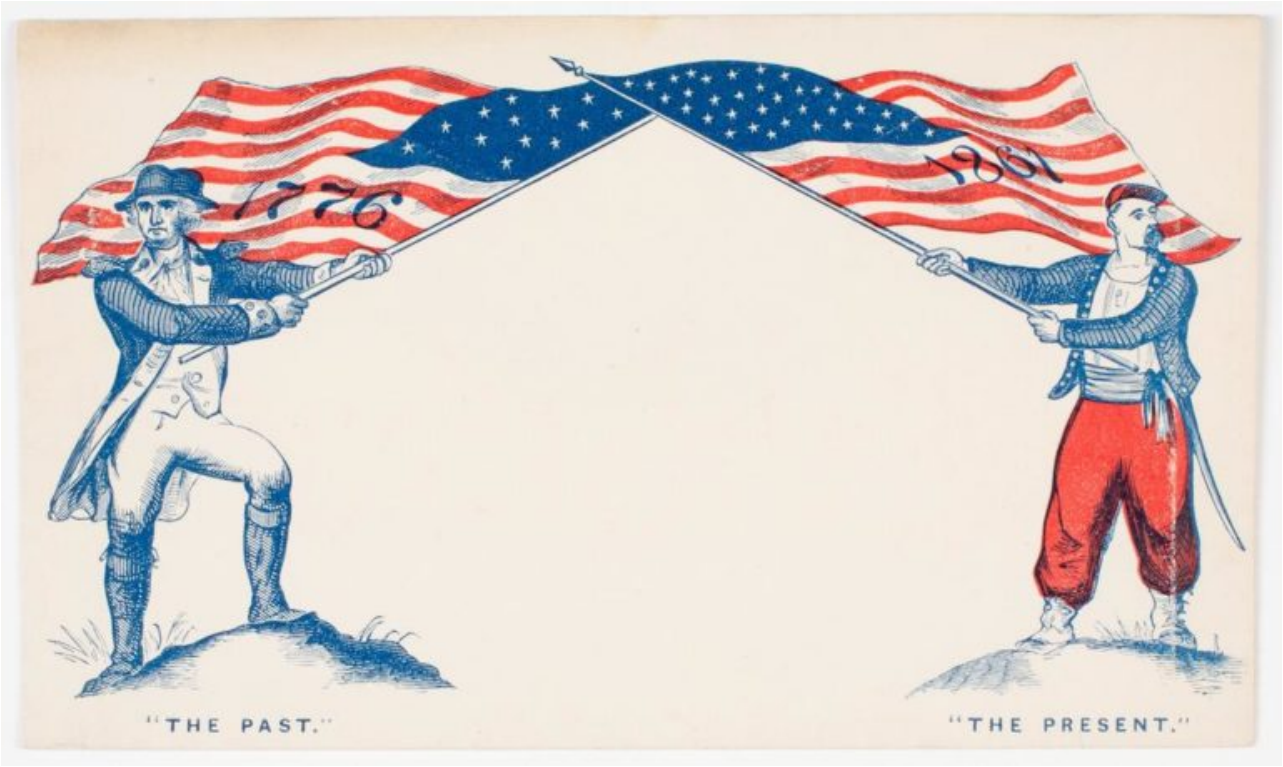
The Arc of the Moral Universe, and Other Long Things



The Civil War was one great eruption of something immanent in human civilization: an ineradicable cycle of violence, a timeless struggle for democracy and freedom.

Unveiling the American Actor: The Evolution of Celebrity in the Early American Theater

The actors who clawed their way to fame in the early decades of the American theater labored in an entrepreneurial industry that was far more reminiscent of prospecting for gold or financing merchant ships than it was of modern industrial production.

Two Early American Bestsellers

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Presented as part of the Special Literature Issue

The prehistory of American bestsellers takes us beyond questions about the content and literary value of bestselling texts and invites us instead to explore just what makes such a phenomenon possible.

Where All the Trains Ran: Chicago

Presented as part of the special issue “Early Cities of the Americas.”

“In a city increasingly characterized by class and ethnic distinctions, the trip in by train was arguably the one significant personal experience that more Chicagoans had in common than any other.”

A View from the Parish Jail: New Orleans

Presented as part of the special issue “Early Cities of the Americas.”

“It was very hot and damp six months a year, it was one of the least-favored ports in the New World, and huge swarms of insects appeared seasonally with terrifying predictability.”

Poems

Dry Creek Valley

On the second

and third

wires over the wire
on which forks the zinfandel vine:
barbed knots
and spirals of old
severed vinetips:
one can flick
these wishbones of waterless
grapewood into
full rotations
on the wire:
some are not wyes,
some have the look of shrew-sized
brainstems into

the knots
of which I fail
to not
project my proprioception
and the regulation
and insistence of my breathing here
in the plutocratic hills,
while quaked reactors fail
Japan, and bombs fall
in Afghanistan
for purposes of regulation
and insistence, and
there’s a crow (in an oak with a copy of
Whitman’s beard
on every limb)
counting to five
over and over and a propane truck
filling the tanks of the vineyard opposite.

Maalaea

Stones half-buried in pulverized star-
fish, silica, coral, basalt shatter, a waterline-
threaded
band of scatter, an-
agrammatic
stone notes in a wave sequencer: bright, ‘h-
onest’ tones, each
has ‘bend’ and ‘pitch,’
has length,
and some come
with echo effect: a stone
turns in the eye into
a minor model of the cloud-and-
turbine-
studded Pu’u
Kukui, itself
a scale-
invariant stone
in sequence in littoral blue
isolation as

the eternity-bird’s eye view zooms out: Earth-
stone in sequence, tonal music
of sphere after
sphere broken by
sweetwater, spacewater, saltwater
dulcimer hammers into
non-Euclidean scales, corals, and
liquid iron cores and pitchblendes and
denser half-life
ores in a band of
stellar
scatter, each with pitch and
bend of light
  from Spica blue
to Proxima
Centauri red to red
of an open mouth to benthic blue
back to late childhóod,
when I lóved yoú.

Saugatuck Dunes

I and the others, over the dune hill wall,
confronted the Great Lake and wandered
with paper, pens and dying in different
parents
directions, and I sat a long time on a beech log and wrote

The Dearth of Rods:

The structure of the retina imposes limitations
on *homo sapiens sapiens’* powers of observation.

Spacewise, rods and cones being finite, resolution
must be finite. So the 17th century invention

of the microscope began the apprehension
of the infinite space bounded which is that suspension

of reactor stars and matter darkly theorized to be what
it resembles: something of a universe within a hazelnut

within an Epicurian atom. Timewise, that neuronal

signals pulse discretely means that any visible phenomenon

must last beyond the interval

(during which Lucifer-Icarus falls) of milliseconds

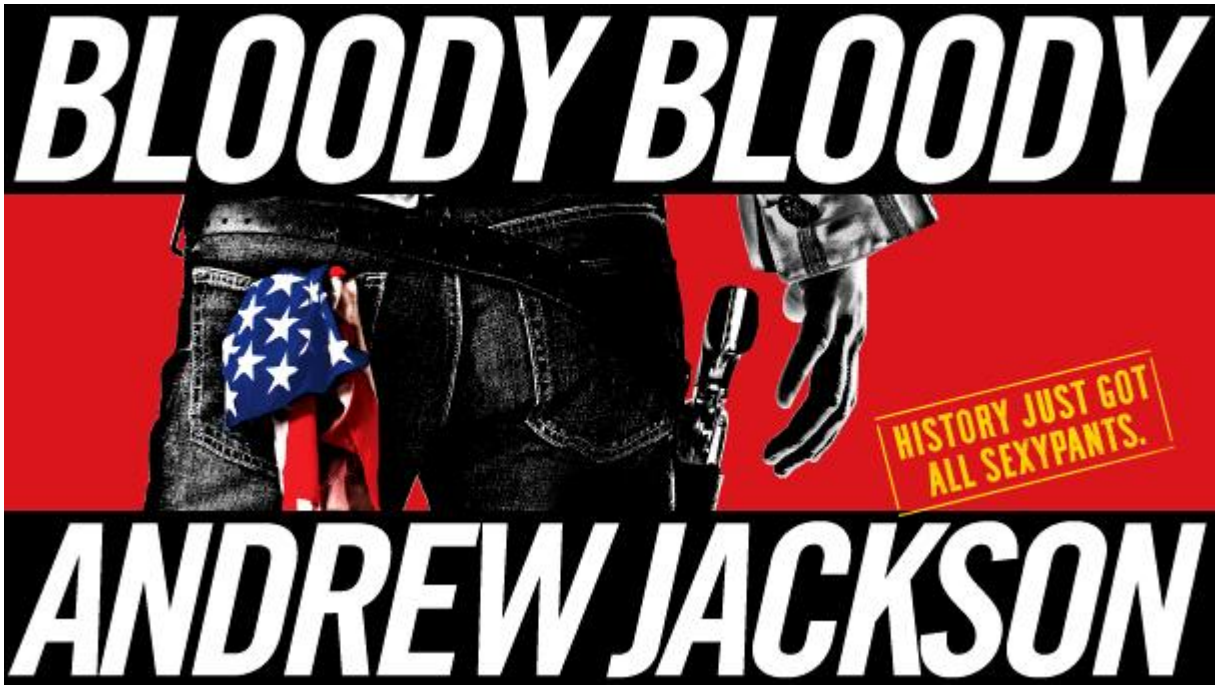
needed by a primate brain to render an experiénce, hence
the 19th century invention of photography commencedthe death birth of God,

until one of the others walked
toward the black dot
that was me
and arrived
and sat, and I felt a pulsation, acute,
a desire to
protect, and felt, too,
protected, but she
sat with me
for less than
a minute in silence, then
asked for more paper and walked off.

Could it be True I Once, Alone Walking, Found

A split tree trunk
with a torn off back
half of a water-
logged *Paradiso*
in its hollow?

Populism! Yeah? Yeah!!



Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson

On a chilly weekend shortly before Christmas, the Stunning Significant Other (hereafter, SSO) and I took a quick trip from snowy, abstemious New England down to New York City. With no Friday night plans in place, as Metro North whisked us toward Grand Central I asked her if there were anything in particular she'd like to do that evening. Any restaurants she'd like to visit? Perhaps we could see what the Metropolitan Opera was performing? Or maybe a Broadway show? I will confess that I was not entirely lacking in ulterior motives in asking these questions. She replied that it would be great to see a show—but what was playing? Well, I cautiously replied, there was a soon-to-close musical that I'd heard was really great. "What's it about?" Well, I ventured, even more cautiously, it's about antebellum politics and Manifest Destiny. "That sounds absolutely awesome," was the response. (A word of caution: I would not try this with just any significant other. It helps if he/she is also a devotee of nineteenth-century Americana. You've been warned.)

The opening number offers the essence of the show's take on Jackson's appeal, and also its less-than-subtle link to current political events.

That's how we found ourselves at the Bernard Jacobs Theatre on West 45th Street later that evening, ready to see "Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson." This musical, originally conceived by Les Freres Corbusier, a downtown theatre troupe that is "devoted to aggressively visceral theatre combining historical revisionism, sophomoric humor, and rigorous academic research," had its roots in the downtown theater scene, although it was first performed in Los Angeles. This production was brought to Broadway by the Public Theater in fall 2010. Apparently the audience for a loosely historical musical satire about our seventh president was not as large as the producers had hoped. The show, which cost $4.5 million to stage, closed on January 2, 2011, after only 120

performances, finishing its run substantially in the red.

“Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson” combines the emo-rock musical stylings that made “Spring Awakening” such a smash earlier in the decade with an irreverent, free-wheeling approach to American history and presidential politics. In this respect, it is reminiscent of the little-seen but highly entertaining “President Harding is a Rock Star,” a glam rock musical that got its start on the experimental stages of the East Village before enjoying a run in Washington, D.C., in the run-up to the 2004 presidential election. Indeed, one of the main messages of BBAJ is the importance of media appeal—and particularly sex appeal—in the marketing of presidential candidates: the posters for the show seen on bus shelters around New York showed this image (fig. 1), whose slogan “History Just Got All Sexypants” seemed to be one of the key themes (if not desires) of the show.


