



HISTORICAL STUDIES JOURNAL
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Sometimes I feel like they're all still here, like they never really checked out, and I can almost see them"

 University of Colorado at Denver
and Health Sciences Center
Downtown Denver

Jack Torrance in Stephen King's *The Shining*

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HISTORICAL STUDIES JOURNAL

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What do a Greek historian, a Spanish explorer, a colonial preacher, a western surveyor, and the ghost of a hotel housekeeper have in common? Each of them captured the interest of a talented University of Colorado at Denver history student. This unlikely mix of characters inspired examples of research and writing that the History Department faculty and the *Historical Studies Journal* staff consider some of the finest produced during the 2004-2005 academic year.

Though historians of necessity go where others have gone before, their unique insights and analyses offer new lenses through which to view events, cultures, and motivations. Be that lens on a spyglass or a microscope, Franklin bifocals or a Ouija board pointer, it enables us to focus on the subject in an original way. The papers presented in the following pages, covering a diverse range of topics and viewpoints, provide a representative sample of the outstanding work undertaken by students in CU-Denver's wide range of historical studies.

I would like to thank the faculty members who submitted student papers for consideration, the student authors who dedicated many additional hours to perfecting their writing and citations, and the conscientious editorial staff who contributed their recommendations and revisions to this issue of the *Historical Studies Journal*. Thanks also to Shannon Fluckey, graphic designer with Auraria Reprographics, for her Herculean efforts on the *Journal's* behalf, and to Dr. Tom Noel for his oversight and considerable expertise.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the University of Colorado at Denver's History Department for recognizing the importance of providing its students this opportunity for hands-on practice with the myriad aspects of the publishing process. From writing and revising to refining and proofing, each step has been a valuable learning experience for everyone involved.

Debra Faulkner
Editor



THUCYDIDEAN MORALITY AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

by Oscar Mackey

Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* is a seminal work. The ancient Greek general-turned-historian gives us most of our knowledge concerning this period of Greek history, and his careful observance and objectivity make this history a cornerstone of both Greek history and historical methodology.

For Americans, Thucydides provides a unique historical perspective with which to view our own history. The economic and political similarities of ancient Athens and contemporary America are a basis for obvious comparisons. However, few such comparative studies look to moral, as well as physical, declines. Most comparisons have attempted to contrast the two main antagonists of Thucydides' war through recent and contemporary conflicts – most notably the Cold War.

Moral issues in Thucydides' book are found throughout in the many speeches and debates. These dialogues, isolated and examined by Greek historians such as Paul Woodruff, offer new points of comparison with the United States. Paul Woodruff's translation of Thucydides is, in his own words, "an unashamed betrayal of Thucydides,"¹ which he explains as clarifying certain concepts made obscure in the ancient Greek of the original text. Woodruff's focus on certain conceptual abstractions – justice, power, human nature, and fear – help define a warning that is implicit in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*.

*Oscar Alexander Mackey, majoring in U.S. History and minoring in German History, plans to earn his Masters in History at the end of Spring 2006. With an emphasis on cultural and diplomatic history, Mackey has focused on German-American foreign relations, though his interests extend to include all American foreign policy and comparative history in particular. As evidenced by this paper, he enjoys finding models in the past to relate to the present. Mackey was drawn to this topic after reading Paul Woodruff's collection of excerpts from *The History of the Peloponnesian War* – titled *Of Justice, Power and Human Nature* – for Professor Carl Pletsch's Historiography class in Fall 2004.*

This warning is, of course, inferred. Woodruff is careful not to identify Thucydides with any explicit theory concerning human nature, as differing interpretations of *The History of the Peloponnesian War* exist. Concerning Thucydides, Donald Kagen writes that, “In the original Greek his style is often very compressed and difficult to understand, so that any translation is by necessity an interpretation.”² Concerning Athenian foreign affairs, Kagen argues the realist interpretation of Thucydides, while Woodruff’s interpretation is considered idealist.

For quick reference, David Boren and Edward Perkins define realism – with regards to foreign policy – as a “view of the state as the most important actor in an anarchic world arena in which states calculate their interests in terms of power.”³ This perspective is unconcerned with ethics and morals, and is calculated solely on the power of the state and its ability to project that power – Machiavellian considerations. Boren and Perkins associate foreign policy idealism with concern for international institutions, international law, building a world community, and “peace through collective security, rather than through various iterations of balance of power as advocated by the realist school of thought.”⁴ Simply put, realist interpretations of Thucydides argue for Athenian arrogance and violence – be tough on your enemies! An idealist interpretation condemns Athenian foreign policy during the Peloponnesian War.

Woodruff’s idealistic interpretation makes Thucydides somewhat of a philosopher. Through the dialogues, he identifies concerns with political and personal morality, and certain general truths about humanity. An obvious theme of *The History of the Peloponnesian War* is that human nature is a negative force, which triumphs over ethical and moral considerations whenever the will to enforce such considerations lapses.

The next logical step in Woodruff’s revelations is the argument that Thucydides wrote his history objectively and thoroughly so as to set an example for future peoples. Thucydides’ impartation of events, when coupled with moral considerations of the many speeches and debates, implies a warning: We were the greatest city in the world; here are our great mistakes; don’t make them yourselves.

Twenty-five hundred years later, the United States of America may claim to be the most powerful and influential nation on the globe. As a democracy and a world power, the U.S. identifies so strongly with ancient Athens that our nation was founded on Athenian principles, and our oldest government buildings are fashioned in ancient Greek styles.

Why then, in this most powerful nation, are Thucydides’ implicit warnings going unheeded? His careful observance of Athenian moral decay and its aggressive and unethical foreign policy offers explanations behind the disaster of the Peloponnesian War and subsequent Athenian decline. Why must history repeat itself in the foreign policies of the United States?

Modern American foreign policy invites comparisons with Thucydides’ Athens, and these comparisons are compelling. First, there is a perception and reality gap in both of these entities’ self-perception. Athenians viewed themselves as exceptional: icons of success and progressivism in the Greek world. Many believed that success was based on a greater moral character, as epitomized in both the debate at Sparta in 431

BCE and Pericles' famous Funeral Oration. Importantly, the exceptional character of these rationalizations is repeated in American culture and identity. Second, both Athens and the United States influenced foreign conflicts for their own gain, and the dubious morality of that influence has had drastic consequences for the affected foreign entities. Third, whether stated, codified, or implied, both Athens and the U.S., believing their economic successes validated their political systems, have held a callous and condescending view toward non-democratic, non-capitalistic societies. This has rationalized the subjugation of foreign peoples as well as the attempted exportation of democracy by force.

This is a comparative essay, but more of an exploration of morality in American foreign affairs. Morals are, of course, wide ranging and contested concepts, but for the purposes of this study, morality simply means humanity – the idea that human lives have value beyond the needs of any state or government. Harming or killing other people – especially innocent “collateral” victims – is immoral.

Thucydides' subtle presentation of the moral and ethical questions facing Athens in *The Peloponnesian War* legitimizes and demands the same considerations of U.S. foreign policy. Those considerations suggest that U.S. foreign policy is as morally reprehensible and self-destructive as Athenian imperialism was over two thousand years ago.

One important note before continuing: although some “mainstream” American foreign policy history is – by necessity – consulted for this essay, a majority of the foreign policy analysis comes from very recent sources, often with an international perspective. Traditional notions – and histories - of U.S. interests and foreign affairs have gotten pretty moldy, and have less validity in the modern world. Also, as sources concerning U.S. involvement in the Guatemalan revolution are sparse, that history is included in this essay, while it is assumed the reader is more familiar with the Vietnam War.

PERCEPTION AND REALITY:

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND IDENTITY

In 431 BCE, the Athenian leader Pericles gave his famous Funeral Oration, justifying the death of Athenian soldiers and glorifying an Athenian character and identity. First he paid homage to Athenian democracy, the “form of government that does not try to imitate the laws of our neighboring states,” and that “we are more an example to others, than they to us.” Further, Pericles commented upon Athenian “courage in action,” and boasted that “when we invade our neighbors, however, we usually overcome them by ourselves without difficulty, even though we are fighting on hostile ground against people who are defending their homes.” He stated that Athens was a “lesson for Greece,” where each Athenian is self-sufficient, diverse, of grace and versatility, and added to Athenian power, “which we have obtained by having this character.”⁵

Though Pericles maintained that “we shall be the admiration of all people,” other Greek city-states had very different perceptions of Athens. At the debate at Sparta, the Corinthians complained that the Athenians “encroach upon their neighbors little by little.”⁶ In his own speech, the Spartan Sthenelaidas insisted the Athenians were “bad men to us now, and they deserve double punishment for changing from good to bad.”⁷

The Spartan King Archidamus, before the city of Plataea, insisted he came to liberate the Greeks from Athenian imperialism, and the Lacedaemonian general Brasidas insisted he “fights Athens for the freedom of Greece.”⁸



From what is known of Athenian pride, ambition, and violence, especially during the Peloponnesian War, Pericles’ perceptions of a high and moral Athenian character are degraded by the realities of Athenian conduct.

Though Thucydides does not explicitly say so, these noble and idealistic traits that Pericles describes are a myth: Athenian conduct in the Peloponnesian War disclaims them. This myth of Athenian character, however, is an important aspect of their self-perception, and especially essential to rationalizing imperial ambitions.

Such a validating myth is equally important to Americans. Though not overtly colonial, U.S. foreign policy has been imperial rather than national. American economic and political interests transcend national interests, and often prove hugely damaging to the nations that they are imposed upon. However, a powerful information campaign is always ready to put a pro-American spin on any foreign conflict – be it economic, political, or even militaristic. This information, delivered through the mass media of the time, usually speaks to the moral responsibilities of the United States, and to do that Americans must be reminded that they, and their country, are representative of exceptional ideals of democratic morality. This belief helps Americans to ignore – or disbelieve - the horrifying violence and dubious morality often associated with U.S. foreign policy.

In Seymour Martin Lipset’s *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*, the American belief in an exceptional identity is critically and carefully explored. Acknowledging that Americans have historically emphasized their unique and exceptional character, progressive and successful democracy, and economic strength and growth, Lipset argues that to social scientists, “exceptional” has not meant that the U.S. possesses better people or superior culture, but instead suggests a qualitative difference from other western nations. The U.S. then, is an outsider in the world community – whether isolationist or pariah.

This theme of exceptional American identity is rooted in the basic concept of Americanism. Rather than identifying with a common history, as Europeans do, Americans define themselves by ideology.⁹ That ideology, Lipset argues, is rooted in small part within American attitudes and largely within American values, which are

defined as “well entrenched, culturally determined sentiments produced by institutions or major historical events.”¹⁰ The Bill of Rights, Jackson’s Frontier Thesis, or rural Protestant morality could be considered manifestations of these sentiments.

The exceptionalism that Lipset describes is a qualitative difference. As stated before, it means the U.S. is different, though not necessarily better, than other nations. Though extremely moralistic, Americans are morally divided along political non-issues, such as abortion and gay marriage.¹¹ With such issues at the forefront of American debate, true moral concerns – such as the rights of non-Americans associated with U.S. global policy, and America’s role in the modern world – are buried in the blather.

To justify an aggressive and callous foreign policy, American leaders often speak to this “exceptional” American nature. Often elevating U.S. enemies to an evil, Hitler-like status, Americans are presented as moral opposites to the targeted regimes.¹²

Thus, American perceptions are very similar to the Athenians. In fact, this perception of a unique American character is turned on itself with the most basic research, defining American exceptionalism as nationalistic – and even imperialistic – pride. The reality is that this American perception of an exceptional identity *is* the exceptionalism, and this global “outsider” status helps rationalize unjust and aggressive foreign policies.

As this essay covers two major events in the history of U.S. foreign policy, this contrast of perception and reality is best examined within their context. American involvement in the Guatemalan Revolution was simultaneously aided by domestic propaganda, most prominent within the mass media but also in scholarly publications. Following the successful overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954, the limits of American credulity were stretched by the Eisenhower administration’s denial of any role in the coup. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, whom Charles Yost describes as believing that he was chosen to lead the good fight against the forces of [world communism],¹³ went so far as to inform a national television and radio audience that the events in Guatemala represented victory over the “evil purposes of the Kremlin to destroy an inter-American system.”¹⁴ Dulles presented Guatemala as a wayward nation, misled by Soviet ideology, and the U.S. as a benevolent example on anti-Soviet principles, whose overthrow of the democratically elected Arbenz government was “the biggest success in the last five years against communism.”¹⁵

During this period of U.S. history, the communist label automatically justified American indignation. By painting foreign “enemies” with the communist brush, Americans could rationalize immoral (and illegal) actions against them, and so the American media worked overtime to prove Guatemala’s revolutionary government a pawn of Soviet Communism. In this way the reality of overthrowing a legitimate and progressive government in favor of an oppressive, right-wing dictatorship could be buried in the perception that the U.S. was pursuing its balance-of-power, “realist” foreign policy and containing Soviet Communism.

The Vietnam War is, of course, a veritable study of contradictions and identity conflicts. In her essay “The Vietnam War in American Memory,” Marilyn Young identifies several aspects of American identity. These facets – myths, really – are as idealistic as Pericles’ description of the Athenian identity, and prove as false. Young

explores a popular vision of American identity originally expounded by Loren Baritz, which describes modern American identity as rooted “in the belief of the unique moral stature of the United States, which allows policymakers to pursue narrow self-interest in the name of global benevolence.”¹⁶ Young quotes Baritz not for the truth of this statement, but because Baritz himself proves unable to disassociate from the myth when he later insists that “an important reason we marched into Vietnam was liberalism’s irrepressible need to be helpful to those less fortunate.” Even though “the decency of the impulse...cannot hide the bloody eagerness to kill in the name of virtue.”¹⁷ Young argues that the Vietnam War destroyed Americans’ vision of their country, which featured the beliefs that Americans could not commit atrocities; that wars undertaken by the U.S. were always just wars; that no foreign will could prevail over that of the United States, and that Americans could not lose wars.¹⁸

Speaking directly to the perception-reality gap, Young decries the fact that no American president – including any who may have participated in the anti-war movement, has ever acknowledged that the U.S. invaded Vietnam against *stated American values and ideals*, and did so secretly and deceptively, fighting a war of immense violence in order to impose its will on another sovereign nation.¹⁹

The myths of character, so endemic to American self-perception, are as morally lacking as they were to Thucydides’ Athenians. If Americans believe they possess both a higher moral character and a responsibility to control global affairs, they can forever justify blatantly imperial ambitions.

TAKING SIDES: AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN FOREIGN CONFLICT

In 427 BCE, tensions between Corinth and its previous colony on the island of Corcyra erupted into a bitter civil war between Coryraean democrats and oligarchs. Athenian support allowed the democrats to gain the upper hand and begin a mass slaughter of oligarchs. The resulting violence was a major cause of the Peloponnesian War, and removed all legal and moral checks to obscene and murderous behavior. Thucydides argued that the war itself allowed for these moral and ethical declines, insisting that one could now find “every kind of wickedness afoot throughout all of Greece by the occasion of civil wars.” Thucydides made it clear how such horrible events end: “at this point the civil war that had grown so large came to an end, at least as far as this war was concerned, since there was hardly anything left of one of the two sides.”²⁰



Once again, Thucydides did not explicitly state an argument against Athenian notions of justice and human nature. However, the facts themselves do, which many maintain was Thucydides’ intention. The Athenians argued that justice was a concept to be imposed between equals, and that moral questions of justice do not apply between

the strong and the weak. Furthermore, the Athenian assertion that stronger entities are compelled to rule weaker ones is not upheld by history.

Although the U.S. has not been overtly colonial in the modern world, weaker nations within our sphere of influence have not been allowed the luxury of true autonomy and self-determination – even when they demand it. The 1954 CIA-initiated overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala is one tragic example of this aspect of American foreign policy. When, in 1944, a peoples’ revolution overthrew President Jorge Ubico, as well as the subsequent provisional president, the United States watched with great interest. Whatever the outcome, the State Department believed that Guatemala “would remain the docile little neighbor it had been for decades.”²¹ However, new President Arevalo did not show the expected deference to “friendly representations” from the U.S. State Department.²² When Arevalo failed to enact major reforms, the progressive and socialist-minded Jacobo Arbenz easily won the next presidential election. Arbenz’ major agrarian reforms and leftist-leanings concerned the U.S. State Department. A perceived communist threat within the American sphere of influence had begun to materialize, and by 1954 the CIA had backed, trained, and supported a coup, which overthrew the Arbenz government and installed an American-friendly regime under Castillo Armas.

For a detailed and enlightening study on the Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, read Piero Gleijeses *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States*. For this essay’s purpose, Gleijeses study helps illustrate the tragic gap between perception and reality in U.S. foreign affairs. This is also the only book-length study of the American role in this coup.

While the Guatemalan people strove against each other for autonomy and self-government, the Monroe Doctrine presupposed a “benevolent” U.S. presence in Guatemalan affairs. America could not stay out of this internal Guatemalan conflict. Just as Athenian involvement destabilized Corcyra to the point of near anarchy – by supporting the democratic side of the conflict, whose representatives soon took great delight in the torture and murder of oligarch supporters – U.S. involvement in Guatemala led to the region’s most repressive and murderous government in its history.

The State Department’s negative perception (or rationalization) of Guatemalan politics after the revolution was based on two premises: Guatemalan “persecution” of American companies and an irresponsible attitude towards communism. Now, having discussed American exceptionalism, we can infer that Americans did not consider themselves an imperialist power, and that any American involvement in Guatemala, including economic involvement, was considered protective and helpful. Monroe’s Doctrine, Wilson’s “protective imperialism,” and Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy were all designed to protect Caribbean and Central American countries from threats both abroad and within. “If the U.S. had been heavy-handed in its Latin policies and diplomacy, these “protectionist” measures should have removed any grounds for complaint.”²³

By the late 1940s, the Truman administration faced a new Guatemala. The “good old families” from the former governing class were unrepresented, and middle-class

political parties and organized labor groups had influence in the new government. Furthermore, the new government supported new labor codes that attempted to force American companies such as United Fruit Company and Empresa Electrica to increase both wages and workers' rights.²⁴ The perception in the State Department, buoyed by reports from these "persecuted" American companies, was that communism had gained a foothold in Guatemala. When president Arevalo requested that U.S. Ambassador Patterson be recalled for persistent meddling in Guatemalan affairs, it was perceived as another example of Guatemalan hostility, which had been "patently inspired by the communists." Once again the U.S. perception revolved around a paranoid fear of communism.

So the American perception is clear: Guatemalans had fallen under the whispering connivance of communism. The reality, however, is far different, as a careful examination of Guatemalan "persecution" of American companies reveals. In 1944, U.S. investment in Guatemala totaled approximately \$93 million, and was concentrated in three companies: the Empresa Electrica de Guatemala (a subsidiary of Electric Bond and Share), the International Railways of Central America, and the United Fruit Company. Empresa Electrica had a turbulent history in Guatemala, as the center of several prior political intrigues. It had been seized by the Guatemalan government in WWI, and frantic American attempts to re-acquire the thriving power company had resulted in the overthrow of two Guatemalan presidents in 1920-21. When the U.S. bought the company back from the new pro-American president, the low price and poor service fueled anti-American sentiments in nationalistic Guatemalans.²⁵

The IRCA held a virtual monopoly on Guatemalan trade: the 580.7 miles of railway was about three-fourths of the total railway in the country. The lack of usable roads and control of the only line between the capital and Guatemala's only deep-water port of Puerto Barrios, plus owning the only pier in the harbor, gave IRCA complete control over Guatemalan trade. Though most complaints had focused upon the IRCA's exorbitant rates, one customer had been given bargain rates: the United Fruit Company.²⁶

The United Fruit Company (UFCO), known as "The Octopus," was the world's largest grower and exporter of bananas. Prior to the revolution, the Guatemalan government had allowed UFCO to operate as "a private fiefdom, never interfering on behalf of the workers."²⁷ Its influence and power in Guatemalan affairs was too great to detail in this short essay, but it was no workers' paradise. Operating as a near-feudal power, outside the control of the Guatemalan government, UFCO had done pretty much as it pleased since its inception in the 1920s.

So how could these companies, virtual monopolies with power-ties to the U.S., be the victims of Guatemalan persecution? In May 1947, a labor code was enacted, which established different degrees of protection and benefits for workers in industrial, commercial, or agricultural enterprises. Agricultural laborers employed on estates of 500 or more workers were granted the same rights as industrial workers. UFCO declared this policy discriminatory and turned to the U.S. for help. The code, they asserted, was the product of "communistic influences emanating from outside Guatemala."²⁸

With the ascendancy of Jacobo Arbenz – and his decidedly leftist tendencies – to the presidency, progressive agrarian reform became a reality, and these companies feared for their holdings.

This fear was not unfounded. The Agrarian Reform Law of 1952 expropriated 234,000 acres of uncultivated land at UFCO's 295,000 acre plantation at Tiquisate. Due to UFCO's tendencies to cheat on their taxes, the land was valued far lower than its actual value. Screaming in protest, and backed by the State Department, UFCO insisted upon greater compensation. Arbenz, however, was seeking more than land. He "intended to break the power of a foreign enclave that threatened the country's sovereignty."²⁹ Arbenz intended to get the U.S. out of Guatemala.

The progressive and anti-American programs of the Arbenz government intended to displace American control of Guatemala's infrastructure – not by seizure, but by competition. Without foreign capital, Arbenz oversaw the construction of a large road network which threatened IRCA's monopoly of overland trade, the construction of a port at Santo Tomas to break IRCA and UFCO's virtual control of sea trade, and the construction of a hydroelectric plant to compete with the U.S. controlled Empresa Electrica.

Guatemalan "persecution" of American companies simply meant the withdrawal of American *carte-blanche* in Guatemalan affairs. Furthermore, any examination of Arbenz' reforms reveals their progressive and populist nature.

But what of Guatemala's "irresponsible attitudes towards communism?" Arbenz did join the PGT in 1957, three years after his overthrow.³⁰ Other than UFCO's shrill insistence that Arbenz was a puppet of Soviet influence and his obvious leftist leanings, only one event gave the U.S. enough "proof" to initiate a coup in Guatemala. Because the U.S. blocked attempts by the Arbenz administration to buy weapons from the free world, the Guatemalan president decided to secretly buy weapons from Czechoslovakia. While the sale itself remained secret (for a time), the administration's Soviet dealings were not. Though fear of American invasion had prompted this overture, the State Department perceived a new Soviet-Guatemalan relationship and determined not to allow a Communist foothold in the western hemisphere.

At the Caracas conference, Dulles forwarded a resolution declaring "international communism" incompatible with the concept of "freedom" in the Americas. A provision within the resolution required all American states to take steps against communist "subversion," giving Dulles the justification he needed to move against the Guatemalan government.³¹ This direct anti-Arbenz policy led to a CIA sponsored coup and the eventual installation of the dictator Castillo Armas.

