

Annotation

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NEWSLETTER

September 2003

War and Disappointment

BY JONATHAN R. DULL

Wars, even the most glorious, seem to be accompanied by not only death and hardship, but also disappointment. Whereas the results of misguided wars soon appear, it often takes more decades for the fruits of even the most successful wars to ripen. The euphoria of Appomattox, for example, proved very short-lived. Not only did a Confederate sympathizer assassinate President Abraham Lincoln, but the defeated South refused to accept the emancipation of its former slaves. Even the well-meaning President Ulysses S. Grant was unable to prevent the undoing of many of the war's great accomplishments. (See particularly *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* and *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation*.)

It took a century to put in check the offspring of the Confederacy—the Ku Klux Klan, Jim Crow laws, lynchings,

and the systematic disenfranchisement of African Americans (a story

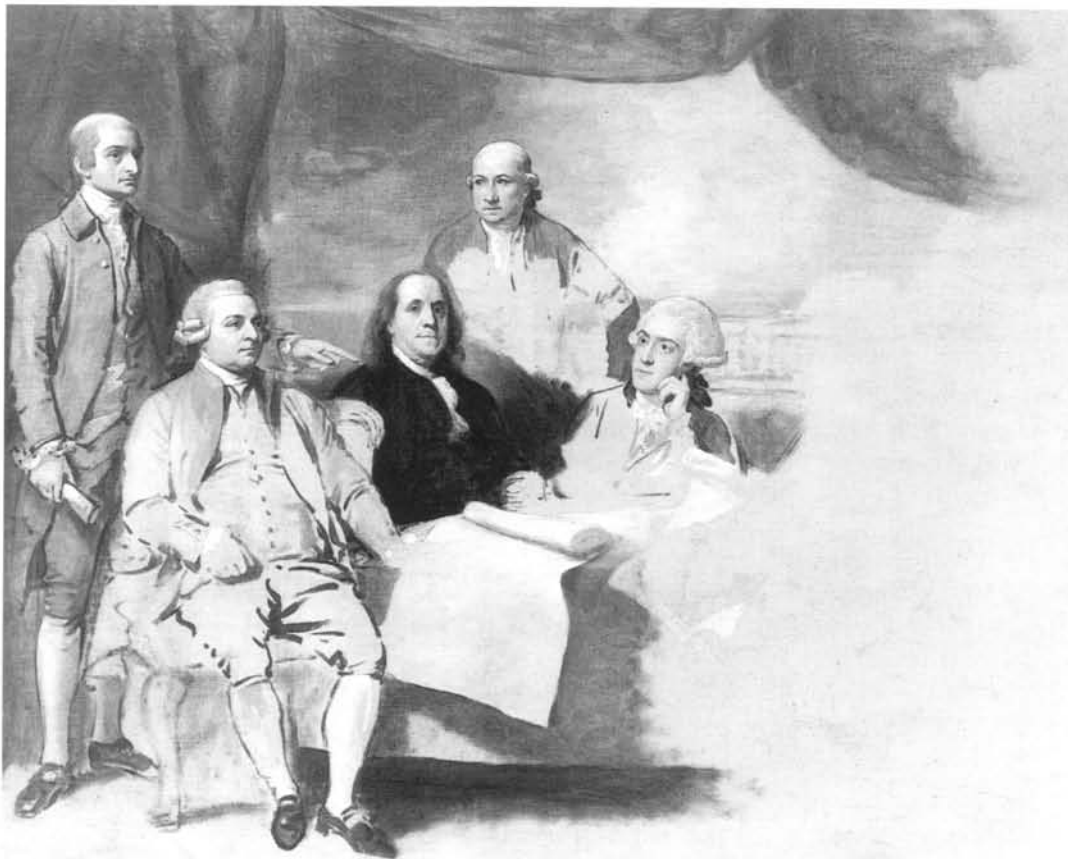
told in part in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*). Indeed, the work of Abraham Lincoln will not be complete until we have eliminated racism and discrimination and made of ourselves one nation truly free.

Although the Second World War represented a more successful break from the past, even it had its share of disappointments. The war quickly was followed by economic dislocation, the division of Europe by an Iron Curtain, and the threat of an even more terrible war (topics that will be treated in forthcoming volumes of *The Papers of*

George Catlett Marshall). Only half a century later do we see Europe making major strides toward the democracy, peace, and unity for which Presidents Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman hoped.

The Papers of Benjamin Franklin have already recorded some of the results of one war, while forthcoming volumes will examine the results of a second. The first of these was the so-called French and Indian War. Apparently the most glori- (continued on page 16)

THE NHPRC SUPPORTS
THE PAPERS OF BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN PROJECT



A painting by Benjamin West shows the American peace commissioners who negotiated the Treaty of Paris that ended the American Revolutionary War. From left to right are John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens, and Franklin's grandson William Temple Franklin (secretary to the American commissioners). The British participants declined to sit for the painting. Photograph, National Archives and Records Administration.

AFTERMATH OF WAR

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The September 2003 issue of *Annotation* focuses on the behavior of historical figures in the immediate aftermath of various wars in which this country has engaged. The authors of the articles in this issue are each associated with a project that the NHPRC funds or endorses. Our featured articles are

"War and Disappointment," by Jonathan R. Dull

"Cincinnatus Returns to His Plow: George Washington's First Year After Resigning His Commission," by David R. Hoth

"Diplomacy and Military Innovation after the War of 1812," by Daniel Preston

"An Overlooked War," by Scott Roney

"Power I think can go no further': Ulysses S. Grant after Appomattox," by Aaron Lisee

"Preview of Presidential Reconstruction: Andrew Johnson's Interview with the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, November 1863," by Steven F. Miller

"George C. Marshall and War's Unintended Consequences," by Larry I. Bland

"The Last Patrol: The Vietnam Veterans Against the War 1971 Encampment on the National Mall," by Mark S. Greek

NHPRC Application Deadlines

THE COMMISSION'S MEETINGS FOLLOW THE FISCAL YEAR OF OCTOBER 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30. CONSEQUENTLY, THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FISCAL YEAR IS IN NOVEMBER AND THE SECOND IS IN MAY.

June 1 (for the November meeting)

Proposals addressing the following top priorities:

- The NHPRC will provide the American public with widespread access to the papers of the founders of our democratic republic and its institutions by ensuring the timely completion of eight projects now in progress to publish the papers of George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and papers that document the Ratification of the Constitution, the First Federal Congress, and the early Supreme Court

OCTOBER 1 (for the May meeting)

Proposals not addressing the above priorities, but focusing on an activity authorized in the NHPRC statute as follows:

- collecting, describing, preserving, compiling, and publishing (including microfilming and other forms of reproduction) of documentary sources significant to the history of the United States
- conducting institutes, training and educational courses, and fellowships related to the activities of the Commission
- disseminating information about documentary sources through guides, directories, and other technical publications
- or, more specifically, documentary editing and publishing; archival preservation and processing of records for access; developing or updating descriptive systems; creation and development of archival and records management programs; development of standards, tools, and techniques to advance the work of archivists, records managers, and documentary editors; and promotion of the use of records by teachers, students, and the public

APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED FROM NHPRC, NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, 700 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, ROOM 111, WASHINGTON, DC 20408-0001, 202-501-5610 (VOICE), 202-501-5601 (FAX), nhprc@nara.gov (E-MAIL), OR BY ACCESSING OUR WEB SITE AT www.archives.gov/grants

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

What a wonderful opportunity we have. Those of us engaged in the work of documenting the American democratic experience understand the importance of the national historical record. We know we are dealing with more than just curiously antiquarian knickknacks from an irrelevant past. Our work is vital because we keep that which is necessary for maintaining *identity*:

We hear reports of identity theft, where criminals, using falsified or illegally gained documentation, assume another's identity in order to cheat, steal, or otherwise do mischief.

Clearly, records document the rights and responsibilities of our citizens. Without them, our standing in everyday matters—marriage, education, membership in church or other groups, ownership of property—would be subject to challenge. Indeed, even our existence as the persons we claim to be is suspect without documentary evidence.

Likewise, in a democracy where citizens have the right and obligation to monitor and speak up about the behavior and performance of elected and other government officials, records are essential. Records make possible what James Madison demanded: "The right of freely examining public characters and measures and of free communication thereon, is the only effectual guardian of every other right." Our identity as a nation is defined in part by these words from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

As American citizens, we protect our rights and watch over our government, but these functions are only part of what defines us as a people. Documentary sources help us answer questions like "What does it mean to be an American?" Or, a bit more specifically, an Irish American, African American, Indian American, or American Indian. The records that document the shared, yet endlessly complex and nuanced American experience are located in thousands of repositories throughout the country, as well as at the National Archives.

Such records document our national experience through the eyes of individuals, businesses, unions, churches, nonprofit associations, and state and local governments. They consist of diaries, jour-



Max J. Evans

nals, letters, account books, deeds, contracts, applications for employment, marriage records, birth and death certificates, and many other types of materials. These materials exist as familiar paper documents and photographs, on microforms, and in electronic versions, computerized or recorded as audio- or videotape. They are sources for historians, social scientists, and other scholars; writers and filmmakers; family and local historians and genealogists; journalists, attorneys, title companies, builders, and engineers; and educators and their students at all levels.

They are sources for today, it is true. Those of us in the historical documentation business should remember that our efforts in collecting, preserving, arranging, describing, and editing historical records for publication is vain unless the sources are used. Indeed, the founders of our nation clearly understood that democracy requires an informed citizenry. The NHPRC envisions a society where every citizen values and uses authentic records of our diverse democratic experience. Yet, while we preserve the remnants of the past for today, we must remember that our obligation is also to the future. One wag reminded me some years ago that most of our customers have not yet been born!

