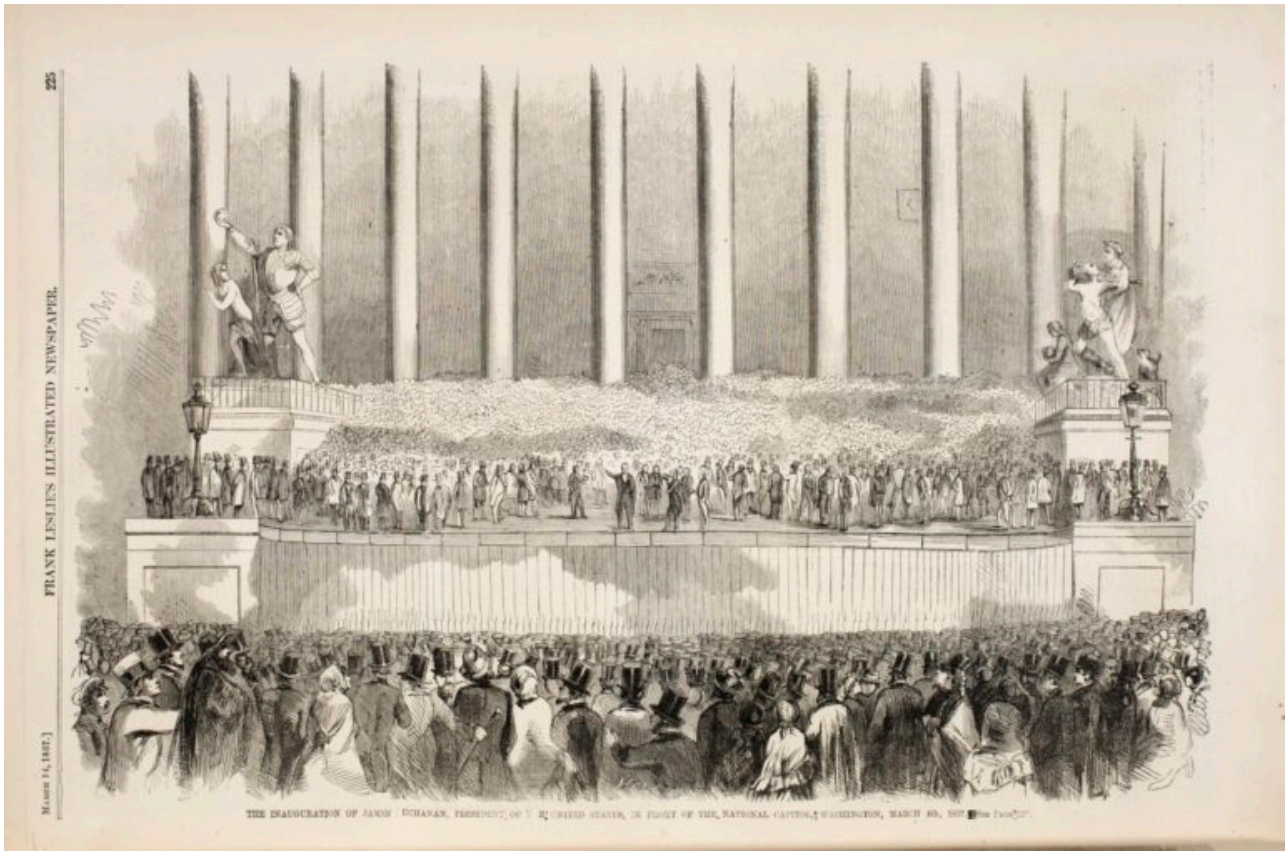
Cinqué the Slave Trader

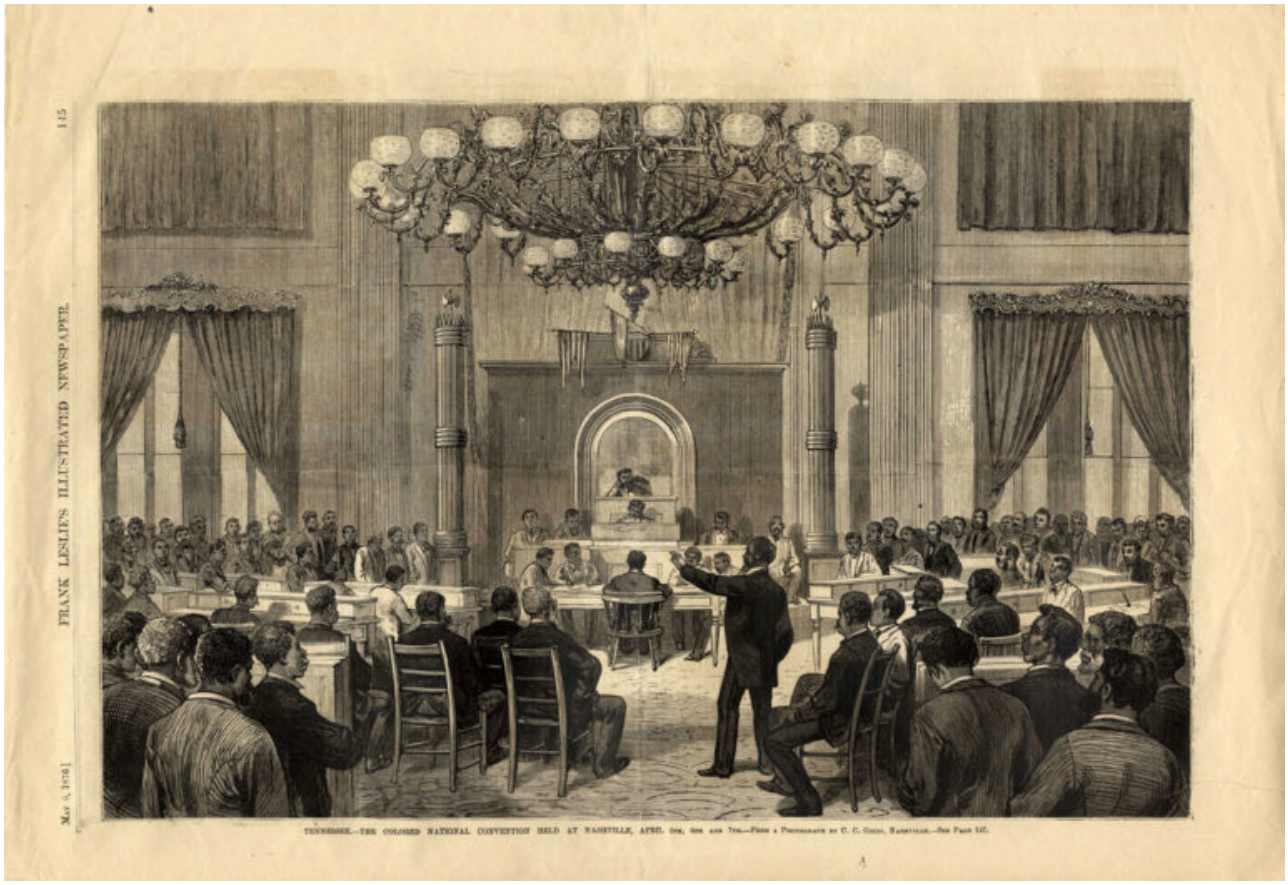
Some new evidence on an old controversy

Jane Clark: A Newly Available Slave Narrative



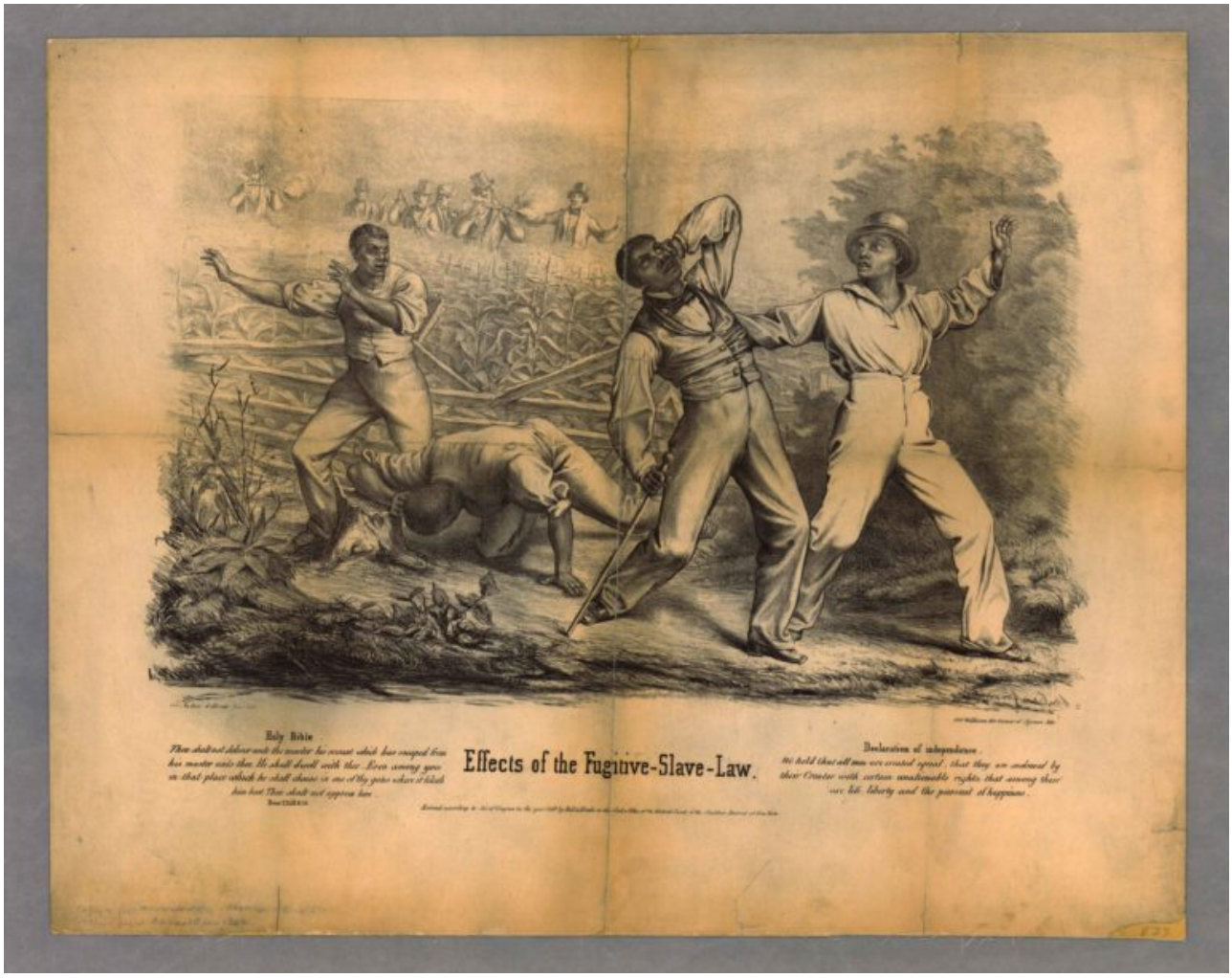
Penned in 1897 by Julia C. Ferris, a white teacher and local educational leader, the manuscript narrates portions of the life of Jane Clark, an enslaved woman who escaped to Auburn in 1859. This narrative, rich with information about the Underground Railroad, has never been available to scholars, teachers, and lay readers—until now.

Life Beyond Biography: Black Lives and Biographical Research



Little is known? One might well say that far too much is known to hold black lives within the comforting confines of a narrative biography.

These Names Had Life and Meaning



During the course of the project, students began narrowing their research to topics that could be answered through the database. What was the racial and gender composition of the members of the various abolitionist groups? To what extent had both slavery and the slave trade flourished in Massachusetts?

