

The 2004 James Pinckney Harrison Lectures

Honor and America's Wars: From the Revolution to Mexican Conquest

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In the American lexicon the word honor has practically disappeared from everyday use. To be sure, in court we still acknowledge judges as “Your Honor,” and checks are given that citation when presented at the bank. Colleges sometimes have governed the legitimacy of exams and papers with student-run boards of honor. As the sociologist Peter Berger once declared, honor now has about the same relevance as the notion of chastity, a virtue that vanished with the arrival of the pill. In earlier times, long established elites ruled lesser folk, communities were small and parochial, and institutions, even the state and local law, weak or sporadic. Then, honor and shame were the polarities that provided imperfect but harshly enforced social conformities and a degree of stability in peace or even war. Now, for better and for worse, the forces of secularism, commercialism, industrialism, mass communications, institutional complexities of every sort have replaced the kind of face-to-face conventionalities of the past.

In the relationship of nations, however, the primitive rules of honor and dread of a collective shame still obtain as motives for aggression or defense. This is so despite attempts through the United Nations, international courts of justice, and multi-nation treaties to curb nuclear weaponry, chemical warfare, and other sources of mass destruction. In the three lectures to be presented each successive Monday at this same hour, I hope to explore the way we Americans have used and misused the old principles. Power over powerlessness, male over female, white over black, liberty over slavery—these were the eternal dichotomies of honor and prestige as opposed to shame and vulnerability. It is a complicated issue. Honor can motivate and rightly so. Yet, enthusiasts for war can also manipulate it to advantage because of its centrality in any form of patriotic ideology. Warriors on land, sea, or air, it always seems, must never be thought to die in vain. Their memory in the public mind must be treasured regardless of ultimate victory or defeat. The reasons for war must establish that obligation from the beginning.

In this lecture, the first, we begin with the American Revolution, a war for independence but also a war in behalf of patriots' honor. We will then proceed to three later wars that were vigorously pursued and one that did not come off, all four of them with serious political consequences. Donald Kagan, the Yale historian, notes that we in the West tend to recognize only the so-called rational categories for war: territorial expansion, national security, economic booty of one sort or another. But, he says, the role of honor that we might deem irrational often provokes the outbreak of military action. Honor, Kagan continues, “in the sense of prestige, clearly plays an important role in the [never-ending] competition for power. But nations also react strongly to the fear of dishonor, to assaults on their dignity that are the result of passion and hatred, not calculation.”¹ Before we go further I should say that I intend to be deliberately and outrageously present-minded in these lectures. We all have war on the mind, with the daily news of our unhappy dealings with those Middle-Eastern honor societies of Iraq and Afghanistan.

But now back to the beginning. With regard to the American Revolution, it has long amazed me that Gordon Wood and most other experts have not the vaguest clue how the ethic of

honor played a role in the coming of Revolutionary fervor and in the conduct of the war itself. His famous Creation of the American Republic (1972) dwells on virtue and other ideals in a most profound and elegant way. Not a word on honor, however, can be located in the index. Wood's more recent work, The American Revolution, A History also passes it by. Historians of the American Revolution have been uncomfortable with the bloodthirsty rhetoric that fill the hundreds of Revolutionary pamphlets, reports of political rallies and riots, and correspondence of the Founding Fathers. As Gordon Wood astutely noted some years ago, scholars have been preoccupied with the Revolution as a purely intellectual movement to the exclusion of other factors.² We know much about the evolution of republican theory but little about the ardor that gripped the revolutionary soul. Wood has observed, "The objective social reality scarcely seemed capable of explaining a revolution."³ I would argue that the Age of Reason was also an Age of Honor.

In dealing with the restive colonies, the British authorities undertook a disastrous policy that combined haughty condescension with military coercion, as if dealing with wayward youngsters. Under orders from Admiral Graves in Boston, Captain Henry Mowat of the Royal Navy, in October 1776, warned the Patriots of Falmouth, Maine, of his intention to raze their port. He justified the bombardment as "a rod of correction." The people had too long defied "the legal prerogatives of the best of Sovereigns."⁴ In once more appealing "decently" and "humbly" to "King, Lords, and Commons of Great-Britain," we must assure them, the Tory naval officer continued, "that we dread the very thoughts of an absolute independency; and that we see no prospect of security or happiness but under the powerful protection and mild superintendency of the mother country." American loyalists to the Crown adopted the same posture. In 1775 Thomas Chandler of New York warned patriots, "You must know, that singularity in right conduct will be an honour to you, and a shame only to them that act otherwise."⁵ Another Tory denounced the rebels as ungrateful children and worse--detestable parricides [sic].⁶ Yet, such language only drove home the Whig patriots' that the Royalists at home and overseas haughtily denied the Americans--whatever their place in society might be--the honor due them as morally responsible adults.