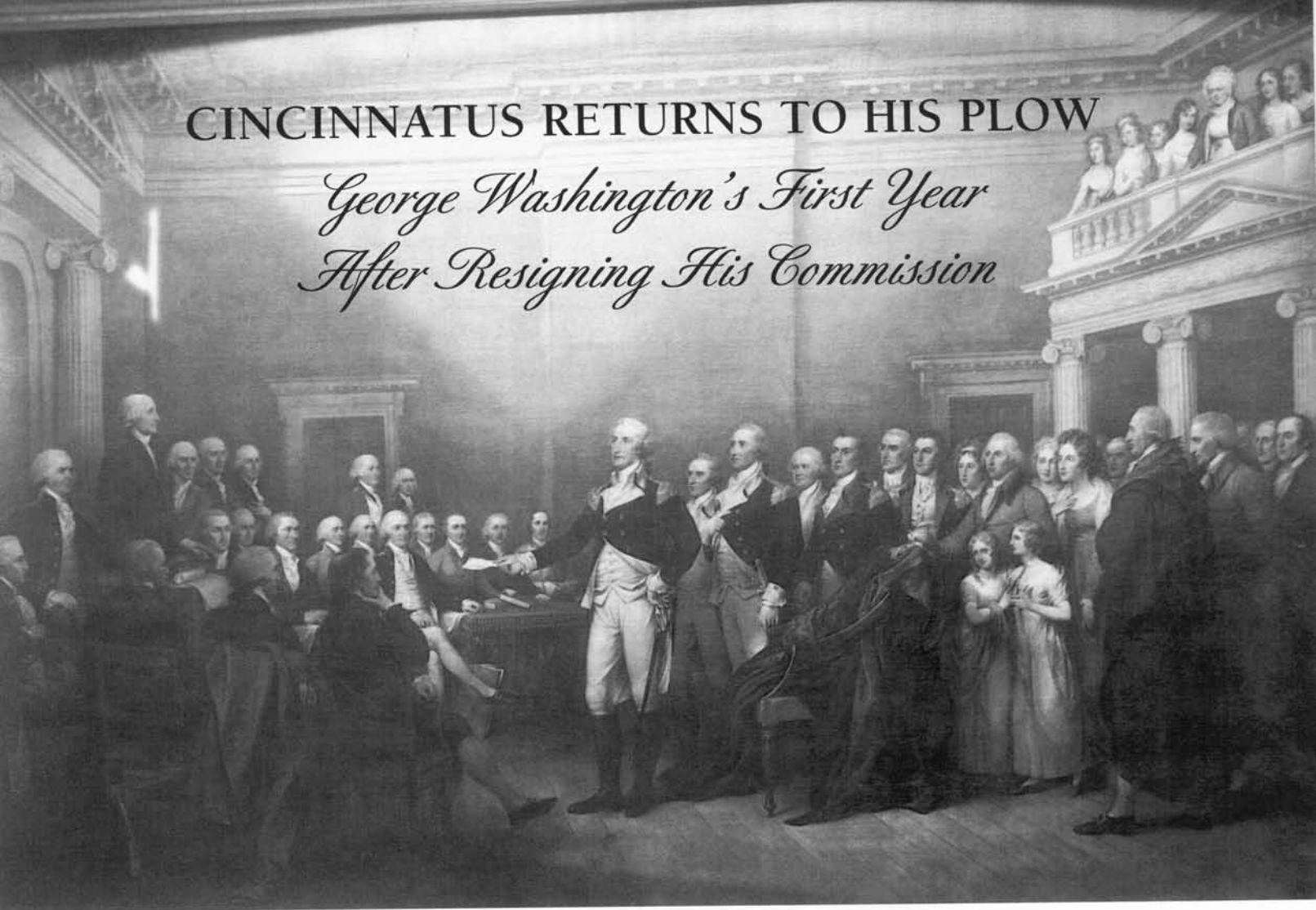
Referring to research for his book, *The Path Between the Seas*, historian David McCullough wrote, "... [T]o open up a box of ... death certificates ... and to read the personal details of those who died—their names, their age, where they came from, height, color of eyes—was a connection with the reality of them, the mortal tale of that undertaking [building the Panama Canal], that one can never find by doing the conventional kind of research."¹ We expect our grandchildren and their grandchildren to enjoy this same visceral experience and joy in discovery and understanding.

Access to the American historical record is my passion. Finding more and better ways for citizens to locate historical records, and making authentic sources (not just their descriptions) reachable by all, can make a difference in people's lives. That's what drives me. I suspect it is what drives you, our *Annotation* readers. ♦

¹ David McCullough interview with Bruce Cole, from *Humanities*, (May/June 2003), electronic version.

CINCINNATUS RETURNS TO HIS PLOW

George Washington's First Year After Resigning His Commission



BY DAVID R. HOTH

The Revolutionary War having come to a successful conclusion, on December 23, 1783, Gen. George Washington, commander in chief of the Continental Army, appeared before Congress in Annapolis, where he concluded a gracious address with the words: "Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of Action—and bidding an Affectionate farewell to this August body under whose orders I have so

long acted, I here offer my Commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life."¹

THE NHPRC SUPPORTS
THE PAPERS OF GEORGE
WASHINGTON PROJECT

Freed at last from the arduous military responsibilities that had absorbed his life since his appointment in June 1775, Washington was now able, he wrote Lafayette, to

pursue "those tranquil enjoyments, of which the Soldier who is ever in pursuit of fame . . . can have very little conception."²

For most individuals, even for most public figures, the choice of retirement is essentially a private act, but such was not the case for Washington. Although he had been selected to become commander in chief as a prominent Virginian, his struggles to maintain an army in the field had given him a deeper understanding of the necessity for cooperation among the former colonies and a commitment to nationhood that made him among the first Americans. By the 1780s, if not before, Washington had come to embody the Revolutionary cause for many, perhaps most, Americans and for virtually all of America's allies. Because his response to the coming of peace would inevitably influence their understanding of the Revolu-

tion's meaning, Washington's decision to "become a private Citizen on the Banks of the Potomack"³ was influenced as much by his public responsibility as by his private inclination.

The December 1783 resignation itself was the culmination of an extended process. For the last year of his military career, Washington had wrestled with the problem of keeping together an army while the prospects for peace strengthened. Even after March 1783, when Washington received reliable news that a preliminary treaty "as full & satisfactory, as we have reason to expect," had been signed, the "contingent" nature of the agreement dictated

ABOVE: This painting by John Trumbull shows Gen. George Washington resigning his commission to the Continental Congress in Annapolis, Maryland, December 23, 1783. Photograph, Library of Congress.

that the army be "prepared for either alternative, War or Peace," as it might "be obliged to worry thro' another Campaign, before we arrive at that happy period, which is to crown all our Toils."⁴ However, Congress' inability to command resources from the states became a greater problem as the sense of crisis waned, and the army grew restive under long neglect.

Suggestions that the army should not disband until Congress had properly provided for the needs of its officers had circulated since late 1782. In March 1783, shortly before he received notification of the preliminary treaty, Washington had to call a meeting to address such a proposal circulating among the officers at Newburgh. Moreover, in June 1783 a soldiers' mutiny arose in the Pennsylvania line, although it was quickly quelled. The danger of estrangement between the army and the citizenry prompted Washington to manage his resignation in a way that would strengthen Congress and support justice for his officers.

On June 8, 1783, Washington issued a circular to the state governors stating his intention "to return to that domestic retirement, which, it is well known, I left with the greatest reluctance." He took the occasion to argue the need for strengthening the Federal Government lest the divided states "become the sport of European politics." Washington listed four things "essential . . . to the existence of the United States as an Independent Power."

In discussing the first, "An indissoluble Union of the States under one Federal Head," he wrote that every state must comply with the "late proposals & demands of Congress." The second, "A sacred regard to Public Justice," referred to the states' obligation to discharge the debts incurred by Congress for defense of the country, not the least of which was compensation owed to army officers.

"The adoption of a proper Peace Establishment," according to a plan that Washington had submitted to Congress in May, included a relatively small standing army and militia well organized on principles consistent among the states. Also included were arsenals and factories for military stores, and academies for military instruction; in the circular letter Washington re-emphasized the need for uniform training of the militia. The final essential was the "prevalence of a Disposition" among the

people that "will induce them to forget their local prejudices & policies, to make those mutual concessions which are requisite to the general prosperity."⁵

Washington's December 1783 resignation, then, fulfilled multiple purposes. By resigning his command, he supported the principle of civilian control of the military and also focused attention on the role of Congress in guiding the Revolutionary struggle.

There was also an important symbolic dimension to the resignation. Those who had made the linkage of America with the Roman Republic recognized a parallel between Washington, who had reluctantly accepted command of the American army,



Bust of George Washington by French sculptor Jean Eugène Robert Houdin. Photograph, The Papers of George Washington.

and Cincinnatus, who had left his farm to defend Rome. By replicating the resignation of Cincinnatus, Washington put a capstone on his fame and provided evidence of his own virtue, and thus the virtue of the American cause. The proof that he sought no office or honors increased his reputation, making him even more of a rallying symbol that united Americans who might otherwise have failed to achieve the cohesion necessary for strength.

Washington's correspondence of this period is filled with references to the opportunity and necessity for America to establish a "National character" or reputation. His own reputation would do much to increase America's prestige in the world, and it might also enable him to shape the policies he thought necessary to create a character respected among nations.

To fully establish that reputation, however, it was necessary that Washington indeed retire to his plantation. Fortunately, that requirement was in perfect accord with Washington's inclinations. After 9 years of "Arduous employment at the expence of my domestk ease & happi<ness>,"⁶ Washington was no doubt pleased to relinquish a command that could bring no further laurels

and return to his much neglected plantation.

Washington soon found that "An almost entire suspension of every thing which related to my own Estate, for near nine years, has accumulated an abundance of work for me." At Mount Vernon he undertook several improvements. His plans for improvement of the house required him to seek out skilled workers. Hearing in March that "a Ship with Palatines" had arrived at Baltimore, he requested Tench Tilghman to secure a house joiner and a bricklayer "who really understand their profession"—adding "I would not confine you to Palatines. If they are good workmen, they may be of Assia, Africa, or Europe. They may be Mohometans, Jews, or Christian of any Sect—or they may be Athiestsm—I would however prefer middle aged, to young men. and those who have good countenances & good characters on ship board." Even so, good workmen proved elusive; Washington also asked Biddle to acquire such men in Philadelphia, and in early July he asked John Rumney, Jr., to inquire about hiring them in England. Tilghman finally engaged a joiner in late July, but it appears that a bricklayer was not to be found.⁷

Washington also spent time working on his accounts. Correspondence with Robert Morris and James Milligan in the first 4 months of 1784 show his careful attention to the settlement of his military accounts, but his domestic accounts were in more disarray. As he pointed out to Fielding Lewis, Jr., "I made no money from my Estate during the nine years I was absent from it, and brought none home with me."⁸ Many of his debtors had paid him in depreciated currency, while his creditors were yet to be paid.

Washington's claim that he was "retireing within myself" and would "view the busy world, 'in the calm lights of mild philosophy,'" was probably never an accurate picture of his state of mind. Certainly he remained intensely interested in the policies that he had supported in his circular letter, and he wrote eloquently to Virginia governor Benjamin Harrison about the dangers resulting from the "disinclination of the individual States to yield competent powers to Congress for the Foederal Government." But he was most likely forced into a somewhat public role before (*continued on page 16*)



Diplomacy and Military Innovation *after the War of 1812*

BY Daniel Preston

The near-disaster of the War of 1812 graphically revealed the weaknesses of the American Government, especially in the areas of finance and defense. When the war ended, the United States turned its attention immediately to correcting these problems. Thankfully, the country was blessed with a long period of general peace and prosperity, so that when the great crisis of the 1860s struck, the nation was strong enough to weather the storm.

Americans were generally euphoric at the favorable outcome of the war. Members of President James Madison's administration shared this sentiment, but their joy was tempered by a feeling of relief that the ordeal of the war was over and by an unnerving knowledge of the weaknesses of the country that had been revealed by the war. No sooner had the war ended than the work of recovery and reorganization began. For James Monroe, who at war's end served as both Secretary of State and Secretary of War, a major concern was the restructuring of the departments under his charge.

The long years of commercial warfare preceding the war, and the war itself, had enervated the consular and diplomatic corps. Many consular posts were unfilled or inactive. After the war ended, consuls in many ports, such as John Gavino at Gibraltar and A. M. Cock at Martinique, reopened their correspondence with the State Department. Their dispatches stated that the long absence of American commerce from their ports left them with nothing to report.

