

2004

Colonial Williamsburg, National Identity, and Cold War Patriotism

Luke Edward Roberts

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Roberts, Luke Edward, "Colonial Williamsburg, National Identity, and Cold War Patriotism" (2004).

Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects. Paper 1539626439.

<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-jxhv-s327>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND COLD WAR
PATRIOTISM

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of American Studies

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by


Luke Roberts

2004

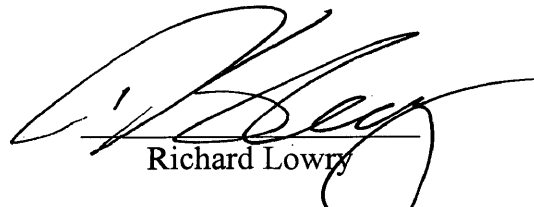
APPROVAL SHEET

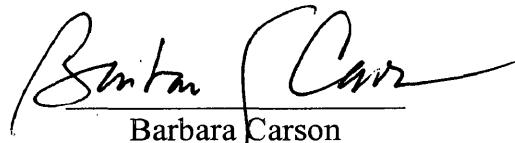
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts


Luke Roberts

Approved by the Committee, April 2004


Richard Lowry


Barbara Carson



Kimberly Philips

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
INTRODUCTION	2
CHAPTER I. FORMATIONS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AT COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG	7
CHAPTER II. PROMOTING PATRIOTISM AT COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG	16
CHAPTER III. AMERICA AND COLD WAR PATRIOTISM	31
CHAPTER IV. SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG	46
CONCLUSION	56
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59
VITA	62

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Professor Richard Lowry for his patient guidance and thoughtful criticism. The author is also indebted to MaryKate Roberts for her careful reading of this paper, as well as the staff of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives for their assistance.

Abstract

Our national identity is the product of many different representations of the nation. Certain representations of our past help shape our sense of national identity while reinforcing contemporary political beliefs and ideas. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Colonial Williamsburg helped to both shape national identity and promote political beliefs that were in line with the anti-communist climate of Cold War America.

This paper will examine the role that Colonial Williamsburg plays in the formation of national identity. Colonial Williamsburg's association with the founding of American democracy has allowed it to become an institution that connects modern Americans with the ideals that have shaped their nation. Colonial Williamsburg sends the message that the ideals of the founding fathers are an important part of modern American society, thus visiting Colonial Williamsburg makes people feel connected to the American nation and they can see themselves as a part of the greater national experience.

This paper will also examine the efforts of Colonial Williamsburg to use the ideals of American democracy to promote political ideas that are contemporary to a specific time period. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Colonial Williamsburg promoted a specific type of American democracy by linking American democratic ideals to the crusade against communism. Motivated by the anti-communist messages that pervaded American society at the time and through the use of various publications, films, and radio programs, Colonial Williamsburg hoped to promote American democracy at home while, in cooperation with the United States State Department, sought to encourage American democracy abroad.

COLNIAL WILLIAMSBURG, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND
COLD WAR PATRIOTISM

Introduction

Why are Americans so fascinated by the past? Our national holidays commemorate people or events of the past, museums and historic sites preserve and interpret the past, movies present the culture and struggles of our past while styles of architecture and furnishings allow people to live in the past. Perhaps it is a desire among many people to “escape for a time from the tyranny of the modern lock – step world of digital watches and computers, to slacken the pace of life and regain a sense of rootedness.”¹ While many people may use the past to escape from the technologically driven fast pace of the present, there is, perhaps, a more significant reason for our fascination with the past. Our history allows people to connect with basic beliefs and ideals that serve as the roots of the American nation, and by doing so helps people identify with the concept of being part of a nation. Our national history connects people with the ideas that have made the present way of life possible. This helps people identify modern society with a society in which beliefs and ideals have not been obscured by progress and technology. Using the past to put people in touch with their national roots gives them a feeling of connectedness to the concept of the American nation. This, in turn, allows them to identify with the idea that they are a part of something larger and outside the bounds of their everyday lives.