In response to such charges, American Revolutionary pamphleteers seized the grammar, vocabulary, and style that bespoke the honor of their cause and the shame of submission. They did so with a regularity that suggests its salience in everyday colonial life. Since pride of male sexuality and the shame of its absence figured in the code, tract writers indulged in allusions that bordered on the scatological. Charlestonian John McKenzie raged that Britain had "insulted--bullied--" and generally treated Americans as "emasculated eunuchs."⁷ Likewise, Thomas Paine in Common Sense stressed the ideals of virility in defense of family: "Are your wife and children destitute . . . ? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hand . . . if you have, and can still shake hands with the murderers, then you are unworthy of the name of husband, father, friend or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant."⁸ How far the rhetoric deviated from fact need not matter in the polemical war.

Moving from the depths to sublime heights, pious New Englanders, more than Southern Patriots, tended to couple honor with lofty scriptural reference as well. They found the Old Testament especially appropriate as well they might. The ancient Hebrew nation, like the modern Middle East, was well versed in the dictates of honor.⁹ The irascible John Allen, a Baptist minister of Boston in 1773 took Micah 7: 3 for his text. He expounded on the right of a chosen people to protest and even overthrow the tyranny of evil rulers. Allen thundered: "Have

you not heard the voice of blood in your streets, louder than that which reached to Heaven, that cry'd for vengeance, that was, said the Lord to Cain, the voice of thy brother's blood . . . ?"¹⁰ Peter Thacher of Malden, Massachusetts, however, became so overwrought that he forgot the customary Biblical text for explication. At once he plunged into the heart of the matter. The preacher urged his flock to "spring to action, let us gird on the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, and determine to conquer or die! . . . Do not let us hear of any of you who behave like cowards." Only in the summation did he remember to insert the requisite scriptural passage: 2 Samuel 10: 12. Yet it was quite appropriate: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people."¹¹ Dishonor entailed an unmanly spirit. As a result, he continued, Americans should reject "the soft arts of luxury and effeminacy" and sacrifice the pursuit of wealth to the cause of liberty. Those who admire wealth alone, he advised, "almost deserve to be enslaved."¹² Behind these outbursts, of course, there were just complaints. The list is familiar: unfair taxes; official corruption; and unjust Parliamentary reprisals against the restive colonies. As the anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers has observed, honor is always the sworn enemy of taxation. Coerced payment involves a lessening of manhood and independence. From the dawn of history, defeated enemies and inferior people had to forfeit property as tribute or tax. Free peoples, however, contributed to the king's treasury in terms of subsidy, freely rendered out of affection, real or feigned, for the ruler. In earliest times, revenues for the head of state was more or less a matter of gift exchange, in the fashion that Bronislaw Malinowski analyzed in the 1920s. The revenues furnished were traded for the benefits of leadership and responsibility vested in the king. So it had been understood by the Parliament, for instance, at the time of Charles I's Ship Money crisis. The outcry against British taxation without American representation and voice in the process arose from this concept. It was based on the honor of grant or subsidy versus mortification of taxation. Ancient precedent served to buttress the rationale. James Otis, for instance, pointed out that in Periclean Greece, colonists were obliged only "to pay a kind of deference and dutiful submission to the mother commonwealth." But, he insisted, nothing more demeaning than that was required of them.¹³