So these two U.S. Government concerns – persecution of American companies and an irresponsible attitude towards communism – are invalidated by Gleijeses research. The perceived "persecution" became – in reality – a progressive attempt to both decrease American control of Guatemalan infrastructure and economy, and increase the Guatemalan quality of life. The irresponsible attitude towards communism was to be secretly accused of body-snatcher syndrome by American companies who stood to lose wealth and control under the new system.

By reason of this argument, the United States' decision to topple the legitimately elected Arbenz government was of extremely dubious moral character. Like the Corcyraeans so many centuries earlier, Guatemalans would pay in blood for the meddling of a strong foreign power, as the worst human qualities assumed control of the government, setting a poor moral example for ambitious Guatemalans to follow.

Terror and murder became commonplace in Corcyrea, and the same is true of Guatemala. The violence subsequent to Arbenz' overthrow has been horrific. The bloodbath far outlasted the 1954 coup. Had the United States not let imperial interests determine such destructive policies, Guatemala may have had a better history. Instead, at least 100,000 Guatemalans had been killed, and more than 40,000 had disappeared between 1954 and 1991.³² More recent studies put that death toll at nearly 200,000.³³ As recently as 1990, two weeks after President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Albright declared the strength of Latin American democracy and free markets at the Hemisphere Summit in Santiago, Chile, the Guatemalan military supported the murder of the Bishop of Guatemala City, who had been speaking out against human rights abuses.³⁴

JUSTICE AND HUMAN NATURE: THE WEAK AND THE STRONG

In 416 BCE, the Athenians made war against Melos, a Lacedaemonian island colony south of Athens in the Sea of Crete. Before commencing hostilities, the Athenians sent ambassadors to negotiate with the Melians. Rather than discuss practical terms for surrender, the Melian dialogue became a debate over the moral issues of justice and power. The Athenians insisted that to debate moralities was a waste of time. They reasoned that justice could only exist between equals, and that human nature determined that the strong should rule the weak. Further, the Athenians insisted that Melian enmity would serve their purposes – cowering already conquered peoples – better than friendship.

For their part, the Melians recognized that the Athenians would only listen to pleas for their interests. They reasoned that their neutrality would serve Athens better, by lessening their number of foes; they argued that the gods would not favor the unjust and unprovoked attack by the Athenians; they insisted the Lacedaemonians would come to protect their colony. In the end, they refused to submit their liberty without a fight.³⁵

The Athenians, as stated before, claimed no interest in Melian friendship; they insisted that (human) nature compels gods and men to rule over anyone they can; their contempt for the Lacedaemonians gave them no reason to respect or fear them. After a protracted siege, the Athenians eventually captured Melos, killed all the military-aged men and enslaved all the women and children.³⁶



The key moral points to the Melian dialogue are concerned with ideas of justice and human nature. The Melians protest the injustice of unprovoked aggression and conquest by the Athenians. However, the Athenians do not let such notions dissuade them from their imperial ambitions, as they claim there can be no justice for the weak, and that justice is not a consideration between unequal powers. Without notions of justice or simple morality, it is easy to move to the next level of Athenian justification for conquest: human nature compels the strong to rule the weak.

The Vietnam War raised exactly these issues, though in different contexts. The massive injustices that the U.S. committed against Vietnam imply that justice and morality did not apply to the Vietnamese, as far as America was concerned. As did the Melians in 431 BCE, North Vietnam refused to comply with the much stronger invader. Speaking retrospectively, former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara believed that the U.S. “underestimated the power of nationalism to motivate a people to fight and die for their beliefs.”³⁷

This strength of will displayed by Ho Chi Minh, the NVA, and the Vietnamese people forced the U.S. into further escalation, which brought the misery of modern warfare down upon the small southeast Asian country. The resulting injustices are well documented and discussed in the historiography of Vietnam. The following examples help illustrate how the U.S. government could easily suspend moral considerations in their deadly campaign against Vietnam, and how the Vietnamese perspective – the perspective of the weak – could never even be considered.

In his essay, “Visions of Righteousness,” Dr. Noam Chomsky argues that Americans have rationalized away any moral debt that the U.S. might owe Vietnam. Chomsky blames U.S. literary culture for distorting reality and creating a scenario in which the U.S. became the injured party in Vietnam. With countless stories of NVA atrocities and the horrors visited upon POWs, Americans were made to feel as though they were defending themselves against Vietnamese aggression, and as such were victims of the Vietnamese.³⁸

Chomsky takes offense at such baseless perceptions, and further quotes a *New York Times* story by Bernard Gwertzman, in which a State Department official is quoted as saying “he believes the United States has now paid its moral debt for its involvement on the losing side of Indochina.”³⁹ Outraged, Chomsky denounces such a statement, paraphrasing it to mean the U.S. owed no debt for massive slaughter of Vietnamese peoples – or for leaving three countries in ruins. Neither would the U.S. owe a debt to the millions of “maimed and orphaned, to the peasants who still die today from unexploded ordinance.”⁴⁰

In his brief history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, Chomsky presents a thoroughly immoral and imperialist American policy:

The U.S. was deeply committed to the French effort to re-conquer their former colony, recognizing throughout that the enemy was the nationalist movement of Vietnam. When France withdrew, the U.S. dedicated itself to subverting the Geneva settlement, and installed a terrorist regime that had killed perhaps 70,000 “Viet Cong” by 1961, evoking resistance, which,

from 1959, was supported from the northern half of the country temporarily divided by the 1954 settlement the U.S. had undermined. In 1961-62, Kennedy launched a direct attack against rural South Vietnam with large scale bombing and defoliation as part of a program to drive millions of people to camps where they could be “protected” by armed guards and barbed wire from the guerrillas whom, the U.S. conceded, they were willingly supporting. The U.S. maintains it was invited in, but the London Economist accurately observed that, “an invader is an invader unless invited in by a government with a claim to legitimacy.” The U.S. obviously did not regard South Vietnamese rulers as legitimate, as it replaced them when they failed to exhibit enthusiasm for the American attack or sought to implement the neutralist settlement that was advocated on all sides.⁴¹

This history must be considered when examining the indomitable will of the Vietnamese revolutionary movement. The Reverend Martin Luther King knew this when he reflected: “when we ask why [North Vietnamese leaders] do not leap to negotiate, these things must be remembered.”⁴² Such questions were vital, as the U.S. government could not understand why such a small and weak nation refused to acquiesce to demands placed upon them by a country of superior strength.

As to American morals concerning justice or compassion for other peoples, they are sadly lacking in the Vietnam example. George Kennan claimed that notions of justice would only hamper U.S. aggrandizement:

We have about 50% of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3% of its population. . . . In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships, which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and daydreaming, and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction. . . . We should cease to talk about vague and – for the Far East – unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.⁴³

These “realist” notions of foreign policy are the same ones advanced by Athens in both the Mytilene and Melian debates. They also support Chomsky’s argument that Americans are not often enough exposed to moral questions concerning U.S. foreign policy. His declaration of an “American faith” outlines a belief that the U.S. is unique in history – and the contemporary world – to such ideals as freedom and self-determination; that it is “not an actor in world affairs but rather an ‘emancipator’ who responds to the hostile or brutal acts of other powers but, apart from that, seeking nothing but justice, human rights and democracy.”⁴⁴

In his famous “Declaration of Independence From the War In Vietnam,” Martin Luther King condemns U.S. injustices committed against Vietnam:

Obviously, the U.S. does not concern itself with “justice” when it comes to the Vietnamese. Here are the injustices described: We did not recognize Vietnam when they declared their independence in 1945 – after combined French and Japanese occupation. Instead, we supported France in its re-conquest of her former colony; The new revolutionary government, seeking self-determination, was made up of indigenous forces that included some communists, and intended to enact land reforms – which the Vietnamese people needed; for 9 years after 1945 we supported the French in their attempt to take Vietnam back; We paid 80 percent of the war costs for the war, and encouraged the French to continue fighting even after they lost the will to do so; the Geneva agreements appeared to promise unification, reform, and independence, but the U.S. subverted this process, while their man in the South, Diem, refused to unify the country and ruthlessly routed all opposition; we poisoned their water, killed a million acres of their crops, destroy their trees; we ally ourselves with the landlord and refuse to put into any action our words concerning land reform.⁴⁵

Such views of U.S. foreign policy towards Vietnam were not rare during the war, so how could American leaders justify continued aggression against the small Asian country? In his declaration, King insisted that imperialist concerns guided American foreign policy and believed that, by choice or by accident, the U.S. had followed an imperial policy. Just as Athens had exacted tribute from her “allies,” the U.S. had grown accustomed to investing large sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to remove the profits with no concern for the social improvement of these regions. Even in the present day, the U.S. has refused to rescind the privileges and pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investment.⁴⁶

America’s decision to invade Vietnam had major effects on the Vietnamese. Approximately 3.2 million Vietnamese were killed during the conflict.⁴⁷ Most estimates conclude that American bombs killed between 150,000 and 400,000 South Vietnamese “collateral victims.” The U.S. dropped 20 million gallons of herbicides – including 11.2 million gallons of Agent Orange – on hardwood forests, mangrove jungles, and farmland, auspiciously to deny food and cover to enemy forces. According to Vietnamese estimates, this chemical offensive eventually killed or injured 400,000 people, and contributed to birth defects in 500,000 children.⁴⁸

Athens murdered the entire male population of Melos. That death toll represented fewer numbers than those listed above.

In his book *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara puts forth the very powerful and compelling argument that the U.S., though initially involved in Indochina for “good, honest reasons,” allowed the Vietnam War to escalate into a thoroughly unjust and immoral conflict. Some of the reasons for escalation he attributes to the need for American power-projection.

In other words, just as Athens believed that conquering Melos would serve their purpose by generating fear and respect in the Athenian empire, the U.S. believed that withdrawing from Vietnam would have made them weak in the eyes of its NATO allies and, more importantly, in the eyes of China and the Soviet Union.⁴⁹

Other comparisons may be made as well. Just as a lack of concern with justice allowed the Athenians to denigrate Melian pride and desire for self-government and eventually murder the entire male population of Melos, similar U.S. beliefs allowed the aforementioned atrocities to be perpetrated against the Vietnamese. Melos endured a lengthy siege before succumbing to their violent end, but Vietnam, a jungle country with external sources of supplies, held out against all odds to claim eventual victory. McNamara understood – before many others in the administration – that no threat of bombing could break the will of the Vietnamese independence movement.⁵⁰ Just as the Melians did not respond to Athenian threats of annihilation, the NVA did not break before massive displays of American firepower.

Finally, just as the Athenian attack on Melos re-invigorated their Lacedaemonian adversaries, McNamara envisioned domestic unrest followed by an eventual global consensus against the U.S., determining that the moral issues were clear:

There may be a limit beyond which many Americans and much of the world will not permit the United States to go. The picture of the world's greatest superpower killing or seriously injuring 1000 noncombatants a week, while trying to pound a tiny backward nation into submission on an issue whose merits are hotly disputed, is not a pretty one. It could conceivably produce a costly distortion in the American national consciousness and in the world image of the United States – especially if the damage to North Vietnam is complete enough to be “successful.”⁵¹

CONCLUSION: AMERICAN MORAL DECAY

In 428, the city of Mytilene – the principal city on the island of Lesbos – rebelled against Athenian control. Though they had special privileges in the Empire, the Mytileneans believed these privileges, and the majority of their rights, would soon be rescinded by Athens. Though welcomed into the Peloponnesian League, Athenian control of the sea meant the League could not do much to support its island-based ally. After a lengthy siege, the Mytileneans were forced to surrender.

Like the Melians, the Mytileneans asked to plead their case before the Athenian people. However, the Athenians were so enraged by the rebellion of a “privileged” ally, that they decreed every Mytilenean male of military age be executed, and every other individual enslaved. One day after this decree, many Athenians regretted their decision, and an assembly was convened to reconsider the violent decree.

Thucydides did not include a personal judgment of this debate. However, though Cleon argued to uphold the decree and Diodotus argued against it, neither Athenian considered the moral implications of executing so many people – especially as they were fighting for their freedom. Instead, they both considered whether the decree best served the interests of the Athenian empire.

When contrasted with Pericles' description of Athenian character in the Funeral Oration, the Mytilenean debate reveals a far more negative view. For his part, Cleon insisted that Athenian subjects obeyed only because Athens exceeded them in strength; that punishments should be meted out immediately and with malice; that killing the Mytileneans set a clear example for other Athenian "allies" considering rebellion. Diodotus, on the other hand, insisted that the punishment could not deter future rebellion; that showing mercy would make future sieges shorter and less expensive; that not all the Mytileneans supported the rebellion and thus should not all be killed, or future rebellions would be more united.

It is important to note certain points in Diodotus' refutation. He did not speak for the Mytileneans, insisting he "did not come forward to speak about Mytilene with any purpose to contradict or to accuse. Our dispute, if we are sensible, will concern not their injustice to us, but our judgment as to what is best for us." He stated that he "would not have you pardon them if it did not turn out to be good for the city." Finally, he refused to include morality – he called it justice – in his argument, insisting that "we are not at law with [the Mytileneans], and so have no need to speak of justice."⁵²



Paul Woodruff does Thucydides a great service. The debates and dialogues selected for *Of Justice, Power and Human Nature* truly grasp the moral center of *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. They present certain truths about Athens: First, Athenian identity included an "exceptional" self-perception, which conveyed the sense that an Athenian was special in the Greek world; second, that the great city-state was a blatantly imperialist power, with designs upon as much of Greece as they could control; third, that Athenians projected a callous attitude toward other Greeks, considering them inferior and justifying their subjugation through aggressive notions about human nature.

The first truth is extremely pertinent to American identity as well. American exceptionalism has resulted in an "outsider" identity, which promotes indifference to unjust, aggressive and imperial foreign policies.

The U.S. shares the second truth as well. Gliejeses' study of the tragic overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz illustrates U.S. imperial – if not colonial – interests in Latin America. The American government's inability to disassociate itself from the massive profits from overseas investments has led to extremely questionable foreign policy.

The third truth, callous and insensitive attitudes towards non-Americans, is typified by American indifference to the suffering their government has caused to other nations. Even if one argues that not all Americans endorse aggressive and invasive foreign policies, there is obviously not enough dissent to derail these policies.

In the context of Athenian policy, both Cleon and Diodotus argue a theme that is also inherent in American foreign policy. It has rarely (if ever) been “what is right,” or “what is just,” but “*what is right for America.*” Even when the issue at hand means life or death for countless civilians, American interests take priority over human life.

Decrying such a policy, Karl Von Vorvys describes the modern era as a time when pseudo-scientific notions of race, tribe, caste, class or ethnicity have been dispelled. “Civilization is not the property of any group,” and “all human beings have a vested interest and a right to participate in the benefits of the advancement of civilization.”⁵³ In this light, categorization into superior and inferior groups no longer holds true. In the present day, “we no longer recognize radical discontinuities among human beings either as a scientific truth or as a moral imperative.”⁵⁴ Such sentiments denigrate any “scientific” basis for aggressive and “realist” foreign policy.

The United States is currently involved in another questionable conflict: a war in Iraq that originated in 1991, declined from major combat to sanctions, blockades, and intermittent bombing, and again escalated into full-fledged war in 2002. Once again American perceptions are being steered by politicians and the media. “No nation should rape, pillage, and brutalize its neighbor,” declared George H. W. Bush, prior to his invasion of the Middle East in 1991⁵⁵. From what we know of American conduct in Vietnam, this statement is blatantly hypocritical. Unable to afford this and various other military deployments and interventions, the U.S. has extracted larger and larger amounts of “host nation support” from its clients and even direct subsidies from its “allies.” Japan actually paid up to \$13 billion in support of H. W. Bush’s Gulf War.⁵⁶

Jean Edward Smith’s study of the first Persian Gulf War defines a similar pattern of injustice to that perpetrated in Vietnam:

*The damage wrought by Desert Storm has been enormous. A UN survey called the bombing of Iraq “near-apocalyptic,” threatening to reduce “a rather highly urbanized and mechanized society to a preindustrial age.” The Washington Post reported that 70 percent of the bombs dropped on Iraq missed their intended targets, and that civilian and military casualties numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Because of oil spills related to the war, marine life in the upper Persian Gulf is unlikely to recover for at least 40 years. After the Kuwaiti government was restored, the emir displayed “none of the ardor for democracy he proclaimed during the war,” and the repressive feudal structure under the Kuwaiti government was fully restored.*⁵⁷

Though such violence against non-combatants (such as Athenian sieges against embattled city-states) is difficult to defend, certain defenders of a “just war theory” have argued for the necessity of careful, limited wars against deserving opponents. Some proponents of this idea of just war have included the 1991 attack on Iraq in this category. One such proponent, Michael Walzer, defines a just war as “a limited war [defined by] war aims [that] legitimately reach to the destruction or to the defeat, demobilization, and (partial) disarming of the aggressor’s armed forces.” Walzer further argues that “except in extreme cases, like that of Nazi Germany, they don’t legitimately reach to the transformation of the internal politics of the aggressor state or the replacement of its regime. For ends of this latter sort would require a prolonged occupation and massive coercion of civilians. More than this, they would require a usurpation of sovereignty, which is exactly what we condemn when we condemn aggression.”⁵⁸

So this rather weak defense of the war against Iraq is rebutted by contemporary events in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein has been overthrown, but revolutionary forces regularly engage American troops in the many contested regions of Iraq. The prolonged occupation has begun, and Iraqi sovereignty has been usurped. Prior events in Guatemala and Vietnam suggest that “free” elections are bound to elevate a pro-American individual to highest office, where American interests –not social reform or human rights - will be given top priority. If the elections are truly free, Americans will probably not like whoever is elected.

Concerning Vietnam, Henry Kissinger once stated that “we fought a military war, our opponents fought a political one. We sought physical attrition; our opponents aimed for our psychological exhaustion. In the process we lost sight of one of the cardinal maxims of guerilla war: the guerilla wins if he does not lose.”⁵⁹ With millions of potential guerillas in Arabia, how can American occupation of Iraq prove successful?

Furthermore, “bringing freedom to the Iraqi people” is a truly long-term, multi-generational project. “Freedom does not magically appear,” argues Joel Mowbray in *Dangerous Diplomacy*, “it happens in stages – a process that can be measured not in months, but years or even decades.”⁶⁰ Mowbray insists that freedom is not really about holding elections or casting ballots, but instead building institutions of freedom, such as a free press, free enterprise, and free and independent religious organizations. Further, it entails pushing governments to implement internal reforms and place a high priority on human rights.

Concerning our allies, an idealistic foreign policy would suit the U.S. better. Resentment of Athens’ power motivated Athenian allies to rebel against their subjugator, often at the price of their utter destruction. Europeans, traditionally America’s closest allies, have expressed such resentments. European attitudes toward the U.S. are compounded by the fear that U.S. power imposes not only America’s political will upon the continent, but also American values. Europe does not share our support for the death penalty, our gun-toting culture, or our faith in individual rights over those of the community.⁶¹ Coupled with a U.S. tendency toward unilateral action, such

values stoke the fires of European resentment. Unlike Athens, the U.S. will not send a fleet to subjugate Europe, but the loss of support of key American allies portends future troubles.

It would do Americans well to consider the lessons Thucydides outlined for us in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. It seems to relate to the United States more than any entity since Athens, with the exception of ancient Rome. Why make the same mistakes that Thucydides describes to us? Why follow the same cycles and patterns which history suggests lead to a grim pattern of decline - and possibly find ourselves on the losing end of a long-term global conflict? Why allow a foreign policy of callous, global interference to put us at odds with our worldly neighbors? Why end up hated by the global community?

Without a greater discourse concerning a higher morality than that associated with divisive non-issues, these questions will never be answered and, consequently, these issues will never be solved. Instead, the U.S. will simply continue its moral decline, and – if history is any indicator – an eventual economic, social, and physical decline will follow.



ALEJANDRO MALASPINA
AND THE PERILS
OF PROJECTION

by Troy Karnes

“For man it’s always the same: he has only the past from which to learn, by which to judge the present and not get tangled up in the future, and all he wants is to get tangled up in this last concern, abandoning the others that would be much better for him.”

—Alejandro Malaspina
to Paolo Greppi
December 20, 1791

On August 31, 1789, Alejandro Malaspina wrote a journal entry discussing the poor health of one of his marines. Ten days after the expedition left Cádiz, Spain, the man had become sick. The ship’s surgeon, Don Francisco Flores, diagnosed the man with venereal disease. This surprised Malaspina because he described the man as having “irreproachable” conduct. The marine worried about his honor so much that he never disclosed his illness. His silence hindered the surgeon’s ability to treat him effectively, and the disease progressed rapidly. “After a month of unspeakable suffering, all his strength abandoned him, and left him unable to withstand the suppuration of the gangrene, which had now been totally cleansed.”¹ The man died on September 8, 1789.

Troy Karnes wrote this paper for a Spring 2005 senior seminar with Professor Michael Ducey. In the course of researching the life of Alejandro Malaspina, Troy translated many primary source documents from the original Spanish. He gratefully acknowledges the intellectual assistance of Professor Gabriel Finkelstein throughout intensive revisions of the original paper. Karnes graduated with a Bachelor’s degree from UCD in December 2005 and plans to attend graduate school next year with the aim of one day becoming a history professor himself.

Marines and sailors of the eighteenth century frequently contracted venereal disease, and Malaspina repeatedly decried their lack of morals. In that respect, this story is unremarkable. But it has bearing here because it symbolizes the problems that Malaspina and Spain dealt with. The process of looking for solutions for Spain went through three similar phases: diagnosis, treatment, and resistance to treatment. The story of the fatally ill marine illustrates Malaspina's tendency to misdiagnose problems. He could see when they existed, but he often failed to accurately identify their causes. In this case, venereal disease or immorality were not so much the problems as symptoms of long periods aboard ship with no sexual contact. Malaspina also had problems prescribing treatments. Like many other enlightenment thinkers, he tried to separate logic from experience because he believed truth would lead to less biased solutions. But Malaspina could not escape his biases. He had classist opinions against sailors that distorted his ideas of how to solve the problem. He saw the overwhelming presence of venereal disease in sailors as a moral problem, not a structural problem. He evidenced similar difficulty eliminating biases from his advice to the Spanish Crown. Finally, the third phase of the Malaspina analogy, resistance to therapy, arose from the fact that he chose to treat problems economically instead of politically. Malaspina lacked political skills, which usually led him into trouble. Malaspina's story illustrates the limitations of these three phases and also gives insight to the analogous adversity that late eighteenth-century Spain dealt within their New World colonies.

Alejandro Malaspina was born in Mullazzo, Italy, in 1754 to a noble family. As the third son, he did not stand to inherit the wealth of his family.² Instead, his parents sent him to the Clemantine College in Italy, where he studied many enlightenment philosophers. Malaspina kept works by Jefferson, Hume, Filangieri, and Carli in his library.³ He especially revered the philosopher and economist Adam Smith.⁴ Smith's influence pervades most of Malaspina's political and economic thoughts. When he finished his education, he chose to pursue a career in the Spanish navy instead of following the religious path that his family wanted for him.⁵ While he enjoyed the benefits of a noble family and good education, it was Malaspina's performance in the Spanish navy that secured for him the leadership of the 1789 expedition to Spanish colonies in the Pacific Ocean.