A pressing responsibility was to determine which ports required consuls, whether there were still consuls in those ports, and to appoint consuls where needed. One of the central goals of this reorganization was the restructuring of the consular service so that posts were held by American citizens with commissions from the President. The chaos of the pre-war years had

led to a system in which U. S. ministers appointed consuls, and consuls appointed vice-consuls in ports where they were needed. In many cases, these men were not Americans but rather leading merchants in the ports where they resided. President Madison and Secretary of State Monroe sought to replace these ad hoc arrangements with a system centralized in the State Department and with appointees named by the President.

The diplomatic service was in equal disarray. The American ministerial corps was never large, but at war's end only two ministers—William H. Crawford in Paris and Thomas Sumter in Rio de Janeiro, with the exiled Portuguese Government—were at their posts. There had been no minister to Spain since 1805, and the post at London had been empty since William Pinkney left in 1811. John Quincy Adams continued to serve as minister to Russia, but he had left St. Petersburg in 1813 to assume his duties on the peace commission, leaving the diplomatic duties in Russia in the hands of a chargé d'affaires.

The end of the war presented not only an opportunity, but also a very real need to appoint ministers to the major capitals and station lesser diplomatic agents in other nations. The succeeding 2 years saw a host of new appointments: John Quincy Adams to Great Britain, William Pinkney to Russia, and Albert Gallatin to France. George Erving was appointed minister to Spain, but was not received by the Spanish Government. Jonathan Russell's appointment as minister to Sweden was rejected by the Senate.

Although Monroe left his post as Secretary of War shortly

ABOVE: James Monroe, L.L.D., President of the United States, in an 1817 engraving based on a painting by C.B. King. Photograph, Library of Congress.

THE NHPRC ENDORSES
THE PAPERS OF JAMES
MONROE PROJECT

after the war ended (he served in that capacity from late August 1814 through March 1815), the problems of military reorganization, demobilization, and national defense occupied his time and continued to hold his interest long after the war ended. Monroe began work on a plan for reorganization of the army almost immediately upon assuming the duties of the War Department.

The war had underscored the inadequacies of the militia as a reliable means of defense. When an administration proposal to draft militia into national service failed, Monroe, along with key members of Congress (including his future Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun) hammered out a plan that supplemented the small Regular Army with volunteer regiments provided by the states. (The volunteer regiments of the Civil War were an outgrowth of this system, devised in 1814-15.) The most contentious part of the reorganization was the size of the Regular Army, an issue that became more central when the war ended and planning became focused on a peacetime army.

Monroe had always been less hostile than many of his fellow Republicans to the notion of a standing army. During the reorganization process, the Secretary advocated an army of at least 20,000 men, arguing that the United States needed a larger army to patrol the expanding western frontier and to provide adequate defense for the states. The final provision for an army of 10,000 fell far short of what he saw as necessary. This reorganization became an administrative nightmare, as army officers and their supporters bombarded the War Department with letters seeking retention and maintenance of rank in the reduced and reorganized peacetime army. Monroe left the War Department in mid-March 1815, but afterwards he spent many weeks working with the acting Secretary of War, Alexander J. Dallas, on the onerous task of assigning army officers to their new positions.

One part of the reorganization was a restructuring of the military academy. Like many Americans, Monroe was dismayed at the poor leadership provided by the existing officer corps. Convinced that the army needed professional officers, Monroe worked with army officers to devise an improved plan of governance and instruction for the academy, and in February 1815 issued a new set of rules and regulations. The military academy remained of great interest to Monroe; when a major dispute erupted during his Presidency between the superintendent and the teaching staff, Monroe intervened personally to resolve the matter.

A key element of postwar military strategy was the construction of an adequate system of coastal fortifications. British squadrons had operated freely in Chesapeake Bay and other American waters throughout the war. Monroe in particular was incensed at the country's inability to expel them. During the summer of 1813, he proposed an assault on the British base on Blackstone Island at the mouth of the Potomac River, a plan that

was rejected when President Madison decided that the United States lacked the ability to launch a successful attack.

In 1815 and 1816, Congress passed legislation to fund the rebuilding of existing fortifications and the construction of new ones. Monroe became an enthusiastic proponent of this plan to line the coast from New Orleans to Detroit with forts. Shortly after becoming President in 1817, Monroe set out on a tour of inspection, visiting installations from Baltimore to Portland and westward to Detroit. In 1818 he inspected proposed sites for a navy yard on Chesapeake Bay, and in 1819 he visited military posts from Norfolk to Savannah.

Monroe very much wanted to inspect the works at the mouth of Mobile Bay and at New Orleans, but the great distances involved prevented him from doing so. Perhaps the greatest disappointment to Monroe during his Presidency was the curtailment of funding for this program. The President argued strenuously for the restoration of funds, particularly for the forts along the Gulf of Mexico, but economic pressures of the depression and partisan fighting in Congress left his efforts unsuccessful.

A key element of postwar military strategy was the construction of an adequate system of coastal fortifications.

Paradoxically, Monroe achieved his greatest contribution to national security in the postwar years (and long afterwards) in his service as Secretary of State. Although the war had ended, friction continued along the Canadian border between American and British troops. Leaders on

both sides worried that one of these minor border incidents might escalate into a renewal of the war between the two countries. In 1815, Monroe suggested to the British chargé d'affaires at Washington that disarmament along the Great Lakes might be a solution to the problem. Shortly thereafter, he instructed John Quincy Adams, the American minister in London, to raise the subject with the British Government.

The British were receptive to the idea and instructed Charles Bagot, the new British minister to the United States, to negotiate a treaty with Monroe that placed limitations on the number and size of warships to be permitted on the Great Lakes. The actual negotiations between Monroe and Bagot proceeded quickly during the summer of 1816, but Great Britain did not ratify the treaty until after Monroe assumed the Presidency in March 1817. Consequently, the resulting Rush-Bagot Treaty, which was the first step in the eventual disarmament of the Canadian-American border, bore the name of Richard Rush, the acting Secretary of State who signed it. However, credit for the treaty belonged to Monroe, and it was a fitting reward for his labors in the trying years following the end of the War of 1812. ♦

DANIEL PRESTON IS EDITOR OF *THE PAPERS OF JAMES MONROE*.

An Overlooked War

BY Scott Roney

A military conflict often lost in the historical imagination of the American people, the Mexican War began and ended during the Presidency of James K. Polk (1845–49). Contemporaries and those few historians who address the war tend to focus on the debate about the causes of the war. This debate can cause discomfort, for notions of “slaveocracy” or unabashed Manifest Destiny do not reflect favorably upon Americans’ view of themselves.

A more subtle interpretation, that American expansionism furthered Jeffersonian ideals of the agrarian economy and individualism, was not lost on the Whig opponents of the war in the 1840s, but that line of argument is now largely quieted. Polk made Texas annexation a pivotal issue in the election of 1844. Outgoing President John Tyler considered Polk’s election a referendum on Texas annexation, and on his last day in office set that process in motion. There can be little doubt that pursuit of that goal precipitated the war, which lasted from 1846 to 1848.

Politicians, voters, and investors knew that war loomed. In the year preceding the war, stock prices fell. Europeans, by and large, opposed the war. President Polk’s controversial economic program emphasized lower tariffs, which provided the general government its primary source of revenues. Critics, foreign and domestic, feared that the war would expand American influence at the expense of another sovereign state. While Mexico maneuvered to accommodate British mediation, the President ordered American troops into Texas and placed naval forces on the Texas coast.

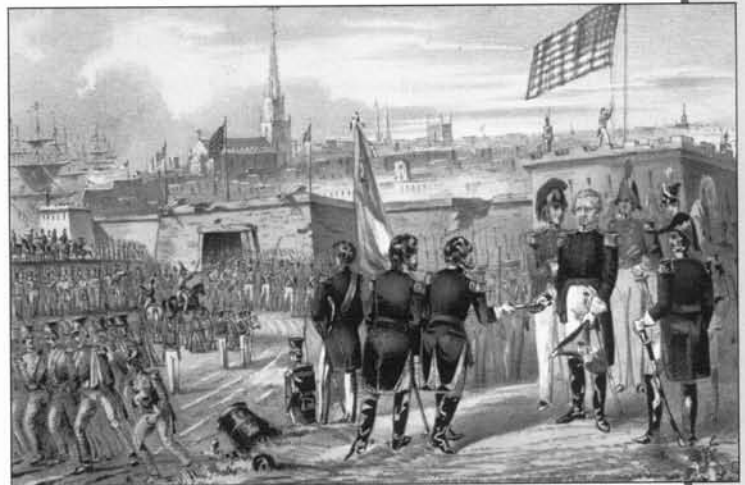
The President claimed, with some justification, that he employed diplomatic means to resolve the Texas crisis and other disputes between the United States and Mexico. Polk’s emissary, John Slidell, attempted to quiet Mexican claims to Texas and offered to purchase New Mexico and California, but Slidell failed to get talks started, and within days of those initiatives, the elected government of Mexico was overthrown by Gen. Mariano Paredes y Arillaga. When a Mexican force attacked an American patrol east of the Rio Grande River, the President asked Congress to recognize that a state of war existed between the two countries.

The Polk administration styled it a defensive war, claiming that American blood had been shed on American soil. Most Americans, whether private citizens or public officials, supported the troops in the field, which consisted primarily of volunteer militia units. Members of Congress voted to fund the military venture even as some of them held reservations about the legitimacy or desirability of the war.

One Southern senator complained that the expense of the war would leave the United States saddled with a large public debt when the country had so recently enjoyed a surplus of revenues over public expenditures.¹ A Northern senator questioned the President’s war message; he argued that the administration’s claim that the war was necessary “could not be sustained by the facts,” so congressional support for the war had to be based “on faith” rather than “confidence.”² Throughout the war and for some time afterward, the war’s necessity and the ad-

ministration’s motives remained controversial, but the American public supported the troops and celebrated their military victories.

Though some battles were hard fought and both sides sustained casualties, the United States prevailed militarily on the four main fronts of the war: northeastern Mexico, the central valley of Mexico, New Mexico, and Upper California, all of which were separated by great distances and difficult terrain.



American soldiers, sailors, and marines all took part in the fighting, and the U.S. military staged its first major amphibious assault on the gulf port of Veracruz. Early in the war, American troops conquered and occupied the north-

Mexican forces evacuating the port of Veracruz and surrendering their arms to the U.S. Army under Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott on March 29, 1847. Artist unknown. Photograph, Library of Congress.

eastern provinces, New Mexico, and Upper California, but those regions were of peripheral concern to the Mexican Government. Not until Gen. Winfield Scott led his army up the central valley into Mexico City, into the “halls of Montezuma,” in August 1847, were the Mexicans forced to recognize military defeat. However, much time elapsed before the American Congress officially sanctioned the peace in March 1848.

In the first stage of the war, Gen. Zachary Taylor carried with him a proclamation declaring the Mexican Government one of “usurpers and tyrants” who caused the war and the misery of the Mexican people.³ The proclamation further noted that, to the extent Mexican civilians behaved as neutrals in the conflict, they would be unmolested. But General Taylor’s occupation of northeastern Mexico was not without incident. Mexican civilians did not immediately warm to foreign military occupation despite the shortcomings of their own volatile government.