As historians have long known, the Parliamentary exactions on Americans to help reduce British indebtedness for the Seven Years' War were light by contemporary standards.¹⁴ By the rubrics of honor, cutting taxes is the supposed height of ethical conduct that rulers can perform. Sound familiar? Colonists smarted under the affront of taxation with no means to bargain, modify, or persuade the Parliamentary parties through colonial representation. In the Virginia Resolutions to Lord North in 1775, Thomas Jefferson argued that "Whereas, we have right to give our money, as the Parliament does theirs, without coercion, from time to time, as public exigencies may require, we conceive that we are alone the judges. . . . Because at the very time of requiring from us grants of Money they are" planning war against us, "which is a stile of asking gifts not reconcilable [*sic*] to our freedom." Likewise, the Congress's Resolutions of 31 July 1775, spoke of taxes as "gifts" not to be "wasted among the venal and corrupt for the purpose of undermining the civil rights of the givers." The resolution further demonstrated the significance of the ancient prescriptions: "we consider ourselves as bound in Honor as well as Interest to share our general Fate with our Sister Colonies . . . and having in vain "appealed to the native honour and justice of the British nation," a new course of action is necessary.¹⁵

The category of involuntary taxpayer entailed reduced social and political status. Such exactions lessened one's own and family's independence--freedom from the control of or obligation to another. Machiavelli had long before warned that unwise rulers overtaxed their subjects at great peril, "for men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their

patrimony.”¹⁶ In fact, by custom those who gained the most glory and authority from either military victories or officeholding were expected to pay for such honorifics. They should not burden marginal folk. Taxing Americans, however, had become popular in the home country, argued one pamphleteer, because the British had drained themselves while Ireland had been “impoverished to almost the last farthing.”¹⁷ Even Ireland, which, in James Otis’s opinion, had fallen into English hands as “a conquered country,” deserved “the same right to be free under a conqueror as the rest of his [majesty’s] subjects.” How much more worthy then, he asked, should America be when at no time was it a defeated province, but one created by “emigrant subjects.”¹⁸

The second grievance, bureaucratic malfeasance and venality, stimulated almost equal fury. Such vices violated the honor code in two specific ways. Nepotism and favoritism in office seeking put Americans at more disadvantage than before when competing for titles and posts against placemen with contacts at Whitehall unavailable to the distant colonists. Second, corruption reinforced the sense of impotence that men of honor felt in the handling of political affairs. Their anger stemmed from the implied dependency and alienation from authority that the indignity of open corruption flaunted in their faces. The imposition of the Stamp Tax, of course, was seen as a further opportunity for gross corruption.¹⁹ In thunderous response to the crisis, the Rev. Enoch Huntington of Massachusetts preached: “Already do the avaricious courtiers of Great-Britain, with the numerous train of their . . . hangers-on, with the whole tribe of dissolute spend-thrifts, and idle deboshee’s, feast themselves” upon “the spoils of our future earnings. . . .” John Adams echoed the sentiment: “When luxury, effeminacy, and venality” have reached “a shocking pitch in England, when both electors and elected are become one mass of corruption; when the nation is oppressed to death with debts and taxes . . . what will be your condition under such a parliament? You would not only be slaves, but the most abject sort of slaves, to the worst sort of masters!”²⁰

The third objection intimately connected with honor was the outcry against standing armies. Not only were they potential instruments of lawless tyranny, but their presence also signified mistrust of the local elite and the general populace. The use of professional forces set at conflict the members of a locale against military inquisitors into their exclusive affairs. Such an opposition has been traced to the late seventeenth-century Commonwealthman John Trenchard and earlier to James Harrington.²¹ Suspicions of occupying armies, however, long predate that era. Clearly they violated the sense of local independence, the honor of the community. To the American colonists, the imposition of permanent forces, especially when quartered in civilian billets instead of barracks, signified humiliation and naked despotism.²² Finally, how honor was a factor in the relationship between revolutionary liberty and what the Rev. James Emerson of New England called “vile ignominious slavery” has long puzzled American historians.²³ “How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes,” asked Dr. Samuel Johnson.²⁴ The Founding Fathers by and large saw no contradiction between ownership of slaves and the insistence upon universal freedom. Among other meanings attributable to the phrase “all men are created equal” is the notion that claims to honor are open to all members of the white fraternity upon an equal footing. So it was later understood in the antebellum South. According to the hierarchy which the ethic upheld, slavery, however, represented the most disgraceful, humiliating, and pitiable condition known to man. In the eighteenth century, slavery was only the most extreme form of social alienation. Other types of involuntary subordination--indentured servants, redemptioners, apprentices, landless laborers--were situated within the accepted social order. As a result, the notion of freedom implied some

