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Commissioner of Georgia to Europe, 1861

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SECESSION DIPLOMACY: A STUDY OF THOMAS BUTLER KING,
COMMISSIONER OF GEORGIA TO EUROPE, 1861

by

MARY PINCKNEY KEARNS

(Under the Direction of Donald Rakestraw)

ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to determine the function and effectiveness of state diplomats in the Confederate cause abroad by examining the mission of Thomas Butler King to the courts of Europe for the state of Georgia within the context of the international dimensions of the first year of the Civil War. The work will address the various Confederate arguments for recognition through the examination of propaganda documents published by King and their effect on French and British policies. The work will further investigate the direct trade movement of the 1850s and its effects on the southern diplomatic effort.

INDEX WORDS: Thomas Butler King, Georgia History, Direct Trade, Confederate Diplomacy.

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COMMISSIONER OF GEORGIA TO EUROPE, 1861

by

MARY PINCKNEY KEARNS

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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2006

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Electronic Version Approved:
July 2006

DEDICATION

For Wayne Ervin, a devoted teacher and mentor. You not only taught me to appreciate history, but introduced me to the area's local history and the wonderful world of international politics.

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I would like to especially thank Dr. Donald Rakestraw for his continued advice and patience. Without his helpful urging, I never would have attempted the topic or continued with it. I would also like to thank Dr. Charles Crouch for his continual guidance, input, and, most importantly, assistance in the translation of several vital French documents. Dr. Lisa Denmark and Dr. Alan Downs, both members of my committee, were also of great assistance through their numerous suggestions and encouragement. Without the aid of Dr. Rakestraw and the rest of the committee, this thesis would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION

In November 1860, the election of a Republican president set in motion a series of events that would change the United States forever. In the South, leaders debated the course their states should take. Should they secede or should they await the new president's entry into office? In Milledgeville, Georgia, the state legislature called for a Joint Committee of both Houses to decide the issue. Thomas Butler King of Glynn County would preside over the committee.¹ The factors to consider were numerous: the ability of the state to effectively take on the role of the federal government and survive as an independent entity; the potential loss of crucial services, such as postal communications; and the impact secession would have on Georgia's economy. The committee determined that a convention of the people would be called in January to consider the factors and decide the issue.

By the time the convention met on 16 January 1861, new factors had complicated the debate with the secession of South Carolina and Alabama and their call for all other southern states to join them. Would Georgia prefer to secede alone or join a southern confederacy? Which would be in Georgia's best interest politically and economically? The convention decided, by a vote of two hundred and eight to eighty-nine for Georgia to secede. On 19 January the state declared herself to be independent and willing to joining a southern confederacy.²

As states seceded from the Union in 1860 and 1861, it became necessary for them to usurp powers that had belonged to the federal government. Trade, for example, had

¹ Letter from Georgia King to Cuyler (Tip) King dated 13 November 1860, in the T. Butler King Papers #1252, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

² Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Georgia and State Rights*, reprint edition with an introduction by John Herbert Roper (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), 200-203.

been a power granted to the federal government in Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution. While assumption of power was merely a change of words on paper, the exercise of that power proved much more difficult, especially since most of the nation's foreign trade took place in the northern ports of New York and Boston. New Orleans was one of the few southern ports that conducted trade with foreign nations. Trade was not the only issue at stake for southern leaders. How would the southern states communicate with foreign nations? Mail from foreign countries arrived on the same ships that carried the foreign cargoes, which typically landed in northern harbors before being sent south on American ships. The southern states quickly realized the necessity of sending commercial agents to foreign nations for the purpose of establishing trade and communication. These commercial agents would work to "create favorable sentiment, to clear the ground of impediments to trade, and to supplement the actual purchases attempted by the purchasing agents" as well as any other specified duties that the state would deem necessary as time wore on and new circumstances arose.³

While works on Confederate diplomatic efforts are numerous, they have placed too much attention on the impact of cotton on southern policies to the neglect of other southern economic motives on overall Confederate diplomatic strategy. Prior to the formation of the Confederate States of America and the appointment of Confederate commissioners William Yancey, Pierre Rost, and A. Dudley Mann, several states, including Georgia, sent their own commissioners to Europe to establish lines of communication and trade. The idea of direct trade with Europe actually had its roots in a southern commercial movement begun in the 1830s. As the North industrialized and

³ Samuel Bernard Thompson, *Confederate Purchasing Operations Abroad* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), 8.

grew demographically, southern leaders sought ways to maintain their political and economic power. Southern leaders thus developed the idea of a commercial movement which advocated the creation of southern industry, expansion of transportation lines, and establishment of direct trade with Europe to cut out northern middlemen. The movement, while it lost momentum in the 1840s, grew exponentially in power during the 1850s, climaxing with the start of the Civil War. With secession, southern commercial leaders saw the opportunity to bring about their ideas.

Despite the lack of attention given to southern state diplomacy, there are several highly influential works that shed light on the political and economic background of and obstacles to the South's diplomatic policies. Ephraim Douglass Adams's *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (1900) is an extensive study of Confederate, Union, and European policies.⁴ Over the course of nine chapters spanning the pre-war years to the conclusion of the war, Adams investigates the ways in which the American Civil War effected Britain's attitude and action in both domestic and foreign policy, the principles of her statesmen, and the inspirations of her people. Adams found that "the great crisis in America was almost equally a crisis in the domestic history of Great Britain itself and that unless this were fully appreciated no just estimate was possible of British policy toward America."⁵ Through this prism, Adams maps the development of British policy, focusing on legal and political aspects, and the abilities of the various statesmen from the Union, Confederacy, and Britain itself.

As the first to offer a comprehensive work of the South's efforts entirely from an economic viewpoint, Frank Lawrence Owsley's *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign*

⁴ Ephraim Douglass Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, 2 volumes as one (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., [1924]).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

Relations of the Confederate States of America (1931) was and remains one of the subject's seminal texts.⁶ Owsley posits that, while Confederate diplomacy rested solely on the idea that cotton was king, the South's "King Cotton theory" was in actuality a "King Cotton delusion."⁷ Through close scrutiny of the South's actions, however, Owsley finds logic in its cotton philosophy. The world's dependence on southern cotton, reflected in international trade statistics, led southerners to believe that cotton was indeed king and could be used to force Europe to intervene on the South's behalf.⁸ Although historians have contested several of Owsley's contentions, such as the role cotton alone played in the South's efforts, the work, along with Adams, remains the foundation upon which studies of Civil War foreign relations rests.

Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt's *Europe and the American Civil War* (1931) was the first major work to examine both the British and continental view of the American crisis.⁹ While over half of the work is devoted to British opinion, the second half is entirely devoted to continental opinion, focusing specifically on France and Russia. Jordan and Pratt use newspapers, parliamentary debates, diaries, and diplomatic correspondence to show that the American crisis was important to Europe both practically and idealistically. Britain realized during the first year that she "was more closely tied in interest and feeling to her rowdy relatives than she had appreciated before the crisis."¹⁰ In France, the war "entered that current of European events which kept

⁶ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1959)

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

⁹ Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (Boston.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1969).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

Liberal ideas alive among the French people.”¹¹ Jordan and Pratt show that the crisis did not impact only the American nation, but Europe as well.

Brian Jenkins’ *Britain and the War for Union* (1974) is an excellent examination of the political background of British neutrality.¹² A comprehensive account of Britain’s role in the conflict, the work focuses on British policy towards the Union and Confederacy. The distinguishing mark of the work is its inclusion of Canada as a factor in British policy. Many works short shrift the fact that Britain, in addition to being worried over the economic aspects of the crisis, also feared the consequences of the American war on its colonial holding—a fact William H. Seward played to the North’s advantage.

D.P. Crook, in his work *The North, the South, and the Powers, 1861-1865* (1974), also focuses on Confederate and Union efforts in Britain.¹³ Crook writes that although “more words have been written upon the American Civil War than upon most historical subjects, that upheaval has never been accorded its just place in the international history of our times.” Crook, thus, seeks to offer a narrative history of the diplomatic arena with a focus on the interplay between the American powers and the “great powers”—Great Britain and France. Crook maintains that the American Civil War was a turning point in “Atlantic history” because it enabled the United States to make its way into “super-powerdom” and gave impetus to European militarism, monolithic capitalism, and centralist nationalism.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid., 244.

¹² Brian Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, vol. I (Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1974), 20.

¹³ D.P. Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers, 1861-1865* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1974).

¹⁴ Ibid., v-vi.

Another extensive work on Britain is Howard Jones's *Union in Peril: The Crisis Over British Intervention in the Civil War* (1992), which focuses on the reasons Britain did not intervene in the Civil War.¹⁵ Jones maintains that the reasons were neither simple nor singular. Jones argues that the Civil War "not only caused profound domestic difficulties," but also raised "perplexing international issues that could not be resolved amicably," such as the Union blockade.¹⁶ Many Englishmen both inside and outside the government, such as Lord John Russell, British foreign secretary, and William E. Gladstone, chancellor of the exchequer, favored intervention either through mediation, armistice, or recognition. The political dangers involved in intervention and the lack of understanding by the British of the American issues led the nation to maintain neutrality.¹⁷

The most recent work to address the factors that influenced Britain's reactions to the American crisis is R.J.M. Blackett's *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War* (2001).¹⁸ Examining the attitudes of Radical, Liberal, and Conservative politicians, as well as the national press, Blackett suggests that British support for the Confederacy was more widespread than previous studies indicated. To support his findings, Blackett places the issues of the war in a transatlantic context, focusing on "the nature and changing contours of transatlantic abolitionist connections" and the role race played in the public's perception of American conditions. Operating on the assumption that outside pressure can and frequently does influence government actions in a democracy,

¹⁵ Howard Jones, *Union in Peril: The Crisis Over British Intervention in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

¹⁸ R.J.M. Blackett, *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001).

Blackett further examines the efforts made by both the North and the South to win public support. By focusing on the transatlantic context and public perception, Blakett provides a fresh look at the extent to which the American crisis affected Britain's domestic policies.¹⁹

The critical source for any scholarly work on France and the American Civil War is Lynn Case and Warren Spencer's *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy* (1970).²⁰ The first work to exclusively examine France's political reactions and attitudes towards the American crisis, *The United States and France* provides vital insight to the international dimension of the Civil War. The work extensively covers the various factors, such as the Union blockade and the *Trent* crisis, that impacted French policy. The distinguishing feature of the work is Case and Spencer's portrayal of France as a collaborator, rather than follower. Most previous works portrayed France as a hapless child following Britain's lead out of fear for its own survival. Case and Spencer, however, clearly demonstrate that not only did France actively cooperate with Britain, but also helped shape Britain's policies to support France's desires.

Jay Sexton, in "Transatlantic Financiers and the Civil War" (Autumn 2001) and his *Debtor Diplomacy: Finance and American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era 1837-1873* (2005), addresses the issue of transatlantic debt and its impact on European policy during the conflict.²¹ In 1861, British financial tensions against both the North and the South contributed to the nation's adoption of neutrality in the conflict. The default of

¹⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

²⁰ Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

²¹ Jay Sexton, "Transatlantic Financiers and the Civil War," *American Nineteenth Century History*, 2, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 29-46; available from GALILEO [www.galileo.peachnet.edu/]: Academic Search Premier; Internet; accessed 23 October 2005 and Sexton, *Debtor Diplomacy: Finance and American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era 1837-1873* (Oxford, England: Clarendon, 2005).

several southern states in the 1840s as they repudiated rather than satisfying European debts had strained American-British relations and caused Britain to distrust any investment in the American South.²² In addition, British investors disapproved of the American use of British funds to finance expansionary projects, such as the Mexican War. As the first works to address the issues of debt on British policies, “Transatlantic financiers” and *Debtor Diplomacy* provide an intimate look into the financial interdependence of the nations and the impact of British investment concerns on British diplomatic policies.

Several works of a lesser scope also augment the field. While the previous works focus on the larger players, such as the trio of William Yancey, Pierre Rost, and A. Dudley Mann sent by the Confederacy to Europe, W. Stanley Hoole’s edited version of Paul Pecquet du Bellet’s *The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet of Richmond and Its Agents Abroad: Being Memorandum Notes Taken in Paris During the Rebellion of the Southern States from 1861 to 1865* (1963) and edited version of *Confederate Foreign Agent: The European Diary of Major Edward C. Anderson* (1976) provide an inside look at the difficulties the minor southern agents faced in Europe.²³ *The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet* is a memoir written after the war by Paul Pecquet du Bellet, a southerner living in France during the war. Pecquet du Bellet took it upon himself to help in the South’s propaganda effort, demonstrating the lack of southern organization and the deficiency in the South’s European policies. *Confederate Foreign Agent* is the

²² Jay Sexton, *Debtor Diplomacy: Finance and American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era 1837-1873* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 6-7.

²³ Paul Pecquet du Bellet, *The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet of Richmond and Its Agents Abroad: Being Memorandum Notes Taken in Paris During the Rebellion of the Southern States from 1861 to 1865*, W.M. Stanley Hoole, ed. (Tuscaloosa, AL: Confederate Publishing Company, Inc., 1963) and W. Stanley Hoole, ed., *Confederate Foreign Agent: The European Diary of Major Edward C. Anderson* (University, AL: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976).

diary of Major Edward C. Anderson, who was sent by the Army to Europe to purchase supplies. As primary documents, the two works highly compliment the existing historiography.

While these previous works provide excellent coverage of Civil War diplomacy, the historiography has generally failed to place the work of the minor players into the overall diplomatic context. One reason for this shortcoming has been the general lack of interest in Civil War diplomacy. Recent interest, however, by scholars such as Howard Jones, R.J.M. Blackett, and Jay Sexton, has encouraged a fresh and closer look. This study hopes to add another layer to the investigation by examining the Georgian Thomas Butler King, commissioner to the courts of Europe for the state of Georgia in 1861. Through the study of King, this work will explore the purpose and effectiveness of state diplomats in the Confederate cause abroad.

Thomas Butler King was one of the first Confederate agents to arrive in Europe and begin a propaganda campaign in the general press. The state of Georgia appointed King to seek European recognition of the state and to establish a line of communication and trade between Georgia and one or more of the European powers.²⁴ Through King's appointment and mission, one can glimpse the impact of the direct trade movement of the 1850s on Confederate diplomatic efforts and the effectiveness of minor personalities abroad.

Various Confederate arguments for recognition and their effects on French and British politics will be addressed through the examination of a series of propaganda documents published by King. In addition, this work will examine the basic economic motives behind the Confederacy's need for recognition, including the establishment of

²⁴ Edward M. Steel, Jr., *T. Butler King of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964).

steamship lines for the purpose of carrying mail, the acquisition of manufactured military supplies, and financial support for Southern business ventures. Finally, the paper will demonstrate that the movement for European recognition did not originate with the Confederate government as shown by the earlier historiography, but with the individual states in their desire to assume the powers of the federal government.

To support this study, a variety of sources have been consulted. For T. Butler King, information was gathered from his personal papers located at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, the 25 April 1862 issue of the *Daily National Intelligencer* which printed a portion of King's captured correspondence, and the records in the *Calhoun Prize* case located in the mid-Atlantic branch of the National Archives and Records Administration in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as well as from Dr. Steel's biography. The works of Paul Pecquet du Bellet and Major Edward C. Anderson, edited by W. Stanley Hoole, were also helpful in establishing a contemporary view of King's effectiveness abroad. Government documents of all involved parties have been utilized, especially those of the Confederacy, compiled by James D. Richardson (1904), Georgia, compiled by Allen D. Candler (1909), and Britain, compiled by Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt (1986). For French public opinion and government policies, the *Moniteur Universal* proved a vital source. Francis Balace's *La Belgique et la Guerre de Sécession 1861-1865*, volume one, (1979) helped reconstruct Belgium's position and actions taken in the Civil War, along with King's efforts there. All works written in French for the purpose and use of this paper were translated by Dr. Charles Crouch of Georgia Southern University. The *Macon Daily Telegraph* helped provide a crucial view of Georgia and the direct trade movement prior to and during the war.

The first chapter of this work provides a biographical background of T. Butler King and his qualifications for his appointment. Chapter two gives a background of the direct trade movement in Georgia. The chapter is divided into two parts: the first part examines the economic basis of the direct trade movement and the reason southern leaders believed the movement's goals possible; the second part focuses on the impact of the movement in Georgia's legislature and the political necessity behind the establishment of direct trade. Chapter three follows King abroad and examines the arguments for and against European recognition of the South and the efforts King took to exploit the arguments for his own purpose. The work concludes with a direct look at King's mission, the efforts he took as a result of the various European arguments and their impact on European policy.

CHAPTER 1

“YOU...WHO I KNOW HAVE DONE SO MUCH”²⁵

Following secession in 1861, the southern states took actions to establish themselves as independent from the United States. These included seizing forts and arsenals, raising troops, and revising laws. Considering that the formation of a southern Confederacy was still an abstract idea when secession occurred, these actions were crucial for the seven southern states that declared independence between December 1860 and February 1861. The Confederacy did not form until 4 February 1861.²⁶ By declaring independence prior to the formation of a southern confederacy, the states recognized that they would have to assume the trappings of an independent nation for an indefinite period. In such a case, the states would be in charge of their own affairs, both internally and internationally. One of the first steps would be to establish relations, diplomatic and commercial, with other nations. For the southern states, there were several obstacles to overcome concerning trade. At the time, most trade and communication (mail) with European nations, the South’s main trading partners, was conducted via internal routes from northern harbors.²⁷ Thus, southern leaders readily recognized that highly qualified individuals needed to be appointed as trade commissioners to establish lines of steamships from Europe to the South for the purpose of trade and communication. The state of Georgia under the leadership of Governor Joseph E. Brown, which formally seceded on 29 January 1860 but had already prepared

²⁵ Melanie Pavich-Lindsay ed., *Anna: The Letters of a St. Simons Island Plantation Mistress, 1817-1859* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2002), 80. Anna King to Thomas Butler King, 11 April 1850.

²⁶ The seven states were Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas.

²⁷ Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 12.

for this eventuality, appointed Thomas Butler King of St. Simons Island, a plantation owner and politician, as the state's commissioner to Europe in early January.²⁸

T. Butler King, although ignored in the Civil War diplomatic historiography, was not a man of slight importance or success. Contemporaries felt that King did "more than all the rest here for our [Confederate] cause."²⁹ Even before King left the state of Georgia, his abilities and expertise were acknowledged. The *New York Herald*, knowing his political background and stature, actually thought him to be part of the larger Confederate commission to Europe.³⁰ Although never stated by Governor Brown, it can be surmised that Brown appointed King because of his known expertise in communication, naval, and business affairs. While in Europe, King was one of the few Confederates to achieve some success. Faced with the daunting task of establishing direct trade with three neutral nations—France, England, and Belgium—King managed to secure the passage of a French law changing the destinations of two French steamship lines. Unfortunately, the Union blockade of the southern states prevented the law from taking affect.³¹

²⁸ Letter of Governor Joseph E. Brown to Thomas Butler King, January 1861, in the T. Butler King Papers #1252, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hereafter cited as the T. Butler King Papers. King was formally appointed by the Georgia Secession Convention on 30 January 1860, but letters to King from Governor Brown in late December and early January indicated that King was informally appointed much earlier. Georgia was not the only state to take such an action. On 14 January 1861 the *New York Herald* announced that South Carolina appointed a trade commissioner of its own, Dudley Mann, who would later serve as an official commissioner for the Confederate States of America to Europe. The same article also mentioned that other Southern states were taking similar measures. Chronicles of the Civil War, "The Crisis-Prelude to Conflict," *New York Herald* (14 January 1861), available from <http://www.pddoc.com/cw-chronicles/?p=473>; Internet; accessed 27 August 2005.

²⁹ *Washington, DC Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 April 1862. Letter from W.T. Brisbie to T. Butler King, dated 13 September 1861.

³⁰ Chronicles of the Civil War, "The News," *The New York Herald* (16 March 1861), available from <http://www.pddoc.com/cw-chronicles/?p=1068>; Internet; accessed 27 August 2005.

³¹ Edward M. Steel, Jr., *T. Butler King of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 154.

T. Butler King was born on 27 August 1800 to Daniel and Hannah Lord King in Palmer, Massachusetts.³² Daniel King had been a corporal in the American Revolution and a minuteman at Lexington on 19 April 1775. T. Butler's mother, Hannah Lord King, was said to have been of strong personality and descended from a good family. By the age of fifteen, with both of King's parents dead, T. Butler was placed in the care of relatives in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania. Little is known about King's youth except that he attended Westfield Academy, a public institution of novel fame, in Westfield, Massachusetts.³³ After he graduated, he turned to studying law under the prominent lawyer and jurist Judge Garrick Mallery in Wilkes-Barre and then with his older brother Henry in Allentown until he followed his brother Stephen to Georgia in the early 1820s. In Georgia, T. Butler opened a law practice. King subsequently met Anna Matilda Page of Retreat Plantation on St. Simons Island. They were married on 2 December 1824. Being the only child of William Page, Anna was heiress to one of the larger plantations of Glynn County, and on the death of his father-in-law, King became one of the leading planters of the coastal area as well as one of the most influential men in an area where land meant prestige and power. By King, Anna bore six sons and four daughters. To accommodate the growing family, King enlarged and improved his

³² Edwin R. MacKethan III (ed.), a grand-nephew of T. Butler King, in *The Story of the Page-King Family of Retreat Plantation, St. Simons Island and of the Golden Isles of Georgia* (Darien, GA: Darien Printing and Graphics, 2000), 113. The actual year of King's birth is in dispute. Edward Steel in *T. Butler King of Georgia* reports that King was born in 1800 in Palmer, Massachusetts, however an account copied from a book belonging to Daniel King reports T. Butler as being born in 1797 in Hanover, New Hampshire. Unfortunately, neither state has record of his birth. For the purposes of this work, I have decided to use the date on his tombstone which corresponds with the date given by Steel. Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 1.

³³ Westfield Academy was unique during its time in that it was coeducational and prohibited corporal punishment.

property, purchasing 4700 acres of the Middleton Barony on the Satilla River in 1830 and 150 acres in Waynesville, Georgia in 1831.³⁴

To augment his wealth and increase his prestige, King entered into several business ventures. In 1826 King invested in the Brunswick Canal Company. The Brunswick port was and remains one of the deepest and most accessible harbors south of Charleston, but the nearest navigable river, the Altamaha, was twelve miles to the north. Investors in the Brunswick Canal Company hoped that by building the canal, the busy river traffic would be diverted from the city of Darien in the north to the better port of Brunswick, and thus create in Brunswick a port city to rival Savannah. The project, managed by William B. Davis, who was also in the Georgia General Assembly, was constantly plagued with problems. Even with the aid of government slaves, progress on the canal remained slow.³⁵ An investigation discovered that Davis had charged the state five hundred dollars for his services contrary to agreement and sold one of the government slaves rather than returning the slave to the proper state agent. Despite the scandal, the project remained appealing to its investors and state authorities who feared that Savannah was “prostrated by the completion of the Charleston rail-road to Augusta.” Rather than give up the project, King took over Davis’s duties.³⁶

In 1832, while King consolidated control over the Brunswick Canal Company, he started his political career, winning a seat in the state senate for Glynn County. As a

³⁴ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 1-6.

³⁵ For a period prior to 1834, the state of Georgia owned and leased slaves to work on roads and waterways. In 1830 the state owned about 190 slaves for such purposes. For more on the use of slaves by the state see Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Régime* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1918), 377 as well as Phillip’s “The Origin and Growth of the Southern Black Belts,” *The American Historical Review* 11 (July 1906): 805 available from GALILEO [www.galileo.peachnet.edu/]: JSTOR; Internet; accessed 30 January 2006.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

senator, King was able to advocate favorable legislation for his growing business ventures. To further attract investors from outside the state, King invested in a railroad to link Brunswick with the Georgia-Florida border, a real estate agency, and the Bank of Brunswick. In the Senate, King obtained a charter for the Brunswick Canal and Railroad Company in 1834 that named him, his brother Stephen, and William Wigg Hazzard as incorporators.³⁷ In 1835 he sponsored an act allowing one third of the Brunswick town common to be surveyed into lots and sold to benefit the school and academy. King purchased seven hundred acres in hopes that the value would increase after the building of the canal and railroad.³⁸ Outside investors also quickly seized upon the new developments, until the Panic of 1837 caused an economic downfall across the nation.³⁹

Unfortunately for King, the Panic of 1837 devastated his fledgling projects. Boston investors, looking to protect themselves, held King personally responsible for the losses and wanted to abandon the railroad in favor of the canal against King's advice.⁴⁰ To keep the railroad project alive, King traveled north to seek new investors. When that effort failed, he turned to local planters and encouraged them to subscribe for stock rather than investment capital.⁴¹ King succeeded, and the plans for the railroad moved forward once more until 1839 when the Bank of the United States of Pennsylvania suspended specie payment for the second time. This action not only devastated cotton planters

³⁷ After the Brunswick Canal and Railroad company reorganized in 1835, King secured a charter for the renamed Brunswick and Florida Railroad Company.

³⁸ Glynn Academy still operates today as one of Brunswick's two high schools. It was chartered in 1788 and is the second oldest high school in the state of Georgia. For more information, see Glynn Academy's website <http://www.glynn.k12.ga.us/GA/admin/history.html>.