Fig. 1. Publicity image from “Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson.” Courtesy of the show’s Website, www.bloodybloodyandrewjackson.com

The interior of the Jacobs Theatre was a welter of old-timey bric-a-brac, taxidermy, velvet swagged curtains, portraits of nineteenth-century political figures, duct tape, strings of lights, piles of empty beer cans and liquor bottles: picture Peale’s Museum, trashed by the Delta Tau Chis. Suspended from the ceiling was a stuffed horse, its legs trussed together by a chain. I waited all evening for it to burst open and shower something—Confetti? Whiskey? Worthless currency from the pet banks?—over the audience, to no avail.

Much of the press that BBAJ received related to the undeniable charisma and appeal of the show’s star, Benjamin Walker (fig. 2). He swaggered onstage at the outset of the show in tight jeans and a military jacket, a holstered pistol at his side, surveyed the audience, and declared, “You guys are sexy as shit!” After some additional prefatory patter, he declared “I’m Andrew Jackson! I’m your president! Let’s go!” And the night was off to the races with the show’s opening full-cast number, “Populism, Yea, Yea!” (A song that I was singing to myself on the way over to the theater—the SSO thought I had made it up.) The opening number offers the essence of the show’s take on Jackson’s appeal, and also its less-than-subtle link to current political events, describing populism as a movement that is

For people like us,
Who don’t just think about things—
People who make things happen.
Sometimes with guns,
Sometimes with speeches too,
And also other things.


Fig 2. Benjamin Walker as Andrew Jackson. Courtesy of the media gallery at www.bloodybloodyandrewjackson.com

The ironic, winking connection to contemporary politics runs throughout the musical, and can at times verge into the self-satisfied (as many reviews of the show noted, this tone did not translate well from smaller downtown venues to the scale of a Broadway production). The musical offers a loose—very loose—outline of Jackson's upbringing on the Tennessee frontier (his family is depicted as being killed by Indians, cementing young Andrew's remorseless hatred of the people whom he would as president persecute so thoroughly), and offering an explanation of his later populist politics in his father's rants against the urban elites of the East who don't give a damn about the needs of citizens in the West. The show races to put Jackson in action, in the War of 1812. It is in the wake of his stunning victory at the Battle of New Orleans that Jackson the public figure—the real subject of the musical—comes to the fore, in a song titled "I'm Not That Guy." Jackson struggles with the implications of life in the public eye, including the exposure that a career in politics would bring to his marriage to his wife, Rachel, whose lack of an official divorce from her first husband before marrying Jackson would dog him throughout his career. Walker as Jackson quickly reconciles these misgivings, however, and at the end of the song declares what the rest of the musical will show to be the primary tenet of Jackson's political beliefs: "Who am I? I'm Andrew Fucking Jackson!"

A ninety-minute musical that is primarily being played for laughs can't be expected to offer much in the way of historical detail, and BBAJ makes no claim to fidelity to the facts (although the show's Website does offer a link to additional resources for those who are interested in learning more about Jackson and his era). Most of the historical context that is present in the show is offered by the Storyteller (Broadway veteran Kristine Nielsen), supposedly a retired history teacher and admitted Jackson aficionado who periodically rolls onstage in a motorized wheelchair accessorized with an American flag. The central section of the musical deals with the high points of Jackson's career: the election of 1824, and the "corrupt bargain" that put John Quincy Adams in the White House; Jackson's decision to run again in 1828; and his first term in office. Through this portion of the show Jackson shares the stage with the main political players in those events: John Quincy Adams, John Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Martin Van Buren. It is in the depiction of these figures that many readers of *Common-place*might find the most to enjoy.

Darren Goldstein plays Calhoun as a slick backroom wheeler-dealer, with a voice seemingly lifted from the cartoon chicken Foghorn Leghorn. Lucas Near-Verbrugghe's Van Buren is a fawning, two-faced petty bureaucrat, interested in nothing more than feathering his own nest. The show's version of John Quincy Adams is a far cry from Anthony Hopkins' incorruptible idealist in the film "Amistad." Here, Jeff Hiller plays the sixth president as a stupefied, incompetent, adenoidal lummox; when the deal is consummated that hands Adams victory in the 1824 presidential election, he clumps offstage and yelps, "This is exciting! I never win anything!" Most notable, however, is Bryce Pinkham's performance as Henry Clay, who speaks in a near-incomprehensible shriek, may or may not have a hunchback, has hair that appears to have been styled by a

mid-80s Robert Smith, and is continually stroking some sort of rodent—too sleek for a marmot, too big for a weasel. Perhaps a mink (fig. 3).

For theatre-goers who are familiar with the historical context, all of this is very entertaining. And the key message of this central section—that the qualities that it takes to get elected president are very different from those that are required to govern effectively—is one that has obvious connections to more contemporary periods. Yet many members of the audience seemed a bit baffled. The show's satirical humor seemed to have difficulty connecting with the audience in a venue of this size, and its music and choreography are not as polished as many visitors to New York likely expect to see on a Broadway stage (especially if they paid the full price of over $100 a ticket).

Fig 3. Darren Goldstein as Calhoun, Bryce Pinkham as Clay, Ben Steinfeld as Monroe, Jeff Hiller as John Quincy Adams and Lucas Near-Verbrugghe as Van Buren. Courtesy of the media gallery at www.bloodybloodyandrewjackson.com

Perhaps more perplexing was the show's shift in tone in its final third, where things turned somber as the focus swung to the one historical event that most members of the audience probably associated with Jackson: the Trail of Tears. A Native American leader named "Black Fox" is depicted as being a close confidante of Jackson, aiding his policies of Indian removal by betraying numerous tribes in his role as Jackson's chief negotiator (the character was called Black Hawk in the show's first run at the Public Theater, but the name was changed after Native Americans who saw the show objected that the character's negative portrayal could lead audiences to think that it referred to the real Black Hawk, the Sauk and Fox war leader of the early nineteenth century). But at the end of the show, Black Fox's own people stand in the way of Jackson's expansionist vision, and Black Fox is forced to take leave of Washington to lead his tribe in what he knows will be a futile war against U.S. troops. Jackson explains that the conflict between Indians and white settlers hungry for land was foreordained from the moment Europeans first set foot on the continent, and that even if he wanted to stop what he refers to as the "genocide" that is underway, he is powerless in the face of historical forces he can't control.

The show concluded with a rousing version of "The Hunters of Kentucky," an 1821 song that Jackson used as his campaign anthem in 1824 and 1828. Yet despite ending on this energetic note, the underlying theme of the show left one feeling somewhat uneasy. As BBAJ showed, the United States as it is presently constituted is the result of a long list of bad (if not downright immoral) decisions throughout history—decisions that modern voters might regret, but that have also made us who we are. We have been the material beneficiaries of Jackson's power-mad, bloodthirsty streak, and even if we could right these wrongs, the musical asks us whether we would want to. BBAJ's combination of history and satire was likely not well suited for the Broadway stage—it simply isn't commercial enough to fill that many seats night after night. A smaller

venue, and an even sharper edge, would have helped this entertaining historical mash-up enjoy a longer run.

All Things Were Working Together for My Deliverance

By the time the Union army reached Bayou Boeuf—the neighborhood where Solomon Northup, a free black man kidnapped from upstate New York, had been enslaved for twelve years—it had become a tourist destination. The federals accompanying General Nathaniel P. Banks on the march to Port Hudson, Louisiana, who had read Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853) made a point of seeking out the plantation of Edwin Epps, the last, longest, and most notoriously brutal owner of Solomon Northup before he regained his freedom (fig. 1). On May 19, 1863, 2nd Lt. William H. Root of the 75th New York Volunteers, wrote the following in his diary: "We are in the district that formed the theater of Solomon Northup's bondage":

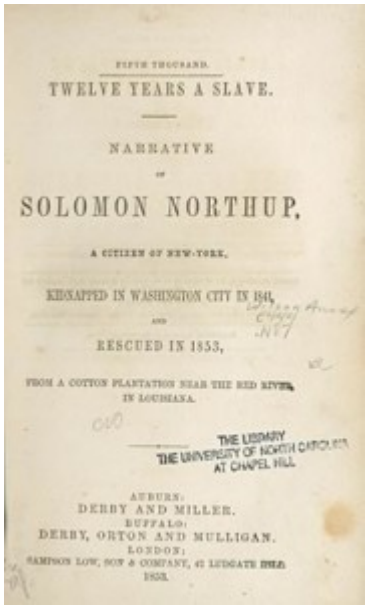
Old Epp's plantation is a few miles down the Bayou and Epps himself is on the plantation, a*noted* man made famous of his owning Solomon Northup. Plenty of negroes are found about here who say that they knew Platt [Northup's name while enslaved] well and have danced to the music of his fiddle often. Some who

remember when he was taken out of the lot by the “Northern gemman.” Bayou Boeuf was then the witness of quite a scene which made a lasting impression on the minds of the poor darkies who saw the affair.

The story of Northup did linger, both on the bayou and in the memories of soldiers who traveled in those parts during the war. S. E. Chandler, a sergeant with the 24th New York Cavalry, wrote to the *National Tribune* in 1894 about Northup and his story, noting that “the book is now out of print, cannot be procured of any regular dealer.” However, he had found a copy of *Twelve Years* in a secondhand bookshop in Albany. Chandler recalled meeting “a number of returned soldiers who were with Banks on his Red River expedition who told me of having read the book at the time it was published (1854[sic]) and who visited the plantation of Edwin Epps, where Northup … passed years of his life. They told of seeing and talking with his former slave comrades, whose names were Uncle Abram, Wiley, Aunt Phoebe, Patsy, Bob, Henry, and Edward.” Chandler hoped that others who had visited Bayou Boeuf during the war might also write to the *National Tribune* with “a brief account of what they learned” about the world and the people that Solomon Northup had left behind.

> The film serves to remind us what the war accomplished: the dismantling of the institution that cost Northup twelve years of his life.

As the soldiers who went looking for Edwin Epps well understood, to remember the Civil War was also to recall its antecedents and its outcomes—that is, the South and the nation as they existed before, during, and after the bloody conflict. The recent film version of Northup’s story, appearing in the midst of the Civil War’s sesquicentennial, exemplifies this broader understanding of war memory. Like the book before it, Steve McQueen’s *Twelve Years a Slave* points directly to the bitter roots of the conflict. The film also serves to remind us what the war accomplished: the dismantling of the institution that cost Northup twelve years of his life.



FIFTH THOUSAND.

TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE.

NARRATIVE

OF

SOLOMON NORTHUP,

A CITIZEN OF NEW-YORK,

KIDNAPPED IN WASHINGTON CITY IN 1841,

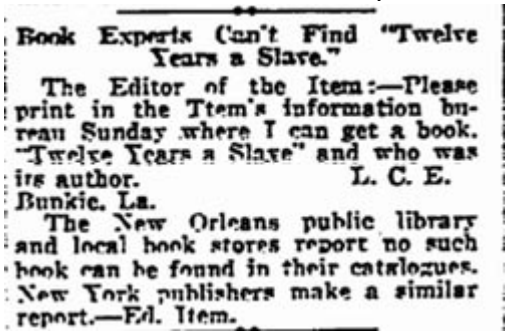
AND

RESCUED IN 1853,

FROM A COTTON PLANTATION NEAR THE RED RIVER, IN LOUISIANA.

AUBURN:
DERBY AND MILLER.
BUFFALO:
DERBY, ORTON AND MULLIGAN.
LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, SON & COMPANY, 47 LUDGATE HILL.
1853.

1. Title page of an original edition of Solomon Northup's Twelve Years a Slave, published in 1853. Courtesy of the UNC University Libraries, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina.



Book Experts Can't Find "Twelve Years a Slave."

The Editor of the Item:—Please print in the Item's information bureau Sunday where I can get a book. "Twelve Years a Slave" and who was its author. L. C. E.
Bunkie, La.

The New Orleans public library and local book stores report no such book can be found in their catalogues. New York publishers make a similar report.—Ed. Item.

2. Advertisement that appeared in New Orleans Item, April 22, 1922, p. 4. Courtesy of GenealogyBank.com, a division of NewsBank, Inc.

