

Bibliographical Pathways to the Backcountry: Historical Writings of Robert M. Calhoon

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INTRODUCTION BY ROBERT M. CALHOON

In 1964 I received two job offers, one from DePaul University in Chicago and the other from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The DePaul job was the more impressive opportunity—a Tenure Track Assistant Professorship in Early American History. The Greensboro position was a one-year instructorship teaching the European and American surveys. For reasons I could not articulate clearly at the moment, I declined the DePaul offer and waited for several anxious weeks for the promised Greensboro appointment to materialize, which in due course it did.

Although I never regretted my choice, I sometimes wondered why I made it. After all, I had spent a happy decade in the upper middle west first as an undergraduate at the College of Wooster and then in graduate school at Western Reserve University. Chicago was like Cleveland, only bigger and more dynamic. Only gradually did I come to appreciate the appeal of the North Carolina Piedmont and the logic of building a career there. I had grown up in Pittsburgh, the northern hub of a region stretching through West Virginia, the Valley of Virginia, the Carolina Piedmont and Upcountry, and northern Georgia and Alabama. My Calhoon ancestors had settled in the Pennsylvania frontier before migrating to Ohio, Missouri, and Oklahoma, and therefore Backcountry before they were westerners, while my maternal ancestors had taken the Great Wagon Road to Lexington, Virginia in the 1760s and, finding the best farm land taken, moved to the banks of the Missouri River in 1819. (My parents met at the University of Missouri in 1924.) My mother's closest sibling, John McCluer, graduated from Davidson College and did graduate work at Chapel Hill before settling in Charlotte. My family summered in western Maryland. Thus I had a feel for the region Carl Bridenbaugh had called "The Back Settlements" in his influential book on southern colonial regionalism which I read for Jack Greene's Colonial History course at Western Reserve in 1961.

Not that I expected to do research on the Backcountry. The coming of the Revolution was the "hot" topic in the 1960s and that meant research trips to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. But my UNCG colleague and mentor, Richard Nelson Current, chided me gently for my disregard of local history, and proudly showed me his personal copy of *The Life of David Caldwell* by Eli Washington Caruthers. "There's stuff on the Tories in the Caldwell biography," he teased me, knowing that I was revising my dissertation on pre-Revolutionary Loyalism. See below entries B1, B2, and R1.

Indeed there was. Influenced by Edmund S. Morgan and even more by Morgan's mentor, Perry Miller, I sensed that Revolutionary-era sermons were an underutilized source on the political education of both Whigs and Tories. When I discovered two politically sophisticated Caldwell sermons in Caruthers's appendix, I realized that I had stumbled onto a gold mine of new insight into religion and politics. How, I wondered in 1974, did those sermons get written and preached in the wilds of the Carolina frontier, of all places?

Answering that question occupied much of my subsequent career. But framing that question, connecting it to what I already knew, re-educating myself about Calvinism and Scottish Common Sense philosophy, and getting inside of David Caldwell's head so that I could look outward at his society and environment through his eyes and sensibilities consumed my time in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s (entry B7).

That entire experience of research, writing, historical interpretation, and literary artistry stands in stark relief in my books, articles, reviews, and reference works published over a half century following that fateful conversation with Dick Current and even more fateful conversations with my Elon College colleague, Durward T. Stokes. A brief and selective guided tour of my historical publications may prove instructive and even entertaining to the historical community of Backcountry history teachers, history buffs, local history librarians and their clients, and even political leaders like Congressman Howard Coble—a product of two great Backcountry Institutions, Alamance Presbyterian Church and Guilford College (entries A9 and A12).

I did not, in those mid-career writings, think of myself as a Backcountry specialist. Instead I identified with the mid-twentieth century cosmopolitan historians who ranged widely over early modern Europe and early America, tracking the progress of Renaissance humanism (entries B6, A10, A13, A16, A17, A19, CA6, E4, R17, R19, R37, R98, and RE10). Gradually, I came to see that my mixture of religious and intellectual history defined religion too loosely and casually (entries B4, A11, A14, A17, and R50) and political philosophy with insufficient rigor (entries A5, A17, R10, R16, R34, R37, R63, and R86).

In 1995 I experienced an epiphany. What I had been studying for a quarter century and considered to be the glue holding society together was religiously grounded political moderation. (entry B7 announced that discovery but bits and pieces of that concept had already crept into entries B3, B6, CB1, E5, E6, E7, R26, and R38). Just as Perry Miller and Edmund Morgan (entries E4 and A19) had set off flash bulbs in my head, now Mark Noll and Donald Mathews imparted precision and elegance to my interdisciplinary scholarship (entries R50, R53, R58, B4, and B7).