³⁹ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 10-12. The Panic caused a depression that lasted into the 1840s.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 12-13. King, recognizing that the nation's future lay in railroads, believed that the railroad was the more advantageous of the two ventures.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 14. When a person subscribed for stock, the subscriber agreed to work his slaves on the line in return for transportation on the finished line and increased land value.

across the nation, but caused all of King's Brunswick schemes to fail—the canal, the railroad, the bank, and even the local newspaper, the *Brunswick Advocate*.⁴²

In addition to King's failed financial schemes, his wealth was further diminished by lower crop yields on his plantations, which were primarily a result of imperfect farming techniques and weather patterns. Anna King, in a letter to her friend Miss Jane Johnston of St. Simons Island in 1839, asked Jane to purchase her and her daughter Hannah Page plain bonnets since their circumstances were "so much reduced by the loss of crops."⁴³ In 1842 the family's financial status became such that Anna wrote a letter to James Hamilton Couper calling on him as one of her trustees "to protect the property bequeathed in my Fathers will for the benefit of myself and children" since King's creditors had already "seized and taken from him all his property."⁴⁴ While their current predicament was partially King's fault for purchasing a large number of slaves and depending on crop sales to pay for his purchases, she did not blame him. "I do not impute any blame, or mismanagement to my husband, nor has his misfortunes, in the slightest degree impaired my confidence in his integrity, or his ability to manage property."⁴⁵ Anna's assessment was accurate. While King made several bad financial decisions, much of his misfortune resulted from economic crises, weather, and lower crop yields. Financial problems continued to plague him throughout his life, ultimately forcing him in the early months of 1842 to sell all of his property except the Retreat

⁴² Ibid., 15-17.

⁴³ Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 15. Anna King to Miss Jane Elizabeth Johnston, 2 December 1839.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 17. Anna King to James Hamilton Couper, 3 March 1842. James Hamilton Couper was the son of John Couper of Cannon's Point plantation and the elder brother of Anna's son-in-law, William Audley Couper.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

plantation and to seek his fame and fortune in alternative avenues.⁴⁶ While many in King's position would have given up after two consecutive failures and a series of financial struggles, King did not let the failures overcome him. Instead, King continued to exhibit persistence in everything he attempted.

While King's finances faltered, his political pursuits were increasingly successful. In 1832 in the state Senate, King actively defended states' rights. King sponsored a resolution calling for a federal constitutional convention to decide the issue of implied powers and voted against the condemnation of South Carolina for its role in the nullification crisis and against the tariff. As a member of Georgia's Troup Party, King was chosen to attend the state constitutional convention in 1833, where he played an active role in obstructing the revision of the state constitution.⁴⁷ At the convention he voted to reduce the size of the state Senate, but against a similar bill calling for House members to be elected on the basis of free white populations instead of the federal basis which counted slaves as three-fifths.⁴⁸ In 1834 he spoke again in favor of nullification, declaring nullification to be the only remedy against economic and political nationalizing tendencies by the non-slaveholding states. While he declined reelection in 1836 to pursue outside capital for his Brunswick schemes, King returned to the state Senate in 1837, seeking to extend state credit to private companies.⁴⁹ In the 1838 session, King

⁴⁶ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 40-41.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-19. While the Troup Party had called for the convention, the Clark-Union Party gained control of the convention, placing King in the minority. For more on the Troup Party of Georgia and other Georgian political parties see Paul Murray, "Party Organization in Georgia Politics 1825-1853," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 29 (December 1945): 195-210; Paul Murray, *The Whig Party in Georgia, 1825-1853* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 1-58; and Anthony Gene Carey, "E Pluribus Unum": Georgia Politics and the Dynamics of the Jacksonian Party System, 1840-1844," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 79 (Winter 1995): 810-841.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20. King most likely voted against the reduction of House members because Glynn County had the lowest free white population in the state but the highest ratio of slaves to free.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

became the *de facto* Senate floor leader and sponsored a number of resolutions opposing the Bank of the United States, arguing that Congress had “no power under the Constitution to incorporate one.”⁵⁰ While King’s party membership changed over the course of his life, the political beliefs that he developed during the 1830s concerning states’ rights and the role of the government under the Constitution would remain consistent.

King also became involved in the Commercial Convention Movement of 1837 to 1839. The commercial conventions were called mainly to deal with problems that the suspension of specie payment and the lack of credit in the Panic of 1837 wrought on the South, as well as the growing economic disparity between the industrializing North and agricultural South. At the Augusta (Georgia) Convention on 16 October 1837, King served on both the publicity committee and the resolutions committee. The convention determined that the discriminatory federal financial policy, the protectionist tariff, and lack of southern enterprise were the roots of southern dependence on the North. The convention called for the establishment of direct trade with Europe to reduce southern dependence on northern shipping interests. At the next convention in Augusta on 2 April 1839, King was unanimously chosen as president. The delegation sought to establish European agencies in southern ports to handle foreign exchanges, although nothing came of this decision. In October 1839 yet another convention was held in Macon, Georgia, in which King served as chairman of the resolutions committee. The committee called for southern banks to advance money to planters on cotton and to allow planters to hold their cotton off the market until designated agents in Europe could obtain the best possible

⁵⁰ Letter from T. Butler King to Franklin and Taliaferro County, 14 September 1838, in the T. Butler King Papers.

price. The convention adopted and implemented this plan, but it failed after the price of cotton dropped and banks throughout the South suspended specie payment. After 1839 the movement faded, but it rose again in the late 1850s, influencing Georgia's decision to seek trade abroad at the outset of secession. King's prominence in the movement both in the 1830s and during its revival prompted Governor Brown's decision to send King as the state's representative.⁵¹

By the end of 1838, King looked to advance his political career and ran for the United States House of Representatives to which he was elected in 1839 as a Whig candidate. One of King's first speeches was on the Independent Treasury Bill, which he considered to be unconstitutional. In 1840, King ran on the States Rights-Whig ticket that had nominated William Henry Harrison for president and won reelection.⁵² On 7 July 1841 King, realizing the potential of steam power in the military, introduced House Bill 10 calling for the formation of a Home Squadron by the Navy consisting of "two frigates, two sloops, two small vessels, and two armed steamers."⁵³ In his notes concerning the bill, King explained his inclusion of armed steamers: "The changes which...steam power has already effected...in the Naval armaments of the maritime powers of Europe...require the most prompt and efficient action on the part of the [US] government...to protect our commerce and guard our sea coast."⁵⁴ Passed by Congress, this act proved to be highly influential, evolving in the 1890s into the North Atlantic Squadron and again in the 1900s into the Atlantic Fleet and then into the United States

⁵¹ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 28-30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 31-37.

⁵³ Congress, House Journal, 27th Congress 1st Session, H.R. 10, 7 July 1841; available through the Library of Congress, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875*, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?hlaw:1::/temp/~ammem_TTPn::; Internet; accessed 29 January 2006.

⁵⁴ Notes by T. Butler King on the "Home Squadron" Bill, 1841, in the T. Butler King Papers.

Fleet of today. This particular act brought him great popularity with naval officers.⁵⁵ With his aid, Congress also passed the Naval Reorganization Act of 1842 which created a bureau system that would remain in place for the next century. As a consequence of these efforts, King was recognized by naval leaders as a naval expert and seen by young naval officers, who were discouraged with conservative seniors, as their special advocate on the Naval Committee. Despite his popularity, King and the entire Whig ticket lost the next election to Democratic candidates. King, undeterred, chose to remain involved in public life and economic affairs.⁵⁶

After his loss, King returned to state politics for a short time, attending the 1843 gubernatorial convention in which he served on the Committee of Twenty-one that presented the convention's agenda. King was also named chairman of the state's delegation to the Whig National Convention in Baltimore and vice-president of the Young Men's Convention that ratified the convention's nomination. On return from the convention in 1844, King recaptured his old seat in the U.S. Congress.⁵⁷ During his term in 1845, King continued his work with naval affairs. His most significant act was the recommendation of a bill to build more steamers and subsidize three new commercial shipping lines to France, England, and Panama. This experience with shipping lanes and steamers would later influence Governor Brown's appointment of King to Europe.⁵⁸

Reelected in 1846, King continued his legislative efforts concerning transatlantic steamers and pushed through a bill providing for the subsidization of the transatlantic

⁵⁵ Mildred H. Wilcox and Mildred Nix Huie, *Plantations of Coastal Georgia*, Vol. I, *King's Retreat Plantation: Today and Yesterday* (Brunswick, GA: Neeld Printing House, Inc., 1980), 13.

⁵⁶ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 41-43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 45-48. King's electoral victory was not without difficulty. During the election, King felt that his opponent Charles H. Spaulding personally maligned his character and after the election challenged Spaulding to a duel on Amelia Island in Florida Territory. After a few missed shots, both men shook hands and parted.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

mail and a naval procurement bill despite the many fiscal demands already placed on the Treasury from the war with Mexico.⁵⁹ Senate Bill 128, which King reported to the House with an amendment, provided for the building of four “first-class sea-going steamships, to be attached to the navy,” as well as for the transportation of mail between Liverpool and New York, and then New York to New Orleans with stops at Charleston, Savannah, Havana, and Chagres. To initiate the legislation, the secretary of the navy was directed to conclude contracts with two designated agents to manage the Atlantic and Caribbean mails.⁶⁰

During King’s term in the Twenty-ninth Congress (1846), controversy arose between southern and northern members. The controversy was over an amendment David Wilmot of Pennsylvania attempted to attach to an appropriation bill. Wilmot’s amendment hoped to ban the extension of slavery into the territories. The amendment became known thereafter as the Wilmot Proviso. King, like other southern representatives, stood firmly against the provision. While King was nationalistic in some regards, such as the application of federal funds to support communication and transportation advances, his early belief in the rights of states did not waver, and he viewed Wilmot’s proviso as an unconstitutional attack on a state or territory’s right to decide for itself whether to be free or slave.⁶¹

After the Twenty-ninth Congress had concluded, King returned home to find his time consumed with public business. The Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia, with which he had become involved in, elected him to its board of directors and

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁶⁰ Congress, Senate, 29th Congress 2d Session, S. 128, 22 February 1847; available through the Library of Congress, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875*, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?hlaw:3:/temp/~ammem_yFBS::; accessed 29 January 2006.

⁶¹ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 54.

chose King to represent the company at a Chicago railroad convention in July 1847. At the convention, King was named one of the vice-presidents and a member of the steering committee.⁶²

With the convening of the 30th Congress in 1848, King found himself among the most experienced members in the House, and as such, chosen as chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs. Building from his work in the previous session concerning transatlantic mail steamers, King proposed that the postmaster general be granted dual authority with the secretary of the navy to protect the needs of the postal service. He failed to get approval. King also recommended the building of a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama. While the idea gained attention, it was never discussed on the floor of the House. In conjunction with the railroad, King proposed a two-ocean network to expand trade with China, which he saw as a prominent future market for American goods. Even though the measure was tabled, it attracted the attention of Congress and the press and helped to perpetuate the myth of China as an inexhaustible market.⁶³ King's legislative agenda and commercial activities during the session demonstrated that he was rapidly becoming one of the nation's leading experts on naval and communication affairs.

With Whig Zachary Taylor's victory in the election of 1848, King hoped to receive a prominent position in the new government that he had so fervently advocated. During the 1848 Philadelphia convention, King acted as floor leader, served as one of the convention vice-presidents, and was the chairman of the credentials committee,

⁶² Ibid., 54-56.

⁶³ Ibid., 54-60. This idea of China as an unlimited market was not new in the United States for Great Britain during the 1830s and 1840s was already looking towards China as a market for British goods, which Britain achieved through the Opium War and the 1842 Treaty of Nanking. John P. McKay, Bennett D. Hill, John Buckler, and Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *A History of World Societies: Volume II since 1500*, 6th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 870-871.

throughout which he promoted Taylor in the hope that Taylor would appoint him as secretary of the navy. Unfortunately for King, his appointment fell victim to partisan politics in Georgia. Upcountry Whigs, led by Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens, objected to King and instead promoted another fellow Georgian, William Crawford. In the end, Taylor, on the advice of John Crittenden, Robert Toombs, and Alexander Stephens, chose to appoint William Crawford secretary of war and William Ballard Preston secretary of the navy.⁶⁴ Anna King wrote to her son Lord, “I will pass over the injustice he has met with. He ever has been & ever will be an object of jealousy—to judge [John McPherson] Berrien & the Up Country members.”⁶⁵

King’s steadfast support for Taylor, however, did not go unnoticed. In 1849-1850, California asked the Union for admittance as a state. Initially, the Whigs united in support of California statehood, but soon divided over the issue of slavery in California. Taylor, believing that slavery could not exist in California, proposed that California (and New Mexico) write constitutions without the mention of slavery and apply for statehood. To avoid partisan and party bickering, Taylor secretly appointed King as a special agent of the president to deliver his plan to California’s military and naval commanders in the territory.⁶⁶ King’s tasks were to relay Taylor’s concern for California’s welfare to the people of California, to advise the adoption of measures suggested by the president, to gather general information on the territory, and to report any attempts by the people to establish an independent government. To maintain the illusion of secrecy, King publicly

⁶⁴ Ibid., 65-70. Robert Toombs, Alexander Stephens, and William Crawford were all politicians from Georgia’s upcountry who resented the power of coastal cities and leaders.

⁶⁵ Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 55. Anna King to Lord King, 5 April 1849. Judge John McPherson Berrien of Savannah served as a US senator for Georgia from 1825-1829 and from 1845-1852. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress: Berrien, John McPherson*, available from <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000413>; Internet; accessed 28 January 2006.

⁶⁶ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 72-73 and 77. President Taylor planned on making California a free state and with the party behind his plan, Taylor needed a southern Whig to deliver the news.

claimed that he was traveling to California to examine the proposed route for his trans-Isthmian railroad and to study the mail steamship lines, the two subjects on which he had become the acknowledged expert.⁶⁷ The fact that Taylor chose King for the position demonstrated King's expertise and reliability as an agent, two qualities Brown would recognize as well when appointing King as Georgia's commissioner to Europe.

The events that followed King's acceptance of the mission changed the course of King's political career. Although the president had told the captain of King's ship to make all due speed, King still arrived a day after the governor of the territory had called for a convention to establish a state government. King, taking stock of the situation, publicly advocated support for California's admittance.⁶⁸

While waiting for the convention to convene, King set off on a tour of the territory during which he observed a number of items of economic concern to the country. He saw that there was the need to resurvey the lands since the boundaries were unclear; resurveying the lands immediately would save millions in litigation in the future. More importantly, King recognized the future implications that gold would have for California. One such result would be the increased significance of the port of San Francisco as a supplier of gold to both sides of the Pacific. As such, King added that "the establishment of a mint in California will bring thither more than ten millions of silver bullion, from other ports of the Pacific coast." King also noted that those "who purchase and ship gold to the United States, make large profits; but those who dig lose what others make." King further identified the strategic location of the San Francisco harbor which he foresaw becoming one of America's principal ports of trade with Asia. The harbor,

⁶⁷ Ibid., 72-73.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 74-75.

King acknowledged, could be further augmented with “the construction of a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama” to “secure the market for these articles [coal] against all competition,” and to quicken the speed of communication between New York and San Francisco to twenty days. Finally, because of his interest in naval affairs, King advocated the establishment of a powerful military force in California.⁶⁹ Although King had been sent to obtain general information, he, as was his custom, focused on his areas of expertise—communications, trade, and naval affairs—and immediately sought ways to use this information for the greater good of the country.

On return from the tour, King used his status to send a steamship to the southern region of the territory to ensure the safe and timely transport of the delegates from the southern region of the territory.⁷⁰ This was the last influence King had on the California convention, for dysentery prevented further participation. Although unable to attend the convention, he did not stay completely out of politics. King, as soon as he could write again, wrote home to the governor of Georgia to resign his seat in Congress and cast his lot with the burgeoning California political scene. In the confusion of forming a new state, party organizations were slow to develop and the early elections lacked the partisanship of the eastern states. As a result of speeches made in the mining areas, King had gained recognition in the newspapers and so had the potential to win a seat in the U.S. Senate, a position which he had always desired. He, however, lost to William

⁶⁹ “Review of the Report of Hon. Thomas Butler King on California,” *The American Whig Review* 11 (May 1850): 450-452; Internet; available from <http://sdl.library.cornell.edu/gifcache/moa/amwh/amwh0011/00462.TIF6.gif>; accessed on 17 April 2005.

⁷⁰ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 75. Despite King’s good intentions, the dispatched vessel with the delegates wrecked en route. Luckily, all of the delegates survived and all but one of the delegates still made it in time for the working sessions that began on 3 September 1849.

McKendree Gwin on the third ballot. King, once again disappointed but undeterred, left for Washington with the newly-chosen California delegation on 1 January 1850.⁷¹

In Washington, King found the political situation to have changed drastically; the formerly unified Whig Party had split regionally over the slavery issue. Because he was President Taylor's agent, both sides blamed King in the political debate over California's conflicted admission. The northern faction of the Whig Party accused King of wrongfully influencing the people of the state towards seeking statehood while the southern faction, along with the Democrats, charged him with being the driving force behind the anti-slavery clause in the state's constitution.⁷² Concerning these slanders, his distraught wife wrote to him about a report in the *Daily National Intelligencer* she had seen: "I see a vile slander on your 'report' in the *Intelligencer* of the 3d...I cannot endure the slander which all public men are subject to. And you above all others who I know have done so much for the public good and at so great a sacrifice. And have been so ill requited."⁷³ In his formal report to the secretary of state, King, in response to the attacks, defended his and Taylor's actions. King explained that not only had he arrived in the state the day after the governor called for a constitutional convention, but "[t]he Convention was sitting 130 miles from the place where I was; my illness was a sufficient proof that I did not, and could not, had I been disposed, exercise any influence on the Convention."⁷⁴ While the issue of California was settled on the national stage with the

⁷¹ Ibid., 75-76.

⁷² Ibid., 77-79.

⁷³ Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 80. Anna King to Thomas Butler King, 11 April 1850. The article she referred to is not in the 3 April issue of the *Daily National Intelligencer*, so there is a chance she either remembered the wrong date or the wrong paper. The sacrifice Anna was alluding to was the sacrifice of him not being able to spend time with her and her family at home. Anna was continually writing of how she hated him being so far away from her during all his political and commercial trips, leaving her to manage the plantation and raise the children by herself.

⁷⁴ "Review of the Report of T. B. King on California," 447.

Compromise of 1850, which admitted California as a free state and enacted the Fugitive Slave Law to assuage the South, Georgia leaders and electorate did not forget or forgive King's involvement in the affair. In 1855 King found it necessary to publish a pamphlet in his defense. Taylor, whom Democrats and southern Whigs alike blamed for the controversy, died in office on 9 July 1850.⁷⁵

With the inauguration of Millard Fillmore, King's name again came up as a potential cabinet member. Fillmore, a shrewd politician, recognized that to place King in such a position, despite his expertise and loyalty to the party, would be unwise politically because of King's involvement in California, and King, in a letter to his son, wrote that he did not desire an appointment in the cabinet. King instead intended to return to California to run once more for U.S. senator, an action facilitated by Fillmore's appointment of King as collector of the port of San Francisco which carried a salary of ten thousand dollars annually.⁷⁶

When King arrived in California, he found affairs at the port of San Francisco in complete disarray and immediately required all importers to comply strictly with the law, an adherence the past collector had neglected. Many disagreed with King's actions to restore order, and all further actions by King only acerbated the situation. King, hearing reports of goods being smuggled into the port through the mail, sent the surveyor of the port to witness the opening of the mail bags from the ship *Columbia*. The postal authorities, incensed at King's action, refused to comply, at which point the surveyor went aboard the ship opened the bags himself. While both sides were at fault, the incident demonstrated that King took his duty seriously. Another incident involved

⁷⁵ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 79-82.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

King's response to a San Francisco fire in May 1851. King, providentially, had ordered the building of a vault in the Customs House prior to the fire for the purpose of storing the government specie; when the Customs House burned, the vault survived the fire. King immediately posted guards around the vault until a new vault could be constructed. When the time came to move the money, King, concerned with the city's lawlessness, supervised the transfer with the aid of an armed force.⁷⁷ The newspapers ridiculed King for his action, proclaiming that "the whole conduct of the exploit exhibited military skill of the highest order, and heroic devotion worthy of all praise."⁷⁸ Feeling abused and maligned, King hinted in a letter to Treasury Secretary Thomas Corwin that he wished to resign by 1 August 1852, but on consideration decided to stay until the inauguration of the new administration. Unfortunately, Corwin had already accepted his resignation and replaced King in November of that year.⁷⁹

In 1851, King, while struggling to maintain order in San Francisco, again ran for the U.S. Senate in California against Democratic candidates Solomen Heydenfeldt and John C. Fremont. After ten days of voting, the legislature remained divided between King, Fremont, and John B. Weller, who replaced the withdrawn Solomen Heydenfeldt. Unable to come to a decision, the legislature chose to defer the decision until the next legislative session, thus placing additional importance on the state elections. Recognizing King's political clout within the Whig Party, the Democrats accused King of using the Customs House payroll to subsidize a correspondent of three local newspapers. The accusation arose after the *Pacific News* switched its support from Fremont and the Democratic Party to the Whigs. Democrats also manipulated King's actions as San

⁷⁷ Ibid., 83-88.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 90.

Francisco's port collector for party advantage. The result of the scandal was the overwhelming election of Democrats and the appointment of Weller as senator. Having lost his position as port collector and his second bid for the U.S. Senate, King decided to return to Georgia.⁸⁰

Before King could return to Georgia, he had to finalize his duties as port collector in Washington. While King was informed that his business in Washington was a mere formality and as such would take little time to complete, events occurred to draw its conclusion out. The Fillmore administration delayed approval of King's accounts until the administration's final days. King also had to wait for Congress to relieve him of the responsibility for losses incurred in the fire, which was resolved only after the intervention of the former secretary of the treasury, Robert J. Walker. Further accounting disputes continued to plague King until the last of a series of lawsuits was resolved in 1860.⁸¹

Having failed to win a seat in California and having alienated himself from Georgia politics, King once again focused on business interests. While in California, King joined eight other associates in purchasing land for the purpose of large scale mining of quartz-bearing ore. Anna wrote on the subject of King's financial hopes in July of 1854 to her son Lord: "how nobly your poor Father struggles to retrieve his lost fortune & as far as I can understand from their letters he is no better off than when he began. Knowing his disposition so well I feel that he never will cease his efforts as long as health lasts." Anna's confidence testified again to King's perseverance.⁸² Shortly

⁸⁰ Ibid., 90-96.

⁸¹ Ibid., 96-97. The administration's reason for delay is uncertain.

⁸² Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 227. Anna King to Lord King from Retreat, 3 July 1854.

thereafter King's associates decided to dispatch King to Britain to dispose of their property.

While in England, British capitalists approached King about another possible investment, a railroad, proposed by the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Railway, that would stretch from Savannah to Mobile. At the same time, King became involved in the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company as well. The most popularly proposed route for the transcontinental Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company was through Texas. Since Texas affairs were crucial to the road's success, King left for Texas to lobby for state aid. The Texas legislature quickly rewarded King's efforts with a charter for the Texas Western Railroad Company. King's involvement as one of the railroad's directors kept King in constant movement between his home in Georgia, Texas, and New York. In the fall of 1856 the Southern Pacific Railroad Company Board of Directors appointed King as "General Superintendent and Land Commissioner" with a salary of fifteen thousand dollars annually. King supervised the building of the railroad, which went well until the Panic of 1857 placed extreme financial strains on the country. The company's president, George S. Yerger, in an effort to save the charter, executed a deed of trust to provide for the railway's sale. King led the opposition against the president, initiating a series of judicial actions that would take three years to resolve. The railway, despite King's efforts, was sold in 1858 at a public auction. King abandoned the company only to return a few months later as a lobbyist.⁸³

By 1855, King had recovered from his political defeats in California and announced his candidacy for the Georgia Senate as a short-lived member of the Know

⁸³ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 98-115.

Nothing Party.⁸⁴ The Know-Nothing Party, a new movement of the 1850s that essentially began in the North but expanded to the South in 1854, espoused anti-Catholic and nativist ideals. The party in Georgia primarily appealed to former Whigs, not because of the party's ideology, but because they could not bring themselves to join the Democratic Party, which had been their traditional enemy. Many converts also feared the immigrant's impact on the vote in the free states. Immigrants were arriving in the northern free states in large numbers and so rapidly becoming a large voting bloc that, according to the Know-Nothing Party, embraced dangerous ideas of universal liberty that made them sympathetic to the slaves. For King, a slave-holder and supporter of states' rights, the transition to the Know-Nothing Party, which by that point was essentially the party of states' rights, seemed logical.⁸⁵

During the campaign, King faced strong opposition. Expecting his opponents to object to his involvement in California's admittance, King published an explanation of his mission to California. What surprised King was the charge that he had mishandled county school funds in 1832. To counter this attack, King demanded an audit of the 1832 county accounts. The audit revealed that King was indeed at fault, and King quickly remedied the situation by reimbursing the mishandled funds. Despite his loss, King's failure highlighted the obstacles that lay ahead if he should choose to resume his political career.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ibid., 130.

⁸⁵ Anthony Gene Carey, *Parties, Slavery, and the Union in Antebellum Georgia* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), 186-188. For more information on the Know-Nothing Party in Georgia also see Carey's "Too Southern to be Americans: Proslavery Politics and the Failure of the Know-Nothing Party in Georgia, 1854-1856," *Civil War History* 41, no. 1 (March 1995): 22-40.

⁸⁶ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 130-131.

The following year, King followed the lead of his former associates and joined the Democratic Party. He chose to demonstrate his change of allegiance by attending the Democratic National Convention in 1856 in Cincinnati as a lobbyist for the transcontinental railroad. In 1859, after the death of his favorite son, the junior Thomas Butler King, King turned once more to Georgia politics, running for the First District congressional seat.⁸⁷ To address his opposition's accusations, King once more wrote an address to the people of the district, in which he laid out "the purposes and objects which induce me to express a desire to re-enter public life," and defended himself against "the infamous slanders and falsehoods which have been invented by my enemies, and revived and circulated from time to time, as their malice, aspirations, or interests might dictate."⁸⁸ King again lost the nomination, this time to Peter Early Love, and blamed the most recent loss on his opponent William H. Stiles for an article Stiles wrote against him in the *Southern Georgia Watchman* under the name "Philippi."⁸⁹ Anna King wrote to their daughter Georgia on King's and her own feelings toward the slander: "when your Father traced it to him—he demanded a retraction or to meet him with pistols...black must be his heart to make the attack he has on your Father."⁹⁰ Undeterred, King announced his bid for the Georgia Senate and won in the October elections, successfully returning him to Georgia politics.⁹¹

On his return to the Senate, King's work with the railroad industry secured him the chairmanship of the Committee on Internal Improvements. As chairman King once

⁸⁷ Ibid., 131. See Appendix 4 for what area constituted the First Congressional District.