¹ Lowenthal, David. The Past is a Foreign Country. Cambridge, London, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985. p. 49.

Today it is possible for Americans to connect with the past in almost every aspect of their lives. Through the museums they visit to the houses in which they live, Americans are continuously attempting to bring the ideas and values of the past into their modern lives. In his essay discussing the colonial revival in American architecture and furnishings, Kenneth Ames states that “evidence of the past, including the not-so-distant past, demonstrates that people realized the necessity of preserving relics in order to keep ideas and ideals alive.”² The ideals that the colonial revival looked to perpetuate into the future were those of colonial America. These ideals, and often times myths, could be absorbed and understood by all Americans, including those who have emigrated to the United States from other lands. Through the course of American history, colonial ideals have come to represent that which is truly American.

In her autobiographical work *The Promised Land*, Mary Antin illustrates how powerful ideals and myths of the past can be in shaping national identity. A Russian immigrant in the United States in the early years of the twentieth century, Antin uses the historical stories and myths of her adopted country to define what it means to be an American. When reflecting on her sixth grade study of the American Revolution and the early republic, Antin explains how the American past allowed her to identify with her newfound place in American society. She mentions reading stories “about the noble boy who would not tell a lie to save himself from punishment”³ and how,

² Ames, Kenneth. *Introduction*. In Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America*. New York: Norton, 1985. p. 13.

³ Antin, Mary. *The Promised Land*. London: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912. p.223.

through these myths, she elevated George Washington to the status of sainthood. As her study of the revolution continued, Antin was able to develop a concept of national identity:

As I read how the patriots planned the revolution, and the Women gave their sons to die in battle, and the heroes led to victory, and the rejoicing people set up the republic, it dawned on me gradually what was meant by *my country*. The people all desiring noble things and striving for them together, defying their oppressors, giving their lives for each other – all this it was that made *my country*⁴

Antin is able to identify with the American nation through the ideals and myths of the revolutionary era. She is able to define herself as an American and she has a definitive concept of what it means to be an American based on the history that had been presented to her. Whether it was based on fact or myth, whether it was realistic or idealistic, Antin's search of the past connected her to the concept and ideals of the American nation and in doing so made an American out of a Russian immigrant.

Today, places such as Colonial Williamsburg attempt to identify and explain the ideals of the American Revolution to the public. As a result, Colonial Williamsburg acts as a conduit between Americans and their nation, creating the opportunity for people to see themselves as a part of a national destiny. By implication, it is a destiny that had begun long before the visitors have lived and will continue for long after they are gone. In a sense, Colonial Williamsburg attempts to help visitors better understand the meaning of the phrase "my country" much as Mary Antin's study of the American Revolution had done for her.

⁴ Ibid., p.225.

As one of the pre-eminent history museums in the United States, Colonial Williamsburg is an important part in the process of forming concepts of national identity. When John D. Rockefeller, Jr. authorized the purchase of the first piece of property that grew into what is now known as Colonial Williamsburg, he recognized the value of creating such a restoration. Rockefeller hoped to “restore Williamsburg, so far as that may be possible, to what it was in the old colonial days and to make it a great center for historical study and inspiration.”⁵ As Rockefeller became more involved in the restoration project he began to feel that the restoration would offer more than just a center of study. “As the work progressed, I have come to feel that perhaps an even greater value is the lesson that it teaches of the patriotism, high purpose, and unselfish devotion of our forefathers to the common good. If this proves to be true, any expenditure made there will be amply justified.”⁶ What Rockefeller had realized was that institutions such as Colonial Williamsburg could serve a dual purpose: as a center for historical study, and as a site promoting patriotism and a sense of national identity among those who visit.