Looting and violence followed American military occupation in many Mexican towns.

According to one historian of the war, “the chief criminals were the Texans.” But this same historian also blamed Mexican

civilians for the instability, because they sold liquor to the Americans. He argues that U.S. officers contributed to the lawlessness because these officers became the de facto judiciary in the oc-

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JAMES K. POLK PROJECT

cupied areas and "would not convict a Mexican without legal proof of his guilt."⁴

The war in New Mexico and Upper California involved but a small number of troops. In August of 1846, less than 1,500 American soldiers under Col. Stephen Kearny occupied Santa Fe without a fight. Kearny hoisted the American flag over the provincial capital and appointed Charles Bent governor of the territory. By late September, as New Mexico appeared pacified, Kearny moved westward to California. The calm in New Mexico proved more apparent than real, however, and in January 1847, the province erupted in revolt. Governor Bent himself was among the casualties in the revolt, but a renewed American offensive under Col. Sterling Price soon defeated the resistance.

The United States' conquest of Upper California was odd, if not bizarre. As early as 1842, an American naval force had attacked and occupied a coastal town there, only to withdraw after learning that no state of war existed between the United States and Mexico. In early 1846, Capt. John C. Fremont led a small unofficial force into Upper California, ostensibly on a scientific excursion. On July 4 of that year, Fremont's meager force declared the province an independent country. One historian of the war termed this independence "farical," but soon thereafter word reached Upper California that the war was on, and the Bear Flag was quickly replaced with the Stars and Stripes.⁵

Battles then took place for Upper California, although only 2,000 combatants, Mexican and American combined, took the field. The Mexicans were divided three ways: those who wanted to remain Mexican, those who favored independence, and those who sought union with the United States. When war came, many of those who favored independence sided with Mexico, and small battles ensued. Kearny's small and beleaguered army moved into Upper California and was rescued by Com. Robert Stockton's sailors and marines.

By January 1847, Stockton and Kearny (now a general), took Los Angeles, only to find that Fremont had already negotiated a peace with Mexican authorities. Kearny's instructions from Polk's administration were "to provide a free government . . . to conciliate the inhabitants and render them friendly to the United States."⁶ Neither of these objectives was easily accomplished; riots and disorder ensued. Indeed, the American conquerors could not get along with each other.

This also proved the case in the conquest of the central valley of Mexico. American forces won battle after battle from Veracruz to Mexico City, but American officers battled amongst themselves over who should receive credit for the victories. Generals Winfield Scott, Gideon Pillow, and William Worth bickered about press reports that emphasized one or another's role in the battles. Scott brought charges against Pillow and Worth; Pillow complained directly to his old friend Polk. Little actually came from the court of inquiry, but Scott was relieved of his command in January 1848. Still, Congress afforded the general a hero's welcome on his return to the United States.

Amidst the clashing of egos that followed the conquest of Mexico City in August of 1847, General Scott imposed a "contribution" of \$150,000 on the citizens of the city, two-thirds of which was sent back to the United States to establish a soldiers' home.⁷ Yet the two countries still had to arrange a lasting peace.

The State Department's Nicholas Trist accompanied Scott's army for the purpose of negotiating peace terms with the Mexican Government. But Trist faced several difficulties in this task. Finding a responsible party with whom to negotiate placed first

among Trist's challenges. The government of Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna fell in September 1847, replaced by a provisional government with only tenuous authority. By the time a more authoritative Mexican Government had formed on November 2, Polk had already recalled Trist, although Trist himself did not learn of the recall until the 16th of that month.

Thereafter, Trist defied the President and entered into negotiations anyway. By February 2, 1848, the rogue American diplomat and Mexican commissioners had finalized their work on the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Despite Trist's lack of authority in the matter, the terms of the treaty conformed to Polk's wishes, and the President submitted it to Congress for ratification.

Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States kept the conquered territories of New Mexico and Upper California. The treaty established the "permanent" boundary between Mexico and Texas at the Rio Grande, but the changing course of the river itself caused some later mischief. The United States shored up the Mexican Government with a payment of \$15 million, and agreed to handle American citizens' claims against Mexico amounting to some \$3 million more. The U.S. Senate ratified a slightly modified version of the treaty in March, and the last American troops left Mexican soil in July 1848.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo "can be interpreted as a platform upon which the superstructure of U.S.-Mexican international accord has been built."⁸ Early problems with the treaty arose from the flawed "Disturnell map," used by the negotiators to draw the new boundaries. Other problems involved the status of some 100,000 inhabitants of the formerly Mexican territories ceded to the United States under the treaty. Sovereignty disputes occurred as American troops chased hostile Indians across the border into Mexico.

As historian Richard Griswold del Castillo has carefully documented, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo has had a rich and often checkered past. Many of its original provisions have been modified over time, yet some remain in force today. Most of the controversial issues arising from the treaty were resolved by U.S. courts and legislative bodies in favor of U.S. interests, but those occurred largely after the Presidency of James K. Polk. In 1844, candidate Polk promised the electorate he would not seek a second term; he kept his word. The military battles of the Mexican War all took place during the Polk administration; the legacy of the war lives on. ♦

SCOTT RONEY IS AN ASSISTANT EDITOR WITH THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES K. POLK PROJECT.

¹ John Calhoun, cited in John H. Schroeder, *Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 24.

² John Dix, quoted in *Ibid.*, 21.

³ Justin H. Smith, *The War with Mexico*, vol. 2 (New York: MacMillan, 1919; reprint, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), 210.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 212-13.

⁵ Otis A. Singletary, *The Mexican War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 63-64.

⁶ Charles L. Dufour, *The Mexican War: A Compact History, 1846-1848* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1968), 88.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 274.

⁸ Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 155.



President James Knox Polk in an 1846 lithograph by Peter S. Duval, based on a portrait by Albert Newsam. Photograph, Library of Congress.

"Power I think can go no further" ULYSSES S. GRANT AFTER APPOMATTOX

BY Aaron Lisec

Approaching Appomattox Court House on the morning of April 9, 1865, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant had the air of someone overtaken by the events he had set in motion. For 2 days he had exchanged notes with Gen. Robert E. Lee, carefully setting the parameters for surrender talks while his generals raced to close off Lee's last avenues of escape. The excitement and tension brought on one of Grant's migraine headaches, and he spent the night of April 8 bathing his feet in hot water and mustard. Still sick, he rose early and rode toward the front. When a messenger handed him Lee's latest reply, Grant remembered, "the instant I saw the contents of the note I was cured."¹

As any student of Civil War history knows, Grant had not dressed for what followed. "When I left camp that morning I had not expected so soon the result that was then taking place, and consequently was in rough garb."² Grant's unceremonious manner extended further than his uniform. He later described how he drafted the letter that ended 4 years of fighting. "When I put my pen to the paper I did not know the first word that I should make use of in writing the terms. I only knew what was in my mind, and I wished to express it clearly, so that there could be no mistaking it."³

Grant had been too busy orchestrating the outcome of the struggle to concern himself much with the aftermath. From frequent talks over the preceding months, Grant understood President Abraham Lincoln's inclination toward lenience. This accorded with Grant's own nature. As he sat down to write, Grant "felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly."⁴ Grant's letter to Lee laid out terms for a military, not a civil, surrender. But his thoughtfulness in allowing officers to retain side arms and all men to keep their horses, looking ahead to farm work, set the tone for a peace that would reflect Lincoln's wishes.

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Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in the parlor of the McLean House in the vicinity of Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. Photograph, National Archives.

Events soon altered that hopeful beginning. Lincoln's assassination strengthened Northern hard-liners. When Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman overstepped his authority and negotiated liberal military and civil terms in North Carolina, President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton overruled him, and sent Grant to repair the damage. Grant also disapproved of his friend Sherman's course. But his trip alarmed him, as he wrote to his wife, Julia: "The suffering that must exist in the South the next year, even with the war ending now, will be beyond conception. People who talk now of further retaliation and punishment, except of the political leaders, either do not conceive of the suffering endured already or they are heartless and unfeeling and wish to stay at home, out of danger, whilst the punishment is being inflicted."⁵

Grant consistently sought to lessen the punishment wherever he could, whether for obscure rebel soldiers caught in bureaucratic tangles, or for Lee himself. On May 6, Grant welcomed a rumor that Lee might seek Presidential pardon. "Although it would meet with opposition in the North to allow Lee the benefit of Amnesty I think it would have the best possible effect towards restoring good feeling and peace in the South to have him come in. All the people except a few political leaders South will accept what ever he does as right and will be guided to a great extent by his example."⁶

Instead, Lee was indicted for treason in

early June. Grant complained to Stanton that "Good faith as well as true policy dictates that we should observe the conditions" of the Appomattox surrender.⁷ In his official report for 1864-65, written in late June, Grant repeated his concern. In a digression he later crossed out, Grant argued that Lee would never have surrendered if he thought he might face treason charges, and would still be leading troops in the field. More philosophically, he added: "Those who have had to fight and risk their lives have learned moderation and forgiveness. Would it not be well for all to learn to yield enough of their individual views to the will of the Majority to preserve a long and happy peace?"⁸

Moderation and forgiveness made economic as well as political sense. In late May, Grant directed commanders in the southeast to "Give every facility and encouragement to getting to market Cotton and other Southern products. Let there be no seizures of private property or searching to look after Confederate Cotton. The finances of the Country demand that all articles of export should be got to market as speedily as possible."⁹ This order was repeated in mid June. But efforts to get the Southern economy moving again were impeded from the top. Grant later complained that Johnson's "denunciations of treason and his ever-ready remark, 'Treason is a crime and must be made odious,' was repeated to all those men of the South who came to him to get some assurances of safety so that they might go to work at something with the feeling that what they obtained would be secure to them."¹⁰

In the power vacuum that followed surrender and assassination, Grant saw a military role not only in reviving commerce, but also in prosecuting foreign policy. The French occupation of Mexico, while the United States was distracted, had infuriated Grant as much as the next patriot. Furthermore, Grant had a deep sympathy for the Mexican people and their aspirations, and a sense of responsibility engendered by his own role in the Mexican War. He now turned his attention in that direction.

On May 21, ordering Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele to help establish "a strong foothold upon the Rio Grande," Grant vented some of his anger toward France and Great Britain, whose backhanded support for the South had been equally irksome. "We will have to observe a strict neutrality towards Mexico, in the *French & English* sense of the word. Your own good sense and knowledge of International Law, and experience of policy pursued towards us in this war, teaches you what will be proper."¹¹ Overall charge of the border region went to Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, already Grant's weapon of choice for decisive action. On June 10, Grant ordered Sheridan to demand the return of any Confederate artillery and public property moved across the border to Matamoros. "If the demand is not complied with go and take it and all those engaged in its transfer."¹²

As tension built, Grant laid the issue before Johnson, arguing the importance of early resolution while a strong U.S. force still remained from the war. In his June report, published months later, Grant evoked the Monroe Doctrine and taunted the French: "Let foreign bayonets be withdrawn and we will see how long the Empire, *the choice of the people*, will stand."¹³ In July, Grant wrote to Johnson urging the sale of arms to insurgent Mexicans, describing the French occupation "as part and parcel of the late rebellion in the United States, and a necessary part of it to suppress before entire peace can be assured."¹⁴ The return of property helped defuse the immediate crisis, but Grant kept up his bellicose rhetoric, telling Sheridan in August that "before all the seed of the rebellion can be regarded as crushed out," the ex-Confederates "must go back to their homes. We must hold ourselves ready to demand this."¹⁵ The standoff on the Rio Grande continued, but the strident tone diminished, and events in Mexico resumed their own course.