⁸⁸ Address of Hon. T. Butler King, to the People of the First Congressional District, 1859, in the T. Butler King Papers.

⁸⁹ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 131-133.

⁹⁰ Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 408. Anna King to Georgia King, 11 August 1859. Coincidentally, this was also one of the last letters Anna wrote before her death on 22 August 1859.

⁹¹ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 135.

again, worked to secure state aid for railroad ventures in Georgia, especially for the Macon and Brunswick Railroad Company with which he was financially involved.⁹² He also advocated the establishment of direct trade with Europe, an idea derived from the revived Commercial Convention Movement which called not only for direct trade, but also river and harbor improvements, the building of factories in the South, railroad construction, and a “southern route for a railroad to the Pacific.”⁹³

On 9 December 1859, King sponsored a bill calling for the appointment of a commissioner to go abroad with the representatives of the Cotton Planters Association to report on the possibilities of establishing direct trade. The bill, however, never escaped committee. In February of 1860, the Macon and Brunswick Railroad Company, unwilling to rely on King’s ability to guide the railroad aid bill through the state Congress, developed as a contingency plan the deployment of a representative to Europe at some future date for the purpose of securing capital.⁹⁴ The company chose T. Butler King as its agent. The date of King’s departure was still unknown, but King anticipated it to be soon after the company’s meeting on 20 April.⁹⁵ The trip was delayed however by political events, illness, and the death of King’s brother Andrew.⁹⁶

The year 1860 initiated a series of events that influenced the course of King’s political career. That year the Democratic Party held a national convention in Charleston, South Carolina to nominate its presidential candidate and adopt a party platform. The Democratic Party of Georgia initially named King as an alternate delegate for the

⁹² Ibid., 135.

⁹³ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 94.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 135-139.

⁹⁵ Letter from Florence King to H. Lord King, 29 April 1860, in the T. Butler King Papers.

⁹⁶ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 141.

Charleston Convention to support Howell Cobb in a bid for the presidency, but compromisers in the party removed his name from the list when the lists of anti-and pro-Cobb members were merged.⁹⁷ Thus, King attended once again as a lobbyist for the transcontinental railroad.⁹⁸ The convention, however, came to an abrupt end when fifty delegates from the lower South walked out after the adoption of the Douglas platform, which reaffirmed the party's 1856 endorsement of popular sovereignty. The southern delegates had desired a platform that would extend federal protection of slavery. The departure of the southern delegates prevented an agreement on all further issues and the convention, therefore, decided to adjourn and try again in six weeks in Baltimore.⁹⁹ The breakup of the convention by radical southern delegations horrified King: "I believe that the safety of the Union depends on the preservation of the National Democratic party." King felt that the only hope for peace was a reunion of the Democratic Party.¹⁰⁰ King's daughter Georgia explained more succinctly: "Father fears that the division at Charleston is but a prelude to a disunion of the States, worked by ambitious politicians who forget the good of our country in trying to gain notoriety for themselves."¹⁰¹ Although King continued to support the principles of states' rights, he also strongly believed in the Union that he had painstakingly supported for so many years. When the Democratic Party again met in Baltimore, King hoped to restore the party behind a single candidate, but illness prevented him from taking an active role.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Howell Cobb, of Athens, was a prominent Georgia politician. From 1843 to 1851 and from 1855 to 1857, he served in the United States Congress, acting as speaker of the house from 1849 to 1851. He also served as Georgia's governor from 1851 to 1853 and was secretary of the treasury under President Buchanan.

⁹⁸ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 138-140.

⁹⁹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*. 214-215.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from T. Butler King to Robert Collins, etc., 11 May 1860, in the T. Butler King Papers.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Georgia King to Richard Cuyler (Tip) King, 11 May 1860, in the T. Butler King Papers.

¹⁰² Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 141.

In the legislative session of 1860, a lively debate ensued between the unionists, led by Alexander Stephens, and the secessionists, led by Robert Toombs, over the issue of whether the state should call a convention of the people or secede immediately. King, following the movements of the campaign as a moderate secessionist, advocated disunion only as a last resort. This position garnered for him the role as a mediator between the two camps. In this capacity, King proposed that the subject of a secession convention be referred to a joint committee. The Senate adopted the proposal and chose King as its chairman.¹⁰³ King's daughter Georgia, serving as his secretary, wrote to her brother Floyd that "[t]here will be a heavy battle to fight."¹⁰⁴ As to King's personal views on the matter, Georgia wrote to her brother Lord that Father "wishes for a convention of the people and a large Southern Confederacy from the Atlantic to the Pacific...with Mexico and Cuba (when we get them) for alliances with other powers." Georgia King further remarked that her father hoped to harmonize opinions, but that he did not have a very strong hope of doing so.¹⁰⁵ Realizing that compromise between the two sections was impossible, King embraced the idea of secession.¹⁰⁶ The joint committee ultimately recommended the holding of a convention of the people.

During the 1860 legislative session, Governor Brown expressed his desire to establish a line of steamers between Savannah and a European port. A Belgian company had contacted Brown about the possibility of establishing a line of five steamers with Georgia and claimed that the steamers were ready, if Georgia agreed to a guarantee of five per cent on their investment. Brown, seeing the possibility of disunion and

¹⁰³ Ibid., 141-142.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Georgia King to John Floyd King, 10 November 1860, in the T. Butler King Papers.

¹⁰⁵ Letter from Georgia King to Lord King, 15 November 1860, in the T. Butler King Papers.

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Georgia King to H. Lord King, 4 December 1860, in the T. Butler King Papers.

recognizing the contract's value should secession occur, asked the state legislature on 8 November 1860 to grant him the power to appoint a commissioner to conclude the agreement. The legislature adopted the proposal unanimously.¹⁰⁷ Governor Brown promptly requested the services of King, and asked that he depart by mid-January 1861.¹⁰⁸

On 2 January 1861, the same day that Brown called for the seizure of Fort Pulaski in Savannah by state forces, he informed King that he had been appointed commissioner to the various courts of Europe—"to the Government of Queen Victoria, to the Emperor Napoleon III, and to the Government of the King of Belgium." Brown took this action because "[i]n view of the changed condition of the political and commercial relations of the State of Georgia with other States, by her separation from the 'United States of America' and becoming a Sovereign and Independent State," the matter became "of the first importance" and as such "the causes which have led to this change and the effects which must necessarily follow it, should be immediately explained to the Governments of the principal European Powers."¹⁰⁹ King, because of his political, economic, and ideological background, readily accepted.

The instructions, which followed later, outlined his mission. First, King was "to explain to the Governments to which you are accredited, the causes which have led Georgia to sever her connection with the Government of the United States." Also, he was to ascertain whether those governments would "immediately acknowledge the Government of Georgia as that of an independent State, prior to the formation of a

¹⁰⁷ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 142.

¹⁰⁸ Letter of Governor Joseph E. Brown to T. Butler King, 26 December 1860, Governor's Letter Books and Orders, RG 265604, Georgia Archives, Morrow: GA.

¹⁰⁹ Letter of Governor Joseph E. Brown to T. Butler King, January 1861, in the T. Butler King Papers.

Southern Confederacy, for the purpose of securing suitable protection to commerce between her ports and those countries.” It was King’s responsibility to explain to the respective governments why it was necessary and to their advantage “to establish direct commercial and diplomatic intercourse between the Southern States and all the world.” Finally, King was to explain that “the manufacturing States of the North, have hitherto supplied the Cotton States with home manufactured articles amounting to some sixty or seventy millions of dollars in value, annually...which must hereafter compete, if admitted, with European manufacturers.”¹¹⁰ In other words, King was to explain to Europe that European products would thereafter compete equally with the previously protected northern manufactures. After Georgia’s secession, Governor Brown additionally charged King with the task of contracting eight thousand Minnie Muskets of the 1855 U.S. model, although the number was later reduced to four thousand in the hope that the new Confederacy would provide for the state’s defense.¹¹¹

Having been a member of the state’s legislature and chairman of the joint committee to decide the secession issue, King knew and understood the issues incumbent in his first directive. He also demonstrated great persistence and perseverance, a trait that would be needed to overcome any European apprehensions of the South. Finally, King had proved his political abilities in both the state and national Congresses.

King was also particularly well-suited to carry out the second instruction to secure commerce. King was among the first to advocate the use of steamships in the United

¹¹⁰Allen D. Candler, ed., Candler, *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. II: State Papers of Governor Joseph E. Brown Relating to the Public Defense, the Organization and Equipment of Troops, Provision for the Families of Soldiers, etc., 1860 to 1865, inclusive (Atlanta: Chas. P. Byrd, State Printer, 1909), 21-23.

¹¹¹ Letter of Joseph E. Brown to T. Butler King, 12 February 1861, Governor’s Letter Books and Orders, RG 334110, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, GA.

States Navy during his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives. He successfully established subsidized shipping lines with France, England, and Panama in 1845 and displayed great interest in postal affairs as evidenced by his attempt to grant the postmaster general dual authority with the secretary of the navy. He had served as the U.S. Senate's chairman of naval affairs and as San Francisco's port collector, through which King gained a well-rounded knowledge of sea routes, logistics, and protection. King had considerable experience in political lobbying through his many railroad schemes, the Brunswick Canal Company, and the Bank of Brunswick. As the designated agent for the Macon and Brunswick Railroad Company, King was already prepared to travel to Europe.

King's familiarity with Georgia's economy as a businessman and planter, as well as the United States economy, made him an appropriate candidate to carry out the third instruction, explaining why it was to Europe's advantage at that moment to establish direct trade with Georgia. King's mission report to President Taylor after his return from California demonstrated his knowledge of the national economy and international trade. King was well-suited to explain the fourth and last instruction, concerning the manufacturing power of the North and its systems of tariffs since he continually voted against northern-imposed tariffs, and, during the commercial conventions of the 1830s and 1850s, sought to reduce southern dependence on northern industry. Thus, Governor Brown appointed T. Butler King to one of the state's most critical positions.

CHAPTER 2

“COMMERCIAL FREEDOM IS POLITICAL FREEDOM”¹¹²

Governor Brown’s decision to establish direct trade between Georgia and Europe in January 1861 was not a new idea. Beginning with the Commercial Convention Movement in the late 1830s, southern leaders had advocated direct trade as a way to reduce the South’s economic dependence on northern commercial interests. In the late 1850s, the South returned to the idea of direct trade with an increased vigor—evidenced in the growing number of newspaper articles, public debates, and government deliberations on the topic—as a result of the growing divisiveness between the two regions over slavery, states’ rights, and other regional concerns. United States Census and trade statistics fueled the discussion, providing, in southern minds, evidence of the South’s economic superiority. When Georgia seceded, the public not only desired direct trade, viewing commercial freedom as political freedom, but believed that economic independence, as well as political independence, was in fact possible.

The South, increasingly enriched by the cotton trade—a result of technological inventions in the textile industry—had every reason to desire economic independence. Economically, the southern states that seceded combined to form the fifth largest economy worldwide.¹¹³ Southern leaders looked to the nation’s export numbers to demonstrate the importance of the southern agricultural market to the United States. According to *Harper’s Weekly* on 9 February 1861, the fiscal year 1859-1860 was the nation’s most active year in history in terms of imports and exports. The United States

¹¹² *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia at the Annual Session of the General Assembly Commenced at Milledgeville November 7th 1860* (Milledgeville, GA: Boughton, Nisbet & Barnes, State Printers, 1860), 268.

¹¹³ Charles Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998), xv.

imported \$362,163,941 in foreign goods and exported \$400,122,296 in domestic goods. The article attributed the record year to the unusually heavy export of cotton from the southern states.¹¹⁴ The *Macon Daily Telegraph* reported on 16 November 1860 that in 1859 the value of southern exports amounted to \$187,105,548—fifty-six percent of the nation’s total value in exports.¹¹⁵ In fact, between 1830 and 1860, cotton continually accounted for at least one-half of the United States’ total export value and was the largest single item of export.¹¹⁶ As similar reports continued to appear citing such southern import and export disparities, southern leaders found justification for seeking direct trade with European nations.

Southern leaders also recognized foreign dependence on raw materials from the South, especially Britain. In 1820, the United States supplied more than half of all British imports. By the end of the decade, the U.S. was supplying three-quarters of Britain’s imports. By the 1850s, the U.S. provided seventy-two percent of Britain’s cotton supply. The American South was the only region in the world that could increase the cotton crop in proportion to the world’s increasing demand for the material.¹¹⁷ As a result of the cotton gin and its continual innovations, the South had managed to almost double its production of cotton each decade from 1800 to 1860.¹¹⁸ During the first half of the nineteenth century, the South produced nearly seven-eighths of the world’s cotton

¹¹⁴ *Harper’s Weekly*, “The Foreign Commerce of the United States,” (9 February 1861) available from <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war-feb-1861/civil-war-alabama-secession.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 March 2006.

¹¹⁵ *The Macon Daily Telegraph*, 16 November 1860. Frank Owsley in *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. revised by Harriet Chappell Owsley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), 13-14 reported that the United States had exported \$278,392,080 worth of materials, of which \$198,389,351—seventy-one percent—came from the export of southern cotton, tobacco, rice, and other products.

¹¹⁶ Harold Underwood Faulkner, *American Economic History* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, revised 1931 ed.), 210, 244.

¹¹⁷ J.H. Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain*, vol. III: Free Trade and Steel 1850-1886 (Cambridge, England: the University Press, 1932), 220.

¹¹⁸ Faulkner, *American Economic History*, 247.

supply.¹¹⁹ Efforts had been made in India and Egypt by Britain to develop alternate sources, but had yielded limited results. In 1859, nearly twenty years after initiating these efforts, reports showed that Britain had increased India's cotton output by only ten million pounds since 1800.¹²⁰

France, while not as dependent on southern materials, relied on southern consumerism. Unlike Britain, France's relatively equal division of landed property and slow growth of population limited its available workforce for urban employment. French industries, therefore, remained predominantly artisanal in nature, but on par with Britain in terms of industrial output and productivity.¹²¹ The only regions that developed a comparable cotton textile industry to that of Britain were Alsace and the Nord.¹²²

Despite the limited industrial development, the cotton textile industries of Alsace and the Nord did require significant amounts of southern cotton to produce clothing for the French laboring class. France, however, only produced for this domestic market, unlike its British neighbor which generally exported its cotton products. France, rather, continued to export mainly luxury goods. French industries generally excelled at the finishing end of the manufacturing process. The employment of skilled labor, versus the use of unskilled workers in Britain, allowed French industries to "capture and maintain

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 383.

¹²⁰ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. revised by Harriet Chappell Owsley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), 4.

¹²¹ Charles Crouch, "The Petite Bourgeoisie of Paris During the Bourbon Restoration, 1814-1830: A Prosopographical Inquiry into the Political and Economic Integration of the Parisian Lower Middle Class" (Ph. D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1991), 8. For more on French economic development in the nineteenth century see Patrick O'Brien and Caglar Keyder, *Economic Growth in England and France, 1700-1914* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978); Jordon Goodman and Katrina Honeyman, *Gainful Pursuits: The Making of Industrial Europe, 1600-1914* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988); and Ronald Aminzade, "Reinterpreting Capitalist Industrialization: A Study of Nineteenth-Century France," *Social History*, 9 (1984): 329-350.

¹²² Dudley Dillard, *Economic Development of the North Atlantic Community: Historical Introduction to Modern Economics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), 287, 289.

markets for higher quality products”—products southerners desired.¹²³ As the second largest foreign consumer of French silk, the United States accounted for nearly a third of all French sales.¹²⁴

Georgia’s economic prowess similarly stimulated interest for direct trade among the leaders and the people of that state. Between June 1858 and June 1859, the value of exports for the city of Savannah amounted to \$18,351,554 and imports amounted to \$782,061. During this same period, Savannah collected \$89,157.18 in customs duties. From September 1860 to August 1861, the city of Savannah was the third largest port of origin for exported cotton from the U.S., with 302,187 bales of cotton shipped.¹²⁵ According to the 1860 Census of the United States, Georgia was the fourth largest producer of ginned cotton in the Union, producing 701,840 bales at 400 pounds each. Georgia also grew 52,507,632 pounds of rice, making it the second largest producer after South Carolina. Georgia further produced 919,318 pounds of tobacco along with 2,544,913 bushels of wheat and 946,227 pounds of wool. Georgia was the tenth largest producer of Indian corn in 1860 with 30,776,293 bushels and the third largest grower of peas and beans producing 1,765,214 bushels. Although a minor grower compared to the mid-western states, Georgia also grew 1,231,817 bushels of oats. Lastly, while Georgia’s crop of Irish potatoes was small—only 303,789 bushels—Georgia had the nation’s largest sweet potato crop with 6,508,541 bushels.¹²⁶ Added together, the value of these

¹²³ Crouch, “The Petite Bourgeoisie of Paris During the Bourbon Restoration, 1814-1830,” 8.

¹²⁴ David H. Pinkney, “France and the Civil War,” in *Heard Round the World: The Impact Abroad of the Civil War*, ed. Harold Hyman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1969), 121.

¹²⁵ Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 227-229. Statistics gathered from House executive and treasury department documents.

¹²⁶ Joseph C.G. Kennedy, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the*

goods was substantial. When further combined with manufactured goods, which according to the 1860 Census was valued at \$16,925,564 (only one percent of the nation's total manufacturing value of \$1,885,861,676), Georgia had a clear incentive to bypass the North and trade directly with Europe.¹²⁷

Table 1. 1850 and 1860 Georgia Agricultural Census Statistics

Crop	1850	1860
Ginned Cotton (in bales of 400 pounds).....	499,091	701,840
Rice (in pounds).....	38,950,691	52,507,632
Tobacco (in pounds).....	423,924	919,318
Wheat (in bushels).....	1,088,534	2,544,913
Wool (in pounds).....	990,019	946,227
Indian Corn (in bushels).....	30,080,099	30,776,293
Peas and Beans (in bushels).....	1,142,011	1,765,214
Oats (in bushels).....	3,820,044	1,231,817
Irish Potatoes (in bushels).....	227,379	303,789
Sweet Potatoes (in bushels).....	6,986,428	6,508,541

Source: J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), 378-381; available from <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1850a-01.pdf> ; Internet; accessed 19 April 2006; Joseph C.G. Kennedy, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census,*

Interior, vol. 2, Series 17 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), xlvii, xciv, lxxiv, lxxx-lxxxii, 27.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Manufactures of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior*, vol. 3, Series 18 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1865; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 82 and Faulkner, *American Economic History*, 310.

under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior, vol. 2, Series 17 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 27.

Georgia not only had economic incentives to establish direct trade with Europe, but political motives as well. In 1860, Georgia leaders determined that the northern states had violated their economic agreements to the South as guaranteed in the Constitution. The most grievous violation was the North's attempt to abolish slavery, an act that in southern eyes denied them their right to property. What angered southerners the most was the perceived hypocrisy of the abolition movement. As southerners viewed the situation, the wealth of many of the northern shipping families, those same families that were calling for an end to slavery, was based on the very institution they considered immoral. As Governor Joseph E. Brown stated in a special message to the Georgia legislature on 7 November 1860, northern shippers were the primary importers of slaves prior to the abolition of the slave trade and so the wealth of their descendents was built on the very institution that these same descendents now declared immoral.¹²⁸ Northerners, while thus attempting to deny southerners the right to property (slaves), refused to consider renouncing their own property which had been derived from the institution of slavery. To southerners this was obvious hypocrisy.

Southern leaders also perceived northern leaders, in addition to their attempts to abolish the South's labor system, to be working to create a monopoly on all American trade through navigation laws and high tariffs that only benefited northern manufacturers. In November 1860 the *Macon Daily Telegraph* identified a number of various drains on

¹²⁸ Allen D. Candler, ed., *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. I (Atlanta: Chas. P. Byrd, State Printer, 1909), 20-21.

the southern economy. Among these were the tariff which imposed a duty of nearly twenty percent, navigation laws, which excluded “American vessels from competition with the cheap carrying vessels of England and Holland, and the rest of Europe,” and the fact that foreign goods consumed in the South came through the North rather than coming directly from Europe.¹²⁹ Southern leaders claimed that these problems, if allowed to continue, could lead to serious long-term economic consequences. The South, overall, exported seventy percent of its cotton supply abroad and the rest to northern mills. Once manufactured, the value added to the cotton equaled the price that the South received for the raw cotton. Added to the South’s economic drain, fifteen to twenty percent of the raw cotton’s price went to factors normally representing either northern or British firms. Cargoes of the manufactured product brought from Europe were then generally taken to northern ports because of the greater volume of trade, from where they would then be transported overland or shipped down the coast, all of which added increased freight charges on imported goods.¹³⁰ Although tariff rates generally decreased from 1832 to 1861 as a result of southern political power on the federal level, tariffs remained a threat to the South’s economic prosperity, consistently increasing the already high importation costs.¹³¹

A few weeks later, the *Macon Daily Telegraph* continued its tirade against the North. The paper determined that the U.S. statute book contained many statutes designed to benefit the North, while none existed for the benefit of the South. Despite the fact that the South paid nearly two-thirds of the nation’s revenue, sixty million went to the North

¹²⁹ *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 28 November 1860.

¹³⁰ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 92.

¹³¹ Faulkner, *American Economic History*, 237-238.

while only twenty million went back to benefit the South.¹³² U.S. Senator James Henry Hammond of South Carolina had reported in a speech in March 1858 that of the seventy million dollars raised by the federal government annually in taxes, the South on average paid fifty million dollars while the North paid only twenty million. Southerners remembered this disparity over two years after the senator's speech.¹³³

Recognizing these economic disparities and their drag on the southern economy, Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia, in a special message on 7 November 1860, maintained that Georgia should "have the power to regulate our own revenue laws, tariffs, etc., and to discriminate against them...by imposing export duties on Cotton purchased by them (the North), and import duties on manufactured articles sold by them."¹³⁴ Brown believed that, since Georgia cotton seemed indispensable to the North, the North should be forced to agree to a favorable commercial treaty in which the North would buy and sell Southern goods on equal terms with foreign nations.¹³⁵ Brown justified his stance on the U.S. Constitution, stating that it was a compact "by which each State made concessions to the other for the sake of the Union."¹³⁶ Since northern states seemed to be infringing on the rights of the southern states, it was Georgia's right to take these extreme measures.

Brown was merely reasserting a goal southern leaders had been working to achieve for the past decade through the establishment of direct trade. Throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s, as southern leaders came to recognize the northern obstructions on the southern economy, they began to take action. T. Butler King on 9 December 1859

¹³² *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 10 December 1860.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 3 January 1861.

¹³⁴ Candler, *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. I, 52.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

introduced a series of resolutions in the Senate that, if passed, would have empowered “the governor to appoint a commissioner to accompany the representatives of the Cotton Planters Association abroad,” which had been in contact with the Belgian American Direct Trade Association for several years, “and report on the possibilities of direct trade.”¹³⁷ Although the Senate buried the resolutions, the proposals introduced the idea of sending a state-supported commercial delegation to Europe.

The opportunity to establish commercial relations with a foreign nation arose when in January of 1860, Belgium sent Laurent de Givé as a consul-merchant to Atlanta, Georgia in the hopes of developing commercial relations with the American South. Upon de Givé’s arrival in March 1860, southern leaders, recognizing the manufacturing abilities of Belgium and its consumption of southern cotton, decided in April 1860 to send an official delegation to Brussels to enter into negotiations with the Belgians for the purpose of establishing a direct line of trade.¹³⁸ The delegation, which was under the direction of Howell Cobb of Georgia, included Cobb’s secretary M. Buchanan, the Belgian engineer Eugene le Hardy, and Joseph Barbier, who was the official commissioner from Tennessee.¹³⁹

The delegates arrived in Belgium in early July 1860 and entered into negotiations with the *Compagnie Belge-Américaine*, a new company formed to trade exclusively with the American South.¹⁴⁰ Throughout the negotiations, Belgian political and manufacturing leaders treated the delegation most cordially, causing Cobb to believe that Belgium was a

¹³⁷ Edward M. Steel, Jr., *T. Butler King of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 137 and *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 6 September 1860.

¹³⁸ Francis Balace, *La Belgique et la Guerre de Sécession 1861-1865 Étude Diplomatique*, vol. I (Paris: Societé d’ Edition; Les Belles Lettres, 1979), 44-46 and *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 6 November 1860.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

true friend of the United States, and a special friend of Georgia.¹⁴¹ The result of the negotiations was the delegation's agreement to feature the company's products at the annual Cotton Planter's Fair that was to be held in Macon for three weeks in December of that year and to continue to feature the company's products at future fairs.¹⁴² Cobb returned to Georgia on 1 August, while Barbieri remained in Belgium to assist in the selection of goods.¹⁴³

Georgians viewed the Belgian company's attendance at the fair as a blessing: "The heaven is at work, and the spirit that brought the States we have the honor to represent, to the consideration of this vital effort of the South, is one that will be a powerful impetus to the development of Southern resources."¹⁴⁴ From this commercial relationship, it was realized by all in the state that, as stated in Cobb's report, "there will necessarily arise out of the establishment of Direct Trade with Continental Europe, very important *political* complications." These complications referred to the North, whose relationship with the South was already strained and which garnered a virtual monopoly on foreign trade.¹⁴⁵ In his report, though, Cobb stressed that the purpose of trade with Belgium was not to unsettle the commerce between England and America, but to establish another channel of commerce to accommodate the increasing trade of the cotton region.¹⁴⁶

Additional factors resulting from the growing tension between the North and South worked to bind Georgia closer to Belgium. By December 1860, Brown knew that

¹⁴¹ *Daily Macon Telegraph*, 6 September 1860.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 11 September 1860.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5 September 1860.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 September 1860.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 September 1860.

secession was inevitable. Concerned about the disruption of Georgia's mail services and the state's dependence on northern ships, and at times northern personnel, Brown told the legislature on 8 December that the "present aspect of our political affairs makes it the duty of the legislative authority of the State to provide in every way possible for direct and speedy communication with Europe."¹⁴⁷ Brown thus called for the Georgia legislature to "make prompt provision for a line of ocean steamers to run weekly between Savannah and some important commercial port in Europe."¹⁴⁸ As a result of Cobb's mission to Belgium, Brown became aware of a line of Belgian steamers, for which he would later dispatch T. Butler King to negotiate. In this same missive, Brown made his first case for a commissioner to be sent to open negotiations.¹⁴⁹

The Georgia House of Representatives took immediate action in response to the Governor's message of 8 December. Later that day, John L. Harris of Glynn County presented a report stating that "commercial freedom is political freedom."¹⁵⁰ Understanding that political freedom could never be achieved without commercial freedom, the report empowered the governor to enter into negotiations for the establishment of a line of ocean steamers and to appoint a commissioner accordingly.¹⁵¹

The Senate, in accord with the favorable relations with Belgium resulting from the Cobb delegation, followed suit on 10 December 1860, reporting a bill to "incorporate the Belgian American Company for the development of direct trade with the Southern States of the United States," and the European and Southern Direct Trade and Steam

¹⁴⁷ Candler, *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. II: State Papers of Governor Joseph E. Brown Relating to the Public Defense, the Organization and Equipment of Troops, Provision for the Families of Soldiers, etc., 1860 to 1865, inclusive (Atlanta: Chas. P. Byrd, State Printer, 1909), 6.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁵⁰ *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 268.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 268-269.