Recently, I began researching the editorial backstory to the first modern republication of *Twelve Years a Slave,* in 1968, and that edition's translation into a feature film. It soon became clear that much of the press coverage of the film—which has focused on the film's level of historical accuracy, and on how true it is to Solomon Northup's account—has ignored the subsequent history of the story Northup told. Northup came to believe, when looking back at his escape from the bayou, that "all things were working together for my deliverance." Little could he imagine that his published narrative would also experience redemption more than once in subsequent years.

Northup's account reached the big screen after traveling the same hard ground of racial conflict that the nation as a whole crossed from the 1850s to the present. The book fell out of print after the Civil War and remained so through the nadir of race relations in the South and the rise of Jim Crow. It was not republished until 1968, in the midst of the Civil Rights movement, when historians had begun to reflect on the African American past in search of

antecedents for the radical politics of the present. Now that the Civil War has once again become present in American popular culture due to the sesquicentennial, *Twelve Years a Slave* has resurfaced, this time in cinematic form.

That such a searing film would appear now seems fitting. While most contemporary textbooks discuss the role that slavery played in disunion, antebellum southern slavery is not often integrated into the popular memory of the war. Although important films about slavery and the Civil War have appeared since the 1960s—from *Roots* to *Glory* to *Lincoln*—none of these are so closely tied to the testimony of one person's daily experience of slavery. It is the particularity of Northup's story, as many historians have noted, that allowed him to so keenly reflect antebellum society at large and especially slavery's hold over daily life in the South before the war.

The film's attention to violence (a focus it shares with the original text) and to the plantation landscape in which such routine brutality occurred, de-sanitizes slick political justifications for the Civil War. Like Alexander Gardner's grisly photographs of Antietam in 1862, *Twelve Years* shocks its intended audience with horrors that have largely been kept from the public eye.

As a work of both memory and memorialization, the film version of *Twelve Years a Slave* is perhaps the most powerful answer yet to the movie that became the archetype of the Civil War epic from its debut in 1939, David O. Selznick's production of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. The inverse of that unforgettable monument to a fictional yet fiercely remembered "Old South,"*Twelve Years a Slave* reminds us of what the Civil War *really* swept from American society.

The resulting film is clear-eyed and painful to watch, closely following the experience of its protagonist and taking relatively few liberties with the original text. Countless critics, writers, and historians have hailed it as cinema's first honest look at the South's "peculiar institution." Writing in the *New Yorker,* David Denby declared it "easily the greatest feature film ever made about American slavery." Were it not for the collaboration of two historians in Louisiana, however, McQueen's film could not have become such a testament to what enslaved people endured before the Civil War.

In the spring of 1966, Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon contracted with Louisiana State University Press to republish what seemed to be an improbable story. Solomon Northup was a free black man living in Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1841 when he was lured to Washington, D.C., by two men posing as performers in need of Northup's skill as a violinist. Awakening to find himself chained in a slave pen, Northup was quickly sent south to the New Orleans slave market, sold under the name of "Platt" to a man named William Ford, and carried to the Bayou Boeuf region of central Louisiana. There he remained in bondage for twelve years, much of that time to a cruel master named Edwin Epps, before he was able to reclaim his freedom.

On his return to New York, Northup arranged to tell his story to a lawyer named David O. Wilson. Like most slave narratives of this period, *Twelve Years a Slave* was both a condemnation of slavery and a much-needed source of income for its ex-slave narrator. Wilson does not seem to have had serious abolitionist leanings, but he was an aspiring writer and recognized a good publishing prospect in Northup's story. Harriet Beecher Stowe had published her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the year previous, and it met with unprecedented success. The original 1853 edition of *Twelve Years a Slave* was dedicated to Stowe, who had been pleased to see Northup's experience come to light. She noted the similarities between Northup's ordeal and Uncle Tom's, particularly the fact that Northup had been enslaved to a sadistic master (Epps) in central Louisiana, very near to where Tom suffered the abuses of Simon Legree.

Although Eakin and Logsdon became interested in the narrative independent of one another, Eakin saw it first. She recalled that she was about twelve years old when she first read *Twelve Years a Slave.* She had accompanied her father to Oak Hall Plantation (near Alexandria, Louisiana), where he had some business with its owner, Dr. W. D. Haas. Haas was the grandson of Douglass Marshall, mentioned in Northup's account, who owned fifty slaves at Oak Hall in 1860. To keep the young girl occupied, Haas gave her the family's copy of Northup's story. She recalled being struck by the familiar names and places in the narrative.

Despite her avid interest in *Twelve Years a Slave*, Eakin had a difficult time obtaining a copy of her own. The book had long been out of print, as a clipping in the New Orleans *Item* from 1922 attests. Someone from Eakin's hometown of Bunkie with the initials "L.C.E." placed an advertisement in search of a copy of the book and was told none could be had, even in local libraries (fig. 2). Eakin eventually found a copy in a secondhand bookshop in Baton Rouge. As a college student at LSU in the 1940s, she began tracing the life of Northup and apparently never stopped.

Perhaps it is not surprising that Sue Eakin's is not the face most associated with the recent film adaptation of *Twelve Years a Slave* (fig. 3). In fact, most people would be hard pressed to consider the woman in her author's photo (white, grandmotherly, with her hair set and a chain on her eye glasses) on the cutting edge of anything, much less that of African American history. Although it was clearly Eakin who did most of the sleuthing, with Logsdon's help she brought the remarkable narrative of freeborn Solomon Northup's ordeal in slavery back into print.

Just as Lt. Root penned his letter from a South soon to be free of slavery, Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon revived Northup's narrative during another upheaval in American race relations. The political movements of the late 1960s brought with them a rising interest in African American history. At that critical point in a long racial struggle, in an age before digital archives put original nineteenth-century books at readers' fingertips, Eakin and Logsdon made *Twelve Years a Slave* accessible to two generations of scholars and their students.

3. Dr. Sue Eakin, professor of history, from the yearbook of Louisiana State University at Alexandria, Sauce Picante (1978). Courtesy of University Archives and Central Louisiana Collection, James C. Bolton Library, Louisiana State University at Alexandria.

4. Illustration from original edition of Solomon Northup’s Twelve Years a Slave, published in 1853. Courtesy of the UNC University Libraries, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

In doing so they became part of a long history of slave narrative publication and re-publication in American letters. With the rise of anti-slavery activism in the 1830s, the publication of slave narratives burgeoned. White abolitionists typically penned an introduction to the former slave’s account; many ex-slaves also relied on amanuenses (who often had heavy-handed editorial

intent) to transcribe their stories. Some literary critics have seen this as an unequal relationship, and others see this same inequality in modern editions: the words of a former slave, so this critique goes, are never allowed to stand on their own, without the support of an editor to authenticate them.

In the case of Northup's story, however, the process of authentication was always something of a communal one, and it began almost from the moment of Northup's liberation. Given the illegal nature of Solomon Northup's enslavement, the effort to retrieve evidence of his sale and to retrace his steps commenced once he was redeemed. After a failed attempt to send a letter to New York and a near lynching (fig. 4), Northup found an ally in Samuel Bass, an itinerant carpenter with antislavery sympathies who got word to those in New York who could vouch for Northup's status as a free man. A descendent of his father's owner, Henry B. Northup, traveled to Louisiana to retrieve him, with endorsements and aid from Louisiana Senator Pierre Soulé and the governor of New York.

Both Northups then traveled to New Orleans, where they visited the slave pen where he had been held and the room in which William Ford had purchased him. According to the *New York Daily Times*, they also visited the office of a notary to "trace the titles of the colored man from Tibaut [Tibeats] to Eppes [sic], from Ford to Tibaut, and from Freedman [the New Orleans trader] to Ford—all the titles being recorded in the proper books kept for that purpose." The elaborate system of notarial record keeping in New Orleans, which today fills an archive like no other in the country, helped Northup corroborate his own memory of events.

In later years, the accounts of Lt. Root and Sgt. Chandler, too, served to authenticate Northup's story. And Chandler's list of people who remembered Northup and his sudden liberation suggests that those who were enslaved with him also were willing to affirm both his story and its strangeness. The inclusion of a woman named "Patsy" on that list is significant since in Northup's telling she had been the main object of abuse in the Epps household, caught between the sexual coercion of Edwin Epps and the violent jealousies of his wife. That Patsy may have been there still, with Epps, means the war could not have come soon enough.

White members of the Bayou Boeuf community—contemporaries and immediate descendants of those Northup had encountered—also chimed in regarding the accuracy of Northup's memories. There is evidence that white planter families from the Bayou Boeuf community kept copies of the 1853 edition of *Twelve Years a Slave* in their libraries. According to Eakin, a family named Townsend "undoubtedly was one of those who owned one of the original editions of which there were a number still preserved." Apparently the people of Bayou Boeuf were eager to see their community recognized in print, even if it appeared in the context of a truthful account of the brutality of slavery and the slave trade.

In the footnotes to the 1968 edition, Eakin reprinted parts of an annotation

Dr. Haas had written on the flyleaf of the book in 1930, around the time Eakin first read the narrative. Dr. Haas's inscription reflected the grudging admission of residents of the area that Northup's narrative was accurate in its recounting of people and places in Bayou Boeuf: "This story is remarkable in many respects [—] that an uneducated negro after twelve years spent in slavery under a drunken overbearing Master could give so correct a narrative of his experiences is remarkable."

By 1966, Eakin had completed years of research on Northup's narrative, but convincing the editors at LSU Press that she was the right person for the editing job was not easy and, ultimately, not entirely successful. When she first approached the press about publishing *Twelve Years a Slave,* she was a married woman with children, a master's degree, and an instructor's position at a small regional state university. Eakin did not receive a PhD until 1978. "(Mrs.) Sue L. Eakin," as she signed her letters, was not the highly credentialed male historian university presses preferred.

5. Dr. Joseph Logsdon teaching at the University of New Orleans, ca. 1970. Courtesy Special Collections, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana.

6. Northup Trail, stop 2: Bayou Boeuf and image of Mary McCoy and her house, top right. McCoy was the original owner of the 1853 edition of Northup's narrative that was brought to Joseph Logsdon by a student in 1966. From Backtracking Twelve Years a Slave, Solomon Northup Trail Guide, p. 4-5, vertical file. Courtesy of the Ethel and Herman Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies, New Orleans, Louisiana.

In one telling, Eakin approached the press and was rejected. When she tried again, the editors expressed mild interest. Unbeknownst to her, however, a young scholar at LSU-New Orleans (later, the University of New Orleans) with a BA and MA from the University of Chicago and a PhD from the University of Wisconsin, had discovered his own copy of *Twelve Years a Slave*, and had decided that it should be reprinted.

Joseph Logsdon first read Northup's narrative when one of his students brought the book to class (fig. 5). The woman was a friend of the McCoy family, some of whom were mentioned in Northup's account, and it was their copy she had brought for Logsdon to see. According to Northup, the young plantation mistress Mary McCoy was "the beauty and the glory of Bayou Boeuf" and a benevolent slave owner who held "about a hundred working hands, besides a great many house servants, yard boys, and young children" (fig. 6). In his first letter to her, Logsdon told Eakin: "The work came to my attention last fall when one of my students … brought me the family's treasured (and humorously edited) copy of the narrative. After reading the fascinating book, I realized that it should be edited and republished."

Both historians had gone to the press, within weeks of one another—Eakin with years of research in hand, and Logsdon with an interest in the subject matter and well-placed contacts in the field. After meeting Eakin and discussing a possible collaboration, Logsdon wrote to the director of LSU Press: "Her knowledge of the Bayou Boef [sic] region is truly impressive. There is no question in my mind that, working together, we shall write a much better book." For Eakin, however, the decision to collaborate with Logsdon was not much of a decision at all, since she had little choice if she wanted to be an editor on the project.

They divided the work between them: Logsdon worked on the New York parts of the account as well as the introduction, and Eakin continued to research and write footnotes to the Louisiana portion. Together, they verified nearly every name, date, and landmark Northup mentioned in his narrative. John Ridley, who wrote the script of the film, told the *New York Times* that he relied upon the extensive notes in the Eakin and Logsdon edition to write the screenplay.