minimal social standing. The freeman was one capable of self-provision or enjoyed an autonomy from subservience to someone higher in rank. Hence the constant message of Revolutionary propaganda was to protest all marks of what Josiah Quincy called “the chains of vassalage.”²⁵ I need remind no Virginian of the famous words of Patrick Henry, 23 March 1775: “Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me Liberty or give me Death!” For centuries in political thought, slavery and liberty were by no means considered antithetical. Henry might have said Give me honor instead of liberty for they were considered one and the same. Machiavelli and Algernon Sidney, John Locke’s contemporary, both believed that love of liberty so animated the warrior spirit that their countrymen had the moral right to enslave those without such a heritage.²⁶ By such reasoning, liberty took the form of a hegemonic right to rule rather than a universal principle. The concept that slavery in the presence of liberty was corrupting to both master and servant was a relatively new one that few besides such thinkers as Montesquieu and Jefferson took seriously.

This sketch scarcely does justice to the relationship of honor and the revolution that overthrew the yoke of monarchy. It would take a book to do so. We must move on, though, to a war that did not happen, a call for honor but in the end went unheeded—that is, what’s called the Quasi War with France. What this episode demonstrated was that honor denied and peace restored can have a political downside. But that is the not way it looked at the start of the crisis. In the late 1790s President John Adams and others were ready and eager for war with France. They feared the Revolutionaries with a passion only equaled in the 1950s by the fear of worldwide Communism. The XYZ Affair, broken diplomatic relations, the riotous behavior of Republicans in opposition, and the belligerent godlessness of the French regime all conspired to arouse fierce panic and outrage, at least in Federalist circles. So alarmed was the administration in Philadelphia, then the capital, that a guard was posted outside the president’s residence., The John Adams roundly denounced what he called “this terrorism” abroad in the land. He commanded that a cachet of arms be smuggled from the war office to his house through darkened back alleys to avoid detection.²⁷ The Cincinnatus at Mount Vernon was called up to leave the plow, as it were, in order to head the land forces. Civil liberties fell by the wayside with the passage of the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts, a common American reaction to war scares as later patterns would prove even unto our own day. High Federalists were sure that a declaration of war would silence and defeat the Jeffersonians as unpatriotic and cowardly. The slogan of the day was the outcry: “Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute!” It represented a demand for nationwide unity and the upholding of the country’s self-esteem.

But not all Americans were wholly convinced. Moderate Federalist Robert Goodloe Harper argued that some thought war “the most manly and honourable course:” but others urged a home defense-building that would suffice for the moment.²⁸ Congress dithered about and refused to act. Meantime France sent out strong peace feelers. All to the good, Federalist Alexander Hamilton wrote sarcastically. Negotiations with the perfidious French would soon and inevitably bring that nation’s “friends into power.”²⁹ And sure enough it did. The Republicans won in 1800 and gradually drove the Federalists into everlasting oblivion. Adams had missed a grand opportunity to perpetuate Federalist rule for at least another four years, even if it had cost lives and huge outlays that the government, the beleaguered president recognized, could hardly afford. With his right-wing thoroughly disgusted, his party divided, Adams had gained too little credit for leaving the “State with its coffers full,” as he wrote shortly after defeat, “and the fair prospect of a peace with all the world in its face.”³⁰

Of course, other factors were involved as well. Yet clamor for war usually unites a nation behind a leader in the short term by placing national security and national pride at the forefront. In 1979, Jimmy Carter also turned away from the rubrics of honorable revenge for insult in the Iranian crisis. A war to free the embassy hostages could well have furnished him a second term—whether it violated his moral principles or not.

In any event, Adams's successor, Thomas Jefferson, being the Southerner he was, knew that a well-timed war offered great political benefits. Teddy Roosevelt had nothing but scorn for Jefferson as a commander in chief whom he identified as virtually a coward, or at least a "visionary" who "was utterly unable to grapple with the slightest danger."³¹ But if Jefferson could locate a war that offered little expense and lots of glory, he could move as swiftly as a wildcat. As one author notes, "there was something about the petty despots of the Barbary Coast that triggered the redheaded Virginian's temper and set his adrenaline pumping."³² Could the same reactions apply to George W. Bush and the Iraqi dictator?