Malaspina left the port at Cádiz, Spain, on July 30, 1789. He focused on two subjects during his travels in the Pacific: science and politics. Scientifically, his most important task dealt with making detailed hydrographic charts of the waters and geographic charts of the land in and around the Spanish American colonies.⁶ He and his crew also collected astronomical, botanical, biological, and gravitational data during the voyage. Politically, Malaspina wanted to present a report to the king describing the condition of the colonies. This meant examining the economics and bureaucracy of the colonial government in addition to gathering information about the political situation of competing British and Russian colonies in the Pacific.⁷

Most studies of Malaspina link him with two other Enlightenment explorers in the eighteenth century: British Captain James Cook and French Comte Jean Galaup La Pérouse. These two explorers traveled in the Pacific earlier than Malaspina (Cook in 1768, 1772, 1776, and La Pérouse in 1785). Cook, especially, inspired him.⁸ Cook's

influence is apparent in the names of Malaspina's two custom-made corvettes, the *Descubierta* (Discovery) and the *Atrevida* (Daring or bold). When Malaspina revised the journal of his expedition, however, he made sure to differentiate himself from Cook. In his introduction, he explained that he went to the Pacific with a different point of view and with different goals than Cook. He did not go on a voyage of discovery; he went on a voyage of information accumulation. He wanted to augment the Crown's knowledge of its possessions,⁹ hoping that this knowledge could pull Spain out of its economic and empiric decline.

Spain, under the Hapsburgs, had become increasingly disorganized throughout the seventeenth century. Its economic problems spread to politics and the military. As a strong Catholic power, the Spanish fought a number of religious wars against the Moors and Protestants. They also fought other Catholics for control of the papacy. As other nations, namely Britain and France, began to compete with Spain internationally, it realized that the colonies needed better defenses. The religious wars, in addition to the need for an increased colonial military presence, spread Spain's responsibilities too thin. It suffered consequently from a lack of men and money.

When Spain's King Charles II died without an heir in 1700, the Bourbons, from France, took power in Spain. They implemented a number of political, economic, military, and religious reforms. They brought the French influence of enlightened, rational government into their rule of the Spanish empire. The philosophical change that occurred when the Bourbons took over led to the simplification of the administration of the colonies.¹⁰ They eliminated the extensive taxation exemptions so the Crown could govern the colonies more directly and collect taxes more effectively. They also stopped the practice of selling political positions that had become popular under the Hapsburgs. The Bourbons did not sell any governmental posts between 1750 and 1777. Instead, they appointed peninsular Spaniards to those positions. Economically, they secured monopolies in the tobacco and mercury industries in order to raise money for the Crown. They raised the price of tobacco to increase profits and lowered the price of mercury to make processing silver cheaper. The Bourbons also eased trading regulations so the colonies could conduct business with each other more freely. In addition to political and economic changes, the Bourbons also implemented reforms affecting the Catholic Church. They severely limited the authority of the Church by reclaiming much of its land. Malaspina, however, believed that many of these reforms did not get to the source of the problems that faced the empire because the monarchy did not have a complete understanding of the colonies.

Spain began to develop its transatlantic empire about a century before Britain. The early Spanish colonies took advantage of the lack of European competition in many ways. Historian Anthony Pagden explains that the Spanish explorers who first wrote about the New World created a new genre based on a new form of authority. Europeans' favored sources of knowledge — religious canon and classical texts — did not explain the New World, so the explorers claimed authority through their exclusivity of knowledge instead.¹¹ As other European countries began to develop transoceanic empires, however, these Spanish claims began to deteriorate.

Many eighteenth-century intellectuals mocked earlier Spanish explorers. De Pauw and Raynal provided the most criticism of the Spanish.¹² They believed that the Spanish destroyed any opportunity to intellectually benefit from the New World.¹³ They came to this conclusion for three reasons. First, many eighteenth-century thinkers accused the Spanish of putting too much emphasis on materialistic gains and not spending enough time on intellectual gains. Pagden gives a good description of this behavior as it pertains to Columbus' voyage. He says that the natives made the Spaniards happy with fine cotton, food, and hammocks, and "at this moment the Spaniards are satisfied, their claws...sheathed." Soon thereafter, however, the Spaniards proceed with slaughters, massacres, and pillaging.¹⁴

Second, the infiltration of the Pacific by other European nations raised security issues for the Spanish, so they greatly limited access to these territories.¹⁵ By restricting other European countries, the Spanish held a monopoly over the potential knowledge in the New World. The exclusivity of knowledge gave Spain authority,¹⁶ but the eighteenth-century philosophers began to criticize the Spanish texts.¹⁷ They argued that the descriptions provided by the early explorers did not make any sense, so they could not be true. Even Malaspina recognized the outlandishness of early descriptions of the Americas. He said, "In truth I can hardly recount the astonishment into which I have been plunged while considering to what extent Europe has until now believed an infinite number of absurdities, which one could not make true even if one expressly wanted to."¹⁸

Finally, critics questioned the authors' abilities to correctly perceive their surroundings.¹⁹ They fit most early colonizers into four categories: missionaries, traders, soldiers, and sailors. The intellectuals believed that the men who made up all four of these categories came from the lower classes and thus had suspect biases. In order to solve this problem, the intellectuals called for enlightened men, who had proper training, to go to the New World in order to write accurate accounts.²⁰ The Spanish took these criticisms seriously and responded by funding a number of scientific explorations.²¹ The intrusion of British and French fleets into the Pacific further prompted Spain's decision to fund Malaspina's expedition.²²

Knowledge became an important tool that countries used at the end of the eighteenth century in order to make claims about overseas territories.²³ This method of asserting ownership of land did not develop in the eighteenth century. Claiming possession of lands through intellectual means originated from the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.²⁴ Spain had become marginal in the eighteenth century, and it wanted to increase its power. Malaspina believed that the information he gathered would lead to a diagnosis of Spain's problems, which in turn would lead to the development of a solution. The crown, on the other hand, saw the information itself as the solution. Regardless of their intentions, both parties first had to focus on obtaining information from the overseas colonies. They both believed that knowledge equaled power, though this is not always the case. Knowledge is a tool that people can use, but simply accumulating it does nothing. Malaspina's writings went unpublished for a long time because the royal court sealed all of his documents.

On March 12, 1793, Malaspina arrived at the British colony of Port Jackson, New South Wales (Australia).²⁵ The Spanish and British officers enjoyed an amicable relationship during Malaspina's stay. For example, both parties hosted meals.²⁶ The British treated the visitors very kindly, feeding the crew kangaroo at almost every meal.²⁷ The Spanish returned the warm hospitality by feeding the officers and their wives a number of lunches onboard their ships.²⁸ Malaspina's crew stayed with the British for about a month. While he and his crew enjoyed the stay socially and performed scientific experiments during this time, the political aspects of the colony interested Malaspina more.

He did not believe that Britain had established the New South Wales settlement as a penal colony only. His economic observations lead him to believe that the British established the colony to resupply large fleets and to provide luxuries to the motherland.²⁹ He argued that the costs associated with using the colony solely as a prison could not justify its establishment. The long voyage from Britain resulted in huge transportation costs, and the British also had to pay the guards and civil servants as well as provide them with clothing and other necessary supplies.³⁰

In this case, Malaspina diagnosed the situation correctly and came to the same conclusions as other writers of his time. In 1788, Francisco Muñoz wrote "A Political Discussion of the English settlements in New Holland [as Australia was then known]." In it he described the immediate and remote dangers of the British settlement.³¹ He came to many of the same conclusions as Malaspina. Immediately, Muñoz feared that the colony would have adverse economic effects for Spain by creating more competition on one hand and developing a black market in South America on the other. In time, he believed the threat would turn militaristic through piracy, directly invading the colonies, or starting a revolution which would have detrimental influence in the Spanish colonies.³² If these fears materialized, the Spanish would have trouble holding onto their colonies along the West coast of the Americas. English historian John Stockdale wrote in *An Historical Narrative of the Discovery of New Holland and New South Wales* in 1786, "Should a war break out with the Court of Spain, cruisers from Botany Bay might much interrupt, if not destroy, their lucrative commerce from the Philippine islands to Acapulco, besides alarming and distressing their settlements on the west coast of South America."³³

In his "*Axiomas Políticos*," Malaspina predicted that foreign nations would eventually invade the Spanish colonies.³⁴ He saw the British establishment of New Holland as one of the early steps in their preparation for war against the Spanish.³⁵ Spanish leaders did not want to lose any overseas territories, especially to the British. The colony of New Holland did not mark the first time the Spanish took issue with a British presence in the Pacific. In May and June of 1789, the Spanish arrested the crews of two British fur-trading ships near Nootka, off Vancouver Island, Canada.³⁶ Malaspina hoped that his extended stay in the British colony would help him devise a way to avoid conflict with the British military. Malaspina drew from his favored philosopher, Adam Smith, when he developed his solution to the problem.

In his "Political Examination," Malaspina gave the king advice for dealing with the potential British threat from New Holland. His proposal relied heavily on the

economic idea of comparative advantage. He knew that the British military could easily overpower the Spanish military, so he devised an economic solution to eliminate that advantage. While avoiding militaristic conflict with the British served as the main driving force behind Malaspina's economic plan, he also saw an opportunity for the Spanish monarchy to benefit from the situation monetarily.

Malaspina wanted Spain to sell livestock and foodstuffs to the colony of New Holland.³⁷ Malaspina knew that the colony at Botany Bay had problems with its livestock. The land around the settlement did not have any animals that the colonists could use to work the land.³⁸ During his visit, he learned that the colony imported its livestock from Bengal, India, but the journey killed 80% of the animals sent to the colony and the shipping prices made the costs very high.³⁹ Malaspina arrived just before a transport ship from Bengal brought "one Bull, twenty-four cows, 220 sheep, 130 goats, five horses, and six asses" to the colony. During the trip all of the cattle, more than half of the sheep and asses, and one horse died.⁴⁰ Given the colony's difficulty obtaining livestock, Malaspina suggested that the Spanish supply it with large animals.⁴¹ According to Malaspina, shipping to Australia via Spanish ports in South America made the most sense. Calm waters between the two locations gave the ships a safe voyage, and the climate made it possible to safely keep livestock on the deck.⁴² Keeping animals above deck increased the ship's loading capacity. He also recognized that the route included many safe places to replenish food and water for the livestock. Finally, he said that the best seasons to ship the livestock directly corresponded to the best months for the British colony to receive livestock.⁴³ According to Malaspina, these favorable conditions made Spain the best supplier for the colony at Botany Bay,

His desire to trade with the British appeared a good way to make money, but Malaspina's suggestions seem odd given the intense rivalry between the Spanish and British at the time. He wanted ultimately to make the New Holland colony more stable. He advocated this approach for two reasons. First, recognizing Britain as a superior naval power, Malaspina wanted to avoid military conflict with them. To accomplish this goal, he tried to focus on the economic opportunity that the British could have through trading with the Spanish. He believed that Britain would be less likely to attack the nation that supplied its colony with goods necessary for its growth. Second, Malaspina assumed that if the British colonists were able to cultivate the land more efficiently with Spanish livestock, they would settle into the colony more, creating an increased sense of security and allowing the colony to grow. His argument followed that increased growth and security would force the colonists inland. Once the colonists moved inland, where Malaspina believed they would spend so much time looking for precious metals that they would neglect their other duties. During his visit, British Surgeon General Dr. White told Malaspina he suspected that a significant source of silver laid to the east of the city, in the Camarthen Hills.⁴⁴

Malaspina predicted the British would also have problems with the natives in Australia. He said that the natives killed any colonist who wandered too far inland without proper weapons for defense.⁴⁵ The aboriginals had impressive weaponry,

according to Malaspina, who described large, sling-thrown spear, accurate up to 300 feet away. For medium-ranged targets, the natives relied on darts made of fish bones, and they carried clubs for close combat. The natives attached oyster shells to the clubs in order to increase the weight clubs and to increase bleeding during combat. In conjunction with their offensive weapons, the natives also carried shields to deflect enemy attacks.⁴⁶ Their ferocious attitude combined with their impressive weapons led Malaspina to believe that they would cause trouble for the British.

Malaspina's plan to destroy the British colony seems more like a projection than a logical solution. He believed that the decline of the British empire would follow the same patterns as the crisis-ridden Spanish empire. Basically, he equated the colonies in Australia with Spanish colonies. The Spaniards' desire to rule over the land and natives for personal gain led to many problems. Malaspina also criticized the Spanish fixation on precious metals. He claimed that gold "is the cause, in short, of political mistakes which have kept us weak for three centuries and which have prevented us either from restraining the actions of our conquistadors or from exploiting them usefully."⁴⁷ As the number of conquistadores in the Americas grew, they began to fight each other for power and wealth. The Spanish monarchy and the conquistadores who already had power — especially Hernan Cortés — saw trouble starting amongst the Spaniards. Cortes' rule was overthrown when he left Mexico City in search of the failed expedition of de Olid in 1524. The Spanish drive to extract wealth from the colonies created a volatile situation, and Malaspina believed the British would follow the same model. In addition to unsettled relations between Spaniards, rebellions of the indigenous peoples had also created cause for concern in Spanish colonies. In Peru, the *Taki Onqoy* movement represented the native attempt to regain power from the Spanish in 1560.⁴⁸ Malaspina believed that the British colony had many of the same early symptoms of aboriginal unrest, so he assumed that they would contract the same "illnesses" that plagued the Spanish empire.

Malaspina knew history, but he did not use it correctly in equating the British colonial situation with the Spanish. The Spanish enjoyed many successes in their sixteenth-century explorations, but by the time Malaspina set out on his 1789 voyage, Spain had lost much of its power. In the eighteenth century, Spaniards recognized Britain as the most powerful nation. Because Malaspina saw the British power as analogous to the Spanish power of previous centuries, he argued that "their steps are leading them however into the same pit into which have fallen all the other nations which have arrived at the highest degree of opulence and power."⁴⁹ Malaspina did not realize, however, that looking at history and ignoring situational context leads to the misuse of history. Malaspina vividly showed the ease with which projection and bias can result from studying the past. Malaspina saw a simple role reversal between Spain and Britain, but he did not see their essential differences, namely the discrepancy in political skills. His proposed therapy for Spain's diseased empire ignored this profound dissimilarity. His desire to remedy the circumstances ultimately overwhelmed his judgement. His projections also appeared in his opinions on Spain's policies towards its colonies.

Malaspina's February 12, 1790, journal entry described the desertion of a marine. Desertions were common in the early stages of his voyage, and Malaspina adopted strict punishments for sailors and marines who attempted to desert the expedition, as this particular episode demonstrated. Assigned to guard the blacksmith's forge and cattle overnight, the marine had instead stolen the blacksmith's clothes and tools and fled with a local farmer who hoped he would marry his daughter. When Malaspina discovered the crime the next day, he sent a group of soldiers who pursued and caught the insubordinate marine and the farmer later that morning. Malaspina lined up his men and forced the marine to run the gauntlet three times.⁵⁰ The harsh punishment did not, however, deter other men from fleeing the boats. In fact Malaspina's crew diminished to about half of its original size within nine months. When he reached Lima, Peru, in early May, 1790, he implemented a more progressive policy to solve the problem. He used economics instead of politics to keep his crew onboard the ships. Instead of punishing soldiers who deserted, Malaspina began paying his men for attending the morning muster. He noticed a distinct improvement in his crew's behavior as a result.⁵¹

Recognizing that Spain had difficulties with its colonial politics, Malaspina wanted the Crown to take a different approach. Reflecting the strong influence of Adam Smith's ideas, Malaspina suggested that Spain convert its political power to economic power. He focused both his scientific and political goals on making Spain more economically efficient. Scientifically, he concentrated on creating detailed maps of the geography and ocean currents of South America and the Pacific. Malaspina wanted to bring back more accurate maps of the Spanish empire because the maps that he carried did not always match his observations. On December 15, 1790, while off the southern coast of Panama, Malaspina noted that the Spanish national charts and "Jeffery's British Chart" did not match his personal inspection of the area.⁵² Malaspina saw these discrepancies as frustrating and dangerous. With shallow shoals in the area, accurate maps helped captains ensure the safety of seagoing vessels.

Along with a desire for accurate geographical maps, he also believed in the importance of creating hydrographic charts in the Americas.⁵³ These charts revealed the direction and strength of ocean currents. Hydrographic mapping made navigation of the areas much easier because unknown ocean currents could force unskilled sailors off course. Malaspina wanted to make sailing around the colonies safer and more efficient for inexperienced merchants, and he believed the improved charts and sailing instructions would allow trade to flourish.

Malaspina did more than create better maps and charts to improve the economic stability of the empire. He also suggested bold political reforms. The Bourbon reforms sought to centralize the colonial system in Spain in an attempt to strengthen the empire. Malaspina thought that centralizing the empire would not make it stronger; he thought the empire should consolidate its possessions. He proposed a plan for Spain to exert cultural influence over the colonies so it could benefit from them financially without as much risk of a costly and bloody revolution. In his "*Axiomas Políticos*" he argued that *la conservación de la América es más bien efecto del sistema religioso que del military y*

politico. (The preservation of America is better achieved by the religious system rather than militarily and politically).⁵⁴ Malaspina's desire to focus on the church's role in colonization directly conflicted with Bourbon ideology at the time.

The Bourbons wanted to decrease the power of the church while increasing the power of the military.⁵⁵ They increased the power of the military by establishing a regular army for the creoles and by allowing them to join the militia.⁵⁶ Before the Bourbons, however, Spain did not trust the colonists. The Crown to employ colonists in the defense of the colonies for fear of revolution. When faced with severe shortages, however, they had to accept a lower quality of men into the military.⁵⁷ The religious institutions in the colonies, on the other hand, were prospering. The church raised significant amounts of money from chantries (an endowment for a mass given in behalf of someone's soul)⁵⁸ which allowed the church to give loans, usually with 5 percent interest. In 1804, however, the state seized the capital from these chantries and all land owned by the church.⁵⁹ Malaspina and the Crown agreed that continuing imperialism in the Americas would lead to a stronger Spanish empire, but they disagreed on the methods needed to maximize the benefit. The Crown wanted to continue the traditional form of political and militaristic imperialism. Malaspina, however, wanted to focus on cultural and economic imperialism.

Malaspina believed that the strong-hand approach that the state pushed for would have a greater probability of leading to a colonial revolt. His opinions came at a time when a number of revolutions shook Europe. The Spanish knew how devastating a large colonial revolt could be. They had witnessed the American Revolution against the British eighteen years before Malaspina departed on his voyage, and many of the ideas he put forth in his "*Axiomas Politicos*" contain distinct correlations to the events on the east coast of America. The Haitian revolution also worried the Spanish. That revolution showed that a colony of slaves could lead a successful revolt against a European power. Finally, The French Revolution started just before he departed for the Pacific.

Philosophically, Malaspina did not like war, and he definitely did not like revolution. He viewed the French Revolution with disgust. In a letter dated August 23, 1790, to Paolo Greppi, Malaspina's good friend, he asserted his belief that the French nobility showed too much patience with the lower classes. He believed that the success of the revolution would lead to a more agricultural, free, opulent, and enfeebled nation—similar to Holland.⁶⁰

Later, in December 1791, he wrote another letter to Greppi, in which he made another strong argument detesting the situation in France:

...[I] believe that France is currently living a valetudinarian dream, that she would have arranged her finances very well if she had not preferred to attempt to establish human rights such as one reads of in Rousseau; in short that while trying to diminish royal authority, through pitiless ridicule, she degrades man, be it in the people's hatred or in the King's apathy... let me believe that the legislators of France have only brought about her ruin, because they would like man to be as he is in books, without paying attention

to what he has actually been and what he will always be... Cursed be he who would like to make of the populace so many philosophers; he will create nothing but fanatics, and philosophy will take the place, among men, of the religion of old, so that they will continue to slaughter one another until the end of time.⁶¹

Malaspina acknowledged that his distance from the events may have led him to erroneous conclusions, but his opinions give much insight on his views on revolution. He followed the conservative belief that the upper classes should run the government. He had a very poor opinion of the lower class. Many Enlightenment intellectuals, like Rousseau, shared these classist opinions. They believed the uneducated did not have the proper training or experiences necessary to make rational decisions. Next, Malaspina abandoned the romantic idea that people are naturally good. He constantly discussed both points in his journal. He did not have a very high opinion of sailors. He described them as “that unhappy class whose life is no more than a series of perils undertaken for little pay, and of misfortunes and infirmities arising from their very endeavors. Men of this class, which Europeans consider valuable, are nonetheless more than any other given up to their passions and vices.”⁶² Finally, Malaspina had an equal uneasiness about intellectuals. He believed that their “fanatic” philosophies resulted in much of the world’s bloodshed. By denigrating the lower classes and the intellectuals, Malaspina showed that he thought monarchies provided the best government, as long as they did not overextend themselves. This governmental structure has many similarities to the military, where Malaspina enjoyed a prominent position. That system also lessened dependence on politics because status, not careful articulation and wide acceptance of proposed policies, determined placement in the hierarchy.

He believed that reducing Spain’s political responsibilities over the colonies and promoting self-sufficiency in the colonies had significant benefits. He argued that the colonies could only augment the Spanish treasury after they effectively sustained themselves. Giving up political and militaristic control of the colonies would reduce the strain on Spain’s treasury. He wanted the colonies to supply their own navy, believing that the colonies had the resources to make their own ships.⁶³ They would save money on the financial burdens of the administration of the colonies, too. Furthermore, he believed that people in the colonies worked harder for their own livelihood—physical and political—than for a monarch.⁶⁴

In addition to calming disputes between colonies and the state, Malaspina believed that a reformed colonial system that focused on economics could settle tensions with the natives. Malaspina wanted to integrate the natives into the commercial system for two reasons. He saw the natives as a source of inexpensive labor, and he also believed that commerce would pacify the natives.⁶⁵ Both of these ideas originated much earlier than Malaspina’s time. Spain started using the natives as slaves almost immediately after they landed in the Americas. An eighteenth century Scottish model argued people evolved “through four evolutionary stages, hunting, herding, agriculture, and commerce.”⁶⁶ These stages showed the gradual pacification of people, so commerce corresponded to the least violent stage. Malaspina’s argument directly follows this line

of thinking even though eighteenth century Scottish intellectuals could not make the model fit developments in the Americas.⁶⁷

The Spanish court feared revolution as much as Malaspina, but they saw a different potential revolution. Ironically, Malaspina adopted the ideology of the revolutions that he wanted to avoid. When Malaspina returned to Spain in 1794, he created uproar in the Spanish royal court that eventually led to his imprisonment. They saw his ideas as inflammatory and dangerous. Manuel Godoy, a powerful man in the royal court, believed that Malaspina's political agenda would result in a revolution in Spain similar to the revolution in France. This fear stemmed from Malaspina's belief that King Carlos IV should replace many members of the court, including Godoy. Malaspina shared his opinion in letters to the king and queen.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, Malaspina did not completely understand the intricacies of the royal court, and Godoy intercepted the letters. He had Malaspina arrested immediately. The inseparable nature of Malaspina's scientific and political studies led Godoy to confiscate all of the writings from the expedition. The Council of State conducted a hearing to determine Malaspina's fate on November 22 and 27, 1795. They sentenced him to spend ten years and a day in the San Antón prison in La Coruña, Spain.