Twenty-one years later Rockefeller’s son, John D. Rockefeller III, had transformed the ideas of his father from the hope that Colonial Williamsburg would be a center of historical study, to the idea that Colonial Williamsburg could be instrumental in promoting the ideals of democracy both at home and abroad. As Rockefeller III stated in 1948, “Colonial Williamsburg has the opportunity, indeed the responsibility, to help show that our democracy is a living, vital force and way of

⁵ Humelsine, Carlisle H. Recollections of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in Williamsburg 1926-1960. Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1985. p.6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

life today; that it is a goal and an objective which is as worth working for in everyday life as it is in fighting for in war.”⁷ This statement signals that in two decades time, Colonial Williamsburg had become more than just a center of study. It was becoming an active, working purveyor of democratic ideas. Rockefeller III believed that the institution of Colonial Williamsburg had a responsibility to help spread democratic thought. Indeed, by the late 1940s Rockefeller III had created a committee to investigate the possibility of using Colonial Williamsburg’s message to influence and shape modern world affairs.⁸ While this transformation may be attributed to a number of factors, it is to a large degree, the product of Cold War culture. Colonial Williamsburg became caught up in the anti-communist rhetoric that was such a significant part of American culture in the early years of the Cold War. As the American public was inundated with anti-communist messages, Colonial Williamsburg embraced those messages as a way to promote the relevance of the restoration to a nation engaged in a Cold War with the Soviet Union. This paper will analyze the concerted effort made by Colonial Williamsburg in the late 1940s and early 1950s to embrace the discourse of the Cold War by linking the ideals of the American Revolution, such as freedom and democracy, to capitalism and comparing them to the traits of Soviet communism. This is an important part in the formation of Benedict Anderson’s idea of the “imagined community” which is a piece of the larger and ongoing process of shaping and developing ideas of national identity.

⁷ Williamsburg, Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, “Our Opportunity,” an Address by John D. Rockefeller III, February 4, 1948.

⁸ Kammen, Michael. Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture. New York: Vintage Books a Division of Random House, Inc, 1991, p. 582.

Chapter One

Formations of National Identity at Colonial Williamsburg

In his study of the origins and spread of nationalism, Benedict Anderson states “Most Americans will never meet other Americans yet we have a sense of a solid community moving along the line of history.”⁹ This sense of identification with those whom we do not know is what Anderson calls the imagined community. It is the idea that people of diverse geographic, ethnic and social backgrounds can see beyond their immediate surroundings and feel part of one national unit. The imagined community can be based upon a form of government or a philosophical idea or concept that suggests people with seemingly diverse backgrounds enjoy the same way of life. People of various backgrounds belong to an imagined community that unites them under the auspices of the national.

Today, Colonial Williamsburg plays an important role in the creation of an imagined community by inviting Americans from any part of the country to identify and relate to the origins of their nation. The basic ideals associated with American democracy, such as freedom, prosperity, liberty, and justice are all espoused by the interpretive program of Colonial Williamsburg. The interpretation of these ideals has, in many ways, helped the restoration become the embodiment of not just colonial ideals, but of American ideals. This allows people from different geographic, ethnic,

⁹ Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London and New York: Verso, 1991. p. 26.

or socio-economic backgrounds to come to Williamsburg and identify the qualities that make them a part of the American nation.

In his essay on cultural identity, Stuart Hall explains how the narrative of history is vital in creating the “imagined community” that allows people to envision themselves as part of a larger entity, the nation. Hall distinguishes some main elements relating to the narrative of history and discusses how they help to construct a concept of national identity among the people. These elements are also an important part of the way Colonial Williamsburg tells the narrative of the American past.

One element is the narrative of the nation itself. The ways in which the story of the nation is told in the classroom, in literature, through the media, and through popular culture all help to shape the concept of the national. It is possible to add museums to the list above, as they are considered by many to be the “custodians” of the past. For the narrative of the nation to be effective it must be able to unite Americans with the idea of a national destiny. By focusing on certain judicial and legislative ideas that existed both in colonial America and twentieth century America, Colonial Williamsburg promotes a feeling that the ideals and emotions that led to the creation of the nation are the same ideals that exist in our society today. Visitors to Colonial Williamsburg will recognize the accepted ideals of American democracy, and be able to identify the same ideals in modern society. The visitors will then walk away with the feeling that they are a part of something that has lasted for two centuries, and will continue to last long after they are gone. It places them in the center of an ongoing, national destiny and makes them see and appreciate the larger picture of the national.