After Appomattox, Grant found himself the most powerful military leader since George Washington, leading the largest army the nation had ever raised. Lincoln's death left him the most popular man in the Union. On April 21, he wrote Julia about the challenges and possibilities that lay ahead. "I have a Herculean task to perform and shall endeavor to do it, not to please any one, but for the interests of our great country that is now beginning to loom far above all other countries, modern or ancient." Reunited, the country "will have a strength which will enable it to dictate to all others, [to] conform to justice and right. Power I think can go no further. The moment conscience leaves, physical strength will avail nothing, in the long run."¹⁶

Grant expressed his nationalism through

his tough stand on Mexico. But even in the midst of that apparent crisis, he devoted his energy to dismantling the great armies. By July, as Grant reported later to Stanton, "the spirit in which the results of the war were accepted by the south was known; already two months had passed without a collision of any importance."¹⁷ In July and August, Grant issued a stream of orders to muster out as many men as possible. By October, Grant could report to Stanton that 800,000 men had passed "from the army to civil life so quietly that it was scarcely known, save by the welcomes to their homes, received by them."¹⁸

To replace them, Grant recommended a regular army of 80,000, enough to meet "the possibility of future local disturbances arising from ill feeling left by the war or the unsettled questions between the white and black races at the south."¹⁹ As 1865 closed, racial conflict had taken up surprisingly little of Grant's attention since Appomattox. At Johnson's request, Grant made a 2-week tour of the South in late November and early December, and returned "satisfied that the mass of thinking men of the South accept the present situation in good faith."²⁰ He was inclined to blame most discord on the black soldier, "imbued with the idea that the property of his late master should by right belong to him, or at least should have no protection from the colored soldier."²¹ Additional blame went to Freedmen's Bureau agents accused of promising land redistribution. Grant predicted gradual progress. "It cannot be expected that the opinions held by men at the South for years can be changed in a day, and therefore the freedmen require for a few years not only laws to protect them, but the fostering care of those who

will give them good counsel and in whom they rely."²²

Such was Grant's hope at the end of 1865. It was not well founded. White Southerners inclined to resist soon regrouped and began in earnest the decade-long struggle that dominated both of Grant's terms as President. Twenty years later, the dying Grant closed his *Memoirs* on another optimistic note. "I feel that we are on the eve of a new era, when there is to be great harmony between the Federal and Confederate. I cannot stay to be a living witness to the correctness of this prophecy; but I feel it within me that it is to be so."²³ To the last, the man who led the nation in war was determined to see it secure in peace. ♦

AARON LISEC IS AN ASSISTANT EDITOR OF *THE PAPERS OF ULYSSES S. GRANT*.

¹ *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (New York, 1885-86), II: 485.

² *Ibid.*, 489.

³ *Ibid.*, 492.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 489.

⁵ John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (PUSG) (Carbondale, Ill., 1967-), 14: 433.

⁶ PUSG, 15: 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 109-10.

¹⁰ *Memoirs*, II: 510.

¹¹ PUSG, 15: 81.

¹² *Ibid.*, 139.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁶ PUSG, 14: 429.

¹⁷ PUSG, 15: 357.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 358.

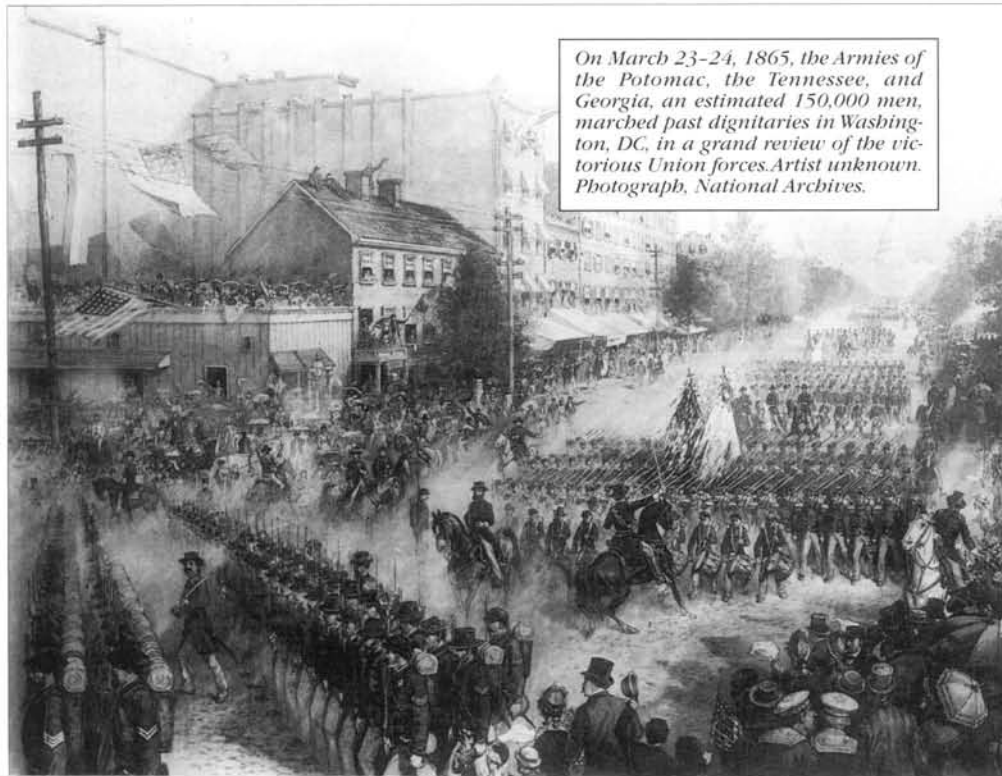
¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 434.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 435.

²² *Ibid.*, 437.

²³ *Memoirs*, II: 553.



On March 23-24, 1865, the Armies of the Potomac, the Tennessee, and Georgia, an estimated 150,000 men, marched past dignitaries in Washington, DC, in a grand review of the victorious Union forces. Artist unknown. Photograph, National Archives.

A Preview of Presidential Reconstruction

Abraham Lincoln's assassination elevated Andrew Johnson to the Presidency at a critical moment in American history, enabling him to put his own stamp on Reconstruction. Facing the tasks of reuniting a divided nation and recasting a Southern social order unsettled by the emancipation of 4 million slaves, Johnson drew on his wartime experience as military governor of his home state of Tennessee. He held the post, with headquarters in Nashville, from his appointment by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in March 1862 until his election as vice president in November 1864.¹

Johnson served as military governor during the North's transformation of the nation's conflict from a war for the Union into a war against slavery, and was himself transformed in the process. Initially an ardent opponent of emancipation whose influence helped secure Tennessee's exemption from Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, by the end of that year Johnson had become convinced that the Union could not be restored without freeing the slaves.

In late November 1863, Johnson gave his views on emancipation and related subjects during an interview with the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, a body appointed 7 months earlier by Secretary of War Stanton to investigate the condition of former slaves and recommend measures to help them defend and support themselves.² The interview came amid a burgeoning debate about national reunification, the future of the emancipated slaves, and the character of the social order that would replace slavery. Within weeks, President Lincoln would issue a proclamation promulgating his own plan of reconstruction, and Republicans in Congress would begin deliberations that ended

in the creation of a Federal relief agency, the Freedmen's Bureau, in March 1865. While some authorities were pressing

the Federal Government to actively supervise the former slaves' transition to freedom, Johnson had a different course in mind. Reluctant to establish contraband camps or to confiscate property for the benefit of the freedpeople, and convinced that private employment with minimal governmental oversight was the most effective means to make

ANDREW JOHNSON'S INTERVIEW WITH THE AMERICAN FREEDMEN'S INQUIRY COMMISSION, NOVEMBER 1863

BY STEVEN F. MILLER

slaves into free men and women, Johnson articulated positions that would put him at odds with the Republicans during his Presidency.

The interview is transcribed exactly as written, with no correction of nonstandard spelling, capitalization, or punctuation. Dividers mark material omitted for reasons of space.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Nov. 23^d, 1863.

Testimony of Gov. Andrew Johnson.

Q Suppose the slaves emancipated throughout the South, do you think they would be able to maintain their position, without any interference on the part of the Federal Gov't, to make up to them the disadvantages they have incurred in slavery, in the way of education & the capability of taking care of themselves?

A I don't think they will be in a condition to do it. There is a vast difference between the mass of the negroes in South Carolina, & the mass of negroes here. We have found that by undertaking to gather them into contraband camps, we got only the dross; and instead of doing that, we now tell the masters that they ought to begin at once to give them employment and pay them for their work; and the moment that begins, the whole question is settled. No longer ago than week before last, there was a gentleman here who wanted to go into the mak-

ing of cotton quite extensively, with hired negro labor. Women & children come in here in great numbers, and say they need a house and something to eat, and some of them will say, "My husband is in the service"; and they expect the Gov't will support them. I tell them, "There are white women whose husbands are in the service, and they have to work. The idea of freedom is not to do nothing; you must go to work. We have not brought you away from your masters, but we are not going to send you back. You must go to work and depend upon yourselves, and live by your own industry. We will give you a few days rations, and you must go round and get work." And in most instances they have done so; and we find this plan works much better than getting them all together in that squalid, debased condition which we see in contraband camps. I have thought it was better to set the negroes to work, paying them wages, than to make soldiers of them, because a soldier's life is a lazy one; but by setting the negroes at work, we give them an idea of contracts, and when the rebellion is over, they will be in a better condition to take care of themselves than if they were put into camps. A good many will not go into the service, but will go to work, and so we are able to employ them in both capacities. The women are kept at work cooking & washing, so that all are employed. Our experience so far has proved that to be the best policy.

I think the negro population in this State can be better managed than in South Carolina or Georgia, if we can only go along and give them work. There are hundreds of thousands of negroes here who will stay here, and almost perish in the gutters, rather than colonize. They will stay, unless there is some compulsory process to drive them away.

Q Should you consider it necessary that Superintendents should be appointed to take care of the women and children, put them on plantations, pay them wages, and reimburse the Gov't from the proceeds of their labor?

A We have been talking about that here, too. There will be a good deal of property confiscated, but it has not been yet. So far as

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we can carry out the policy, in pursuance of law, I think it had better be done; but I have thought it not best to take property until the whole thing is settled. While there are hundreds of thousands of white families perfectly destitute, because the Gov't has not given them that protection in time, which they ought to have, I should not be disposed to cut up the plantations and put the negro women and children upon them. Such a course would create a good deal of feeling.

Q You think, then, they should be left alone?

A I think it is better to leave things as they are than to commence the other system, because many are making contracts now, and in many instances, their owners are paying them wages.

