the War of 1812 is awash with unending theses and arguments about the real causes, all of which seem to cycle in and out of fashion every generation. One interpretation calls this an "interesting paradox," that a war "of such insignificant proportions" should have produced such controversy concerning its causes.[26] Another historian suggested that any attempt to understand the War of 1812 by "combining the conclusions of the various monographs" would yield only a "list of contributing causes, with no indication as to the relative importance of the several factors."[27] In addition to the more commonly suggested causes, which will be investigated below, there are some more novel contributions that could be expanded in future studies. Alan Taylor called 1812 a "North American Civil War," fought between competing ideological visions of America that "blurred the boundaries of political

[25] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812,* 54 cites the *Lexington Reporter*, March 24, 1812. Page 58 contains the "entire frontier" quote.

[26] Reginald Horsman. "Western War Aims, 1811-1812." *Indiana Magazine of History*. Vol. 53, No. 1 (March 1957), 1

[27] This list is long at that. According to Warren Goodman, who wrote a "survey of changing interpretations" for the war, the list would include: the desire to defend the national honor; the hunger for agricultural land; the belief that the Indian problem could be settled only by removing the British from the continent; the competition between Americans and Canadians for the fur trade of the Northwest ; the South's lust for the Floridas; Anglophobia ; the anti-English propaganda activities of political exiles from England and Ireland; the desire to end Spanish interference with the export trade of Mississippi and Alabama; the ideal of manifest destiny; the desire to foster domestic manufacturing by excluding British products; and the West's desire to improve its economic condition by forcing the repeal of the British Orders in Council. *Warren H Goodman. "The Origins of the War of 1812: A Survey of Changing Interpretations." Mississippi Valley Historical Review. 28 (2): 171–186.* https://www.jstor.org/stable/3738032. *(Accessed July 10, 2019),* 185-86

identities."[28] G.F.G. Stanley said that the American Revolution was the fundamental cause of the war, the Louisiana Purchase for souring American relations with Britain, and the war in Europe as the only reason Great Britain struggled.[29] For other historians, 1812 was not a defensive war, but an aggressive act "with conquest of Canada as a major object."[30] But as Reginald Horsman says, it should not be surprising that there is some confusion regarding American intentions, as such intentions "were argued about at the time-- both before and during the War of 1812-- and they have been argued about since," and the role of Canada has been particularly controversial.[31]

The question remains why, given the assumed vastness of land available in the West, did the United States desire Canada so much as to fight two wars to conquer it? Perhaps the reason that the historiography of this period cannot discern the true cause of the war is a combination of two factors. First, that American historians have far too readily dismissed the original explanation, an expansionist desire to possess Canada. The second element suggests that this dismissal of imperialistic designs for Canada occurs because such introspection simply makes Americans "uncomfortable," which explains why British and Canadian scholars are less hesitant to suggest it.[32]

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[28] Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 7-8

[29] Stanley, *War of 1812*, 11-16

[30] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 49

[31] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 2. Horsman says the three main opinions stem from arguments by Pratt, Taylor, and Burt, and that the tendency of other historians in studying this confused topic is either to list divergent reasons for war without any attempt at division into degrees of importance, or to choose one reason and to relegate the others to a position of relative insignificance. Horsman, "Western War Aims," 4

[32] In *War of 1812: Land Operations*, Stanley says that "The suggestion that the declaration of war by the United States in 1812 might have been inspired, in part at least, by imperialistic motives has never been popular with the American generally (29)."

CAUSES OF THE WAR OF 1812

Since it was the United States that declared war against Great Britain, some believe that certain British policies caused the war. It is often said that the British, in "their zeal to conquer Napoleon," pushed the Americans too far and "dismissed their former colonies with an indifference that bordered on contempt, thus repeating the errors of 1776."[33] The British polices collected as the "Orders in Council" were the means through which the British empire fought a commercial war with France. For some historians, the Orders in Council promoted a general belligerence of trade and commerce, actual blockades, and even impressment of American sailors.[34] Though repealed before the war began, the Orders in Council remain a prime historiographic focus as the so-called 'Maritime cause' of the war.[35] This argument privileges those specific British policies, which focused on naval trade and commerce, as the main cause of hostilities between the United States and Great Britain. The argument that American commercial rights, combined with the impressment of sailors, finally pushed the United States to war remains one of the more commonly addressed, and refuted, causes of the War of 1812. If the real grievance which caused the war was British interference with American commerce and the rights of American sailors, a belief promoted by historians like Julius Pratt, an obvious discrepancy emerges. Why was the "war to redress those grievances opposed by the maritime section of the nation and urged by the inland section, which

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[33] Pierre Berton. *The Invasion of Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 24. In this sense, Berton calls 1812 a continuation of the American Revolution.

[34] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations,* 139

[35] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations,* 139. News of the repeal would not reach the United States until after they had voted for the war, but the decision to continue the war, and invade Canada anyway, suggests that may have been only pretext.

were scarcely affected?"[36] Pratt himself later recognized the question, but he is not alone in the promotion of the maritime explanation. Historians such as Reginald Horsman continued to contend that the basis for the war were the British maritime policies, specifically those aimed against Napoleon.[37] The next obvious question is what of Napoleonic France? France also possessed a belligerent naval policy towards neutral powers, and seized American goods as Britain had done. The United States had also more recently fought a war, albeit the Quasi War under John Adams, against France than Britain. To those that profess the maritime cause, the answer may be one of quantity. The British empire seized American goods at a rate of 3:2 versus French seizures, and only Britain impressed American sailors, to an unknown total.[38] But as Perkins demonstrated, Canada and the Orders in Council received far more attention than impressments during the months leading to the war it was.[39]

The maritime cause persists because it is precisely what President Madison eventually blamed for the war, though both American and Canadian historians dismiss such statements for several reasons. After viewing the Congressional records, Madison

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[36] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 9

[37] Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 263. Horsman says the basis of the war can be found in Europe, especially British policies against Napoleon.

[38] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations,* 121. American numbers suggest 6k, though Britain admitted to only 3k. France would eventually respond positively to Macon's Bill, "An Act concerning the commercial intercourse between the United States and Great Britain and France, and their dependencies, and for other purposes," which focused any remaining attention on Britain.

[39] Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 220. The impressment issue all but disappears until President Madison resurrects the narrative on the eve of the war. According to historians like W.L. Morton, even though the United States had been gaining support for war with Britain since 1803, especially after the attack on the U.S.S *Chesapeake* in 1807, it wasn't until Macon's Bill and Napoleon's "sharp manoeuvre [sic] in rescinding the Berlin decrees forced Madison to declare war, or make the United States ridiculous before the world." Morton, *Canadian Identity,* 27

considered the maritime argument in the final few days before declaring war; only at the outbreak of the war did Madison begin "inverting the order of complaints," by putting impressments and the other maritime policies first.[40] As previously stated, the second reason was that the British were already softening their aggressive commercial policy. Though they had actually ordered portions of the Orders in Council to terminate before the United States declared war, the lag in communication time caused such a message to arrive too late. When the war began, even the suspension of the Orders in Council could not stop the United States, who continued the war. If the maritime causes truly were to blame for the war, why was the war continued when Britain repealed them? This would suggest that the desire for Canada was more important that the pretext through which the war began.

This is not to say that commercial polices were not of some concern in the decision to go to war, only that they were not the primary cause. President Washington addressed this very fear of commercial bullying in 1796. In President Washington's final annual address to Congress, he warned the United States that the "protection of a naval force is indispensable" to an active external commerce.[41] The President warned that even "the most sincere neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war," and it seemed the strife caused by the Napoleonic Wars proved him correct.[42] Washington foresaw the need for a navy to "prevent the necessity of going to war by

[40] Burt, *U.S., G.B., & British North America*, 312. Burt also cites Henry Adams for first expressing this disparity.

[41] George Washington. Eighth Annual Address to Congress. December 7, 1796

[42] George Washington. Eighth Annual Address to Congress. December 7, 1796

discouraging belligerent powers from committing such violations of the rights of the neutral party" hoping this would at least deter foreign powers from harassing the young country.[43] But many of the bills promoted to create such a naval force were denied before 1812. Some argued what good could a budding fleet be against the towering naval might of the British empire, while others connected a large military force to tyranny; be it naval or a standing army.

Another way to dismiss the maritime cause came from a singular question: Why did the United States not go to war in 1807?[44] The British impressment of American sailors and enforcement for the Orders in Council, combined with the Chesapeake Affair should have been more than enough to push the United States into war. Jefferson has been previously quoted as saying the "affair of the Chesapeake put war in my hand. I had only to open it and let havoc loose," and if these were the causes of the war, why not meet the British as soon as they refused to repeal such terms? Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury assumed that October 1807 was the month which would "decide the question of war or peace," and thought it was prudent "to contemplate (rather than to prepare) immediate offensive operations."[45] But the war did not come when the maritime policies of Great Britain escalated or the Chesapeake Affair provided justification. The lack of a sufficient answer to these questions, the opposition of the

[43] Ibid

[44] Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 14; "Actually what is really surprising is not that America declared war on England in 1812, but that she had not done so several years earlier. In many ways it is easier to show why America should have gone to war in 1807 or 1809 rather than 1812."

[45] Albert Gallatin to Thomas Jefferson. October 21, 1807

maritime states in New England, and the promise of other causes results in the regular refutation of a maritime cause for the War of 1812.

The first historian to bring a much-needed refutation to the assumed causes of 1812 was Henry Adams. Descendant of Presidents John and John Quincy Adams, Henry Adams' *History of the United States of America 1801 – 1817* was one of the first to realize that the traditionally accepted narrative of maritime causes was sorely lacking. By themselves, the collective naval concerns of trade and impressment of American sailors does not adequately explain why the war took place, let alone why it occurred in 1812. Adams therefore asserted that had Great Britain revoked the Orders in Council in March 1812, "no war could have taken place, unless it were a war with France."[46] However, Adams was also one of the first historians to imply that the plan for the conquest of Canada had been a contributing cause of the war rather than a method of carrying on a struggle undertaken for other reasons.[47] While maritime rights remained an accepted and occasionally preferred doctrine, the first cracks in the façade had been made. From this implication, the expansionist thesis first emerged, and by 1902 the maritime

[46] Henry Adams cited in Goodman, "Origins of the War of 1812," 173. Some historians, such as A.L. Burt, offered that the reasons for delay: hope that Britain would repeal the Order in Council in time; the fears of "honor" would cause a war of France as well; and general unpreparedness. Burt, *U.S., G.B., and British North America*, 311

[47] Goodman, "Origins of the War of 1812," 173. Goodman says of Adams that he "seems to have been the first to recognize that an interpretation of the causes of the War of 1812 almost exclusively on the basis of maritime matters was an oversimplification and, consequently, a distortion. Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 422; cites another historian who says Adams did "hint" that "Canadian-directed imperialism played a part." See also Victor Sapio. "Expansion and Economic Depression as Factors in Pennsylvania's Support of the War of 1812: AN Application of the Pratt and Taylor Theses to the Keystone State." *Pennsylvania History*: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies, Vol. 35, No. 4 (OCTOBER,1968), pp. 379-405. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27771724. (Accessed: 18-06-2019 19:32 UTC), 379

interpretation was so enfeebled that one historian asserts the "grounds for war were singularly uncertain."[48]

If maritime causes were not the prime consideration for war, attention swung to the leadership of the war movement, which came from the West and the South. Historians attempted to ascertain the factors which prompted these areas to favor war with Britain.[49] Early explanations stressed an expansionist desire for Canada, the effects of American immigration, fears the British were inciting Amerindian harassment, and a highly developed sense of national pride among frontiersmen and Western leaders. These causes will be met in that order.

After naval concerns were first proven inadequate, the cause of general American expansionism replaced it. From Henry Adams' inquiry came the idea that perhaps Canada was more than a means to wage war, but a cause in and of itself. According to Bradford Perkins, the "anti-British trend" of 1811-1812, did not sufficiently "unite East or even the South, nor was it long-lived," but, temporarily, it affected the entire nation… Thus the cry for Canada."[50] Even if the timing was fortuitous, when this explanation is

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[48] Sapio, "Expansion and Economic Depression as Factors in Pennsylvania's Support of the War of 1812," 379. In Hacker, "Western Land Hunger," the author suggests that impressment remained a *casus belli* for the war, but the idea of a mercantile naval war inciting the western farmers was absurd, yet "Historians, nevertheless, have maintained that this backwoods rural society was the protagonist in a conflict waged over ships, seamen, and cargoes." Louis Morton Hacker. "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812: A Conjecture." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Mar., 1924), pp. 365-395. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1892931. (Accessed: 18-06-2019 19:32 UTC), 365

[49] Sapio, "Expansion and Economic Depression as Factors in Pennsylvania's Support of the War of 1812," 379. Sapio also believes that the publication of Henry Adams's History "suggested that the traditionally accepted maritime interpretations of the War of 1812 did not adequately explain the causes of that conflict." This uncertainty "led students to an intensive and as yet incomplete search for new and different explanations." Economic conditions were added when these explanations seemed to be incomplete. He says that a "major historiographical controversy developed" from this disorder. Sapio, "Expansion and Economic Depression as Factors in Pennsylvania's Support of the War of 1812," 379

[50] Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 289

viewed through the lens of American expansionism, the narrative of the unfinished revolution, or even in connection to the desire to possess Canada thus expressed by the Americans, the conclusion seems obvious. Canada was a glaringly obvious target of expansion. Though contemporary scholars had yet to consider this as imperialism, and though that may be the final iteration of this thesis, such developments were incomplete. What did exist at this point, however, was that the attitude of American expansionism, generally or focused on Canada, was one of the primary causes for the war. This cause goes by two names: The Expansionist thesis, or the land-hunger thesis.

Though essentially advocated by Henry Adams, Louis Hacker is credited as the first true proponent of the land-hunger thesis, the suggestion that a "greedy desire for fertile Canadian farm lands lay behind the façade of arguments for national honor."[51] Historians consider the United States to have an expansionist persona in its first hundred years, jumping from one conquest or purchase of land to the next to gradually fill the North American continent. Often generally cited as an "insatiable appetite for land,"[52] an "ardent expansionist sentiment,"[53] or simply as a "land mania,"[54] the United States regularly exhibited a belief that "all North America must at length be annexed to us—happy indeed if the lust for dominion stop there."[55] Hacker believed that the maritime

[51] Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 422

[52] Stanley, *War of 1812*, 29

[53] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 11

[54] *Alexandria Gazette*, p3. September 28, 1811. Writing to the *Alexandria Gazette* in Virginia, one article mentions that "We know of nothing better calculated to dismember the union of these states, than the Land-Mania which unfortunately prevails among a great portion of our citizens."

[55] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 19. Pratt is citing Gouverneur Morris

interpretation was utterly unconvincing, especially given the hostility of the New England States to the war balanced against the force of the agrarian West.[56] Hacker also suggests that had the war been for national pride, it would have occurred immediately following the Chesapeake Affair; pride would have caused a war in 1807 or 1809.[57] It is here that Hacker suggests Canada, as a great reserve of agricultural lands, was desired by the West which so forcefully sought the war with Britain.[58] It is true that a conquest of Canada would remove Great Britain as a threat to American neighborhood as much as it is true that Canada was the only logical target of the United States at this time. But why should that diminish the desire of the Americans to possess Canada, now advocated vigorously by the West, as *casus belli* for the war?

In Hacker's version of the expansionist thesis, he utilizes the oft-cited quotation of John Randolph to illustrate how the desire for Canada flooded American discourse. Randolph claimed that once the report of the committee on foreign relations came into the House, "we have heard but one word - like the whip-poor-will, but one eternal monotonous tone - Canada! Canada! Canada!"[59] Citing numerous local newspapers articles which "plainly expressed desire for Canada," Hacker shows that the prevailing opinion in the West was that "All agree that Canada must be ours; and it is perhaps

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[56] Hacker, "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812," 365

[57] Hacker, "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812," 366. Hacker and other have also pointed out that "pride" would have forced a war on France as well.