Indeed, my discovery and appreciation of the beauty and intricacy of mind and spirit in political history broadly conceived brought invitations to write two Afterwords to new collections of state-of-the-art scholarship on the Ulster Scots diaspora and the loyalist diaspora (entries A18 and A19) and to co-author with John Moseley a cutting edge paper on Nathanael Greene's ethics (entry CA6). From its early eighteenth-century beginnings to its early twenty-first-century civic consciousness, the Backcountry has bred its own public intellectuals—commentators on politics, culture, and what its universities call “continuing education.” I am deeply indebted to editors at presses like the University of South Carolina and book review editors like Jon and Rosemary Yardley at the *Greensboro Daily News* in the 1960s and early 1970s for the opportunity to expound widely on history as a literary art and a social science in entries R13, R14, R16, and especially R19, a joint review of new cutting edge studies on colonial social order published in 1972 by Roland Bertoff, Carl Bridenbaugh, Pauline Maier, Gerald Mullin, and Robert Zemsky.

The 1960s and early 70s were the heyday of cosmopolitanism in early American history, and appreciation of the philosophical heritage of colonial British America bore fruit in the final quarter century of the twentieth century. Illustrative of this

transformation were my earliest writings about religion and politics (entries A16, A19, CB1, CA1, CA2, CA3, R60, R65, R80, R88, and R96). A common post-Reformation and Enlightenment education palpably held society together, and in the southern Backcountry it created porous boundaries between low country and Backcountry. The inclination of people in the middling ranks of society to think for themselves in matters of religion and morality fostered both denominational churches with old world roots and primitive churches rooted in the first three centuries of the Christian era as well as in Native American and African cultural and religious memory (entries A22, CA7, and CA9).

It is my hope that this listing of historical writings represents, albeit in embryonic form, a historiographical-bibliographical bridge between the 1960s and the 20 teens.

Books

- [B1] *The Loyalists in Revolutionary America, 1760-1781*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973).
- [B2] *Religion and the American Revolution in North Carolina*. (Raleigh: N.C. Division of Archives and History, 1976).
- [B3] *Revolutionary America: An Interpretive Overview*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).
- [B4] *Evangelicals and Conservatives in the Early South, 1740-1861*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988).
- [B5] *The Loyalist Perception and Other Essays*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).
- [B6] *Dominion and Liberty: Ideology in the Anglo-American World, 1660-1801*. (Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1994).
- [B7] *Political Moderation in America's First Two Centuries*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Coauthored Books

- [CB1] *Issues Past and Present: An American History Sourcebook* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1978), two volumes (co-authored with Philip Paludan, Michael Moore, Donald C. Lord, and Jonathan Utley).
- [CB2] *"A Truly Efficient School of Theology": The Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Historical Context* (Columbia: Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, 1981) (co-authored with H. George Anderson).
- [CB3] *Loyalists and Community in North America*. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994) (co-authored with Timothy M. Barnes and George A. Rawlyk).
- [CB4] *Tory Insurgents: The Loyalist Perception and Other Essays Revised and Expanded Edition*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010) (co-authored with Timothy M. Barnes and Robert Scott Davis).

Articles and Book Chapters

- [A1] Editor, "William Smith Jr.'s Alternative to the American Revolution" in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 22 (Jan. 1965):105-118.
- {A2} Editor, " 'A Sorrowful Spectator of These Tumultuous Times': Robert Beverley Describes the Coming of the Revolution" in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 73 (Jan. 1965): 41-55
- [A3] " 'I Have Deduced Your Rights': Joseph Galloway's Concept of His Role, 1774-1775" in *Pennsylvania History*, 35 (Oct. 1968): 356-78.
- [A4] " 'Unhinging Former Intimacies': Robert Beverley's Perception of the Pre-Revolutionary Controversy, 1761-1775" in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 68 (Spring 1969): 246-61.
- [A5] "The Loyalist Perception" in *Acadiensis*, 3 (Spring 1973): 3-14.
- [A6] "The Floridas, the Western Frontier, and Vermont: Thoughts on the Hinterland Loyalists" in Samuel Proctor, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Florida: Life on the Frontier* (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1976), 1-15.
- [A7] "Civil, Revolutionary, or Partisan: The Loyalists and the Nature of War for Independence" in *Military History of the American Revolution* (Washington: Government Printing Office for the U.S. Air Force Academy, 1976), 93-108.
- [A8] "A Troubled Culture: North Carolina in the New Nation, 1790-1834" in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *Writing North Carolina History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 76-110.
- [A9] "Separation of Church and State" in *Eerdman's Handbook to Christianity in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdman's Publishers, 1983): 272-73.
- [A10] "An Agrarian and Evangelical Culture" in Lindley S. Butler and Alan D. Watson, eds., *The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretive and Documentary History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 169-91.
- [A11] "Watergate and American Conservatism" in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 80 (Spring 1984), 127-37.
- [A12] "The Reintegration of the Loyalists and the Disaffected" in Jack P. Greene, ed., *The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 49-74.