After the Statues Have Fallen

BRITT RUSERT

FUGITIVE SCIENCE

Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture

Rusert intervenes in narratives of racist pseudo-science, establishing not only a more inclusive history of early American science, but in doing so, arguing for a revision of the concept of the human.

What is a Loyalist?

I want to begin to sketch out a definition of loyalism that is not inherently prejudicial…

What is a Female Loyalist?

When we read the war from the perspective of female Loyalists, Loyalism becomes even more inclusive.

Rejuvenating the Revolution? Roundtable on Turn: Washington’s Spies

A Historian’s Take on AMC’s *Turn*

In telling the story of the American Revolution, academic historians and

Hollywood filmmakers have a troubled history. Both parties have attempted to bring the founding of the American republic to life for a contemporary audience, but rarely have they agreed on how best to accomplish this. There has been no shortage of directors who have ignored the advice of their historical consultants or of historians who have criticized a film's most trivial anachronisms. A clever work of satire, the 1986 film *Sweet Liberty* captured the dynamics of this dysfunctional relationship. The film's protagonist, Michael Burgess (ably played by Alan Alda), is a college history professor who sells the movie rights to his prize-winning study of the American Revolution to the director Bo Hodges (Saul Rubinek). Thrilled that his life's work will be captured on the silver screen, Professor Burgess eagerly welcomes the production crew to his sleepy Southern college town only to learn that Hodges intends to adapt the book as a bawdy comedy targeted at a teenage audience. Horrified, Burgess confronts Hodges to demand an explanation. Clearly amused at the historian's discomfort, Hodges proclaims the three principles of a successful Hollywood blockbuster: "defy authority, destroy property, and take people's clothes off." Nonplussed, Burgess retorts, "What does that have to do with American history?" Blinded by the demands of their respective disciplines, Burgess and Hodges fail to see their common mission. Both the historian and the filmmaker must to do more than merely relate an accurate narrative of the period's events. They must make the past relevant to the present. Done well, both academic history and historical cinema have the potential to breathe new life into familiar stories. Each can rejuvenate the Revolution.

Making the American Revolution meaningful to a twenty-first-century audience is exactly what the cast, crew, and producers of AMC's new television series *Turn* have set out to accomplish. Promising to tell "the story of America's first spy ring," *Turn* speaks to a post-9/11 audience intrigued by the workings of global espionage and raised on a diet of political violence served up by CNN. *Turn* is a product of its time. Though historians often disparage historical interpretations driven by a presentist agenda, few would deny that the questions we ask of the past are shaped by the world we live in today. The producers of *Turn* and academic historians have this in common: neither can escape viewing the past from the perspective of the present.

Errors in chronology and costuming are easily overlooked because the show succeeds at capturing the spirit of America's tortuous path to nationhood, but it fails epically in its responsibility to the very real people who walked that road over 200 years ago.

Turn's implicit argument, that the American Revolution was far more violent, more terrifying, more contested, and more uncertain than we usually imagine when we picture George Washington crossing the Delaware or Thomas Jefferson drafting the Declaration of Independence, falls in line with a recent trend in the historical literature that depicts the birth of our nation as a brutal and divisive struggle. *Turn* portrays an embryonic America torn apart by political discord. The conflict raging in the small Long Island town of Setauket, where much of the series is set, is presented as a microcosm of the larger conflict.

Like all American colonists, Setauket's denizens must confront the fraught questions of political and family allegiance in a time of turmoil. One cannot help but think of the stark divisions between blue and red states in contemporary America. To drive this point home, as well as to increase the dramatic tension, the protagonist Abraham Woodhull (Jamie Bell) lives in a house divided. Abe's father, Richard (Kevin R. McNally), a socially prominent judge, and his wife, Mary (Meegan Warner), are firm supporters of the crown. Abe's own loyalties, which he strives to conceal from his family, end up reluctantly, though resolutely, with the Revolutionaries. As the series unfolds, Abe struggles to maintain his principles in a morally ambiguous world. His allies on the Patriot side, Benjamin Tallmadge (Seth Numrich) and Caleb Brewster (Daniel Henshall), are not above committing atrocities in the name of the "glorious cause," and his British opponents, most obviously Major Hewlett (Burn Gorman) and Ensign Baker (Thomas Keegan), are capable of integrity and humanity. This is not the traditional story of America's nobility and virtue in the face of Britain's barbaric brutality most recently showcased by the 2000 film *The Patriot*. What's not for a historian to love?

As is often the case, the devil is in the details. Errors in chronology and costuming are easily overlooked because the show succeeds at capturing the spirit of America's tortuous path to nationhood, but it fails epically in its responsibility to the very real people who walked that road over 200 years ago. Like many historical dramas, *Turn* uses a combination of actual historical individuals and fictional characters in its cast. In a recorded discussion with faculty from the College of William & Mary in February 2015, the producers of *Turn* lauded their efforts to portray the experiences of little-known revolutionaries like Woodhull and Tallmadge rather than the usual parade of Founding Fathers. They are pleased to be doing "history from the bottom up." While household names like George Washington and Benedict Arnold are present, the show's principal players are men and women long obscured by the cobwebs of history. Perhaps it is because of this obscurity that the producers felt entitled to take such great liberties with the lives of these individuals: liberties that would undoubtedly expose the producers to a defamation of character suit were the people portrayed in the series still alive.

Actor Samuel Roukin, who portrays John Graves Simcoe on Turn: Washington's Spies, addresses the audience at William & Mary's "Television, History, & Revolution" from William & Mary news video. Courtesy of the College of William & Mary.

Some of these liberties are harmless, perhaps even necessary. The real Hewlett, for instance, was an American, born and bred on Long Island, not the posh Englishman Burn Gorman personifies. In fact, a regiment of American Loyalists, not British regulars, garrisoned Setauket throughout the war. Green-coated

Americans fighting blue-coated Americans might easily confuse the lay viewer, however. The producers' decision to anglicize Hewlett and his troops is justifiable on the grounds of narrative clarity and does little to misrepresent Hewlett, a man who was historically dedicated to the British Empire. Depicting an adulterous relationship between Abe Woodhull and Anna Strong (Heather Lind) is more questionable. Woodhull, who was a single man during the war, was ten years Anna's junior. There is no evidence that the married mother of six had a romantic relationship with Woodhull. Yet, the demands of drama are paramount. The romance between Abe and Anna is a crucial component of the show's narrative arc. In a work of historical fiction, creative liberties will be taken. *Turn* does not purport to be a work of documentary history after all.