[58] Hacker, "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812," 366. Hacker was not alone in his assertions. Historian Howard T. Lewis also proposed that Canada would be coveted for agricultural lands in 1911. Lewis is cited in Goodman, "Origins of the War of 1812," 173-174

[59] Hacker, "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812," 376. Hacker also utilizes the speech of Felix Grundy, December 9, 1811 to show the expansionist desire connecting Canada, Florida, and American empire (375). He also cites a local Ohio newspaper and "

essential to the future security and happiness of the United States that Canada should become a part of them."[60] Quite simply, war with Britain was "the order of the day and Canada was the prize,"[61] and the expansionist thesis more easily explained why 1812 was the war the West wanted.

There was a longstanding fear that expansionism would eventually lead the United States to frequent conflicts, and the conflicts in 1812, the Mexican-American, Spanish-American, and the innumerable Amerindian Wars suggest those fears were valid. But for 1812, was expansionism to blame for the war? Likely, at least according to some historians. A.L. Burt said that "both branches of government were consciously steering the country much closer to hostilities," through the desire to occupy West Florida in October of 1810.[62] Newspapers like the *Portsmouth Oracle* suggested that an offensive war was the avowed object of Congress to "make conquest of all British North America, so as to extend our territory to the North Pole."[63] Even the historians which promoted the maritime thesis, such as Reginald Horsman, admit the fact that for the whole of this period from 1803-1812 there was a steady American demand for expansion into the Floridas," which was another factor in the War with England.[64] Julius Pratt suggested a connection between these expansionist desires which implied such thoughtful

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[60] Hacker, "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812," 377-78. Hacker also suggests that though there were other reasons to conquer Canada, the agrarian concerns outweighed them. Hacker "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812," 394

[61] Hacker, "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812," 395

[62] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America,* 288

[63] *Portsmouth Oracle*. August 29, 1812

[64] Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812,* 173

consideration as to renounce any claims of defensive imperialism or of so-called reactionary expansionism. In a chapter entitled the "Lure of the Spanish Provinces," Pratt suggests that if "frontiersmen of the Northwest demanded war with Great Britain as indispensable, his kinsman of the southern border at least saw in it a means of fulfilling his expansionist dreams."[65] Pratt asserted there was "good evidence that before the declaration of war," both the northern and southern Republicans came to a "definite understanding" that the acquisition of Canada in the North "was to be balanced by the acquisition of the Floridas" and the South.[66] Despite sectional differences and political dangers, the expansionists had joined forces.

Such sentiments did not stop with Florida or Canada either. The expansionist desires which permeated this period were linking to any nearby lands not yet owned by the United States. In a letter to then-President Madison, Thomas Jefferson wrote that after the Spanish gave the Floridas, they would "consent to our receiving Cuba into our union to prevent our aid to Mexico & the other provinces."[67] Jefferson concluded that "we should then have only to include the North in our confederacy, which would be of course in the first war, and we should have such an empire for liberty as she has never surveyed

[65] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 120

[66] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 138-140 and 120-122 resp. Pratt cites a December 9 speech by Grundy to preserve the "equilibrium of the Government." Turning Canada into multiple states created sectional issues, however, citing Hunter to Plumer, May 13, 1812

[67] Thomas Jefferson to James Madison. April 27, 1809

since the creation."[68] I am persuaded, Jefferson claimed, that "no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire & self government."[69]

Where the causes for the War of 1812 are concerned, Canada and British North American were far more pressing than East or West Florida. The "expulsion of the British from Canada," said William Burwell of Virginia, has always "been deemed an object of the first importance to the peace of the United States, and their security against the inroads of an enemy."[70] Upper Canada had appeared "like a long defiant arm thrust deep into the American's continental migration route," and as a consequence "she was bound to attract American travelers and settlers, and to tempt militant American expansionists."[71] The Canadian historian G.F.G Stanley asked, was not "this insatiable appetite for land one of the factors behind the warmongering of western-American politicians such as Henry Clay, and behind the strategic emphasis placed by the American military authorities upon the acquisition of Upper Canada during the War of 1812?"[72]

A reading of the American sources suggests Stanley was correct, the desire to possess Canada has saturated the discussion to disprove any doubt of Canada's central importance to the war. Stanley even offers a refutation to any who would suggest "that Clay and those who favored operations against Canada were thinking of Canada simply

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[68] Thomas Jefferson to James Madison. April 27, 1809. Jefferson instantly connected Florida to Cuba to Canada in one paragraph, and consistently called the acquisition effortless or easy.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 10. Burwell quote from the 10th Congress, 2nd session, Feb 1,1809. The sentiment is repeated by Stanley in War of 1812 and Pratt in Expansionists

[71] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 141

[72] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 29

as a tactical objective- a hostage as it were, for the good conduct of the British government" has "misunderstood their real motivation."[73] The expansionist cause for the War of 1812 benefits not only from the extensive debates which occurred in Congress before the war and since 1775, but also the expressed desire that Canada, once attained, would never be returned. Henry Clay wrote that point exactly in 1813, that it has ever been his opinion "that if Canada is conquered it out never to be surrendered if it can possibly be retained."[74] David Erskine echoed Clay that a "strong idea prevails that the militia of the adjacent states aided by a large volunteer force would be sufficient to take possession of Upper Canada,"[75] and others add that "once conquered, no consideration should induce us to surrender it to the enemy."[76] Joshua Desha of Kentucky believed that "no peace can occur while Canada or Nova Scotia remain British."[77] Even Jefferson, who had avoided the war in 1807 is said to have told French minister Turreau that if the British "do not give us the satisfaction we demand, we will take Canada, which wants to enter the Union," and when, together with Canada, "we shall have the Floridas, we shall

[73] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 31. The oppositional statement is found in works such as Burt, U.S., G.B., B.N.A, which says that the conquest of Canada was frequently mentioned in the debates over war, but not necessarily as "desirable for its own sake." Burt, *US, GB, and British North America,* 309

[74] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 31

[75] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 30

[76] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812,* 264. Lexington Reporter is cited. "Upper Canada, purchased with the blood of the West, may it never be sacrificed to the prejudices of the East."

[77] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 31

no longer have any difficulties with our neighbors; and it is the only way of preventing them."[78]

For those Americans that questioned the expansionist motives of the United States, and questioned the desire to possess Canada, the words of Josiah Quincy stood out. Quincy asked with the vastness of the West beyond the Mississippi, did the American people desire Canada? "Is it for land? We have enough. Plunder? There is none. New States? We have more than is good for us. Territory? If territory, there must be a strong army to watch that."[79] Ignoring the obvious response of a united Amerindian Confederacy under Tecumseh, for every Josiah Quincy in the Congress or in the newspapers, there were multiple expansionists. On the subject of "the intended conquest of Canada," wrote the *Albany Gazette,* "public expectation is wide awake. —Every one is anxious to learn the time and place of the second descent on the upper province."[80] This was, after all, what was being suggested by the American Congress. "Have not the United States, upon the floor of Congress (during the whole course of the present session), *threatened to invade the Canadians?*" asked the *Commercial Advertiser*, have "they not voted armies for the avowed purpose?"[81] The second invasion of Canada appeared as if pre-determined. The question was not why, but when and how would Canada join the Union?

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[78] Thomas Jefferson to Minister Turreau, as cited in Mapp, Alf. *Thomas Jefferson: Passionate Pilgrim*. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 148

[79] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 139

[80] *Albany Gazette*. October 8, 1812

[81] *Commercial Advertiser*. April 15, 1812

Another crucial piece of the expansionist thesis was the steady growth of the American population, and how that population was migrating North. Before the war began, some numbers suggest that close to 3/5ths of Canada's population was from American immigration, and "if that influx had continued, the province would almost certainly have become American by osmosis."[82] Others historians say that four of every five settlers in Upper Canada were American, by birth or descent, and only a small portion of that was Loyalist refugees.[83] The Upper Province, wrote the *City Gazette*, which was "settled for the most part by emigrants from the Eastern states… is almost already ours—we shall soon possess both that and the lower Province…. Instead of receiving the enemy on our own shores we will march to Canada: the way is open."[84] There was widespread assumption in Upper Canada that the "spread of American settlement… would lead naturally and irresistibly to its incorporation into the United States," that it was "virtually an overflow of the American frontier, which seemed destined to absorb it."[85] Such sentiments were occasionally advocated as the "peaceful" invasion of Canada through gradual osmosis rather than military invasion, until the 1812 invasion united the Canadians through common defense. One American newspaper summed up the feeling that, "as clear as demonstration can make it, that our *population and empire is travelling to the westward*…. Moving from one part of our empire to

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[82] Berton, *Flames Across the Border*, 23

[83] Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 286. Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 8. Says ~30k left to settle in Upper Canada, 1792-1812.

[84] *City Gazette*. June 10, 1812

[85] Zaslow, *Defended Border*, 3

another," and that once Canada is added to American numbers, one should consider that China feeds a population of 333 million with only half the land.[86]

The exact numbers are honestly of secondary concern to the land-hunger thesis. American migration and population growth had created a situation wherein the Canadian frontiers were filling with Americans, and Loyalist or otherwise, such proximity to the American borders meant the "inevitable consequence of another war."[87] One is tempted to wonder, says A.L. Burt, "what would have happened to this part of British North America if that war had not come," because it suddenly stopped the peaceful American invasion of Upper Canada."[88] The historical consensus is that the American declaration of war in 1812 "severed the growing connection between the United States and Canada as if with a knife."[89]

But we are not currently concerned with the outcome of the war, only the cause of it. We must consider the additional theories created in the aftermath of the expansionist thesis and the refutation of the maritime thesis. The remaining prominent theory as to what caused the War of 1812 has two components, but both in some way blame the Westerners for the war. The first focuses on Western fears of Amerindian reprisal to any expansionist efforts, and the second surrounds the policies and agitations of the political faction eventually known as the War Hawks.

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[86] *The Weekly Aurora*. August 24, 1813

[87] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 383

[88] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America,* 182-184

[89] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America*, 182-184

Looking at the Amerindian cause first, historians are decidedly split. Horsman suggested that "American concern with the Indian problem has exerted a profound influence on historians…. To some it is the key factor in the coming war, to others it is of practically no significance."[90] Since the days in which Thomas Jefferson predicted the western lands of the Louisiana Purchase would serve as a buffer to expansion, the United States has underestimated how quickly they would fill those lands. As a cause for the war, G.F.G Stanley said that whatever impact maritime cause "may have had in the Atlantic States," the dominant reason for the "war psychosis in the western regions of the United States" was the conviction that the British in Canada were behind "the continued opposition of the Indian peoples to the western advance of American settlement."[91] The Amerindians were seen as obstacles "in the way of American expansion because they would not readily cede the land that the American farmers wanted," and because they frequently sided with the British because of a "coincidence of interest" in that both "stood in the way of American expansion."[92]

Even if the prevailing opinion was that the tribes allied with the British, and the British with them, to "parry the threatened attack" on Canada or their villages, [93] the alliance which had vexed Americans since the Revolution was troubling for the western

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[90] Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 223. See also Richard Drinnon. *Facing West: the metaphysics of Indian-hating and empire-building*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1997. Reginald Horsman. *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812.* Michigan State University Press, 1967. David Miller, *The Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast: A History of Territorial Cessions and Forced Relocations, 1607-1840*. McFarland and Company, 2011

[91] Stanley, *War of 1812*, 21

[92] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 28-29. Pratt also says that the Confederation under Tecumseh was a cause, but not *the* cause, for the war. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 54

[93] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America*, 304

frontiersmen and farmers. Jefferson suggested to John Adams that through the conquest of Canada, one conquered the Amerindians, that the "possession of that country secures our women and children forever from the tomahawk and scalping knife, by removing those who excite them."[94] Jefferson assumed the popularity of the war was based first on the ability to "stop the Indian barbarities," and said that the "conquest of Canada will do this."[95]

In his "Western War Aims" article, Julius Pratt said that after Tippecanoe, the "war party" in Congress "proclaimed that the British must be driven from Canada, in order, in the words of John Rhea of Tennessee, to 'put it out of the power of Great Britain, or of any British agent, trader, or factor, or company of British traders to supply Indian tribes with arms or ammunition; to instigate and incite Indians to disturb and harass our frontiers, and to murder and scalp helpless women and children.'"[96] Pratt links this to the demand to expel the British from North America as the "perfectly logical culmination of a long contest with the Indians for the secure possession of the Northwest and of a conviction as old as the Revolution that the Indian resistance was supported by the British."[97] This suggests that the Northwest was intensely preoccupied with the Amerindian danger on its borders, the British hostility thought to be lurking behind it,

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[94] Thomas Jefferson to John Adams. June 11, 1812

[95] Thomas Jefferson to the President of the United States (Madison). June 29, 1812

[96] Pratt, "Western War Aims," 45

[97] Pratt, "Western War Aims," 45. If in 1812 it was a "lofty pretension," Pratt says, "masking a, secret policy of agrarian expansion," this "lofty pretension" had been sedulously nurtured for thirty-five years.

and at the root of both was what Pratt calls agrarian cupidity instead of land hunger.[98] While Pratt calls this an indirect motivation, the fears of Amerindian violence as the cause of the war is directly linked to the past and future expansionism of the United States.

The second part of the Westerners thesis puts the cause of the War of 1812 at the feet of the War Hawks, a faction of Democratic-Republican politicians headed by Henry Clay and John Calhoun. After gaining control of the 12th Congress, this faction finally had the votes necessary to push the war effort through, partially explaining away the question of why the war did not start in 1807. Everywhere but in New England, wrote Bradford Perkins, "men who temporized or favored negotiation" were replaced when the 11th Congress became the 12th, with those who "stood for war; young, energetic, active men."[99] This collective of western and "radical, expansionist, malcontent politicians of the east" war party had been vocal since at least 1810.[100] But as historians came to analyze the War Hawk thesis, a disagreement occurred over which politicians, outside Clay and Calhoun, actually qualified for the label.

Roger Brown's "The War Hawks of 1812: An Historical Myth" had been one of the more popular articles which rejected the very label of War Hawk. The long presumed existence of a belligerent Republican faction, led by Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun has

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[98] Pratt, "Western War Aims," 50. Indirectly, of course, "agrarian cupidity" was at the root of the trouble. If the war spirit in the Northwest grew out of friction with the Indians, that friction was in turn the product of the American expansion into the Indian lands…In other words, we must believe that when newspapers and political leaders almost universally talked about Indians and British they meant what they said, and were not adroitly concealing their real interests."

[99] Perkins, *Prologue to the War of 1812*, 261

[100] Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812*, 35

been referenced as “genuinely bristling and warm for a war with Great Britain,” simultaneously urged by “economic grievances, expansionist designs, a hypersensitive sense of national honor, or simply the conviction that no other course remained open.”[101] Brown says it was the Federalist opponents of the war, men “not privy to the views of Republicans,” who coined the term War Hawk based on false appearances: he claims no Republican ever answered this description.[102] Brown believes that after the realization that Great Britain would not repeal the Orders in Council unless compelled to do so by armed force, there was no alternative.[103] Brown’s account of the War Hawks, especially Clay and Calhoun, seems to operate outside the normal historical contentions. Whereas Brown is quick to call attention to quotes such as Calhoun’s "War, I regret, has become unavoidable," citing “no clear evidence that Clay and Calhoun had been for war before the fall of 1811,” he is also swift to diminish the calls for war, the speeches of Clay which advocate that “the conquest of Canada is in your power.”[104]

In “Who Were the Warhawks?” Reginald Horsman attempts to quantify which members of the Republican party could have fit the bill of the much-maligned faction. Rather than settle on the congressional debates, which he deems “obviously impressionistic,” Horsman focuses on the actual votes for war taken in the period from

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[101] Roger Brown. “The War Hawks of 1812: An Historical Myth.” *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (June 1964), pp. 137-151. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27789150. (Accessed: 29-05-2019 22:10 UTC), 137

[102] Brown, “War Hawks of 1812,” 137

[103] Brown, “War Hawks of 1812,” 138. Cites Norman Risjord, Bradford Perkins, and Reginald Horsman as recent historians who would support such a claim.