As in the case of the American Revolution and the troubles with the French Directory, the themes of honor versus enslavement, national pride against submission to foreign extortion and hostage-seizing were recapitulated. In the closing years of the Washington administration the United States was still forced to pay nearly a million dollars in cash, along with other valuable commodities to rescue over a hundred sailors from the Algerian dey. With an empty treasury and virtually nonexistent forces, the young nation had to follow European precedent. The issue remained, though, a question of tribute or bribery, itself a signal of disgrace and vulnerability. Britain and France were too preoccupied with their own rivalries and too powerful to let some pirates determine policy. So, payoffs were the most convenient resource to handle the minor vexation.

The United States, however, was new to the world scene, uncertain of its strength and, despite Jefferson's opposition against extortion had continued to follow the European example of payments to the North African Islamists. Only five days into his administration, Jefferson took a forceful step that contradicted his dedication to low taxes and limited government, hallmarks of the honor code. He had had the Barbary pirates in his sights years before. As early as 1786, Jefferson had advised that "The [North African] states must see the rod," a military undertaking requiring both naval and land forces. Two months after Thomas Jefferson assumed the presidency in 1801, with warships already underway, he rejected the demands of Tripolitan Pacha for the annual tribute which he and three other Islamic rulers of North Africa had long extracted from even the most powerful maritime nations.³³

Other factors also may have played a role. Jefferson's ascension to the high office presented no mandate; he had barely won by a mere eight electoral votes, although grandly calling the victory a second revolution. For that circumstance, he could thank the slaves counted as three-fifths persons. Without that margin Adams would have had a second term. Still worse, Jefferson had to fend off his own running-mate, who had accidentally tied for the top spot. Luckily, Aaron Burr's unsavory politics permitted Jefferson's narrow triumph in the House of Representatives.³⁴

In a recent journalistic account of the Barbary wars, Joseph Wheelan has subtitled it: "America's First War on Terror 1801-1805." He points out that within days of his inauguration the new president had ordered four ships of the line to the North African coast without seeking a war resolution from Congress or giving any prior notification to European powers in order to conduct what Wheelan titles "Jefferson's War." Years before, Jefferson had counseled James Monroe, "The motives pleading for war rather than tribute are numerous and honorable, those

opposing them mean and short-sighted.”³⁵ Sound familiar? One might question that piracy and hostage-taking constituted terrorism in the sense we use the term now. But clearly, a sense of national honor had prompted Jefferson’s contradiction of his own principles of limited, a virtually taxless government, weak navy, and tiny army. Even former president John Adams, who had paid off the Barbary states, albeit reluctantly, admitted that a war would be “heroical and glorious: at a time when the maritime European states have “made cowards of all their sailors before the standard of Mahomet.” But he was inconsistent. The Marquis de Lafayette reported that Adams preferred peace and payment, whereas Jefferson, he wrote, “finds it as cheap and more honourable to cruize against” the pirates. Before he died in 1799, George Washington had remarked “that chastisement would be more honourable, and much to be preferred to the purchased friendship of these Barbarians” who were simply heaping up “the highest disgrace” on their own heads.”³⁶ Jefferson reaped the rewards of undertaking a war against a weak enemy, without much loss of lives or treasure. In that respect, he was more fortunate than a current war president. But they might yet come to share an advantageous outcome. Commenting on the possibility of war against France in 1798, George Logan, a Philadelphia Quaker, had warned, “wars created by ambitious executives have been undertaken more to their own aggrandizement and power than for the protection of their country.”³⁷ The fight against bribery and extortion certainly helped Jefferson’s overwhelming 1804 reelection exactly two hundred years ago.

Turning to the next to last war for today, we consider the second conflict with Great Britain. The causes need not long detain us, but at the top of the list was the insult of British Orders-in-Council and the impressment of American sailors from both commercial and naval vessels, the Chesapeake incident being the most demeaning. In his 1882 account of the war, John Clark Ridpath had concluded that prior to the outbreak, the “insolence” of the royal Orders-in-Council” would eventually have to mean “retaliation and war” or else a continuation of “humiliation and disgrace.”³⁸ Ridpath’s interpretation, though, did not last, and an economic and material approach followed in the inter-world-war period. In 1961 Norman Risjord reopened the subject. He reached the same conclusion that Donald Kagan has offered more recently. Twentieth-Century scholars had been “brought up on the disillusionment that followed the failure” of the Wilsonian dream of worldwide democracy, Risjord explains.³⁹ Parenthetically, making the Middle East safe for democracy is the most recent test of this sort of nation-building.