Artistic license, however, is no excuse for the series' portrayal of British Captain John Graves Simcoe (Samuel Roukin). In the show's pilot episode, viewers are introduced to a tall, foppish, effeminate, but unmistakably sinister Englishman destined to be a thorn in the side of the would-be hero Abe. It is no surprise that the producers of *Turn*, aiming primarily at an American audience, wanted a British antagonist. Simcoe is that and more. He is for *Turn* what William Tavington was for the *Patriot*: a British officer of unspeakable cruelty and devilish cunning. Roukin has described the character he portrays as "basically a sociopath," and not without reason. *Turn*'s Simcoe is a predator. He sexually menaces Anna, brutally beats Abe, stabs an American spy in the throat at a dinner party, hangs an innocent man, and murders a Loyalist soldier in order to bolster his reputation among his men. These are but a few of his more egregious acts. But Simcoe is no mere brute. His is a calculating and clever embodiment of evil, born of hatred. According to AMC's website, "John Graves Simcoe is a born attack dog who harbors an intense dislike for most colonists." That dislike—or better yet, loathing—manifests itself in his scheme to assassinate Abe's father and frame the Patriot-leaning Reverend Nathanial Tallmadge (Boris McGiver) for the shooting. When Abe foils his plan, Simcoe is livid. During a prisoner-exchange negotiation with Patriot forces, Simcoe defies Major Hewlett's direct orders and callously executes Caleb Brewster's uncle in front of his nephew. Although Hewlett has him arrested, Simcoe escapes court martial, languishing for a time as a clerk in the quartermaster's department, before being promoted to command of the Loyalist Queen's Rangers regiment. The British high command appears largely unconcerned by Simcoe's brutality.

The real John Graves Simcoe did none of these things. The son of a decorated naval officer who died during the British campaign to capture Canada in 1759, Simcoe was a twenty-three-year-old Eton- and Oxford-educated lieutenant when war erupted in Massachusetts in 1775. Though he lamented "the dreadful scene of civil war" that had engulfed the colonies, the young officer was eager to prove an effective soldier. Like many of his fellow British officers, Simcoe believed that the colonists had been led astray by Whig demagogues and that force alone could bring about an "effectual reconciliation" between the king and his colonists. There is no doubt that Simcoe was what historian Stephen Conway has dubbed "a hard-liner:" an officer who thought rebellion deserved to be

punished. In a letter to his mother, he referred to the rebellious colonists as "infatuated wretches" and hoped for their "inevitable destruction." Yet his zeal to suppress the American rebellion did not translate into unrestrained brutality toward American soldiers or civilians. He approved of his commanding general Sir William Howe's orders to protect the property of the people of Boston and to spare the town from flames upon the army's departure in 1776. A man as deeply committed to his God as his King, Simcoe strongly disapproved of harming the helpless. When he discovered that some of his soldiers were disinclined to take prisoners in battle because Simcoe had forbidden them to confiscate their captives' watches, Simcoe reversed his policy. Human life was more important than private property. This is hardly the portrait of a sociopath.

Paradoxically, the likely culprit behind this case of cinematic slander is the historian behind the series: Alexander Rose, the author of the popular history *Washington's Spies*, upon which *Turn* is based. To Rose, a Cambridge University-trained historian of twentieth-century Britain, "Simcoe exemplified the worst aspects of the British army." The evidence supporting this claim is tenuous, to say the least. Rose points to the Queen's Rangers' occupation of Oyster Bay during the winter of 1778-79 as proof of Simcoe's "wanton brutality." In Rose's words, Simcoe "stripped Oyster Bay bare of wood" and "sacrilegiously converted" the Quaker meetinghouse into a storeroom. Simcoe's troops did occupy Oyster Bay that winter, and no doubt they seized buildings and other supplies for purposes of defense and firewood, but this was common practice among eighteenth-century armies. The Continental Army would have behaved no differently, except perhaps promising the buildings owners' reimbursement in worthless Continental currency.

Most erroneously, Rose claims that "Simcoe made his presence felt" in Oyster Bay by apparently overseeing—or at least condoning—the whipping of a townsperson. Following Rose's footnote leads to an obscure local history that relies on a nineteenth-century source as evidence of this incident. The source, Henry Onderdonk's *Documents and Letters Intended to Illustrate the Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County* (1846), records excerpts from a number of eighteenth-century documents but omits documentation for this particular incident, in which the author narrates the arrest of "a respectable young man, John Weeks," for failing to give the correct countersign when challenged by a sentry. Weeks was "seized, tried, and sentenced to be whipped." His punishment was interrupted only by the "frantic appeals of his mother and sister." The problem is that even according to this undocumented nineteenth-century account, Weeks's arrest occurred before Simcoe and his Rangers reached Oyster Bay. The contingent occupying the town was the Loyalist regiment Fanning's Corps, a "rude and ill-behaved" unit, in the estimation of the nineteenth-century historian. It is hard to imagine how Simcoe could have made his presence felt in the town when he was not even there. It is equally difficult to fathom why Rose would cite a twentieth-century local history to ascribe culpability to Simcoe for this alleged incident when he cites Onderdonk's work elsewhere in his book. An ungenerous reviewer might assume bad faith.


John Graves Simcoe by John Wycliffe Lowes Forster. This portrait depicts Simcoe as the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.