[104] Brown, “War Hawks of 1812,” 138

November, 1811, to June, 1812.[105] Horsman's crucial discovery was that even though there "generally seemed to be a Republican majority in favor of war with England," there was also a "striking lack of party unanimity on the best methods of fighting the war."[106] These disagreements included some petty contentions, but also debated major policy adjustments, such as if a navy was necessary or wise in a war with Great Britain.[107] Another important debate occurred regarding using a militia army as an offensive force, something which would have (in)famous repercussions in the war.[108]

Horsman's results list roughly 45 representatives registering no more than two "adverse" votes on the eleven war measures, with most of those nays being against naval expansion.[109] He describes 61 as "usually giving their support to measures leading to war," but only 20-30 "true enthusiasts."[110] Several of the War Hawks were said to be "quite overt in their intention to conquer and retain Canada," both as retaliation for the

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[105] Horsman, "Who were the War Hawks," 125-26. His hope was that this would indicate how many consistently voted for measures leading toward war, though he admits the voting patterns are confused by those who supported war measures in the hope of persuading England to yield. Reginald Horsman. "Who Were the War Hawks?" Indiana Magazine of History, Vol. 60, No. 2 (June 1964), pp. 121-136. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27789149. (Accessed: 29-05-2019 22:08 UTC)

[106] Horsman, "Who were the War Hawks," 123

[107] Horsman, "Who were the War Hawks," 123

[108] Ibid. Horsman's findings include one other interesting note. Certain votes, which were in effect war measures, found Federalist supporters against Republican opponents, a decided contrast to the traditional tone of the war.

[109] Horsman, "Who were the War Hawks," 130. Horsman says that the navy was still being viewed as a luxury, wasted resources in a war against the mightiest navy in the world, and something that could endanger the republican values of the government.

[110] Horsman, "Who were the War Hawks," 130-32. "The true enthusiasts-- the War Hawks-- certainly numbered less than forty, and it can be argued that there were fewer than thirty. And the total group that usually could be depended upon to support war measures was not much more than sixty. Out of a House of Representatives of 142 members this was a remarkably poor representation on which to base a war. It is surprising not that it took six months for war to be declared, but that it was declared at all" (132).

long history of British maritime aggression and to fulfill long expressed American desires."[111] Felix Grundy of Tennessee said that he was "willing to receive the Canadians as adopted brethren; it will have beneficial political effects," such a measure would "preserve the equilibrium of the government by balancing off the peopling of Louisiana."[112] Grundy said that he was "anxious not only to add the Floridas to the South, but the Canadas to the North of this empire," whereas others simply accepted that Canada was part of "a divine plan for the United States on the North American continent."[113]

But if there truly was a defined faction of hawkish Democrat-Republicans, the headline members are Henry Clay and John Calhoun. Unquestionably presented as leaders of the War Hawk faction, Clay and Calhoun are two of the more aggressive proponents of the war with England. For Clay, there are two items which stand out above all others. The first is a relatively small quote by comparison to the second, but it is no less important for diving Clay's true feelings on the war. Clay said that he was "not for stopping at Quebec or any where else," that he would "take the whole continent from them and ask them no favors. We must take the whole continent from them. I wish never to see peace until we do."[114] This quote is used to emphasize that Clay, like many of the other War Hawks, sought the complete expulsion of the British Empire from North

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[111] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 12

[112] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 12

[113] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 12-13 cites various congressmen, but especially Richard Johnson and John Harper for the divine plan references. Federalist Senator James A. Bayard reported that westerners and southerners were disturbed by this insistence that Canada, when conquered, should be divided into states and incorporated into the union. Horsman, "Onto Canada," 14

[114] Henry Clay. *The Papers of Henry Clay*, edit., James Hopkins. Volume I The Rising Statesman, 1794-1814. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959), 581

America. That Clay suggests not just Quebec, but the "whole continent" serves to imply the expansionist desires for continental hegemony. The final line, "I wish never to see peace until we do" suggests the gravity of this second war for Clay. They must remove Great Britain from the continent; the conflict with Britain cannot end until then.

Clay's second item is much longer. What is often called the "troubled ocean of war" speech, Clay is urging Congress to go to war with Britain in February 1810.[115] After assuring his fellow Congressmen that "no man in the nation desires peace more" than he did, Clay utters the famous "but I prefer the troubled ocean of war, demanded by the honor and independence of the country, with all its calamities, and desolations, to the tranquil, putrescent pool of ignominious peace." In this we can see both honor and independence cited as causes for the war. The belief that a potential war would be the continuation of the Revolution reemerges from Clay's speech, suggesting this narrative was more prevalent than some scholars believed.

Clay claims that if reconciliation cannot occur with both France and Britain, and "we are forced into a selection of our enemy," then he was for war with Britain "because I believe her prior in aggression, and her injuries and insults to us were atrocious in character." This selection can counter one major failure of the "honorable war thesis," which suggest the United States should also demand war with France. Through Clay's recognition that a war for "honor" presents the United States with *casus belli* on both, he claims that "Britain stands preeminent." Clay clearly considered both nations at fault, but Britain's insults were more egregious. Clay then cites the impressments as part of

[115] This speech came from two sources to ensure accuracy of language. An excerpt taken from *Annals of Congress*, 11th Cong., 1st Sess. (1810): 579; AND Clay, *Papers*, 448.

Britain's violations, and shames those who would "appeal to the vacant vaults of the treasury" in response to such actions.

The conquest of Canada is in Congress' power, Clay says, and promotes the belief that "the militia of Kentucky are alone competent to place Montreal and Upper Canada at your feet." While Clay was sorely mistaken in the latter half of that assessment, the former is a clear call to arms and a clearer target: the conquest of Canada. Clay closes this speech with the often-uttered reminder "that the British navy constitutes the only barrier between us and universal dominion," and a warning that resistance to Britain will be viewed as submission to France. Clay responds that this "castigation of our colonial infancy being applied in the independent manhood of America," is a debasement to assume that if, as America citizens, the United States "had to depend upon any foreign power to uphold our independence." Their own resources, Clay believed, if properly directed, were fully adequate for defense. There are three important points in this selection. Clay does not wish the United States, which he now views as in a stage of "independent manhood," to be dependent on a foreign nation for its defense, especially considering that the prospect of war with their former ally was under discussion. The final point of note is that of "universal dominion" being attainable if only the British navy were not in the way. While this could simply be a call for the later proposed bill to increase the size of the navy, the conclusion of universal dominion suggests it is more akin to the traditional belief in a glorious destiny. This is still a speech wherein Clay is channeling the imperialism of early America, and his promotion of dominion fits well with his previously quoted desire for the entire North American continent.

Second of the War Hawks is John C. Calhoun. While Calhoun has a large speech to digest just as Clay did, he also wrote a few more small quips on Canada and American imperialism worth investigating. Calhoun believed that within four weeks of a declaration of war, "the whole of Upper and a part of Lower Canada, will be in our possession."[116] He is shown to possess a true distaste for the anti-war arguments, claiming most were "characterized by every epithet which indicated vice or weakness," and contained "libels of our founders and our liberty and empire."[117] Chief among his annoyances was the way in which his opponents could not decide on the cause of the war, or the War Hawks' true goals. "They then have acknowledged," he says in one rebuttal, that the "Orders in Council, and not the conquest of Canada, as they now pretend, was the cause of the war" and that the opposition had been claiming that "avarice or love on conquest" was the desire of his faction.[118] While Calhoun denies the intentions, it is important to note that this was the chief criticism against the pro-war faction.[119] Calhoun also uses a few speeches to rail against the partisan nature of Federalist opposition, and is especially

[116] John C Calhoun. *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, edit., Robert Meriwether. Volume I, 1807-1817. (University of South Carolina Press, 1959), 102. Speech on the Albany Petition for Repeal of the Embargo. May 6, 1812

[117] Calhoun, *Papers*, 193

[118] Calhoun, *Papers*, 192.

[119] Some notes on the factionalism of the war vote. The New Jersey Journal casts the invasion of Canada as a partisan issue "with the opposition" ridiculing it without possessing strong reasons. (November 16, 1813). Also cited: Richard Buel. *America on the Brink*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3: Buel Portrays the Federalists leaders as orchestrating the extremism they pretended to restrain. Buel also cast the political struggles of the Federalists and Dem-reps in the years leading to 1812 as the brink of dissolution and first serious challenge to American nationhood. "Regionally centered coalitions of like-minded gentry." Buel, *America on the Brink*, 1

concerned about the John Henry letters and their attempt to "separate these states," after the Chesapeake Affair.[120]

Calhoun's 1811 speech "On the Resolutions of the Committee on Foreign Relations" is also worth analysis.[121] Calhoun bemoans the argument that the United States is not ready for the war with the simple and obvious response of "let us remedy the evil as soon as possible. Let the gentleman submit his plan; and if a reasonable one, I doubt not it will be supported by the House." In the arguments for and against a Canadian invasion, Calhoun also took some offense to the opposition's use of General Montgomery, whom Calhoun calls "sacred to heroism" and was "indignant of submission" in this argument.[122] Calhoun believed that if the naysayers of his day had existed then, and their feelings acted upon, "this hall would never have witnessed a great people convened to deliberate for the general good; a mighty empire, with prouder prospects than any nation the sun ever shone on, would not have risen in the west. No; we would have been base subjected colonies; governed by that imperious rod which Britain holds over her distant provinces." He ends this speech by claiming his opponent has used

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[120] Calhoun, *Papers*, 92-93. See also Calhoun's Speech on the Report of the Foreign Relations Committee. December 12, 1811. Calhoun, *Papers*, 75; Speech on the Dangers of Factious Opposition. January 15, 1814 (Calhoun, *Papers*, 189). For more on the Henry Papers and the American response, see: William R Manning. *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Canadian Relations*, Vol. 1 (1784-1820). (Washington, D. C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1940), esp. 182-83, 201

[121] John C Calhoun. *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun,* ed. Ross M. Lence (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992). 6/7/2019. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/683. Calhoun's Speech on the Resolution of the Committee on Foreign Relations. December 12, 1811

[122] His response is a well-crafted call back to the revolutionary desire for a Canadian invasion. "Suppose a member of that day had risen and urged all the arguments which we have heard on this subject; had told that Congress—your contest is about the right of laying a tax; and that the attempt on Canada had nothing to do with it; that the war would be expensive; that danger and devastation would overspread our country; and that the power of Great Britain was irresistible. With what sentiment, think you, would such doctrines have been then received? Happy for us, they had no force at that period of our country's glory."

every cause for war imaginable, joking even "the probable rise in the price of hemp" was conjured, that the motives of the Western politicians and people have been misrepresented, and instead supplies the "known patriotism and disinterestedness" of those people instead of any base and unworthy motives. The War Hawks did not see themselves as hawkish, as Clay and Calhoun frequently retort, but as true patriots unwilling to stand by and take the abuses of their former colonial masters any longer. Through their defense of the war, and the measures requested to wage it, Canada remained a fundamental object. The war must be fought, Canada must be conquered, and only then could the true vision of a United North America replace a British one.

Though the War Hawks thesis claims those western politicians were instrumental in causing the war, they alone could not produce enough votes to push the United States into war with Great Britain.[123] As it happens, however, the war vote did not need to rely on the West. Though they had advocated it strongly, Westerners were not alone in the cries for war. Some historians have produced maps of the war vote, many of which display that the "for war" side was not as sectionally divided as previous historians have claimed. In *Prologue to the War of 1812*, Bradford Perkins' map shows that all states except New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts had more yeas than

[123] Goodman, "Origins of the War of 1812," 176. Of the vote, Goodman says that it "cannot be denied that the War of 1812 was less popular in New York and New England than in the newer sections of the country. However, to consider the struggle solely a project of the West is laboring the point. That section alone could not have mustered the 79 votes cast in the House of Representatives in favor of the declaration of war."

nos.[124] Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina voted unanimously for the war.[125]

While this might diminish the War-Hawk thesis for the war, it does not impede a generally expansionist thesis regarding Canada. Far more than western farmers desired the lands in Canada, and conquering Canada had been discussed widely and frequently since the end of the American Revolution. As John Randolph put it, "we have heard but one word- like a whippoorwill, but one eternal monotonous tone- Canada! Canada! Canada!"[126] For War Hawks in 1812, "sieging Canada would avenge British-inspired Indian Wars and provide rich rewards in fertile real-estate," and would do so easily.[127] In the South, the conquest of Canada was widely discussed and openly advocated as early as

[124] Perkins, *Prologue to the War of 1812*, 408. From Goodman's "Origins of the War of 1812" survey: Massachusetts was only 8 to 6 against; New Hampshire cast 3 of its 5 votes in favor of war, and Vermont 3 of its 4. Pennsylvania, only half of which could be included in any definition of the West (as of 1812), cast 16 of its 18 votes for war. Maryland, hardly to be classed as a western state, favored the war 6 to 3. (Goodman, 5) All the representatives from coastal Virginia and North Carolina voted for war; All the opposition to the measure in those states came from the central portions. Goodman, "Origins of the War of 1812" 176

[125] Horsman, "Who Were the War Hawks," 133. With the war vote only casting further confusion into the historiographic pool, the cycle of causes for the War of 1812 reverted back to previous contentions. In the 1960's the discussions concerning maritime rights and national pride reemerged, headed by Bradford Perkins and Reginald Horsman. Horsman especially had complicated matters by reviving the belief that Canada had only been a means to waging the war, and that the seas held the cause of 1812. Horsman, "Onto Canada," 3. Horsman first revives the contention of A.L. Burt "without detailed elaboration," that the "conquest of Canada was anticipated as the seizure of a hostage rather than as the capture of a prize." Horsman, Western War Aims, 15. Horsman later issues his belief that Democratic-Republicans "intended to invade Canada to retaliate against Great Britain and to hurt Great Britain, but they were happy to invade Canada because it had long been perceived as a threat to American security and hated as a surviving example of British power on a continent now dedicated to a new republicanism. The United States did not declare war because it wanted to obtain Canada, he claims, "but the acquisition of Canada was viewed as a major collateral benefit of the conflict." Horsman, "Onto Canada," 24. The congressional debates are cited for their temporary discussion of maritime grievances and a navy before resuming talks of Canada and conquest. Horsman, Western War Aims, 15. Ignoring that Canada had been a continuous demand since 1775, Horsman suggests that "there seems no reason to believe that this was in itself a sufficient reason for the war party to achieve such general support in 1812. Horsman, "Western War Aims," 15

[126] As cited in Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 232.

[127] Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 55

the summer of 1807.[128] Canada was often connected to the idea of securing Florida in an exchange, an idea previously explained, though it was advocated for additional reasons. In his account of western war aims, Julius Pratt agreed with a modified version of Hacker's thesis that Canada was a desired acquisition.[129] The people of the Southwest were "quite as anxious for Florida as their northern brethren were for Canada," and that they looked upon the conquest of those lands from Spain, ally of Great Britain, as "a certain fruit of war with England."[130] In this sense, the expansionist thesis is itself expanded to include desire for Florida as assent to northern desires for Canada. While Pratt would oppose the land hunger thesis to a point, preferring instead to advocate that the west assumed the British inspired the Indian uprisings, he also supported the expansionist thesis by connecting desires for Canada and Florida.[131]

There is at least one additional aspect of an expansionist thesis that does not explicitly tie into overt land hunger. In American and Canadian historiography of the

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[128] Goodman, "Origins of the War of 1812," 177

[129] Pratt, "Western War Aims," 37. Pulled from his *Expansionists of 1812*, 12-14, his conclusions are as follows. 1) The desire/belief that the United States would annex Canada was continuous since Independence to 1812, from 1783-1810 as "indefinite future" but without strength or motive. Tecumseh's rise expedited this demand. 2) The South was "almost unanimous in its demand for the Floridas" AND Southwest for Mexico was a "widely prevalent opinion" it would fall into American hands 3) Sectional rifts were everywhere, so if both of those could be gained by say, war with Great Britain AND Spain, the balance would be maintained North/South. 4) Madison and Monroe had sympathy for annexing Florida. 5) Sectionalism was a cause for failure, creating a want of skill and preparation, but also in lacking enthusiasm from Southern Congressmen. I say it as this- sectionalism caused a less than complete devotion to a single goal-Canada failed as a result. 6) Manifest Destiny first emerges from the war's early expansionist program.