Disenchanted or not, historians of the 1812 episode proposed economic motives—a western grab for land as the chief rationale for war. Risjord notes that only 10 Congressmen from the West sat in the House. It was the 39 Southern delegates who chiefly propelled the nation to war. Jeffersonians fretted about the costs of warfare because it meant great expenses, higher taxes, central government expansion, and loss of rural virtues and family values, as it were. But when honor’s at risk, these problems had to become secondary. Not to take up arms, warned War Hawk Henry Clay of Kentucky, would stain the country “with shame and indelible disgrace,” after the “great injuries and abuses we have received.” Uniting the cause of personal and national honor, he urged “what would disgrace an individual under certain circumstances would disgrace a nation.” So far as Clay was concerned, “there was no intrinsic difficulty or terror” as we would be fighting only on our own continent. “If gentlemen please to call these sentiments Quixotic, he would say I pitied them for their sense of honor.”⁴⁰ That redoubtable conservative John Randolph of Virginia accused Clay and friends of “Dutch courage” in this reckless zeal for war. Shaking off his Republican doubts on taxes and expanded government only reluctantly, however, John Smilie of Pennsylvania echoed Clay’s sentiments: “If we now recede we shall be a reproach to all

nations.”⁴¹ Risjord concludes his fine assessment that the Republican party, particularly its Southern members, had slowly reached the judgment that “war was the only alternative to national humiliation and disgrace.”⁴²

Our final example and briefest example is the Mexican struggle of the 1840s, the first really large-scale foreign war that up til then the United States had ever fought. Honor, I fear, must take a back seat on this one. It was a grab for land and a most successful one, as Whig politicians charged. In the usual fashion, however, dissenters like Abraham Lincoln, John C. Calhoun, and Alexander Stephens had to vote for war appropriations to avoid accusations of unpatriotic betrayal of the boys in the ranks.⁴³ Drowning out the opposition was a rhetoric of “Manifest Destiny” that proved the most savage chest-thumping in national annals. Southern exhilaration over the acquisition of so much western territory was overwhelming. Those who objected, like Abraham Lincoln, were branded as traitors in the happy fever of war and conquest.⁴⁴

In the war itself, romantic notions of death and glory flourished as never before as well they might. According to a New York newspaper, the country underwent a “poetic mania.” William Faulkner’s great -grandfather William C. Falkner outwrote most other versifiers with his epic, The Siege of Monterey, in 493 stanzas which he peddled at Mississippi county fairs. Poems celebrating gallant victories multiplied with a countless number of them titled “Monterey” or “Buena Vista.”⁴⁵ Theodore O’Hara, a Catholic volunteer from Kentucky, penned a few once famous lines. They were later to grace the wrought-iron archways leading to Union cemeteries from Gettysburg to Shiloh.

On Fame’s eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead.
Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead,
Dear as the blood ye gave,
No impious footstep here shall tread
The herbage of your grave;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps.⁴⁶

The Mexican War provided as much inflation to the national ego as one might imagine. It was also the first attempt at a proclaimed nation-building—the absorption of a Catholic Mexican population, sparse though it was, into the beneficence of democracy, freedom, and, at that time, Protestant hegemony. If Polk had had his way, all of Mexico could have been folded into arms of Dame Liberty. The war, however, lasted too long, as wars tend somehow to do. Toward the end, public support started to wane. As a result, the party that initiated and led it went out of power at the next election. Astonishingly it was the bloodiest war Americans ever fought, that is, with the highest ratio of death to those serving—a total of 13,788 out of just over 100,000 enlisted.⁴⁷ Here was honor in its most arrogant attire, a victory over a poorly led, demoralized neighbor. Yet that conquest was to precipitate the greatest and bloodiest crisis in the nation’s history, the subject of the next lecture.

Endnotes

¹ Kagan, "Honor, Interest, and Nation-State," in Abrams, ed., Honor among Nations, 5.