The idea that cotton cannot be made by white men is all a mistake. I was born and raised in a slave State, and I can remember when I went into the cotton field and picked out cotton, and I could do more than any negro boy I ever saw; and if all the Alabama country was taken, and cut up into reasonable sized farms, with a white population, and the negroes hired, at fair wages, they would make more cotton than they could with slave labor, and raise their own meat & bread. It is true, no one would raise so many bales as the large planters have raised, but the aggregate product would be as great. If the rebellion was all settled up, I think a large portion of the servants would go right back, if they were stimulated with the offer of fair wages for their work.

Q To what extent do you think the slaveholders of Tennessee fall into the plan of hiring negroes?

A I don't think I have sufficient data to approximate a conclusion. A good many, however, are looking to that, and some have made application and want to go into it. If we could have two or three instances that succeeded pretty well, a large proportion of the slave labor would be absorbed.

Q You think the best way is to let that thing work itself out as it is, without Gov't interference?

A I think so.



My idea is, that with proper management, free labor can be made more profitable than



President Andrew Johnson. Artist unknown. Photograph, Library of Congress.

slavery in a very few years. This will place the negroes upon & within the great Democratic rule; it will unfetter industry, & if they have the talents and enterprise in them to rise, let them come. In adjusting this thing, the object is, to make them take the best and most beneficial relation to society. Now, here are the women and children, who are incapable of making contracts. Sometimes, the children have no parents at all, and have become a charge upon the community. Now, we have in the State statutes in reference to orphan children, and the question comes up if a large portion of this negro population might not be made to take a much better position in society through the means of orphan asylums & similar institutions. When everybody occupies the same position in reference to slavery, everybody will be in favor of that system which will make their condition advantageous to society. There will be no squabbling when that takes place. There must be vagrant laws for the negroes, as there are for whites, and laws to prevent their congregating in improper assemblies. So we should go on, & the time would come when black boys, as well as white, would be put to apprenticeships. I was a regular indentured apprentice myself, and I don't think it would hurt them at all. And these things are just as much needed for a great many of the whites as for the blacks.



Q What do you consider the legal status of the slaves in Tennessee?

A So far as emancipating the negroes in Tennessee is concerned, I don't think you need to trouble yourself much about that. I think that is already settled.

Q Have you any colored troops here?

A Oh, yes, we have three regiments here.

Q How have they acted?

A They have performed much better than I expected. I was very agreeably disappointed. The negro takes to discipline easier than white men, and there is more imitation about them than about white men. Then another thing: when the idea is in his mind, that the connection between him and his master is broken, and he has got white men to stand by him and give him encouragement, and a gov't which says, "There is freedom before you — put down the enemies of the country; and if you desert, there is death behind you," my impression is that, after a little while, he will fight. Of course, he must have some experience. The thing succeeded much better than I expected, and the recruiting is still going on.

I object to massing the colored people together, and think they should be scattered as much as possible among the whites, because the influence of the whites upon them is beneficial, whereas the influences that surround them when congregated together are not calculated to elevate or improve them.³

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¹ On Johnson as military governor, see the editor's introduction to *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, ed. Paul H. Bergeron, LeRoy P. Graf, et al., 16 vols. to date (Knoxville, Tenn., 1967-), 6: xxv-lxxviii.

² On the commission, see John G. Sproat, "Blueprint for Radical Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History* 23 (Feb. 1957): 25-44.

³ Excerpts from testimony of Gov. Andrew Johnson before the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Nov. 23, 1863, filed with O-328 1863; Letters Received, ser. 12; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917; Record Group 94; National Archives and Records Administration.

GEORGE C. MARSHALL

AND

WAR'S UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

BY Larry I. Bland

Set aside, no human activity produces more unintended consequences than war. Naturally, military planners seek to eliminate the contingent, but an old military cliché asserts that carefully drawn plans tend to disintegrate in the face of an actual enemy. Despite post-Pearl Harbor expectations of eventual victory, who in America could have predicted the war's socioeconomic changes or that the United States would emerge as one of only two superpowers.

George C. Marshall, chief among planners, organizers, and administrators of the U.S. military during World War II, took office as U.S. Army chief of staff only hours after Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, and remained in that post for 63 months. When Germany capitulated on May 8, 1945, Marshall had 8.3 million U.S. Army personnel under his command.

Marshall's normal method of delegating power and authority was to appoint a person with excellent credentials, keep a discrete eye on his or her progress, act as a high-level facilitator or political defender where needed, and otherwise let the subordinate do the job. But Marshall intended that theater commanders not simply be left to their own devices on important policies.

For example, one job army leaders assumed that they would have—albeit temporarily—was running the occupation of enemy countries and dealing with citizens of liberated countries: in short,

civil affairs. A few weeks after Pearl Harbor, the Army authorized a School of Military Government at the University of Virginia. Early in the war, leaders in Washington assumed that civil affairs would be run by civilians, but the Roosevelt administration never followed

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through, leaving the army to plan, run, and finance operations (including the guarding of monuments and museums) in liberated and occupied countries. (A documentary edition on this subject is Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, eds., *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, a volume in the U.S. Army in World War II series [Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1966].)

At home, Marshall was inundated by "floods of letters," newspaper editorials, and political speeches in the first half of 1945 for allegedly sending partially trained 18-year-olds into combat. Congress threatened to pass laws prohibiting the use of such young men in combat until they had a year's training. Marshall vigorously defended the use of 18-year-olds and denied that they were unready for combat. This debate was closely connected to the question of how best to maximize U.S. postwar military potential.

Marshall disliked the inequities of the draft; fairness required that all fit 18-year-old males be given a year's training before going into the reserves. Universal military training (UMT) was a major domestic issue in the years immediately after World War II, and Marshall

was a vigorous supporter, working in numerous ways to overcome opposition, which was particularly strong among church, higher education, union, naval, and National Guard leaders. In September 1950, after the UMT drive had failed, the nation's ground forces' effectiveness had precipitously declined, and the Korean War had broken out, Marshall was called upon to reprise, as Secretary of Defense, his 1939–42 mobilization efforts.

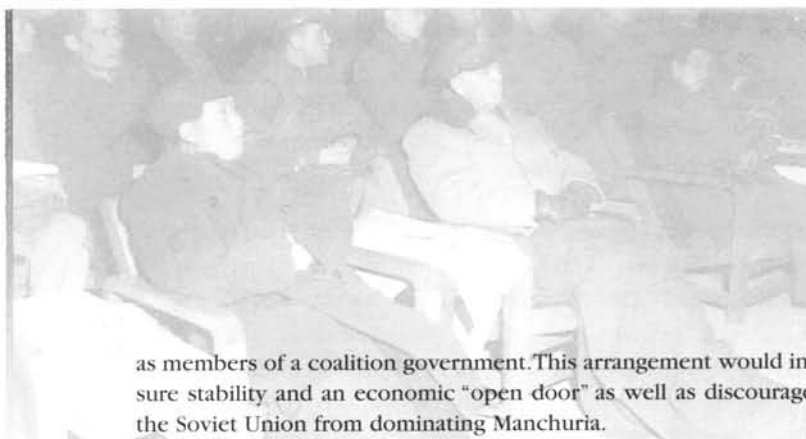
Having been on active duty since 1902 and having served as Chief of Staff of the Army for more than 5 years, the "organizer of victory," as Winston Churchill had called him, expected to retire soon after V-J Day. President Truman, an ardent admirer, was not anxious to see Marshall leave Washington, and his designated successor, Dwight Eisenhower, was in no hurry to take over the job of demobilizing the army and demoting thousands of officers. With profound relief, Marshall retired officially on November 18, 1945, picked up his last medal on the 27th, and headed home to Leesburg, Virginia, to begin the traditional fading-away of old soldiers.



Secretary of State George C. Marshall reports to the nation on April 28, 1947, on the disappointing results of the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference. Shortly thereafter, the United States inaugurated the European Recovery Program, also known as the Marshall Plan. Photograph, George C. Marshall Research Library.

It was not to be. The U.S. ambassador to China, Patrick J. Hurley, resigned on November 27 with a public blast at administration policy and the State Department. The last thing the Truman administration needed in late 1945, just as potentially highly partisan congressional hearings on the Pearl Harbor attack were beginning and as the 1946 election campaign season was heating up, was a fight over U.S. policy toward China. The popular Marshall might manage to defuse the situation, so Truman asked if the general would go to China to attempt to mediate its increasingly vicious civil war. Marshall naturally said yes, but he did not appreciate the honor, and his wife was furious.

Despite wartime hopes that China would emerge as one of the postwar world's "four policemen," that country remained a minor Allied theater during the war. Urgently needed reforms in China's military system was unattainable. Nevertheless, after the war the United States flew thousands of Chinese troops to reoccupy cities in the country's north and east, some 50,000 U.S. Marines landed in north China to guard key facilities, and hundreds of ships transported thousands of Japanese soldiers and civilians out of China to the Home Islands. The United States wanted China unified under Nationalist party leader Chiang Kai-shek, but with the Communists



LEFT: Chinese Communist Party chairman Mao Zedong (left) and Gen. George C. Marshall watch a film during the general's visit to the Communist Party's headquarters in Yan'an, March 4, 1946. Madame Mao is seated in the front row beside Marshall. Photograph, George C. Marshall Research Library.

as members of a coalition government. This arrangement would insure stability and an economic "open door" as well as discourage the Soviet Union from dominating Manchuria.

While Chiang Kai-shek did not desire Marshall's mediation, he could hardly reject it, given his dependence upon American funding and supplies. Communist leader Mao Zedong considered Marshall a representative of the "progressive" faction in U.S. politics and believed that Stalin favored the mediation. To everyone's surprise, Marshall managed to get both sides to sign a cease-fire agreement on January 10, 1946. This was but a precursor to the more important and difficult negotiations for political consolidation and military integration. These, Marshall thought, might be achieved with pressure and funding from the United States. For 12 months he met frequently with Nationalist leaders, Communist delegate Zhou Enlai, and other groups and individuals seeking compromise solutions.

In March and April 1946, Marshall lobbied in Washington for increased U.S. aid to China. By this time, however, both sides were returning to their previous conviction that military victory was the only solution. Marshall believed that neither side could win an all-out civil war, and many Chinese pleaded with him to continue his efforts. President Truman had already indicated to Marshall that he should become Secretary of State, but the general continued to seek a solution for China.

After mid-1946, Marshall began looking for a "third force" in China, a coalition of leaders and non-party men, to act as a balance of power between Nationalists and Communists. When he finally left China in early January 1947, he released a lengthy statement on the China situation that criticized both sides, and that he hoped would help mobilize Chinese and world opinion to force the warring parties to compromise.

It did not, and his inability to solve China's political problems was a key point around which his conservative enemies would coalesce. The China Lobby in the United States firmly believed that massive American intervention in the civil war would enable the Nationalists to win. Marshall was certain that it would not; in his opinion, a large U.S. military presence would simply encourage Chinese xenophobia and aid the Communists. In 1947, few people anywhere thought that the Communists could win the war; when they did in 1949, the accusation by conservatives that Marshall's policies were key factors in the U.S. "loss" of China would haunt him and his memory for decades.