[130] Pratt, "Western War Aims," 37

[131] In Sapio, "Expansion and Economic Depression as Factors in Pennsylvania's Support of the War of 1812," 380. The author asserts that the theses of Hacker and Pratt divided the historical community. When another historian, Richard Hildreth, revived the contention that Canada was a method and not a cause of the war, the historical community faced a bitter divide. See also Pratt, "Western War Aims," 45 and 50 for more on Pratt and the western assumption of Indian belligerence.

war, both sides carefully investigate the repeated accusation that the Americans invaded, both in 1775 and 1812, because the Canadians desired to break with Britain. The actions of the Canadian citizenry, and the British efforts to "restrain the general population from treasonable adherence with the enemy or neutrality,"[132] warrant discussion with any other purported cause for the war, no matter how unlikely. For the war of 1812, the disaffection truly begins when General Isaac Brock requests martial law, the suspension of habeas corpus, and a strengthened Militia Act.[133]

When travelers from the United States visited Upper Canada during the first decade of the nineteenth century, they could generally agree the inhabitants possessed a "determined partiality to the United States and a decided and almost avowed hostility to the British Government."[134] As has been pointed out numerous times, a large portion of the population in Canada were recent immigrants from the United States, "people who could not be expected to come forward to repel an American invasion."[135] But this "alien faction," particularly along the north shores of lakes Ontario and Erie, "was considerable… and assisted in instigating disaffection and were a continual nuisance and source of anxiety" to Canada.[136] Isaac Brock, leader of the British defense in Canada, famously stated that his situation "is most critical, not from anything the enemy can do,

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[132] Letter from the Upper Canadian Council, 3 August 1812

[133] Weeks, "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada," found in Zaslow, *Defended Border,* 193. July 27th, 1812 is when Brock asks, he will have all requests granted by August 3rd.

[134] Cruikshank, "A Study of Disaffection in Upper Canada in 1812-15," in Zaslow, *Defended Border*, 205

[135] C.P. Stacey, "The Defense of Upper Canada," in Zaslow *Defended Border*, 13

[136] Weeks, "The War of 1812," in Zaslow, *Defended Border,* 196

but from the disposition of the people," that the population believes "that this Province must inevitably succumb," that even legislators and the magistrates "have imbibed the idea, and are so sluggish and indifferent in all their respective offices that the artful and active scoundrel is allowed to parade the Country without interruption, and commit all imaginable mischief."[137] The Canadians would join or support the American cause in both wars, while both sides expressed sentiments that they would prefer not to fight their fellow countrymen.[138] This so troubled the British leaders that Brock wrote to complain of the many settlers from the United States who "openly profess a determination of not acting against their countrymen," before the war began.[139] When the war began, at least two members of the Canadian legislature defected, and the general feeling in Canada was that the fate of the country was settled.[140]

THUS THE CRY FOR CANADA

If the war really was part of an unfinished revolution, it would stand to reason Canada would once more enter the crosshairs of the United States. Some questioned the necessity of the 1775 invasion; why invade Canada with the first assault of the United Colonies? Why, months before declaring independence and years after, was Canada so

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[137] Stacey, "The Defense of Upper Canada, in Zaslow, *Defended Border*, 13. Additional sections of this speech can be found in Chapter 5 as well.

[138] Stacey, "The Defense of Upper Canada, in Zaslow, *Defended Border*, 13

[139] Brock to Liverpool. March 23, 1812. Cited in Cruikshank, "A Study of Disaffection in Upper Canada in 1812-15," in Zaslow, *Defended Border,* 207. This page also notes a communication to Lt. Governor Gore which discussed the secret and open hostility that most of the new immigrants possessed against the British Government. Brock responded to Hull's Declaration stating that "numbers have already joined the invading army," and "Nothing can show more strongly the state of apathy in that part of the country [Montreal]." Cruikshank in Zaslow, *Defended Border,* 208

[140] Cruikshank, "A Study of Disaffection in Upper Canada in 1812-15," in Zaslow, *Defended Border*, 210 and 216. American occupation "of a provincial seat of government," was "accompanied by some remarkable demonstrations of disaffection." Cruikshank in Zaslow, *Defended Border,* 212

desired? But in 1812, Canada was the obvious target. Where else could the United States assault the British? How could such a young nation harm the ruler of the seas if not by the remainder of their North American territory? Even in the most contentious critiques of American policy, Canada would remain the obvious *prize* of the war, but what truly caused the conflict? How did the desire to attain the Canadian lands and "finish" the American Revolution lead the United States to war? While some of these questions could undermine the imperialist motives of Canadian conquest, there remains a continuing insistence that Canada would remain an expansionist target so long as the British Empire possessed it.

Contributions by Canadian scholars are especially cognizant of this, and often present the dismissal of imperialistic designs for Canada as being too "uncomfortable" for Americans to address.[141] British and Canadian sources add to the plethora of American documents, letters, and speeches which profess the American desire to conquer and control the Canadas. The idea had motivated Congress since at least 1775, and remained a dominant political discourse through four decades until the second invasion occurred in 1812. Canada remained what Jefferson called the British "fulcrum for these Machiavellian levers," and the cession of Canada "must be a *sine qua non* at a treaty of peace."[142]

When the diplomatic tactic of commercial restriction on Great Britain, mainly through embargo, had failed, the United States opted for war instead. The goal of this war

[141] See also Stanley, *War of 1812: Land Operations*, 29. Stanley says that "The suggestion that the declaration of war by the United States in 1812 might have been inspired, in part at least, by imperialistic motives has never been popular with the American generally."

[142] Thomas Jefferson to General Thaddeus Kosciusko. June 28, 1812

was the invasion of Canada, and even those who do not consider Canada the cause of the war admit it was Britain's greatest weakness or vulnerability. Canada had become an integral part of British trade in American resources, and by 1808, the Napoleonic War would "leave Britain almost wholly dependent on Canada for the resources it would need to maintain its navigation system."[143] The resources of Canada created a situation wherein the United States had to possess them, citing national security or defense, and this is often used to counter any assertions of desire. So long as Canada remains in their possession, the papers said, Britain "may always harass and annoy the western settlements."[144]

Canada was quite obviously a crucial factor in any discussion of war with Great Britain, but so long as American historians underestimate the imperialistic qualities of the proposed Canada conquest, a debate remains. The historical argument regarding the causes for the War of 1812 appear to operate in an unusual cycle. Every generation or so, the same handful of causes are presented, refuted, rehashed, and repeated. There are of course preferred explanations and definitive texts for each generation of historian, a thesis which reflects a given period, but a new cycle begins for every Adams, Hacker, or Pratt. The only constant thus far is change. For a thesis professing early American imperialism to make sense in this cacophony, even a brief analysis of the previously advocated causes merits attention. After examining each cause, however, an underlying imperialistic and expansionist desire for Canada operates as the proverbial elephant in the

[143] J.C.A Stagg. *Mr. Madison's War: Policy, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830.* (Princeton University Press, 1983), 7 and 47

[144] *Democratic Press*, July 22, 1807

room. Though some scholars may choose to diminish or ignore an expansionist thesis, the weight of its merits often damages any other professed cause, preventing acceptance as an alternatively satisfactory explanation.

In this cycling of the causes for the War of 1812, scholars are more frequently drifting away from the shadow cast by Julius Pratt or the revival of his theses in the 1950's. Despite the efforts of this era to revive the maritime narrative, there was no definitive explanation as the 1960's faded to the 1970's, and Horsman notes that "discussions of Canada have continued to revolve around the question of how Canada fitted into the specific question of the causes of the war."[145] While I decidedly disagree with Horsman on the causes of the war being solely naval, his assertion that historians have permitted Pratt's argument to set the framework is unquestionably approved. Since the publication of Pratt's work in 1925, Horsman believes "historians discussing the causes of the war have been anxious to point out that the war was caused by a whole series of maritime acts that were bitterly resented by nationalistic Americans."[146] While he contended the western desire to conquer Canada to prevent British support for the Indians was not the cause of the war, he does admit "this does not mean that there was not a strong desire to annex Canada in the United States."[147] In their efforts to discredit expansionist interpretations, those historians have "ignored deep-seated American fears

[145] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 3. Horsman also cites the addition of J.C.A. Stagg to the equation. Horsman cites Stagg as suggesting that "President James Madison pressed for war and the invasion of Canada because the growing importance of exports from Canada to Great Britain combined with Republican disunity threatened American policies of commercial restriction. By conquering Canada, the United States would better be able to force Great Britain to acknowledge American neutral rights."

[146] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 4

[147] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 4

for national security, dreams of a continent completely controlled by the republican United States, and the evidence that many Americans believed that the War of 1812 would be the occasion for the United States to achieve the long-desired annexation of Canada."[148]

By this point in his career, Horsman had been advocating for a culmination thesis for almost 30 years.[149] The War of 1812 was now being viewed as the result of roughly three decades of abuses, of injuries and insults to pride and commerce, and of fears of frontier invasions and stifling European influences.[150] But this new admission by the old guard that there was a strong desire to annex Canada, and the dreams of continental hegemony which necessitated Canadian expansionism, is crucial. While Horsman's thesis, and those of the historians who have followed it since 1987, rests on the contention that maritime causes ultimately led to the war occurring in 1812 it does not erase these expansionist desires.[151] It is possible that the war, which should have come

[148] Ibid. This article occurred roughly 30 years after Horsman's articles insisting "The fundamental cause of the War of 1812 was the British maritime policy which hurt both the national pride and the commerce of the United States" which was from 1957's "Western War Aims." The development of Horsman's thesis to finally include Canada is noteworthy.

[149] Bradford Perkins has been as well. Since at least 1961 Perkins said that the war came "from an interplay of multiple reasons," rejecting the assumption of 'Mr. Madison's War' and instead suggesting that the War of 1812 came despite President Madison, not because of him. Perkins, *Prologue to the War of 1812*, 425. Perkins also adopted Pratt's thesis that the South sought to "purchase support" for a Florida campaign. Perkins, *Prologue to the War of 1812*, 289

[150] Comparisons between "Western War Aims" and "Onto Canada" reveal surprising developments, some of which have been addressed. While Horsman would continue to posit maritime aggressions as the final "fundamental" cause of the war, he also intimates that the War-Hawk faction--spurred on by years of abuses, fears of Indian incursions, and their own national pride—gave way to war. This culmination still rests on the belief that had the British pursued a less aggressive or even conciliatory policy, there would have been no war. While this may have been true in 1812, those same expansionist desires he mentions do not abate *without* the failures of 1812. War may have simply arrived at later day.

[151] Some examples of these historians should be mentioned. For Horsman himself, "The idea of conquering Canada had been present since at least 1807 as a means of forcing England to change her policy at sea. The conquest of Canada was primarily a means of waging war, not a reason for starting it." Horsman, *Causes of the War of 1812*, 267. Just like Horsman, Perkins disagrees with the expansionist

after the Chesapeake Affair if Horsman's contentions were truly accurate, might not have occurred in 1812 had Britain repealed the Orders in Council and set a lax policy with the United States.[152] But those sentiments expressing the desire to annex Canada, to create a truly "American" continent controlled by the United States, would not simply disappear if there was no war in 1812. Historians have more often intimated that the failures in the war halted the peaceful American migration which would have eventually assimilated Canada.

If the 'culmination of causes' thesis is truly accurate, a more precise focus on early American expansionism elucidates some important details. As Horsman himself admits, it would have been terribly difficult "to imagine the United States declaring war if Great Britain had not possessed that region. There would have been nowhere to attack."[153] The desire for Canada and continental hegemony had, however, been present since before the creation of the United States. These imperialist or expansionist tendencies, branded as anything from problems of neighborhood to agrarian cupidity to actual recognition of an American empire, existed independent and irrespective of the other assumed causes. Had there been no impressments, the Americans would have still desired Canada, as they had been advocating since at least 1775. Had there been no War

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thesis as well, saying that "The United States did not go to war to add new states to the Union," and that Canada was a means to an end. Like Horsman, Perkins believed in the maritime thesis, though he does admit that the "government made very little of impressment from 1808 onward," and belittles the argument of a Warhawk cause for the war. Perkins, *Prologue to the War of 1812*, 423-26. A.L. Burt calls Canada a hostage, not a prize, in a war for pride and honor, then repeats the assessment that Canada was, after all, the "only part of the British empire vulnerable to American attack." Burt, *U.S., G.B., British North America*, 207 and 310 resp.

[152] I say accurate because if the contention becomes that the 1811 election of War Hawks was the final stroke for the war, and the reason why it did not occur in 1807, this would validate the Western thesis and lessen the maritime.

[153] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 11

Hawks, there were still expansionists throughout the Union pointing to Canada as the next target of the conquest. Had Britain behaved less like they were dealing with a former colony and instead an independent state, there would still be those clamoring to remove her and the other European nations from the American continent. Any alternative suggestion for the cause of the War of 1812 cannot account for the continued lingering desire to possess Canada. To invert the expression a bit: Canada was indeed the prize, but the War of 1812 may have simply been the means.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SECOND INVASION OF CANADA

The War of 1812 was a strange little war; simultaneously expected yet equally surprising. In the United States, there had been clamor for years, and yet the preparations for the war were almost nonexistent. Even the narrative of the war, which assumed American victories on land but British naval victories, ended in *status quo ante bellum.* The only real certainty of the war was that the United States would seek to invade Canada yet again, finally liberating North America from British rule while simultaneously adding to their own empire. To quote historian Pierre Berton, "of all the wars fought by the English-speaking peoples, this was one of the strangest," a war he says was entered into blindly, fought blindly, and lead by out of touch leaders far away in Washington and London.[1] The war has been called an unfinished revolution on one side and a rejected revolution for another, a civil war and a frontier war, preventable and yet inevitable. A Canadian town supplied gunpowder for an American Independence Day celebration.[2] The Lieutenant Governors of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia issued statements which would have their people abstain from predatory warfare against their neighbors and that trade would continue without molestation.[3] In some areas of the war, especially the

[1] Berton. *The Invasion of* Canada, 20. Berton also calls the planning for the war a bungling effort. Berton, *Invasion of Canada,* 21

[2] Berton, *Invasion of Canada,* 23. This is reference to St. Stephens and Calais

[3] Lieutenant Governors John Coape Sherbrooke (June 3rd) and George Stracey Smyth (July 10). *Proclamations of the Governors and Lieutenant Governors of Quebec and Upper Canada, 1760-1840: Fourth Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario*. Edit., Alexander Fraser. Toronto: Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1907

frontier, the border has been called "irrelevant; people crossed it as they would a street."[4] A strange little war indeed.