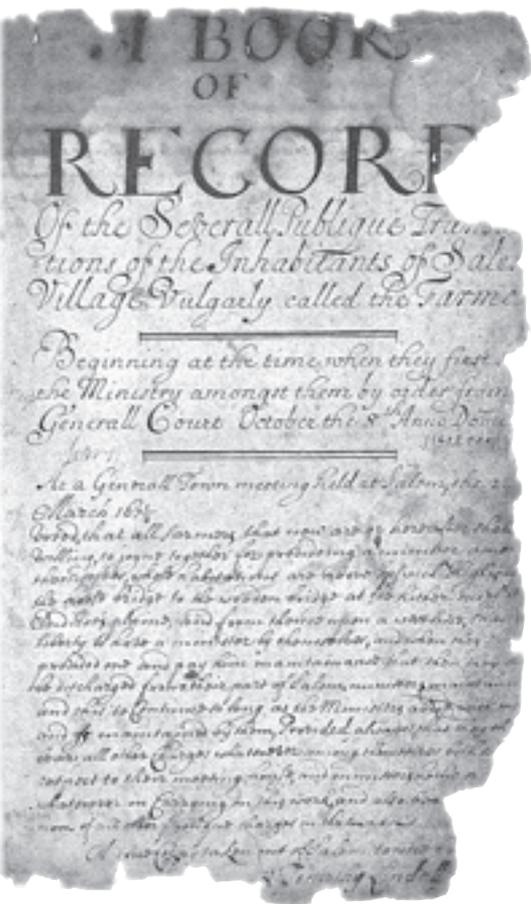
Political ineptitude ultimately led to Malaspina's imprisonment. Malaspina demonstrated his lack of political skill in command of his expedition as well as in the royal court. On the expedition, Malaspina could not properly exert power over his crew, so many abandoned him. When he returned to Spain, Malaspina's inept politics led to his imprisonment. Many scholars describe Malaspina's fall from grace with tragic romanticism. They see Malaspina as an enlightened man unjustifiably punished for his progressive beliefs. Carlos Novi, however, correctly identifies the romanitizing as a "lingering cliché,"⁶⁹ arguing that Malaspina may have let his personal ambitions get in the way of his national duties,⁷⁰ a more plausible explanation. But despite Malaspina's desire for power, he never showed the political experience or skill necessary to present his ideas effectively. He compensated for his own lack of political power by looking for economic solutions, an area in which he had more talent.

Two interpretations explain the connection between Malaspina's political failure and Spain's decline. The first says that Malaspina projected his own personal inadequacies onto Spain. Unable to perform well in the world of politics personally, he looked for economic solutions and suggested that Spain also focus on economics. While this explanation seems logical, it falls short. Reducing national problems to the psychology of the actors ignores real societal forces. Attempting to divorce the person from society will not lead to a satisfactory explanation; they both play an important part in the process. Furthermore, on a more abstract level, it reduces history to the vicissitudes of individual temperament, which trivializes the discipline.

The better explanation draws the opposite arrow. Malaspina had difficulties with politics because Spain did. In decline for nearly two centuries, no political reforms implemented could reverse Spain's fortunes. Malaspina symbolized his time. As an enlightened intellectual, he tried to develop rational ways to deal with the problems in Spanish society, but many problems simply do not have rational solutions. Additionally, Malaspina did not have the political experience necessary to make a difference in

Spain's future. Similarly, Spain did not have the political experiences necessary to deal with international competition. They held power with their overseas empire until other European nations caught up with them. Competition did not cause Spain's decline; it only exposed the problems.

Both versions of the Malaspina correlation demonstrate that Spain had serious problems which caused its irreversible decline. Much like the fatally ill marine who opened this examination, Spain had too much pride in its power to address its problems. When those problems became acute, Malaspina and Spain both tried to treat them. Their treatments failed because they treated only the symptoms. Inadequate politics, not information deficiency, produced the collapse of Malaspina and of the Spanish Empire. Unfortunately, the colonial empire's gangrene was too pervasive for any treatment to remedy.



THE ENLIGHTENMENT
COMES TO
SALEM VILLAGE

by Ruth Hamilton

“No town in the State, it is believed, entered into the Revolutionary struggle with more of heartiness and unanimity than Danvers. And none, in proportion to its population, furnished to the Continental army a larger number of brave and distinguished soldiers.”¹ At the Battle of Lexington and Concord, no Minutemen came from further away than Danvers, Massachusetts, and no town – save Lexington – suffered more casualties that fateful day. Legend said that in the whole of the town there were only two Tories.

General Thomas Gage, in the summer of 1774, conducted his affairs as Royal Governor of Massachusetts from rented office space in the house of Jeremiah Page, captain in the local Danvers militia. Perhaps they both felt this was a good way to keep an eye on the other. In direct defiance of

Above: *A Book of Record of the Severall Publique Transactions of the Inhabitants of Salem Village, Vulgarly called the Farnes*, October 1672, Danver's (Massachusetts) Archival Center

Ruth Hamilton's interest in Salem Village began many years ago, as Danvers, Massachusetts, is her hometown. After writing a paper on the infamous witch hunt trials and hysteria of 1692, Hamilton was curious about what happened next. Ruth teaches eighth-grade American History at Castle Rock Middle School, and she plans to continue in that position after receiving her Master's at the end of Summer 2006. She believes it is very important that young students be exposed to teachers who are excited, enthusiastic, and passionate about the subject, in order to counter the "dates and names" methodology that curses too many history classes in public schools.

the Massachusetts Government Act, Danvers held a town meeting in early September of 1774, and carried on for “two or three howers longer than was necessary, to see if he [Gov. Gage] would interrupt ‘em. He was acquainted with it, but reply’d – ‘Damn ‘em! I won’t do anything about it unless his Majesty sends me more troops.’”² There were already two companies of the British 64th Regiment of Foot stationed close by to protect Governor Gage as he spent the summer in Danvers, a town filled with patriots: members of the Committee of Correspondence, the Sons of Liberty and later, the Continental Congress. How had the former Salem Village, scene of the witchcraft hysteria of 1692, evolved into a hotbed of revolutionary activity in less than one hundred years?

If ever there was a village in need of enlightenment, Salem Village was it. Yet, this certainly was not Paris, London, or even Philadelphia. Salons and coffee houses were not common, or even in existence in this small farming community. Where would these country folk learn of the changes in thought and learning sweeping the European continent? It is my contention that the Enlightenment came to Salem Village through the influence of three Congregational ministers: Rev. Mr. Joseph Green, Rev. Mr. Peter Clark, and Dr. Benjamin Wadsworth. Though all three of these men could probably best be described as orthodox Calvinist ministers, men of their time and calling, in each case and in their own ways, they brought Enlightenment ideas to this farming community. Like the Presbyterians of Scotland, these Calvinist ministers accepted many Enlightenment ideas and ideals as compatible with their rational religion, not a threat to it. They chafed at any hint of ceremony or ritual, believed firmly in the power of individual congregations, and by extension, in the power of the people (at least that of the “visible saints”).

By 1692 Salem Village, a separate parish and church from Salem Town, was twenty years old. During its first twenty years, disagreements, lawsuits, petty differences, and quarrels among the inhabitants racked the village, with much of the turmoil centered on the church. In the space of these twenty years, church members had chosen four different ministers to tend the flock, the first three of whom departed the area under less-than-agreeable circumstances. The fourth, Samuel Parris, created the most havoc, seeming to lead the effort to drive the witchcraft hysteria from the village while actually being an agent for its growth. By the close of 1692, twenty inhabitants of Salem Village and surrounding Essex County had met their deaths, executed as witches. When the newly appointed governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, William Phipps, and a majority of the ministers in the Boston area called for an end to “spectral evidence” as a determinant of guilt, the trials and executions ended.

In 1688, the Glorious Revolution put the Massachusetts Bay Colony on a new footing with the British crown. No longer did the inhabitants of the Dominion of New England have to struggle against the constraints of the governments of Catholic Charles II and his brother, James II. In the eyes of the Puritans, Protestant William and Mary were monarchs deserving of loyalty. The Revolution of 1689 in Boston demonstrated the colonists to be the most loyal of British subjects as they threw off the hated rule of Governor Andros. Increase Mather, smuggled into England in 1688,

successfully negotiated a new charter for Massachusetts in 1691. Although he did not get a duplicate of the former charter, the one he negotiated assured the colonists of much of the autonomy they were accustomed to, including men in positions of power handpicked by Mather.³ The new charter, however, carried with it the requirement to abide by the Act of Toleration of 1689, which meant that the dominant Puritans would have to accept Quakers, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Baptists in their midst. Church membership could no longer be a requirement for voting privileges.⁴ Toleration was about to have a chance in Massachusetts.

New England Puritans found this difficult to swallow, for they had a contradictory view of the separation of church and state. When “state” meant England, they were strong believers in a separation, especially if the crown had Catholic leanings. However, in the individual towns and parishes of New England, church and state went hand in hand, and it was difficult to separate the two when membership in the local Congregational Church was a requirement for suffrage. The Puritans had come to the new world to practice their religion as they pleased, but their beliefs did not readily extend to acceptance of alternative beliefs. In seventeenth and eighteenth century Massachusetts, religion permeated every aspect of life. The Enlightenment in Massachusetts consequently emerged through religion and its ideas voiced, not in coffeehouses and salons, but in church meetinghouses and parsonages. Henry May, in his introduction to *The Enlightenment in America*, says, “My book, then, does not deal equally with the two main clusters of ideas influential in early America: the Enlightenment and Protestantism always in the background as matrix, rival, ally, and enemy. It is not about the Enlightenment *and* religion, but rather about the Enlightenment *as* religion.”⁵ This paper deals with Enlightenment *through* religion.

THE REVERAND MR. JOSEPH GREEN

Samuel Parris preached his last sermon in Salem Village on the final Sabbath of June 1696. He did not leave the area until September, 1697, after final disposition of his court case against the parish for his back pay of seventy-nine pounds, nine shillings and six pence, in exchange for a quitclaim on the land and parsonage he had called home for eight years. He left behind his wife Elizabeth, buried in the Putnam family cemetery. Not surprisingly, it was difficult for the church in Salem Village to find a replacement for Samuel Parris, or even a “supply for the pulpit.”⁶ Finally it was decided, “by a unanimous consent that we will keep Tuesday the 12th of Oct. as a day of fasting and prayer to seek direction of the Wonderful Counsellor about providing us a minister.”⁷ On November 19, 1697 the church, again by unanimous consent, decided to “treat with the Rev. Mr. Joseph Green, to see if they can prevaile with him to come & preach with us a while in order to further settlement.” The church record lists the members of the search committee, and among them are the names Putnam, Nurse, Osborne, Rea,⁸ people from both sides of the witchcraft crisis. On December 20, 1697, by “universal consent,” the Church at Salem Village agreed to call Joseph Green and agreed to his salary, pending successful completion of a trial

period from December to June of the following year.⁹ At a meeting on July 31, 1698, at Joseph Green's suggestion, the whole congregation, not just the church members, voted for the first time in Salem Village. According to his *Commonplace Book*, the "vote was General if not universal."¹⁰ Joseph Green, in his first entry in the *Church Record* wrote, "I gave an answer to the church and congregation to the effect that if their love to me continued and was duly manifested, and if they did all study to be quiet, I then was willing to continue with you and engage in the work of the ministry, etc."¹¹ Rev. Hale, from the neighboring town of Beverly, ordained Rev. Green on November 10, 1698.

The committee determined that repairs to the tune of £40 were required to put the parsonage in shape, but some members of the parish objected. Therefore, Rev. Green noted he was "willing the vote of forty pounds should be lett fall: and that if the house be so repaired that it be decent and comfortable to live in it shall please him."¹² Rice says, "...it is almost the first sign in the history of this village that shows of the existence of the Christian religion."¹³ What was the substance of this young man that he should so readily agree to bow to an objection?

Joseph Green, born on November 24, 1675, was one of fourteen children of a Cambridge tailor and his wife, John and Ruth Green. After his older brother, Percivall, died of consumption while working as a minister in Wells, Maine, family and friends determined that young Joseph should be educated for the ministry. Since money was a problem in the Green household, friends and former classmates of Joseph's older brother offered to pay for his education. Green, in his *Commonplace Book*, related the ups and downs of his education, his failure to seriously apply himself, his "neglect of known duty" and the "commission of known sin", spending his time "in fowling and fishing; and in dancing and foolishness."¹⁴ Fortunately, for the future of Salem Village, Green's supporters, especially William Brattle and John Leverett, tutors at Harvard College, were not about to give up on him. They, along with Thomas Brattle, Benjamin Wadsworth and others, gave papers to John Green's widow guaranteeing payment of young Joseph's education at Harvard College. After graduating from Harvard College, Joseph Green taught boys at the Roxbury Latin School until his call to the church at Salem Village.¹⁵

Joseph Green's mentors comprise an interesting group. John Corrigan in his book, *The Prism of Piety: Catholick Congregationalist Clergy at the Beginning of the Enlightenment*, refers to the argument of Norman Fiering that the "First American Enlightenment," beginning in the early eighteenth century, was greatly influenced by a group of men associated with Harvard College.¹⁶ It was during this time, the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth, when a group of ministers in Boston, associated with Harvard College, began to voice in sermons and print, new ideas based in part on the writings of the latitudinarians of England, especially John Tillotson, Edward Stillingfleet, and Joseph Glanvill. The latitudinarians believed in showing no preference among varying creeds and forms of worship. These Harvard men included Benjamin Colman, Benjamin Wadsworth, Ebenezer Pemberton,

Nathaniel Appleton, William and Thomas Brattle, Thomas Foxcroft, John Leverett, and Edward Holyoke, four of whom were Joseph Green's financial supporters and two his tutors at Harvard.

While the liberal ministers of eighteenth-century Massachusetts embodied many latitudinarian ideas, they continued to espouse certain traditional covenantal ideas of Congregationalism, especially concerning original sin and the necessity of grace. Josiah Quincy, while president of Harvard one hundred and sixty years ago, described "Brattle, Colman, Pemberton, Wadsworth, and Appleton" as a "class of divines, which first appeared, when the civil power the clergy had wielded under the old charter, was beginning to be dissolved."¹⁷ Corrigan goes on to suggest that the new charter, with its requirements of a royal governor and religious tolerance, brought the Massachusetts colony into closer contact with the mother country. This resulted in societal changes for the colony including a widening acceptance of a "catholick spirit" described by Corrigan as a "willingness to overlook differences of opinion about the 'smaller things' in religion, and, in particular, to avoid invective and censoriousness in observing the religious life manifest in congregations other than one's own."¹⁸ Corrigan sees "catholick" thought characterized primarily by "an optimism about the possibility for unity, understood not only as the unity among persons of differing religious backgrounds (Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Anglican) but as the intertwining of body and soul in the person, and as the affectionate bonding of the individual to God and to others in the world."¹⁹

Major beliefs of the Massachusetts "catholick" ministers and their followers included: a perception of order and purpose in nature; an acceptance of the body as partner to the soul, and affections as partner to reason; a vast gulf between God and man as a result of original sin; the covenant of grace as the only way to regeneration (but seen as accomplished through the pull of love as opposed to the push of fear); and a desire to raise the affections (emotions) of the congregations, but with controls.²⁰ Contrast this with the traditional orthodox feeling of suspicion "of nature, the flesh, and the affections" shown by Increase Mather, John Higginson, and Nicolas Noyes, who viewed God as more an angry judge than as a loving father.²¹

Joseph Green spent time with both of these diverse groups. Salem Village bordered Salem Town where Higginson and Noyes were the ministers. Green shared ecclesiastical duties with them at a variety of community occasions, belonged to the same association of ministers, and met with them socially. However, at the same time that Joseph Green was meeting with his neighboring conservative, orthodox brethren, he was traveling to Boston, attending lectures and commencements, and visiting his former tutors at Harvard. In fact, Green accepted the position at Salem Village only after consulting with William Brattle, his former tutor.²² Though a minister in a small farming community who spent much of his own time tending his orchards, farming his land, and seeing to his livestock, Joseph Green was in touch with the larger world, even beyond Boston. Five of his brothers were, or had been, involved with a life at sea. His *Commonplace Book* contains a letter to his brother Edward, a sea captain,

requesting that he bring back specific books for him from London, including works by latitudinarians Tillotson and Stillingfleet.²³

Judging by what he recorded of various stops made on a trip to Connecticut and Long Island, Green was something of a traveler himself. He traveled to Boston, Cambridge, and Roxbury quite regularly, for shopping, business, lectures and pleasure.²⁴ On May 29, 1711, he wrote, "I was at Mr. Thomas Brattle's, heard ye organs and saw strange things in a microscope." This was the first written notice of the presence of that musical instrument in Massachusetts.²⁵ Green's diary consists mainly of short, direct notes that make the reader long for more. What strange things did he see in the microscope? Was it the first time he had seen and heard organs? What were his thoughts when he listened to Solomon Stoddard preach the Election sermon, or give a lecture at the time of commencement? Was he more aligned theologically with Increase Mather or John Wise, the patriot of Chebacco Parish? Although he met at various times with both of them, he wrote little of either.

Looking at the church and parish record books for Salem Village and combining them with the brief, sometimes cryptic, notes of his diary and commonplace book gives some small sense of Joseph Green's connection to the Enlightenment. As a Puritan, he was already, in a basic way, living an Enlightenment ideal by questioning the established religion, the Church of England. With the prosperity of the colony and its resultant concern with things of this world rather than the next, fewer congregants were making a profession of conversion and partaking in the Lord's Supper. Churches in New England were not growing at an acceptable rate, so the leading ministers instituted the concept of the Halfway Covenant, allowing for the baptism of children of baptized, yet not full members of the church. Many parishioners considered this a liberal idea.²⁶ Though in use elsewhere at the time of the establishment of the church in 1672, Salem Village had restrained from employing this concept. Joseph Green proposed instituting the Halfway Covenant, and in the *Church Record* of January 19, 1700, are these words: "This [the Halfway Covenant] was voted by itself and then was none that manifested any dissatisfaction – but all gave their consent to each particular. Blessed be God for such a peaceable meeting."²⁷ The entry is in the young minister's hand. He may have had some doubt about the acceptance of the proposal, but the following year the church made it easier for people to come into full communion with the church when they "...voted that the relations of such as offer to join in full communion with us may be read either before the whole congregation or only to the church as our Pastour shall think convenient. And we think it convenient that the relations of persons be read to the church when they are propounded." The church continued that day and, "...voted that we are willing to lay aside that practice of calling for Testimony for persons when they are propounded to our communion."²⁸ With these votes, the church eliminated practices that held some back from asking for full membership in the church. No longer would a prospective member have to make public account of a conversion experience (the "relation" could be read by the pastor), nor would they be subject to "testimony" from members of the church. The young man from Harvard with his liberal ideas was making a difference in the community.

Even though Joseph Green questioned his seriousness toward his own education, he took an active interest in learning. On March 22, 1708, he suggested to the parish the establishment of the first public school in Salem Village, an area inhabited for seventy-plus years.

Neighbors I am about building a School House for the good education of our children, and have spoken to several of the neighbors who are willing to help it forward, so that I hope we shall quickly finish it, and I speak of it here that so every one that can have any benefit, may have some opportunity for so good a service. Some replied that it was new thing to them, and they desired to know where it should stand, and what design of it was. To them I answered that Deacon Ingersoll would give land for it to stand on, at the upper end of the Training field, and that I designed to have a good school master to teach their children to read and write and cipher and everything that is good. Many commended the design and none objected against it.²⁹

Three days later, Green made note of getting “timber for the school house.” On the seventh of April he arranged with Mrs. Deland to “keep school,” and on the eighth, he “agreed with James Holten for a room for ye school, &c.” By the thirteenth of the month, his two sons, Joseph and John, “went to school.”³⁰ Rev. Mr. Joseph Green was not a man to let grass grow under his feet.

Although Joseph Green preached on various occasions against the practice of divination, he approached the possibility of witchcraft differently than his predecessor. Green preached against fortune telling, a practice that continued in the area and caused parishioners concern. He also made note of several meetings with John Dale and his wife because of her being “under temptation” and her fears of the possibility of diabolical influences. On February 22, 1712, he and others spent three hours praying with her, apparently with some success, as there is no further mention of her problem.³¹ While this is hardly Enlightenment practice or thinking, Green’s approach demonstrates a higher degree of reason, patience, and consideration than his predecessor’s. Within months of arriving at Salem Village, Green was responsible for the return of three members of the church who could not bring themselves to attend while Parris was in charge. After three attempts over a period of several years, Rev. Green was successful in restoring the name of excommunicated and executed Martha Corey to the *Church Record*. On August 25, 1706, after many discussions with Rev. Green, Ann Putnam Jr., who at twelve years old had done and said so much to lead to the convictions of innocent people of the parish, assented to a public confession and profession of religion to be read on her behalf by the pastor. Before the public reading, Green consulted with Samuel Nurse, a representative of those injured by Ann and others through the trials of 1692, to confirm that the confession was satisfactory.³²

Still, it is not easy to label Joseph Green a follower of the Enlightenment. However, from the years 1698 to 1715, this Harvard graduate — who dined with the Governor and the judges of the Superior Court, who traveled regularly to Boston and Cambridge,

who was mentored and tutored by acknowledged liberals of the day, who read books from Europe, who looked through a microscope, noted a sighting of the Aurora Borealis eight years before the first acknowledged sighting in 1719, who introduced new practices in church, and brought a school to the village — was possibly the closest connection the farmers and folk of Salem Village had to Enlightenment thought. In 1715, Joseph Green died at the age of forty, leaving behind a pregnant wife, seven children, and a parish that would miss him dearly: “A man to be held in perpetual remembrance both for the seriousness of his instruction, and the agreeableness of his manners.”³³ As one final, tenuous thread of a Green connection to the Enlightenment, his widow wed Mr. William Brattle, liberal tutor at Harvard, minister at the First Church in Cambridge, and member of the Royal Society of London.³⁴

THE REVEREND MR. PETER CLARK

It took the people of Salem Village four years to settle on a new pastor for the parish, but when they did, they chose wisely. Peter Clark, a graduate of Harvard College class of 1712, came from a large farming family in Watertown, Massachusetts. After keeping school in Woburn and preaching for a time in Bridgewater, he accepted the call for the church in Salem Village, working out good terms for his services: £90 per year for salary, plus a £90 settlement and the parsonage. At his ordination were Rev. Joseph Gerrish, Joseph Green’s father-in-law, and Rev. George Curwin, friend, associate, and fowling companion of Joseph Green.³⁵

Peter Clark studied at Harvard during the time Green’s former tutor, John Leverett, was president of the college. The curriculum included Latin, Greek, Hebrew, logic and rhetoric, with the addition of natural and mental philosophy after 1714, when Yale received a gift of the works of Newton and Locke.³⁶ Leverett was, “attracted to theories stressing the cultivation of reason, and the more or less scientific discovery of moral laws, in order to help him in articulating religious duty.”³⁷ The Royal Society elected William Brattle and John Leverett as members in 1714. Leverett, “in response to the challenges of the Enlightenment, magnified precisely those strains of seventeenth-century Puritanism — its naturalism and rationalism — that were to become so important for reasonable religion in the middle and late eighteenth century, and he set these in a context that affirmed God’s love for humanity.”³⁸ Though his contemporaries considered Clark a conservative, some of his works illustrate the influence of the liberal atmosphere in Cambridge and strains emphasized by Leverett.