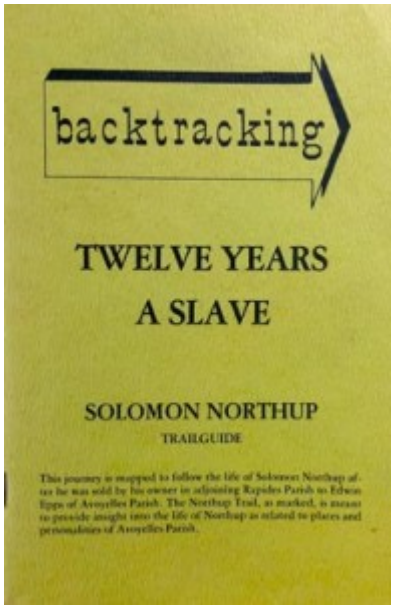
Logsdon's most significant contribution, however, may have been his efforts to put Northup's narrative in a larger context. Logsdon was aware that African American history was of increasing interest to publishers and within the academy. In his "Northup" file, he saved a clipping from the*National Observer* dated March 21, 1966 (fig. 7), with the headline "A New Boom as Negroes Seek a Place in History." The writer noted "the depth and diversity of the current Negro information explosion, a phenomenon that is inundating libraries and schools, spawning new businesses, and creating a sense of pride in heritage among thousands of American Negroes." The Civil Rights movement and its fight for school integration, as well as "the emergence of Africa" in the popular consciousness, had created an "insatiable public appetite for information on Negro Life."

Monday, March 21, 1966 THE NATION

An LP Record and Mrs. Murphy

A New Boom as Negroes Seek a Place in History

7. "A New Boom as Negroes Seek a Place in History," National Observer, March 21, 1966. Joseph Logsdon Papers, Special Collections, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans. Click image to enlarge in new window.



8. Cover, Backtracking Twelve Years a Slave, Solomon Northup Trail Guide, n.d., vertical file. Courtesy of the Ethel and Herman Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies, New Orleans, Louisiana.

In the same article, John Hope Franklin, then teaching at the University of Chicago, argued that "the Negroes' contributions to the nation have been obscured by history, and deliberately so. The traditional view of the Negro that depicts him as irresponsible and shiftless was part of the apparatus used to uphold his degraded status, and justify the institution of slavery." A "reexamination" of that view was underway, but not all of this new work was genuine. Pointing to the efforts of publishers and writers to turn a profit by quickly filling the void in black history, Franklin said: "There are people slapping anything at all to do with Negroes between two covers and making a profit on it."

Logsdon must have seen the Northup project as one that would address Franklin's concerns. The experience of enslavement narrated by one of the enslaved, a dramatic story filled with detail that could be verified and used by scholars and teachers, was the antithesis of the slapdash productions to which Franklin alluded. In light of Northup's obvious intelligence, remarkable survival, and industrious frame of mind even under slavery (in addition to playing the violin at plantation parties, he saved his first master, William Ford, both time and money by devising a means for transporting timber down the bayou instead of over land), *Twelve Years a Slave* would contribute meaningfully to a rebirth of research and writing in African American history.

Logsdon also worked to promote the new edition among prominent historians. He enlisted the help of Kenneth Stampp, eminent historian of American slavery at the University of California-Berkeley, who agreed to write a blurb for the book (though it does not seem to have ever been used). Stampp called the narrative a "priceless document," asserting that while Frederick Douglass's narrative was

the “superior” of the two, “in some respects Northup’s narrative is more valuable to the historian.” Because he had been born a free man, Northup (perhaps more so than Douglass) “tasted the bitterness of slavery.”

When the 1968 edition appeared—doubling the accepted canon of nineteenth-century slave narratives to two—it was as if Northup had offered up his story again, in another tumultuous era for race relations in America. A review for the *Florida Historical Quarterly* (whose blurb, strangely, still appears on the cover of the 2010 LSU Press edition) insisted that the book “should be must reading for every young Southerner. Only in accounts such as this can they understand the true nature of the curse which, more than a hundred years later, still hangs like a millstone around the neck of the South, hampering final emancipation for white and black alike.” Such a directive reflects the time and place in which Eakin and Logsdon reintroduced Northup’s remarkable story, delivering his account to an eager new generation.

If Logsdon provided the larger framework for Northup’s narrative, it was Eakin who reconstructed “the world of Solomon Northup,” to quote Logsdon himself. But in truth, Eakin’s relationship to her subject was not entirely academic—nor was it always objective. She seems to have been drawn to *Twelve Years a Slave* in large part because while it narrated Northup’s trials, the text also recorded a detailed history of her beloved Bayou Boeuf. In the early 1970s, for instance, she secured funding for a brochure called *Backtracking: Twelve Years a Slave*, which numbers the various sites of Northup’s enslavement and provides brief commentary on the people and places he encountered (fig. 8). This text serves as a (now mostly outdated) travel guide through the community where Northup was enslaved for so long.

Perhaps nothing so well illustrates Eakin’s familiarity with the world in which Northup found himself, however, than the map of “The Bayou Boeuf Country” she created with the help of a local cartographer named Rufus Smith (fig. 9). The names and property lines of plantation owners cluster on either side of the bayou, and the cleared land is ringed by swamps and mostly impassable forests. Like Northup’s narrative, the map is full of names and places, topographic notations, and marked routes between plantations. Eakin did her best to highlight Bayou Boeuf, its landmarks, and Northup’s journeys through it. But she was unable to render that same landscape from Northup’s perspective, that is, from the perspective of a free man who suddenly found himself enslaved in plantation country, far from a port or a coastline that might have afforded him swift passage home.

9. A map commissioned by Sue Eakin from local cartographer and surveyor Rufus Smith (1970). Signed by Eakin. Courtesy of Ethel and Herman Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Sue Eakin’s mapping of Solomon Northup’s “world” and his journeys through it

has been translated into three dimensions in Steve McQueen's film. With the camera, he tracks Northup through what historian Walter Johnson describes as the "carceral landscape" of the mid-nineteenth century Lower Mississippi Valley, a vast territory of cotton and cane with few opportunities for escape. In Northup's recollection, it was as though even the sun was beyond the reach of the bayou's inmates: "In the edge of the swamp, not a half mile from Epps' house was a large space, thousands of acres in extent, thickly covered with palmetto. Tall trees, whose long arms interlocked each other, formed a canopy above them, so dense as to exclude the beams of the sun. It was like twilight always, even in the middle of the brightest day."

10. Photograph of the Edwin Epps house in its original location along the banks of the Bayou Boeuf. Sue Eakins located it there in 1976 and helped to orchestrate its first move, to the nearby town of Bunkie, Louisiana. Courtesy of University Archives and Central Louisiana Collection, James C. Bolton Library, Louisiana State University at Alexandria.

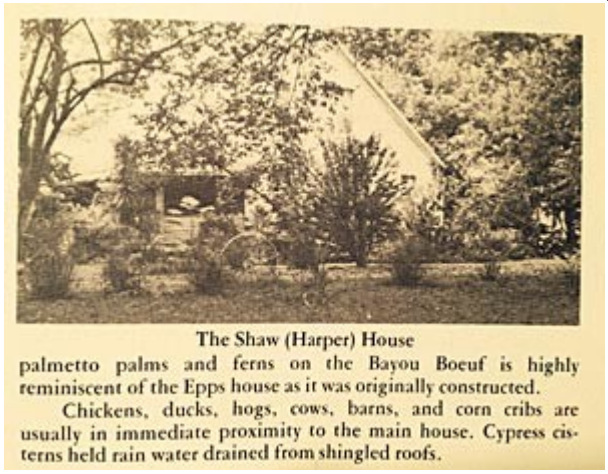
In McQueen's film, elements of the landscape become characters in the story. He filmed oak trees, for instance, in long, watery shots of gnarled branches draped with Spanish moss and, at two points in the story, with the bodies of black men. In one scene, when Northup considers escape, the sweating indecision he suffers in the maze of scrub brush is frightening. When he then stumbles on a lynching—through which McQueen also evokes a more recent reign of terror in the South—the impassability of that space for a black man in the 1840s becomes plain.

Given how closely McQueen's film hews to Northup's account, Eakin would probably have been pleased with the film. But there is one important point on which Sue Eakin would have taken issue with McQueen's version. It concerns the house where Epps lived—the very house where Lt. Root made a stop on his way to Port Hudson. Eakin exerted much effort to help preserve the Edwin Epps house, built with the help of Northup in 1852 (figs. 10 and 11). Since 1976, the structure has been moved twice and now sits, restored, on the campus of LSU-Alexandria. Eakin had found the house herself, after considerable searching: "I had a time documenting the house," she wrote, "because I had mistaken it for another of the hundreds of thousands of old slave cabins which had once lined the Bayou Boeuf." Eakin rightly pointed out that the house, a modest one, was "far more typical of plantation houses as known within the miles of plantations in the lower Red River Valley than the columned mansions 'restored' mostly with oil money after World War II."

Much of the movie, in fact, was filmed on the grounds of the sorts of "columned mansions" to which Eakin alluded. The Felicity Plantation in Vacherie, Louisiana, plays the part of the Epps house in Steve McQueen's movie and such a house, Eakin might have argued, would have been entirely too extravagant for a man who began his career as an overseer. In her *Backtracking* guide, she

included a photograph of the P.L. Shaw House, a neighboring plantation to the Epps place with a nearly identical structure. The Shaw house was still in good repair at the time the photo was taken and probably offers something close to what Lt. Root and his companions found on Epps's property in 1863 (fig. 12).

11. The Edwin Epps house as it now stands on the campus of Louisiana State University at Alexandria, where it serves as a museum dedicated to Northup's time in the region. Courtesy of University Archives and Central Louisiana Collection, James C. Bolton Library, Louisiana State University at Alexandria.



The Shaw (Harper) House

palmetto palms and ferns on the Bayou Boeuf is highly reminiscent of the Epps house as it was originally constructed.

Chickens, ducks, hogs, cows, barns, and corn cribs are usually in immediate proximity to the main house. Cypress cisterns held rain water drained from shingled roofs.

12. Photograph of the plantation house of Edwin Epps's neighbor, P.L. Shaw. As the text notes, this house most closely resembled the Epps house at the time of the Civil War. From Backtracking Twelve Years a Slave, Solomon Northup Trail Guide, n.d, p. 11, vertical file. Courtesy of the Ethel and Herman Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Eakin would have also appreciated the film's high-profile release during the Civil War's sesquicentennial. But she would have continued to point to our garbled understanding of the slave South and our even more confused attempts to remember the society that the Civil War upended. "It was here," she seemed to say, "and here, and here." The peeling houses and the bloodlines that persisted in Bayou Boeuf were also remains of the war and the last physical evidence of the antebellum society it (rightly) destroyed.

Further Reading

Two editions of Northup's narrative have been published in advance of the film: Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York, 2013); Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave, Enhanced Edition*, ed. Sue Eakin (Longboat Key, Fla., 2013). The 1968 edition is Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave,* Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon, eds. (Baton Rouge, La., 1968).

On the history of slave narratives, see Marion Wilson Starling's *The Slave Narrative: Its Place in American History* (New Haven, Conn., 1981).

For critiques of *Twelve Years a Slave* as a book and a film, see David Denby, "Fighting to Survive:*Twelve Years a Slave* and *All is Lost,*" *The New Yorker* (October 21, 2013); Noah Berlotsky, "How *Twelve Years a Slave* Gets History Right: By Getting It Wrong," *The Atlantic.com* (October 28, 2013); Jimmy So, "The '*12 Years a Slave*' Book Shows Slavery As Even More Appalling Than In the Film," *The Daily Beast.com* (October 18, 2013); and Forrest Wickman, "How Accurate is Twelve Years a Slave?" *Slate.com* Culture Blog (October 17, 2013).