As seen in the previous chapter, the perceived causes which would finally push the United States into war in 1812 may be the subject of endless scrutiny and debate. These discussions become increasingly muddled with the actual declaration of war, and the advance of American troops into Canada. "The time is at hand," wrote Brigadier General Alexander Smyth, "when you will cross the streams of Niagara to conquer Canada and to secure the peace of the American frontier. You will enter a country that is to be one of the United States. You will arrive among a people who are to become your fellow citizens." Smyth insisted that the United States had not come to fight against the Canadians, but "that Government which holds them as vassals." Like the campaign during the American Revolution, this war was pitched as one of liberation, aiming to "make this war as little as possible distressful to the Canadian people," to ensure they are "secure in their persons and in their property," while forbidding private plundering and threating punishments "in the most exemplary manner" if ignored.[5]

While Smyth's address to his soldiers certainly sets the tone of the American military efforts, it is not the most well-known. Two proclamations, first issued by William Hull and then a response from Isaac Brock, are equally effective and better travelled. Hull's invasion of Canada began July 12, wherein he issued a proclamation

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[4] Berton, *Invasion of Canada*, 23

[5] General Smyth to the Soldiers of the Army of the Center. Camp near Buffalo. November 17, 1812.

much like those issued during the Revolution.[6] In his proclamation, Hull insists the Americans had been driven to arms after 30 years of peace and his army has invaded Canada "to find enemies, not to make them. I come to protect, not to injure you." Much of the proclamation contains callbacks to the Revolution, both in strategy and deed. Hull declares that the United States "are sufficiently powerful to afford you every security, consistent with their rights, & your expectations," as the revolutionary leaders had attempted to prove. Hull recalls the fight for independence against British tyranny, connecting the fact that many Americans had migrated to Canada by stating how many "of your fathers fought for the freedom & INDEPENDENCE we now enjoy. Being children therefore of the same family with us, and heirs to the same heritage, the arrival of an Army of friends, must be hailed by you with a cordial welcome." As with the first invasions in 1775, American leaders assumed a peaceful welcome. They promised to emancipate the Canadians "from Tyranny and oppression," as well as restore them "to the dignified station of freemen."

But unlike the 1775 invasion, Hull promises that if the Canadians resist, if they prove "contrary to your own interest, and the just expectation of my Country," then the Canadians would be "considered & treated as enemies, & the horrors & calamities of war will stalk before you." This is a marked departure from the tone of the Revolution. Hull threatens a war of extermination if "the barbarous & savage policy of Great Britain be

[6] Hull is a somewhat tragic figure in the story of 1812. He fought during the American Revolution and received recognition from Washington himself, and later became the first governor of the Michigan territory, but his Canadian campaign ended death of a son and the surrender of Detroit to an inferior force. He was put on trial for cowardice and negligence of duty was convicted to the death penalty, but had his sentence commuted by President Madison in honor of his prior services in the Revolution. His Proclamation can be easily found, but also resides in Cruikshank, E.A. *Documents relating to the invasion of Canada and the surrender of Detroit, 1812*. (Ottawa: Govt. Print. Bureau, 1912), p58-60

pursued" and the "savages are let loose to murder our citizens, & butcher our women and children." Hull summarizes his position by stating how the United States offers peace, liberty, and security to the war, slavery, and destruction wrought by Great Britain.

Isaac Brock, hero of the Canadian defense and Britain's stalwart guardian of the war of 1812 responded to the Hull's proclamation to the Canadian people with one of his own.[7] Much of Brock's proclamation mixes fear, uncertainty, and classic anti-French propaganda with the same tenor once used by Guy Carleton in the American Revolution. Brock starts by ironically calling the War of 1812 unprovoked by the United States, ignoring decades of British mistreatment. Brock calls Hull's proclamation slanderous and condescending, but also calls to the Revolution. After he suggests the British government has not truly injured anyone, Brock reminds his readers that war-veterans settled the Canadas; though he purposefully avoids naming the wars. There are frequent reminders of the power of the British empire, that the "maritime power of the Mother Country secured to its Colonists a safe access to every market where the produce of their labor was in demand." Brock says there would be "unavoidable and immediate consequence" to separation with Great Britain, most notably exclusion from ocean trade and most interesting: annexation to France.

Brock insisted the Americans owed a debt to France from the Revolution, and Canada was the price to be paid: "this restitution of Canada to the Empire of France was the stipulated reward for the aid afforded to the revolted Colonies… the debt is still due, and there can be no doubt but the pledge has been renewed…" While Carleton had

[7] Proclamation of Isaac Brock, 22 July 1812. Brock's Proclamation can be found in Cruikshank, *Documents relating to the invasion of Canada*, 81-83 as well as Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 258-260

insisted the Americans were bandits and raiders, Brock likens them to French puppets. He also reminds the Canadians that it was the "Arms of Great Britain, at a vast expense of blood and treasure," which wrested them from France in the first place. Another reminder of British imperial might to subdue them into placidity, as was the strategy in the Revolution. Brock often uses words like force, protection, and powerful to instill the fear of the empire into the Canadians, only to remind them of oaths and loyalty "to defend the Monarchy." To shrink from that engagement is "a Treason not to be forgiven," Brock says, and "let no Man suppose that if in this unexpected struggle his Majesties Arms should be compelled to yield to an overwhelming force, that the Province will be eventually abandoned." That Brock admits the Empire would abandon the province if the Canadians were as passive as their revolutionary ancestors is a clear sign of the weakness of the British position at the outset of war. Brock knew, as Carleton before him, that the only way the British survived in Canada was with the Canadians defending their lands and not greeting the Americans as liberators. The strategies of the two commanders are therefore practically identical: appeal to force and fear, stay on the defensive as much as possible, and hope the enemy commanders blunder.

These two proclamations demonstrate the tone of the war for the United States and British forces in Canada. There are more than a few similarities to one another, and to the first war. Both sides appeal to justice and liberty, threaten force and reprisal if they are not met with an expected degree of cooperation, and recall the past invasions. Both sides denounce the expectation of Canadian neutrality, though it persists through much of this conflict as it did the first war.

Another echo of the first American invasion came from the militias of the two countries. Citing Hull's proclamation, which "has already been productive of considerable effect on the minds of the people," Brock wrote to Governor General of the Canadas George Prevost that the "Militia from every account behaved very ill-The officers appear the most at fault."[8] As they had during the Revolution, the Canadians appeared unwilling to commit to the British cause unless directly threatened by an American force and properly motivated by British propaganda. Brock says he had never "been very sanguine in my hopes of assistance from the Militia," which began to refuse orders and abandon the British cause just as they had in the American Revolution.[9] The militia in long Point's "refusal to join Captain Chambers indicates the little reliance that ought to be placed in any of them."[10] Brock wrote that his situation "is getting each day more critical… The population, though I had no great confidence in the majority, is worse than I expected to find it."[11]

As Carleton had, Brock contemplated martial law even though he originally believed it would cause the militias to disperse.[12] The poor state of the militia caused one British commander to abandon the defense at Sandwich due to the "disposition in which I found the Militia," which since July 12 "have been going off in such numbers" that less

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[8] Major-General Brock to Sir George Prevost. July 20, 1812 found in Cruikshank, *Documents relating to the invasion of Canada*, 73-75.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Brock to Prevost. July 28, 1812 found in Cruikshank, *Documents relating to the invasion of Canada*, 99-100.

[11] Brock to Prevost. July 28, 1812 found in Cruikshank, *Documents relating to the invasion of Canada*, 99-100.

[12] Ibid.

than 471 remained by his letter, and those had been largely inefficient.[13] Hull's proclamation was so effective, the New York Gazette wrote that an initial wave of 60 men deserted the militia immediately.[14] Hull's first days in Canada saw their "militia begin to leave the British and return to their homes," as much as half of the force in three days.[15] When Montreal learned of a declaration of war, they too reverted to Revolutionary behaviors. Many refused to join the Canadian militia, and "a mob threatened to march and free those who were already embodied."[16] American sympathizers in Montreal attempted to seize boats to aid an American assault, only to be gunned down by the British.[17] Just as Carleton had written that "The enemy without is not so formidable as that within," Brock's situation was similarly dismal. He wrote that the "situation is most critical, not from anything the enemy can do, but from the disposition of the people… A full belief possesses them that this Province must inevitably succumb."[18]

Fortunately for the British empire, they had learned from 1775. George Prevost suggested that "every other military operation ought to become subservient" to Quebec.[19]

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[13] Cruikshank, *Documents relating to the invasion of Canada*, 61. Lt. Colonel St. George to Isaac Brock. July 15, 1812

[14] Cruikshank, *Documents relating to the invasion of Canada*, 76. *New York Gazette* of August 5, 1812.

[15] Horsman, *War of 1812*, 35

[16] Horsman, *War of 1812*, 33

[17] Horsman, *War of 1812*, 33. Horsman is citing a letter from George Prevost, dated June 25, 1812.

[18] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 143.

[19] Horsman, *War of 1812*, 28

The Canadians there had already helped to repel an American siege. As the British Governor General, Prevost also feared that an invasion of New England would unify the Federalists to the cause of war, which when combined with the poor state of the militia forced the British in Canada to retain a defensive posture.[20] They relied on the hope that a balance between strict controls such as martial law would suppress dissent without forcing belligerence, and that the Canadians would remain at least neutral as they had in the last war. With these conditions, the war in 1812 seemed to mimic the first encounter: Montreal was a hotbed of dissent, the Canadian people seemed to support and reject the Americans simultaneously, the American campaign would need to conquer a well-defended Quebec to claim Canada, and the Americans would be forced to assault defensive British positions.

Similarity to 1775 was not, however, a desirable state for the Americans. While the British suffered from issues reminiscent of the American Revolution, the problems which had plagued the Americans in that conflict also began to resurface in 1812. Militia forces were constructed for defense, not invasion, and the leaders in Washington proved to be as unhelpful in 1812 as they had been in the past.[21] In the words of one historian, the "American government had simply not prepared for the war it was fighting," and it would be "difficult to imagine a worse military operation than that carried out by the Americans on the Niagara frontier."[22] They are accused of wasting resources, especially

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[20] Horsman, *War of 1812*, 42

[21] Horsman cites the inept preparations of the American government as dooming Hull's campaign before it began. Horsman, *War of 1812*, 41

[22] Horsman, *War of 1812*, 51 and 48 resp. This is a common assessment of the American cause in Canada during the 1812 campaigns. For more on the war itself, see George F.G. Stanley. *The War of 1812: Land Operations.* Toronto: McMillan of Canada, 1983.

in Upper Canada, and were "as ill-prepared for war as Upper Canada."[23] Winfield Scott accused American officers of sinking into "either sloth, ignorance, or habits of intemperate drinking" to the point that combatants on "both sides were at least half drunk."[24] While exceedingly humorous to consider, these problems were only those that plagued the Americans at the outset of the war. Things would soon become much worse, and the similarities to the American Revolution end when the British are able to launch a counter-offensive that did not fail as Burgoyne's had in 1779.

When the war began, the narrative was simple. The British, being superior at sea, would harass American ports and prevent the fledgling navy of the United States from aiding the Canadian invasion. The United States, forced to invade Canada as their only logical target, would likely dominate the land warfare as Britain contended with Napoleon in Europe. As the war progressed, both sides gradually destroyed this narrative and suffered embarrassments in their supposed field of dominance. The arms of the United States did not perform much better than they had in the American Revolution, failing to capture Montreal and losing Detroit to the siege that cost General Hull his position in the Army. But the Americans had progressed in the thirty years since their last conflict with Britain. They would gain control of the Great Lakes, repel invasions of New York and Maryland, and defeat the Amerindian forces under Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa. Though it occurred after the war was technically over, the victory in the Battle of New Orleans was both decisive for the Americans and embarrassing for the

[23] Careless, *Colonists and Canadiens,* 142. Pierre Berton blames Henry Clay for not realizing that the Founders had "never contemplated an offensive war" with the militia system. Berton, *Flames Across the Border*, 2-3

[24] Berton, *Flames Across the Border*, 26 and 28

British. But the British empire would cause a disconcerting situation of their own, burning the American Capital and the Presidential Mansion in August 1814. The war would end as it began, *status quo ante bellum,* with Canada still unclaimed by the United States. But important changes occurred in this war not reflected in the battles and treaties, but in the minds of the American, British, and Canadian populations. During this second "unfinished" American Revolution, the demeanor of the Canadians will drastically change from one of assumed osmosis with the United States to one that will put them on the path to a different type of Confederation.

A MERE MATTER OF MARCHING

In his letter to William Duane, Thomas Jefferson famously referenced the acquisition of Canada in 1812 "as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching."[25] Following Canada would be Halifax and "the final expulsion of England from the American continent.[26] Though he believed that the British "may burn New York or Boston" in retaliation, Jefferson countered the narrative that the Americans could only attack Canada, and instead suggested that the United States "must burn the city of London, not by expensive fleets or Congreve rockets, but by employing an hundred or two Jack the painters," a reference to a Scottish supporter of the Revolution.[27] He assumed the American privateer fleet could "eat out the vitals" of British commerce even after the British destroyed the American regular naval forces.[28] While tied to

[25] Thomas Jefferson to William Duane. August 4, 1812

[26] Thomas Jefferson to William Duane. August 4, 1812

[27] Ibid

[28] Ibid

Jefferson, this letter demonstrates the regular attitude of the Americans in the War of 1812. They assumed some losses, even assumed the burning of an important city, but with such a cost came an inevitable victory. This was the same Thomas Jefferson, the former President who had avoided war with Great Britain despite the Chesapeake Affair and other British offenses, characterizing the invasion of Canada in such clear terms. Then-current President Madison was no different. Madison held hopes of "simultaneous invasions of Canada at several points, particularly in relation to Malden and Montreal," which might have "secured the great object of bringing all Upper Canada, and the channels communicating with the Indians, under our command."[29] Madison immediately assumed the path of the war would follow the Revolution, and after Montreal would come "prospects towards Quebec flattering to our arms."[30] Madison believed that with the control of the Great Lakes, the United States could "hold Canada, whilst in Foreign hands, as a hostage for peace & justice."[31] The American position often simply argued that "Britain will be forced to change her maritime policies because of American success in Canada," but at other times, "it seems conquest not simply invasion is envisioned."[32] The goal in 1812 had been the same as in 1775, put in the words of a Canadian historian, if the United States "took Quebec before the ice left the St. Lawrence in 1813, no British army could ever reverse the loss of Canada."[33]

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[29] Madison to Henry Dearborn. August 9, 1812

[30] Madison to Henry Dearborn. August 9, 1812

[31] Madison to William Dearborn. October 7, 1812

[32] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 12

[33] Morton, *Military History of Canada*, 55

The British also assumed a measure of American success, and issued regular proclamations from the various imperial officials in Canada to control the population. One such measure prorogued the provincial parliament, suspending the government of Canada under martial law and renewing the order every few months.[34] Certain areas, increasingly prone to supporting the American cause, were placed under a more forceful version of martial law. As the spread of dissent increased, Lt. Governor Drummond progressively places more and more Canadian districts under these policies.[35] With an increasingly forceful hand, the British officials also appealed to the "Loyalty, Courage, and Patriotism," of their subjects.[36] Prevost wrote that appeal as he believed the period which would fully decide "whether the arrogant expectations of the Enemy are to be realized, by his successful invasion of this province, or whether he is to meet with defeat and disgrace in his attempt…" would soon be at hand.[37]

But the American cause was not advancing as predicted. The failure of arms began to frustrate the leaders in Washington, which was thoroughly testing the ability of a militia force to invade neighboring lands. In a letter to James Monroe, Jefferson said the war thus far had proved the "necessity of obliging every citizen to be a soldier," as was

[34] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 272-73; Prorogue of the Provincial Parliament from 28 September 1813 forward.

[35] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 272-73; Midland, Eastern, and Johnstown districts are subject to these rules only days apart.

[36] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 270-71. Proclamation of George Prevost to Lower Canada. 18 October 1813

[37] Proclamations of the Governors of Quebec, 270-71. Proclamation of George Prevost to Lower Canada. 18 October 1813

the case with the Greeks and Romans it "must be that of every free state."[38] It would be more than a full century before the United States would consent to keeping a standing army, yet 1812 had caused even the most ardent anti-federalist to suggest training and classifying "the whole of our male citizens, and make military instruction a regular part of collegiate education," as he believed "we can never be safe till this is done."[39] Though he hoped turning the militia into an offensive force would never be considered unconstitutional, that is a far cry from creating such a militaristic statement. But in this letter at least, it seems Jefferson embraced American imperialism, adding that taking Quebec would allow the United States to request "retaining all Westward of the Meridian of L[ake] Huron, or of Ontario, or of Montreal… as an indemnification of the past, & security for the future."[40]

The early failures in Canada brought the desire to possess those lands "far more into the open," to the point that in the first winter of the war Congress was already debating an increase of military forces.[41] What is striking about the debate, at least according to historians like Horsman, is that now "there was much less ambiguity about the purposes of the invasion of Canada," and both political factions "now seemed to assume that if Canada was conquered it was unlikely to be given up."[42] To invoke

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[38] Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe. June 19, 1813

[39] Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe. June 19, 1813

[40] Ibid. Jefferson referenced St. Petersburg, intimating using the Russian state to aid such terms in a presumed treaty with Britain. The debate over the militia spread to the newspapers as well. In the *Columbian Centinel* from July 15, 1812 there are debates regarding the purpose of militia as for defense only or to make war.