² Gordon S. Wood, "Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 23 (January 1966): 3-32. The literature on Republicanism and its origins includes: Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 29 (January 1972): 49-80; Joyce Appleby, "Republicanism in Old and New Contexts," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 43 (January 1986): 20-34; Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York: New York University Press, 1984); Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), and "The Central Themes of the American Revolution: An Interpretation," in Essays on the American Revolution, ed. Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 3-33. See also Douglass Adair, "The Tenth Federalist Revisited," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 8 (January 1951): 48-67. J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); J. G. A. Pocock, Virtue, Commerce, and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); "The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787: A Symposium of Views and Reviews," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 44 (July 1987): 549-640.

³ Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 4.

⁴ Quoted in John E. Godfrey, "Captain Mowatt," March 1877, Collection 110, Maine Historical Society, Portland.

⁵ Thomas Bradford Chandler, What Think Ye of Congress Now? Or, An Enquiry How Far the Americans Are Bound to Abide by, and Execute the Decisions of, the Late Congress? (New York: James Rivington, 1775), 47. Serle's quotation is in the entry for 8 August 1776, contained in Edward H. Tatum, Jr., ed., The American Journal of Ambrose Serle, Secretary to Lord Howe, 1776-1778 (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1940), 60. His reaction to the Declaration of Independence utilized the same language. "A more impudent, false and atrocious Proclamation was never fabricated by the Hands of Man," he wrote. "Hitherto, they had thrown all the Blame and Insult upon the Parliament and ministry: Now, they have the Audacity to calumniate the King and People of Great Britain. . . . Surely Providence will honor its own Truth and Justice upon this Occasion, and, as they have made an appeal to it for Success, reward them after their own Deservings." Entry for 13 July 1776, *ibid.*, 31.

⁶ Quoted in Janice Potter, The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology in Colonial New York and Massachusetts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 137.

⁷ An Address of the Legislature to the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Boston: Benjamin Edes, 1781), 21; John McKenzie, Letters of Freeman, 23, 61, 64, quoted in Greene, "'Slavery or Independence: Some Reflections on the Relationship among Liberty, Black Bondage, and Equality in Revolutionary South Carolina,'" in Jack P. Greene, Imperatives, Behaviors, and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 268-89.

⁸ Thomas Paine, Common Sense in Common Sense and The Crisis (New York: Freethought Press, 1946), 26-27.

⁹ See J. P. Peristiany, ed., Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965) and Michael Herzfeld, "Honour and Shame: Problems in Comparative Analyses of Moral Systems," Man, n.s., 15 (June 1980): 339-51. On New England and secular honor, see Evarts B. Greene, "The Code of Honor in Colonial and Revolutionary Times with Special Reference to New England," in Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts 26 (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1927), 367-88.

¹⁰ John Allen ["A British Bostonian"], An Oration, Upon the Beauties of Liberty, Or the Essential Rights of the Americans. Delivered at the Second Baptist-Church in Boston. Upon the Last Annual Thanksgiving. Humbly Dedicated to the Right-Honourable the Earl of Dartmouth (Boston: D. Kneeland and N. Davis, 1773), 27-28 (available in RW No. 121).

¹¹ Thacher, quoted in Harry S. Stout, The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 306.

¹² John Hancock, An Oration Delivered March 5, 1774, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston: To Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March 1770 (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1774), 18.

¹³ James Otis, The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved, in Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776, Vol. 1, 1750-1765, ed. Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 437.

¹⁴ Robert R. Palmer, Revolution in the Democratic Age: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 1:155. The rates were in 1765: Great Britain, 26s; Ireland 6s 8d; Massachusetts 1s; Connecticut 7d; Virginia 5d. Palmer does not, however, make clear what his figures mean. Do they include county, parish, and provincial taxes or merely the sums garnered for the central authority? The subject of pre-

Revolutionary taxation on all levels of government has not received the historical scrutiny the topic warrants.

¹⁵ Thomas Jefferson, “Virginia Resolutions on Lord North’s Conciliatory Proposal [June 10, 1775],” in The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, ed. Julian Parks Boyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 1:172-73, 231. For an anthropological approach, see F. G. Bailey, Gifts and Poison (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971).

¹⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, “The Prince,” in The Prince and the Discourses (New York: Modern Library, 1940), 62; see also 57-58.

¹⁷ Bailyn, Ideological Origins, 162 ff. See also Conrad Russell, Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 49-53, 56-57, and 376, on subsidy issues. On Irish taxation, see Four Letters on Interesting Subjects, quoted in Bernard Bailyn, ed., Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776, Vol. 1, 1750-1765 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 78.