Navigation Company of Georgia for similar purposes.¹⁵² On 18 December 1860, D. Printup of Floyd County, chairman of the Committee on Finance, formally reported to the Senate that the bill incorporating the Belgian American Company had passed both branches of the General Assembly. The Belgian American Company would operate between Savannah and Antwerp, with an additional port of call possibly at Falmouth, England. The shares of the company were guaranteed at five percent by the state of Georgia.¹⁵³ The state eventually granted the company the power to trade, buy, and sell merchandise as well as to build, own, hold, employ, and charter steam and/or sail seafaring vessels with the same rights and privileges as Georgia citizens.¹⁵⁴

After secession the establishment of direct trade understandably became even more pressing. When establishing committees on 21 January 1861, the Georgia Secession Convention created a committee to focus solely on foreign relations and another to focus on commercial and postal arrangements. The creation of these two committees demonstrated the importance of those two issues. On 25 January 1861, John W. Anderson of Chatham County, as a representative of the Committee on Commercial and Postal Arrangements, reported a preamble stating that the “policy of direct trade between the States of the South and foreign nations assumes more than ordinary importance in view of the relations which the seceding States must bear to the world.” The committee thus resolved that members of the Georgia delegation to the Southern Congress in Montgomery, Alabama should introduce at the earliest possible day the issue

¹⁵² *Journal of the Senate of the State of Georgia at the Annual Session of the General Assembly Commenced at Milledgeville November 7th 1860* (Milledgeville, GA: Boughton, Nisbet & Barnes, State Printers, 1860), 292.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 415.

¹⁵⁴ *Acts of the Georgia General Assembly of the State of Georgia* (Milledgeville, GA: Boughton, Nisbet & Barnes, State Printers, 1860), 8.

of direct trade and “urge the adoption of efficient measures to accomplish this great measure of Southern independence.”¹⁵⁵

Georgia’s Secession Convention also immediately addressed the issue of maintaining stable postal and commercial services. Prior to secession, most customs collectors and postmasters were federal employees. After secession Georgia, therefore, had to take control of postal and commercial services. On 19 January 1861, F.S. Bartow of Chatham County offered a resolution ordering the federal collectors of customs and postmasters to continue in the duties of their offices.¹⁵⁶ This resolution was followed on 26 January 1861 by another resolution from the Committee on Commercial and Postal Arrangements calling for the “collectors of customs and other officers connected with the same in the various ports of this State,” to be “allowed to continue to perform their functions under existing laws, until otherwise ordered.”¹⁵⁷ The convention also adopted an ordinance on 24 January 1861 concerning postal arrangements, directing that all existing postal contracts and arrangements continue and that the persons charged with such duties should continue in those duties. In the event that the U.S. government, its agents or officers, refused or failed to execute their contracts or duties, the governor of Georgia had the right to make arrangements or contracts to maintain sufficient mail facilities.¹⁵⁸ In another ordinance on 28 January, the convention adopted similar measures concerning those who worked in customs, asking that all Georgians who had heretofore held such positions continue in their duties at the same pay. The same ordinance also granted the governor the power to make appointments to all commercial

¹⁵⁵ Candler, *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. I, 273, 300-301.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 711-712.

vacancies.¹⁵⁹ These actions were quickly rendered necessary in January when the federal government in Washington proposed to cut off the transfer of letters and newspapers to the South—an act which the *Macon Daily Telegraph* attacked as bordering on war.¹⁶⁰

The Secession Convention also had to address the concerns of foreign investors. With secession a reality and a war between the northern and southern states appearing imminent, Georgia needed to assure its foreign investors that their investments would be secure.¹⁶¹ The convention thus passed an ordinance on 29 January declaring “it to be the fixed policy of Georgia to protect all investments already made, or which may be hereafter made by citizens of others States in mines or manufactures in this State, and capital invested in any other permanent improvement.”¹⁶²

T. Butler King had his own reasons to establish direct trade with Europe and to accept the mission to Europe offered to him by the state. Despite financial troubles, King’s Retreat Plantation, according to the 1860 Census, was the most productive of the St. Simons cotton plantations. The productivity of the plantation, and the financial troubles that continually plagued King, were likely the reasons that led him and other southern leaders to join in the Commercial Movement and to examine ways to bypass the strangle hold of the northern middlemen.¹⁶³ King’s economic status, along with his general interest in and support of variant commercial ventures, also likely influenced his acceptance of the mission to Europe.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 720.

¹⁶⁰ *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 31 January 1861.

¹⁶¹ Foreign investors had been uneasy about investing in the South since the 1830s when several states defaulted on their loans.

¹⁶² Candler, *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. I, 724.

¹⁶³ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 165.

King was appointed Georgia's commissioner to Europe in January 1861, and spent the next month preparing for his mission and observing the rapidly changing political situation. He and Governor Brown exchanged several letters concerning King's specific instructions. Unsure of how long he might be in Europe, King also took the time to make arrangements for the defense and evacuation of his coastal home.¹⁶⁴ In a letter to his son Lordy, King wrote that he had "urged the Governor to order the Brunswick Riflemen to St. Simons immediately."¹⁶⁵

King also attended the Montgomery Convention at which the southern states agreed to form the Confederate States of America. At the convention, King's chief concern was a postal bill for Atlantic steamers that would allow the Confederate postmaster general "to contract with any line of steamers for transportation of the mails from the Confederate States of America to foreign ports" through the use of a mail subsidy. King focused on this bill for several reasons. First, it concerned his area of expertise and second, it directly resembled a bill he had sponsored in the U.S. Congress twenty years before. The bill passed on 1 March 1861.¹⁶⁶

Finally, King, as the Macon and Brunswick Railroad's representative to Europe, had to finalize plans with the company before departure. The initial section of the railroad was scheduled to be completed in the autumn, but the investors still needed capital to complete the remaining one hundred and thirty-eight miles of track. Since the company could rely upon neither state aid nor northern aid in the impending crisis, it prepared to seek a loan of five million dollars abroad. The company planned to invest

¹⁶⁴ This was good foresight by King since his family was forced to evacuate the St. Simons Island plantation while he was abroad in 1861.

¹⁶⁵ Letter from T. Butler King to H. Lord King, 21 January 1861, in the T. Butler King.

¹⁶⁶ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 144-145.

one fourth of this capital into yellow pine timber lands near the railroad line and in existing stocks of yellow pine lumber. If accomplished, this investment would give the company a near monopoly on the material. As the company's agent, King's commission on all transactions was to be five percent.¹⁶⁷ There were doubts as to the plan's potential for success, one of which would prove prophetic for many southern agents seeking loans in Europe. Henry Wheeler, an associate with the Macon and Brunswick Railroad, wrote King before his departure that "no capitalist in Europe will invest here until the Southern Confederacy has firmly established itself & demonstrated to the foreign world that the investments of strangers will be protected."¹⁶⁸

When King finally departed for Europe on 13 March aboard the *Adriatic*, he left with great hopes but many doubts as to whether Europe would indeed invest in the South at such an early stage. C. G. Baylor wrote to King on 3 January 1861 that Governor Brown "has struck the true blow for Southern independence, and your mission becomes one of immense importance."¹⁶⁹ In a way, an entire state was depending on him for its livelihood. The European nations, however, had yet to make an official policy on the South's secession. King would have the daunting and difficult task of convincing European leaders to extend some form of recognition to the Confederate States of America to secure the South's commercial freedom.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 145.

¹⁶⁸ Letter from H. Lord King to T. Butler King, 16 January 1861, in the T. Butler King Papers.

¹⁶⁹ *Washington, D.C Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 April 1862, "Disunion Plottings in Europe." Letter of C. G. Baylor to T. Butler King, 3 January 1861. The newspaper itself dates the letter in 1860, but the content and context of the letter indicate that the date was a misprint and should have read 1861.

CHAPTER 3

“ACKNOWLEDGED IN TEN DAYS”: KING’S EFFORTS AND EARLY EUROPEAN SYMPATHIES¹⁷⁰

In the early months of 1861, the southern states quickly maneuvered to establish their autonomy. They granted commissions, rewrote constitutions, and raised defenses. At the same time, the southern states met in a convention in Montgomery, Alabama to form a southern Confederacy. On the European side of the Atlantic, events also moved quickly as public attention shifted from observing events closer to home, such as the Italian unification effort, to understanding the events unfolding in America.¹⁷¹ The South had threatened secession for several decades, but few in Europe expected the South to carry out its threat. Until late 1860, Americans had proved willing to compromise for the sake of the Union and to peacefully adjust to changing circumstances. Secession thus came as a shock and, in spite of the distance, European states found themselves forced into the conflict as both the North and South sought both diplomatic and economic aid.

Thomas Butler King, one of the first southern representatives dispatched to Europe after secession to vie for European favor, arrived in Britain in mid-March 1861 just as public opinion appeared to turn in the Confederacy’s favor. Initially, following South Carolina’s secession in December 1860, public opinion in Britain and France, the two nations that would play the greatest roles in the American conflict, had been unsympathetic to the southern states. Several factors, however, gradually turned British and French sympathies.

¹⁷⁰ Letter of T. Butler King to H. Lord King, 25 March 1861, in the T. Butler King Papers #1252, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In the context of this paper, the European Powers are Great Britain and France, with references to Belgium.

¹⁷¹ For more on the Italian question and unification, see Derek Beales and Eugenio F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2002) and Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).

Diplomatically, Britain, France, and the United States, since the 1850s, had been engaged in a tense *détente*. Britain was increasingly concerned about the growing economic power and militaristic diplomatic stances of the United States, which threatened Britain's hold over Canada and Britain's dominance on the seas. Napoleon III of France sought to place Mexico under French control, a scheme that worried both Great Britain and the United States.¹⁷² Britain feared that France's acquisition of Mexico could potentially destroy Europe's balance of power. The United States objected to a French-controlled Mexico on the grounds that it ran in direct opposition to the Monroe Doctrine, which declared that the western hemisphere was no longer open to European colonization and that any interference by a European would be considered a threat to the peace and security of the United States.¹⁷³

Britain and the United States had been at odds with each other since the American Revolution. While there were signs of rapprochement between the two, such as the move towards free trade, the transatlantic cable project, and Britain's disavowal of the right to search ocean vessels during peacetime in 1858, tensions remained.¹⁷⁴ American beliefs in manifest destiny, often expressed in anti-British political rhetoric, instigated several irritations between the two nations. In 1842 the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, which was undertaken to resolve the border between Maine and New Brunswick, conceded the greater portion of the disputed territory to the United States.¹⁷⁵ While Daniel Webster

¹⁷² Napoleon III's full name was Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. He was the son of Hortense Beauharnais and Louis Bonaparte. For more information on Napoleon III see James F. McMillon, *Napoleon III* (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1991).

¹⁷³ D.P. Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers, 1861-1865* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1974), 2.

¹⁷⁴ Charles P. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe, 1861-1865* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1969), 11.

¹⁷⁵ Brian Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, vol. I (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 75.

and Alexander Baring, the first baron Ashburton, resolved a number of outstanding disputes, they were unable to settle the question of the northwest boundary in the Oregon Territory. The subsequent rancor as Americans demanded “Fifty-Four Forty or Fight” threatened not only British territory, but British honor. Despite the fact that Britain considered the Oregon territory to be of little importance by the 1840s, it felt compelled to take action in defense of its honor, leading to talk of war.¹⁷⁶ Although the two nations managed to peacefully resolve the Oregon issue in 1846, diplomatic challenges continued to present themselves such as the 1856 John Crampton affair in which the United States expelled Crampton, the British minister to the United States, for breaching U.S. neutrality laws concerning American non-involvement in the Crimean War.¹⁷⁷ The outbreak of civil war in the United States in 1861, therefore, presented the British with a dilemma. Torn between applauding the dismemberment of her rival and an appreciation for the benefits of economic interdependence and reciprocity, Britain had largely discovered that negotiation rather than confrontation was in its own best interest. This recognition would have a great impact on Britain’s role in the American Civil War, ultimately encouraging British neutrality.¹⁷⁸

Napoleon III’s ambitions in Mexico played a role in France’s diplomatic position on the American conflict. In the autumn of 1859, Viscount Jean Alexis Gabriac, French ambassador to Mexico, despatched Aimé Louis Victor de Bosc, Marquis of Radepont, to Paris to convince Napoleon III to intervene in the Mexican Civil War. Radepont attempted to manipulate the emperor’s sympathies, detailing the plight of French subjects

¹⁷⁶ Donald A. Rakestraw, *For Honor or Destiny: The Anglo-American Crisis over the Oregon Territory* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1995), 176-177.

¹⁷⁷ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 75.

¹⁷⁸ Rakestraw, *For Honor or Destiny*, 176-177.

in the war-torn country and warning of the possibility of an American take-over.¹⁷⁹ Napoleon III was known as an opportunist, according to the London *Times*: “No man seems to watch more keenly for accidents and trusts more to combinations which may spontaneously arise.”¹⁸⁰ While Napoleon III promised Radeponst that he would not forget the French claimants and offered them “his all powerful protection,” he was unwilling to intervene, for he did not feel as if the conditions were yet right for intervention.¹⁸¹ Napoleon III received other petitions as well, including one in May 1859 from a group of Mexican monarchists asking for a French monarch to be placed in control of Mexico.¹⁸² While Dubois de Saligny, who had replaced Gabriac as the French minister to Mexico in 1861, obtained acknowledgment from the Mexican government of the French financial claims in the early months of 1861, satisfying those claims were not as simple a task.¹⁸³ One such claim, the Jecker claim, was worth an astounding 1.2 million dollars—an amount not easily dismissed by the French government.¹⁸⁴ The continued inability of the Mexican government to pay the French claims led Napoleon III to consider intervention. He understood that the presence of the United States, which had already made clear its intention in the Monroe Doctrine to prevent European meddling in the Americas, would complicate French efforts at intervention. Political recognition of a southern Confederacy and a weakened United States would provide more advantageous conditions for France in its hope to place Mexico under its control. Napoleon III, however, while recognizing the advantages southern recognition could bring, also realized that his

¹⁷⁹ Nancy Nichols Barker, *The French Experience in Mexico, 1821-1861: A History of Constant Misunderstanding* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 155.

¹⁸⁰ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 77.

¹⁸¹ Barker, *The French Experience in Mexico*, 155.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

involvement in Italy, which included war with Austria, had overextended France's resources and thus decided to act on the American crisis in concert with Britain, the dominant naval power.¹⁸⁵

Additional factors, however, such as fears of a southern power, also prevented France from making such a move during the early months of 1861. While the South could potentially weaken the American dominance of the western hemisphere, the South had never hidden the fact that it desired control over the Caribbean, especially Cuba, for the purpose of expanding the slave economy. The North had consistently thwarted southern ambitions, but with the southern states operating as an independent government, Napoleon III and other European leaders worried about the South's underlying motives, its long-range designs, and the possibility of future conflicts in the Caribbean region.¹⁸⁶

The one diplomatic precedent that favored French support for the Confederacy was the Italian unification movement. Napoleon III's prime diplomatic goal in the 1850s and 1860s was to restore France's international prestige and to renew Europe's balance-of-power system under French leadership. His first step towards this objective was to drive the Austrians out of northern Italy and aid in the formation of a northern Italian federation.¹⁸⁷ In July 1858 Napoleon III signed the Plombière Treaty with Emilio Cavour, president of Sardinia-Piedmont—the first of the major European powers to do so—in which Napoleon III agreed to send troops to aid in the unification effort as long as the war was fought on the defensive. In aiding the unification effort prior to the formation of a legal government in Italy, France established a precedent which implied

¹⁸⁵ Joseph A. Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789-1973* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 89.

¹⁸⁶ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 19.

¹⁸⁷ Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times: From the Enlightenment to the Present*, 5th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995), 190.

French support for and recognition of other nationalist movements. Other nations, including Britain, soon signed onto the French precedent, providing that the movement in question could erect a stable and proven government. The United States too had set a precedent of early recognition of revolutionary governments with its recognition of Hungary in 1848, even before it had secured independence and established itself. Henri Mercier, French minister to the United States, personally believed that the Union could not criticize the European countries if they chose to recognize the Confederate government as a result of the Hungarian precedent. Comments such as that made by Mercier indicated to many southerners that France and the other European powers would soon recognize the Confederate States of America on the basis of the precedents previously set by France in Italy and the United States in Hungary.¹⁸⁸ Before the European powers would react, however, they had to weigh the economic consequences of their response.

While diplomatic issues divided Britain, France, and the United States, trade and financial issues bound the three together. The two European countries were tied to the South by cotton and to the North by grain, both of which were extremely important commodities. Both commodities were important to both Britain and France, but because the cotton trade with the South produced great economic wealth in each country, it would be an important factor in their diplomatic policies. French Foreign Minister Edouard Antoine Thouvenel told a fellow diplomat that the “question of recognition causes us embarrassment. We care nothing for the political question of right in the matter and would do nothing were those the only concerns. But the commercial question, that’s

¹⁸⁸ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 14.

what troubles us.”¹⁸⁹ In a letter, T. Butler King asked Thouvenel, “Can the governments of France and England permit this war to continue until it shall have destroyed the annual product of three hundred millions of dollars in value of commercial exchange?”¹⁹⁰ The answer to the question was one the governments had already been considering and the answer did not appear to be simple. Henri Mercier told Lord Richard Bickerton Pemell Lyons, British minister to the United States, that “if war became imminent between the Northern and Southern Confederacies, the commercial interests of the European Powers would imperatively require that they should place themselves in the position of neutrals.” At the same time, however, “France could not allow the interruption of her commerce with the South.”¹⁹¹ Lyons agreed with Mercier’s opinions and stressed that Britain and France should act together in whatever course they should choose to take and to secure the cooperation of the other great powers.¹⁹² Commercial affairs would thus be the primary issue for the European powers.

Britain had reason to be distressed over the potential interruption of commerce with the South. British shipping and exports depended on southern cotton. Beginning in 1820, British industries became dependent on the southern states for over three-quarters of its raw cotton supplies.¹⁹³ Additionally, nearly five million Englishmen held jobs in the British cotton textile industry. A large portion of the British population thus

¹⁸⁹ Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 29.

¹⁹⁰ T. Butler King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King, to Europe* (Milledgeville, GA: Confederate Union Power Press, 1863), 16. Letter from T. Butler King to the French minister of foreign affairs, dated 11 July 1861.

¹⁹¹ Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt, ed., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Part 1, Series C: North America, vol. 5: The Civil War Years, 1859-1861* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, Inc., 1986), 189.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁹³ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 5.

depended on the southern cotton crop.¹⁹⁴ T. Butler King wrote to Lord John Russell, British foreign secretary, that he was not surprised that “great anxiety should be felt in the principal manufacturing countries of Europe” since “so much capital is invested in manufacturing establishments, and so many people are employed in them.”¹⁹⁵ Conversely, Britain also had reason to fear a rupture with the North. By 1860, Britain was importing fifty-five percent of its foodstuffs—bacon, lard, salted and fresh pork, and salted and fresh beef—from the northern United States.¹⁹⁶

Southern cotton and southern imports were important to France as well. In France in 1860, cotton and tobacco constituted sixty percent of the nation’s purchases from the United States.¹⁹⁷ France overall obtained ninety percent of its raw cotton from the southern states.¹⁹⁸ With two hundred and seventy-five thousand workers employed as cotton spinners and weavers, generating a four hundred percent profit, an estimated seven hundred thousand people in France were dependent in some way on the cotton industry.¹⁹⁹ The South, furthermore, served as one of the world’s larger markets for European manufactured goods, especially luxury items.²⁰⁰ T. Butler King remarked to Lord John Russell that southern “consumption of manufactured merchandise is probably three times as great as any other agricultural people, of equal number, and will be

¹⁹⁴ Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 11.

¹⁹⁵ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 11. Letter from T. Butler King to Lord Russell, dated May 1861.

¹⁹⁶ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 7.

¹⁹⁷ David H. Pinkney, “France and the Civil War,” in *Heard Round the World: The Impact Abroad of the Civil War*, ed. Harold Hyman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1969), 121.

¹⁹⁸ Thomas A. Sancton, “The Myth of French Worker Support for the North in the American Civil War,” *French Historical Studies*, 11 (Spring 1979): 58. available from GALILEO [www.galileo.peachnet.edu/]: Academic Search Premier; Internet; accessed 14 January 2006.

¹⁹⁹ Case, *The United States and France*, 128.

²⁰⁰ Charles M. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998), xv.

augmented as their exports increase.”²⁰¹ For France, the promise of an increase in southern consumption was not a comment that could be disregarded, for the United States had been France’s second largest foreign consumer of French silk, constituting nearly a third of France’s sales to the United States.²⁰² Overall, France was loathe to lose the American market, which accounted for ten percent—three hundred and sixty-seven million francs—of France’s total international trade.²⁰³

While Britain depended on the northern states for foodstuffs, it also had its reservations about the United States, especially concerning maritime interests. For some time prior to the outbreak of war, Britain’s commercial interests had been declining in the wake of the American shipbuilding business. Beginning in 1815, northern shipbuilding skills became renowned as they turned out models that surpassed all others in speed, strength, and durability. New England produced the most skilled artisans, drawing many shipwrights from northern Europe to America.²⁰⁴ As industry grew, so did the passenger and cargo business. By 1860, the total tonnage carried on American vessels equaled that of Britain, while Britain saw its tonnage continually declining.²⁰⁵ Britain thus, as the primary maritime power, had reason to worry about supporting a power that could potentially overshadow its maritime dominance. T. Butler King, however, noted to Lord Russell that “the shipping interest of the Northern States has been built up on the agricultural products of the Southern States, protected as it has been by the tonnage duties on foreign shipping,” but now that the South had seceded, Britain could regain its

²⁰¹ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 13. Letter from T. Butler King to Lord Russell, dated May 1861.

²⁰² Pinkney, “France and the Civil War,” 121.

²⁰³ Sancton, “The Myth of French Worker Support,” 59.

²⁰⁴ Harold Underwood Faulkner, *American Economic History*, revised ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931), 280.

²⁰⁵ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 74.

shipping business if the South could maintain its independence. This seemed to make a compelling case for Britain to recognize the Confederate States of America.²⁰⁶

In addition to international trade issues, Europeans also had concerns about their investments in the United States. Since the 1840s Britain had invested heavily in the northern states, but largely avoided investing in the southern states. After the Panic of 1837, nine states had defaulted on their loans, three of which—Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi — repudiated their debts altogether.²⁰⁷ The repudiated debts of the three southern states combined, amounted to eleven and a half million dollars, most of it owed to British investors. The perceived southern propensity for repudiation caused British investors to avoid taking further financial risks in the South.²⁰⁸

Europeans had little faith that the establishment of a new nation would change southern patterns of repudiation and the Confederate States of America's choice for president seemed to justify this position. In 1849, the future president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, had published two public letters in the London *Times* in which he defended his state's repudiation of its debts. Davis, referred to by European capitalists as 'the Champion of Repudiation,' would tarnish the Confederacy's financial image from the outset. Auguste Belmont, the American agent for the Rothschild banking house, wrote the Rothschilds in 1861, "Who will take a dollar of a Confederacy of states of which 4 have already repudiated their debt...unless it be

²⁰⁶ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 10. Letter from T. Butler King to Lord Russell, dated May 1861.

²⁰⁷ Jay Sexton, *Debtor Diplomacy: Finance and American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era 1837-1873* (Oxford, England: Clarendon, 2005), 72.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

that the name of Jefferson Davis, notwithstanding his advocacy of repudiation in his own State of Mississippi, should have a sweeter sound to European capitalists than I think.”²⁰⁹

European investors also preferred the northern method of financing internal improvements with the proceeds of bond issues. The southern states, in contrast, used the proceeds of its bond sales to finance non-secure banking institutions backed by the state. Southern dependence on a slave institution further influenced the decision of European capitalists, who believed that slavery inhibited the diversification and growth of the southern economy. Mono-crop economies, such as that of the South, were not attractive to investors because one or two bad harvests could ruin an investment or one or two bumper crops could depress the price of the commodity.²¹⁰

British bondholders therefore invested primarily in the northern states. They held between fifty and sixty million pound sterling by 1854 in publicly issued American securities, five million pound sterling more than British holdings in French, Russian, Belgian, and Dutch government bonds.”²¹¹ The North, thus, had a lot to lose if Great Britain decided to side with the newly-formed Confederacy. Jay Sexton had determined that “the creditor-debtor relationship of Britain and the United States bonded the two nations together and gave them the common interest of avoiding war.”²¹² Since Britain, between 1853 and 1869, controlled nearly half of the United States national debt, the two nations were highly dependent on each other financially.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Sexton, “Transatlantic Financiers and the Civil War,” *American Nineteenth Century History*, 2 (Autumn 2001): 33. available from GALILEO [www.galileo.peachnet.edu/]; Academic Search Premier; Internet; accessed 23 October 2005.