By the time Marshall returned to Washington, D.C., on January 21, 1947, Western Europe was beset by one of the worst winters on record. Plans for postwar recovery were shelved in favor of immediate survival. The U.S. loan expected to carry Britain for several years was buried by a blizzard. The British moved rapidly to cut their expenses in Greece, Turkey, Palestine, and elsewhere. Western European Communist parties were emboldened, and middle-class morale plummeted.

The administration's major pronouncement on the crisis was the Truman Doctrine speech of March 12, 1947. Marshall, who was in Paris on his way to the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference,

tried unsuccessfully to modify the speech's crusading tone (it called for the United States to oppose Communism everywhere), which was obviously not backed by military capability.

Marshall's mediation mission to China seemingly inured him to drawn-out negotiations. His assumption that Joseph Stalin was a realist who ultimately would agree to a compromise settlement with the Western powers was worn away over weeks of meetings. Marshall ultimately concluded that the Communists desired social and economic chaos in Europe, as they had in China the previous year, assuming that Communism and the Soviet Union would benefit.

By the time the Foreign Ministers' Conference ended on April 24, its chief accomplishment was the firm establishment in Marshall's mind that the Soviet Union had no desire for an early restoration of order in Germany. Moreover, his numerous talks with the French and British foreign ministers and his personal observations on the way to and from the conference convinced Marshall that Europe's economic plight was severe and that the United States had to do something quickly to prevent the complete breakdown of Western Europe's societies. The patient was sinking, he told a nationwide radio audience on April 28, while the doctors deliberated.

Marshall directed that his new departmental think tank, the Policy Planning Staff, be activated immediately with George F. Kennan as chairman. Kennan and Under Secretary of State Will Clayton were particularly important in generating the ideas that Marshall put together for a brief, consciously low-key speech at Harvard University on June 5. The speech warned of Europe's plight, asserted that the United States could successfully help economically, but insisted that the initiative come from a coordinated Europe (a political requirement for congressional acceptance, as Marshall knew). Meanwhile, Marshall worked carefully to reassure Republican senator and potential presidential candidate Arthur Vandenberg that the program's costs would not bust the budget.

By the time European Recovery Program legislation was submitted to Congress in December 1947, President Truman and the press had taken to calling the idea the "Marshall Plan." (Typically, Marshall never used the term, because he thought it unseemly to confer credit for a collective accomplishment on one person.) In addition to testifying before Congress, at which Marshall was always effective, he launched a major public relations campaign to support the plan, giving speeches to key groups.

Once implemented, the Marshall Plan organization—which was autonomous, run by a Republican businessman, separate from the State Department, and limited to 4 years' duration—worked without Marshall. Nevertheless, he deserved being named *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" for 1947 and the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953 for his part in perhaps the most effective single foreign policy initiative ever implemented by the United States.

High civilian office, Peace Prize, approbation, hatred: all were results of accepting the demands of public service after army retirement; all were unintended consequences of the status George C. Marshall had gained during World War II. ♦

LARRY I. BLAND AND SHARON RITENOUR STEVENS ARE EDITORS WITH THE PAPERS OF GEORGE CATLETT MARSHALL PROJECT. THEIR FIFTH VOLUME, "THE FINEST SOLDIER," JANUARY 1, 1945–JANUARY 7, 1947, WILL BE PUBLISHED IN 2003 BY THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS.

ous of triumphs, the war proved a Pyrrhic victory for Anglo-Americans (and a disaster for Native Americans, Acadians, and, to a lesser extent, the inhabitants of New France).

For Franklin and his fellow Anglo-Americans, the results of the war were a major disappointment. Rather than being rewarded as major contributors to victory, they were subjected to abuse by the British government. Attempts to curtail the political and economic semi-independence of the American colonies began soon before the outbreak of hostilities, but the process was accelerated by the war itself.

Victory brought for Britain increased debt, a larger army, and increased responsibilities. For Americans, it brought economic dislocation, as well as new taxes and threats to self-government. Franklin, once so proud of the British Empire and America's role in it, eventually found himself treated as a traitor to the British crown. Finally, he was forced to choose between the Britain he loved and the colonies that had chosen him as their representative. The French and Indian War helped to dissolve the cement that held the British Empire together.

The successful conclusion of the American Revolution brought its own disappointments. Indeed, these disappointments began even before the war's end. Soon after the decisive victory at Yorktown, the French fleet sailed away, leaving the British still in possession of New York, Charleston, and Savannah. To the frustration of Americans, the war continued for another year. Casualties were small, but the British were able to strengthen their blockade of American ports. Helplessly, the Americans saw their ships captured and their economy disrupted.

War was brought to an end by the provisional peace treaty of November 30, 1782, confirmed in the general armistice of January 20, 1783. Although the treaty negotiated by Peace Commissioners Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams was highly favorable, it possessed troublesome articles relating to the payment of debts and the restitution of Loyalist property. When Americans proved incapable of complying with those articles, the British refused to evacuate their frontier

posts within the borders of the United States. Not until after the Jay Treaty of 1794 was the United States the master of its own territory.

It took far longer for the United States to escape the economic tutelage of Great Britain. During the peace negotiations of 1782, Franklin continually stressed that Britain would need to make sacrifices in order to achieve not only peace with the United States, but also reconciliation. A few months after the signing of the general armistice, Franklin, Adams, and Jay began negotiations for a commercial treaty with Britain that would allow the Americans to trade with Britain's remaining colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

Franklin and his colleagues viewed the British West Indies as a key market for American produce, one that was crucial to the development of American trade. British Foreign Secretary Charles James Fox, however, believed Britain had to restrict that trade to British ships in order to train sailors for the Royal Navy, a vital matter for British security. In spite of the efforts of David Hartley, the British negotiator, the talks failed. Fox saw no need for concessions to the economically and militarily weak United States.

To the regret of the American commissioners, the final peace treaty of September 3, 1783, merely confirmed the terms of the preliminary Anglo-American peace agreement. Americans were left the continuing problem of what we would call neo-colonialism, their economic dependence on Great Britain. (For differing attempted solutions to that dependence, see *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* and *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*). Not until well after the War of 1812 would America become truly independent. The lessons are sobering when we look at our most recent war. We probably will face disappointments. If the overall results are unfavorable, we will know all too soon. Even if the results are favorable, it may take many decades before we see former enemies become true friends. ♦

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he wanted one.⁹

In 1783, Washington had accepted the interim presidency of the Society of the Cincinnati without having attended a meeting or seen the proceedings, probably expecting a purely ceremonial role.¹⁰ But the society proved unexpectedly controversial.

On October 10, 1783, "Cassius," supposed to be Ædanus Burke of South Carolina, wrote "Considerations on the Society or Order of Cincinnati. . . . Proving That It Creates a Race of Hereditary Patricians, or Nobility." The considerations were circulating in pamphlet form in Philadelphia by November 1783, when Washington's friend Elizabeth Willing Powel sent him a copy, describing it as "replete with good Sense." She added, "Some say there is no Cincinnatus in existence; I think there is; & after having so largely contributed to erect the glorious Fabric of Liberty in this new World he will never, intentionally, aid or support any Scheme that may eventually sap & overturn it."

According to "Cassius," the members of the Cincinnati, strengthened by "all the potent families and leading first-rate men," who would be joined to the society by honorary membership, "would soon have and hold an exclusive right to offices, honors and authorities, civil and military," leaving the rest of the populace "a mere mob of plebeians" degraded in the eyes of the new nobility. Such criticisms were being heard in New England as well, as Henry Knox warned Washington from Boston on February 21, 1784, and in March the Massachusetts legislature adopted a report declaring the society "unjustifiable" and "dangerous to the peace, liberty and safety of the United States."¹¹

The controversy threatened to deepen the division between the army officers and the country. Moreover, although "Cassius" had carefully excepted Washington from his critique, it could become a threat to Washington's own reputation. On April 8, he wrote Thomas Jefferson, seeking his "Sentiments" and those of Congress regarding the society. Jefferson replied on April 16, reiterating in more moderate language the objections to the society's provisions for hereditary

succession and honorary memberships and suggesting that congressional sentiment was generally unfriendly to the society.¹²

By the time the society met in Philadelphia in May, Washington had decided to present the members with a series of observations that echoed Jefferson's critique. It was necessary for the society to abandon the hereditary and honorary membership articles and to disavow any interference with politics. If it became impossible to make the society conformable to the people's "sense of republican principles," he threatened to withdraw his name from membership.

During the meeting, Washington continued to make his views known, opposing in particular an amended article that attempted to salvage temporarily the hereditary idea. A later draft omitted that article, and the "institution" that was finally adopted omitted any specific reference to hereditary succession or honorary membership. The address to the state societies, which explained that the changes did not impugn the "purest Principles" that actuated the society, but merely paid deference "to the prevailing Sentiments of the Community" without affecting the "two great original pillars, Friendship and Charity," was sent out "Signed by Order Go: Washington President."¹³

On this occasion, Washington was away from home for about a month, but he may have meditated a much longer trip. He wrote Philip Schuyler on May 15 that "until lately," he had intended to continue on "to the Falls of the Niagara—& probably into Canada," but was prevented by business at home and by his distaste for taking a passport from the British, who had not yet surrendered the western posts as promised.¹⁴ The proposed trip hints at Washington's interest in binding the West to the American Union.

Within a month and a half of his return, Washington began planning for "a trip to the Western Country" in September. Like so many of Washington's activities in 1784, this trip was avowedly private, to "secure" Washington's western lands.¹⁵ He traveled via Berkeley County to collect rents there.

However, the journey would also serve a public purpose. Washington was concerned

about America's tenuous hold on the West, and he made it another object of the trip "to obtain information of the nearest and best communication between the Eastern & Western Waters; & to facilitate as much as in me lay the Inland Navigation of the Potomack."¹⁶ When he returned home, he renewed efforts to form a public company for improving the navigation of the upper Potomac and linking it to the waters of the Ohio. In a letter to Virginia Governor Harrison he explained the economic advantages to the state of his project. He also pointed out "that the flanks & rear of the United States are possessed by other powers," making it necessary "to apply the cement of interest" to bind western settlers to the Union.

Taking advantage of the visit of Lafayette, whom he met in Richmond and accompanied to Annapolis, Washington met with members of both the Virginia and Maryland legislatures to urge the merits of the proposal. In mid-December, he also wrote Representative Richard Henry Lee to suggest that Congress should undertake exploration and mapping of "the Western Waters."

In consequence of these activities, Washington was appointed by the Virginia legislature to meet with commissioners from Maryland to draft a bill acceptable to both states. The bills agreed to by the commissioners were passed by the legislatures, and in May 1785, the Potomac River Company elected Washington as its president.¹⁷ Thus, by the end of 1784, Washington was no longer a private citizen observing the public political scene, but had become a political actor with a project designed to strengthen the Union. ♦

¹ A draft of this address, in Washington's handwriting, can be found in the New York Public Library: Emmet Collection.

² Feb. 1, 1784, in W.W. Abbot et al., eds. *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series* (Charlottesville, Va., 1992-97), 1:88. Hereafter cited as *Confederation Series*.