¹⁸ Otis, The Rights of the British Colonies, 452.

¹⁹ William Gordon, The Separation of the Jewish Tribes after the Death of Solomon, Accounted for, and Applied to the Present Day, in a Sermon before the General Court, on Friday, July the 4th, 1777, Being the Anniversary of the Declaration of Independency (Boston: J. Gill, 1777), 11.

²⁰ Quoted in Davidson, Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783, 140-41. Men of more temperate dispositions also spoke in passionate language.

²¹ J. G. A. Pocock, The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century (1957; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 331-32. See also Lois G. Schwoerer, ‘No Standing Armies!’ The Antiarmy Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); J. G. A.

Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 22 (October 1965), 549-83, esp. 558-64; Lewis D. Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 15-33; Jerrilyn Greene Marston, King and Congress: The Transfer of Political Legitimacy, 1774-1776 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 134-45.

²² Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission and Circumstances of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 339; Bernard Bailyn, introduction to Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1765, Vol. 1, 1750-1765 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 41-44, esp. 42 n. 7, in which he points out that J. G. A. Pocock dates the issue only as far back as 1675, but there was a nostalgia in Commonwealthman writings for feudal times when "the 'nobility' secured 'the people against the insults of the prince and the prince against the popularity of the commons.'" See Robbins, Commonwealthman, 104.

²³ James Emerson, A Thanksgiving Sermon . . . (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1766), 7.

²⁴ Quoted in David Hackett Fischer, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 410.

²⁵ Quincy, Observations on the Act of Parliament, 69-70.

²⁶ Caroline Robbins, "Algernon Sidney's Discourses Concerning Government: Textbook of Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 4 (July 1947): 267-96, and The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman.

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- ²⁷ Alexander DeConde, The Quasi-War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1797-1801 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 83.
- ²⁸ DeConde, Quasi-War, 107.
- ²⁹ DeConde, Quasi-War, 159.
- ³⁰ DeConde, Quasi-War, 259 (quotation), 263. .
- ³¹ Roosevelt quoted in Mark Russell Shulman, "The Influence of History upon Sea Power: The Navalist Reinterpretation of the War of 1812," Journal of Military History 56 (April 1992);183-203 (quotation, 191).
- ³² A .B. C. Whipple, To the Shores of Tripoli: The Birth of the U.S. Navy and Marines (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991), 19.
- ³³ Quoted in Gerard W. Gawalt, "America and the Barbary Pirates: An International Battle Against an Unconventional Foe," Library of Congress website.
- ³⁴ See Leonard L. Richards, The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 42.
- ³⁵ Joseph Wheelan, Jefferson's War; America's First War on Terror 1801-1805 (New York; Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 3.
- ³⁶ Adams, Lafayette and Washington quoted Wheelan, Jefferson's War, 45, 46, 54.
- ³⁷ Logan quoted in DeConde, Quasi-War, 80.
- ³⁸ Quoted in Shulman, "Influence of History upon Sea Power," 187).
- ³⁹ Norman K. Risjord, "1812: Conservatives, War Hawks, and the Nation's Honor," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd. Ser. 18 (April 1961):196-210, (quotation 196).

⁴⁰ Clay in April 1, 1812, in Annals of Congress, 12th Cong. 1st sess., 24 (Washington, 1853):1588-89.

⁴¹ Smilie in ibid., 1592.

⁴² Risjord, "1812, Conservatives, War Hawks and the Nation's Honor," 210.

⁴³ John H. Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 22-28, 153; Robert W. Johannsen, "Young America and the War with Mexico," in Richard V. Francaviglia and Douglas W. Richmond, eds., Dueling Eagles: Reinterpreting the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848 (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 2000), 167-69.

⁴⁴ Dwight G. Anderson, "Quest for Immortality: A Theory of Abraham Lincoln's Political Psychology," Gabor S. Boritt, ed., The Historian's Lincoln: Pseudohistory, Psychohistory, and History (Urbana,: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 262.

⁴⁵ William Lee Miller, Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 459.

⁴⁶ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Hearts of Darkness: Wellsprings of a Southern Literary Tradition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 108.

⁴⁷ William Lee Miller, Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 459.