Visitors to Colonial Williamsburg see that the traditions surrounding the origins of the nation have stood the test of time. The origins, continuity, tradition, and timelessness of the ideals of American democracy illustrate the idea that aspects of democracy may change, but basic ideals that form the foundation of democracy can remain unchanged over time.¹⁰ A sense of being part of something that is timeless is important in perpetuating national identity across generations.

The narrative of the nation also depends upon some degree of tradition. In many ways, Colonial Williamsburg is centered upon the idea of identifying the origins of tradition in American society. Interpretive programs at Colonial Williamsburg focus on concepts of legislative tradition, citing the origins of our modern system of representative legislation within the walls of the reconstructed capital, and the chamber of the House of Burgesses. The court program at the colonial courthouse on Market Square highlights elements of colonial justice that continue to be found in our modern judicial system, such as the opportunity for the accused to stage a defense and the authority of the court to distribute punishments. These ideas of traditional American society are an important part of Colonial Williamsburg's interpretive program.

Perhaps the most important element of the narrative of the nation is a "foundational myth," which Hall defines as "a story which locates the origin of the nation, the people, and their national character so early that they are lost in the mists of, not 'real,' but 'mythic' time."¹¹ The concept of a foundational myth provides

¹⁰ Hall, Stuart, ed. Modernity: an Introduction to Modern Societies. Open University, 1996. p.614.

¹¹ Ibid., p.614.

national origins with a mythic quality that sets them above critical analysis. The factors surrounding the creation of and the individuals involved in the establishment of the nation become mythologized and that sets them apart from others. They become sacred in a way that links the nation to divinity and gives the national a religious quality. Myth provides social cohesion by creating stories and legends filled with symbolic meaning and characters that are larger than life.¹²

While Hall's discussion of national identity revolves around constructions of British national identity, it can be applied to the United States. Over time, the figures and events surrounding the struggle for American independence have taken on a mythic quality. Colonial Williamsburg has presented visitors with an American version of the foundational myth in which visitors can interact with the major figures of the myth. George Washington talks with visitors about important issues of the day, Thomas Jefferson discusses his role in the House of Burgesses and Patrick Henry confirms his reputation as a radical in a speech to visitors. Colonial Williamsburg allows visitors to enter the foundational myth of America and see for themselves those whom we have mythologized.

Over time, however, it has become increasingly difficult for the imagined community to manage all other distinctions within society. While Colonial Williamsburg works hard to contribute to the imagined community that will unite Americans, it must, today, also contend with an increasingly diverse society. Hall discusses what he refers to as the crisis of identity that exists in America today and gauges its impact on the idea of national identity. He argues that many feel the old

¹² Ibid., p.481

concept of national identity, a concept based on a homogenous society, is corroding and fragmenting because of increased levels of diversity in modern society. Not only is society today more ethnically diverse than it was in the 1920s and 1930s, but changing gender roles, new technology and economic opportunities are allowing people to take part in society in ways in which they were previously excluded from doing. For example, the opportunities available to women today have, in some ways, changed the role of women in our society. No longer are women forced by social expectations into the role of housewife, nurse, secretary, or teacher. They now have the opportunity to choose what role they will play in society and their choices today include everything from lawyer to firefighter or doctor to C.E.O. Technology has also changed the role of individuals in our society. The technologically driven society of today places a high value on technical know-how, and a person's gender, racial, or economic identities have become less important. All of these factors allow people to establish identities as individuals who relate to different groups within the larger world of the nation. People today tend to identify with groups based upon ethnic, socio-economic, or professional qualities before associating themselves with the nation. This newfound identity of individual groups destabilizes the concept of national identity and works to de-center older conceptions of what it means to be a part of the nation.¹³ Hall eloquently illustrates this point through a discussion of the Clarence Thomas – Anita Hill hearings of 1991:

The hearings caused a public scandal and polarized American society. Some blacks supported Thomas on racial grounds; others opposed him on sexual grounds. Black women were divided, depending on whether their "identities" as blacks or as