Without access to a diary or commonplace book to access, it is difficult to achieve the same intimate feel for Clark as for Joseph Green. Peter Clark’s formal writings, along with his published sermons and pamphlets, provide the best glimpse of the man, although the *Church Record* also provides insights. Surprisingly enough, the witchcraft crisis of 1692 was apparently not sufficient to convince the inhabitants of the potential evil or danger involved with fortune telling and the like. As had Joseph Green, Peter Clark had to confront the issue. Notes in the *Church Record* from September 5-7, 1746, indicate a potential problem of church members consulting “reputed witches

or fortune tellers.” Rev. Peter Clark, however, was not about to go the route of his predecessor, Samuel Parris. Two votes were taken and recorded.

*No proof appearing against any of the members of this church (Some of whom had been strongly suspected of this Crime) so as to convict them of their being guilty, it was further voted that the Pastor in the name of the Church should publickly testify their Disapprobation & abhorrence of this infamous & ungodly practice of Consulting Witches, or Fortune tellers or any that are reputed such; exhorting all under their watch who may have been guilty of it to an hearty Repentance & Returning to God, earnestly seeking forgiveness in this Church of Christ and Warning all against the Like practice for the time to come.*³⁹

This may not indicate the height of Enlightenment, but compared to the tragedy of 1692 and the death of innocent people convicted of witchcraft by spectral evidence, it was a step in the right direction.

During the fifty-one years that Peter Clark was pastor at the First Church of Salem Village, there were notable changes in religion and politics. In 1752, Salem Village petitioned the Crown to become a town in its own right, separate in all ways from Salem, and to be renamed Danvers. A new town meant more General Court members, and with tempers starting to rise in the colonies, the king refused the request. Instead, Danvers was designated a district, similar to a town in all ways except representation at the General Court. Five years later, it became a town, as the town seal says, “The King Unwilling.” That the town went ahead with incorporation regardless of the king’s wishes indicates the mindset of the people of Danvers. In making the decision to move toward independence or to remain loyal to the crown, towns and churches of New England often acted as a community rather than as individuals.⁴⁰ In 1757, the people of Danvers began to state their position.

The Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s was a time of turmoil in New England. The proponents of the evangelical period shared common beliefs with the Baptists, including a desire that the church should consist of regenerate membership, a “visible body of saints” — that is, those who had been saved. They were also opposed to government interference with churches and control among the churches (consociations, associations, etc.).⁴¹ In addition, the Awakeners were interested in eliminating the Halfway Covenant, limiting infant baptism instead to the children of church members considered regenerate and in full communion.⁴² During the early months and years of the Great Awakening, clerical opinions ran the gamut from total acceptance to qualified approval to downright alarm, and yet some of the clergy, including Peter Clark, reconsidered as the revivals continued. George Whitefield wrote in his journal after visiting Salem in 1740, “Preached there also to about 2000. Here the Lord manifested forth His glory. In every part of the congregation persons might be seen under great concern and one, Mr. Clark, a good minister as is granted by all I conversed with, seemed to be almost in heaven.”⁴³ However, when Whitefield’s *Journal* was published,

with his scathing criticisms of Harvard, Yale, and many of the New England ministers — even going so far as to say that many of them, “do not experimentally know Christ” — the tide of clerical opinion started to turn.⁴⁴ At this point Rev. Peter Clark no longer seemed to be almost in heaven, as he lectured in Topsfield,

...A manifest Violation of this Law of Love is that unchristian Practice, that prevails so much this Day, and among many that make more than common Pretence to Religion of Judging the Hearts of their Fellow Christians that walk orderly, and pronouncing them Hypocrites, Pharisees, and Unconverted, which is a practice so vile and odious in itself, so abominable to God as being a blasphemous Usurpation of his Prerogative to search and try, and judge the State of Men's Hearts, and so uncharitable to Men and such a bold Intrusion into the Throne of the great Judge of all; that it can scarce be too severely testify'd against, it being a palpable Breach of that Charity which should be among Christians, and of the plain Rules of the Gospel.⁴⁵

Rev. Clark was aware of the increased interest in church and religion brought by the Great Awakening, but like many others in the Boston area, he felt enthusiasm needed to be tempered. By 1750, the Great Awakening had brought about the opposition of many eastern Massachusetts ministers (orthodox Congregationalists) who in the eyes of the Awakeners had been subject to “latent Arminian rationalism,”⁴⁶ and therefore rejected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Over the years, “respectable mainstays of the Moderate Enlightenment: Locke, Clarke, Tillotson, and those Dissenters who tended toward rationalism” had influenced these ministers.⁴⁷ Certainly, those men educated at Harvard in the beginning of the eighteenth century would have studied the very works the Awakeners found so objectionable. At an early convention of New England Separatists (those who had left the established Congregational churches to form their own, more conservative ones) they admitted that some of their misguided brethren were in favor of “destroying human Learning, and even human reason itself, as useless in Religion.” For those in the colonies in favor of order, intellect and rationality, the Great Awakening was alarming.⁴⁸ However, the fears were due in part to isolated cases, not a general, pervasive plan. According to Edwin Gaustad, in *The Great Awakening in New England*, “The great revival in New England was not anti-intellectual nor were its chief defenders obscurantist. Harvard and Yale had been needlessly alienated from the revival by the blundering, if pious, slander of Whitefield. Even with this handicap, as one moved from revivalist into antirevivalist circles there was no rising gradient of erudition. Jonathan Edwards of Northampton and Benjamin Colman of Boston were intellectuals who had no superior in New England; and both were firm, capable friends of the Awakening.”⁴⁹ Perhaps New England Minister Ezra Stiles, reflecting almost two decades later on the Great Awakening, said it best, “Multitudes were seriously, soberly and solemnly out of their wits.”⁵⁰

The revival spirit of the Great Awakening and the controversy surrounding it, divided the previously united front presented by the clergy of New England; no longer was it imperative to speak with one voice. According to Gaustad, "Open schism was the order of the day; theologians campaigned boldly, crystallized their ideology, and organized their forces," and it was here that Rev. Peter Clark began to gain recognition in a wider scope. Clark, always respected for his intellect, had been invited to preach the Artillery, Election, and Convention sermons in Boston. He was also one of the early lecturers for the Dudleian Lecture series initiated at Harvard in 1755 and continuing to the present day, and some of his works, published by popular subscription, give evidence of his accepted value as a writer. He was not opposed to taking on a controversial subject. That subject was original sin.

With the influence of Enlightenment thought, Western culture began to see man as rational and inclined to good. The doctrine of original sin represented much that the spirit of the Enlightenment hated. In England, Dr. John Taylor authored a work entitled, *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, Proposed to Free and Candid Examination*, a treatise that challenged the orthodox view of original sin. This book launched the discussion on both sides of the Atlantic. In Northern Ireland, a Calvinist minister warned against reading it, telling his congregation that it was, "a bad book and a dangerous book and a heretical book," but he also considered it unanswerable.⁵¹ After the turmoil of the Great Awakening and the spread of the belief in the inherent depravity of man, calmer heads began to prevail and the question arose regarding the cause of what Jonathan Edwards referred to as the "infinitely miserable condition" of man. Was it through his own fault or was the cause original sin? Ministers in eastern New England were ready to defend both ideas, and a pamphlet war began, with Rev. Peter Clark of Danvers as one of the chief combatants.⁵²

In 1757, Rev. Samuel Webster anonymously authored a tract entitled, *A Winter Evening's Conversation upon the Doctrine of Original Sin... Wherein the Notion of our Having Sinned in Adam and Being on That Account Only Liable to Eternal Damnation, Is Proved To Be Unscriptural, Emotional, and of Dangerous Tendency*. This piece directly incorporated the ideas found in Taylor's work. Rev. Peter Clark disputed Webster's ideas in his own tract, *Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin Stated and Defended: A Summer Morning's Conversation between a Minister and a Neighbor, a Reply to a Winter Evening's Conversation*. While staunchly defending the doctrine of original sin, Clark found it difficult to believe infants condemned to eternal damnation, saying instead that it was, "among the secret Things which belong to God alone." This statement led to a charge by Charles Chauncy that Clark was no Calvinist if he could write such unorthodox things. Clark's response was that he "could not be charged with deserting Calvinism, for he had never been a regular Calvinist. He was consistent with elevating reason above authority."⁵³

As the pamphlet campaign continued, others joined in, and Jonathan Edwards published his book, *Original Sin*. Peter Clark wrote of it, referring Webster to "President Edwards' late treatise on this subject, in which he has fully vindicated the said texts (against the exceptions of Dr. John Taylor whom this gentleman follows, in most

things) to the general satisfaction.”⁵⁴ Jonathan Edwards and Peter Clark were not strangers to each other or to each other’s work. In 1750, while Edwards was waiting to hear if he would be dismissed from his position as pastor in Northampton, he wrote to Peter Clark in hope of enlisting his aid though a letter in defense of his book and his practices in tightening the requirements for admission to the Sacrament. His letter indicates his high opinion of Clark: “...But nevertheless am encouraged to write on my own behalf, from the Esteem I have long entertain’d of your Judgment, from some of your writings, particularly your defense of Infant Baptism against my Class-mate Walton, and also by the appearances I saw of Candor in your Late Letters to Maj. Pomroy & Mr. Billing.” Edwards went on to explain how he had been misinterpreted and misrepresented, when in actuality he held the same opinions as Clark himself.⁵⁵ Edwards was not the only one writing to Clark at this time, for the Ecclesiastical Council, on hearing Clark was writing an answer to Edwards’ book, *Qualifications for Communion*, asked him “to expedite what he had undertaken.”⁵⁶ Edwards’ high esteem for Clark did not last long however, for Clark’s hoped-for letter never arrived, and Edwards was dismissed from the pulpit. What Edwards may not have known was that Clark had declined to write to the Council. It is not known whether Edwards wrote his book before Clark and Webster began their pamphlet war, or whether he had feelings of animosity because of a perceived part Clark may have played in his dismissal. However, in his preface to *Original Sin*, he wrote that Taylor’s book had been “spread abroad in the land, without any answer to it, as an antidote.”⁵⁷

In looking at the topic and content of Clark’s pamphlet writing it is easy to think of him as non-enlightened. But was he not part of what Lawrence E. Klein refers to as the “conversational Enlightenment” where “England is a most central locale, not only because in the early eighteenth century English writers gave an influential rearticulation to the ideal, but because from the early eighteenth century England pioneered an elaborated world of conversational opportunity”⁵⁸? The American colonies were certainly part of this world of conversational opportunity where Clark was able to carry on his conversations about infant baptism or original sin with “a freedom of raillery, a liberty in decent language to question everything, and an allowance of unraveling or refuting any argument without offence to the arguer.”⁵⁹

Perhaps Clark’s Dudleian Lecture of May 5, 1763, best shows the influence of the Enlightenment in his thought. Entitled, *Man’s Dignity and Duty as a reasonable Creature And his Insufficiency as a fallen Creature*, the lecture addresses the idea of natural religion. Of this Clark said,

I apprehend to consist in such laws, or rules of moral conduct, as are founded on deductions from principles of mere natural reason relative to divinity and morality, without the aids of any supernatural revelation. This is natural religion in theory.... It is the excellency of natural religion, that it hath its foundation in the rational nature of man...it is fundamental to all civil order, the welfare of society, and the laws of government, all the laws and precepts of it being consonant to eternal truth & equity.... that

*the mere religion of nature which was calculated for a state of innocent, uncorrupt nature, and could serve to this end only in such a state is now, in the present degenerate state of mankind, in many respects defective, and insufficient to conduct him to his great end; and needs the supply of such helps, means and advantages, as the scripture-revelation furnishes us with.*⁶⁰

With this belief in the concept of natural religion, Clark coupled the orthodox teaching of the necessity of scripture-revelation as a result of original sin. Later in the lecture, speaking directly to those students planning on a ministerial career, he said,

*As to those of you who may have a view to the sacred ministry, let me recommend an impartial regard to truth, especially truth in your studies and disquisitions. Let nothing be admitted, for truth, but what a rational judgment shall pronounce such, upon solid convincing evidence. Guard against prejudices and prepossessions of every kind, against prejudices arising from education, interest, or any corrupt passion. Let no opinion be embraced as true and sound, merely because it is received by tradition from the fathers, without impartial examination. To prove all things and hold that which is good and true, is the counsel of inspired scripture.*⁶¹

Rev. Clark continued on to warn the young men to be careful not to throw off principles of education, but to “examine them as strictly as possible” and “cast them not off, till it plainly appears they will not stand the test of reason or scripture; and whatever opinions will not abide this test, tho’ men of learning and renown have been the abettors of them, reason warrants their abdication – *Magis amica veritas.*”⁶² Now here is the enlightened thinker. Clark’s advice to the Harvard divinity students brings to mind the phrase “Dare to know,” even though the speech was presented twenty-one years before the publication of Immanuel Kant’s famous work.⁶³ Perhaps Rev. Clark used this advice when teaching his young student, Samuel Holten. The Holtens, an old village family going back to the days of the witch trials, had slated Samuel to be the scholar in the family, hoping that he would attend college. With that in mind, he went to live with the Clark family, but after four years, he became ill and suffered a permanent hearing impairment.⁶⁴ Despite the resulting end of his college dreams, an examination of Holten’s life accomplishments testifies to the excellent education he received under Clark’s tutelage.

Rev. Peter Clark remained pastor at the First Church of Salem Village (Danvers) until his death in 1768. His parishioners loved and respected him, even if his sermons were unbearably long. On one occasion a delegation of the parish stayed behind to ask if his sermons might be shortened, to which he answered “No; any of the people might freely leave when they judged they had heard enough; but the sermons could not be shortened.”⁶⁵ Clark took part in the life of the village and very likely brought to those people the concept of “daring to know.”

THE REVERAND MR. BENJAMIN WADSWORTH

Following Peter Clark's death, the First Church of Danvers again went four years without a permanent minister until they selected Benjamin Wadsworth, a young man of twenty-three and a graduate of Harvard (1769). After graduation, Wadsworth spent time in study, reading theology as a Hopkins Fellow under Professor Wigglesworth and, like many young Harvard graduates, kept in school for a time. His ordination in Danvers in 1772 was quite elaborate, costing the parish £212. The church, in their preparations for the ordination, had seen to everything, including a charge to the committee chosen to prepare the meetinghouse "to keep the Beams clear, and not suffer any Persons to go up inside the Roof" as it was common in the parish for youths to be "perched like fowls among these beams and braces..."⁶⁶

As a well-educated young man in a position of authority, Wadsworth would likely influence the thought of his parishioners. Most of his writing that has come down to us is in the nature of sermons, funeral orations, etc. which "contain little theology, a subject which Wadsworth was always too courteous and gentle to debate."⁶⁷ There were no theological disputes or discontent in the parish during his pastorate. Parishioner Samuel Putnam said of him,

*Dr. Wadsworth was not only the spiritual guide, but to a great degree the temporal adviser of his people, and he knew men and things so well as to command the respect and confidence of all. His common sense and prudence were so great that he seemed never to meddle without an apparent necessity and an intent to do good.... His style of preaching was efficient in simplicity and rather above the comprehension of some of his hearers, and he read his sermons very rapidly, keeping his eyes close to the manuscript. What he preached would have appeared better than it did, if there had been any pains taken to deliver it.*⁶⁸

Perhaps this lack of good delivery style was what led Wadsworth to decline preaching the Dudleian Lecture in 1800.

One way to glimpse the mind of Benjamin Wadsworth is to examine what he read with the help of two documents: "Abridgment of What I Extracted while an Undergraduate at Harvard College" and the inventory of Wadsworth's library compiled by his executor in preparation for probate. As might be expected of a divinity student, Wadsworth read a variety of collected sermons (including Mayhew's),⁶⁹ books on rhetoric, Thomas Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, and Puritan writers like Bunyan, Neal, his predecessor Peter Clark, and of course, Increase Mather. In addition, his extracts show that he was reading authors of the Enlightenment, including Addison and Steels' *The Spectator*, Henry Fielding's *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews*, and David Hume's *History of England*. It appears he also had an interest in singing and hymns, having read both Isaac Watts and Phillip Doderidge.⁷⁰

As in his college reading and studies, Wadsworth's personal library showed diversity in subject matter. Once again, there are the expected volumes of sermons, concor-

dances, Bibles, and rhetoric. The interest in music reappears with books of hymns by Watts and Rippins. There are dictionaries and grammars for English, French, and Hebrew, along with Hill's *Arithmetic*, Adams' *Essay on Electricity, Navigation, The Indian Wars*, Ferguson's *Astronomy*, and Morse's *Geography Made Easy*. Wadsworth read from the classics including Ovid, Virgil, and Caesar and had copies of books by such enlightened thinkers as Tillotson, Reid, Sherlock, Locke, Pope, and Leiber.⁷¹

How did Wadsworth apply what he was reading and studying? He left no diary, no commonplace book, so we must look to his actions. Perhaps one of the best areas to see the applied principles of Enlightenment thought is in reference to the American Revolution. The questioning of the established authority, the desire to participate in self-government, and the need to preserve the rights of Englishmen was strong in Danvers, as can be imagined in a town established, "the King unwilling." Benjamin Wadsworth was one of these emerging patriots, agreeing with the Danvers Town Meeting votes of 1773 "that we will use all lawful Endeavors for Recovering maintaining and preserving the invaluable rights and privileges of this people and stand ready (if need be) to Risque our lives and fortunes in Defence of those Liberties which our forefathers purchased at so Dear a Rate."⁷²

According to local legend, Wadsworth was involved in an escapade known as Leslie's Retreat. General Thomas Gage's intelligence network had reported, "There are eight Field pieces in an old Store or Barn, near the landing place at Salem, they are to be removed in a few days, the Seizure of them would greatly disconcert their schemes."⁷³ On February 26, 1775, British troops arrived at Salem, having sailed first to Marblehead and then marched to Salem with the aim of seizing cannon and military stores believed housed there. They made two mistakes: it was a Sunday and therefore all good Congregationalists gathered in central places, their meetinghouses; and a drawbridge guarded the road the British chose to travel into Salem. The alarm went out, the drawbridge went up, and the British were in trouble.⁷⁴ According to the local stories, Benjamin Wadsworth left the pulpit, shouldered his musket, and ran with others of the town militia the five miles to Salem.⁷⁵ Meanwhile in Salem, there was a bit of a standoff with Colonel Leslie saying he "should be obliged to fire upon the people on the northern side of the bridge if they did not lower the leaf." The reply from the other side was "if the troops did fire they would all be dead men." Colonel Leslie, growing frustrated stated, "I will get over this bridge before I return to Boston, if I stay here till next autumn...By God! I will not be defeated." To this Captain Felt, of the Salem militia, replied, "You must acknowledge you have already been baffled."⁷⁶ The two leaders continued their discussion with hopes of finding a solution to the dilemma. Depending upon whose account you read — Captain Felt, Rev. Thomas Barnard, Rev. Benjamin Wadsworth, or a combination thereof — Felt reached an agreement with Leslie. Under his promise, Leslie and his Regulars would cross the bridge, march fifty rods, and then retreat without "troubling or destroying anything."⁷⁷ This done, the first battle of the Revolution was postponed until April 19, 1775, when the Regulars once again moved, but not on a Sunday and not towards a drawbridge.

There is no further evidence of Wadsworth's involvement with the actual fighting of the Revolution, but the men under his pastoral care fought at Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill, Saratoga, and Ticonderoga.⁷⁸ He kept up a regular correspondence with the aforementioned Samuel Holten, the young man tutored by Rev. Peter Clark. Holten had gone on to study medicine and set up a practice in Danvers, but this work took second place to his involvement in government. He became a representative to the General Court and was involved in the early preparations for resistance to British power. Holten was also a member of the unauthorized Provincial Convention of 1768, the Provincial Congress of 1775, the Committee of Safety, and the First Essex Regiment. On June 22, 1778, Holten began service as a member of the Second Continental Congress and was a signer of the Articles of Confederation. For a time he served as President of the Congress of the Confederation.⁷⁹ How much of Holten's belief in liberty, government, and the rights of man was formed by the education he received from Rev. Peter Clark? How had the generations of Congregationalists and Puritans, with their basic premises of the right to dissent and the right to govern themselves, influenced his own beliefs?

Of the Revolution, Rev. Benjamin Wadsworth wrote, "...a revolution in favor of civil and religious liberty, which, in its principles, has given a fatal shock to tyranny and oppression in general – a *glorious revolution*, which spake into political existence our NATIONAL REPUBLIC – now rising, with rapid progress, to meridian glory."⁸⁰ Even though his friend and correspondent, Samuel Holten, was an anti-Federalist, Wadsworth indicated Federalist leanings in piece called "Social Thanksgiving a Pleasant Duty," where he wrote, "Heaven smiled again and blessed us with a Federal Constitution, the wisdom of sages, and wonder of nations; rising perhaps as near perfection, as any government ever planned by man."⁸¹ As a Federalist, he had concerns and fears about Jefferson and the Republicans. Some Republicans in town even accused him of trying to influence the voting in the 1804 election.⁸²

Being interested in both education and morality, Wadsworth was instrumental in establishing the Sabbath School in town, assisted at Phillips Academy, served on the Danvers school committee, and founded the Danvers Moral Society, a temperance group. In 1816, Harvard awarded him a Doctorate of Divinity. Ten years later, Wadsworth was laid to rest in the same cemetery as his predecessors, Joseph Green and Peter Clark.⁸³

CONCLUSION

From 1698 until 1826, three Congregationalist ministers guided the parishioners at the First Church of Christ in Salem Village. All were graduates of Harvard and were fairly orthodox in their beliefs. Each was the product of his time, circumstances, and education, and each brought to the community, in one way or another, the changes in thought that were sweeping Europe and crossing the Atlantic. Each was one of a minority of educated people in the community and thus would be in a position of respect and authority. All had connections to the wider world and thereby connected

others in the village to that world and all believed in the power of reason, the value of education, and the ultimate providence of God. The village previously torn apart by dissension, superstition, and tragedy deserved something better and, in these three men, received it.