²¹⁰ Sexton, *Debtor Diplomacy*, 70.

²¹¹ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 5-6.

²¹² Sexton, *Debtor Diplomacy*, 7.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

Ideological ties, in addition to diplomatic and economic concerns, also divided Europeans between the North and South. Democratic governance was an important factor in determining European sympathies. America's democratic structure was, for many individuals, an ideological beacon. British reformers, disillusioned by continuing aristocratic corruption, hoped to incorporate more democratic reforms, using the success of the United States as their example. French reformers, displaced since Napoleon III's *coup d'etat* on 2 December 1851, also looked to the United States for inspiration. The reformers, weary of Napoleon's adventurism in Italy and the Crimean War as well as his authoritarian agenda, sought to initiate reform that would once again give them a voice in their government.²¹⁴ Although Napoleon III pursued a more liberal agenda after 1860, incorporating a variety of the wanted reforms, he continued to maintain his authoritarian control over France to the detriment of the liberal opposition. The United States thus remained an important symbol of French democratic goals. As such, the news of the South's secession came as a shock. Paul Pecquet du Bellet, a southerner living in Paris during the war, wrote that the "news of the American rupture produced a profound sensation in Europe," astounding the Red Republican Party in France, which was accustomed "to look to the political institutions of the United States as the only true model of Government perfection."²¹⁵ For the United States to remain a model of republican perfection, the Union had to regain the lost states and, therefore, throughout the war, the French liberal opposition supported the Union.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 14-15.

²¹⁵ Serge Gavronsky, *The French Liberal Opposition and the American Civil War* (New York: Humanities Press, Inc., 1968), 26-27. Paul Pecquet du Bellot was a Louisianan and southern defender who lived in Paris during the 1860s.

²¹⁶ W. Reed West, *Contemporary French Opinion on the American Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1924), 16.

The South, in contrast, appeared to many Europeans to be aggressive and highly authoritarian. First and foremost, Europeans in general did not accept the South's argument that it had the legal right to secede. Most Europeans believed sovereignty, without question, resided in the governing body. The illegality of secession, therefore, was taken almost for granted by the liberal journals."²¹⁷ Europeans perceived the South's secession from the Union as a demonstration of the region's aggressive nature and its inability to accept a presidential defeat.

Southerners, however, continued to concentrate their efforts on a combination of constitutional arguments to demonstrate the legality of secession.²¹⁸ The South claimed that since the original states had joined the United States voluntarily, they could withdraw voluntarily as well. The U.S. Constitution did not specify that a state could not withdraw from the Union. The North, therefore, was the aggressor, fighting a legally constituted government merely to retain its own power.²¹⁹ T. Butler King remarked to Lord John Russell that the "States created the Federal Government. It was not instituted to be their master, but merely their representative, clothed with certain specified powers, and charged with the performance of certain clearly defined duties." To further augment his point, King pointed out that when the thirteen colonies achieved independence from Britain, King George III acknowledged them as "free, sovereign, and independent States." It was not until the people of the individual states consented to such a Union that the states became joined. "It was simply an act of the people of the State, which at that time they held, and have so held ever since, that they had the right, by the same process at

²¹⁷ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁸ Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, xv.

²¹⁹ Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War*, intro. Samuel Eliot Morison (Boston.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 60.

any time to repeal or rescind.” Since the North had violated its legal and moral obligations to the South, the people of the South had a right to secede.²²⁰ In a letter to Edouard Thouvenel, French minister of foreign affairs, King further developed his argument, concluding that “the war which the government at Washington is now waging against them is intended to be a war of conquest and subjugation.”²²¹ These arguments, gradually, caused Europeans to perceive that southerners were the true victims, not the aggressors that they were made out to be at the outset of the secession crisis. John E. Cairnes reflected in 1863 that the Civil War was described as “having sprung from narrow and selfish views of sectional interests (in which, however, the claims of the South were coincident with justice and sound policy).” Considering that Abraham Lincoln had stated in his inaugural speech that he would not interfere with the institution of slavery in the South, views such as Cairnes’s, appeared to be sound.²²² The British in return advised the wayward combatants to “either return to their political partnership, or agree to separate and learn to live in harmony as independent allies.”²²³ Europeans, preferring peace rather than war, thus began to reconsider their earlier preconceptions despite the fact that the southern government represented a slave power.

British and French aristocrats, unlike their liberal counterparts, shared a slightly different ideological view of their American cousins. Where the reformers saw hope, aristocrats saw a nation ruled by mobs, especially in the northern states. American

²²⁰ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 7-8. Letter from T. Butler King to Lord Russell, dated May 1861.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²²² Lincoln’s statement in his inaugural address and its effect on European sympathies will be further examined later in the chapter.

²²³ John E. Cairnes, *The Slave Power: Its Character, Career & Probable Designs Being an Attempt to Explain the Real Issues Involved in the American Contest*, 2nd ed. (London & Cambridge: Macmillan & Company, 1863; reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1968), 3.

democracy appeared “crude at the surface, rotten at the core.”²²⁴ The South, while viewed by many as a backward area controlled by poor whites, who were “the most degraded, ignorant, brutal, drunken, and violent class that ever swarmed in a civilized country,” at least appeared to operate in a more hierarchical and authoritarian manner as a result of the slave system by which southern society was ordered into masters and slaves.²²⁵ British lords, under political attack from reformers at home, generally sympathized with their aristocratic, albeit backward, cousins. As a British pamphleteer wrote:

It is to this forecast of the possible uprising of the popular political influence in the State, here at home, that we must ascribe the habitual abuse of the Americans of the North, and apologies for those of the South—the one section being simply Democratic Republics, the other governed by their slave-holding oligarchies! Our lords don’t fear the latter, but do hate and fear the former.²²⁶

This fear of Democratic Republicans would prove to be an asset in the South’s quest for European recognition.

Similar ideological concerns motivated the French. Unlike Britain, France had suffered from political instability since 1815. Since the French Revolution, France had overthrown two monarchies and established a Republic, which Napoleon III had overthrown. Throughout this volatile history, a number of oppositionist groups had formed, consistently threatening the power of those governing. Although France operated under a façade of democracy, democratic government as practiced in the United States was anathema because it threatened Napoleon’s rule.

French leaders also felt culturally tied to the state of Louisiana. Just as the British viewed the thirteen eastern American states as its cousins, France continued to view the

²²⁴ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 71.

²²⁵ Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe*, 11.

²²⁶ Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War*, 69.

people of New Orleans as its relatives.²²⁷ When Louisiana seceded, it was easy for some in France to sympathize with the southern movement since in Louisiana “our language is spoken, our religion is followed, our tastes are the same, our ideas, our customs...they are our brothers.”²²⁸ T. Butler King wrote to Comte Charles Auguste Louis Joseph de Morny, French minister of commerce, that “there is a very strong feeling of sympathy throughout the Southern States for France,” pointing out that Louisiana “was for many years a French colony” and that “in South Carolina the French element is strong.”²²⁹ Southerners in France seeking French support emphasized this “unbridgeable gulf” that separated the “agrarian, latin, aristocratic South from the industrial, Protestant, democratic North.” By stressing the South’s latin origins, the North was likened to the Anglo-Saxon race, the arch-enemy of the Frenchman, and the South to the Gallo-Roman races; although in reality, such a comparison only applied to the state of Louisiana.²³⁰

While the European powers found themselves bound to the United States culturally, if to different regions and to different degrees, through common origins, the morality of slavery distanced them from the South. Frenchmen, almost without exception, believed slavery to be an abhorrence. France had abolished slavery in its colonies in 1848 and took great pride in that accomplishment.²³¹ When the southern states seceded, liberal Frenchmen, defended the Union and its form of democracy and

²²⁷ Ibid., 219.

²²⁸ Gavronsky, *The French Liberal Opposition*, 78.

²²⁹ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 14. Letter from T. Butler King to Comte de Morny, dated 7 May 1861. Although King emphasized the French element in South Carolina as a southern tie to France, most Frenchmen and southern Huguenots would have disagreed.

²³⁰ Ibid., 77.

²³¹ West, *Contemporary French Opinion*, 9. For more information on the French abolition movement see Francis Démier’s “Slavery, Colonial Economy and French Development Choices during the First Industrialization (1802-1840) and Philippe Vigier’s “The Reconstruction of the French Abolitionist Movement under the July Monarchy” in Marcel Dorigny, ed., *The Abolitions of Slavery: From Léger Félicité Sonthonax to Victor Schoelcher, 1793, 1794, 1848* (New York: Berghahn Books; Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2003), 237-247, 248-253.

condemned secession as the design of a few leading Southerners hoping to expand their slave-holdings. The French liberals believed that southerners since the time of John C. Calhoun and the nullification crisis of 1832 had worked to destroy the Union in a criminal conspiracy. They claimed that Jefferson Davis had criminally diverted military equipment to the South during his term in the U.S. Senate and that the ministers of war, navy, and finance in the Buchanan administration had belonged to a secret southern conspiracy society. Only through such conspiratorial methods, liberal Frenchmen believed, could the Confederacy achieve such considerable success in such a short period of time.²³²

Britain had abolished slavery in 1833 and also frowned on southern attempts to maintain the institution.²³³ Since the 1820 Missouri Compromise, the British generally believed that northern abolitionists had offered so many concessions to the South that their actions verged on the point of “shameful surrender.” Many in Britain, therefore, came to believe that the conflict was caused by southern intransigence.²³⁴ In an effort to distance itself from the uncompromising and politically aggressive South, Britain took a number of steps during the first half of the nineteenth century to free itself from “the American shackles,” by attempting to create rival cotton sources in India, Egypt, and several other British colonies. After twenty years of study and efforts, however, the results were slight, prompting T. Butler King to remark to Lord John Russell that the “cotton growers of the Southern States do not regard with the slightest anxiety or jealousy the efforts that are being made to produce cotton in Asia, Africa, Australia and South

²³² Gavronsky, *The French Liberal Opposition*, 75.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 41.

²³⁴ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 38.

America.”²³⁵ King’s remark was fairly accurate for in India, Britain was only able to obtain ten million more pounds than it had received in 1800.²³⁶ India had only produced sixty million pounds of cotton in 1860, whereas Georgia alone produced over two hundred and eighty million pounds in the same year.²³⁷ In 1861, Britain thus found itself still economically dependent on the southern cotton and the evil institution that produced it.

In light of Britain’s disappointment in India and its other colonies to develop an alternative source of cotton, Englishmen generally welcomed the news of Abraham Lincoln’s election, for they believed that Lincoln, as an anti-slavery candidate, would finally abolish slavery in America. When the South threatened secession in response to Lincoln’s election, many in Europe considered the grievances to be no more than a renewal of the bluster of the past and that the two regions would once again find a compromise.²³⁸ Once the South actually seceded, however, Britain, along with France and other continental powers, found itself in a difficult position. Prior to secession, Europeans had consistently and fervently espoused abolitionist ideals. However, secession portended war, the interruption of trade, and the creation of new maritime standards in time of war, which could potentially limit steps Europeans could take in

²³⁵ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 12. Letter from T. Butler King to Lord Russell, dated May 1861.

²³⁶ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), 3-4.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4-5 and Joseph C.G. Kennedy, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior*, vol. 2, Series 17 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 27.

²³⁸ Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War*, 4-6.

future conflicts.²³⁹ Manufacturers, agents, merchants, and governmental leaders in Britain, while generally opposed to slavery, believed that an interruption in the American cotton supply would “destroy England’s chief industry, starve the operatives, and bring ruin and revolution upon the land.”²⁴⁰ Lincoln’s actions did not ease the moral dilemma. In his inaugural speech, he clearly stated that he had absolutely “no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists.”²⁴¹ Lincoln, therefore, by agreeing not to interfere with slavery, implied to many Europeans that the war was as the South contended—a war over economic and political ideals, not slavery.

Some European abolitionists had hoped for the division of the Union long before the conflict. The British Garrisonian abolitionists had called for such a breach for more than twenty years, believing that the secession of the non-slaveholding states from the Union was the best assurance of emancipation.²⁴² The Garrisonians had come to believe that the United States’s “course had been so triumphant, so unparalleled, so free from difficulties, so unchecked by disaster or reverse, that the national sense and the national morality had both suffered in the process.”²⁴³ With the Union divided, slavery would be confined to a narrow region, morality would once again return, and the selfishness and the excess of power of the United States would be curtailed. The South would also “be released from the harassing contest it has hitherto had to maintain with the North” and

²³⁹ The new maritime standards refer to the debate surrounding the North’s decision to enforce a blockade of the South before they could make it effective. The following chapter will explore the issues of the blockade more fully.

²⁴⁰ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 12.

²⁴¹ James Morton Callahan, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy* (n.p., 1901; reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1964), 82.

²⁴² R. J. M. Blackett, *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 17.

²⁴³ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 185.

“brought into direct contact with the public opinion of Europe, upon whom it must rely for its manufactures, education and literature.”²⁴⁴ Southern independence would force the region to change its slave system to maintain its economic prosperity within the brotherhood of nations.

Many Europeans also recognized that the South was not the only culprit in America’s slave system. Although America had abolished the slave trade in 1808, northern shipping agents facilitated a thriving slave trade between Cuba and America during the 1850s. Northern agents financed the slave trade, carried the slaves on American ships manned primarily by northern seaman and protected by the American flag.²⁴⁵ The British consul in New York estimated that of the one hundred and seventy slave-trading expeditions that were outfitted between 1857 and 1861, one hundred and seventeen most likely sailed from American ports and at least seventy-four sailed from New York.²⁴⁶

Additional factors influenced Europeans as well in their sympathies. Although there were a variety of statistics to support the potential victory of both sides, geography, war aims, and leadership tended to favor the South. The South had the advantage of interior lines of defense, a wide geographic border, and its war aim of self-existence was defensive.²⁴⁷ While the North had the advantage of industrial self-sufficiency and an established government, history provided few examples of situations in which the aggressor power overcame such difficulties as the South’s geography presented, the most

²⁴⁴ Alfred Grant, *The American Civil War and the British Press* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc. Publishers, 2000), 16.

²⁴⁵ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 75.

²⁴⁶ Duncan Andrew Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.; Rochester, NY: Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press, 2003), 21.

²⁴⁷ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 25-26.

recent example being Napoleon's attempted invasion of Russia in 1812.²⁴⁸ The French, and many other Europeans as well, did not believe that the Union had any great men to sustain the Union politically through the ordeal. In December 1860, the Parisian paper, the *Constitutionnel*, remarked that the "American Union would need, in such a peril, a superior man, whose respected voice, dominating the tumult, would address to patriotism a solemn appeal, and would rally the spirits under the old federal banner."²⁴⁹ Although Europeans perceived Lincoln to be an upright man and a great orator, he had not yet established his credentials as a great statesman, and so Europeans did not think him capable of such a great task as holding the Union together. The fact that Jefferson Davis had been a U.S. senator and cabinet member indicated to many in Europe that Davis was more fit for executive duties than Lincoln, regardless of his belief in repudiation. This belief, however, did not extend to other southern leaders, for Robert Bunch, the British consul in Charleston, South Carolina, remarked that President Jefferson Davis was the only competent man in the South. Despite European feelings towards the South's political leaders, Europeans generally considered the South's military leaders to be superior to those of the North.²⁵⁰ The Parisian *Moniteur Universel* observed that General Winfield Scott was the only general of note in the North, but late in years. The South, in contrast, had the likes of P.G.T. Beauregard and Robert E. Lee. The paper remarked, however, that while Europe considered the South to have the better leaders, the

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 25-26.

²⁴⁹ West, *Contemporary French Opinion*, 35.

²⁵⁰ Ephraim Douglass Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (New York: Russell and Russell Inc., [1924]), 59 and 81.

leaders must prove themselves, for “only prolonged battle can produce soldiers really worthy of that name.”²⁵¹

Initially, the United States carried out policies that injured its cause among Europeans. In March 1861, with the seven states of the deep south absent, the U.S. Congress passed the Morrill Tariff, which established the highest tariff rates yet to be enacted by the United States. The tariff raised import duties twenty-four to thirty percent. Britain and France, both dependent on American imports, resented this action. The *Journal des Débats*, a pro-northern Orleanist paper, bemoaned that “hardly had the first threatening symptoms broken out, than from one end of the republic to the other there was raised the cry ‘To the tariffs!’”²⁵² France’s economy was especially hurt by the tariff because it raised the rate on high-grade silk from nineteen percent to thirty percent. The tariff also raised the duty on wine from thirty to forty percent, and the duty on brandies was more than doubled from thirty percent to the set rate of one dollar per gallon.²⁵³

The South, quickly recognizing the advantage, appealed to Europeans desires and endorsed the idea of free trade. Prior to secession, Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina advocated southern free trade to Robert Bunch. Not only would free trade benefit the European powers and the South economically, free trade would also require the establishment of steamship lines which Britain would have to protect. The establishment of such lines would thus provide a plausible argument for Britain to intervene against northern attempts to regulate Confederate commerce.²⁵⁴ At the Montgomery Convention, Rhett sought to establish a commercial alliance with the

²⁵¹ *Le Moniteur Universal* (Paris), 24 May 1861.

²⁵² West, *Contemporary French Opinion*, 32.

²⁵³ Pinkney, “France and the Civil War,” 123.

²⁵⁴ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 20.

European powers in which the powers would enter into “reciprocal obligations offensive and defensive for twenty years or more,” in return for a promise that the South would “permit European parties to the treaty to enjoy the privileges of the coasting trade free” and that an import duty would not be imposed higher than twenty percent *ad valorem*. Even at twenty percent, it would be the lowest rate since the opening decades of the nineteenth century.²⁵⁵ The Confederate Commissioners William Yancey, Pierre Rost, and Dudley Mann, actually left for Europe with instructions to seek such an alliance.²⁵⁶ Jefferson Davis, in his inaugural address on 18 February 1861, stated that it “is alike our interest and that of all those to whom we would sell, and from whom we would buy, that there should be the fewest practicable restrictions upon the interchange of these commodities.”²⁵⁷

Unfortunately for the South, the Montgomery Convention failed to deliver the promises of free trade. Southern leaders disagreed on both the rates and the type of tax to impose in the absence of a tariff. A movement existed among southern leaders to use an export tax on cotton to raise government funds. Feelings concerning the imposition of an export duty were diverse. The *Macon Daily Telegraph* argued on 26 February 1861 that a duty must be imposed, whether it be on imports or exports, but that the export duty would be cheaper for the consumer and therefore encourage foreign trade.²⁵⁸ Gazaway Lamar of the Bank of the Republic wrote that same month to Howell Cobb that rather than an export duty, he preferred a tax on income and a direct taxation on the Georgia

²⁵⁵ Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers*, 22-23.

²⁵⁶ Callahan, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy*, 81.

²⁵⁷ James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, Including the Diplomatic Correspondence 1861-1865*, vol. I (Nashville: United States Publishing Company, 1904), 33-34.

²⁵⁸ *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 26 February 1861.

principal, the capital sum of cotton placed at interest.²⁵⁹ In later correspondence with Cobb, however, Lamar admitted that, while an export duty of ten percent was more desirable than a tariff, free trade was the best of choices for it would attract the European powers to the Confederate cause rather than to that of the North.²⁶⁰ Lamar believed that “whilst the South can rule Europe and New England by cotton, she can by free trade explode all the power of the rest of the Union.”²⁶¹ Regardless of the person’s view, Europe and the desire to attract foreign trade were always at the forefront of the discussion, for southern leaders, while recognizing the need for a tax on either exports or imports, also recognized the advantages free trade would offer with Europe.

In February 1861, the Montgomery Convention adopted as a compromise measure the 1857 tariff, which was the lowest tariff enacted by the United States since the passage of the “Tariff of Abominations” in 1828.²⁶² As the *London Times* observed, “both sides, agreeing on nothing else, are quite unanimous on two things; first, the avoidance of direct taxes on themselves, and secondly, the desire to fix upon England the expenses of their inglorious and unnatural combat.”²⁶³ T. Butler King, however, considered the adoption of the 1857 tariff to be a favorable action. Writing to the Comte de Morny, French minister of commerce, King observed that the low tariff, as well as the repealing of tonnage duties and the opening of the coasting trade to foreign vessels, contrasts “very strongly in favor of the Southern ports, when compared with the high

²⁵⁹ Ulrich B. Phillips, ed., *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1911*, vol. II: The Correspondence of Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens, and Howell Cobb (Washington, DC: n.p., 1913), 539.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 545.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 552.

²⁶² *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 1 March 1861. The 1857 tariff based duties on an ad valorem system as did its 1846 predecessor, but with an enlarged free list and a five percent rate reduction. For more information on the tariff policy of the United States prior to the Civil War see Faulkner, *American Economic History*, 235-238.

²⁶³ Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 81.

protective tariff of the Northern States, intended to exclude the importation of foreign merchandise.”²⁶⁴ Furthermore, King estimated that exports of the Confederate States would amount to nearly three hundred million dollars annually. This was, in King’s opinion, an opportunity that Europe could not afford to ignore. The only thing the South asked in return was formal recognition.²⁶⁵ This prospect of free trade with the South and the wealth that would inevitably follow, prompted European leaders to consider recognition.

British and French political leaders also reconsidered their early support of the North as a result of several actions taken by William Seward at the outset of the war. William Seward, Lincoln’s secretary of state, had a long record of anti-British sentiment and speech, building his career by twisting the lion’s tail to gain support from his New York Irish constituents.²⁶⁶ Lord Lyons wrote to Lord Russell in February 1861 that “some of the leaders of the Party which is about to come into power, are on the look-out for a foreign dispute, in the hope that they should thus be able to divert the public mind from home quarrels, and to re-kindle the fire of patriotism both in the North and in the South.”²⁶⁷ At a dinner given in March by Lord Lyons for Seward and a number of other foreign ministers, Lyons noted further provocative talk by Seward, who threatened to seize “any and all ships that tried to trade with the South, even if there was no blockade.”²⁶⁸ While the Democratic Party had espoused anti-British sentiment as well over the decades, the fact remained that the newly formed Republican Party lacked a

²⁶⁴ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 14. Letter from T. Butler King to Comte de Morny, dated 7 May 1861.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Frank J. Merli, *Great Britain and the Confederate Navy, 1861-1865* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 26.

²⁶⁷ Bourne, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, vol. 5, 182.

²⁶⁸ Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, 65.

tested policy, its leader, Lincoln, was an unknown, and its most vocal statesman, Seward, appeared insolent and discourteous.²⁶⁹

It was in the midst of deciding these European arguments that King, the first of the Southern envoys to reach Europe, arrived in Britain. Despite reservations, King generally perceived the British to be leaning towards Confederate recognition. Initially, King found the British to be quite interested in the prospect of free trade with the Confederacy and in the fragmentation of a growing rival. Shortly after his arrival, he wrote his son Lordy that the British “express the greatest anxiety on the subject of our national affairs” and that if “war can be avoided they will rejoice at the disruption of the Union...because their desire for free trade will be encouraged and their great rivals in commerce and manufacture will receive a serious check if not a total overthrow.” King further remarked on the British views of the U.S. leadership in Washington, noting that while the movements of the Confederate government in Montgomery were applauded by the British, “the evident vacillation and want of statesmanship at Washington is ridiculed.” King felt encouraged by the general sentiments he encountered in London, remarking that because of the South’s commercial relations with Britain and promise of free trade, he “could have the Government of the Confederate States acknowledged in ten days.”²⁷⁰

Since his mission lacked the diplomatic authority to speak on behalf of the Confederacy and Georgia’s entrance into the Confederate States of America negated his instruction to have the state of Georgia recognized, King soon left for the continent to pursue his varied commercial commissions for the state and for the Macon and

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 39.

²⁷⁰ Letter of T. Butler King to H. Lord King, 25 March 1861, in the T. Butler King Papers.

Brunswick Railroad.²⁷¹ In Paris, King established contact with the banking house of Bellot des Minières, Frères et Compagnie to seek funds for his negotiations in Belgium and for the Macon and Brunswick Railroad.²⁷² The head of the company was Ernest Bellot des Minières, a major player in the various direct trade ventures of the 1850s and 1860s. He had been involved in the Norfolk and Saint-Nazaire Navigation Company (a venture underwritten by the state of Virginia and composed equally of American and French partners) as well as the James River and Kanawha Company.²⁷³ Minières also played a role in the formation of the Southern Pacific Railroad, which, after the South's secession, allowed him to "to hold a mirror to the eyes of European cotton manufacturers the mirage of 'white gold.'" On 20 March 1861 the Virginia legislature, because of his position in the Southern Pacific Railroad, appointed Minières Vice-President of the American Agency in an effort to centralize the actions of the various railroad companies within the South and direct their efforts in Europe. Minières' connections as vice-president of the Alabama Direct Trading Company and the Georgia Direct Trading and Navigation Company led him to later affirm that not a single bale of cotton could arrive on the European continent without it passing through his hands.²⁷⁴

Existing documents do not indicate whether Minières and King had met prior to 1861 through the Southern Pacific Railroad Company or whether the Macon and Brunswick Railroad Board of Directors directed King to Minières. Regardless, King's contact with Minières would prove to be instrumental to his mission. While Minières's banking house assured King that it would "make very likely your Railroad, and take care

²⁷¹ Edward M. Steel, Jr., *T. Butler King of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 146.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁷³ Francis Balace, *La Belgique et la Guerre de Sécession 1861-1865 Etude Diplomatique Tome I* (Paris: Societé d'Édition; Les Belles Lettres, 1979), 75-76.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 75-77.

of Brunswick,” it did not commit to King’s Macon and Brunswick Railroad scheme.²⁷⁵

Minières, however, did provide King with letters of introduction to personages in the highest governmental circles in Belgium, including the Duke of Brabant. Along with these contacts, Minières provided King with advice on how to proceed in Belgium:

“Speak as much and as often as you can do it, with the Duque of Brabant, M. Malon and M. Poncelet, about the S. Pacific R.R. the Canal, the South, the Southern Railroads, the honesty of the South, and so forth.”²⁷⁶ Even though King failed obtain financial support for his railroad, he moved to address his commission’s primary objective—to secure a line of steamers from Belgium to Savannah—and so departed for Belgium.²⁷⁷

Belgium’s interest in the American conflict was primarily commercial. Although heavily dependent on cotton for its textile industry, Belgium remained hesitant to betray the nation that “their constitution, their religious toleration, and their communal and provincial centralization” had copied.²⁷⁸ When King arrived, however, he found the Belgians to have a “most friendly sentiment towards our country, which I believe to be general in Belgium, and an ardent desire for the speedy establishment of the independence of the Southern Confederacy.”²⁷⁹ Friendly sentiments, however, could not make up for King’s disappointment in finding that the Belgian-American Company with which he had come to negotiate was not all that it had claimed to be.