Though the event is not depicted in the show, the real John Graves Simcoe did have an altercation with the Woodhull family. In late April 1779, Loyalist John Wolsey, who had been released recently from a Patriot prison, informed Simcoe of Woodhull's career as a rebel informant. Intent on apprehending the suspected spy, Simcoe and a party of his Rangers descended on the residence of Abraham's father, Judge Richard Woodhull. The judge, who historically was a Patriot rather than a Loyalist sympathizer, became the hapless victim of his son's clandestine activities when Simcoe's men failed to discover Abe. According to a letter that Abe later wrote Tallmadge, Simcoe, eager "to make some compensation for his Voige [voyage] … fell upon" the Judge "and Plundered him in a most Shocking Manner." Rose's interpretation of this event was that Simcoe personally "beat up Abraham Woodhull's father." An alternate reading of the source suggests that Simcoe sought financial compensation for the expedition and permitted his men to seize items of the judge's private property. British troops plundering inoffensive American civilians was in and of itself a "Shocking" act of cruelty discouraged by the prevailing European rules of war, but it was a far from uncommon practice during the conflict.

Plundering was one thing; physical assault was entirely another. Had Simcoe personally beaten a fellow gentleman—and an elderly one at that—he would have faced official censure, if not court martial and dishonor. Moreover, Abe would certainly have been more explicit in his letter had that been the case. When New York Loyalist Edmund Palmer "fell upon" a Mr. Willis, who was an "old Gentleman," American Major General Israel Putnam informed Washington that Palmer "abused, beat, & left him, to appearance dead." Abe's letter is silent on his father's status after the raid. It is highly unlikely that Judge Woodhull experienced such treatment at the hands of Simcoe. During a similar raid in 1778, Simcoe had personally protected the improbably named American Colonel Thomas Thomas, "a very active partizan of the enemy," from his "irritated soldiers" who wanted to revenge the death of one of their comrades. If Simcoe or his troopers had brutalized Judge Woodhull, rather than merely plundered him, the Patriot press would have had a field day. Instead, the raid failed to make the news.

This is not to suggest that the real Simcoe was a softy. During his raids in New Jersey, Simcoe and his Rangers regularly burned barns and even private dwellings belonging to suspected Patriots. A Frenchman visiting Canada after the war was struck by Simcoe's persistent "hatred … against the United States" and his "boasting of the numerous houses he had fired during the unfortunate conflict." In 1779, the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* claimed that Simcoe's "exploits have generally been marked with acts of the most inhuman barbarity."

To the governor of New Jersey, William Livingston, Simcoe was “a consummate savage.” Seeking to exploit Simcoe’s raids for propagandistic purposes, both the author of the piece in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* and Livingston—who was a skilled propagandist often writing under the pseudonym Adolphus—painted Simcoe as a barbarian: someone beyond the pale of the civilized world. Rose, and by extension the producers of *Turn*, have accepted uncritically the Patriot propagandists’ interpretation of Simcoe.

The historical Simcoe, despite his firm belief that the stick was a better inducement for loyalty than the carrot, was no murderer. The Duke of Northumberland, who knew him well, claimed that Simcoe was “brave, humane, sensible, and honest.” Even Simcoe’s arch rival, American cavalry commander Colonel Henry Lee, described Simcoe as “one of the best officers in the British army” who “was a man of letters, and like the Romans and Grecians, cultivated science amid the turmoil of camp.” To Lee, Simcoe was “enterprising, resolute, and persevering.” It is hard to imagine an American officer endorsing someone who regularly murdered Patriot soldiers and brutalized civilians. *Turn*‘s portrayal sullies the memory of an officer who, though inveterately opposed to American independence, served his king and cause with honor and vigor.

Turn‘s depiction of Simcoe is not only unjust to a man who would go on to be one of the founders of modern Canada, it is regrettable in its predictability. Roukin gives us the classic cliché of a sexually aggressive and cruelly sadistic aristocratic English villain. The viewer instantly recalls the English lord who rapes newly married women under the guise of the law of *Primae Noctis* in *Braveheart* (1995) and Tim Roth’s repulsive interpretation of rapist and murder Archibald Cunningham in *Rob Roy* (1995). *The Patriot*‘s William Tavington, while not a rapist, does delight in burning innocent men, women, and children alive. All three characters accomplish their evil deeds with a smirk and a hint of an aristocratic lisp. But these characters are works of fiction. Though potentially inspired by historic characters, they bear fictional names. Their nefarious deeds require no documentation. Simcoe, on the other hand, was real. He and his Queen’s Rangers operated on Long Island and raided Setauket. Abe Woodhull considered Simcoe an especially dangerous foe, even wishing him dead. The opportunity to create a sophisticated, complex, zealous, and contemporarily relevant antagonist was thrown away on Roukin’s Simcoe. In the end, *Turn*fails most spectacularly by failing to live up to its potential for originality, squandering its chance to rejuvenate the Revolution by resorting to a tired trope. This unfortunate decision tarnishes an otherwise plausible and entertaining historical drama.

Further Reading:

For the relationship between historians and Hollywood, see Robert A. Rosenstone, “Inventing Historical Truth on the Silver Screen,” *Cinéaste* 29:2 (Spring 2004): 29-33 and Melvyn Stokes, *American History through Hollywood Film: From the Revolution to the 1960s* (London, 2013), especially chapter 1:

“The American Revolution.”

The February 3, 2015, discussion among the producers, cast, and advisors of *Turn* and faculty members from the College of William & Mary, entitled “Television, History, & Revolution,” can be viewed in full here.

For a brief biography of the real Major Hewlett, see Todd Braisted, “Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hewlett: The Loyal-est Loyalist,” *Turn to a Historian*, April 27, 2015.

For information on the relationship, or lack thereof, between Abraham Woodhull and Anna Strong, see Rachel Smith, “Abraham Woodhull and Anna Strong Revisited,” *Turn to a Historian*, April 6, 2015.

The interview in which Samuel Roukin characterizes Simcoe as “basically a sociopath” can be found here.

Find AMC’s official biography of the character John Graves Simcoe here.

For historical biographies of John Graves Simcoe see William R. Riddell, *The Life of John Graves Simcoe, First Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, 1792-96* (Toronto, 1926), Mary Beacock Fryer and Christopher Dracott, *John Graves Simcoe, 1752-1806: A Biography* (Toronto, 1999), and Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies* (New York, 2010), chapter 2.