- [A13] "Religion and Individualism in Early America" in Richard Curry and Lawrence Goodheart, eds., *American Chameleon: Individualism in Trans-National Context* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1991), 44-65.
- [A14] "On Political Moderation" in *Journal of the Historical Society*, (2006), 275-95.
- [A15] "Religion Confronts the Social Order" in Charles Lippy, ed., *Religion in South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 168-81.
- [A16] "The Evangelical Persuasion" in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 156-183.
- [A17] "Confessionalism and Primitivism in Southern Religious Culture" in *Center on Religion in the South Newsletter*, 10 (1995), 2-3.
- [A18] "Jacob Stirewalt and the Doctrine of Ministry" in *Proceedings of the Lutheran Historical Conference*, 16 (1998), 85-100.
- [A19] "Robert M. Weir and the Life of the Mind" in *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 99 (1998), 180-195.
- [A20] "Cusp of Spring," John B. Boles, ed., in *Autobiographical Reflections on Southern Religious History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 53-72.
- [A21] "Religion, Moderation, and the Post-Revolutionary Settlement" in Peter Onuf and Eliga Gould, eds., *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 217-36, 355-360.
- [A22] "Afterword: Historic Moderation in the Ulster to America Diaspora" in Warren Hofstra, ed., *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience, 1680-1830* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 233-48.
- [A23] "Afterword: Loyalist Cosmopolitanism" in Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan, eds., *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 277-87.

Coauthored Articles and Book Chapters

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- [CA2] “The Scandalous History of Sir Egerton Leigh” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 26 (Jan. 1969): 47-74 (co-authored with Robert M. Weir).
- [CA3] “The Removal of the Massachusetts General Court from Boston, 1769-1772” in *The Journal of American History*, 55 (Mar. 1969): 735-55 (co-authored with Donald C. Lord).
- [CA4] “The Coherence and Character of the Loyalist Press” in Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench, eds., *The Press and the American Revolution* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1981) (co-authored with Janice Potter).
- [CA5] “Moral Allegiance: John Witherspoon and Loyalist Recantation” in *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, 63 (Fall 1985): 273-83 (co-authored with Timothy M. Barnes).
- [CA6] “North Carolina Lutherans and the Tests of Time” in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 77 (Fall 2004): 338-53 (co-authored with Raymond M. Bost, Carl F. W. Ficken, Gary R. Freeze, and Susan W. McArver).
- [CA7] “Woodrow Wilson and Political Moderation” in *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 85 (2008): 137-150 (co-authored with Bradley R. Foley).
- CA8] “Religion and Loyalism” in *Faith and the Founders of the American Republic* (2012) (co-authored with Ruma Chopra).
- [CA9] “Nathanael Greene and Republican Ethics” in Jim Piecuch and Greg Massey, eds., *General Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution in the South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2012), 147-166 (co-authored with John M. Moseley).

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- [E3] "John Adams," "Thomas Jefferson," and "George Washington" in *Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia* (1981).
- [E4] "Perry Miller" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, (1983).
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- [E6] "Christian Church," "Kehukee Baptist Association," "Migration, Southward," "Robert Johnston Miller," and "James O'Kelly" in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* (1984).
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- [E8] "Spier Whitaker, III" in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, 6 (1996).
- [E9] "Loyalism and Neutrality," "The Impact of the Revolution on Church and State," and "Internal Effects: Religious" in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *Blackwell's Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (1991); reprinted, revised, and expanded (1999).
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- [E13] "Immanuel College," "Lutheran Church" in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*.
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Book Reviews

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- [R8] Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black in Greensboro Daily News*, Mar. 2, 1968.
- [R9] Jackson T. Main, *The Upper House in Revolutionary America, 1763-1788 in The Maryland Historical Magazine*, 63 (1968).
- [R10] Robert G. McCloskey, ed., *The Works of James Wilson in The Historian*, 30 (1968).
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- [R16] Michael Kammen, *Deputyes and Libertyes in Greensboro Daily News*, June 29, 1970.
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