In 1687 John Wise, pastor of the nearby Chebacco parish (now Essex), led a protest at the town meeting in response to the attempt by Governor Andros to levy a tax from quit rents. Arrest, trial, and conviction, which led to jail, followed his protest. He became a hero to the people, giving them a “sense of the value of the rights of Englishmen.” These rights were completely secular, not based on religion, but on law.⁸⁴ Thirty years later, 1717, saw the publication of John Wise’s book, *Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches*. Wise drew heavily on the German philosopher, Samuel Pufendorf’s *De Jure Naturae et Gentium*, with thoughts similar to John Locke’s on government. Perry Miller writes, “...he [Wise] seized as decisively as Locke himself upon the conceptions of social compact, natural rights, and the right of revolution; just as Locke made these the rationale of the English constitution, Wise proposed that they rather than Scripture gave the *raison d’être* to Congregational societies.”⁸⁵ John Wise and Joseph Green met at many church related activities and both signed petitions to clear the names of those accused in 1692. Since Wise outlived Green, it is likely that he and Clark also met on varied occasions. Wadsworth came to Salem Village too late to associate with John Wise, but his book was on the shelf in Wadsworth’s library.

Salem Village was no hotbed of Enlightenment thought, but over a period of about one hundred years, three men quietly brought the ideas and ideals of reason, education, scientific advancement, music, liberty, toleration, and self-government to the people living there. And the people were the better for it.



JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT:
HEROIC PATH FINDER OR
HEEDLESS SELF-PROMOTER?

by James A. Murphy

Who was the American explorer that became known as the Path Finder? It would almost seem as though there were two John Charles Frémonts. His life was a roller coaster filled with tremendous highs and perilous lows. He rose from poverty to wealth and fell back to poverty again. He went from an obscure civilian surveyor to second lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers to major general of the United States Army, the first United States Senator from California, and first presidential candidate of the newly formed Republican Party in 1856. Yet he died destitute.

He alternated constantly between success and failure. Many times his successes came from the very jaws of disaster, and on other occasions, with good fortune in his grasp, success would elude him. He overcame illegitimate birth in a time when such a stigma could hamper one for life. He had the uncanny luck to be in the right place at the right time to become acquainted with and befriend influential people. Frémont's illegitimacy and early poverty were the catalysts for his quest for fame and public adulation.

Frémont was an explorer, soldier, and politician, but he never quite achieved the heights in any of those careers that he wished to attain. Some say he was a great explorer, while others say he was lucky enough to have engaged expert guides. He did not contribute to the discovery of new lands, unlike those that had come before

Above: John C. Frémont, Tom Noel Collection

James A. Murphy wrote this paper for a senior seminar class, taught by Professor Michael Ducey. Murphy chose John C. Frémont because, although Frémont was very famous in his own time, he is an often-overlooked historic figure today. Jim graduated with a BA in History in May 2005.

him and held the title of explorer. His real accomplishment was in accurately mapping those lands in the west discovered by his predecessors. The contradictions in the man and his career are intriguing. Frémont was prone to exceed his orders and was uncompromising in his decisions to the point of insubordination, eventually earning him a military court martial. There were those who had a great deal of affection and adoration for him, and there were those who despised him. He was a man that took chances with his life and the lives of those who explored with him. He did not seem to mind the loss of life encountered in his quest for fame and acclaim as a national hero.

It is not the purpose of this paper to demean the man or his accomplishments. The purpose is to examine his deeds and to explore the personal motivations and the spirit of the time in which he lived and how they shaped his contradictory life. In order to do this, it will be necessary to look into the early life of John Frémont and touch upon the lives of his parents.

John Charles Frémont was born on January 21, 1813, in Savannah, Georgia. Rather than being a happy occasion, his birth was a scandal. His mother, Anne Beverly Whiting, had been married to an elderly man by the name of John Pryor and lived in Richmond, Virginia, with him. She became involved in an extra-marital affair with Charles Fremon, a French émigré. She left her husband and ran off with her lover. Pryor had petitioned the Virginia legislature for a divorce; however, there is no evidence to indicate that it was granted before Fremon's death in 1818. Frémont grew up with the stigma of being a bastard and the child of a family whose financial condition was unstable.¹

It must be remembered that early nineteenth century Richmond, Virginia, was a very different world from that in which we live today. It was an aristocratic town, conservative and wealthy. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were among the national icons who could be spotted in the town.

Frémont's mother, Anne, was the youngest daughter of Colonel Thomas Whiting, a well-known member of the community and a large landowner of Gloucester County, Virginia. At the age of seventeen, she married John Pryor, a man old enough to be her father. The Pryors held a respectable place in Richmond society.²

Frémont's father, Charles Fremon, was a Frenchman who supported the Royalists during the French Revolution. Eventually, he arrived in Virginia; he was without any monetary resources, but he still had his head. There were many French refugees in the United States that had integrated well into the fabric of the young nation. Fremon had no trouble being absorbed into the best social circles of Tidewater, Virginia.

Fremon realized he could make a living by teaching French. He was first employed at William and Mary College and then at a prominent Richmond school. Eventually, he obtained lodging at a cottage on John Pryor's estate and began giving Mrs. Pryor French lessons. The teacher-student relationship turned into a full-blown love affair. In 1811, Mrs. Pryor abandoned her aging husband, ran off with the young French teacher, and married him.

Upon hearing of the marriage, John Pryor petitioned the Virginia legislature for a divorce. As mentioned previously, there is no record of a divorce being granted.

Despite the scandal, Fremont contributed to the support of the family as a dance teacher, and his wife took in boarders. Under this stigma of scandal and illegitimacy, John Charles Frémont was born.

In his *Memoirs*, Frémont, not surprisingly, fails to make any mention of his illegitimacy. He describes his early life as “desultory” and states that “...events of early life make slight impressions and have no consequences...They do not extend their influence into the time when life begins in earnest.”³ Frémont avoids any mention of his father. This could be because he was only five years old when his father died, and he did not have any recollections of him, or it could be purposeful. In any event, his parents legally married after the death of John Pryor (who died sometime during John’s first five years), and the book was closed on the scandalous prior conduct of his parents.

After Charles’ death, Anne moved the family to Charleston, North Carolina. Though his real surname was Fremont, John Charles added the “t” and placed an accent mark over the “e” sometime in his early life. This could have been his way of trying to escape from the stigma of illegitimacy. It is this attempt to recreate his identity and his uncanny ability to cultivate friendships of influential people that played an important role in the life of John Charles Frémont.

By all accounts, John Frémont was a very intelligent and studious young man. At the age of sixteen he enrolled in the College of Charleston. Although a gifted student, he was expelled three months before graduation. The impetuosity of both his mother and father flowed through his veins. He fell in love with a young Creole woman, the sister of a friend. His class attendance began to fall off, and he would stay away from the school for days at a time. This behavior was not tolerated at the College of Charleston. However, after he received a formal warning from the school, he continued his reckless conduct. Frémont was expelled on February 5, 1831, for “habitual irregularity and incorrigible negligence.”⁴ He did not seem to be overly concerned by the situation. “I smiled to myself while I listened to the words about the disappointment of friends and the broken career. I was living in a charmed atmosphere and their edict only gave me complete freedom.”⁵ His passionate flame for the girl eventually burnt out.

In 1836, Frémont petitioned the Board of Trustees and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree.⁶ In his *Memoirs*, Frémont states only, “A few years afterward the faculty voluntarily conferred upon me the degree of Bachelor and Master of Arts, so taking me back into the fold.”⁷ He does not state that he had petitioned the college. He lets the reader assume that it was the idea of the college to confer the degree upon him. He also gave the degree a more important title by adding the word “Master” to it. This is consistent with the way he chronicled his career. He was not bashful about adding to his own importance.

By the time he received his degree, Frémont had made the acquaintance of influential people and had established advantageous friendships. Among these was the distinguished Joel Roberts Poinsett. Poinsett was one of Charleston’s leading citizens and the former American Minister to Mexico. Poinsett obtained a civilian appointment for Frémont as a teacher of mathematics to midshipmen aboard the USS *Natchez*.

At the time, a United States Naval academy did not exist, so the education of midshipmen had to be conducted in many diverse locations, including aboard ship. His appointment lasted two years, during which time he made the acquaintance of the executive officer, Admiral David Farragut.

When his appointment with the Navy ended, he returned to Charleston. While there, he continued to move about in the better social circles. He became interested in a position working with the United States Topographical Corps to help survey a route for the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad. Once again, Poinsett helped him, and Frémont was appointed a surveyor for the expedition. When the job was completed in 1836, he was unemployed again. By this time the government wanted a survey of the lands in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, which were occupied by the Cherokee Indians. Captain W.S. Williams, who had been Frémont's superior on the previous survey, requested Frémont as an assistant.⁸ According to Frémont, this is where he felt his life's work began. "The occupation of my prime of life was to be among Indians and in waste places. There were to be no more years wasted in tentative efforts to find a way for myself. The work was laid out and it began here with a remarkable continuity of purpose."⁹ During the survey/reconnaissance of the Cherokee country, Frémont performed well. His education, naval experience, and experience as a surveyor gave him some valuable credentials. More importantly his benefactor, Poinsett, had become Secretary of War.¹⁰

Through the influence of Poinsett, President Van Buren appointed Frémont to the rank of second lieutenant in the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers.¹¹ Once again Frémont was the beneficiary of a tremendous favor. The Corps of Topographical Engineers was a relatively new unit of the United States Army. The main duties of the Corps of Engineers were to survey routes for railroads and wagons, and create accurate maps for field commanders. At the time, the Corps had only thirty-six officers, all of them top West Point graduates. Frémont was the only non-West Pointer in the Corps.¹²

Again, good fortune was on Frémont's side. At the time of his appointment, the War Department was interested in a survey of the western territory between the upper Mississippi and upper Missouri rivers, under the command of the French scientist Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, a man of impeccable credentials. As this was a project of the War Department, Secretary Poinsett made the decision to have his young friend Frémont assigned to the expedition.¹³ Frémont, in his *Memoirs*, mentions that he was ordered to accompany Nicollet on the survey as his assistant; he does not make any indication of Poinsett having had any influence upon his selection for the assignment.

This expedition proved to be a tremendous learning experience for the young Frémont. He referred to it as his "Yale College and Harvard." Nicollet took a liking to him and taught him many skills, including map-making and scientific observations of flora and fauna. He became adept at taking accurate celestial measurements for the plotting of map positions. Under Nicollet's tutelage, Frémont became an accomplished survey engineer.¹⁴ Young Frémont was very intelligent with a keen ability to learn and knew that he must please those that could be of help to him socially, politically, and

professionally. His friendship with both Poinsett and Nicollett and the introductions that each provided him ensured that he traveled in the best social circles and continued to cultivate influential and powerful friends. At this stage in his life, he was able to charm and win the admiration of those people. It was not until later that he would be self-assured enough to become confrontational.

In 1839, while in Washington, D. C., he met sixteen-year-old Jessie Benton through her father, United States Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, with whom he had already struck up an acquaintance. Senator Benton was a powerful member of the Senate and a dedicated expansionist. Frémont, also an expansionist, was very impressed with Benton's views. Reflecting upon his meeting with Benton, he wrote in later years, "This interview with Mr. Benton was pregnant with results and decisive of my life."¹⁵ True to form, Frémont became a close friend with the powerful Senator Benton and began paying many social visits to the Benton home. Until their meeting at the Benton home, Jessie attended a boarding school in Georgetown. According to Frémont, he had truly fallen in love. "Her qualities were all womanly, and education had curiously preserved the down of a modesty which was innate...there came a glow into my heart which changed the current and color of daily life and gave beauty to common things."¹⁶

One has to wonder if Jessie would have brought that "glow" into Frémont's heart if her father had not been a powerful man that could be of great help to the young lieutenant. He had had relationships with other women in the past, and he had ended them abruptly, but they were not the daughters of influential people.

Senator and Mrs. Benton were not happy about the 26-year-old soldier's romantic interest in their sixteen-year-old daughter.¹⁷ In fact, it has been said that the senator violently opposed the relationship.¹⁸ After engaging in the frowned-upon courtship, Frémont and Jessie Benton eloped on October 19, 1841. They decided to keep their marriage a secret for the time being. Jessie returned to her parents' house, and Frémont continued to live in his boarding house.

In November, they had decided to tell the senator and his wife about their marriage. Senator Benton was furious and ordered Frémont to leave his house. He told Frémont, "Get out of the house and never cross my door again! Jessie shall stay here." However, Jessie intervened and, holding on to her husband's arm, she let her father know that in no uncertain terms that she would stay by her husband, no matter the consequences. Benton knew that he would most certainly lose his daughter if he did not accept Frémont, so he relented.¹⁹ Although he objected to the marriage, Benton eventually became a promoter for John Frémont's career.²⁰ Frémont had not only cultivated powerful friends; he had acquired a powerful relative.

Frémont could not have found himself in a more advantageous position for embarking upon a career as an explorer. The country had a distinct nationalism that kept many eyes looking westward. Manifest Destiny was absorbed into the public mind set. There were many reasons for this westward push, including political and self-serving special interests. The wealthy wanted to expand and develop railroads and thereby increase their wealth. The people wanted land and the government wanted settlers to

go west to tame and cultivate the unsettled territories. The settlers in the West were also eager to be brought into the Union.

The regional differences between the North and the South played a significant role in the quest for Manifest Destiny. Congress was divided along party lines, but it was also divided along sectional lines. North and South each wanted to expand the country and admit new states in order to gain political control of Congress. The Southerners feared legislative domination by the North and the Northerners wanted to keep slavery out of any newly admitted states. Both of these adversarial groups looked westward as a way of obtaining their goals.

In order for this to be accomplished, the vast areas of the West had to be surveyed and accurate maps made. Accurate surveys were essential for eventual wagon transport, railroads, and military purposes. This was the job of the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. It is difficult to imagine in this time of rapid transportation and communication that the country we now know was virtually a mystery one-hundred and sixty years ago. However, it must be remembered that the task of the Corps of Topographical Engineers was crucial for the understanding of the western region. They were the elite of the Army. Their task could be compared to that of the astronauts of the late twentieth century. It was just as important in their time. In his quest for glory, John C. Frémont entered into this exciting and publicly admired field of endeavor.

In 1842, Congress passed an appropriation bill of thirty-thousand dollars to finance a survey of the Oregon Trail. This would facilitate immigration to the Oregon Territory — at least, that was the story for public consumption. It seems that there might have been other reasons for the survey. “General Harrison, as a western and military man, would most probably have entered heartily into the ultimate motive of the expedition...But the death of the President made different conditions. Mr. Tyler threw the weight of his administration against any measure to encourage and aid the emigration to Oregon...These were altered circumstances...it was necessary to use caution, in order to avoid opposition.”²¹ This is a definite indication of covering up the true reasons for the expedition. In his book, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, William Goetzmann theorizes that President Tyler would object to disruption in Anglo-American relations, such as presented by the Oregon migration. The mission of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, therefore, became one neither sanctioned by the President or clear in its goals relative to national policy. Frémont, a lowly second lieutenant, participated in a conspiratorial deception of his Commander-in-Chief.

Due to failing health, Nicollett could not go on the expedition, so Benton successfully lobbied for his son-in-law to head up the survey party. Frémont left Washington on May 2, 1842, and arrived in St. Louis on May 22 for outfitting, a distance of approximately eight-hundred and thirty-five miles that can be traveled in 13 hours by car today. This twenty-day journey gives an idea of how hard travel was in Frémont’s time. The trip was not even made in unexplored territory. Among those accompanying Frémont on this first expedition were Charles Pruess and Christopher (Kit) Carson.

Preuss was an accomplished cartographer, topographer, and sketch artist. He was born in Germany and never seemed to stop missing his native land. He was a valuable addition to this first of several expeditions on which he accompanied Frémont. However, their relationship was never to be more than a professional one. On the personal level, Preuss did not really think much of Frémont, according to his diary entries. The two men would never be friends.

Frémont met Kit Carson on board the steamship *Rowena*, while heading upstream from St. Louis. Frémont had been inquiring about a Captain Drips whom he was told was an experienced mountaineer for the purpose of engaging him as a guide. Instead of finding Drips, he made the acquaintance of Carson. Carson told Frémont that he would be able to guide him. Frémont told Carson that he would have to check out his qualifications. Carson later wrote, "I presume the reports he received were favorable, for he told me he would engage me, paying me one hundred dollars a month. I accepted the offer."²² Frémont gave an account of this first meeting with Carson in his *Memoirs*. "I was pleased with him and his manner of address at this first meeting. He was a man...with a clear steady blue eye and frank speech and address; quiet and unassuming."²³ This business association would develop into a lifelong friendship for the two men.

Frémont's first expedition finally set off in June of 1842. His official orders were to survey the Oregon Trail as far as South Pass, in present-day Wyoming.²⁴ Immigrants heading for the opportunity of land in the West previously traveled this route, so it was not a tremendously difficult task, which disappointed Frémont. He was aching for adventure and peril. He wanted to be a hero. The South Pass route was also the favored route of the mountain man, Jedediah Smith, for getting to Oregon. The pass, according to all written accounts, was not a treacherous rocky obstacle. They reached South Pass on the eighth of August. To Frémont's disappointment, the summit was between two low hills, fifty or sixty feet high. It seemed no more impressive than Capitol Hill in Washington to the young lieutenant.²⁵

Not only had Frémont's expectations of an exciting expedition fraught with danger at every turn been dashed, his visions of bravely leading his intrepid band of explorers, like a modern day Cortez, over dangerous a mountain pass had been eliminated. Instead of fighting his way across hostile terrain, he had led a very good scientific expedition and produced a fine survey of the territory. They had taken all required measurements and astronomical plots. They meticulously documented the flora, fauna, and meteorological conditions that the expedition encountered. He successfully completed his task and fulfilled his orders, but this was not good enough for Frémont, whose ego was beginning to take center stage.

Frémont did not see this expedition as just another survey. This was his chance to wipe out the stain of illegitimacy and the memories of a childhood that was full of poverty. He was going to earn his rightful place in the upper crust of society. This was his opportunity to become an important and influential figure.

Frémont and his party had learned of Indian danger further along the trail when they reached Fort Laramie. Experienced mountain man Jim Bridger informed Frémont

that the Oglalla band of the Sioux was engaging in hostilities along the Sweetwater River, between Fort Laramie and South Pass. Upon hearing this information, Frémont declared to his men that “those who were disposed to cowardice and anxious to return had but to come forward at once and state their desire.” Only one man stepped forward.²⁶ Frémont ignored warnings by trappers, traders, and some Sioux warriors not to proceed.²⁷ This situation could have given Frémont a reputation as a brave and gallant Indian fighter in the public eye, and he sought that level of adoration. However, the Indians had dispersed and moved on by the time the expedition reached the area of the hostilities. Again, the glory he so desired had eluded Frémont.

With so much disappointment for the young Frémont, he was not about to turn the expedition back at the unimpressive South Pass in compliance with his orders. The expedition pushed on beyond the Continental Divide to the Wind River Mountains. He was determined to find and climb the highest peak in the range.

On August 13, 1842, according to Frémont, he took a small party to ascend the peak that he had determined to be the highest. He believed that they could climb the peak and return to camp before nighttime, but he had miscalculated. His little band spent an uncomfortable night without provisions and did not reach the peak.²⁸ Finally, on August 15, Frémont and his small party, including cartographer Charles Preuss, reached the summit of the peak that had been their goal. Frémont planted, in the manner of past explorers, his country’s colors.²⁹ This peak, which has been known by Frémont Peak or Woodrow Wilson Peak at different times, was not the highest peak in the Rocky Mountains. The act of planting the flag of the United States, however, was so symbolic and registered with the nationalism of the time that it catapulted Frémont into national prominence through the release of his congressional reports to the public. This is exactly what he had hoped to achieve. His reputation and his career began to escalate.

After the ascent was successfully completed and measurements and data collected, the expedition began its return trip. At Fort Laramie, Carson left the expedition and the others traveled the same route that had brought them west.³⁰ Back home, Frémont, with the help of his wife, wrote a report detailing the expedition. It contained vital information for travelers heading west. It detailed water holes, campsites, pasturage, and river crossings. The report was presented to Congress in 1843, and Congress authorized the printing of ten-thousand copies. Frémont had the fame he sought.

The report was widely read and it excited the imagination of the public. The people wanted heroes, and Frémont filled the need. Peoples’ imaginations made the expedition more than it was. His report was read in homes by candlelight to families eager to have adventure brought to them, and his story and his deeds became bigger than real life. This was family entertainment in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In an example of how the public embraced Frémont’s report, Joaquin Miller wrote, “I never was so fascinated. I fancied I could see Frémont’s men, hauling the cannon up the savage battlements of the Rocky Mountains, flags in the air, Frémont at the head, waving his sword, his horse neighing wildly in the mountain wind, with unknown and unnamed empires at every hand. I was no longer a boy...I began to be inflamed with a love for action, adventure, and glory...”³¹ The public had a new hero.

It is not hard to imagine how the masses could be excited about Frémont's report when it is read. This excerpt from his July 1 entry referred to a buffalo hunt: "My horse was a trained hunter, famous in the West under the name of Proveau, and, with his eyes flashing, and the foam flying from his mouth, sprang on after the cow like a tiger. In a few moments he brought me alongside her, and, rising in the stirrups, I fired at a distance of a yard, the ball entering at the termination of the long hair, and passing near the heart. She fell at the report of the gun...."³²

Expedition cartographer Preuss denied that this incident happened. His July 1 journal entry refutes Frémont's claim. "Today several cows were killed, also a bull, which I could examine closely. Frémont joined the chase and claimed he laid one low himself. This is dubious, however, since he did not bring anything, not even the tongue."³³

Although he had performed his task successfully, at least on the surface, this expedition's luster fades upon closer scrutiny. The peak that he had climbed was not the highest peak in the Rocky Mountains, as he had claimed. It was only 13,785 feet, far lower than many other peaks in the Rocky Mountains. He also failed to accurately plot the location of South Pass, the primary objective of the expedition. Although most of his work was accurate, he did not get everything right all the time. The public appetite for adventure over accuracy seemed to be to Frémont's good fortune.³⁴

In 1844, Frémont was selected to head up another expedition to the West. Frémont's expertise as a mapmaker was solidly established, and Congress wanted accurate surveys of the entire Oregon Trail. His orders, therefore, gave him permission to go beyond South Pass and into the Oregon Territory. Congress wanted Frémont to make accurate maps that could be connected to maps previously made by naval explorer Charles Wilkes. Wilkes charted the Northwest's coastal bays and interior in 1841-1842. The hope was that both sets of maps, when put together would form a complete picture of the entire territory from St. Louis to the Pacific.

At this time there were settlers in the Oregon Territory from both the United States and Britain. Both countries looked favorably upon scientific expeditions. A writer for a London newspaper wrote in March 1844, "It is said that Lieutenant Frémont has been appointed to the survey of the Oregon Territory. We are heartily glad of it. He will be sure to do his work well, and if our topographical engineers labor in the same style and spirit, we may reckon on obtaining, through their joint efforts, an accurate knowledge of that country...."³⁵ There seemed to be a spirit of cooperation for the purpose of scientific exploration between the two governments.