The Belgian-American Company, on which the hopes of Georgia rested, in actuality lacked the capital necessary to organize and maintain a maritime line as desired

²⁷⁵ Letter of E. de Bellot Minières to T. Butler King, 16 April 1861, *Calhoun 1862 Prize Case* (Case 1862), National Archives and Records Administration, Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 146.

²⁷⁸ Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War*, 198.

²⁷⁹ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 5. Report of Mr. King to the Governor.

by Georgia. Uncertain reports from the Cotton Planter's Fair in Macon, Georgia further prevented the Belgian industrialists from launching the line. For King, who had remained optimistic about the enterprise, this was a great disappointment.²⁸⁰ In his report to the Georgia legislature, King stated that the Belgians had "but little practical knowledge of, or experience in ocean navigation, and especially the management of steamships" for they were "a manufacturing, not a commercial people."²⁸¹

While in Belgium, King made contact with several influential southern agents, the most influential of which was General Elisha Y. Fair, the outgoing United States minister to Belgium. Although personally against secession, Fair, a native of Alabama, resigned after his state's secession, but remained at his post until his successor, Henry S. Sanford, arrived. According to Lord Howard of Walden, Fair declined an offer by Jefferson Davis to continue as the minister to Belgium for the Confederacy. However, no record of this offer exists in the Confederate archives. Fair, if Lord Howard's recollection is correct, likely realized the untenable position in which he would be placed if he accepted the post that he had served in for three years as the minister for the United States. Regardless of his official affiliation, Fair had been a consistent promoter of direct trade between Belgium and the American South. During King's stay in Brussels, Fair supported King's efforts to establish direct trade and to secure arms, and even directed King to the arms manufacturers at Liege.²⁸² Similarly to King's experience with his other goals, his attempt to purchase fifty thousand rifles in Liege failed because the manufacturers were

²⁸⁰ Balace, *La Belgique*, 73-74.

²⁸¹ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 5. Report of Mr. King to the Governor.

²⁸² In the wake of the Cotton Planter's Fair in Macon, Georgia, knowledge of the weapon manufacturing capabilities in Belgium was likely well-known to King and King might even have been instructed to approach Belgium first. The *Macon Daily Telegraph* on 1 February 1861 reported that the Belgian and American Company agent, Guillaume Eyrond, had brought with him "some of the most superior fire arms I have ever seen, as samples," and that the agent had been in close conference with Governor Brown the entire day.

overwhelmed with orders. In May, Fair, who had recently left Brussels to return to the Confederacy, reported that the Liege manufacturers were backordered and delivering mediocre weapons to Major Caleb Huse in London, who had been sent to Europe by the Confederate Army to obtain weapons.²⁸³

King also encountered J.M. Vernon, who had been sent to Europe in June 1860 to establish a shipping line. Vernon, like King, had gone to Brussels to accomplish his task. At the start of hostilities, Vernon, his financial situation having become precarious, contacted King and requested assistance. Vernon called for King's assistance in the matter to avoid borrowing from his Belgian friends at the risk of "destroying the future of the cause."²⁸⁴ Whether or not King granted his request is unknown.

King may also well have met a number of Belgium's more prominent statesmen. Several northern newspapers during the time King was in Belgium reported that King had met with King Leopold II, although surviving documents do not support such an occurrence. It can be assumed, however, that considering King's political background and Minières letter of introduction, that King had contact with members of the higher political circles, such as the Duke de Brabant.²⁸⁵

King did not meet his specified goals in Belgium, but he did make some progress. First, through Minières, King gained access to Belgian and French governmental circles, which provided him with a network in which to operate after the European powers declared neutrality. Second, King's efforts allowed the direct trade movement in Belgium to continue for several more decades. King noted that while the Belgians had little experience or knowledge in ocean navigation, they were a great manufacturing

²⁸³ Balace, *La Belgique*, 79-82.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 74. The report of King's audience with the King later proved to be only a rumor.

people and so deemed the effort to establish direct trade between the two nations a worthy one; thus encouraging future negotiations.²⁸⁶ The Confederacy directed Dudley Mann of the Yancey, Rost, and Mann mission to reopen the negotiations started by King in Belgium. Mann, however, for reasons unknown, never acted on the matter.²⁸⁷ In April 1863 Brown, hoping to expand on the modest results of King's mission, would again appoint a commissioner, C.G. Baylor, to Europe to promote direct trade. Unfortunately for Georgia, Baylor instead went to New York and rejoined the Union cause.²⁸⁸ Although King was not immediately successful in establishing direct trade with the southern confederacy, his hopes finally came to fruition a decade later, a result that could not have been accomplished without his efforts.²⁸⁹ Finally, King, as the first Southern envoy to Belgium, was the first to initiate Belgian-Confederate relations—a relationship that the Confederacy would hold dear. The Belgian attempt to establish direct trade within the South led the Confederacy to perceive Belgium as a nation favorable to the South's cause.²⁹⁰

King's modest success in Belgium no doubt resulted from European sympathies for the South early in the conflict. The commercial question was the largest determinant for the European powers, but was not the only element. The powers would have to weigh the many diplomatic, economic, and ideological aspects—considerations that were both complex and interdependent. There were factors clearly in the South's favor, and these allowed King to achieve some success. The dangers of democracy, especially democracy as espoused by the North, and the value of southern trade caused a number of influential

²⁸⁶ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 5. Report of Mr. King to the Governor.

²⁸⁷ Balace, *La Belgique*, 104.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 592 and 61.

European leaders, such as Minières and the Duke de Brabant, to sympathize with the South. Sympathy, however, did not necessarily gain tangible support. While Minières provided King with letters of reference, he refrained from committing to an investment in King's railroad. Minières, unsure of how the conflict in America would be resolved, was hesitant to risk an action that could attach his banking house to a losing position.

Although many aspects of secession divided Europeans, all of them wanted the conflict be solved peacefully. The news that arrived at the end of April of the attack on Fort Sumter and subsequent mobilization orders from both the Confederacy and the Union dashed that hope. Until April 1861, Europeans thought of secession and hostilities in the abstract. There was no real need for hasty or even concrete action. The onset of war meant that they could no longer afford to wait and see. Europe's reaction would determine the course and outcome of King's mission, perhaps even the outcome of the war.

CHAPTER 4

“I KNOW...HE HAS DONE MORE THAN ALL THE REST HERE FOR OUR CAUSE”²⁹¹

News of the South’s firing on Fort Sumter spurred European leaders to determine a clear policy on the American crisis; the time for uncertainty and division had ended. On 19 April 1861, four days after the firing on Fort Sumter, President Abraham Lincoln, despite the lack of ships available for use, announced a blockade of the southern coastline, inadvertently internationalizing the war. European nations would have to decide whether to recognize or reject the blockade, but the issues surrounding it prevented such an easy decision. The blockade raised numerous controversies, which if acted upon too hastily, could potentially bring the European nations into the conflict. European leaders also realized that the Confederacy would soon seek recognition and aid—both financial and military. T. Butler King, in Belgium when news of Fort Sumter arrived, found the political climate in Europe radically changed as the European nations reacted and rushed to set a position that would best serve their interests.

The European powers first had to decide whether to formally recognize the Confederacy or to merely grant it belligerent rights. The Union blockade initially became the primary factor in Britain and France’s decision. In recent years, Britain and many other European nations had come to view all blockades as a “barbarism contrary to modern trends.”²⁹² Although Union leaders continued to argue that the Confederacy was merely in a state of insurrection, the declaration of the blockade, a recognized act of war,

²⁹¹ *Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 April 1862. Letter of W.T. Bisbie to T. Butler King, 13 September 1861.

²⁹² D.P. Crook, *The North, The South, and the Powers, 1861-1865* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1974), 48.

for all practical purposes, elevated the Confederacy to belligerent status.²⁹³ Belligerent status would allow neutral parties to enter blockaded waters with noncontraband goods and the Confederacy the right to send privateers with prizes into neutral ports.²⁹⁴

European governments, therefore, struggled between the Union's articulated position of the war as an internal affair and international precedents, which generally conferred belligerent rights to states in rebellion. Lord John Russell, the British foreign secretary, had written Lord Richard Lyons, the British minister to the United States, on 16 February about the possibility of a blockade, stating "above all things, endeavor to prevent a blockade of the Southern coast. It would produce misery, discord, and enmity incalculable."²⁹⁵

More importantly than commercial concerns, European leaders had to consider the political implications of either recognizing or rejecting the blockade. In 1856, at the Congress of Paris, representatives from seven European nations—Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Sardinia, and the Ottoman Empire— signed a pact declaring that:

I) Privateering is and remains abolished. II) The neutral flag covers enemies' goods with the exception of contraband of war. III) Neutral goods, with the exception of contraband of war are not liable to capture under the enemies' flag. IV) Blockades in order to be binding must be effective, that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ George M. Blackburn, *French Newspaper Opinion on the American Civil War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 35.

²⁹⁴ Howard Jones, *Union in Peril: The Crisis Over British Intervention in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 38-50.

²⁹⁵ Ephraim Douglass Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., [1924]), 58.

²⁹⁶ James Morton Callahan, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy* (n.p., 1901; reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1964), 118. List of signatory nations found in Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 77.

The blockade established by the Union would be the first test of this declaration, especially of the fourth article concerning the definition of effective.²⁹⁷ The United States had not been party to the conference, holding out for a fifth article that would protect all noncontraband private property at sea; it, therefore, was not bound by the Declaration of Paris.²⁹⁸ For Europeans to support either the Union or the Confederacy could thus jeopardize the principles set forth in the declaration and establish a dangerous precedent.

Britain, furthermore, thriving on free trade, feared the loss of its principle supply of cotton and thus had reason to break the blockade. At the same time, to break the blockade would run the risk of denying Britain the right to use its navy as a blockading power in the future, for Britain had blockaded ports for decades with fewer warships to the mile than the Union proposed.²⁹⁹ Although Britain generally considered blockades to be barbaric, the British Admiralty recognized that British naval interests lay in expanding the blockade practice. Acquiescence to the strong naval role feigned by the Union would have set convenient precedents for Britain, but at the cost of current principle and commerce.³⁰⁰ The question of the blockade's effectiveness thus became the main argument on which Britain and France would base their policies. Until the blockade's effectiveness could be ascertained, the European powers would have to refrain from making a hasty decision.

²⁹⁷ Case, *The United States and France*, 80.

²⁹⁸ Frank J. Merli, *Great Britain and the Confederate Navy, 1861-1865* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 45.

²⁹⁹ Alfred Grant, *The American Civil War and the British Press* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2000), 98.

³⁰⁰ Crook, *The North, The South, and the Powers*, 48.

Prior to the outbreak of war, French and British leaders had discussed possible options. The French had already approached the British on 30 March 1861 about the possibility of neutrality. Henri Mercier, the French minister to the United States, told Lord Lyons that, should war occur between the North and South, “the commercial interests of the European Powers would imperatively require that they should place themselves in the position of neutrals,” and recognize both regions as equals.³⁰¹

The outbreak of actual hostilities, however, caused the leaders of both nations to reassess the situation. Russell realized that before Britain could develop an American policy, it needed to decide “the character of the war,” whether the war “should be regarded as a war carried on between parties severally in a position to wage war,” and whether the parties had the ability “to claim the rights and to perform the obligations attaching to belligerents.” After much consideration and two informal meetings in early May with the three official Confederate representatives (William Yancey, Pierre Rost, and A. Dudley Mann), Russell determined that southern claims for recognition as a belligerent could not be questioned, and as such, the Confederacy should be “invested with all the rights and prerogatives of a belligerent.”³⁰² Britain, however, chose to withhold formal recognition until the Confederacy could prove itself capable of maintaining an independent government. The situation was still too precarious and contentious to formally recognize the Confederate States of America or to ally with the now-divided United States. In this climate, on 13 May 1861, Queen Victoria of Great Britain signed a proclamation of neutrality. The document reaffirmed southern

³⁰¹ Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Part I, Series C: North America, vol. 5: The Civil War Years, 1859-1861 (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, Inc., 1986), 189. Lord Lyons to Lord J. Russell, 30 March 1861.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 193. Lord J. Russell to Lord Lyons, 6 May 1861.

belligerency while restricting the actions southerners could take diplomatically and economically in Britain. Recognizing that “hostilities have unhappily commenced between the Government of the United States and certain states,” the proclamation charged and commanded “all Our loving subjects to observe a strict neutrality in and during the aforesaid hostilities.”³⁰³ The proclamation ultimately satisfied neither side. It fell short of southern hopes of official recognition and was perceived by the Union to have acknowledged Confederate belligerent status prematurely. Charles Francis Adams, the U.S. minister to Britain, had yet to reach London to explain his government’s views.

France, like Britain, reconsidered its position. In late March, Mercier and Lyons had agreed that the two powers, France and Britain, should act in concert and secure similar co-operation with the other great powers.³⁰⁴ On 11 May, Edouard Thouvenel, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, detailed France’s policy of neutrality to Mercier, noting that, since the South “has all the appearance of a *de facto* government...the government of the emperor can not consider the two contending parties in any other light than as two belligerents.”³⁰⁵ The following day, Thouvenel met with Henry Shelton Sanford, U.S. minister to Belgium, to elaborate upon this policy. At the meeting, Sanford countered that France had “only fifteen days since received news of the determination of the President to employ force” and that, as a friendly power, France should at least “wait the result of a trial of its strength and not precipitately to give a quasi-recognition to those seeking to overthrow the Government.”³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Ibid., 203. Inclosure, by the Queen, a proclamation.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 190. Lord Lyons to Lord J. Russell, 30 March 1861, received 16 April.

³⁰⁵ Case, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy*, 54.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 56. Sanford was in France acting as the U.S.’s temporary ambassador to France until a new ambassador could be sent to replace Charles J. Faulkner, who had resigned his post to join the Confederate cause.

Over the following weeks, Thouvenel worked on the declaration's wording, sending the draft to the other French ministers for their opinions. By this time, Thouvenel knew about northern resentment over the British proclamation and took steps to soften the document's impact. The official declaration of neutrality by France, signed by Napoleon III on 10 June 1861, contained similar wording to that of Britain's, but opened with the statement that France was to observe a "strict neutrality...between the government of the Union and the States which claim to form a separate confederation." This recognized the Confederacy as a belligerent power, but not yet as a separate government.³⁰⁷ Thouvenel attempted to assuage Union resentment by communicating to William Seward, U.S. secretary of state, that the issuance of the declaration was merely a procedure required by French law to inform the belligerent parties of their privileges.³⁰⁸ Like its British counterpart, however, the document made it difficult for King and other southern agents to operate within France.

In light of British and French declarations of neutrality, the outlook of T. Butler King's mission to Europe to secure lines of communication, arms, and financial investments in the Macon and Brunswick Railroad appeared bleak. Because his efforts in Belgium had failed to come to fruition, King turned to Britain and France, the only other nations with which King had been granted the authority to negotiate. Their declarations of neutrality, however, forced King to find alternative ways to accomplish his tasks. King's status, while not to his liking, proved to be his one asset. Since King's instruction to gain recognition had been negated by the formation of the Confederacy, his mission had become strictly commercial in nature. In this role, King was able to move more

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 58-59. For the full text of the French declaration of neutrality, see *Le Moniteur Universel*, 11 June 1861.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

freely among the French and British political circles than the Confederate commissioners, who found the official channels closed to them. By focusing on his commercial instructions, King would be able to achieve some success in the French legislature, encouraging the addition of southern ports in several proposed steamship routes.³⁰⁹

Before he could negotiate for a line of steamships, arms, or investments, King recognized he would have to make an effort to influence European public opinion. Among both the French and British, King had observed a “most discouraging ignorance of the great advantages presented by the Southern States for direct commercial intercourse with them, and a prevailing belief that New York was the only port which offered suitable encouragement to steam communication with the North American continent.”³¹⁰ Another impediment to King’s work was a number of daily Parisian journals, which were circulating “mischievous misrepresentations” of the South.³¹¹ Finally, because the Confederacy lacked an established line of communication between Europe and itself, the Union held a virtual monopoly over all American news. A. Dudley Mann, one of the Confederate commissioners in Europe, reported to Secretary of State Robert Toombs that the Reuter News Agency wished to receive weekly reports from the South to transmit to Europe if only Toombs could discover a way to send the reports to New York. Toombs failed to act on Mann’s suggestion, and the North maintained its monopoly.³¹²

³⁰⁹ Edward M. Steel, Jr., *T. Butler King of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 149.

³¹⁰ T. Butler King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King to Europe* (Milledgeville, GA: Confederate Union Power Press, 1863), 5.

³¹¹ W.M. Stanley Hoole, ed., *The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet of Richmond & Its Agents Abroad: Being Memorandum Notes Taken in Paris During the Rebellion of the Southern States from 1861 to 1865* (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Publishing Company, Inc., 1963), 31.

³¹² Charles P. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe, 1861-1865* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1969), 18.

These circumstances led King to expand upon his original directive to explain Georgia's commercial relations to Europe and begin a propaganda effort in Britain and France. King believed that the best way to influence a government was to "change the opinions of individuals by communications addressed to their Governments."³¹³ Expecting to work in concert with the Confederate delegation, he was horrified to discover from Pierre Rost that the diplomats lacked the authority to undertake such a propaganda campaign. They had received neither instructions on the subject nor funds for such a purpose. King, therefore, decided to take upon himself the task of informing the public of the South's commercial advantages. To do this, King wrote three letters—one to Lord John Russell of England, one to Comte de Morny of France, Minister of Commerce, and one to Edouard Thouvenel of France—and had them published.³¹⁴

King first published his letter to the Comte de Morny, dated May 1861. King printed three thousand copies of the letter, both in English and in French, and distributed them across Europe.³¹⁵ He sent copies to Napoleon III, the French Imperial Council, the French Senate and Corps Legislatif, the newspaper press, insurance offices, chambers of commerce, principal French manufacturers, the German Commercial Union, the foreign embassies in Paris, and the various ministers of state of Europe.³¹⁶ In the letter, King laid

³¹³ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King to Europe*, 5.

³¹⁴ Hoole, *The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet*, 31. The Confederate government did not take its first step towards the establishment of an organized system of propaganda until November 1861, in which it sent Henry Hotze to direct public opinion in Europe. From Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. revised by Harriet Chappell Owsley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), 155.

³¹⁵ The pamphlet printed upon King's return to Georgia actually dated the letter May 1862, but considering King described writing and printing the letter prior to his departure from Europe, the date of 1862 is not possible. He had already returned to the South by May 1862. It is thus assumed that the year was a misprint and that the letter was actually written in May of 1861. Considering the receipt for the pamphlet's printing is dated 18 June 1861, the pamphlet itself was distributed most likely sometime during mid-June 1861. The receipt can be found in the *Calhoun 1862 Prize Case* (Case 1862), National Archives and Records Administration, Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia.

³¹⁶ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King to Europe*, 6.

before the minister what he believed to be “some considerations in favor of the immediate establishment of lines of steamships from the ports of France to those of the Confederate States of America.”³¹⁷

The letter largely centered on the economic benefits and advantages the South offered France. King began the letter by expounding on the South’s efforts towards the establishment of free trade, such as the adoption of a low tariff and the repeal of all tonnage duties, and the advantages they offered France compared to the North. King then pointed out that because secession had halted its southern commerce with the port of New York, which the South perceived to be necessary for the North’s industrial survival, “any new line from a French port to New York would not be profitable, and probably result in failure.” The South, in contrast, could offer nearly three hundred million dollars worth of exports each year and the establishment of a steamer line would provide for the rapid transmission of the mails between France and the South.³¹⁸

King enumerated the advantages of a southern trade route. First, he touted the cultural ties of France with Louisiana and the South Carolina Huguenots, which would guarantee the large importation of French luxury items by the South. Second, since British merchants would be quick to appreciate the advantage of commerce with the South, could France not “be persuaded to take the lead and reap the advantage?” Finally, southern ports, such as Savannah, were just as practical for trade as New York. Savannah, King explained, was the second largest exporting city in the new Confederate States of America. Railroads emanated from the city seven hundred miles to the west, nine hundred miles to the northwest, and two hundred miles to the South. Situated only a

³¹⁷ Ibid, 14.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

few miles from the city, cargo transfer from the port would be easy and the harbor itself could accommodate vessels drawing up to twenty-three feet. Direct trade with Savannah would also be quicker than by the current circuitous route through New York, for, while Savannah was three hundred miles farther from Havre than New York, the sailing distance between Savannah and New York added seven hundred miles. The establishment of a direct line would thus shave four hundred miles from the journey, making the route quicker, and ultimately cheaper, bypassing the New York middlemen.³¹⁹

The letter served its purpose. King noted in his report to Governor Joseph E. Brown that, as a result of the publication of his letter, “a very remarkable change was soon seen in the tone of most of the newspapers of Paris, and several of them took strong grounds in favor of the Southern cause.”³²⁰ Paul Pecquet du Bellet, a southerner living in Paris at the time, described the work to be “a very able book upon the American War.”³²¹ Edwin de Leon, a southerner of unofficial status in 1861, but an appointed Confederate propagandist after 1862, remarked in his later memoir that King’s pamphlet was “able” and that King, through the use of the pamphlet and other publications and conversations, had “prepared the foreign mind” for the reception of the Confederate commissioners.³²²

Soon after the publication of his letter to de Morny, King published another letter, this time to Lord Russell, also dated May 1861.³²³ Along with explaining the

³¹⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

³²⁰ Ibid., 6.

³²¹ Hoole, *The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet*, 32.

³²² Edwin de Leon, *Secret History of Confederate Diplomacy Abroad*, edited by William C. Davis (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 17.

³²³ The letter, like that of the one addressed to Comte de Morny, was published in pamphlet form. A proof of the pamphlet was sent to King on 11 June and from a letter by a British acquaintance of King’s (name unreadable) on 22 June, noting that his father was much pleased with the pamphlet and would review it shortly, it can be assumed that the pamphlet was distributed to the public by mid-June 1861. Letters found

commercial advantages, King addressed the foreign secretary's political concerns. King began his letter with an explanation of the constitutionality of secession, outlining the legality of the Confederate States of America as well as the reasons for secession. "The States created the Federal Government" and "while, in fact, the South has not been guilty of a single act of aggression against the North," the North had continually threatened the South's economic existence through its desire for high tariff duties and the abolition of slavery.³²⁴

King went on to explain the pecuniary advantages the North had received from the federal government's fiscal policies. For instance, as a result of the protective tariff, it had experienced a thirteen hundred percent increase in manufactures between 1820 and 1850. To support his theory that the North had derived these advantages, King used a variety of statistics from the 1850 census and 1860 census estimates concerning consumption rates between the two regions, total agricultural and manufacturing values, tonnage rates, and railway construction. From these, King concluded that the nation's wealth rested on the South's agricultural economy and that the "secession of the Southern States has severed at a single blow their financial and commercial, as it has their political connection with the Northern States."³²⁵

King also sought to allay the fears the manufacturing countries may have concerning the South's cotton economy, addressing questions of labor, land, and transportation. To the issue of labor, King, through the use of the 1850 and 1860 census estimates, argued that the South had a sufficient labor force to meet the increasing

in the *Calhoun Prize Case papers*, National Archives and Records Administration, Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia.

³²⁴ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 8.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

demand for cotton. In addition, the South had skilled workers, whereas the workers in India and China were unskilled. India and China, therefore, could not compete with the skilled industry of the European nations. As to land, King maintained that despite British efforts to the contrary, “the Cotton States of the Southern Confederacy contain the only cotton-growing region in the world where more cotton is produced than consumed in manufactured goods.” King finally addressed the question of transportation, which by this time, had been complicated by the announcement of the blockade by the North. King argued that the North could not conceivably stop every vessel at sea and collect duties on the captured cargo. Even when found in the vast ocean, a ship’s deck is too small to “ascertain the description and quantity of goods comprising the cargo, without opening every package.” If the North took such an action, King further explained, it would violate the laws of nations, for “every ship that is stopped and overhauled for the purpose of collecting duties on the cargo, is just as much a capture as she would be were she stopped in the middle of the Atlantic by a pirate, and required to pay a ransom.” Since the North had broken international law, King believed that Europe could justify the establishment of direct trade with the Confederacy, as well as the Confederacy’s recognition.³²⁶

King published his final letter to Edouard Thouvenel in mid-July 1861. Like the letter to Lord Russell, this one also focused on the political aspects of establishing trade with the South. King again began with a discussion of the legality of secession and the perceived violations of the North, concluding that the “war which the government at Washington is now waging against them is intended to be a war of conquest and subjugation.” King therefore believed that Lincoln, by commencing war against and

³²⁶ Ibid., 11-13.

blockading the South, had “forfeited all claim to the forbearance or sympathy of the great European powers whose policy has been the protection of right, the promotion of civilization, and the extension of commercial intercourse.” In addition to asking the French minister if France could continue to support such an unjust nation and leader, King queried Thouvenel, “Can the governments of France and England permit this war to continue until it shall have destroyed the annual product of three hundred millions of dollars in value of commercial exchange” by refusing to break the blockade? King obviously felt that France could not. It was Europe’s duty to intervene in the war for a “man in the midst of a city might as well claim the right to set fire to his house and say to his neighbors, it is no affair of yours,” but this “assertion of right would not secure the lives of persons in adjoining apartments.” Ultimately, Lincoln’s policies were harming France and England economically, essentially acting as “a war on the industry of France and England, under false pretenses.” France, King argued, should therefore break the blockade by the “unjust” North and protect its natural rights to free and open trade.³²⁷

In addition to the declaration of neutrality, King also had to address the issue of the Union blockade, a circumstance the Confederate commissioners believed would “be the great lever which will eventually decide the relations between Europe and the South.”³²⁸ The blockade proved troublesome for Europe in a variety of aspects. First, rather than notifying European governments and setting a date to close a port, the U.S. government put the blockade into effect by warning the individual ports as they were closed. This method made it difficult for European merchants who could not guarantee

³²⁷ Ibid., 16.