For Simcoe’s letter to his mother in which he mentions “the dreadful scene of civil war,” “an effectual reconciliation,” “infatuated wretches,” and “inevitable destruction,” see John Graves Simcoe to Katherine Simcoe, Boston, June 22, 1775. Transcribed in Riddell, *The Life of John Graves Simcoe*.

For Stephen Conway’s description of some British officers as “hard-liners,” see Stephen Conway, “To Subdue America: British Army Officer and the Conduct of the Revolutionary War,” *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3rd ser., 43 (1986): 381-407.

For Simcoe’s approval of Howe’s policy of protecting civilian property and refusing to burn Boston upon the army’s evacuation, see John Graves Simcoe to Katherine Simcoe, Boston, March 13, 1776. Transcribed in Riddell, *The Life of John Graves Simcoe*.

For expressions of Simcoe’s religious faith, see John Graves Simcoe to Katherine Simcoe, Boston, June 22, 1775. Transcribed in Riddell, *The Life of John Graves Simcoe*, and John Graves Simcoe to Katherine Simcoe, Boston, March 13, 1776. Transcribed in Riddell, *The Life of John Graves Simcoe*.

Simcoe’s decision to reverse his policy on plundering enemy prisoners can be found in *Simcoe’s Military Journal: A History of the Operations of a Partisan Corps, Called the Queen’s Rangers …* (New York, 1844).

For Alexander Rose's claims that "Simcoe exemplified the worst aspects of the British army," engaged in "wanton brutality," "stripped Oyster Bay bare of wood," and "sacrilegiously converted" the Quaker meetinghouse into a storeroom see Alexander Rose, *Washington's Spies: The Story of America's First Spy Ring* (New York, 2006).

For an example of Continental troops seizing private property, and General Washington's opposition to it, see George Washington to the Board of War, Valley Forge, January 2-3, 1778. Founders Online, National Archives (last update: 2015-03-20). Source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777-28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel (Charlottesville, Va., 2003).

See also George Washington to Colonel Armand-Charles Tuffin, marquis de La Rouërie, Wilmington, September 2, 1777. Founders Online, National Archives (last update: 2015-03-20). Source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 11, 19 August 1777-25 October 1777, eds. Philander D. Chase and Edward G. Lengel (Charlottesville, Va., 2001).

In his narration of the whipping of John Weeks, Rose chose to cite Frances Irwin, *Oyster Bay in history; a sketch by Frances Irvin. With notes by Clara Irvin* (Oyster Bay, New York [?]: 1963 [?]). Henry Onderdonk's recounting of the alleged incident is very clear that Simcoe and his Queen's Rangers were not present at the time. Henry Onderdonk, *Documents and Letters Intended to Illustrate the Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County …* (New York, 1846).

Abraham Woodhull's account of Simcoe's raid on his father's house appeared in Samuel Culper to John Bolton, June 5, 1779. George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General correspondence, 1697-1799, which can be accessed via a keyword search here.

For Rose's interpretation of the raid see Rose, *Washington's Spies*, 129, 163.

General Israel Putnam's description of Edmund Palmer's alleged plundering and beating of a "Mr. Willis" in July 1777 can be found in Major General Israel Putnam to George Washington, Peekskill, NY, July 19, 1777, Founders Online, National Archives (last update: 2015-03-20). Source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 10, 11 June 1777-18 August 1777, ed. Frank E. Grizzard Jr. (Charlottesville, Va., 2000).

For Simcoe's protection of Colonel Thomas from his "irritated soldiers" see *Simcoe's Military Journal*.

The Frenchman who visited Simcoe in Canada was François-Alexandre-Frédéric La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. His account of Simcoe's hatred for the Americans can be found in *Travels through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada …* (London, 1800).

For the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*'s claim that Simcoe's "exploits have

generally been marked with acts of the most inhuman barbarity" see *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, November 6, 1779.

For Livingston's description of Simcoe as "a consummate savage" see Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*.

For more on Livingston's career as a Patriot propagandist see *The Papers of William Livingston* Carl E. Prince, Dennis P. Ryan, Pamela B. Schafler, and Donald W. White, eds., 5 vols., 2:3-6 (Trenton, N.J., 1979).

In a letter to Captain Joseph Brant, the Duke of Northumberland described Simcoe as "a most intimate friend of mine." Northumberland thought Simcoe was "possessed of every good quality which can recommend him to [Brant's] friendship. He is brave, humane, sensible, and honest." Northumberland to Captain Joseph Brant. September 3, 1791. *Simcoe's Military Journal*.

For Colonel Henry Lee's recollections of Simcoe see Henry Lee, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States* 2 vols., 2:8 (Philadelphia, 1812).

Abraham Woodhull confessed to Benjamin Tallmadge that had he not "fear of Law or Gospel, [he] would certainly [kill Col. Simcoe], for his usage to me." Samuel Culper to John Bolton, December 12, 1779. George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General correspondence, 1697-1799.