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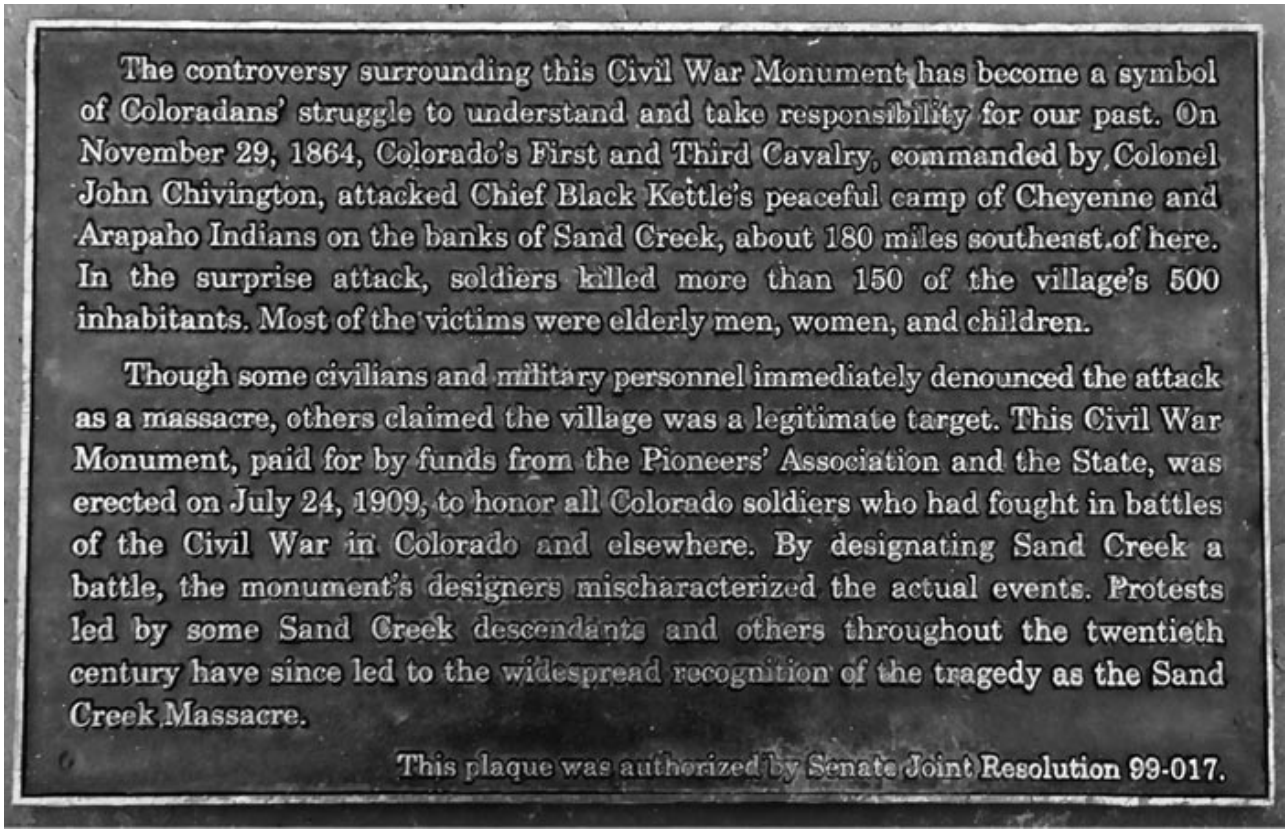
For Liberty and Empire



Remembering Sand Creek, Rethinking the Civil War

The runners were exhausted. Mostly young people from the Northern and Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, they dripped with sweat and nibbled on energy bars. They talked and sipped from bottles of water, striking odd poses to stretch their road-weary hamstrings. They had just finished a relay of roughly 200 miles, a "healing run" intended to protect them from the ravages of drugs and alcohol, violence and deprivation, boredom and sorrow—just some of the maladies that stalked them on the reservations where they lived.

Early that morning and throughout the previous day, Thanksgiving, they ran past stores gearing up for sales, past families crammed into cars speeding toward holiday gatherings, and past mile after mile of empty prairie landscapes. At impromptu rituals along their route, they reacquainted themselves with venerated tribal traditions and with land that had once belonged to their ancestors. Having finally arrived at their destination, the state capitol building in Denver, they were ready to complete their journey. They stopped to catch their breath and to commemorate a painful tragedy from their collective past. The date was November 29, 2002, the 138th anniversary of the Sand Creek massacre.

They gathered around the plinth of a Civil War memorial atop the capitol steps, which seemed to some of the Cheyennes and Arapahos like an odd classroom in which to study tribal history. A teenager wearing Nike gear—from her hat all the way down to her fluorescent pink shoes—had traveled from Concho, Oklahoma, to participate in the healing run. She looked up at the statue and said, "I

don’t get it.” A uniformed federal soldier, seemingly only a few years older than the athlete standing by his feet, gazed westward into the middle distance, across Denver’s Civic Center Park and toward the Rocky Mountains (fig 1). He carried his rifle in two hands and thrust one leg in front of the other, ready to meet the enemy or Colorado’s bright future, whichever crossed his path first. The runner asked, of nobody in particular, “Will someone tell me why we’re here? What does this Civil War guy have to do with us? With Indians? With Sand Creek?”

> Americans … often recall their history as one of steady progress punctuated by the occasional righteous war. In this view, the nation fought the Civil War only because of slavery and to expand freedom.

She did not have to wait long for answers. Drum beats and the opening strains of Chief White Antelope’s death song signaled the start of a ceremony to reinterpret a plaque affixed to the north-facing side of the Civil War memorial (fig. 2). That marker first related the state’s early history and then boasted of its citizens’ patriotism—it reported that nearly 5,000 Coloradans had volunteered to serve the Union during the Civil War, “the highest average of any state or territory and with no draft or bounty”—before listing in neat columns the names of all of the “battles and engagements” in which those soldiers had fought, including, at the bottom right, a bloodletting typically labeled “a massacre”: Sand Creek.

Although that episode may have seemed out of place on what otherwise appeared to be an honor roll, the story of Sand Creek’s inclusion on that list suggests that as the United States continues its Civil War sesquicentennial celebration, taking a moment to study the intersection of Native and national histories, as well as the collision of the past and the present, may help to reshape popular conceptions of the Civil War’s causes and consequences in the American West. Confronting Sand Creek’s place as part of the Civil War forces onlookers to reckon with the fact that a conflict most often recalled only as a war of liberation should more properly be remembered as a war of empire as well.

Such an understanding may be foreign or uncomfortable for Americans, who often recall their history as one of steady progress punctuated by the occasional righteous war. In this view, the nation fought the Civil War only because of slavery and to expand freedom. Even the best scholarship can inadvertently contribute to such misconceptions. James McPherson’s *Battle Cry of Freedom*, for instance, the most influential study of the war written in recent decades, begins in the far West. McPherson suggests that the conflict grew out of struggles between North and South over territory acquired from Mexico—struggles, in short, over the shape of an emerging American empire. By book’s end, though, McPherson largely drops the issue, focusing instead on the fate of the newly freed people, on struggles over definitions of citizenship, and on the growth of the federal government in the postbellum years. In other

words, *Battle Cry* locates the roots of the war in the West, but then, with the return of peace, largely forgets the region.

1. Colorado Civil War Memorial, Denver. Unveiled in 1909, the statue is sited on the west side of the state capitol building. It faces the city's Civic Center Park. Photograph courtesy of History Colorado (Subject file collection, Scan #10037235), Denver, Colorado.

Popular culture, much more even than scholarship, now typically frames the Civil War exclusively as a war of liberation. The recent film *Lincoln*, for example, might best be understood as answering a question Stephen Spielberg posed at the end of another of his war epics, *Saving Private Ryan*. Painting the earlier film's final scene against a perfect commemorative canvas, the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, Spielberg places an aging James Ryan amidst a forest of gleaming white crosses. After kneeling before the gravesite of the man who saved his life during the war, Ryan, a synecdoche for citizen soldiers, asks his wife if he has led a good life and if he is a good man. She replies that he has and that he is. With that, Spielberg, as close to a national narrator as the United States has, reassures moviegoers that World War II was a good war. The music rises, Ryan salutes his fallen comrade, the scene fades to a backlit American flag stiff in the breeze, and then to black.

Lincoln recapitulates the same queries and repurposes similar tropes. Forgetting that the war exploded not just out of the sectional conflict over slavery, but also out of the fight between the North and the South to control a growing Anglo-American empire in the West, Spielberg ignores that region and also the war itself, confining himself to a detailed recounting of the Thirteenth Amendment's passage. In doing so, he suggests that President Lincoln died so that the United States might live and that the nation, because it destroyed the institution of slavery during the war, redeemed itself in blood. *Lincoln* provides an object lesson in catharsis through suffering, as Spielberg transfigures tragedy, the death of more than 600,000 soldiers, into triumph, and violence into virtue. Was the Civil War a good war? Has the United States lived a good life in the years since? Yes and yes, the filmmaker reassures his vast audience. And so, by viewing the war through a narrow lens and a crimped regional perspective, Spielberg shades collective memory into teleology. With *Lincoln*, he reads the past backward, obscuring as much as he reveals.

But no matter how it is portrayed in cinema, cast in monographs, or understood in the popular consciousness, the Civil War was rooted, from its beginning to its end, in the far West. Long after Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, long after President Lincoln's assassination, long after the Thirteenth Amendment's ratification, the nation continued to focus on how best to settle the land beyond the 100th meridian, on how best to secure an empire that stretched from the Atlantic coast to the shores of the Pacific and beyond. And even after the war boasted a moment of redemption, a day of

jubilee, for many Americans, it also featured episodes of terrible subjugation, days of dispossession, for others. Which is to say, even after the Civil War evolved into a war of liberation, it remained one of empire. For people who hope to understand this disjuncture, the experiences of Native Americans during the war, including at Sand Creek in 1864, may help.

Returning to November 29, 2002. As participants gathered around the memorial, state, municipal, and tribal officials spoke about Colorado's early Anglo and Native histories. Then Laird Cometsevah, a Southern Cheyenne chief and leader of a Sand Creek descendants' organization, recounted the details of the massacre. Cometsevah's version of the Sand Creek story served as an official narrative for many Northern and Southern Cheyenne people. He explained that after a gold strike in 1859 triggered a rush to the mountains near Denver, his ancestors endured years of escalating violence with settlers on the plains to the east. Cometsevah's forebears, weary of bloodshed and chaos by 1864, sought a truce with white authorities in Colorado. Late in September of that year, a group of peace chiefs, including Black Kettle, traveled to Denver, where they met with Governor John Evans and Colonel John Chivington. After Evans placed the negotiations in the hands of the region's military leaders, Chivington suggested to the Native emissaries that if they wanted to keep their bands safe, they should travel immediately to Fort Lyon, a federal installation in southeastern Colorado. The Cheyennes and Arapahos did as they were directed. The fort's commander told them to camp along the banks of Sand Creek. Then Colonel Chivington betrayed their trust.

Before daybreak on November 29, 1864, Cometsevah continued, 700 soldiers, men from the First and Third Colorado Regiments, "attacked that camp of peaceful Indians." By day's end, the Colorado volunteers had "slaughtered more than one hundred and fifty Indians," most of whom were women, children, and the elderly. Cometsevah pressed on: "The white soldiers had no mercy. They desecrated their victims' bodies, cutting open the belly of a pregnant woman, murdering children, and slicing the genitals from the corpses lying on the ground." He concluded: "Our people still haven't recovered from that treachery."

As the assembled dignitaries and runners contemplated Cometsevah's words, Bob Martinez, a Colorado state senator, stood next to a freshly cast plaque shrouded in sweetgrass. After Arapaho and Cheyenne singers performed an honor song, Martinez unveiled a bronze plaque, narrating the politics of memory surrounding Sand Creek's placement on the nearby memorial (fig. 3). The text noted, "The controversy surrounding this Civil War monument has become a symbol of Coloradans' struggle to understand and take responsibility for our past." It then recounted the Sand Creek story before returning to the topic of the contingent and contested nature of public memory: "Though some civilians and military personnel immediately denounced the attack as a massacre, others claimed the [Cheyenne and Arapaho] village was a legitimate target." The sponsors of the Civil War memorial, for their part, had "mischaracterized the actual events" when they "designated Sand Creek a battle." In contrast, the plaque concluded by pointing to the "widespread recognition of the tragedy as

the Sand Creek Massacre." The ceremony complete, Martinez posed for pictures with the Cheyenne and Arapaho runners.

For some onlookers, Senator Martinez's participation in the ceremony might have seemed incongruous. Four years earlier, rather than seeking to reinterpret elements of the monument, Martinez had tried to erase them. He had sponsored a bill in the state legislature to delete Sand Creek from the list of battles and engagements on the statue's base. Congress had just authorized the National Park Service to commemorate Sand Creek at a new historic site located near the killing field, thrusting the massacre back into the spotlight in Colorado. Martinez found himself shocked when he walked by the statue on his way to work in the capitol.