¹³ Ibid., p.600-601.

women prevailed. Black men were also divided, depending upon whether their sexism overrode their liberalism. White men were divided, depending not only on their politics, but on how they identified themselves with respect to racism and sexism. White conservative women supported Thomas not only on political grounds, but because of their opposition to feminism. White feminists, often liberal on race, opposed Thomas on sexual grounds. And because Judge Thomas is a member of the judicial elite and Anita Hill, at the time of the alleged incident, was a junior employee, there were issues of social class position at work in these arguments too.¹⁴

Thus in the United States today, people have multiple identities that often times supersede national identity. It is because of this increased tendency for people to identify themselves with individual groups with specific interests that it has become more difficult to sustain an image of the national that all segments of the population can agree upon.

From its conception in the late 1920s, the patriotism promoted by Colonial Williamsburg was supposed to support the imagined community that allowed Americans to overlook all of their different individual identities in the name of national identity. In the years between the beginning of the restoration of Williamsburg and the early 1950s there were competing identities within Williamsburg itself, although not as extensive as the ones that exist today. For example, when John D. Rockefeller, Jr. first became involved with the restoration project there were rumblings among the locals regarding a “Yankee Northerner” purchasing property in Williamsburg. Rockefeller had to contend with his identity as a northerner and attempted to do so by being as unobtrusive in the community as possible.¹⁵ In hindsight, it appears that Colonial Williamsburg may have overcome

¹⁴ Ibid., p.601.

¹⁵ Humelsine, p.8

this conflict of identities by promoting Williamsburg as a site of national significance rather than a place that had only local historic importance.

As the restoration was open to the public, racial identity became an important issue. The identity of people as either African-Americans or white-Americans was a powerful factor throughout American society, and the ideals of the imagined community of America were not always able to transcend these differences. As Michael Kammen states, “Rockefeller had acquiesced in the argument that white tourists would be comfortable only if African-Americans were visible in eighteenth-century livery as deferential servants but invisible as twentieth-century free persons.”¹⁶ Rockefeller had recognized that individual identity was not going to be completely displaced by Colonial Williamsburg’s representation of the ideals of American democracy. While the imagined community talked about such ideals, the Williamsburg Inn remained segregated and African-American employees lived in a segregated dormitory.¹⁷

Stuart Hall illustrates how modern society weakens national identity, and while that process may be intensified today, it is by no means new. The patriotism promoted at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s, 40s and 50s that was supposed to allow visitors to see above individual identity was ineffective in the face of discrimination based upon racial identity. The imagined community that unites people under the idea of the nation does not necessarily unite all people of differing

¹⁶ Kammen, p. 368.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.368.

backgrounds. While it does work to overcome differences, the idea of an imagined community that promotes unity among diverse people seems to be more effective when there is a specific goal in mind. This was especially true in the early years of the Cold War.

The extent to which Colonial Williamsburg could be used to promote patriotism did not become clear until the outbreak of World War II. The certainty of America's mission in the war made it easy to promote a form of patriotism that would be beneficial to the outcome of that mission. "Like events and interests in our own past, those in history acquire different meanings and require different interpretations as time passes."¹⁸ The fight against totalitarianism gave new meaning to the traditional American ideals of freedom and democracy and in fact encouraged their application to a contemporary situation that involved the entire world. In today's world it is increasingly difficult to promote one form of national identity within a society that is more diverse than ever, and in a nation that does not have a clear idea of its place in world affairs. While the attacks of September eleventh and the subsequent war on terrorism may provide some sense of national purpose in the modern world, it is markedly different than the years immediately following World War II. The United States then had a new and powerful position in the world and a definitive enemy with which to contend. The climate of the Cold War encouraged Colonial Williamsburg to adapt the ideals, myths and traditions of the American past to serve the aim of anti-communism and the promotion of American democracy.

¹⁸ Jacobitti, Edmund, ed. Composing Useful Pasts: History as Contemporary Politics. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000. p.x.

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s Colonial Williamsburg promoted a form of national identity that was fervently anti-communist.