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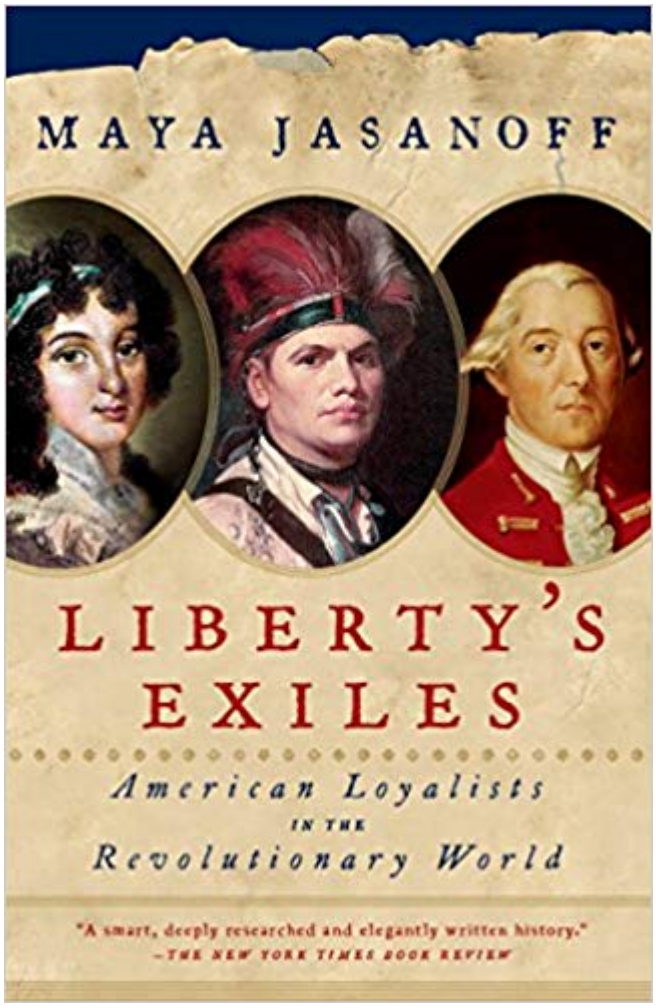
T. Cole Jones holds a PhD in early American history from the Johns Hopkins University. He is the Hench Post-Dissertation Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society and will be joining the faculty of Purdue University as an assistant professor of history in the fall. His current book manuscript is entitled *Captives of Liberty: Prisoners of War and the Radicalization of the American Revolution*.

A Loyalist Guarded, Re-guarded, and Disregarded The Two Trials of Mather

Byles the Elder

If we think of the War of Independence as a civil war fought between British subjects, we also get a sharper look at revolutionary politics during and after 1775-1776.

Loyalist Diaspora



In recent years we have seen a surge of interest in American loyalists. Highlights of this renewed attention to loyalists include: journal essays by prominent scholars such as Philip Gould, Alan Taylor, and Jasanoff; several recent books, most notably Cassandra Pybus' *Epic Journeys of Freedom,* which generated a significant response; a conference at the University of Maine in 2009; and the 2011 AAS Seminar in the History of the Book dedicated to the topic. With *Liberty's Exiles* Maya Jasanoff has added a remarkable book to this list, one that establishes the ground for all future studies of American loyalists. Jasanoff's meticulous and ambitious study deftly captures the experience of a wide range of loyalist actors, including black slaves, Native American allies of the British, Southern planters, and powerful mid-Atlantic and New England political figures. The demographic diversity of her history is impressive, as is the fluidity with which her narrative moves across gendered, racial, social, and regional variations. For these reasons, it would be an injustice to reduce *Liberty's Exiles* to the category of a study of loyalism. Loyalists may be the key players of the study, but the central theme of the

book is the resituating of the American Revolution in a much broader global imperial history. As such, *Liberty's Exiles* makes an indispensable contribution to a growing body of work on empire and the globalization of eighteenth-century studies.

Jasanoff provides a vivid sense of the impact that key events and decisions of the Revolution had on the people who were most affected by them.

Another way to describe Jasanoff's study would be to say that this is a book about how the American loyalists who left the United States reshaped the British Empire in the decades following the American Revolution. The Revolution here becomes a crucial event in the history of the British Empire, which, of course, it was. But this dimension of the conflict has often been elided in nationalist histories focused on how the Revolution changed (or didn't change) the politics and culture of thirteen colonies turned states. Either way, as the emphasis on exile in the title implies, Jasanoff's study is principally focused on the loyalist migration out of the United States during and after the Revolution. The early chapters of the book explore the nature of American loyalists' sentiments and their views of the Revolution. The trajectory of the narrative, however, is always directed toward their eventual departure for England, Canada, and other parts of the British Empire.

Liberty's Exiles unfolds chronologically, but the focus of the study is biographical. Jasanoff builds her metanarrative around the stories of individual loyalists. This strategy of emphasizing individual experiences and tying them to the major political, military, and administrative events that unfolded has the advantage of giving a real human face to the conflict. In many ways it's a brilliant decision by Jasanoff, especially when we consider how intensively the traditional story of the American Revolution has dehumanized loyalists. Through the stories of loyalists such as Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, David George, and William Augustus Bowles, Jasanoff provides a vivid sense of the impact that key events and decisions of the Revolution had on the people who were most affected by them. Policy decisions and military actions are not just currents in the broad flows of history; they have specific effects on individuals who then make decisions accordingly. In addition to providing a more concrete sense of how individuals experienced the events of the Revolution, this approach highlights the kind of agency afforded to these loyalists.

Foregrounding the biographical also calls attention to the different and similar questions faced by loyalists from across the demographic spectrum. We can see, for example, how the departure of British loyalist forces in Savannah affects both the elite white Johnston family and the free black George Liele. Jasanoff constantly organizes her narrative around these comparisons and contrasts. The other key device that moves the narrative forward is the comparison between regions. So with an event like the aftermath of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, she moves through a series of characters in Savannah and

Charleston to show us how a diverse range of actors responded to the British departure from those cities. Later, in Part III of the book, she dedicates a series of chapters to the fates of loyalists in different outposts: the Bahamas, Jamaica, Nova Scotia, Sierra Leone, and England. This way we get both local variations and regional comparisons. In both cases, Jasanoff's remarkable archival work has enabled her to tell the stories of a diverse set of peoples. And Jasanoff has gone to great lengths to track down exiled American loyalists around the world and to tell their stories. Through them she traces the global effects of the American Revolution and its impact, particularly, on the British Empire as it rearticulated itself around the world. In this respect, *Liberty's Exiles*continues the work of Jasanoff's first book, *Edge of Empire,* which explored the origins of the British Empire. Closer to home, the early chapters of Jasanoff's book integrate the loyalists more fully into the story of the American Revolution and provide insights into what a less nationalistic reading of the Revolution might look like.