³²⁸ James Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy Including the Diplomatic Correspondence 1861-1865*, vol. II (Nashville: United States Publishing Company, 1904), 45.

that their goods sent to southern ports would be permitted to enter on arrival.³²⁹ On this issue, Seward informed Lord Lyons that “the practice of the United States was not to issue such notice,” but to notify each vessel individually as it approached the blockaded port. Lyon objected, noting that “it might in some cases expose foreign vessels to the loss and inconvenience of making a useless voyage.”³³⁰

Second, while the Declaration of Paris called for a blockade to be effective in order to be binding, the declaration did not define the meaning of “effective.” Subsequent international practice established “that a blockade does not cease to be a blockade because individual vessels may succeed in breaking it successfully, but that the blockade, to be legal, must present an actual danger to vessels attempting to evade it.”³³¹ Such a definition, however, left room for debate by both sides of the American conflict. Since the definition lacked a precise definition, it became the primary argument on which both sides would focus their debate. For this same reason, the effectiveness of the Union blockade would become the issue on which European policies would be based.

Third, the blockade directly impacted British, French, and other European industries. Although 1859 and 1860 had been bumper crop years for cotton, manufacturers and political leaders feared the impact of a prolonged disruption of the cotton trade. On 21 October 1861 the *Moniteur Universal* reported the decision of the United States to blockade New Orleans, which the article described as “the most significant cotton exporting port.”³³² The article prayed that, should the United States be successful in recovering New Orleans, it would reopen the port for the exportation of

³²⁹ Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, 245.

³³⁰ Bourne, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, 207. Lord Lyons to Lord J. Russell, 2 May 1861, received 17 May.

³³¹ Case, *The United States and France*, 139.

³³² *Le Moniteur Universal*, 21 October 1861.

cotton and that the Confederate government would not hinder the planters from exporting the crop.³³³ The paper went on to explain that “the level of anxiety which agitates English manufacturing on the subject of cotton and of the violent desire they have to see the blockade disappear” fills all the news, for the British felt that the blockade “is cruelly prejudicial to their interests.”³³⁴ European leaders thus had to consider public opinion and industry as well as the legal aspects of the blockade.

Finally, because the Confederacy lacked a navy, it resorted to privateering; an action the Declaration of Paris condemned. According to the Confederate government, all those who desired “by service in private armed vessels on the high seas, to aid this government in resisting so wanton and wicked an aggression,” could apply for letters of marque or commissions.³³⁵ Europeans largely frowned upon the action, hoping in the words of the *Moniteur Universel* “that the sentiment of morality which grows without cease throughout Europe will suffice to stop the profiteers,” since “the delivery of these letters is unhappily a barbaric right.” The paper thus hoped that, while privateering was a right lawfully accorded to governments, the Confederacy would realize the immorality of it and cease the practice.³³⁶ Southern agents, in light of this European view of privateering, had to justify the need for the “barbaric” practice. The Confederate commissioners, Yancey, Rost, and Mann, in a letter to Lord Russell dated 14 August, stated that the “people of the Confederate States are an agricultural and not a

³³³ When mentioning the hope that the planters would not be hindered by the Confederate government, the article was referring to an unofficial cotton embargo enforced by the South, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy Including the Diplomatic Correspondence 1861-1865*, vol. I (Nashville: United States Publishing Company, 1904), 61. Statement made in a proclamation by Jefferson Davis on 17 April 1861. For more on the Confederacy’s governmental policy on privateering see Richardson, *A Compilation*, Act Recognizing the Existence of War, 105-110 and President’s Instructions to Private Armed Vessels, 111-112.

³³⁶ *Le Moniteur Universel*, 2 May 1861.

manufacturing or commercial people. They own but few ships.” The Confederate States were thus “compelled to resort to the issuance of letters of marque, a mode of warfare as fully and as clearly recognized by the law and usage of nations as any other arm of war.”³³⁷

In response to southern propaganda appeals aimed at European public opinion, U.S. leaders sought to convince the European nations that recognition of its blockade would be in their best interest. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., son of the U.S. minister to Britain, wrote on 25 August 1861 to his brother Henry that “England should pray it [blockade] might last for two years...as if enforced its inevitable result must be...to forever break down the price of cotton to a reasonable profit over the cost of its cheapest possible production.”³³⁸ Such an action would be “England’s chance to free herself from what has been her terror for years,” allowing her time to organize cotton culture in India, Egypt, Abyssinia, and South Africa.³³⁹

In response to the varied positions of the Confederate, Union, French and British governments, King wrote an article on the nature and legal background of the blockade entitled “The American Blockade.”³⁴⁰ The only article from his mission to survive in draft form in his papers, it reads like a lawyer’s brief and focuses on the legal precedents of blockades. King began with a general description of commercial intercourse between nations and how principles had changed over time, mentioning that “no one ventures now to advocate other than perfect freedom of commerce on the seas.” If all nations advocate

³³⁷ James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy*, vol. II, 63.

³³⁸ Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *A Cycle of Adams Letters 1861-1865*, vol. 1 (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company the Riverside Press Cambridge, 1920), 34.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁴⁰ T. Butler King, “The American Blockade,” 1861, in the T. Butler King Papers #1252, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Although the article is undated, Steel cites in a footnote that internal evidence dates the draft sometime in October 1861. Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 190.

perfect freedom of the seas, though, did a nation have “a right to interfere between two others in their commercial relations whether by treaty or by force of arms?” The key to the question, King stated, resided in the treatment of contraband goods of war, the right of belligerents to blockade the ports and seaboard of the other, and the blockade’s bearing on neutral parties.³⁴¹

Referencing several authorities on the subject, King surmised that neutrality, while preventing the sale and transfer of munitions of war and other goods of war, did not “affect the other commercial relations of the neutral nations with the belligerents or their treaties to that end.” Although the particular circumstances may vary for every case, the Declaration of Paris in 1856 had established rules, which had since become the basis of law throughout Europe, stating that belligerents had “no right to interfere with the course of such commerce.”³⁴² Regarding materials designated as contraband of war, King discovered that there had not been a tried agreement on the subject. Arms, ammunition, ropes, sails, and other appliances for ships had largely been agreed upon as items of war, but other items, such as sulphur, sulphate, etc, were still in question.³⁴³ On this issue, King found that the current blockade enacted by the United States was in conflict with its own precedent, for, in a treaty with France in 1778 and again in 1782, it had agreed that “all articles which cannot properly be designated as designed for the uses of war whether by land or sea shall not be considered contraband.”³⁴⁴

King then turned to the issue of blockades themselves. Using a definition from the work “Manuel des marius,” King defined a blockade as “a port where vessels of war

³⁴¹ Ibid., 1-2.

³⁴² Ibid., 2-3.

³⁴³ Ibid., 5.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 8.

(word unreadable) guard against the entry or departure of vessels and take them prisoner if they attempt it.” A blockade is thus ineffective unless all vessels are prevented from successfully running the blockade. Blockades, furthermore, according to the “Principles androit public maritius,” could only be enforced in fortified places. Thus, if an area is not commanded by a fortification or protected by vessels of war, it cannot be legally blockaded.³⁴⁵

Having defined and elaborated on the characteristics of a blockade, King addressed the question of whether the Confederacy should be granted belligerent rights in an effort to protect commerce of a neutral sort with Europe. To demonstrate that the Confederacy should be granted belligerent rights, King referenced a meeting in Havre, France between the Chamber of Commerce and an unknown French minister. The Chamber of Commerce addressed the minister on the topic of trade with the Confederacy, stating that trade should be allowed since “treaties of alliance and commerce have been appeased and ratified and are in existence.” Since France and the southern states were connected by treaty, the Chamber of Commerce argued that France, as a neutral party, should throw open the southern ports to French ships “for the cotton necessary for our working classes.”³⁴⁶ In response to the chamber’s plea, the minister responded that “strangers and neutrals have no right to interfere in measures taken by the Government of the country,” since a blockade, regardless of the circumstances, “cannot be allowed to obstruct freedom of navigation.” The minister also addressed the right to interfere in the American crisis. He stated that before France could act on the matter, three questions had to be answered. First, does either belligerent employ means directly effecting nations

³⁴⁵ Ibid, 9-10.

³⁴⁶ King does not explain if France was bound by a singular treaty or multiple treaties, or what treaty, or type of treaty, bound the southern states to France.

stronger to the quarrel? Second, will a neutral's right to navigate freely be rendered inefficacious by the war? Lastly, is the blockade effective and valid? The minister answered that, while the blockade injures the purveyor directly, "no danger whatever could result to the belligerent who prevents the import of such goods." By examining the losses of France's various industries, the minister concluded that it could not be denied that the blockade was directly injuring France's trade as a neutral.³⁴⁷

Having demonstrated that the North's use of a blockade was contrary to precedent and international law, King concluded with an enunciation of the injuries France was suffering as a result of the blockade. In the cotton industry alone King found that factories in Liverpool, England had tried to conserve their cotton supply by lowering their working days to only three days a week. In response to this action, King observed that many workers in the manufacturing districts were showing an alarming concern for the future.³⁴⁸ The blockade thus "directly attacks neutral nations in as much as it not only takes from them the natural supply necessary for their trade," but makes it difficult to obtain it elsewhere.³⁴⁹

King's article adroitly addressed the issues surrounding blockades and demonstrated that they were numerous and complex. Recognizing the complexity of the American situation in regards to the blockade, European leaders sought Union and Confederate adherence to at least articles II and III of the declaration on the protection of neutral rights. Secretary of State William Seward, despite prior support for and historical reliance on the practice of privateering, hoped "to obtain an international consensus outlawing southern privateering," and thus entered into negotiations with Europe. The

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 12-17.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 20.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 24.

negotiations, lasting for several months, remained unsuccessful. European leaders, suspecting the United States of pursuing selfish ends, insisted on the inclusion of a rider disclaiming any intent to take an action that might have a direct or indirect bearing “on the internal differences now prevailing in the United States.” Although they condemned the act of privateering, British and French leaders refused to revoke the permission they had granted earlier to the Confederacy to arm such ships or to treat those acting under permission of authorized letters of marque as pirates. Britain and France had decided, at the risk of diluting the Declaration of Paris, not to commit an action that would jeopardize their neutrality.³⁵⁰

Unlike the Union, the Confederate government sought ways to placate the European powers. Soon after the declaration of the Union blockade, the Confederacy agreed to adhere to the principle that “the flag covers the merchandise.”³⁵¹ A few months later, the Confederate legislature adopted Articles II, III, and IV of the Declaration of Paris. The legislature, however, amended the resolution a few days later to emphasize “the Confederacy’s determination to exercise the right of privateering.”³⁵² Although Europeans applauded the Confederacy’s actions, they maintained a strong attachment to neutrality.

Regardless of the legalistic and theoretical arguments, the development of policy depended on the reality of the situation. From the beginning, southern and European leaders had doubted the ability of the Union to blockade effectively the 3,549 statute miles of the Confederate coastline with its many harbors, rivers, inlets, bays, and interior

³⁵⁰ Merli, *Great Britain and the Confederate Navy*, 46.

³⁵¹ *Le Moniteur Universal*, 24 May 1861, 727.

³⁵² Brian Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, vol. 1 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1974), 139.

channels, especially since the Union only had ninety vessels on its naval register in 1861, of which only forty were steamers and of those only twenty-four were fit for service.³⁵³

The Union enacted a strategy which countered the questions of effectiveness. Rather than try to blockade the entire coastline, the Union Navy initially focused on the individual ports, of which the South had few large enough to support foreign trade.³⁵⁴

Nevertheless, to guarantee the blockade's effectiveness, the Union promptly enlarged its fleet, purchasing seventy steamers and fifty-eight sailing vessels by December 1861.

Despite these efforts, the blockade continued to remain largely ineffectual throughout the first year, with the ratio of captures in 1861 being one in ten.³⁵⁵

In the fall of 1861 the most famous of the blockade runners that year, the *Bermuda*, ran the blockade at Savannah and delivered a large cargo of rifles and munitions. While the ship's ability to run the blockade supported the South's claim that the blockade was ineffectual and therefore null and void, it also, as the *London Times* reported, proved that the unofficial cotton embargo enacted by the South was "the work of the South as much as the North." If "ships can get in they can also get out, and if the South desires to send us cotton it has not lacked the opportunity."³⁵⁶

This issue of effectiveness would remain a contentious issue. Southerners would continue to cite incidents like the *Bermuda*, and other statistics such as General Josiah Gorgas's report of 3 February 1863 which listed the large number of rifles, muskets, and other materials that Major Caleb Huse had shipped through the blockade.³⁵⁷ Pro-southern

³⁵³ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 229.

³⁵⁴ Case, *The United States and France*, 134.

³⁵⁵ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 230 and 261.

³⁵⁶ *Le Moniteur Universal*, 23 October 1861. For more on the cotton embargo see the next paragraph.

³⁵⁷ William A. Albaugh, III and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Arms* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1962), 61. The report cited the shipment of 9,715 short Enfield rifles, 70,980 long Enfield rifles, 354

sympathizers in Europe would then use the statistics to argue the idea that the blockade should be broken due to its ineffectiveness, while pro-northern sympathizers used the data to prove that the South was the culprit behind Europe's economic problems.

Although never specifically addressed by King in his letters or surviving works, King had to contend with an informal cotton embargo. Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders had begun to advocate the withholding of cotton from European markets as incentive for European nations to recognize the Confederate government. The Confederate Congress debated the passage of such legislation several times, but it was a divisive issue. Even embargo supporters like Jefferson Davis realized that such an action would be diplomatic suicide.³⁵⁸ Vice-President Alexander Stephens considered the idea of use of cotton as a political tool a serious mistake.³⁵⁹ Judah P. Benjamin, attorney-general and later secretary of state for the Confederacy, recommended that the government send all cotton on hand to England before the blockade could be enforced to be stored and used as a source of revenue throughout the war.³⁶⁰ The Confederacy never enacted an official embargo, but local citizen organizations, along with higher bagging costs and higher insurance premiums at the seaports prevented the export of cotton from southern ports.³⁶¹ Lyons wrote Russell that "men who ought to know the Southern feeling well, declare that the owners of cotton would rather burn their cotton on their plantations than send it to a port in the occupation of the United States." The British consul in Charleston, Robert Bunch, reported several instances in which constituted

Enfield carbines, 21,040 British muskets, 27,000 Austrian rifles, and 2,020 Brunswick rifles among other materials.

³⁵⁸ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 30.

³⁵⁹ Callahan, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy*, 88-91.

³⁶⁰ Jay Sexton, *Debtor Diplomacy: Finance and American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era 1837-1873* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 139.

³⁶¹ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 37 and Jenkins, *Britain and the War for Union*, 142.

Committees of Safety prevented British ships from loading cotton.³⁶² Instances such as that reported by Bunch and the cotton embargo only served to create resentment against the South, resentment the South could ill afford in its quest for recognition. The *Moniteur Universel* called the embargo a “calculated political ploy” and believed it to be the obstacle to the provisioning of Europe, not the blockade itself.³⁶³ Leaders, such as Davis, failed to realize that the immediate impact of the embargo would be negligible since the bumper crops of 1859 and 1860 provided British and French textile manufacturers with a surplus of cotton that would last them well into 1861 and 1862.³⁶⁴

It was in this climate that King attempted to establish a line of steamers to Georgia from either France or Britain or both. Through his propaganda efforts, and his early contact with Ernest Bellot des Minières, King gained entry into the leading French circles.³⁶⁵ Through these contacts, King discovered that the French Corps Legislatif had been debating the establishment of a new line from Havre to New York and a line from Bordeaux to the West Indies. In 1858, Napoleon III of France had issued a decree allowing for the creation of postal service between France, the United States, and the Antilles. Michel-Victor Mazziou, to whom the concession had been given, had renounced it, however, in 1860. The concession was then transferred to Emile Pereire, the director of the Société générale du Crédit mobilière, who took over the Compagnie

³⁶² Bourne, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, 318. Lord Lyons to Earl Russell, 8 October 1861, received 21 October.

³⁶³ *Le Moniteur Universel*, 23 October 1861.

³⁶⁴ Duncan Andrew Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY: Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press, 2003), 50.

³⁶⁵ During this time, King met with a number of influential persons, both French and Confederate, that helped him in his efforts. His contacts included French Senator Michel Chevalier, Paul Pecquet du Bellot, future Confederate propagandist Edwin de Leon, Pierre Rost, and the Confederate military agents Major E.C. Anderson (Army) and James Bulloch (Navy). Calling Cards, *Calhoun 1862 Prize Case* (Case 1862), National Archives and Records Administration, Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia.

Générale Maritime, a joint-stock company, and used the Crédit mobilière to underwrite the venture.³⁶⁶

King, looking to establish a line of steamers between France and the South, seized the opportunity to effect a change in the points of destination. He hoped to convince the legislature to redirect the Havre line to Savannah rather than New York, and to extend the Bordeaux line to New Orleans. The task was not easy, but having already argued the economic advantages of trading with the South, King was able to convince the legislature after “much delay, labor and personal intercourse with the members” to make stipulations which would allow for such a change in the future.³⁶⁷ The legislature on 17 July granted the company under Article 3 a twenty year contract, to begin three years after the date of concession or after all services had been well established and operating. The legislature then granted the minister of finances, under Articles 10, 11, and 12, the right to take necessary measures to advance the company, safeguard the rights of the state, and move the subvention from any port of France to any port from Nova Scotia to the Amazon. The finance minister, therefore, had the right to change the line’s point of origin or destination if it should prove advantageous to the company and to the state. The contract then further allowed for the creation of a direct line between France and New Orleans if the utility of such a line should be recognized by the government. If the company refused to acknowledge such changes, the contract stated that the commission would be ceded to another company. Finally, the contract under chapter 11 allowed the company to cease all or part of its service in the case of war.³⁶⁸ Through these clauses, the company could,

³⁶⁶ *Le Moniteur Universal*, 17 July 1861.

³⁶⁷ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 6. King reported that the decision had been unanimous.

³⁶⁸ *Le Moniteur Universal*, 17 July 1861.

once the blockade was lifted and the conditions made more advantageous, change its ports of call to ports in the South such as New Orleans or Savannah.

Having secured a French line, “without the payment of a subsidy by the State, or subscription to stock by her citizens,” King left for Britain in late October to establish a separate British line as well. As already stated, King had published a letter to Lord John Russell intended to enlighten the British public on issues concerning the South and the port of Savannah. Through the aid of the letter and further correspondence, King opened negotiation with several British firms on the establishment of a subsidized line. On 1 November, King concluded a contract with Mr. Frederick Sabel of Liverpool.³⁶⁹ As provided by his instructions, the contract allowed for a subsidy of one hundred thousand dollars per annum.³⁷⁰ Acknowledging the blockade, the contract, assuming confirmation by the Georgia legislature, called for the line to commence running six months after the blockade’s removal.³⁷¹

In addition to establishing the two steamship lines, King continued to find ways to benefit his state, such as the procurement of guns. As King witnessed in Belgium, arms manufacturers all over Europe and the United States could not meet the demand.³⁷² Failing to procure guns in Belgium, King turned to France. In France, King met with Paul Pecquet du Bellet, a southerner who had been living in Paris for some time prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Bellet joined King in this effort. Confederate Major Edward C. Anderson described Bellet as a man of “great conceit” and “ignorant” in business matters. Anderson recorded in his diary details of a meeting with King where he first met

³⁶⁹ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 6.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁷² *Le Moniteur Universal*, 24 May 1861.

Bellet. Anderson noted that Bellet “talked of arms & ships as though he controlled the nations war materiel, and strove hard to dazzle us with his importance.”³⁷³ Through Bellet, King gained access to French arsenals and the upper French circles. Anderson wrote several days later that he called on King to ask him “to obtain a permit in the proper quarter for us to visit the Govt Arsenal at Vincennes...to have a look at the class of muskets which Mr. King and Mr. Pecquet assure us can be purchased from the French Govt.”³⁷⁴ Two days later Anderson learned that he had been granted permission to go to the armory to obtain a large supply of muskets.³⁷⁵ On the suggestion of King, “who was extremely anxious to have the South promptly furnished with suitable muskets,” Bellet wrote to Major Captain Huse, who was in France to purchase supplies for the Confederate Army, about the presence of fifty thousand smooth barrel and flint lock muskets at the Vincennes armory.³⁷⁶ Despite his evident interest in procuring arms, King failed to honor his contract with Georgia for fifty thousand rifles, renouncing it on 19 July 1861.³⁷⁷

In addition to the political obstacles King faced in his official duties, he also had to overcome Confederate financial difficulties. With the South remaining unrecognized and untested in 1861, most European businessmen and bankers were leery of accepting bills of credit. Confederate agents, furthermore, had to contend against the pro-Union

³⁷³ W. Stanley Hoole, ed., *Confederate Foreign Agent: The European Diary of Major Edward C. Anderson* (University, AL: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976), 33. Diary entry dated 18 July 1861.

³⁷⁴ W. Stanley Hoole, *Confederate Foreign Agent*, 33-34. Diary entry dated 20 July 1861. Anderson described King at this time to be “quite as plausible as when I knew him years ago as a member of Congress,” but poisoned somewhat by Bellot’s conceit. Anderson would later write that he while he had invited King to take passage with him back to Georgia, he had deliberately waited until it was too late for King to join. He also noted that King was “maneuvering to be appointed one of the new Confederate Commissioners.” W. Stanley Hoole, *Confederate Foreign Agent*, 79. Diary entry dated 10 October 1861.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid*, *Confederate Foreign Agent*, 34. Diary entry dated 22 July 1861.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid*, *The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet*, 45. Letter from Paul Pecquet du Bellet to Caleb Huse, dated 24 July 1861.

³⁷⁷ Francis Balace, *La Belgique et la Guerre de Sécession 1861-1865*, vol. I (Paris: Société d’ Edition; Les Belles Lettres, 1979), 73.

policies of the larger banking firms. George Peabody and Baring Brothers both refused to meet with Confederate Commissioner Dudley Mann. The repudiation of foreign debts by the three southern states in the 1840s also came to haunt the South in their war-time efforts. In early 1861, South Carolina had its loan request rejected by Baring Brothers.³⁷⁸ The Confederacy did send specie to Europe, but in limited amounts. Without the cotton trade to generate new bills of exchange, the resulting shortage of bills and subsequent increase in price prevented the Confederate Treasury from purchasing them.³⁷⁹

On 28 February, the Confederate legislature approved “an Act to raise money for the support of the Government and to provide for the defense of the Confederate States of America.”³⁸⁰ The act authorized the government to borrow a sum not exceeding fifteen million dollars, payable semiannually at eight percent interest and supported by an export duty on cotton. The government authorized the sale of bonds in denominations of fifty, one hundred, five hundred, and one thousand dollars to be issued for ten years, but redeemable by the government anytime after five years with three months’ public notice.³⁸¹ The loan, however, hardly covered the Confederacy’s mounting debts. In May 1861 the Confederate government authorized another loan of fifty million in bonds, again to be paid semiannually at an interest not exceeding eight percent, but payable only after twenty years from their issue date. Unlike the previous loan, the government aimed the new loan at planters and farmers by having bondholders purchase the bonds in produce

³⁷⁸ Sexton, *Debtor Diplomacy*, 141. For more on the Confederate repudiation of European loans, see the section on financial tensions in chapter three.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

³⁸⁰ Richard Lester, *Confederate Finance and Purchasing in Great Britain* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), 8.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

rather than money.³⁸² The Confederacy also sought to subscribe loans in cotton, but with few ships to deliver the commodity, such funds remained impracticable.³⁸³

King experienced financial problems of his own in Europe. Having stayed longer than his mission originally called for because of the blockade, he had incurred the unintended costs of printing in his propaganda efforts. King, thus, quickly expended the three thousand dollars the legislature had originally granted him for the mission.³⁸⁴ He attempted to draw funds from his own resources at the end of June, but found that the usual sources of credit were not accepting drafts on Confederate firms. Meredith Calhoun wrote King on the matter, stating that “no matter what a man’s means may be there (South), they are not considered here.”³⁸⁵ Faced with the mounting demands of creditors, King resorted to asking his friends for financial help. On 23 July, Anderson noted that King called on him and, upon telling Anderson that he had been invited to spend three days with the Count de Morny, asked for a loan from the Confederate funds of one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars in order to make a suitable presentation. Anderson declined to accommodate him, referring King to his naval associate, James Dunwoody Bulloch.³⁸⁶ Unfortunately, King was unable to resolve his financial difficulties. In August, Robert Hutchison received instructions for his solicitor to arrest King for debts owed.³⁸⁷ By the end of September, King had to move from the Hotel Montaigne to a furnished apartment to reduce costs. Unable to communicate with either

³⁸² Ibid., 10-12.

³⁸³ Samuel Bernard Thompson, *Confederate Purchasing Operations Abroad* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), 49-51.

³⁸⁴ King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 4.

³⁸⁵ *Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 April 1862. Letter from Meredith Calhoun to T. Butler King, dated 28 June 1861.

³⁸⁶ W. Stanley Hoole, *Confederate Foreign Agent*, 34. Diary entry dated 23 July 1861.