[41] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 16. 20,000 troop increase in one year alone.

[42] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 16

Horsman one last time, he summarizes a limited version of the expansionist viewpoint through Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina and a handful of Federalist politicians. Macon insisted, despite those who claimed the United States was incapable of conquering Canada, that not only could it be conquered but that it was "worth conquering, if it was only to get clear of a meddling and bad neighbor, who is always willing to make a strife in our family."[43] Control of the St. Lawrence was "absolutely necessary," whether it was obtained in the present war or not, Macon knew it would be obtained on some future occasion because the river was vital "to the peace and happiness of the nation, as much so as the mouth of the Mississippi was."[44] Canada was once more connected to Florida, as the occupation of both would rid the United States of bad neighbors.[45] It was only the Federalists which spoke at length in opposition to the invasion of Canada, and they were bitterly opposed to its annexation as evidenced by a speech from Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts. Quincy said that he considered the "invasion of Canada as a means of carrying on this war, as cruel, wanton, senseless, and wicked" while his contemporaries objected to the killing of "the harmless Canadians" and delighted in pointing out that the Canadians had not welcomed the American troops as liberators.[46]

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[43] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 18. Horsman's interpretation of the expansionist position should be read carefully with the knowledge he was promoting the maritime narrative regarding the causes of the War of 1812. For more on the "Good Neighbors" argument see: Lewis, James. *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829.* Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998.

[44] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 18

[45] Ibid

[46] Ibid

Though there was certainly Federalist opposition, as the Hartford Convention of 1815 surely proved, the early stages of the war showed more promise for annexing Canada despite any setbacks. The opinion that if Canada is conquered it "ought never to be surrendered if it can possibly be retained" is worded in various fashions, but the point remained the same.[47] This was the second war that targeted Canada, and even if men such as Nathaniel Macon believed it would take another war, the American position was essentially one which assumed Canada would be conquered eventually. The only problem thus far was that the military campaigns meant to encourage the issue were not developing as expected.

When the war began, many in the United States echoed Jefferson's "mere matter of marching" sentiment. The first Secretary of War for this war, William Eustis, believed the United States could "take the Canadas without soldiers, we have only to send officers into the province, and the people, disaffected toward their own government, will rally around our standard.[48] Speaker Henry Clay believed it was absurd "to suppose we shall not succeed in our enterprise against the enemy's provinces," he believed the United States would "have the Canadas as much under our command as Great Britain has the ocean; and the way to conquer her ocean is to driver her from the land."[49] James Monroe assumed the Americans "shall succeed in obtaining what it is important to obtain, and

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[47] This particular phrase comes from Henry Clay's letter to Major Thomas Bodley. December 18, 1813

[48]MacDonell, John Alexander. *Sketches Illustrating the Early Settlement and History of Glengarry in Canada, Relating Principally to the Revolutionary War of 1775-83, the War of 1812-14, and the Rebellion of 1837-8, and the Services of the King's Royal Regiment of New York*… (Foster: 1893), 161

[49] MacDonell, *Sketches,* 161. There is some dispute on which Clay spoke these words. The quote belongs to Mathew Clay as quoted in Horsman, "Onto Canada," 21.

that we shall experience little annoyance or embarrassment in the effort."[50] Such arrogant assumptions of victory have rarely served their speakers, and such was the case in 1812. The United States frequently assumed a great many things during this war. But much like the expectation that the Canadians viewed them as a liberating army, which would ease their conquest of Canada, things seldom played out as they expected. For the British, the American effort in Canada was one of "perverse stupidity," their commanders were not united, their plans impolitic, and there was a "disunion" between the leaders in Washington and the commanders in the Army.[51]

The sentiment in the United States was not too different. John Calhoun accused the Federalist opposition "had ever strived to make our efforts against Canada abortive," that resources reallocated to defend the coast left the United States "destitute of the necessary force to carry on operations in the North."[52] Political divisions were frequently blamed, with one historian suggesting that there "would probably have been little left of British North America before Napoleon fell, if the division in the United States had not offset the distraction of Great Britain."[53] Some held that the West-South coalition for war fell apart, and with it the true spirit behind the war effort, blaming the South for losing interest in the war after the acquisition of East Florida was blocked by the Senate in

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[50] Perkins, *Prologue to the War of 1812*, 416. James Monroe to Taylor. June 13, 1812

[51] Such is the summary of James Yeo, Great Lakes Commander for the British, as to why the Americans "lost" the war. C.P. Stacey "American Plans for a Canadian Campaign," cited in Zaslow's *Defended Broder,* 273

[52] Calhoun, *Papers*, 207; "Remarks on the Defense of the American Coast" February 8, 1814

[53] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America,* 320

February 1813.[54] Administrative inefficiency was frequently blamed for the poor American showing, especially as it related to mobilizing the resources necessary to raise and fund an army.[55] Others had pointed out that the United States remained too small for the task of invading Canada.[56] There are also military and tactical reasons, at fault, some of which contend that not focusing on Quebec was a "colossal blunder," compacted by the "incompetence that ruled in Washington," which killed the chances for a campaign after the summer of 1814-- just when the American ground forces really got rolling with "real fighting men" and "real fighting generals."[57]

But these defeats, failures, and divisions did not end the American desire to possess Canada. Much like the American Revolution, there would be new plan after new plan continuously devised until a peace treaty finally settled the conflict. But even a treaty could not wholly diminish the expansionist animus aimed at securing all of British North America. The lacking war effort did not end American dreams of conquering Canada. If anything, one result of the disasters caused American politicians "to shun ambiguity and point out that if the nation could unite itself and successfully invade Canada, it might well be able to retain it."[58] As the American efforts shifted to the second half of the war, their policies became mixed between military conquest and the belief that Canada could be attain in the peace proceedings. Such delusions plagued the Americans

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[54] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America*, 323.

[55] Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War,* 503-04. Stagg mentions that this led to drastic post-war reforms. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War,* 506

[56] Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War,* 509

[57] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America*, 325-326

[58] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 15

in the 1780's, professed by Ben Franklin and others, though never actually amounting to any serious considerations. In 1814, John Calhoun gave a speech stressing the "peace and security that could be secured by the acquisition of Canada."[59] Nathaniel Macon pointed out that the "United States had wanted Canada in the Revolution, that George Washington had wanted Canada, that it was envisioned admitting it to the American Union," and that even now the acquisition of Canada and Florida "would add much to the probability of a peace being lasting."[60] Charles Ingersoll of Pennsylvania professed that the "United States should persist in its attempts to take Canada… otherwise we may postpone the conquest to the next generation."[61]

Federalist politicians were seemingly shocked as public sentiment more openly and assuredly shifted to embrace the "desirability or the necessity" of annexing Canada.[62] Conquests in Canada and Florida were being promoted as essential to American "security and happiness," and Congress had been inconsistent in promoting what role Canada had exactly.[63] Congress has been said to have flipped on its supposed belief that Canada was "merely to be conquered to be exchanged for American maritime rights," or even that it was to be retained to "prevent future collisions and Indian attacks," suggesting that neither of these were actually the cause of the war or behind the desire for Canada. Politicians such as Virginia's Daniel Sheffey said he had come to the conclusion from the

[59] John Calhoun. January 15, 1814. Cited in Horsman, "Onto Canada," 23

[60] Nathaniel Macon, March 3, 1814. Cited in Horsman, "Onto Canada," 23

[61] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 23-24.

[62] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 20

[63] The interesting part of this quote by Horsman suggests the Congress flipped between explanations

conduct of American military commanders that this was "a war for the conquest of Canada."[64] All other objectives merged, finally revealing what was likely the true intention after all. The War of 1812 was not fought over maritime rights, impressments, or the fear of Amerindian incursions: Canada remained the avowed aim of the United States since the first failures in 1775, and retained its place as the veiled heart of the conflict in 1812.

Such sentiments bled into American newspaper discourse as well. *The Boston Gazette* wrote a piece claiming that Madison's administration had "distinctly avowed their intentions to Congress to dismember the British Empire, and annex the two Canadas to the United States…"[65] In Albany, an article titled "Invasion! Invasion!" compares taking Quebec and conquering Canada to a "party of pleasure, of a feast," the implications being the Americans could eat their fill of the place as desired.[66] Reprinting the *Montreal Gazette,* an article in the *Commercial Advertiser* pitched the conquest of Canada as either "for the purpose of extending their own territories or of gratifying their desire of annoying Great Britain…"[67] The goal of "take possession of Canada," became coupled to all talks of war with Great Britain.[68] Invading Canada even came to be discussed as "not inconsistent with a just and defensive war," because Great Britain

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[64] Horsman, "Onto Canada," 20-21. Horsman says the part of the Congress was "no longer concerned with drawing careful distinctions between the invasion of Canada as a means of changing British maritime policies and the invasion of Canada as the way to conquest and the removal of a permanent British threat. Horsman, "Onto Canada," 21. They merged all the alleged causes for the war with the conquest of Canada; which suggests Canada was, all along, the real reason for the war.

[65] *Boston Gazette*, 11/7/1814; Political Miscellany section

[66] *Albany Gazette*. April 30, 1812

[67] *Commercial Advertiser*. September 11, 1812

[68] *Cooperstown Federalist*. November 9, 1814

started the conflict through various means, and the United States are simply responding with the only means available to them.[69] Critics of the war were especially quick to suggest a "spirit of conquest" was the real cause of the war, not the "alleged causes," and the invasion of and desire to possess Canada was so ingrained to the American cause, it was "likely to do more than every thing else to prevent the return of peace."[70]

GHENT AND THE PROMISE OF THE NEXT CAMPAIGN

The American efforts to possess Canada gradually shifted from invasion to the possibility of acquiring Canada through peace treaty. While their arms had failed to perform as desired in the Northern theater of the war, Canada was not the only theater for the War of 1812. In the second war of American independence, the unfinished Revolution, Americans directly faced the naval prowess of the British Empire, and a British strategy which largely mirrored their plans from 1775. The naval portion of the War of 1812 is comparatively underrated, however. Put in the words of A.L. Burt, "[m]ost Canadians are prone to ignore the fact, which Americans can never forget, that the War of 1812 was oceanic as well as continental."[71] After the initial repulse of American forces, the British attempted to invade New York and Maine from Canada and the North, Washington and Baltimore in the center, and New Orleans in the South.

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[69] *Daily National Intelligencer*. November 23, 1814

[70] *Portsmouth Oracle*. August 20, 1814. Another article in the *American Daily Advertiser*, dated January 24, 1813 wrote in to compare the American invasion of Canada with the Roman empire, saying "What advantage will We, the People of the United States, derive by the acquisition of Canada and Florida by conquest? Obtained by criminal force, they will not be useful to us." The *Concord Gazette* suggested that the invasion of Canada "cannot be reprobated in language too strong and decisive," as the author conjures imperial Rome, Proconsuls, enslaving Canadians, etc. *Concord Gazette,* August 23, 1814

[71] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America*, 317

American forces widely rebuffed the British counter-offensive. The forces in Maine captured only small towns. While the victory at Bladensburg and the burning of Washington were moral victories for the British, Baltimore survived the "rockets' red glare," and the battle ended in heavy British loses which included their commander. The Battle of Plattsburg ended the British advance on New England, and combined with the victory at Baltimore robbed the British negotiators of any leverage. The Battle of the Thames claimed Tecumseh, chief of the Amerindian confederacy, the year prior. The miracle Battle of New Orleans, wherein the American forces defeated a far larger British invasion in a swift and decisive battle, occurred after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent. Had that battle occurred weeks earlier, the Americans may have not settled for peace, and instead could have used the recent swing in momentum to launch yet another invasion of Canada. By 1815, the United States "had done little more than survive some of the most dangerous threats that had yet been posed to its existence as a nation."[72] Spirits were high that yet another attempted invasion would *surely* be more successful.

The Peace commissioners had been meeting as news of these battles reached both sides. By June of 1813, the United States had already been negotiating for a peace, and though their bargaining position was weak, James Monroe instructed the commissioners "to bring to view the advantage of both countries is promised by the transfer of the upper

[72] Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War,* 501. Some Canadian historians followed the method of G.F.G Stanley, and attempt to undermine the victories of 1814. In *War of 1812: Land Operations*, Stanley regularly tries to diminish the American military, especially those at Plattsburg (Stanley, *War of 1812*, 349), and often contradicts the general overview of the naval war (Stanley, *War of 1812*, 43), wherein Stanley says the Americans presented no challenge to the British Navy despite frequently repelling or outmaneuvering Britain's fleets. That the fledgling United States was able to achieve any victory against the "mightiest navy" was a remarkable feat.

parts and even the whole of Canada to the United States."[73] The British had yet to launch their four-pronged offensive, and assumed a negotiating position of power. That initial British situation gradually eroded until only the Southern invasion remained, the results of which occurred too late to matter. Four months after Monroe issued those instructions, Tecumseh fell. A year later in September 1814 came the American victories at Baltimore and Plattsburg. The bargaining strength of the two sides leveled out.[74]

The British position on the peace was said to have been "grounded on the supposition that the American government has manifested, by its proceedings towards Spain, by the acquisition of Louisiana, by the purchases of Indian lands, and by the avowed intention of permanently annexing Canada to the United States, a spirit of aggrandizement and conquest."[75] As Napoleon had been temporarily dealt with, the British position was to balance American expansionism with some of their own; some requests included Maine north of the 45th parallel along with border reform measures.[76] But even the revered British Commander who bested Napoleon at Waterloo, The Duke of Wellington, insisted the British "have no right, from the state of the war, to demand any concession of territory from America."[77] Wellington suggested that the British demand

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[73] James Monroe. Instructions to the Peace Commissioners. June 23, 1813

[74] George C Daughan. *1812: The Navy's War*. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 352. Says the successful defense of Baltimore, Plattsburgh, and Fort Erie "had very favorable influence on the negotiations for the Americans and prompted several famous responses from both sides."

[75] Reprint of the American to the British Commissioners (September 9, 1814) in the *Vermont Mirror*, December 28, 1814

[76] Stanley, *War of 1812: Land Operations*, 384

[77] Daughan, *1812: The Navy's War,* 352. Letter from the Duke of Wellington tot Liverpool. November 9, 1814

for *uti possidetis*, or a claim over what you currently possess, should not be attempted.[78] The *Edinburgh Review*, a British newspaper, wrote that "the British government had embarked on a war of conquest, after the American government had dropped its maritime demands, and the British had lost. It was folly to attempt to invade and conquer the United States. To do so would result in the same tragedy as the first war against them, and with the same result."[79]

The United States, however, would continually press the Canadian issue. The peace delegates were often reminded to impress upon the "advantages of both countries…. Promised by the transfer of the upper parts and even the whole of Canada to the United States," and free Britain of the "burden" of supporting Canada, while also removing a "fruitful source of controversy" with the United States.[80] But news of recent successes was slow to reach the American delegates, the Battle of New Orleans was late to develop, and the British were willing to end the war. So, the two sides settled as *status quo ante bellum,* and returned all the lands they had claimed from one another. Though it ended without actually changing any borders, each side of the war had some positive spin to hold onto. In the estimation of one historian: American won the last battle, the British

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Daughan, *1812: The Navy's War,* 359. The author also suggests on this page that the "argument that the U.S. failed to capture any Canadian territory that influenced the negotiations is an outdated and highly criticized position."