In its metanarrative, though, *Liberty's Exiles* is only peripherally interested in the Revolution itself and in the United States more generally. The loyalists in this book are always on the path to departing their homes in the thirteen colonies. The narrative trajectory of Jasanoff's history points away from the United States so that it sometimes can feel as if these characters, while clearly shaped by their American experiences, are mostly passing through the Revolution on their way to the more important work that will take place when they go on to challenge and reshape the British Empire. Ironically, then, the loyalists whose voices are absent from this study are those who remained in the United States after the war. Of course, those loyalists are not the subject of *Liberty's Exiles.* They were not exiled.

Jasanoff's study thus underscores a gaping hole in the historiography of the Revolution. For every loyalist who departed the colonies, at least seven stayed behind, and the number is more likely closer to ten or eleven. To do the math in shorthand: by Jasanoff's count, which can be found in the detailed appendix to the book, about 60,000 loyalists emigrated from the United States in the 1780s and 1790s, but by most estimates there were between 500,000 and 750,000 loyalists at the time of the Revolution. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the United States in 1780 was about 2.8 million, and the general view among historians is that in 1775, 2.5 million people resided in the colonies. Using the 1775 figure as a baseline, if 30 percent of Americans were loyalists, there should have been a total of around 750,000 loyalists. Even if we take the most conservative estimate of 20 percent of the population, the total number of loyalists would be 500,000. By any count then, the vast majority of loyalists remained in the U.S. after the war. We sorely need a parallel study to Jasanoff's to recover their experiences, their voices, and, most importantly, their role in the creation of the new American state. To take only one example, Tench Coxe, one of Alexander Hamilton's most important confidants and advisors, was a loyalist who had left during the war but would return and come to play a key role in the new United States.

Virtually every study of American loyalists has focused primarily on the stories of those who left, from Mary Beth Norton's study of loyalists who relocated to England and Bernard Bailyn's biography of Thomas Hutchinson in the 1970s, to more recent work by Judith van Buskirk, Ruma Chopra, and Liam Riordan. No doubt the archive has made it much easier to tell the stories of those who left. For obvious reasons, loyalists who stayed tended not to publish narratives of their experiences of the war and not to advertise their feelings about the war and its effect on their families. We can find glimpses of those experiences, however, in the fiction of James Fenimore Cooper, who married the loyalist Susan DeLancy, and in the writings of Charles Brockden Brown, whose loyalist father was banished from Pennsylvania when the author was a mere child. One suspects, however, that with the longstanding emphasis on the Revolution as a narrative of triumphant nationalism, scholars have also not looked terribly hard to uncover the stories of loyalists who stayed.

To tell the story of the loyalists who left, Jasanoff draws on the language of diaspora. Surprisingly, however, Jasanoff never comments on or tracks the larger implications of this concept. What does it mean to call the experience of largely white American loyalists who felt they had to leave the United States a diaspora? The term diaspora has both a long history and, perhaps more importantly for the purposes of Jasanoff's study, a contentious recent history. Without going into that history here, suffice it to say that the study of diasporic peoples and their experiences has become so important in the social sciences and the humanities that it has an influential journal dedicated entirely to the topic. A quick perusal of any issue of *Diaspora* will show how vibrant and exciting, but also how contested, scholarship on the topic has been. Scholars of diaspora fiercely debate the applicability of the term to peoples other than the original Jewish and Armenian populations whose experiences have shaped its meaning. In recent decades, scholars such as George Shepperson and Brent Hayes Edwards have profitably argued for its applicability to the case of Africans relocated to the Americas. But they did so through a direct and careful engagement with the conceptual frame and theoretical meanings that diaspora has obtained.

Recently, in *The Importance of Feeling English,* Leonard Tennenhouse has argued for diaspora as a useful framework for thinking about the British migration to the United States. Once again, though, Tennenhouse situates his use of the term in dialogue with its past uses and connotations. So, what does it mean to think of the loyalist exiles in terms of a diaspora? How do their experiences resemble the experiences of other diasporic peoples such as the Jews, the Armenians, and African-Americans? How might the insights of scholars who have worked on those other diasporic populations help us understand the ways these American loyalists experienced their dislocation and reconstructed their identities? By attending to these questions, Jasanoff might have helped us think about how a particular notion of what it meant to be British (or Anglo-American?), borne of a diasporic mentality, shaped these exiles' approach to the work of reconceiving and refurbishing the British Empire. Diaspora theory, in other words, has long been engaged with precisely the questions that

Jasanoff takes up in her book: How do global flows of population shape cultural practices and identities? How does the notion of a home, or a cultural memory of home, inform cultural agents' or actors' approach to fashioning themselves and their world abroad? Diaspora refers to a way of thinking about these questions related to globalization and to the movement of people and ideas across space and time, a topic that is at the heart of *Liberty's Exiles.*

Liberty's Exiles is required reading for any scholar interested in the early phases of globalization, the impact of the American Revolution on the reshaping of the British Empire, and the exportation of what we might identify as an American way of thinking about the relations between periphery and center in an imperial context. Thus far I have emphasized the "exiles" in Jasanoff's title, but I would be remiss not to conclude by underscoring the metanarrative of "liberty" in her story of the American loyalist exiles. Again and again, Jasanoff traces how the ideas of liberty that the loyalists had developed during their time in the thirteen colonies would resurface and challenge the shape of British imperial authority in the other outposts of the empire to which they moved after the war. To some this might be the most surprising insight of Jasanoff's book: the long-demonized loyalists who had been written out of American national history as opponents of liberty and democracy would become among the most vocal advocates of their rights and liberties in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, the Bahamas and elsewhere. As Jasanoff shows, the American loyalists were never opposed to liberty or notions of representation in government. They were simply opposed to a separation from the British Empire, which they, and for that matter their patriot countrymen, saw as the source of liberty in the modern world. *Liberty's Exiles* tells how the loyalists' commitments to those ideas would transform the British Empire, if not the world.

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Edward Larkin is associate professor of English at the University of Delaware. He is the author of *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* (2005) and edited the Broadview edition of Paine's *Common Sense* (2004). He is currently working on a study of the way notions of empire shaped the politics and culture of the early United States.