It seemed to Martinez that Sand Creek, "a horrible atrocity," in his view, had no place on this list of "battles." After all, he believed the massacre "had nothing to do with the Civil War," a conflict best remembered, he believed, for preserving the Union and ending slavery. Sand Creek's inclusion on the memorial, Martinez suggested, insulted the tragedy's Native American victims and diminished the sacrifices of the "Colorado Civil War veterans who fought and died in the actual Civil War battles that are listed." Martinez's colleagues in the state legislature agreed. On May 5, 1998, they passed a joint resolution reading, "Sand Creek was not, in fact," part of the Civil War. Nor, the document continued, was it "a battle." Instead, it was "a massacre," and therefore it would have to "be removed from the memorial."

A bit less than a century before that vote took place, Coloradans likely would have been shocked to learn that Sand Creek would someday be severed from its Civil War context. On July 24, 1909, the Pioneers Association, a heritage organization that celebrated Colorado's earliest settlers, participated in a national commemorative project by unveiling the state's Civil War memorial. With veterans of the war nearing the end of their lives around the country, archives throughout the United States acquired vast document collections, authors published stacks of regimental histories, and cities unveiled monuments designed to shape how future generations would remember the war.

As David Blight, Michael Kammen, Edward Linenthal, and other scholars have argued in recent years, this upsurge of memorialization embodied a reconciliationist impulse. A heroic narrative of the war emerged around the turn of the century, a glorious martial story in which Union and Confederate soldiers fought bravely, well, and in service of virtuous goals. The war's root causes—struggles over the fate of slavery, over competing definitions of federal authority and citizenship, and over the right to shape an emerging American empire in the West—could be set aside in service of an amicable reunion between the North and the South.

2. A plaque affixed to the base of the Colorado Civil War Memorial. Sand Creek

is included, at the bottom right, among the list of “Battles and Engagements” in which Coloradans fought during the war. Photograph courtesy of the author.

At the dedication of Colorado’s Civil War memorial in 1909, event organizers stitched together national unity and regional pride, seamlessly integrating visions of empire and liberty. Robert Steele, chief justice of the state supreme court, oversaw the event. The statue’s designer, John Howland, had served in the First Colorado Regiment, and he, along with a crowd of other veterans, participated in the ceremony. A huge audience gathered to celebrate the heroic Colorado volunteers who had helped save the Union, and, at Sand Creek, cleared the way for the nation to realize its Manifest Destiny—projects that would have been inseparable for most onlookers.

A phalanx of riflemen fired a twenty-one-gun salute as Chief Justice Steele pulled back an American flag, unveiling the bronze foot soldier. A military band then broke the “hush of patriotic awe,” balancing the emancipationist spirit of “Marching Through Georgia” (“Hurrah! Hurrah! We bring the jubilee! Hurrah! Hurrah! The flag that makes you free!”) with the Lost Cause nostalgia of “Dixie” (“I wish I was in the land of Cotton, Old times they are not forgotten”). As he rose to speak, Thomas Patterson, a former U.S. Senator and owner of Denver’s *Rocky Mountain News*, invoked the spirit of reconciliation, declaring that, “we are all Americans today, and we all glory in one flag and one country.” General Irving Hale, who a decade earlier had gained fame during the Spanish-American War as a proud imperialist and who later had helped to found the Veterans of Foreign Wars, followed Patterson to the dais, celebrating the Civil War “for making freedom universal for all Americans.” Hale’s remarks ignored the conflict’s effect on Native peoples, including the Cheyennes and Arapahos, but captured the spirit of the day. Nether Hale nor anyone else at the event seem to have given a moment’s notice to the fact that Sand Creek enjoyed pride of place on the monument.

That Sand Creek would be depicted on the statehouse steps both as a battle and as a chapter in Colorado’s Civil War story culminated nearly half a century’s wrangling over memories of the violence. John Chivington, for instance, worked from November 1864 until his death three decades later to shape public perceptions of Sand Creek. He always insisted that the engagement had been a legitimate part of the fight to preserve the Union and to spread civilization into the West. Late in 1864, when he first bragged about Sand Creek, the bloodshed’s status as part of the Civil War seemed like a foregone conclusion. Two years earlier, Chivington had secured his reputation for courage, fighting for the Union in New Mexico at the Battle of Glorieta Pass. Chivington recognized Sand Creek and the Civil War as having been catalyzed by the nation’s struggle over the future of the West. An abolitionist and Methodist minister, he had ridden the circuit in Kansas in the 1850s, hoping to ensure that territory’s future as free soil. He had experienced the 1860 election as a national referendum on competing visions of expansion: the Republican Party’s free soil campaign, kin to Thomas Jefferson’s promised “empire for liberty” in the West, versus the Democrats’ insistence that slavery should be allowed to

root itself in land acquired during the U.S.-Mexican War.

The Republicans carried the day in the 1860 election and then, after most Southern members of Congress absented themselves, passed legislation (the Morrill Act, the Pacific Railroad Act, and the Homestead Act) and created new pieces of the federal apparatus (including the Department of Agriculture) to ensure that the conquest and settlement of the West would proceed according to the party's plans. Chivington knew that many of his men in 1864 had volunteered to fight for the Union because they believed that the Lincoln administration had promised them the West as fair recompense for their service. In this vision, Native peoples would have to make way for onrushing white civilization—or, as in the case of the Arapahos and Cheyennes at Sand Creek, be crushed by the gears of war.

In spring of 1865, Chivington fine-tuned his Sand Creek story for the first of many times. In the months since the massacre, two things had happened to force changes in his recollections. First, despite his concerted public relations efforts, several of his former subordinates, haunted by memories of the carnage, had begun suggesting that Sand Creek had been a massacre, convincing federal authorities to launch inquiries into the violence. And second, the Civil War had ended, leaving the nation struggling to understand what had caused such a terrible paroxysm of violence. Chivington was determined that as this triage of national memories took place, Sand Creek would be bathed in the reflected glory of the war.

In April 1865, Chivington provided federal investigators with a lengthy account of Sand Creek, including lessons about the relationship between the Civil War, the nascent Indian Wars, and the future of the West. For several years prior to Sand Creek, Chivington claimed, he had "been in possession of the most conclusive evidence of an alliance, for the purposes of hostility against the whites, of the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahos, Comanche river, and Apache Indians." Ignoring diplomatic barriers and the bloody history separating those Native nations, Chivington insisted that the allied tribes had represented an existential threat both to white settlers in Colorado Territory and to the Republican vision for control of the Plains, the Rocky Mountains, and beyond. Without Colorado, without Sand Creek, he noted, the party of Lincoln and liberty would have lost its surest toehold in the West.

Chivington placed the horror of Sand Creek against a backdrop of Confederate intrigue. "Rebel emissaries," he revealed, "were long since sent among the Indians to incite them against the whites." George Bent, son of a borderlands trade tycoon and former federal Indian agent named William Bent and his Cheyenne wife, Owl Woman, had supposedly served as the South's agent. Bent, Chivington claimed, had promised the Plains tribes that with "the Great Father at Washington having all he could do to fight his children at the south, they could now regain this country." In other words, Chivington suggested, with federal authorities distracted by fighting the Civil War back east, Native peoples could push white settlers out of the West, retaking land they had

steadily lost since the beginning of the rush to Colorado. The specter of such carnage seemed terrifying in context. With memories of the Dakota uprising in Minnesota in 1862 and the Cherokees' decision to side with the Confederacy still fresh, Chivington insisted that Sand Creek should properly be understood as part of the successful struggle to preserve the Union.

Federal investigators were unmoved by Chivington's claims. Each of the investigations into Sand Creek damned Chivington and the violence he wrought, with none doing so more stridently than the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War (JCCW). Founded in 1861, the JCCW inquired into a vast array of controversial topics, including the causes of Union losses, the treatment of wounded and imprisoned soldiers, and the use of so-called colored troops in the North's armies. Its report in 1865, for example, covered the debacles the previous year at the Crater outside Petersburg, the infamous massacre of African American soldiers at Fort Pillow in Tennessee, and Sand Creek, among other contentious issues.

Pulling no punches, the JCCW recommended that Governor Evans be sacked and that Chivington—who, the committee concluded, had committed "murder"—be cashiered and court martialed. At once acknowledging Sand Creek's place within the Civil War and also attempting to segregate the massacre from the struggle to crush the rebellion, the report's authors raged, "It is difficult to believe that beings in the form of men and disgracing the uniform of the United States, soldiers and officers, could commit or countenance such acts of cruelty and barbarity." Chivington, they noted, had "deliberately planned and executed a foul and dastardly massacre which would have disgraced the veriest savages among those who were the victims of his cruelty." Sand Creek so threatened the honor of the Union cause that the JCCW hoped its perpetrators would be regarded not as federal soldiers but as frontier rogues, less civilized even than the Indians they had killed.

Westerners, and Coloradans especially, did not accept that verdict. After the JCCW issued its findings, the *Rocky Mountain News* lauded Chivington and defended Sand Creek as a necessary part of taming the savage West. And years later, William Byers, the *News*'s editor at the time of Sand Creek, began a print war with Indian reformer Helen Hunt Jackson, who had recently used Sand Creek as an example of the federal government's malice toward Native peoples. In his attacks on Jackson, Byers hewed to the line drawn by Chivington, insisting that the Colorado volunteers had been loyal Union men who had killed hostile Indians. Although federal troops were still grappling with Native nations during the Indian Wars when Byers attacked Jackson, he nevertheless claimed that Chivington and his men had pacified rather than inflamed the Plains tribes. He concluded that Sand Creek had "saved Colorado and taught the Indians the most salutary lesson they ever learned."

Jackson scoffed at the idea that Sand Creek had quieted the region's tribes, rebutting Byers's claims by waving the bloody shirt. The Indian Wars that the massacre had precipitated had cost federal authorities millions of dollars, she

explained, requiring that some 8,000 troops be “withdrawn from the effective forces engaged with the Rebellion.” Not only had the massacre been an atrocity, she argued, it had also detracted from the Union war effort. Two years later, when Jackson published *Century of Dishonor*, she expanded her argument, suggesting that Sand Creek had been a predictable outgrowth of longstanding federal Indian policy. The Republican Party’s vision of empire, of a white man’s republic in the West, had helped set the nation on the path to the Civil War and the Indian Wars.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, with men like William Byers still trying to shape public memory of Sand Creek, George Bent decided that he had to weigh in on the massacre’s history. Anthropologists were arguing at the time that Native Americans were a vanishing race, historians were lamenting the closing of the frontier, and the public was consuming mountains of dime novels. The West, in popular culture and public policy, stood at the center of discussions about the nation’s future. Bent worried that Indians had no voice in those conversations. He began collecting tribal history and lore for James Mooney, a renowned Smithsonian ethnographer, and George Bird Grinnell, a founder of the discipline of anthropology. After the two scholars disappointed him (Mooney because he would not listen, Grinnell because he withheld proper credit), Bent sought out another collaborator. He began working with George Hyde, a relatively obscure historian. In 1906, the two men placed six articles in a magazine called *The Frontier*.

Those essays, published under Bent’s name, inverted Chivington’s Sand Creek stories. Although Bent acknowledged that he had fought for the South—he had served in General Sterling Price’s First Missouri Cavalry—he mocked the “men in Colorado [who] talked about Rebel plots” to ally with the region’s Indian peoples. Pointing to the constraints of Native diplomacy, he noted that the Kiowas and Comanches were “inveterate foes of Texas,” and suggested that the Cheyennes and Arapahos, though hardly staunch Unionists, likewise had no incentive to join with the Confederacy. Turning to the massacre itself, Bent, who survived a wound he received there, related details of Chivington’s betrayal of the Cheyenne and Arapaho peace chiefs; of Black Kettle’s decision to raise a white flag over his lodge, signaling that his people were friendly; and of the Colorado troops’ butchery. (In 2002, Laird Cometsevah would draw on Bent’s Sand Creek stories when, speaking on the steps of Colorado’s capitol building, he recounted the history of the massacre.)