[80] Stanley, *War of 1812*, 382

In a paragraph omitted from the copy sent to Congress, a letter to the peace commissioners shows they were "strongly urged to secure the cessation of the two Canadas to the United States as the only way to prevent another war which would certainly wrest these provinces from Britain." Burt, 348

beat Napoleon, and Canada *did not lose* as it repulsed the invading American armies.[81] Another historian has suggested that the Americans can view it as a naval war where they humbled the British, Canadians can recall a war to defend them from American conquest, and when compared to the struggles against Napoleon, the English don't even know it happened.[82] Only a handful of Canadian historians hold hostility to the peace, one calling the Treaty of Ghent "a negative document," believing early British gains were foolishly wiped out by the skilled American peace delegates.[83]

Just as in 1783, few believed the Treaty of Ghent had solved the actual problems of the war. Canada and the United States continued to share a border that had been unchanged in the war. The United States continued to desire Canada, undeterred by this new failure. In February of 1815, before ratifying the peace treaty, Monroe wrote to General Brown outlining preparations for the plan "to carry the war into Canada, and to break the British power there, to the utmost practicable extent…. I think that we may enter Canada, and gain a decided superiority this next campaign."[84] Brown made many post-war preparations which could have aided future invasions of Canada, including roads he specifically told Calhoun were for such a purpose.[85] Calhoun spoke out that

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[81] Berton, *Invasion of Canada*, 19

[82] Stacey, "The War of 1812 in Canadian History" in Zaslow's *Defended Border*, 331

[83] Stanley, *War of 1812*, 393 and 409 resp. Stanley also calls the war a failure for the Americans because not only did they lose land, the failed to capture the "avowed objects" of the war and conquer Canada.

[84] Monroe to Major General Brown. Department of War. February 10, 1815. For more on the post-war preparations of General Brown, see C.P. Stacey "An American Plan for a Canadian Campaign." The American Historical Review, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Jan., 1941), pp. 348-358. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1838948. Accessed: 18-06-2019 19:27 UTC.

[85] Stacey, "American Plan for a Canadian Campaign," 353-54.

same month against reducing border troops, an action he viewed as "impolitic" of the United States "to reduce ours as low as is proposed."[86]

Soon after the peace, American leaders began to regret giving up claims for Canada. Even as the Rush-Baget agreement of 1817 limited Great Lakes naval forces and the 1818 Anglo-American Convention created the 49th parallel as the Canadian border, some leaders in the United States had yet to abandon their designs on Canada. In 1818, Madison and Monroe exchanged letters wherein Madison called Canada the "remaining danger to a permanent harmony," after stating how Britain had given up the war because it created "a crisis rendering it embarrassing to its affairs internal and external."[87] Canada could be of no value to Britain, Madison wrote, when at war with the United States and was equally valuable to her as a colony or independent state. He assumed only the flattered national pride which came from Britain's vast empire prevented the transfer of Canada, insisting Canada would remain "a source of collision which she ought to be equally anxious to remove; and a Snare to the poor Indians towards whom her humanity ought to be equally excited."[88] The American people were already gearing for the next war, that if they were to try for Canada a third time, "let us go with a force so strong as to hold what, by hard fighting, we shall conquer."[89]

After the War of 1812 the United States spread West, and after various conflicts with Spain, Mexico, and even a Civil War, claimed lands from Atlantic to Pacific to flesh

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[86] Calhoun, *Papers*, 277; Speech on the Military Peace Establishment.

[87] James Madison to James Monroe. November 28, 1818

[88] James Madison to James Monroe. November 28, 1818

[89] *Daily National Intelligencer*. January 13, 1815

out the modern continental map. But as the United States grew and changed, so too did Canada. In the words of historian Phillip Buckner, as the United States "increasingly dominated the continent," Canada's salvation lay in the "improved relations between Great Britain and the United States," symbolized by the undefended border created by the Rush-Bagot Agreement and by "the Anglo-American collaboration which produced the Monroe Doctrine of 1823."[90] The United States had not given up on Canada, as minor incidents like the Patriot War attest, and animosity persisted until at least the Civil War period and the Canadian Confederation in 1867. But the nature of Canadian-American relations changed after the War of 1812, and as the next chapter shows, those changes gradually turned an assured border war and possible third war with Great Britain into the "undefended border" of the modern day.

[90] Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 515

CONCLUSION

THE REJECTED REVOLUTION

Though the Americans had yet to realize it, something important *had* changed in Canada. For the second time in less than 40 years, the Canadians had rejected the ideas of the American Revolution and the United States. Upper and Lower Canada had emerged from the War of 1812 with a new sense of political identity, from "a loose aggregation of village states into something approaching a political entity."[1] The British ruling elite in Canada ensured that their Canadian subjects rejected American values, feeding what Pierre Berton calls the "myth of the people's war" and making sure that all of Canada would eventually "embark on a course markedly different from that of the people to the south."[2] If a third attempt on Canada was in the works, Britain sought to ensure the people would not be as hospitable as before.

Much like the United States in the American Revolution, Canadians emerged from 1812 with a militia legend. Their myth that the local militias, not the regular army, cast out the invaders "gave the rootless new settlers a sense of community."[3] Historians generally disagree as to whether or not the militias on either side did much good. The Canadian historian G.F.G. Stanley blames the minuteman tradition in the United States for the slow start and low numbers of troops during the first leg of the war.[4] Had the

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[1] Berton, *Invasion of Canada*, 28

[2] Berton, *Invasion of Canada*, 28-29

[3] Berton, *Invasion of Canada*, 28. Stacey, "War of 1812," in Zaslow's *defended Border*, 332.

[4] Stanley, War of 1812, 416. See also C.P. Stacey's "Myth of an Unguarded Frontier," *AHR* v56, 1-18

United States fought with the numbers and quality of troops in 1812 as they had in 1814, it is exceedingly possible that parts of Canada would now be states. As for the Canadian militia legend, credit should go to Isaac Brock and the British defense forces. Not only have most sources argued that the quality and quantity of Canadian militiamen to be lacking in both wars, but Brock insured that the "providence was actually better prepared for the war than the United States," especially the Great Lakes naval defenders.[5] Brock and the 41st Foot regiment deserved chief credit, not militias. According to one Canadian historian, the "role of the Indians and that of British regulars was played down in the years following the war," and in addition to overhyping the militias, histories of 1812 have "tended to gloss over the contributions made by the various tribes" especially those under Tecumseh.[6]

The war that was meant to finally attach Canada to the United States, to remove the British from North America, and to complete the northern portion of American expansionism thus failed. The War of 1812 "accomplished exactly the opposite. It ensured that Canada would never become apart of the Union to the south."[7] The United States is said to have "played their cards extraordinarily badly," to the point that the war "did much, I am sure, to prevent the ultimate annexation of the country to the United States."[8] Without the war, it was widely believed that natural American migration would have claimed Canada over time, by simple osmosis and strength of numbers. If the

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[5] Stacey, "War of 1812," in Zaslow's *Defended Border,* 332

[6] Berton, *Invasion of Canada*, 27-28

[7] Berton, *Invasion of Canada*, 29

[8] Stacey, "War of 1812," in Zaslow's *Defended Border,* 335

United States had only let natural migration continue and refrained from violence, there was an "excellent chance" at absorbing Canada peacefully, but after the War of 1812, the steady stream of American migration to Upper Canada "ceased abruptly" and did not pick up after the war.[9]

While this aspect of the war had been largely ignored by most American historians, both the American Revolution and the War of 1812 can also be seen as crucial moments in the development of Canadian nationalism, and the start of a Canadian identity.[10] In the words of Canadian historian Desmond Morton, the "separate existence of Canada was determined by the American Revolutionary War and confirmed by the War of 1812."[11] Americans do not know, writes Seymour Lipset, but Canadians cannot forget "that two nations, not one, came out of the American Revolution," and that if the United States is the country of the revolution, Canada is of the counter-revolution.[12] Americans must consider what happened to those colonists who marched North after the Revolution, those who were said to have turned their backs on the Revolution, who were forced to "justify their greet refusal, had to explain why they did not support

[9] Stacey, "War of 1812," in Zaslow, 336, and Stanley, *War of 1812*, 409.

[10] One such example comes from John Thompson and Stephen Randall: "Canadian, especially English-Canadian, nationalism has been shaped largely in reference to the presence of the United States to the South." It exists "only in reaction to the United States," and rejection of the American Revolution. John Thompson and Stephen J. Randall. *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies.* (University of Georgia Press, 1994), 3

[11] Morton, *Military History of Canada*, ix

[12] Lipset, *Continental Divide,* 1. He also says on the same page that "Americans are descended from winners, Canadians, as their writers frequently reiterate, the losers."

independence."[13] Canadian Historian Frank Underhill captured the entire situation with the United States into the following neat package:

> Our forefathers made the great refusal in 1776 when they declined to join the revolting American colonies. They made it again in 1812 when they repelled American invasions. They made it again in 1837 when they rejected a revolution motivated by ideas of Jacksonian democracy, and opted for staid, moderate, respectable British Whiggism which they called 'Responsible Government.' They made it once more in 1867 when the separate British colonies joined to set up a new nationality in order to preempt [American] expansionism.[14]

What has been called the "Revolution Repeatedly Rejected" in Canada often points out that by around 1815 the transformation was complete in Canada.[15] British North America would remain British, and for the moment at least, the United States knew that the Canadian peoples no longer assented to the calls to join the Union. Though Canada had rejected the Revolution twice, this did not automatically mean the United States would simply cease to desire an extension into Canada. While some historians contend that the American desire to acquire Canada by peace treaty died in the War of 1812,[16] treaty was not the only method of territorial acquisition the United States considered.

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[13] Lipset, *Continental Divide,* 14-15. Lipset says such a mindset assumed moral superiority, whereas the Canadians advocate that "freedom wears a crown," are anti-popular sovereignty, and are an "elitist democracy." The effort to create a "form of rule derived from the people, and stressing individualism made America 'exceptional,' to use Tocqueville's formation. The desire to build free institutions with a strong monarchical state made Canada distinctive, different from its mother country but also its sibling across the border." Lipset, *Continental Divide,* 1

[14] Quoted in Lipset, *Continental Divide,* 16. This idea is essentially repeated by Pierre Berton, who says that the key difference between the two nations can be explained as an ideological one. He suggests that Americans desired "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" versus the Canadian "Peace, Order, Good Government." The American heritage is revolutionary while Canada's is colonial, he says. Berton, *Flames Across the Border*, Preface 1

[15] Thompson, *Canada and the US*, 9

[16] Burt, *US, GB, and British North America,* 395

The immediate post-war period was one which assumed a third, and perhaps final, conflict between the British Empire and their former American colonies. All parties assumed Canada would be the battleground once more. Shortly after the conclusion of the War of 1812, preparations began for the next conflict.[17] In March 1815 the United States passed an act for $400,000 in fortifications and more than doubled that for April of the next year.[18] Major General Jacob Brown, who would have been assigned to lead the 1815 assault on Canada had the Treaty of Ghent not been signed, was given command of the military affairs on American border. One of Brown's chief concerns was erecting a fortress on the St. Lawrence and increase and improve roads throughout the Great Lakes region.[19] The importance of the Great Lakes to the security of Canada was "evidenced by the scale of the exertions made during the war by both sides to gain and hold that command."[20]

Another realization occurred to the Americans after the Treaty of Ghent. After the increase of fortifications on both sides, and with Canada seemingly unified by the war much as the thirteen colonies had been from the Revolution it appeared as if Canada was no longer the easiest of the expansionist routes. The War of 1812 had decimated the Amerindian population, and without a unified Confederacy under Tecumseh, there would

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[17] The article by C.P. Stacey on this subject is indispensable. C. P Stacey. "The Myth of the Unguarded Frontier, 1815-1871." The American Historical Review, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Oct., 1950), pp. 1-18. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1840618. (Accessed: 18-06-2019 19:26 UTC)

[18] Stacey, "Myth of the Unguarded Frontier," 6. This number approaches $7.7 billion in modern inflation-adjusted currency (2020)

[19] Stacey, "Myth of the Unguarded Frontier," 6-8. Stacey says that some of the construction, as it happened, was actually constructed a mile too far North into Canada itself, and was thus halted before competition.

[20] Stacey, "Myth of the Unguarded Frontier," 11

be far less resistance to westward expansion. Historians such as David Miller suggest that the War of 1812 caused the "ruination of the American Indian and the spoliation of his property."[21] From this point forward, American polices with the Amerindian peoples would be one marked by dishonest treaties and what would become Jacksonian-styled removals. The Treaty of Ghent is said to have justified taking lands from all hostile tribes, and even though guarantees would be made, like those to the Creek nation promising "the integrity of all their [remaining] territory," even these would be subject to American military posts, trading centers, and any roads the United States wanted to build or use in their lands.[22]

Conversations between the Secretary of War and the Creek representative Hawkins shows that even as American officials tried to limit white expansion in Amerindian lands, it was often without true enforcement, and thus to no avail.[23] Instead, the United States would begin issuing warnings and bribes to amass Amerindian lands as early as 1816.[24] The days of the Indian Removal Act, the Trail of Tears, and Manifest Destiny at indigenous expense were fast approaching. The expansionist frontiersmen have been labeled the "vehicles for Uncle Sam's territorial aggrandizement," because the territory Jefferson imagined would last for the "thousandth thousandth" generation would

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[21] Miller, *Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast*, 118

[22] Miller, *Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast*, 115

[23] Miller, *Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast*, 119

[24] Miller, *Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast*, 123. Cites the 1816 treaty with the Chickasaw for a few million acres of land, as well as another cessation of 1 million acres in Georgia from the Creek peoples (Miller, *Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast*, 120

scarcely last one.[25] The fears of an over-extended republic seemed to have been short lived, and those few who openly feared the effects of unrestrained expansion "were generally in disarray" because American settlers and sea captains "were constantly presenting the American government with the realities of new settlements and expanding commercial contacts."[26]

The question instead became not how far to expand, but the best method for expanding as far as possible. Should the United States absorb and integrate in an incremental fashion, or allow for the creation of smaller "sister" republics like John Jacob Astor's Astoria?[27] With very little debate, the United States always chose the former option, expanding their continental empire and choosing influence over conquest for distant regions, like South America, which didn't fit that plan.[28] Two quotes help illustrate this imperialist vision. The first comes from the *Nashville Clarion,* a newspaper which asked "where is it written in the book of fate that the American republic shall not stretch her limits from the capes of the Chesapeake to Nootka Sound, from the isthmus of Panama to the Hudson Bay?"[29] The second comes from Thomas Hart Benton in 1825 versus Benton in 1845. Within twenty years, Benton went from the belief that the Rockies would serve as a natural and "everlasting boundary" for the United States to

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[25] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 99

[26] Reginald Horsman. "The Dimensions of an 'Empire for Liberty': Expansion and Republicanism, 1775-1825." *Journal of the Early Republic,* vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1989); 15

[27] See James Ronda. *Astoria and Empire.* University of Nebraska Press, 1993

[28] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 99. According to Robert Kagan, "The Americans could be patient as long as no other power threatened to take what they insisted rightfully belonged to them." Kagan, *Dangerous Empire*, 133.

[29] Cited in Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 65

calling for American rifles in Oregon.[30] This was the mentality of American expansionism; this is how the United States created a continental empire.