³ Washington used this phrase in a letter to Baron von Steuben on Dec. 23, 1783; item 7; Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group (RG) 46; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

⁴ Washington to Elias Boudinot, March 19, 1783; item 152; Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, RG 360, NARA; Washington to the

Chevalier de La Luzerne, March 19, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris (photocopies at Library of Congress).

⁵ June 8 is the date on the copy that Washington retained in his papers (from which the quotations are taken). The surviving recipient copies have dates from June 11 to 21.

⁶ This phrase is taken from Washington's acceptance of command in his address to the Continental Congress of June 16, 1775, in W.W. Abbot et al., eds., *The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series*. 12 vols. to date (Charlottesville, Va., 1985-), 1:1-3.

⁷ Washington to Tench Tilghman, March 24, to Clement Biddle, June 30, and to John Rumney, Jr., July 3; Tilghman to Washington, July 27, 1784; *Ibid.*, 1:232, 474, 484; 2:11-12).

⁸ Washington to Robert Morris, Jan. 4, to James Milligan, Feb. 18 and April 1, and to Fielding Lewis, Jr., Feb. 27, 1784; *Ibid.*, 1:9-11, 129-32, 249-50, 161).

⁹ Washington to Chastellux, Feb. 1, and to Benjamin Harrison, Jan. 18, 1784; *Ibid.*, 1:85, 56-57).

¹⁰ See Washington to Henry Knox, Sept. 23, 1783; Knox Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹¹ "Cassius," *Considerations on the Society or Order of Cincinnati; Lately Instituted by the Major Generals, Brigadiers, and Other Officers of the American Army: Proving That It Creates a Race of Hereditary Patricians, or Nobility; and Interspersed with Remarks on Its Consequences to the Freedom and Happiness of the Republic* (Charleston, S.C., 1783), quotes pp. 13, 21; Elizabeth Willing Powel to Washington, Nov. 15, 1783, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union; Knox to Washington, Feb. 21, 1784, *Confederation Series*, 1:142-43; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Nov. 5, 1783 and April 14, 1784.

¹² Washington to Thomas Jefferson, April 8, and Jefferson to Washington, April 16, 1784; *Confederation Series*, 1:275-76, 287-91.

¹³ See "General Meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati," May 4-18, 1784; *Ibid.*, 1:328-68.

¹⁴ Washington to Philip Schuyler, May 15, 1784; *Ibid.*, 1:384.

¹⁵ Washington to James Craik, July 10, 1784; *Ibid.*, 1:492.

¹⁶ "A Western Journey 1784," in Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., *The Diaries of George Washington* (Charlottesville, Va., 1976-79), 4:1-71, quotation p. 4.

¹⁷ Washington to Harrison, Oct. 10, and to Richard Henry Lee, Dec. 14, 1784; *Confederation Series*, 2:86-99, 181-83.

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The Last Patrol

THE VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR 1971 ENCAMPMENT *on the* NATIONAL MALL

BY Mark S. Greek

Shortly after the U. S. military conducted Operation Junction City in 1967, the largest offensive of the Vietnam War, 20 veterans of the war marched with thousands of antiwar protestors in a parade through New York City. Although the veterans did not know each other or have an official origination, they marched behind a banner that read "Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW)." Following the march, 6 of the veterans met in an attempt to form a national organization of returning servicemen who were opposed to the continued military action in Southeast Asia. Membership in the VVAW grew rapidly, eventually topping 30,000, which included many active-duty GIs stationed in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

Not since the Civil War had a conflict so divided the nation. For the first time, the horrors of war were broadcast on the local news, and a generation began to doubt the "glory of war." Warfare in Vietnam was unlike the honorable stories told by veterans of World War II and Korea. Battles were not fought in open fields or in towns, but in the mountains and the jungle. Nightly broadcasts brought the reality of war into homes across the nation, and many Americans asked, "What are we fighting for?"

As the death tolls mounted and objectives became blurred, a generation took to the streets in protest. Demonstrators shifted

ABOVE: *The Florida VVAW contingent near the U.S. Capitol, April 22, 1971. Photograph, District of Columbia Public Library, Washington Star Photograph Collection, copyright The Washington Post.*

their focus from demands for civil rights to protests against the Vietnam War. As their numbers grew and their voices became louder, they were joined by veterans who had experienced the fighting in Southeast Asia firsthand.

GIs often saw the stark realities of the war and were able to compare them to the "truths" being told to the American public. They witnessed the hatred of ordinary Vietnamese, who did not look at them as liberators, but as invaders. They also witnessed the corruption and injustices of an administration they were sent to protect. After returning to the States, many Vietnam veterans joined with the antiwar movement, calling for an immediate withdrawal of troops and governmental assistance on behalf of those who bore the scars of battle.

Postwar protesting by veterans after completion of their service was not a new phenomenon. Civil War veterans had lobbied for increased health benefits; World War I veterans descended on Washington demanding payment of their promised service bonus; and World War II veterans struggled for educational benefits. Through a grassroots effort, the VVAW sought to expose ugly truths about the Vietnam War through firsthand accounts, and to fight for the rights of returning veterans.

In the wake of the U.S. invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State student deaths, demonstrators once again descended on Washington. After years of fighting for benefits and the withdrawal of troops in various

parts of the country, the VVAW now believed it was time to take their struggle to the nation's capital. In 1971, they joined the National Peace Action Coalition and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, who planned a weeklong demonstration centered on the May Day holiday. The VVAW decided to stage their protest during the week prior to the Mayday celebration.

The VVAW notified the Government that they planned to stage a peaceful rally on the National Mall and camp out there beginning April 17. Over 1,000 Vietnam veterans responded to the call to march on Washington to voice their opinions and concerns. The event was supposed to be a minor, peaceful prelude to a larger demonstration, but it turned into a major antiwar event.

The tone of the veterans' gathering changed when the Government secured an injunction that prohibited the encampment on the Mall. Lawyers for the VVAW fought the ruling and had it reversed by the Court of Appeals, only to have it reinstated by the U.S. Supreme Court. The High Court insisted that the veterans' demonstration would threaten the functioning of the city and the Government.

The veterans, who had already set up camp on the mall, voted 480 to 400 to defy the Supreme Court's order and remain on the Mall. The 400 who voted against defiance favored staying awake all night or relocating to Bolling Air Force Base or RFK Stadium instead. Tony Discepolo, a Vietnam veteran and supporter of the VVAW's encampment, told

the *Washington Star* "We aren't going anywhere . . . we fought in Vietnamese jungles for thirteen months and now we want to stay here for five days and demonstrate to Congress that that war is wrong. I don't think that's asking too much."

Chanting "We won't go," the veterans demonstrated outside the Supreme Court Building. About 100 veterans were arrested during the picketing. Veterans selling their blood and other fundraising efforts helped cover the \$11-per-person bail costs. Public outcry and the thought of forcible arrests of Vietnam veterans, many of them seriously disabled during the war, forced the Nixon administration to reconsider its stance and ask that the injunction be lifted.

The veterans named this highly visible mission Operation Dewey Canyon III, after two "invisible" Marine-led operations into Laos. The weeklong demonstration began with a 30-minute memorial service at Arlington Cemetery, where veterans, along with the families of POWs, MIAs, and the dead, placed flowers on the graves of fallen comrades. After the service was completed, the veterans marched to the U.S. Capitol to begin a round-the-clock vigil and lobbying effort.

Unlike other protesting groups, including the organizers of the Mayday rally, the VVAW believed that change would only come through established methods, such as lobbying or private meetings with Senators and Representatives. Speaking before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, VVAW spokesman John Kerry gave an intensely eloquent condemnation of the war, stating that "there is nothing that has happened in Vietnam that justified the loss of one American." Kerry also declared that "each day someone has to give up his life so that the U.S. doesn't have to admit what the world already knows, that we made a mistake; so that President Nixon won't be, in his words, 'the first president to lose a war.'"

Other activities conducted by the VVAW included a candlelight procession, led by five amputees in wheelchairs, up Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. The march consisted of about 900 participants who did not utter a single word. Only the shuffling of feet and the faint squeak of the wheelchairs could be heard.

The following day, while a World War II veteran played Taps, a long line of veterans took turns publicly disowning their military honors. Campaign ribbons and medals were tossed over the crowd-control barrier, bouncing off the statue of Supreme Court Justice John Marshall. Dave Humphrey, a Vietnam veteran who had returned his decorations

said, "It was a way of reaching the type of person who believes in things like medals."

When the encampment ended, VVAW members restored the campsite to its original appearance by picking up trash and then planting grass and a new tree. Although their demonstration had concluded, several members of the VVAW elected to stay and take part in the Mayday demonstration.



Senator Edward Kennedy talks with veterans camped on the Washington Mall, April 21, 1971. Photograph, District of Columbia Public Library; Washington Star Photograph Collection, copyright The Washington Post.

Mayday had a decidedly different tone. Its goal was to obstruct the daily operations of the city and government. During this event, in a 3-day span, more than 13,000 people were arrested, the largest mass arrest in our nation's history. Although the Mayday demonstrations were more radical than the VVAW encampment, their message was similar. Both rallies sought an end to the bloodshed in Vietnam.

After their encampment, VVAW gained national prominence. Their efforts aided in drawing national attention to the injustices of the war in Vietnam and the plight of the disabled veteran. With the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, the VVAW's efforts now focused on the rights and needs of the returning servicemen and women. In con-

junction with the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), the VVAW founded support groups to deal with the traumatic aftereffects of war, exposed the shameful neglect of disabled veterans in VA hospitals, improved educational benefits, and created job training programs. However its fight did not end there.

Vietnam veterans continued to stage protests in Washington in the years following their encampment in 1971. They marched for increased employment opportunities, compensation, and honorable discharges for conscientious objectors. Smaller groups of veterans even took over the lobby of the Washington Monument, while another group locked themselves in a room in the White House. Most demonstrations by Vietnam veterans were conducted peacefully and were simply designed to highlight their struggles following discharge from the military.

After experiencing the welcome-home celebration for the hostages held in Iran, the VVAW and the VVA struggled for public recognition and appreciation for Vietnam veterans as well. Their struggle led to several welcome-home parades and the construction of the Vietnam War Memorial on the National Mall in Washington. These organizations still continue to seek the return of all MIA/POWs in Southeast Asia, and fight for increased health benefits to soldiers exposed to Agent Orange.

Most historians agree that the antiwar movement had a significant impact on the length and outcome of the Vietnam War. Protesting veterans highlighted society's difficulty with a war they did not fully understand. Vietnam veterans who demonstrated against the war sought to end the needless deaths of American soldiers and gain sufficient recognition and compensation for those who had borne the burden of battle.

Images of the VVAW demonstrations that preceded the Mayday events in 1971 appear in the *Washington Star* Photograph Collection, now owned by the *The Washington Post* and in the custody of the Washingtoniana Division of the District of Columbia Public Library. The *Washington Star* Photograph Collection is currently the subject of a preservation and access project supported by the NHPRC. ♦

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Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) marchers protesting near the U.S. Capitol, April 23, 1971. Photograph, District of Columbia Public Library, Washington Star Photograph Collection, copyright The Washington Post. A related article begins on p. 18.