For the lion’s share of his articles, though, Bent moved beyond the massacre’s particulars, instead considering the implications of the violence. He understood the Civil War as a war of imperialism rather than liberation, a conflict that, after it ended, left the Plains tribes and white Westerners awash in blood. Unlike Chivington and Byers, who maintained that Sand Creek had brought peace to the region, Bent believed that the fighting begat more fighting. The massacre touched off a period of violence that only ended with the subjugation of his people during the dawning Reservation Era. Sand Creek, in Bent’s telling, was part of the rotten foundation upon which the federal

government constructed an empire in the West.

Chivington's loyalists did not allow Bent's charges to stand unchallenged. With most veterans of the First and Third Colorado Regiments well into their golden years, Jacob Downing read Bent's essays in the *Frontier* as an attack on the memory of his own and his comrades' honorable Civil War service. A retired major who, prior to Sand Creek, had distinguished himself fighting Confederates—at Apache Canyon, Glorieta Pass, and several other engagements in the conflict's far western theater—Downing had in the years after the war become one of Denver's most prominent citizens, a businessman and philanthropist devoted to various municipal causes. In 1906, he remained active in several local heritage organizations, including the Colorado chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic.

As a steward of the state's early history and Civil War memory, Downing tried to uphold the status quo by attacking the Bent family. Outraged that an Indian had dared to label the actions of white men "savage," in the pages of the *Denver Times* he called William Bent a "squaw man" and George Bent "a halfbreed." Sand Creek, Downing continued, should be recalled as Chivington had always suggested: a righteous battle fought against hostile Indians determined to slow the march of progress in Colorado, and also as a critical part of the Union war effort in the West.

Before Downing died the next year, he helped to influence early planning for Colorado's Civil War memorial, the statue that would sit atop the state capitol steps. After 1909, that monument would carve Chivington's Sand Creek story into stone, lending an aura of permanence to what had been a contested narrative.

Less than a century later, in 1998, Senator Martinez decided to recast that story, a reminder of the contingent nature of public commemoration. After Martinez's resolution passed the state legislature, the Capitol Building Advisory Committee hired a local metal worker. The artisan would remove the plaque from the statue's base, grind the words "Sand Creek" away, burnish the remaining twenty-one "battles and engagements" to match their original color, and then reattach the nameplate to the memorial. The horror of the past could be erased for just $1,000.

Or not. When David Halaas, chief historian at the Colorado Historical Society, heard about Martinez's resolution, he thought "it was a well-intentioned but lousy plan." Halaas worked at the time with Cheyenne representatives on other efforts to memorialize the massacre, including the Park Service's national historic site. He contacted Laird Cometsevah and Steve Brady, head of the Northern Cheyenne Sand Creek descendants committee. Cometsevah thought "that Sand Creek should not be a battle," but he did not want to see it "erased" from the Civil War memorial. Brady agreed: "Sand Creek was part of the Civil War, though not as a battle." He elaborated: "There were more than a few Indian massacres that happened during the Civil War, though white people tend to forget those stories."

As word spread that the legislature had not consulted with the Sand Creek descendants, opposition to Martinez's well-intentioned revisionism surfaced in Denver. Tom Noel, a historian and public intellectual known as "Dr. Colorado," entered the fray, writing an opinion piece in the *Denver Post* just after Independence Day 1998. Noel argued that Coloradans should grapple with their history, warts and all, rather than forget it. He suggested that the state's Civil War memorial should remain untouched and that "the story of Sand Creek, with all of its various interpretations, needs to be left open for public discussion and reflection."

Some of Chivington's latter-day defenders, including Mike Koury, an author, editor, and member of a national heritage organization known as the Order of the Indian Wars, agreed with Noel that the plaque should be left alone. "Taking [Sand Creek] off a statue," Koury pointed out, "is not going to make it disappear. You gain nothing by hiding it under a blanket." Unlike Noel, though, Koury advocated a conservative course not out of respect for the complexity of ever-shifting collective memories, but because he thought "politically correct" meddling would "dishonor people who fought in the Civil War." Duane Smith, an American historian on the faculty at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, piled on. Annoyed by bureaucrats and activists doing violence to the past, Smith sneered that it would be "absolutely stupid" to alter the statue to suit the politics of the day. He concluded, "Sand Creek was a tremendously important Civil War battle," suggesting that the volunteer soldiers under Chivington should still be honored for their patriotism.

3. A revised plaque placed in 2002 near the Colorado Civil War Memorial. Photograph courtesy of the author.

Finally, on July 31, 1998, Cometsevah and Halaas testified before Colorado's legislature. They explained that Sand Creek had been part of the Civil War. Halaas noted that details about the slaughter could be found in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (otherwise known as the*OR*), the go-to source for historians researching military aspects of the war; that the men of the First and Third Colorado Regiments had mustered into the Union army; and that Evans and Chivington had believed that the Native people at Sand Creek had likely forged an alliance with the Confederacy. Cometsevah and Halaas then offered the legislators a compromise. Rather than "removing Sand Creek," the state should provide the memorial's visitors with context, "inform[ing] the public about the massacre through historical markers." Within a few months, the legislature adopted the suggestion.

Close to four years passed before the new interpretative plaque could be unveiled, four years filled with committee meetings and public outreach events, four years spent trying to spin a single narrative thread that would explain Sand Creek's relationship to the Civil War while also satisfying descendants of

the massacre's victims and contemporary Coloradans fiercely proud of their state's heritage. In the end, 138 years after Colonel Chivington and his Colorado volunteers descended on the Native Americans camped along Sand Creek, the plaque was ready.

After the unveiling ceremony, the Cheyenne and Arapaho leaders and the young runners from their tribes prepared to leave Colorado's capitol, to make their long drives back to Oklahoma, Montana, and Wyoming. Laird Cometsevah asked the teenage girl wearing Nike gear if she had an answer to her question, if she understood what she was doing there, what Sand Creek had to do with the Civil War, and what the Civil War had to do with Indians. She replied, "I think so."

Cometsevah later regretted that he did not press her to elaborate. "I hope she realized that white people were fighting over who would control Colorado and the West at that time," he said, "and I hope she and other people who see the statue understand that Sand Creek happened during the Civil War, but that it wasn't in any way, shape, or form a battle. Chivington and his men were Civil War soldiers, but it was a massacre." With a sigh, Cometsevah concluded, "I hope that young lady understood all of that. But it's always hard to know what people do and don't understand. All we can do at these sorts of things [the healing run and the reinterpretation of the Civil War memorial] is the very best we can."

In the ten years since the state of Colorado rededicated its Civil War memorial, hundreds of thousands of people have visited the capitol steps in Denver. Since 2007, tens of thousands more have traveled to the southeastern part of the state, where they have climbed a small rise overlooking the Sand Creek killing field, located within the National Park Service's historic site. And now, with the Civil War sesquicentennial celebrations ongoing and the sesquicentennial of Sand Creek upcoming, the University of Denver and Northwestern University are grappling with John Evans's role in the founding of their institutions, the Park Service is set to release an interpretive film about the relationship between Sand Creek and the Civil War, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples are planning more healing runs to mark the 150th anniversary of the massacre.

But even amid this uptick in memorial activity, it remains difficult, as Laird Cometsevah suggested, to know for certain what onlookers will make of their experiences, of the history and repercussions of Sand Creek, and of the massacre's relationship to the Civil War—or even if they will make anything at all of that relationship. Most Americans, after all, prompted by popular culture and scholarship, still remember the Civil War only as a war of emancipation, a good war.

But viewed from Indian Country—from the gibbets of Mankato, Minnesota, in 1862, where thirty-eight Dakota Sioux were hanged; from the Bosque Redondo in New Mexico in 1864, where Navajos staggered to the end of their Long Walk; and from the banks of Sand Creek, where peaceful Arapahos and Cheyennes fell before John

Chivington's men—the Civil War looked different. It looked like a war of empire. Perhaps visitors to Colorado's state capitol, when confronted with a reinterpreted statue of a Union soldier, will learn that the Civil War could actually be both of those things at once. Perhaps they will learn that the nation's history is often shot through with such painful ironies and that the act of memorializing the past is fraught with unexpected lessons.

Further Reading

John M. Carroll, *Sand Creek Massacre, a Documentary History* (New York, 1973); Jerome A. Greene and Douglas D. Scott, *Finding Sand Creek: History, Archeology, and the 1864 Massacre Site* (Norman, Okla., 2006), David F. Halaas and Andrew E. Masich, *Halfbreed: The Remarkable True Story of George Bent—Caught Between the World of the Indian and the White Man* (New York, 2005); Stan Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (Norman, Okla., 1974); George E. Hyde (author) and Savoie Lottinville (editor), *Life of George Bent: Written from His Letters* (Norman, Okla., 1968); Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge, Mass., 2013); Gary Leland Roberts, "Sand Creek: Tragedy and Symbol" (PhD dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1984); Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers & the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1998).

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What's in a Name

How Durben in Glasgow Became Dearborn in Quebec

I discovered a Revolutionary-era journal written by a Captain Durben—from an unexpected source—in 2009 while researching Benedict Arnold's expedition to Quebec, a disastrous 1775 attempt to invade Canada and capture the city for the American cause. One of my primary purposes at that time was to compile a comprehensive bibliography of all printings of every journal written about the Arnold expedition, which seems to have generated more journals than any Revolutionary War battle.

One of many Google searches took me to a surprising entry, featured in an online Americana exhibit created by the Special Collections Section of the University of Glasgow Library, which was devoted to eighteenth-century books and manuscripts. On the fourth page, I found a description of a manuscript titled, "A Journal of the Rebel Expedition," written by a Captain Durben, along with an image of the journal's first page. The subtitle stated that this was "An exact copy of a Journal of the Route and Proceedings of 1100 Rebels, who marched from Cambridge, in Massachusetts Bay, under the Command of General Arnold, in the fall of the year 1775; to attack Quebec." I was immediately intrigued—this document purported to be a manuscript journal of the Arnold expedition that had previously been entirely unknown to me.

Upon reflection, I was astonished that an unknown journal of an important Revolutionary War event had been residing in a university library in Scotland for over 225 years and had never been mentioned in any scholarship on the Revolutionary War. At the same time, I was also skeptical. How did a manuscript journal written by an American officer end up in Scotland? Moreover, I had done enough research on the Quebec expedition to know that there was no American officer involved named Durben. The more I thought about the online exhibit, the more I was convinced that, when I researched it further, the manuscript would turn out to be a disappointment because it would prove *not* to be an original journal of the expedition to Quebec.

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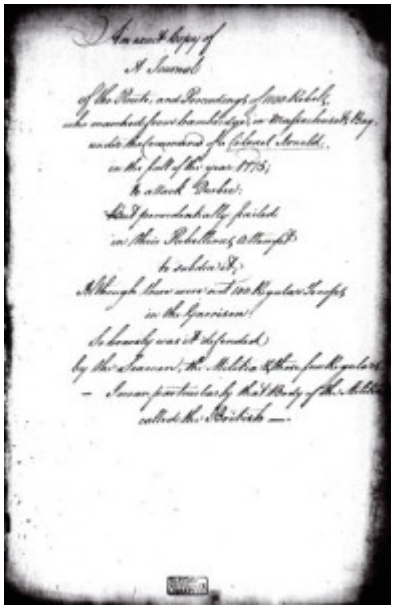
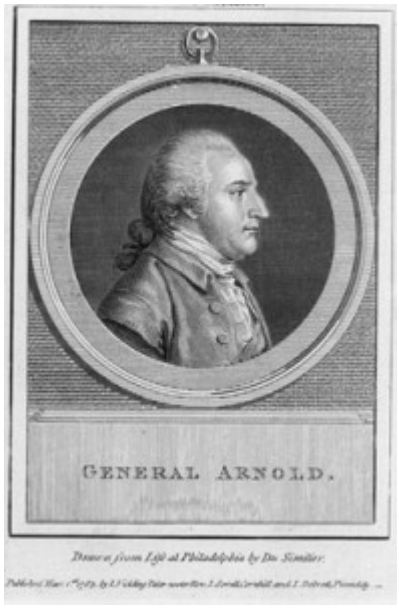
unknown to me.

The Durben manuscript was contained in a bound volume entitled “Manuscripts from the Library of William Hunter.” Dr. Hunter was a Scottish physician and private book and manuscript collector so active in his era that he was a competitor of the British Library. At his death in 1783, he bequeathed his collection, including the Durben journal, to the Library of the University of Glasgow.