In May, the expedition was equipped with all the necessary scientific instruments, livestock, provisions, powder, shot, and weapons. Frémont also managed to get possession of a brass howitzer capable of firing twelve-pound canon balls. "As I expected to be much among Indians who had for many years a known character for audacious bravery and treachery, I applied to Colonel S. W. Kearny, commanding third Military Division, for a howitzer, which he furnished me from the arsenal at St. Louis."³⁶ Again, Frémont displayed his tendency to misinterpret or exceed his orders as he saw fit. This mission was not supposed to be bringing any artillery into

the Oregon Territory. The presence of an artillery piece gave the expedition a definite military appearance rather than a scientific one.

When it was discovered that Frémont had requisitioned and received the howitzer for the expedition, orders were sent out to prevent him from bringing the howitzer along. Through the intercession of his wife, Jessie, he did not receive those orders. According to Frémont, Jessie sent word to him urging him to immediately head to Bent's Fort. He complied with her request because of his confidence in her. He stated that he did not know the reason for her urging until the expedition returned home. An official order from Colonel Abert directed Frémont to return to Washington to explain why he had taken a howitzer along on a scientific expedition.³⁷

If this were truly the case, it gives great insight into the relationship between John and Jessie Frémont. His wife was very involved in his career and did not hesitate to interfere between John and his superiors. If this were not the case, it demonstrates Frémont's growing dismissal of the wishes of his superiors. Either way, the howitzer went along and became an albatross for the men of the expedition. According to his cartographer, Charles Preuss, the cannon had to be pushed and pulled three-thousand miles, and it was fired only at a herd of buffalo.

The expedition traveled already existing trails. Frémont and Preuss accurately mapped these trails, which were of a great help to settlers that came later, but they did not blaze any new trails. The expedition explored and mapped the borders and the terrain of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Frémont and Preuss were the first to calculate the heights of Mount St. Helen, Mount Rainier, and Mount Hood. They confirmed that they were volcanic and witnessed an eruption of Mount St. Helen from a distance of fifty miles. The expedition arrived at Fort Vancouver on November 8, 1884. Their mission was complete.³⁸

Frémont's orders stated that he should return from Fort Vancouver by the same route that he had taken to get there — basically, that he should return east by this most direct route. Characteristically, he reinterpreted his orders and took a different route on the return trip.

In late November, Frémont headed south into California, which was the sovereign territory of Mexico. He still had the artillery piece when he crossed into California. Frémont did not take an easier route south; he went along the Sierra Nevada. This was not the time to be in this mountain range. The mountains were known to be quite dangerous in the winter months.

The expedition entered the mountains in January 1845; Frémont was attempting to cross the High Sierras north of Lake Tahoe. The weather was hostile and the snowdrifts became too high for traveling. The expedition was stranded in the mountains while starvation and exposure began to kill off the animals. When the food ran out, the men started eating the horses and other pack animals that had died. The animals that did not die were too weak to continue and so the men had to haul their own gear. At this point, the howitzer that they had hauled for thousands of miles was finally abandoned much to Frémont's disappointment. Starvation and frostbite took their toll on the men. Their prospects were bleak. On January 26, 1845, Frémont led a

party on snowshoes to the summit of the mountains. After eleven days they found a way out of the mountain range and went back for the rest of the party. At this point Preuss began showing his disappointment and disgust in Frémont by referring to him as “Field Marshal.” He was furious about the ignorance of Frémont’s decision of ordering a winter crossing over the mountains.³⁹

Eventually, the party made it to Sutter’s Fort at the foothills of the Sierras. They were starved and emaciated. It took three weeks for the men to rest and recuperate from their ordeal in the High Sierras. They purchased new animals and supplies for the return trip. The expedition was now furnished with one-hundred and thirty horses and mules, and about thirty head of cattle, five of which were milk cows.⁴⁰ Frémont took the Old Spanish Trail along the Mojave River, which ran through southern Nevada.⁴¹ Frémont returned to Washington in August of 1845; he had further enhanced his national hero status.

Again, Frémont snatched success from the jaws of disaster. The expedition, which took fourteen months, was originally estimated to take only eight months.⁴² Frémont defied orders and took an artillery piece on the expedition, which could have caused an international incident in California. Frémont’s men came close to dying because of his decision to cross the High Sierras in the winter. The extended length of time and the tremendous loss of animals increased the cost of the expedition. For these reasons, he should have been denounced, but he was not.

The nationalistic fervor of the country saved him from any censure. He was hailed as a hero for covering twenty-five hundred miles in fourteen months, and his expedition was described as the most important since that of Lewis and Clark. Congress printed ten-thousand copies of his second report. His fame had increased and he was promoted to Brevet Captain. The timing of his report could not have been more fortuitous. The President, James K. Polk, was an enthusiastic expansionist who coveted Texas, California, and the Oregon Territory.⁴³

On February 12, 1845, Frémont received orders to plan another expedition, to explore the Red River and the headwaters of the Arkansas River. Again, Frémont uniquely interpreted his orders.⁴⁴ According to Frémont, his orders gave him a tremendous amount of latitude. “Concurrently with the report upon the second expedition the plans and scope of a third one should be directed to that section of the Rocky Mountains which gives rise to the Arkansas River, the Rio Grande del Norte of the Gulf of Mexico, and the Rio Colorado of the Gulf of California; to complete the examination of the Great Salt Lake and its interesting region; and to extend the survey west and southwest to the examination of the great ranges of the Cascade Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, so as to ascertain lines of communication through the mountains to the ocean in that latitude.”⁴⁵ This was a very liberal interpretation of the mission’s purpose. But given the expansionist nature of President Polk, Frémont may have been doing exactly what the President wanted.

The men that joined this expedition were all accomplished marksmen, a change from his first two expeditions. Charles Preuss did not accompany Frémont on this expedition either. Why did Preuss, an excellent cartographer, not join this expedition?

The presence of so many marksmen indicates that the expedition was not truly a “scientific” one after all.

In the summer, the expedition headed west and conducted its surveys of the headwaters of the Arkansas, but then continued on to the Sierra Nevada. Frémont and his party crossed the mountains safely and were in the vicinity of San Jose, California, in February of 1846. The expedition continued into Mexican territory. When Frémont learned that there were political troubles in California, he withdrew north toward the California-Oregon border. Here he received word from Marine Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie that a state of war existed between the United States and Mexico.

Settlers who were not original Californios caused the political unrest; they were transplants from the United States and wanted to break away from Mexico. The outsiders were welcomed at first, but they did not want to assimilate into the established California culture. “After 1830 the better sort of society began to slacken as people (who were not all good) from outside came...Gambling, prostitution, vagrancy, and drunkenness became very common.”⁴⁶ The newcomers wanted to impose their own values and their belief in their superiority on the Californios.

Upon receiving word that a state of war existed, Frémont marched back into California. It seems quite plausible that Frémont was not very surprised about the war. His men joined forces with California rebels that called themselves the Bear Flag Republic and under Frémont’s command they defeated General Castro and captured Sonoma and Monterey. The advance of General Stephen Watts Kearny’s troops from the north and the amphibious landing of Commodore Richard Stockton’s naval forces in the west achieved the final victory in California. The American forces came together at Los Angeles.

Commodore Stockton appointed Frémont governor of California Territory. Unfortunately for Frémont, a power struggle between Stockton and Kearny was in progress. Each thought themselves the senior officer in charge. Kearny ordered Frémont to vacate the post of territorial governor because Kearny had his own man that he wanted for the post. Of course, this did not fit into Frémont’s plans, and he refused to comply with the order. It was not the first time that he did not obey an order from a superior. Nothing had happened to him before, so he probably did not worry about the consequences. Frémont’s reservoir of luck was running low. Kearny was the more influential of the two officers and had more pull than Stockton. Frémont was charged with “mutiny, disobedience and conduct pre-judicial to military discipline.” To Frémont’s dismay he was found guilty. The President showed him leniency due to his contributions in the Mexican War and his status as a national hero, but Frémont resigned from the Army in protest of his perceived mistreatment.⁴⁷

Frémont was determined to vindicate himself and, through private funding, put a fourth expedition together in order to find a railroad route from St. Louis to California. His father-in-law, Senator Benton, was again instrumental in helping him put the venture together. Through the Senator’s influence and Frémont’s celebrity status, funds for the expedition were accumulated. It must have been Frémont’s belief in his own publicity that made him decide to lead this expedition under extreme conditions. This

may be a case of Frémont being a legend in his own mind. For reasons known only to John Frémont, he decided to commence the expedition in the winter. He failed to learn from the winter experience of his second expedition.

On November 16, 1848, Frémont reached Bent's Fort. Upon hearing of his intention to enter the mountains, the guides and mountain men in the area advised him that it would be a mistake to pursue the expedition in the winter months. Frémont finally convinced Bill Williams to guide the party. Williams suggested the party head south from Pueblo, but Frémont wanted to travel in a straight line westward through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and into the San Juans.

The expedition wound up stranded in snow much too deep to maneuver in, the temperatures plunged below zero degrees Fahrenheit, and their food ran out. Their horses died of starvation and exposure, and the men suffered from frostbite. The situation was desperate, and on December 26, Bill Williams with three men headed south to New Mexico to find help. On January 11, Frémont and four others went for help. After a week, Frémont came upon Bill Williams and his men. They were in terrible condition. They had survived by eating their shoes, gun cases, and pack straps.⁴⁸ Together the two parties made it to Taos and were able to secure help. Ten of Frémont's men perished.

Mountain man "Uncle Dick" Wooten participated in the rescue effort. He spoke with Frémont at Kit Carson's house in Taos and concluded that the disaster was to be blamed in its entirety on Frémont. "Williams knew every pass into the mountains, and almost every foot of the Rocky Mountain country, and if General Frémont had taken his advice, he would never have run into the death trap. General Frémont had picked out the route, which he wanted to travel in crossing the mountains. Williams told him it was impracticable to cross the range in the winter season by the route, which he had selected, but the great 'Pathfinder' listened to an inexperienced member of the party, who volunteered to pilot him over."⁴⁹ This statement was probably made some years later, since Frémont was not made a general until the 1860s when the American Civil War broke out.

The expedition was a disaster. Frémont laid much of the blame on Williams. Williams was unable to defend his reputation. Williams, along with a small group, went back into the mountains to retrieve some abandoned baggage. According to witnesses, Ute Indians killed him on March 21, 1849.⁵⁰ He was never able to challenge Frémont's assertions that he was incompetent. The decision to go ahead with the expedition was Frémont's as commander of the expedition and not the decision of Bill Williams.⁵¹

What can be said of this man? Was he brave? Or was he reckless and ignorant of the consequences of his actions? Did he care about the benefits his missions would bring to his country or did he only consider personal fortune and fame? He disregarded his superiors and committed acts contrary to his orders as a soldier, some of which could have warranted his execution. There are two sides of Frémont, and it is up to the individual to decide which was the real Frémont, or whether he was a combination of both.



UNEXPECTED GUESTS:
GHOST STORIES
OF THE STANLEY HOTEL

by Clint Cowperthwaite

*“Sometimes I feel like
they’re all still here,
like they never really
checked out, and I
can almost see them.”*

—Jack Torrance in
Stephen King’s
The Shining

“E very employee up here can give you half-a-dozen things that have happened to them,” states Billy Ward, concierge and guide of the Ghost Tours for the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado, “Things happen up here all the time.”¹ Interactions with apparent ghosts are commonplace with the staff of the Stanley Hotel. Guests, who on a consistent basis report unexplained incidents, find it less routine. “It was the most frightening experience of my life,” admitted one-time guest Debby Jazwinski in an interview by Anna Basquez for the *Fort Collins Coloradoan*, “And I haven’t been back since.”² Whether a visitor to the Stanley is a skeptic or a true believer in the paranormal and ghostly apparitions, one must concede that the stately building appears the perfect setting for a good ghost story.

Above: Stanley Hotel Postcard, Tom Noel Collection

Clint Cowperthwaite is a Master’s candidate who will be graduating in May 2006. He plans to pursue a PhD in History for the purpose of becoming a professor and author. Professor Tom Noel’s Spring 2005 Colorado History Seminar exposed him to a variety of fascinating topics in the state’s past. Cowperthwaite decided to research the Stanley Hotel because of its beauty and rich history, and because it gave him the opportunity to visit Estes Park several times and walk around the stately hotel, hoping to catch a glimpse of its ghostly apparitions.

The hotel, which celebrates its one-hundredth birthday in 2009, provides Estes Park with a colorful history, complete with famous characters. “The historic Stanley Hotel has hosted international celebrities since its opening,” according to a 1998 flier produced by the current hotel owners, Grand Heritage Hotels Inc, “President Teddy Roosevelt, the ‘unsinkable’ Molly Brown . . . and of course, Freelan Oscar (F.O.) Stanley.”³ Foreign dignitaries have also been among the guests of the Stanley. In 1994, “an impressive luncheon was held for the Emperor and Empress of Japan and their entourage.”⁴

While the list of registered guests is remarkable, there are also unexpected visitors who reside in the hotel. It is their presence that makes the Stanley the source of tales of the paranormal. Although made particularly famous by the author Stephen King in the 1970s, the Stanley, with its ghostly guests, was prominent long before King arrived and contributed to its contemporary fame. The hotel still hosts more than a hundred weddings and various business conferences each year, and provides the backdrop for several films made in the past ten years. On many of these occasions, guests and hotel staff must cope with the unanticipated, otherworldly guests.

The story begins with the hotel’s creator, F.O. Stanley. “On the morning of June 30, 1903,” writes biographer James Pickering, “Freelan Oscar Stanley left Welch’s ranch hotel on the north fork of the St. Vrain River above Lyons. Following meager directions, he drove his small steam automobile up the rough winding wagon road toward the mountain resort of Estes Park.”⁵ Like so many people before him, F.O. Stanley looked to Colorado for its fabled ability to cure the infirm. According to Pickering, “When Stanley came to Estes Park in 1903, he was a very sick man for whom the outlook was grim . . . his family physician in Massachusetts found evidence of recurring tuberculosis, Stanley had been ordered to start at once for a different climate.”⁶ Upon arrival, F.O. Stanley immediately realized the investment potential in Estes Park as a place for a palatial resort.

Born in Maine and later moving to Massachusetts, F.O. Stanley made his fortune from an improvement in the photographic process that his twin brother, Francis Edgar (F.E.) Stanley, invented. The creation was a dry plate with which to take photographs more efficiently and easily. Before the dry plate invention, the most prevalent technique in photography was the cumbersome wet plate process. “Wet plate photography required that exposure and development be accomplished with a glass plate and then photosensitized, just prior to exposure, by bathing it in a solution of silver nitrate.”⁷ Patented by the brothers in 1886, the Stanleys’ new process changed casual and professional photography. Allowing for mass production at cheaper prices, the Stanley Dry Plate Company became a booming business for the brothers, grossing one million dollars in sales by the turn of the twentieth century.⁸ With the failing health of F.O. in mind, the twins sold the patent to George Eastman of Kodak for \$800,000 dollars in 1904. Though the brothers made their fortune in photography, their real interest was in the horseless carriage.

F.E. began tinkering with a design for a steam-powered carriage in 1897. F.E., in a letter to his wife, Augusta, wrote, “It [the steam carriage] will not be afraid of a steam roller and will have no bad habits. It will stand without hitching, and perhaps

that is all it will do.”⁹ F.E.’s work resulted in the Stanley Steamer, an automobile powered by a steam engine. F.O. quickly joined his brother in this business venture, which became the Stanley Motor Carriage Company in Watertown, Massachusetts. The business venture slowed after F.O.’s diagnosis of tuberculosis. His migration to Estes Park restored his health and rejuvenated his entrepreneurial spirit.

When F.O. Stanley arrived in Colorado in 1903, he was fifty-three years old and weighed 118 pounds, with a life expectancy measured in months rather than years. Perhaps Colorado — more specifically, Estes Park — does hold a mystical restorative power. F.O. Stanley enjoyed living there so much that he survived quite robustly another thirty-five years. “Once Stanley settled into life in Estes, his health began to improve,” states Stanley Hotel historian Ron Lasky, “He gained weight—29 pounds that first summer—and his cough was relieved.”¹⁰ Stanley spent virtually every summer after 1903 in Estes Park, where he and his wife Flora enjoyed the mountain vistas of Estes and the clean air. “For a summer resort,” F.O. Stanley wrote in a letter in 1928, “nature has endowed Estes Park in a wonderful manner. The grandeur of its scenery . . . [is such that] Estes Park is not a place to ‘go through,’ but a place in which to spend the summer in perfect comfort.”¹¹ Flora, though enjoying the scenery and the health benefits the area afforded her husband, was not the type of woman to “rough it” in the West. No doubt, her consternation with the lack of Eastern amenities would contribute to F.O.’s interest in building an elegant resort hotel as much as the investment opportunity.

F.O. purchased 8.4 acres in the summer of 1904 and built a house equal to the lifestyle to which Flora was accustomed. According to Stanley Hotel historian Ron Lasky, “Their Estes Park home was designed like their Newton home [in Massachusetts] in the Georgian architectural style. It was completed in 1904 . . . at a cost of approximately \$7,000.”¹² The house survives today, in fact, on the same road the hotel stands on. Many believe that, as early as 1904, F.O. had ideas for building the structure that became the elegant Stanley Hotel.

While the Stanleys were a welcome addition to the Park, they were certainly not its first wealthy residents. A crucial character in the story of the hotel, as well as one of its current ghostly residents, was in Estes Park well before the twentieth century, and was the area’s largest landowner. Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, the fourth Earl of Dunraven, of Irish nobility, came to Estes Park in 1872. Known simply as Lord Dunraven, he owned forty-thousand acres of land in Ireland and came to America in search of adventure and investment opportunities.¹³ Dunraven arrived in Estes Park in 1873 and immediately liked what he saw. Speculation continues even today about Lord Dunraven’s intentions in Estes Park. Stanley Museum director Susan Davis wrote in 1999, “Over time he bought more than 6,000 acres, mostly along waterways . . . [Many believed Dunraven] bought Estes Park as a private hunting preserve for himself and his English and Irish compatriots.”¹⁴ The feasibility of this is not clear. It seems unlikely, however, because it would be virtually impossible to guard the perimeters of 6,000 acres effectively, and he had a public relations problem with the residents already living there.

Local resentment seemed to stem from the fact that a European held so much land in one of the most scenic areas of Colorado. "As an investment the Estes Park ranch was not a success," wrote a journalist from the *Estes Park Trail* in 1922, because "much popular feeling was aroused at the notion of a British Lord turning one of the fairest spots of Colorado into a private hunting preserve."¹⁵ More than likely, Dunraven intended to capitalize on the potential for tourism the Park could enjoy. As historian James Pickering stated, "it seems more likely that what primarily motivated Dunraven was what motivated so many of his English contemporaries: the prospect of investing in an enterprise that would pay."¹⁶ To this day, the name Dunraven is closely associated with blatant land grabbing. Lord Dunraven did contribute to the development of the Park, through local associates, by building a hotel in 1877.

Dunraven's development, the Estes Park Hotel, also known as the English Hotel, was "40-by-100 foot, three stories . . . with rooms for cards, billiards, and lounging."¹⁷ Attendance at the hotel was meager, largely comprised of Dunraven's close friends. Perhaps in an effort to promote tourism to the Park, a correspondent from the *Rocky Mountain News* stated, "The Earl of Dunraven and Mr. Whyte [one of Dunraven's local associates] are the principal owners of the whole estate, and the public are deeply indebted to them for the facilities [it now] affords to the Park."¹⁸ The Stanley, in sheer size and amenities, eclipsed the English Hotel thirty years later, but at the time, the English Hotel was the most posh establishment in the Park. Dunraven enjoyed the hotel and the freedom it provided him. "Dunraven's wife never accompanied him to Estes Park," wrote a journalist of the Earl, but "he had no trouble finding beautiful women to share his appreciation of nature and other things."¹⁹ Dunraven still holds a considerable reputation as a lover of alcohol and women. By the 1880s, perhaps because of the rumors of his desire to control Estes Park or because of his advancing years, Dunraven left Colorado permanently for Ireland. The F.O. Stanley-Lord Dunraven connection stemmed from the massive acreage the Earl enjoyed.

Stanley Hotel historian Ron Lasky wrote, "around 1905 Burton D. Sanborn began negotiations for purchase of Dunraven's property. He was joined by F.O. Stanley who had similar interests. In 1908 . . . Stanley was well into his plans for his hotel complex."²⁰ F.O. eventually obtained about 1,400 acres, upon which he built the grand Stanley Hotel. Interestingly, Stanley began construction of the hotel in 1907, at least eight months before he owned the land.²¹ During construction, F.O. Stanley played a much more active role than merely as the financier. Stanley was a talented amateur architect with vision and affection for the Georgian Colonial Revival design.

He incorporated the talents of Denver architect T. Robert Wieger, but the initial design was Stanley's. Colorado historian Tom Noel, in his book *Buildings of Colorado*, described the main hotel this way, "From a rough-cut sandstone foundation the main hotel rises to fourth-floor dormers and double octagonal cupola. The symmetrical plan includes three wings, intersecting in an H pattern, with the side wings treated as bays."²² It was the first hotel in Estes Park with electricity and included a manor house (a smaller, winterized replica of the main hotel, finished in 1910), a casino, and a carriage house. The casino, now called Stanley Concert Hall, was not a place

of gaming. As historian Ron Lasky explained, “The name Casino was in common usage at that period of time and meant ‘a place of entertainment.’ F.O. Stanley never would have allowed gambling in his hotel.”²³ The main hotel and Stanley Concert Hall experience the most paranormal activity today.

At the hotel’s opening, a room cost five to eight dollars a night, while most hotels in the Park in 1909 charged two to three dollars. “In its brochure in 1909, the Stanley admitted quite candidly that ‘in the general plan of things Earthly we must count on expense.’”²⁴ Featured in a 1910 publication of *Hotel Monthly*, the hotel received rave reviews. The article paid particular attention to the way F.O. Stanley produced the electricity for the buildings. “Mr. Stanley conceived the idea of utilizing water power to generate electrical energy for all purposes of lighting, heating, and power for his hotel.”²⁵ The electricity F.O. generated not only powered the hotel, but the entire town of Estes Park as well. The article continued, “the white employees are housed in a building away from the hotel and their quarters are above the average in the matter of conveniences.”²⁶ Known as the Dormitory, the employee housing is still in use today. There is a tunnel from the Dormitory to the garden level of the hotel and, according to former Ghost Tour guide Diego Reyes, “People have reported hearing footsteps coming from the old service tunnel . . . which has been out of use for years.”²⁷

When time for the grand opening arrived, F.O. knew how to ensure a full house. The first guests to the Stanley were a state convention of pharmacists. “A pleasant surprise awaits them,” stated an article in the *Rocky Mountain News* in 1909, “for the new Hotel Stanley, instead of being in the ordinary class of mountain hostelries, is simply palatial, equaling anything of its size in the world.”²⁸ Since 1909, the Stanley has been an extravagant establishment, with influential and wealthy guests. During the last twenty-five years or so it has also been the location for extensive ghostly activity.