As the American people tired of war with Britain, they could still look to the lands gained from the Louisiana Purchase to temporarily sate any expansionist desires. Instead of Britain, focus could also shift to North America's other colonial power. As such, the United States would eventually replace Canadian concerns with East and West Florida, and the lands of the Spanish Empire, two additional borders which would undoubtedly come into focus when filling out the immense western lands gained in 1803. The failures in Canada, in short, are the reason the United States shifted focus from North to West: "The American imperial drive was therefore diverted from the North to the West and South."[31] As LaFeber said, the nation had "survived- if barely- and Americans were free for the first time since their independence to turn west and seize the incredible opportunities of a continental empire."[32] But historians should not overlook that it was the failure of the United States to acquire Canada which forced American migration westward, into the lands of Spain instead of Britain, into Manifest Destiny and Picking the Spanish Bone. In the words of Canadian historian W.L. Morton, the settlements of 1818 and the Monroe Doctrine "registered the fact that supremacy in America rested with the United States," but after that period "American destiny drove westward; rarely was it tempted to turn north."[33] The fur trade, the timber trade, the wheat lands, Morton says,

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[30] Lens, *Forging of the American Empire,* 100

[31] Stanley, *War of 1812,* 408

[32] LaFeber, *American Age,* 67

[33] Morton, *Canadian Identity,* 30-31

"could not divert Americans from the Mississippi valley, the Pacific coast and the trade of Asia. These things they wanted supremely; they did not by contrast think Canada worth the difficulty of taking."[34] There is an important distinction in Morton's words; it is the *difficulty* of taking Canada now appeared more obvious. The perennial misreading of the Canadian desire to join the American Union was diminishing, but the desire to possess it remained. The West offered a tempting, and according to Morton far too desirable, alternative to a third war with Britain.

There can be no mistake that the United States would come to also seek the lands of Spain, for as Jefferson said in 1816, that "a war is brewing between us and Spain cannot be doubted."[35] Even Spain considered the absorption of their lands as part of a larger pattern of American expansionism. The memoirs of Spanish Minister Luis de Onís paint the Americans as a haughty, greedy people, bent on dominating the Americas.[36] Written only a few years after the treaty of Ghent, Onís said that the Americans "think themselves superior to all the nations of Europe; and believe that their dominion is destined to extend, now, to the isthmus of Panama, and hereafter, over all the regions of the New World."[37] He predicts the American acquisition of the Floridas "in short time,"

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[34] Morton, *Canadian Identity*, 30-31

[35] Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, February 4, 1816

[36] Luis de Onís. MEMOIR UPON THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WHICH LED TO THE TREATY OF 1819. WITH A STATISTICAL NOTICE OF THAT COUNTRY.ACCOMPANIED WITH AN APPENDIX, containing important documents for the better illustration of the subject. MADRID, 1820. From the Press of D. M. De Burgos. Translated from the Spanish with Notes, By Tobias Watkins. Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Junior, 1821.

[37] Onís, *Memoir*, 23. He also says that "The Anglo-American looks upon every nation with disdain or contempt, admiring the English only, and making it a glory to draw his origin from her. But their situation at the head of the New World, without rivals to impede or restrain their march; an immense and varied surface of territory; their rapid and astonishing progress in population, the arts and industry; the brilliant series of their prosperity; the powerful success of their arms in the late war against Great Britain; and the respect which they fancy they have inspired in the principal powers of Europe have raised their

because such expansionism is "irrevocably decided in their politics, that these provinces must be theirs, amicably, or forcibly; and there is nothing; at present to prevent it, locked up and surrounded as they are by the territory of the Union, with ten millions of inhabitants so disposed as to prevent any foreign nation from setting foot into them."[38] For Onís, the United States had scarcely seen "their independence acknowledged, tranquility and good order established in their Republick, and the place settled which they were to hold among independent powers," when they formed the "ostentatious project of driving from the continent of America" the nations that held possessions on it, and of "uniting under their dominion, by federation or conquest, the whole of the colonies."[39] For Onís, everything "breathes extreme affectation and vanity" in the United States, and in their pride as well as their greed, ambition, and an the "insatiable in the acquisition of territory," he saw the ruin of the country.[40]

The treaty named after Onís and John Quincy Adams, also called the Transcontinental Treaty, ceded Florida to the United States and began the vision Onís predicted. Negotiations may have simply been what one historian called a ploy to "buy time in which the United States would grow stronger, the Spanish Empire would

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vanity to an extreme, of which it is scarcely possible to form an idea. They consider themselves superiour to the rest of mankind, and look upon their Republick as the only establishment upon earth, founded upon a grand and solid basis, embellished by wisdom, and destined one day to become the most sublime colossus of human power, and the wonder of the universe." Onís, *Memoir,* 105-106)

[38] Onís, *Memoir,* 82

[39] Onís, *Memoir,* 120. He says that it was a great and transcendent error to cede Louisiana to the French under "terms so ambiguous, so contradictory, and so unusual in diplomatick transactions" that the frontiers of the province were not marked out, nor was the stipulation even thought of, that France should not alienate it (138).

[40] Onís, *Memoir,* 106-108. Numbers compiled by Sidney Lens suggest that by the 19th century, 705 of the then-continental United States was formerly Spain's: 18 former republics. Lens, 88

crumble, and the European powers would become indifferent or preoccupied."[41] The treaty itself also had a very interesting dilemma for the United States. While possessing Florida was a matter of time, the Adams-Onís Treaty also limited American expansion by placing a firmer border on the Louisiana Purchase. The conflict regarding the terms of the treaty "concealed a general consensus over the continental destiny of the United States."[42] Though the United States gained Florida, it saw any impediment to their expansion as dangerous and undesirable. By placing a limit on the previously undefined Louisiana Purchase boundaries in the South and West, Spain had placed itself in a dangerous position once more. The United States, Onís contended, was bent on driving all other nations from North America and seemingly only awaited an excuse like the one General Andrew Jackson had provided in Florida. In 1822, the recognition of Mexico created such a pretense. The United States now "shared a border, and thus a potential boundary dispute," with the newly independent Mexico.[43] Within months, President Monroe's cabinet began to consider not only plans for parts of Mexico, but also the annexation of Cuba, dubbed "a proposition from the strongest party in Cuba…. To join our union."[44]

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[41] Lewis, *American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood*, 86

[42] Lewis, *American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood*, 145

[43] Lewis, *American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood,* 171

[44] Lewis, *American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood,* 172. During the Missouri Crisis, Lewis says that fears of a new player on the northern continent took many forms. Besides and independent Missouri, things such as a second American union, new European power, Texas, or even Cuba all factored in to the equation. "The concern over Texas seemed so powerful that westerners might break from the union that seemed ready to dissolve rather than accept the loss of a region that they deemed essential to a future confederacy." Lewis, 149

Unfortunately for the Spanish Minister, the prevailing belief in the United States, as summarized by historian Braford Perkins, is that "Europe's distress" was often America's advantage.[45] "In the classic model of imperialism," writes Sidney Lens, "old empires, like old generals, fade away and new ones are built around their tombstones," and for the United States it was the corpse of the Spanish Empire in the Americas which fed the rise of the United States after the War of 1812. Like their absorption of Spanish holdings in North America, the United States was often "pushing on half-open or at least insecurely locked doors" for their successful conquests.[46] But in this argument the word *successful* ought to be stressed. The current narrative of American empire is far too concerned with Spain or the West because the invasions after 1815 were successful. But the Americans sought Canada in the same terms, with the same—arguably increased—veracity, as Florida or any other conquest.

Assuming the centrality of Spain or formerly Spanish lands completely neglects the first invasions of the United States as well as the absolute certainty placed by the Founders in Canada's eventual place in the American Empire. As Rachel St. John promoted in her article "The Unpredictable America of William Gwin: Expansion, Secession, and the Unstable Borders of Nineteenth-Century North America," the map of North America could have looked very different and we should not simply focus on the successful expansions but the "broader history of shifting national boundaries and territorial ambitions" of North America.[47] Historians in the United States, St. John says,

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[45] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 230

[46] Perkins, *Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 230

[47] St. John, "Unpredictable America," 59

whether "lauding the United States' 'manifest destiny' or critiquing U.S. imperialism, both celebratory nationalist histories of U.S. expansion and more critical accounts of U.S. conquest have depicted the United States as a unified, self-conscious, and powerful nation-state in which the government and its citizens worked in unison toward a shared goal of national expansion."[48] Such depictions have too often "left the impression not only that most Americans shared a unified notion of their nation's 'manifest destiny' but also that the United States achieved it," and like St. John's account of Gwin, the invasions of Canada can help American historians rethink that particular narrative.[49] The fact that United States expansionism was not always successful, that many Americans designs for an American empire included Canada, and that Canada remained unconquered after two wars is an important piece of the history of North America and the nations which occupy it.

While some may contend that the War of 1812 was only a temporary relegation, a secondary distraction from Spanish lands and the West, such assertions overlook the continued desire to possess Canada.[50] Within only a few years after the Treaty of Ghent, the "American nation and the American empire stood on firmer ground than ever

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[48] St. John, "Unpredictable America," 59

[49] Ibid. I say American, because many Canadian scholars have noted what John Thompson and Stephen Randall called an "essentially one-sided" nature of power between the current United States and Canada that is clearly reflected in "the imbalance between the relative attention Canadian and American scholars give to the relationship. Thompson, *Canada and the United States,* 2. According to Lawrence Hatter, "The northern border was a critical site of state formation for the first 40 years of the American Republic because it was a place where United States agents could regulate people's movements to distinguish between American nationals and the nations of other states in the 18th century Atlantic World." Hatter, *Citizens of Convenience,* 3

[50] This particular assertion, that "The War of 1812 temporarily relegated the dissolution of the Spanish Empire to a secondary place in American policymaking by shifting federal resources and attention toward British Canada" came from Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson. *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson.* (New York: Oxford, 1990), 38

before."[51] From a position of "relative insecurity," the United States had emerged as the supreme power in the Western Hemisphere: the Louisiana Purchase had been signed over, both Floridas secured, and "a transcontinental claim had been staked, and the prospect of European intervention in the hemisphere greatly reduced."[52] The Americans were discussing broad expansionist plans, such as a canal extending "from the Spanish Maine to the Pacific Ocean," which would enable "the American Empire and the commercial enterprise of a free people," to be "extended as circumstance might require."[53] After Ghent, the focus would shift from Florida to the Monroe Doctrine, which is said to have "set up the ground rules for the great game of empire that was to be played in the New World."[54] What Williams called "imperial anti-colonialism" would become the new foreign policy of the United States, with principles and objectives that were "inextricably intertwined with the construction of the nineteenth century American empire."[55] Just as they had with Canada, the United Sates would continue to promote a foreign policy which stressed the expansion of the Union in "terms of anti-colonial self-

[51] Weeks, *Building the Continental Empire*, 58

[52] Weeks, *Building the Continental Empire*, 58

[53] *Commercial Advertiser*, February 24, 1819

[54] LaFeber, *American Age*, 87. See also Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in 19th Century America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2011. Sexton says that "The Message Proclaimed American opposition to European colonization, but within it lurked the imperial ambitions of an expansionist United States." Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine,* 3

[55] Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine,* 6. Sexton later calls the Anti-colonial process "impossible to separate from early American imperialism." Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine,* 7

determination," believing that places such as Texas or Cuba would naturally, and voluntarily, wish to join the United States.[56]

When Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams, and John Calhoun discussed the role of union after the War of 1812, they echoed the Founders in that promoting a single union was "the only way to accomplish the goals of the Revolution national independence, republican government, commercial prosperity, and territorial expansion."[57] They considered the union of the American states as essential to national independence, republican government, commercial prosperity, and territorial expansion.[58] For the first forty years of the American experiment, no other location occupied the imaginations and attentions of the American people as much as the lands of Canada and British North America. The Union was not complete so long as Canada remained chained to the British Empire.

Imperial expansion "played an integral role in defining the American people as a distinct nation" according to historians like Lawrence Hatter.[59] But it is not until after the failures in the War of 1812 that the Americans began to truly see the Canadians as a distinctly different people. Having twice rejected the embrace of the United States, the Canadians were on the path to eventual unification and Confederation. The United States would eventually move on as well. Momentary satisfaction with the lands in the West and South, and the gradual push of American borders, allowed the United States to recall

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[56] Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine*, 61

[57] Lewis, *American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood,* 63

[58] Lewis, *American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood,* 189

[59] Hatter, *Citizens of Convenience,* 9

the War of 1812 not as a failure to acquire Canada, but as something heroic. Just as the Canadians had survived two invasions from the United States, so did the former British colonies twice survive and repel their former imperial masters. The United States had shown examples of "heroic ardour not excelled by Rome, in her brightest day of glory, and blended with milder virtue than Romans ever knew," according to Gouverneur Morris.[60] Their descendants could live in a future of freedom in the "bosom of peace," and may look, with "grateful exultation, at the day-dawn of our empire."[61]

The War of 1812 was a watershed for Canadian-American relations as much as it was for American expansionism. The two North American peoples continued to intertwine well after the War of 1812 ended, but the animosity post-war was markedly different. Both nations would spread further West, and eventually the Oregon Treaty of 1846 would formalize their boundary from Atlantic to Pacific. During the 1840's and 1850's, one historian marked that the antagonistic relations between Great Britain and the United States "did begin to weaken" as "commercial interests with the United States are so strong that it would require a very extraordinary state of things to bring an actual war."[62] As the 1854 Reciprocity Treaty softened trade relations with Canada, it appeared to one Canadian historian that relations had "inaugurated a new era of harmony" with the United States.[63] Though the Civil War created some fears in Britain and Canada of

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[60] Gouverneur Morris: *An Inaugural Discourse*. Presented at the New York Historical Society in 1816. He refers to the United States as America, however.

[61] Gouverneur Morris: *An Inaugural Discourse*. Presented at the New York Historical Society in 1816.

[62] Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 520

[63] Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 516-17. Buckner is quoting historian Donald Creighton in this section.

American expansionism and retribution, with some suggesting that the "United States appeared in its old light, a vast and encroaching organization, politically truculent, economically aggressive," nothing ever came of those fears.[64] Some nationalistic Canadian historians claimed that British North Americans in the 1860s were afraid that the United States might "become a menace to the British provinces and territories and absorb them one by one, if they remained separate and weak," few others shared those sentiments as relations cooled and the modern notions of an unguarded border emerged.[65]

The War of 1812 and the American invasions of Canada in 1775 each reveal some of the earliest histories of American expansionism. Those first designs of an American empire articulated by the American newspapers and the more precise letters and addresses of Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, and so many other Founders

[64] Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 516. In response to British support of the Confederate States of America, especially the building of Confederate naval vessels in British ports, there was a noted anti-British sentiment brewing by 1864. The *Alabama* claims, as they came to be called, sought compensation for the damages caused by those ships, and of course, Canada reemerged in those discussions. There was the opinion that the cessation of Canada could offer fair compensation for the *Alabama* claims, an idea that historian Phillip Buckner called "an illusion, fueled by the mistaken belief that the British had lost interest in their North American possessions and by the even more mistaken belief that many Canadians were eager to cut their ties with the British Empire." Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 523-24. Such claims caused even the most supportive Canadians and British North Americans to truly consider what would happen after a Northern victory restored the Union.

[65] Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 514. This quote is from what Buckner calls the first scholarly history of Confederation, *Canadian Federation: Its Origin and Achievement: A Study in Nation Building*, by R. G. Trotter. Buckner labels each of the following as nationalistic historians that took on a distinct anti-American tone. Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 518: W.L. Morton claimed that the American Civil War pushed British North Americans "toward the creation of a national government to defend themselves against an increasingly powerful and aggressive United States." Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 517. In 1958 a third Canadian historian, Donald Creighton, argued that the critical turning point in Canadian–American relations had been the period from 1858 to 1864, when "the survival of the existing [British] colonies in a continent dominated by the United States was still not entirely certain," and that a union of the remaining British North American colonies would not only "create a much larger colony better able to undertake greater responsibility for its own defense and with the resources to acquire the vast territories in the West nominally under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company," but it would reinforce the "commitment of the British government to defend its North American colonies against an increasingly aggressive American government." Buckner, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution," 516-17. Citing Creighton in "The United States and Canadian Confederation."

illustrate how the nascent republic envisioned the future of the nation and the American continent. Canada was central to each, and remained so for at least 40 years after the creation of the United States and beyond. Historians must be careful to avoid the "geographic teleology" warned by historians like Rachel St. John, and instead expand our framework of expansionism, empire, and imperialism *forward* from the colonial and Revolutionary periods instead of reading *backward* from the modern. Though often overshadowed by the acquisitions from Louisiana, Mexico, Spain, Russian Alaska, or overseas, the invasions of Canada are just as crucial to the national picture-- warts and all-- as the other steps on the path to an American empire.

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