I wrote to the Special Collection librarians there, requesting a photocopy of the manuscript journal. They readily copied the entire file and sent it to me. The package included the Durben journal plus two other, shorter journals of the expedition. No author is identified by name for either of these shorter journals.



Front page of Captain Durben’s journal. By permission of the University of Glasgow Library, Glasgow, Scotland (Special Collections-Sp. Coll. MS. Hunter 608).



“Portrait of Benedict Arnold,” from The European Magazine and London Review, March 1, 1783. Photograph courtesy of the author. Click to enlarge in a new window.

After closely examining the Durben manuscript, I concluded that it was a period copy of a previously unknown journal originally authored by Captain Henry Dearborn (1751-1829) of New Hampshire, probably one of the best-known officers on the expedition other than Arnold himself. Dearborn was captured in the assault on Quebec on December 31, 1775, and was imprisoned in Quebec until he was released on parole early in May 1776. The journal entries cover the period September 13, 1775, through May 18, 1776. These entries were written contemporaneously as events occurred, as the author went along on the expedition and then, during the winter of 1775-1776, when he was imprisoned in Quebec. The transcription was evidently penned sometime thereafter, by Dr. Robert Robertson (1742-1829), a Scottish surgeon serving with the Royal Navy in Quebec in 1776. In what follows I’ll discuss the evidence that led me to these conclusions.

The name “Durben” at first threw me because, as mentioned above, there was no officer in the Arnold expedition with that name. Looking at names that might sound like Durben, I tentatively concluded that the author might be Captain Henry Dearborn. No other officer had a name that sounds anything like Durben, and no other officer’s name begins with the letter “D.”

Two entries in the journal provided additional evidence supporting Dearborn’s authorship. The author mentions two of his officers by name, both of whom were in Captain Dearborn’s company. The first is Joseph Thomas, who was appointed as Dearborn’s Ensign, according to the daily entry for September 18. The author also refers in an entry on November 2 to a Lieutenant Hutchins being in his company. Both Joseph Thomas and Nathaniel Hutchins were officers in Dearborn’s company, and both are listed in *New Hampshire Troops in the Quebec Expedition*,

published by the state of New Hampshire in 1885.

The Durben journal concludes with entries for the days of May 17 and 18, 1776, which describe the author leaving on a boat with Major Return J. Meigs. The early exit from Quebec by the two officers, Meigs and Dearborn, is verified by other expedition journals, providing compelling supportive evidence that the author of the Durben journal was Henry Dearborn. In Private James Melvin's journal, the entry on May 18, 1776, reads: "Pleasant weather; hear that Major Meigs and Captain Dearborn are gone home." There are also two entries in Captain Simeon Thayer's journal: "May 17 … Major Meigs had the liberty to walk the town until 4 o'clock. Mr. Laveris came and informed Capt. Dearborn that he had obtained liberty for him to go home on his parole … May 18. About ten o'clock they [Meigs and Dearborn] set sail for Halifax." It is clear from these entries that it was well known by the men in prison in Quebec that Meigs and Dearborn went home together.

A note located at the end of the "Captia" portion of the Durben manuscript describes how the journal came into the hands of its transcriber. Here, the writer recounts that Meigs and Dearborn went on board the schooner that was to take them to Halifax on May 17, but it did not make it out of the harbor and had to return. It ended up sailing again the next day, but in the intervening period the journal was stolen from Dearborn. "By some accident or another, the Schooner that they sailed in was obliged to return to Quebec; and a person on board of her stole the originals from the author, & gave it to one of his own friends a shore, who was so obliging as to lend it to me to take a copy of it—at least this is the history which I got from that gentleman, of it." It is clear from this information that Dearborn wrote this journal prior to May 17, 1776.

At the bottom of page 1, Dr. Hunter writes that the journal was given to him by a Mr. Robertson, whom he describes as a surgeon on HMS *Juno*. Documents held at the University of Glasgow identify the *Juno* as a "32-gun ship launched in 1757" and "a fifth rate shipping frigate which was burnt on 7 August 1778." Entries in *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* confirm that Dr. Robertson was on board the *Juno*. The frigate arrived in Quebec on June 4, 1776, five months after the assault on Quebec and two weeks after Meigs and Dearborn left Quebec aboard the HMS *Niger*. Thus, Dearborn was long gone from Quebec when the journal made its way to Robertson via an unknown third party who had stolen it from its original author.

A little over two years later, on August 7, 1778, the *Juno* was burned in Providence Harbor to prevent its capture by American forces. Since Robertson was not listed as a surgeon on any other ship after 1778, it is reasonable to conclude that he was not on the *Juno* when it was destroyed, or else he would have been transferred to another ship. I believe it is likely that Robertson transcribed Dearborn's original manuscript journal while he was on board the *Juno,* between the time it left Quebec in September 1776 and August 13, 1777, the last known date he was on board.

“Map of the Country which was the Scene of Operations of the Northern Army…” from the atlas included in The Life of Washington by John Marshall (1805). The image was republished in a subsequent edition of The Life of Washington by the Walton Book Company in 1930. The red dotted lines were added by David Picton in 2010 to show the route of the expedition. Map courtesy of the author.

“Portrait of Maj. Gen. Henry Dearborn,” etching by Henry Bryan Hall, 1872. Courtesy of the New York Public Library, New York, N.Y.

Dr. William Hunter, the subsequent recipient of the manuscript, died on March 30, 1783, and from his signed notation in the journal we know that it was in his hands before he died. Thus, sometime between 1777 and 1783 Robertson apparently gave his transcribed copy of the journal to Hunter. It has been in the Hunter manuscript collection since that time, and at the time I discovered it had never before been published.

What we have, then, is a journal dating back to 1775, written originally by Henry Dearborn. This original journal was subsequently stolen from its author, transcribed and edited by Robertson, and then given to Hunter. The original manuscript in Dearborn's handwriting has long since disappeared, or at least its whereabouts are unknown.

After the Quebec experience, Dearborn went on to an impressive military career during the Revolution, participating in the battles of Saratoga, Monmouth, Sullivan's campaign, and Yorktown, ending as a lieutenant colonel. After the war, Dearborn was appointed a major general in the Maine state militia, a United States marshal in Maine, and was elected to Congress. In 1801, President Thomas Jefferson named Dearborn Secretary of War, and during the War of 1812 James Madison appointed him Senior Major General in the Army, in command of the northeast sector. From 1822 to 1824, he served as Minister Plenipotentiary to Portugal, and he died in Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1829.

Henry Dearborn is known to have written five other journals of his Revolutionary War experiences, all of which survive in manuscript form. Four of these are in Dearborn's handwriting. The last discovered journal, covering the march to Quebec, survives at the Boston Public Library (BPL) and was published in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* in 1886. According to John Wingate Thornton, a nineteenth-century antiquarian and an expert on handwriting, this last journal held at the BPL is not in Dearborn's handwriting, although he did make some corrections to the manuscript in his hand. In order to better compare the two journals, I spent a day reviewing the manuscript in Boston.

Comparing the Glasgow journal with the one published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, it is easy to see that many of the entries and the events that are covered are similar. However, the Glasgow journal is shorter and more succinct in its entries, which lends credibility to the conclusion that it was written during the events discussed. It is much more likely that someone writing during a significant army field maneuver would not have time for the more extensive and flowery descriptions that are found in the later journal.

An example of the differences in the two journals can be found in the entries for September 22, 1775. The Durben journal entry reads:

22nd. We got up where the Bateaux were built; from thence we carried thirty three men of each Company in the Bateaux up to Fort Western; That is about forty miles up from the mouth of the River; and at night all our men had mostly got up to the Fort.

The MHS journal entry expands the account:

"Working Against Flood on Dead River," illustration by Sydney Adamson from The

Century Magazine (1903). Courtesy of the Library of Congress, image USZ62-108233, Washington, D.C.

Septemr 22d. Proceeded up the River. We pass'd Fort Richmond at 11: O clock where there are but few Settlements at Present, this afternoon we pass'd Pownalborough, Where there is a Courthouse and Gaol—and some very good Settlements, This day at 4 O Clock we arrived at the place where our Batteaus were Built.


Graphic illustration of the march to Quebec, courtesy of the author. Click to enlarge in a new window.

We were order'd to Leave one Sergeant, one Corporal and Thirteen men here to take a Long the Batteau's, they embarked on Board the Batteaus, and we proceeded up the River to Cabisaconty, or Gardners Town, Where Doctor Gardner of Boston owns a Large Tract of Land and some Mills, & a Number of very good dwelling Houses, where we Stayed Last night, on Shore.

Another even more significant variation is found in the comparable entries for October 4, although it is not clear if the same events for that day are being described in the two accounts.

The Durben journal entry records: "4th. We haled [hauled] up our Bateaux at the Portage, and dried them."

The MHS entry states: "4 Our Course in general from the mouth of the river to this place has been from North, to North East, from here we Steer N.:W. to Norrigwalk, which is Twelve miles to where we arrived to night, the River here is not very rapid. Except Two bad falls, the Land on the North side of the river is very good, where there are 2 or 3 families settled, at Norrigwalk, is to be seen the ruins of an Indian Town, also a fort, a Chapel, and a Large Tract of Clear Land but not very good, there is but one family here at present Half a Mile above this old fort, is a Great fall, where there is a Carrying place of one Mile and a Quarter."

The missing Quebec expedition journal in Dearborn's own handwriting is an obvious omission in the personal accounts of his Revolutionary War experiences. Until now, it was thought that the original manuscript journal written at the time by Dearborn was the one published by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1886—although not in his handwriting. Now, however, we know better, because we have that original journal, or at least a sanitized version of it, from the late eighteenth century.

Finding Henry Dearborn's original journal has been exciting and rewarding in ways I could not have predicted. I am convinced that had I not followed through on tedious Google searches, this journal would have never been discovered and

made public. As Revolutionary War manuscripts go, this one is not earth-shattering, nor does it contain any momentous revelations that will change the history of the invasion of Canada. But in its own right it is a significant finding that clarifies the history of one participant's own narratives of the war, and presents the original version of an account that has been known only through later revisions.

After Benedict Arnold himself, Henry Dearborn was the most famous military man on the expedition to Quebec, and he was one of only a handful of American officers to write a journal covering the entire period of the Revolutionary War. Moreover, Dearborn's subsequent career was unmatched by any other participant in the expedition. By virtue of his appointment as Senior Major General during the War of 1812, he rose to a higher military rank, and as congressman and Secretary of War, he attained a higher civilian position than any other expedition alumnus except for Vice President Aaron Burr. Discovery of the Dearborn journal also reveals a fascinating story about how an American manuscript made its way to from Quebec to Scotland, where it has been unknowingly preserved for over 200 years.

To date, I have succeeded in identifying thirty-three extant journals of the Quebec expedition, including the three found in the University of Glasgow Library. When I started this journey, I did not expect to find any previously unknown and unpublished journals, particularly in Scotland. Much to my surprise, there are still unknown manuscripts to be found in the unlikeliest of places. I now know that research that starts out in one direction can lead to surprising and unexpected results that are more rewarding than the original objective.

Further Reading:

The complete transcribed Dearborn journal, as well as the two smaller journals, and notes by Robertson and Hunter, can be found in Stephen Darley, *Voices from a Wilderness Expedition: The Journals and Men of Benedict Arnold's Expedition to Quebec in 1775* (Bloomington, Ind., 2011).

To read other journals of the Quebec expedition, see the compilation of thirteen journals by Kenneth Roberts, *March to Quebec: Journals of the Members of Arnold's Expedition* (New York, 1946). The best histories of the Arnold expedition are Justin H. Smith*, Arnold's March from Cambridge to Quebec* (New York, 1903); John Codman, *Arnold's Expedition to Quebec* (New York, 1901), and Thomas A. Desjardin, *Through a Howling Wilderness: Benedict Arnold's March to Quebec in 1775* (New York, 2006).

There are numerous publications of individual Revolutionary War journals from a variety of battles and campaigns. Two compilations of journals from the war are John C. Dann, ed., *The Revolution Remembered: Eyewitness Accounts of the War for American Independence* (Chicago, 1980) and George C. Scheer and Hugh Rankin,

Rebels and Redcoats (New York, 1957).

For background on Benedict Arnold, the most thoroughly researched biography is James Kirby Martin, *Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered* (New York, 1997).

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