Current and past employees of the Stanley are quite accustomed to these unexpected and unusual guests. “Usually they’re just small things,” states the current Ghost Tour guide, Billy Ward, speaking about the ghostly interactions. “Like you’ll feel someone pulling on the back of your coat; that happens quite frequently.”²⁹ Ranging from the small moments of hair-on-the-back-of-the-neck incidents to extreme otherworldly encounters, employees and guests alike have stories to tell. One of the most common stories involves the creator and owner of the hotel, F.O. Stanley himself.

Billy Ward tells of the ghostly F.O. Stanley still managing his hotel. “On occasion you can catch a reflection out of the corner of your eye in the window. It will be a reflection of what is thought to be F.O. Stanley. He likes keeping an eye on things.”³⁰ One theory as to why F.O. remains in the hotel is his reputation as a taskmaster who demanded excellence. “Stanley,” stated Pickering, “demanded exactness from others.”³¹ Carissa Delisi, an employee who worked the registration desk, told of her encounter with the Stanley ghost. “As I was working at the front desk, I had the feeling someone was watching me. I looked up and no one was there. I returned to my work, had the feeling again, raised my head to look and no one was there. The third time, I raised just my eyes, and did not move my head, and there before me was F.O. Stanley.”³² She goes on to say there was no feeling of terror or danger, and when she returned to

her work, the ghost disappeared. Billy Ward explains the watchful eye of F.O. Stanley as the ghost taking over the former duties of the man. “It is believed he’s making sure we are all doing what we’re supposed to be doing.”³³

The bar of the hotel, the Dunraven Grille, is a very busy spot for paranormal spirits. The *Fort Collins Coloradoan* reported, “The bartenders tell stories of the black-jacketed spirit of F.O. Stanley . . . suddenly passing by the bar or heading toward the kitchen area, then vanishing.”³⁴ The ghosts of the bar prove to be a considerable inconvenience for some employees. The *Coloradoan* summarized one bartender’s story.

*[The bartender] was finishing his nightly duties . . . he neatly arranged the barstools on top of the bar for the night . . . grabbed his coat and headed out for the night through the restaurant. To his shock, when he opened the doors to the restaurant, he saw all of the stools that he had so meticulously arranged upon the bar, tossed across the floor—as if the hired help from years past wasn’t quite pleased with the way the new bartender was doing things.*³⁵

Taskmaster and former owner F.O. Stanley is not the only apparition observed at the front desk. A current employee, a woman who asked not to be identified, was working the night audit at the desk and had a late night visit, around 3 A.M. “A woman came down the stairs wearing a night cap, white night gown. She came to the front desk and said, ‘Pantaloons are inappropriate attire for a young lady.’” The term the apparition used, “pantaloons,” is relatively unknown in this day and age as a description for women’s slacks. She continued, “The woman asked for a cup of tea, and when I came around the front desk the woman was walking up the stairs, I followed her up to the second floor landing and the woman disappeared.”³⁶

Not to be outdone by her husband’s spirit, Flora Stanley is also active. One of the most famous ghost stories of the hotel involves Flora and the Steinway grand piano that F.O. purchased for her to commemorate the opening of the hotel. According to Stanley Hotel historian Ron Lasky, “The beautifully carved Steinway . . . [was] shipped by train to Lyons and then brought up to Estes Park by ox cart . . . [and] was personally played and tuned by John Philip Sousa.”³⁷ Owner of the Stanley Hotel from 1982 until 1995, Frank Normali bought the hotel when it was in severe financial and physical disrepair.³⁸ Normali sold many of the pieces of furniture in the lounge and music room in the mid-1980s, including Flora’s beloved piano. Purchased at auction in the early 1990s, the piano was returned to the hotel where it resides in the music room, on the east side of the building. “When it came back,” comments Ward, “is when it started playing by itself. It is thought that Flora is so happy to have her piano back that she now plays it.”³⁹ Late at night, the person working the front desk often hears music come from the music room. Stanley Hotel Public Relations Director Patricia Maher told *The Estes Park Trail-Gazette* the story of one employee who experienced just that.

One logical down-to-earth employee was sitting at the front desk one night when she heard the old piano playing in the music room. The woman was worried about the grand Steinway . . . when she approached the doorway of the room she looked and saw that the keys were moving, but there was no one there. The desk clerk stepped into the room and the second her foot crossed the threshold, the music stopped.⁴⁰

The previously mentioned night auditor testified to the fact that she heard the piano playing on its own very often, always late at night, and, as soon as she crossed the threshold of the room, the music would stop. Evidence, if it can be believed, is available. Billy Ward states, "One of the pictures the museum has is of a ghostly figure sitting on the piano bench, it always bothers me when I see it."⁴¹ The main floor, where these incidents happened, is just one area where sightings have occurred. The fourth floor is also very active, including frequent appearances by Lord Dunraven.

The fourth floor of the hotel is an oddity. The second and third floors have an old-fashioned ambiance, and one feels as if they are in a comfortable, rustic hotel. On the other hand, the fourth floor, has cramped, constricted hallways that almost seem to close in. Even in the sunlight, the passages appear dark. In 1909, according to the *Estes Park Trail-Gazette*, at the hotel's opening, "servants were typically confined to the fourth floor, only venturing to the main rooms to assist their employers . . . Many of today's visitors to the Stanley Hotel claim to have heard, felt or seen evidence of these servants returning from beyond."⁴² Billy Ward expands on this. "The fourth floor, when the hotel was built, was an attic. There were no rooms up there, and it was just one open room. When families would come up here with their kids, they would bring nannies with them. The nannies stayed on the fourth floor, slept on cots with little dividers."⁴³

Former Ghost Tour guide Diego Reyes, in an interview with the *Estes Park Trail-Gazette*, stated, "While we think that many of the spirits are guests returning to relive some of the good times they had here, some of the best stories come from areas where the servants stayed."⁴⁴ Nora Matter, housekeeping manager, relates complaints by her housekeepers in cleaning the fourth floor. "Housekeepers will plug in vacuums, start to clean and before they have stretched the power cord, found it has been mysteriously unplugged."⁴⁵ Because of incidents like this, according to Billy Ward, "housekeepers will not clean a room on the fourth floor by themselves; they go in pairs. We can't start [newly hired] maids on the fourth floor, because after a few weeks they're out of here."⁴⁶ There are specific rooms on the fourth floor that a guest can request, rooms that provide a better than average chance for having a close encounter of the paranormal kind.

"Rumors of rooms on the fourth floor seemingly cleaning themselves abound," wrote Melissa Tuck in the *Estes Park Trail-Gazette*, "and some patrons have claimed that windows and doors have opened and closed without human intervention."⁴⁷ One active room on the fourth floor is Room 405. Housekeepers report intense activity in the room. "As soon as they walk through the doorway of 405," says Billy Ward, "they'll feel someone brushing up against them."⁴⁸

If 405 is a good room to “feel” a ghostly presence, the bridal suite, Room 401, is the best to “see” one. “The worst room,” states Ward, “is Room 401 . . . we had a newlywed couple in there. The first night the woman took off her ring, set it on the sink . . . the next morning the ring is gone. The engineers went up there and tore the sink apart, but no ring.” While this seems easily explained, that the ring was simply lost down the drain, the recovery of the ring is much spookier. “On the fourth morning they were lying in bed. They look up, and there was a man standing at the foot of the bed, holding her ring. He set the ring on the dresser and disappeared. She got her ring back, but it wasn’t from one of our guys.”⁴⁹

Room 401 has another story of a disappearing ring. This entailed a man’s ring and happened only about a year ago. The guest set the ring on the nightstand as the couple went to bed. The *Fort Collins Coloradoan* related the rest of the story this way,

*The bride awoke and found a man standing in the corner of the room watching the couple. The apparition walked slowly toward the bed, approaching her new husband’s side. It picked up the ring from the nightstand and, with an evil grin, tossed it down the bathroom sink and disappeared. Frantic, the woman called the manager. Hotel staff was able to salvage the ring. The manager offered to buy the couple a drink at the Dunraven Grille. On leaving the bar, the new bride fell to her knees crying as soon as she set her eyes on the large portrait of the late Lord Dunraven hanging in the lobby. That, she said, was the man who had visited Room 401.*⁵⁰

Ward confirms the story and includes it in the Ghost Tour. He was forced to move six couples out of Room 401 just last summer, “because they saw something, saw a man standing at the end of the bed or in the closet.”⁵¹ Guests also report seeing Lord Dunraven in Room 407, again standing in the corner of the room. Dunraven’s activities annoyed one guest staying in Room 407. “The lights in the room were turning on and off, until the guest finally asked to be moved. He’s been seen peering out of the window up there. Guests will pull around back and come to the Front Desk and say there is some man leering at them from the room.”⁵² Ward speculates that the womanizing Lord Dunraven enjoys the fourth floor because of the young married couples that stay there, hoping to return to his adulterous ways.

Room 418 is also very active. It is not clear if it is the work of Lord Dunraven or a former servant, but the room is a source of constant activity. Ward states, “A manager a couple of years ago was up there checking the rooms, making sure they were ready for business. [In 418] he looked at the bed, and it looked like there were indentations in it, like someone was sitting on it. He tried to smooth out the wrinkles and they would not even out.”⁵³ This manager convinced himself the maid service had made the bed incorrectly and he would have it remade. He changed his mind, of course, when he went to leave the room to continue his inspection. “He closed the door, locked it and took a couple steps and the door opened back up. He went back, closed the door and locked it, and it opened again. He told himself *someone wants this door open and*

that's good enough for me. He walked down the hall, to the top of the stairs, and the door slammed shut. He didn't like coming back up after that.”⁵⁴

One couple's story, reprinted in the *Estes Park Trail-Gazette*, tells of them “[checking out] without having spent one full night, after they repeatedly heard someone rummaging through their personal belongings in the bathroom of a fourth floor room.”⁵⁵ With the constant activity on the fourth floor and the lobby area, one may believe those are the best paranormal spots the hotel has to offer. That is until they remember Stephen King's novel, *The Shining*.

Room 217 is by far the most famous room in the entire hotel. According to the 1910 publication of *Hotel Monthly*, Room 217 was the largest room on the second floor. It measures 25' x 17', has two large windows that look out in two directions, including a view of Long's Peak, and a private balcony. The room has housed the hotel's most prestigious guests including dignitaries like Teddy Roosevelt and the Emperor of Japan, as well as well-to-do visitors who stay at the Stanley. Stephen King chose that room to include in *The Shining*. The reason may lie in events that happened before the author's visit in 1973. In 1911, two years after the hotel opened, there was a horrible accident in 217.

As previously stated, the hotel was the first electrified establishment in the Park at its opening. However, the electricity was not always reliable. The electric lights in each room included an acetylene lamp on each fixture to light rooms in the event of a loss of electricity. One evening in June 1911, the power went out. A maid, Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson, began lighting the acetylene lamps, and when she reached Room 217 disaster struck. There was a leak in the lamp in the room and when Mrs. Wilson exposed a flame, the room exploded. The headline in the *Durango Wage Earner* stated, “Famous Stanley Hotel, in Estes Park, Wrecked by Explosion.”

*The beautiful Stanley Hotel, erected at a cost of \$500,000, was partially wrecked last evening by a terrific explosion of acetylene gas. The explosion was in the west wing of the structure, which is now a mass of ruins. The gas exploded in a room on the second floor, wrecking part of the hotel and debris fell into the dining room on the main floor. A few moments later the walls collapsed. Several employees of the hotel were injured, one seriously. Elizabeth Wilson, a chambermaid, was blown from the second floor to the dining room. Both her ankles were broken and she suffered other injuries.*⁵⁶

The explosion blew a hole in the floor of 217 and 219, and Mrs. Wilson fell through, which probably saved her life. Although badly burned, she survived. Many believe she is still in the room today because of the loyalty she felt to F.O. Stanley after the accident. “Bound by guilt and a sense of responsibility,” wrote Melissa Tuck in a 2003 article, “F.O. Stanley took care of the young maid for the rest of his life.”⁵⁷ Her continued service to guests after her death is apparent to some visitors staying in Room 217. “Guests have checked into 217,” tells Ward, “They'll walk into the bathroom and the lights will turn on for them. Guests will check in, put their luggage in the room,

go out horseback riding, come back, and their clothes will be put in the dresser and their bags stacked in the closet.”⁵⁸ Mrs. Wilson does not just help the guests enjoy their stay at the hotel. During the refurbishment of the room a few months ago, some engineers shared this story with Ward. “They’d be carrying things up to 217, have their arms full with carpets or whatever, go around the corner heading to 217, and the door would open for them, so they didn’t have to put their load down.”⁵⁹ These events are credited to Mrs. Wilson, who remains as helpful in death as she was in life. Many current employees strongly believe that author Stephen King had a run in with Mrs. Wilson in the room. King’s experience in the Stanley, which he has never fully divulged, became the inspiration for the best selling book, *The Shining*.

While living in Boulder in 1973, Stephen King and his wife Tabitha decided to take a drive one weekend. They went to Estes Park and tried to go over Trail Ridge Road, only to notice a sign that stated the roads might not be open after October because of snow. They turned around and headed back toward Estes Park. Instead of going home to Boulder, King noticed the Stanley perched upon the mountainside. In 1973, the hotel was run down and looked all but deserted. “We decided to stay for the night,” King told the *Longmont Times-Call*, “and they were happy to have us because we had cash. Old hotels are wonderful. I came here with the idea for this book that involved an old hotel, and this was perfect.”⁶⁰ His one night stay turned into five months, on and off, visiting the hotel and absorbing its inspiration. On the first night, as he later related to Jan Tuckwood of the *Chicago Tribune*, “the wind was high and it was blowing around, and one of the shutters had come unanchored, and it was clapping against the side of the building.”⁶¹ It should be noted, according to hotel historian Ron Lasky, that “there are no shutters on the hotel.”⁶² It is also important to remember there was no central heating in 1973, so the atmosphere must have been truly inspiring. King told an interviewer that a small orchestra played in the MacGregor Ballroom during his visit and the sound of music reverberated throughout the hotel. Ward expands on the author’s visit. “King stayed in 217. He and his wife were all but alone in the building. He would have been pretty free to roam around.”⁶³

Evidence of some of the things King may have experienced in the Stanley appear in *The Shining*’s pages. The storyline is that of Jack Torrance, along with his wife Wendy and their clairvoyant son Danny, who take care of the snowbound Overlook Hotel (King’s fictional name for the Stanley), which proves to be haunted with ghostly mayhem. King wrote, “From the ballroom, she [Wendy Torrance] had heard voices, and music, and laughter . . . and eerily, other sounds would be there, seemingly to slip into place—a dance band, people clapping . . .”⁶⁴ One wonders if King did not get the idea for the late-night ghoulish party from a run-in with ghosts in the MacGregor Ballroom. Melissa Tuck, in the *Estes Park Trail-Gazette* wrote, “Hotel employees receive complaints about loud all-night parties . . . employees must explain to the guest that the restaurant has been closed and empty for hours.”⁶⁵

Or consider the passage in which Danny is playing in the hotel playground and sees, in one of the playground structures, “something there. Something moving. A hand. The waving hand of some desperately unhappy child, waving hand, pleading

hand, drowning hand. [it seemed to beckon,] ‘save me. If you can’t save me at least come play with me . . . Forever. And Forever. And Forever.’”⁶⁶ The hands, one can speculate, sound a lot like a story told by former Ghost Tour guide Ellen DeLeone twenty-five years after King wrote his book. A woman and her child stayed in Room 215, and the woman believed she heard noises in the hall. She opened the door to check the hall and, “She heard her little girl scream . . . the little girl told her she’d seen two hands underneath the sink [beckoning] her.”⁶⁷ While this could be the overactive imagination of a mother and child, it could also be evidence of what King might have witnessed. Though he has never confirmed it, Billy Ward believes King experienced Mrs. Wilson’s help, and possibly, the ghost children who roam the halls.

People hear the ghost children of the Stanley throughout the building. The most common reports from guests and employees are of a boy and a girl. Ward describes them. “The little boy wears a tan cap, one of those flat caps, and knickers with wool socks. He’s usually seen with a little blonde girl. She’s wearing a blue dress, with a white apron front, kind of an Alice-in-Wonderland look. They’ve been seen on the fourth floor by guests and employees.”⁶⁸ The kids are very active, often heard running around the halls and playing the way children do. “They’ll be playing jacks, or playing ball. I’d get calls during the night audit, around 4 A.M., about once every two weeks from people down on the third floor asking me to quiet the kids running up and down the hall. There are no kids running around at four in the morning, I know because I’ve checked.”⁶⁹ Other guests have attested to hearing the children as well. Debby Jazwinski, quoted in an interview in the *Fort Collins Coloradoan*, states, “I could hear kids running up and down the hall, I opened the door and there was no one there, but the noise came into my room.”⁷⁰

Because of King and his book, Room 217 is one of the most famous rooms in any hotel in the country. There is a lighter side to the room as well. Ward explains,

*We’ve got an older couple that comes up from Fort Collins, about once every two months, and they always stay in Room 217. Well, they know sometime during the night people will come down the hallway to look at 217. They wait for it to happen, the older gentleman will creak open the door really slowly, and this little old lady will jump out, and everyone will go running down the hall. It’s hilarious.*⁷¹

Is Stephen King telling more in *The Shining* than he lets on? The affect the success of his book has had on the Stanley is amazing. The key to Room 217 is engraved with “X17,” because every key with “217” on it is never returned. “On summer weekends, at least fifty tourists a day ask to see this room [217].”⁷²

Jim Carrey stayed in Room 217 while starring in the 1994 film *Dumb and Dumber*. The Stanley served as the backdrop of a posh ski resort and hotel in the film. Jim Carrey must have experienced something in Room 217 because one night, according to Ward, “he came down and said ‘I don’t care where you put me but get me out of this room right now.’ To this day we’re not sure what he saw up there in 217.”⁷³ Another possible experience of Jim Carrey’s may have involved the hotel’s

bell tower. In an interview with *Entertainment Tonight*, Carrey stated, “he stayed in the tower because ‘I like the bells.’”⁷⁴ The bells in the bell tower are a source of complaint by many guests. Former tour guide Diego Reyes states, “Guests often call the Front Desk to complain about the bells in the bell tower ringing . . . There are no bells in the bell tower—and there never have been.”⁷⁵ Is Jim Carrey stating more in his quote than perhaps he intended?

The Casino, or Stanley Concert Hall as it is known today, is a beautiful structure. It houses wedding receptions, concerts, and other functions. However, unexpected guests are always present. “I personally do not like going down there after dark,” states Billy Ward, “I’m not the only one. The engineers don’t like going down there either. They’ll be working down there and feel someone pulling on the back of their work belts, like they don’t want them to leave.”⁷⁶ On one side of the building is a stage, and on the opposite side there is a sound room on the second floor. Billy Ward told of unexplained events involving F.O. and Flora. “There are two photographs above the stage of F.O. and his wife Flora, one on each side of the stage. All the banquet people as well as the engineers swear up and down that those photographs will move, back and forth, like they are arguing with each other. That’s how they describe it.”⁷⁷

Stanley Concert Hall has more than just haunted photographs. In the 1960s, under the ownership of the Abbell Management Company, the entire property was dilapidated. Groundskeepers found a transient woman, her name lost to history, hiding there for protection from the cold and the elements. Extracted by property staff, she died two weeks later of exposure, according to local legend.⁷⁸ Billy Ward told of an engineer who recently finished the night by locking up the Hall. “[He] shut off the lights, locked the doors, and as soon as he locked the door all the lights in the building came back on.”⁷⁹ The engineer went back into the Hall and turned off all the lights a second time. The same thing happened again when he locked the doors. “The third time, he looked through the glass on the door. There was a woman standing on the inside, straggly hair, thin, standing inside the building. She [the transient] is believed to be back in the hall to keep warm.”⁸⁰

High-pitched screeches have come from the sound room on the second floor overlooking the Hall during late night tours. Could it be the transient woman calling out her ghostly scream? Billy Ward seems to think so. “I was not a big believer in that stuff, but I don’t like going down there now.”⁸¹ Ghostly orbs appear in pictures taken in the Hall, as well as other inexplicable things. “I was sitting on the stage with two guests on either side of me while another guest took a picture of us. Well, something else showed up behind me, a figure that definitely was not there.”⁸²

The final stop on the tour of the various ghost stories of the Stanley Hotel is the dormitories, two buildings to the west of the main hotel. According to Ward, there are small incidents there all the time, but one big event stands out in his mind. During the summer months, students often come and work at the historic hotel. “In 1995, a group of students from Nepal was here working. Two weeks into it, there was a mini-revolt. All the kids from Nepal are going to quit.”⁸³ When the head housekeeper inquired as to why, she was told a very unexpected reason. It seems one young man

had a problem with the dormitory. “Every night after midnight,” Ward explained, “he said it felt like someone comes into his room and is trying to smother him, he felt like he couldn’t breathe in the building and he had to go running out to catch his breath. It got so bad he ended up sleeping in their van for a couple weeks.”⁸⁴ This is the only example Ward, or any other employee for that matter, can recall of a spirit with apparently evil intentions.

The Stanley Hotel is a Colorado treasure. “Despite King’s horror tale,” wrote Anna Conroy for the *Air Force Times*, “the Stanley radiates a turn-of-the-century romance and charm that make it an unforgettable getaway spot. Stanley himself had a love affair of sorts with this scenic area.”⁸⁵ He ignited the local economy of Estes Park almost one hundred years ago, and local history still reveres F.O. Stanley.

Though the hotel’s contemporary fame comes, in part, from the legends of ghosts and their stories of shenanigans, the landmark has lasted for almost one hundred years and is still going strong. Business is on the rise, including more than one hundred weddings taking place per year on the front lawn, with Long’s Peak as a backdrop. Professional conventions of all types flock to the Stanley for its professionalism and its proximity to the rest of the Park. The name Stanley will forever be associated with Estes Park, and rightly so. His hotel, in all its beauty and legend, deserves its place on the National Register of Historic Places. If guests come for the ghost stories, they will undoubtedly stay for the scenic views and helpful people. The hotel complex is a testament to architectural majesty and a spirit to endure. Ghosts, if one believes in their existence, are always welcome.

THUCYDIDEAN MORALITY
AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

by Oscar Mackey

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ALEJANDRO MALASPINA AND THE PERILS OF PROJECTION

by Troy Karnes

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THE ENLIGHTENMENT COMES TO SALEM VILLAGE

by Ruth Hamilton

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JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT: HEROIC PATH FINDER OR HEEDLESS SELF-PROMOTER?

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*John Charles
Fremont*



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*Stanley
Hotel*

Thucydides



THUCYDIDEAN MORALITY
AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

BOOK
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THE ENLIGHTENMENT
COMES TO
SALEM VILLAGE

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vulgarly called the Farme

*Alejandro
Malaspina*

ALEJANDRO MALASPINA
AND THE PERILS
OF PROJECTION