³⁸⁷ *Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 April 1861. Letter from Robert Hutchison to William Yancey, dated 27 August 1861.

the legislature or his family because of the blockade, King was forced to draw upon Governor Brown's account for an additional twenty-five hundred dollars in the hope that Brown would honor it on his return.³⁸⁸

Beginning on 21 July 1861, a series of events occurred that had the potential of shifting the diplomatic battle. On 21 July the Confederate forces successfully defeated the Union forces at Manassas Junction in Virginia in the first major land battle of the war, an action that appeared to prove the prevailing belief in Europe that the North lacked the might necessary to reunite the nation. The *Moniteur Universal* declared the battle a "rout," but it was one from which the Union could recover enough to defend Washington.³⁸⁹ Following on the heels of the Manassas defeat were Seward's failure with the Declaration of Paris negotiations, the Robert Bunch Affair, and finally the *Trent* affair.³⁹⁰

The Bunch affair began over the arrest of Robert Mure, a Charleston merchant, to whom Robert Bunch, British consul at Charleston, had entrusted a sealed bag intended for the British Foreign Office along with some two hundred private letters. One of the private letters, Union authorities discerned, stated that "Mr. B., on oath of secrecy, communicated to me also that the first step of recognition was taken."³⁹¹ To make matters worse, Mure, although born in Britain, was an American citizen, and thus Bunch had allied with the enemy. Bunch furthermore had issued a passport to Mure, which, contrary to U.S. law, was not countersigned by the secretary of state. Due to the apparent complicity with the Confederacy, the illegal issuance of a passport, and the sending of

³⁸⁸ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 154 and King, *Papers Relative to the Mission of Hon. T. Butler King*, 4.

³⁸⁹ *Le Moniteur Universal*, 5 August 1861.

³⁹⁰ Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, 201.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 186.

letters from the nation's enemies to their agents abroad, the Union called for Bunch's removal.³⁹² Britain immediately countered that it had not entered into negotiations with the Confederacy and would not do so at any time in the foreseeable future. The affair quickly became even more infuriating when the United States failed to react with equal outrage at the French consul, who had been equally involved in the affair.³⁹³ Lord Russell believed that Seward's anti-British history and the failure to ask for the French consul's recall implied that the United States had singled out Britain for provocation to mask its own troubles. The affair, while it never threatened a war between the two nations, did impugn British honor and contributed to a growing animosity against the Union government.

The *Trent* Affair began with the capture of the two Confederate commissioners sent to replace Yancey, Rost, and Mann. En route to Britain on a British ship, James Mason and John Slidell were captured in Cuban waters by Captain Charles Wilkes of the U.S. Navy. The *Trent* Affair raised a number of issues with direct impact on the American crisis: "whether dispatches were contraband, and whether Wilkes' act could be justified as interception and capture of dispatches;" or, "whether the carriage of persons in the diplomatic service of the enemy was analogous to the carriage of contraband or an example of unneutral service."³⁹⁴ Britain and France claimed the act to be the illegal seizure of dispatches, whereas the Union viewed the carriage of the diplomats on the British ship to be an unneutral act. While the northern demand for Bunch's recall had been of concern to British honor, the boarding of a British vessel by military force and the capture of two diplomats publicly threatened Britain's supremacy of the seas and

³⁹² Ibid., 187.

³⁹³ Case, *The United States and France*, 118.

³⁹⁴ Crook, *The North, The South, and the Powers*, 108.

openly breached international law. The first had been easily dismissed, the second not so; it was “the climax of American arrogance.”³⁹⁵ Britain, according to Mann, was “in downright earnestness in her purpose to humiliate by disgraceful concessions, or to punish severely by force, the so-called United States for the flagrant violation of the integrity of her flag upon the high seas.”³⁹⁶ On 30 November 1861 Britain, in response, ordered the British Fleet to readiness and deployed eleven thousand troops to Canada.³⁹⁷

As King departed Europe from Southampton, England in December 1861, these events would once again change the way southern agents would operate. The *Trent* affair would provide Confederate operatives with the first glimmer of hope for recognition. A war against the North would allow Britain and France to raise the blockade and open up the cotton trade. Unfortunately, King, having already left Europe, would not get the chance to react to these changing circumstances.

King furthermore did not get the chance to exploit the shortage of cotton that the blockade and the southern embargo had finally brought about. French industrialists, having recently invested in modernized equipment to compete with Britain, had to reduce wages and employment to meet the scarcity and high prices of cotton and the loss of the southern market.³⁹⁸ For example, in the Rouen region in eastern Normandy, the procureur reported the unemployment figures for the cotton industry to be:

³⁹⁵ Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, 203.

³⁹⁶ Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy*, 123.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 213.

³⁹⁸ Thomas A. Sancton, “The Myth of French Worker Support for the North in the American Civil War,” *French Historical Studies*, 11 (Spring 1979), 58. available from GALILEO [www.galileo.peachnet.edu/]: Academic Search Premier; Internet; accessed 14 January 2006. James M. McPherson argues that the shortened hours, lowered wages, and increased numbers of unemployed may not have been the result of a shortage of cotton, but the result of a declining demand for cloth. In December 1861 cotton inventories were actually higher in Britain and France than any previous December. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 386.

Table 2. Unemployment Percentages in Rouen

	Percent unemployed	Percent partially unemployed
Spinning.....	14.5.....	17.7
Hand Weaving.....	27.....	35.2
Calicoes.....	2.3.....	14.8
Dyeing.....	2.8.....	0
Bleaching.....	6.3.....	22.6

Source: Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 162.

Worker strikes became almost commonplace in France, with fifty strikes occurring during the Civil War period in the textile industry alone despite strikes being illegal until May 1864.³⁹⁹ These circumstances, combined with a severe wheat shortage, led to widespread unemployment and suffering and a greater desire to break the blockade by those that wished the blockade broken.⁴⁰⁰

Despite the fact that King left before he could exploit the changes in European public opinion, his efforts had an ongoing effect in Europe. Prior to King's departure, his published works, along with those written by Ernest Bellot des Minières and Paul Pecquet du Bellet, had helped to set the basis for future southern propaganda activities in Europe. Edwin de Leon, who had been traveling in Europe in 1861, met King and remembered appreciatively the framework his labors had established.⁴⁰¹ Confederate

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 65.

⁴⁰⁰ West, 56.

⁴⁰¹ Edwin de Leon, *Secret History of Confederate Diplomacy Abroad*, 16-17.

Commissioner Pierre Rost, having made the acquaintance of King in Paris, recognized the importance of King's negotiations for direct trade between the South and Europe and continued them with the assistance of Ernest Bellot des Minières and others.⁴⁰² Even Union agents in Europe recognized King's influence over European public opinion, and therefore monitored his movements.⁴⁰³

Although King's labors have since been largely forgotten, his contemporaries recognized his influence. Seeking to remedy the lack of knowledge on the part of the European public, King took it upon himself to expand his mission's parameters and began a propaganda campaign to educate the public about the South's commercial advantages—a task the official Confederate commissioners were slow to effect. Unlike his Confederate associates—Yancey, Rost, and Mann—King actually affected some political success as well. In the face of difficult odds, King managed to convince the French legislature to allow for a line of steamers between France and a southern port—one of the few known political concessions by a European government to the South during the course of the Civil War.⁴⁰⁴ In addition, King managed to secure yet another line to link Britain to Savannah. These accomplishments led Charles Haussoullier in September 1861 to write that he regretted leaving Paris, for King was “the only gentleman from the South who has effected any thing for the interests of the Confederate

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁰³ Despatches from U.S. Ministers to Belgium, 1861, M193, National Archives and Records Administration, Southeast Region, Morrow: GA. U.S. Minister to Belgium William Sanford noted that King and several other secessionists in King's company (Bev Tucker, Faulkner, etc) were to sail on a ship carrying Union correspondence. Sanford, on learning this news, actually feared the capture of the ship.

⁴⁰⁴ Steel, *T. Butler King*, 148.

States.”⁴⁰⁵ W.T. Brisbie, perhaps summed up King’s legacy best, writing to King a comment that his friend, Dr. Smith of Kentucky, had made:

I don’t know Butler King personally, but I know his report on naval affairs (U.S.) and his letter to the Minister, for I read the proofs here when being printed. I know too that he has done more than all the rest here for our cause, and I’ll be damned if I don’t preach the fact aloud when I get home again.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ *Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 April 1862. Letter from Charles Haussoullier to T. Butler King, dated 22 September 1861.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.* Letter from W.T. Brisbie to T. Butler King, dated 13 September 1861.

EPILOGUE

As T. Butler King sailed from Britain for Cuba en route to the Confederacy, his mission was still far from finished. King continued making plans to advance the South's cause even while awaiting departure from Cuba. On 6 December 1861 he wrote another letter to Lord John Russell in which he again espoused the close material alliance of Britain and the Confederacy and praised the work of Her Majesty's Consul General in Cuba.⁴⁰⁷ In addition to his continued propaganda efforts, King prepared his report for the Georgia legislature and hoped that it would be approved. King also planned to travel to Richmond, Virginia to address the Confederate legislature on the need for paid propagandists in Europe. Before he could address the legislatures, however, King first had to return to the Confederacy, a feat that the Union blockade had made much more complicated since his departure nine months earlier.

After several weeks in Havana, King left Cuba on 20 January 1862 aboard the *Calhoun* for New Orleans. Traveling under false papers as the *Cuba*, the light-draft steamer carried in addition to its passenger a cargo of powder, medical supplies, firearms, and coffee. On the third day, the *U.S.S. Colorado*, patrolling the entrance to New Orleans, sighted the steamer. Soon after the sighting, two of the smaller schooners in the blockading fleet chased the *Calhoun* into the shoal water in East Bay. Within an hour, the Union vessel *Samuel Rotan* caught the *Calhoun*, but not before its passengers and crew had jettisoned the firearms, set the steamer on fire, and escaped. The boarding party quickly extinguished the fires and captured the remaining goods, including King's

⁴⁰⁷ *Washington, D.C. Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 April 1862. Letter from T. Butler King to Lord John Russell, dated 6 December 1861.

baggage, papers, and vouchers.⁴⁰⁸ The *Daily National Intelligencer* later received some of King's captured political correspondence and published it on 25 April 1862 along with the report on the *Calhoun's* capture.⁴⁰⁹

Without papers or personal effects, King journeyed to Richmond to argue his cause and perhaps gain a commission of some sort with the new government. While King had been abroad, his daughter Georgia had begun work to secure her father a position. Having heard no word from her father since March and fearing for his safety, Georgia wrote to President Jefferson Davis that her father "must now be chafing and disheartened by a forced absence when were he here he would be foremost to offer his services in our Army," but with the blockade preventing his return and "with no position abroad in which he may serve the county, he suffers the greatest pain for a patriotic and brave man, inactivity."⁴¹⁰ Georgia also wrote the vice-president and fellow Georgian, Alexander Stephens of Georgia, stating that her father "is forced against his will to remain abroad and unless he receive some commission, he must endure the greatest pain a patriot may suffer, to be mocked at such a time as this."⁴¹¹ Georgia wrote a final letter, different from the others in goal, to an unnamed general urging him to mention her father's name to the President as a commissioner to England or France since he had already "been exerting himself as a private individual to enlighten the public mind of Europe as to our real position."⁴¹² Edwin de Leon, whom King had met in Paris, also testified on King's behalf to the new Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin in April 1862,

⁴⁰⁸ Edward M. Steel, Jr., *T. Butler King of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 154.

⁴⁰⁹ *Daily National Intelligencer*, vol. L, no. 15506 (25 April 1862).

⁴¹⁰ Letter from Georgia King Smith to Jefferson Davis, dated sometime 1861 or early 1862, in the T. Butler King Papers #1252, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁴¹¹ Letter from Georgia King Smith to A. Stephens, dated sometime 1861 or early 1862, in the T. Butler King Papers.

⁴¹² Letter from Georgia King Smith to an unknown General, undated, in the T. Butler King Papers 1.

urging him to recognize King's labors "by sending Mr. King back to Europe to continue his useful labors."⁴¹³ After King's arrival, word also began to spread as to his possible appointment as Secretary of the Navy. As with his desire to return to Europe for the Confederacy, this too was not to be.⁴¹⁴ King recalled that while in Richmond, his "only consolation" was that he was "doing or trying to do some good to the cause of the country."⁴¹⁵ The Confederate government, despite failing to award him a commission, did detain him for some time to hear his suggestions, and in April, the Confederate commissioners John Slidell and James Mason received orders from Benjamin that "no means be spared for the dissemination of truth, and for a fair exposition of our condition and policy before foreign nations."⁴¹⁶ To assist the commissioners, the government sent Edwin de Leon to Europe as an official propagandist.

After finishing his duties in Richmond, King returned home to Georgia. After a short visit with his family, which had evacuated to a new plantation in Ware County, he traveled to Milledgeville to give his report to the Governor and the state legislature.⁴¹⁷ Governor Joseph E. Brown endorsed King's report and referred it to a special committee under A.E. Cochran. The committee remarked that it had been "exceedingly gratified with the manner in which Mr. King has discharged the duties of his mission," succeeding in his instructions "under many difficulties."⁴¹⁸ The committee went further to say that

⁴¹³ Edwin de Leon, *Secret History of Confederate Diplomacy Abroad*, ed. by William C. Davis (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 16.

⁴¹⁴ Letters from Georgia King Smith to T. Butler King, dated 24 February 1862; letter from Florence King to T. Butler King, dated 27 February 1862; Georgia King Smith to T. Butler King, dated 7 March 1862; and Mallery King to T. Butler King, dated 16 March 1862, in the T. Butler King Papers.

⁴¹⁵ Letter from T. Butler King to Mallery King, dated 8 March 1862, in the T. Butler King Papers.

⁴¹⁶ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 155.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

⁴¹⁸ Allen D. Candler, *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia, Compiled and Published Under Authority of the Legislature*, vol. II: State Papers of Governor Joseph E. Brown relating to the public

King had “not only ably and faithfully accomplished the purposes of his mission, but has done more, much more, in securing the two French lines referred to, to Savannah and New Orleans” and that his

able documents...have done more to place the real political condition and commercial resources of this country before the European people than any acts or papers which have fallen under their observation during our troubles, and that the people of this whole country are much indebted to him for their production.⁴¹⁹

In light of these remarks, the committee agreed with King and the Governor not to ratify the contract with Frederick Sabel of Liverpool for a subsidized line of steamers, but to wait for the establishment of the non-subsidized French steamers following the raising of the blockade. The committee further asked that the legislature grant King additional funds for his efforts.⁴²⁰ Shortly before Christmas that year, King learned that the Georgia legislature had appropriated twenty-nine hundred dollars to his credit in the treasury.⁴²¹

Despite the glowing reports from the legislature and the added funds, the last months of 1862 were not kind to King. He received news that his daughter Georgia’s husband, General William D. Smith, had died of illness and soon after that his son Henry Lord Page King had died in battle at Fredericksburg. Lordy’s death forced King to return to Richmond to retrieve his son’s remains. While in the Confederate capital, he decided to run for a seat in the Confederate Congress. King ran a strong campaign during the fall of 1863 against the young incumbent Julian Hartridge, losing by only fifteen votes out of six thousand. Following his defeat, the *Savannah Republican* advocated King’s candidacy for the Confederate Senate. Although King had a strong backing in the first

defense, the organization and equipment of troops, provision for the families of soldiers, etc., 1860 to 1865 inclusive (Atlanta: Chas. P. Byrd, State Printer, 1909), 325.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 326-327.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, 323-327.

⁴²¹ Steel, *T. Butler King of Georgia*, 159.

and second ballots, Herschel V. Johnson ultimately won on the third ballot. Defeated in his senatorial bid, King prepared to contest the close congressional campaign, but before he could do so, fell gravely ill. After several partial recoveries, T. Butler King died on 10 May 1864 at his new home in Waresboro, Georgia.⁴²²

Perhaps it was best that King died before witnessing the defeat of the government in which he had invested so much passion. Although he never once raised a gun against the United States, he had fought on one of the most contested battlefields the Confederacy had faced in the war—Europe. Despite every effort the Confederacy made and every situation that arose in its favor, it never gained the recognition it sought. The only concessions the European nations would grant would be commercial in nature, such as the change in the French steamer lines that King effected. These concessions, however, were conducted most often with the individual states within the Confederacy rather than with the Confederacy itself and were born out of economic necessity rather than political reasons. The state of Georgia realized that to retain viability, it would need to look towards other nations to establish lines of communication, direct trade, new avenues of investment, and weapons, functions the federal government and the northern states had formerly supplied. It was to these ends that King had been sent by the state of Georgia and for these ends that he won one of the few European battles.

⁴²² Ibid,159-164.

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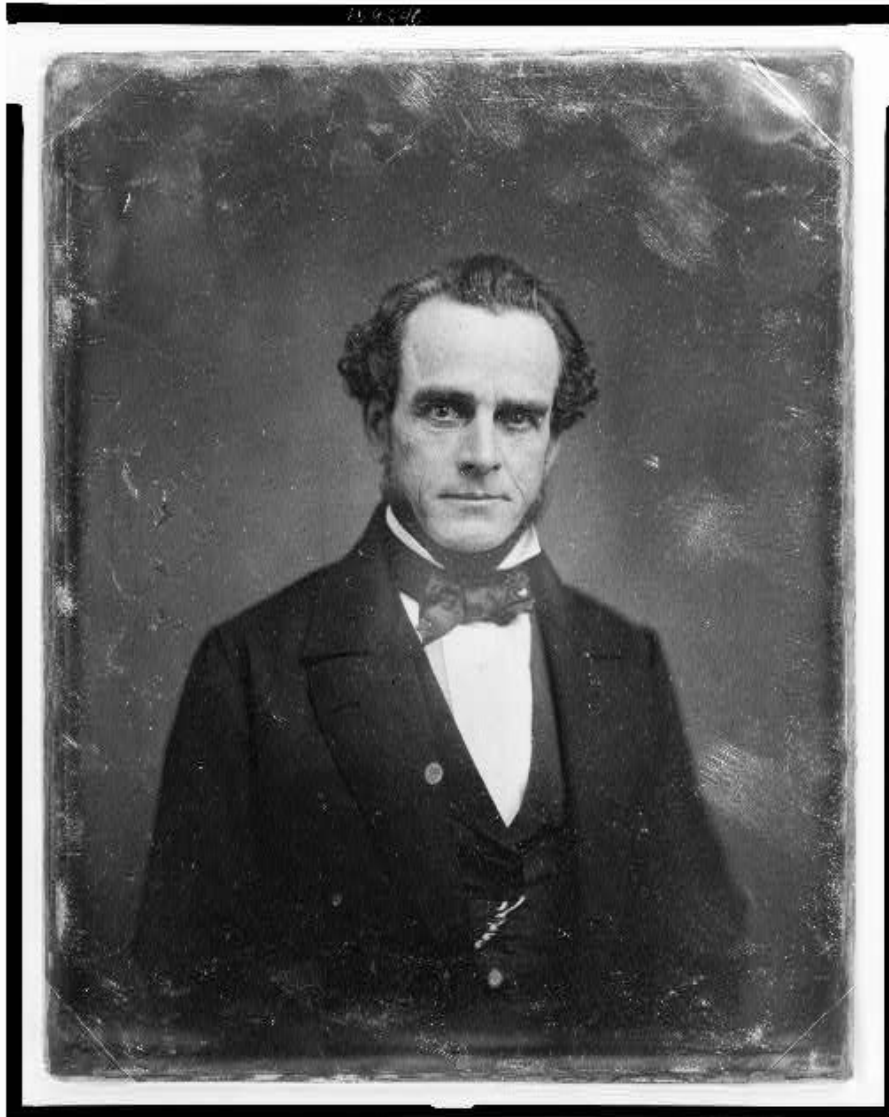
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PORTRAIT OF T. BUTLER KING



Source: Library of Congress, Daguerreotype collection, DAG no. 012, available from <http://lcweb2.gov>, accessed 5 June 2006. Portrait produced by Matthew Brady's studio between 1844 and 1860.

APPENDIX B

KING FAMILY TREE

Daniel King = Hannah Lord

William Page = Hannah Matilda Timmons

Thomas Butler King
1797 or 1800-1864

=

Anna Matilda Page
1798-1859

Hannah Page (Tootee) 1825-1896 = William Audley Cooper 1798-1859

William Page King 1826-1833

Thomas Butler, Jr. (Butler or Buttie) 1829-1859

Henry Lord (Lordy) 1831-1862

Georgia Page King (Josey) 1833-1914 = (1st) William Duncan Smith 1826, 1862,
(2nd) Joseph John Wilder 1844-1900

Florence Barclay (Flora) 1834-1912 = Henry Rootes Jackson 1820-1898

Mallery Page (Mall or Pompey) 1836-1899 = Maria Eugenia Grant 1836-1909

Virginia Lord (Appie or Tommie) 1837-1901 = John Nisbet 1841-1917

John Floyd King (Floyd) 1839-1915

Richard Cuyler (Cuyler, Tip, Hack) 1840-1913 = Henrietta Dawson Nisbet 1863-1944

Source: Edwin R. MacKethan, III, ed., *The Story of the Page-King Family of Retreat Plantation, St. Simons Island & of the Golden Isles of Georgia*, as told by Florence Marye (Darien, GA: Darien Printing and Graphics, 2000), 105-107 and nicknames from the "Inventory of the T. Butler King Papers, 1773-2003, Collection Number 1252," University of North Carolina, available at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/htm/01252.html>, accessed 31 May 2006.

APPENDIX C

TIMELINE OF KING'S MISSION

January 1861: King was appointed Commissioner to the courts of Europe.

January-March 1861: King prepared to leave for Europe.

March 13, 1861: King left New York aboard the *Adriatic* to Southampton, England and then proceeded to London.

March 27, 1861: King departed London for Paris.

April 16-27, 1861: King traveled to Belgium as per his instructions.

May-October 1861: King mainly stayed in France. He left for Britain in late October.

November 1, 1861: King concluded a contract with the Liverpool, England firm of Frederick Sabel and Company.

December 1861: King boarded a vessel in Southampton, England for Cuba.

January 20, 1862: King left Havana on the *Calhoun* for New Orleans. The ship was seized going through the blockade, but King escaped.

February 1862: King traveled from New Orleans to Richmond to consult with the Confederate government.

Late Spring 1862: King finally returned to Georgia to a new plantation in Ware County where his family had evacuated to after Union troops took his home on St. Simons Island.

End of Summer 1862: King went to Milledgeville to give his report to Governor Brown.

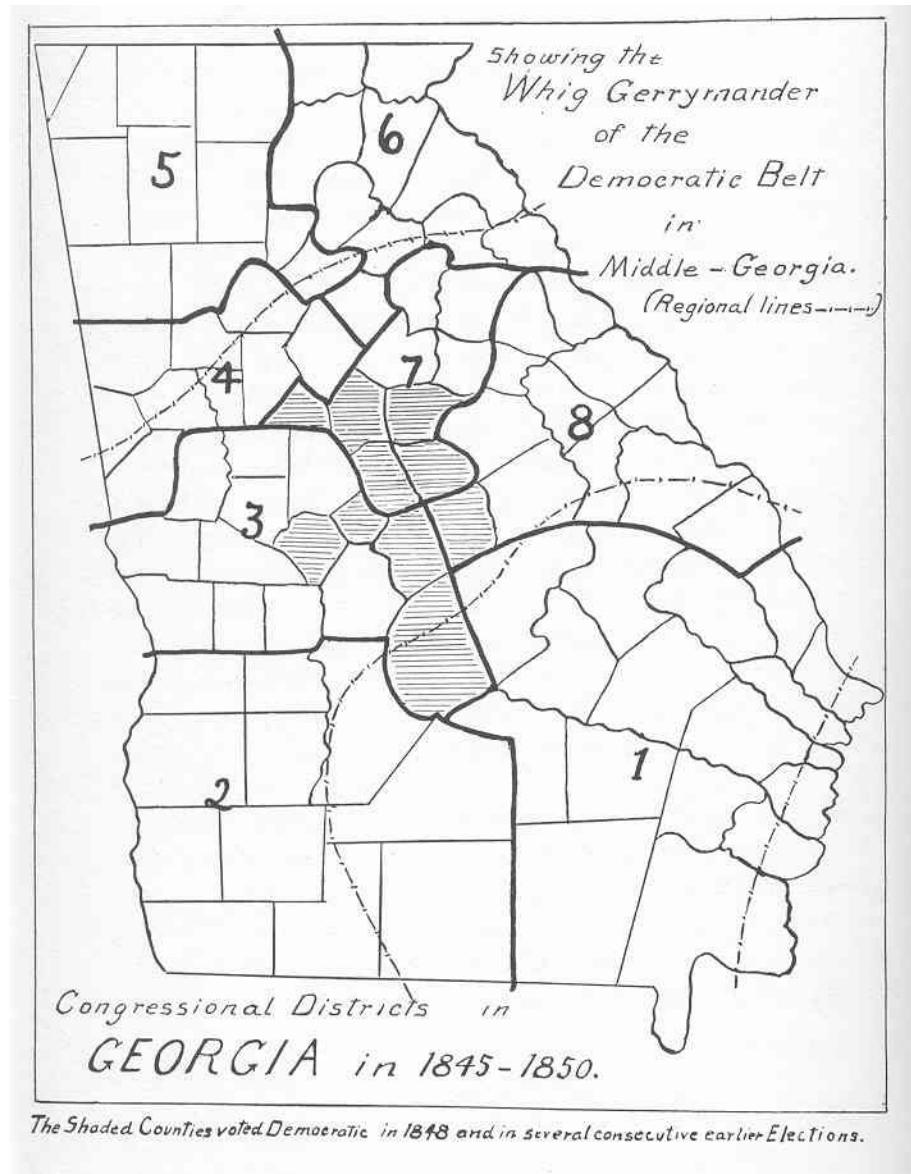
November 1862: The state legislature relieved King of all his extra expenses abroad.

May 10, 1864: Thomas Butler King died.

Source: Edward M. Steel, Jr., *T. Butler King of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964).

APPENDIX D

GEORGIA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS, 1850



Source: Richard Harrison Shryock, *Georgia and the Union in 1850* (Duke University Press, 1926; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1968), 171.