Chapter Two

Promoting Patriotism at Colonial Williamsburg

John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s primary goal was a historically accurate re-creation of the colonial city, but he also recognized the role such a restoration could play in promoting American ideals. While this was not his primary concern he did acknowledge that a restoration such as Colonial Williamsburg had the potential to inspire those who visited to live up to the American ideals promoted at Colonial Williamsburg. Thus, if the usefulness of Colonial Williamsburg as a purveyor of American ideals was not a new idea in the early years of the cold war, an added emphasis of Colonial Williamsburg as a purveyor of specifically anti-communist American ideals was. As with most institutions throughout the United States, Colonial Williamsburg did not escape the infusion of anti-communist sentiment that had worked its way into the fabric of American life. In fact, it embraced such sentiments. From 1945 through 1953, Colonial Williamsburg promoted a version of American patriotism that supported the current anti-communist sentiment that was part of American society. By focusing its interpretive program to this aim and sending the message of Colonial Williamsburg to a larger, sometimes worldwide audience, the leaders of the restoration hoped to awaken and encourage a specific form of American patriotism.

Colonial Williamsburg recognized the international role of the United States in the new world order and the restoration became a beacon of not only American ideals, but of the ideals of people throughout the democratic world. In other words, Colonial Williamsburg became a shrine to all those who supported democracy over communism. The official guidebook of 1951 implied the need for these ideals of colonial America in the contemporary world.

Today, Williamsburg stands as a symbol of one of the most impressive eras of the American past: an era of ideas as well as actions which together helped shape a young republic... There is also the opportunity to see Williamsburg as an affirmation of the spiritual vigor which must underlie any strong democratic society.¹⁹

Rather than thinking of Colonial Williamsburg as a tool with which to strengthen just American democracy, in the years following World War II the museum became a tool with which to strengthen any democratic society. A 1952 publication documenting the first twenty-five years of Colonial Williamsburg reinforced this idea. “After World War II, with American influence permeating the world and proclaiming the advantages of democracy, it was natural that Williamsburg’s horizon should also extend.”²⁰ During the emergence of the Cold War, Colonial Williamsburg believed it could serve as a symbol of democracy throughout the world. The patriotism promoted at Colonial Williamsburg in the early years of the cold war was a blend of American myth, traditional American ideals, and anti-communism. This patriotism did not simply encourage loyalty to the American government; it encouraged loyalty

¹⁹ Williamsburg, Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, The Official Guidebook and Map of Colonial Williamsburg, 1951. p. 9.

²⁰ Williamsburg, Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, The City That Turned Back Time. Parke Rouse, Jr. 1952.

to the American way of life. It was a patriotism that was based on the necessity of a firm understanding of American ideals. As Wendy Kozol states in her essay examining the link between nationalism and domesticity in *Life* magazine,

Nationalistic rhetoric structured Cold War ideologies that polarized the world into factions of good and evil. Patriotism was defined as much by social conventions and cultural ideals as by militaristic actions such as risking one's life for one's country. Most clearly, any criticism of the government was defined as unpatriotic, a definition that often extended to criticisms of the "American way of life."²¹

The Cold War had confirmed to the American people that American patriotism was not restricted to government or military actions, but included the way in which people lived their lives. This patriotism included elements of civic responsibility and individualism as well as anti-communism. The addition of anti-communism gave this blend of patriotism a flavor that was contemporary. Rather than merely celebrating the past, the patriotism encouraged at Colonial Williamsburg suggested that the ideals of the past were directly related to a specific contemporary conflict and its outcome, and these were the ideals that the American people, as well as the rest of the world, needed to see.

In February of 1951, *Fortune* magazine published an edition entitled "U.S.A. the Permanent Revolution." The title, borrowed from the writings of Trotsky, suggested that the ideals of the American revolution have not disappeared. In fact, the article implied that those ideals were an integral part of the struggle against communism. According to the article,

²¹ Kozol, Wendy. "Good Americans: Nationalism and Domesticity in *Life* Magazine, 1945-1960." Bodnar, John, ed. *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996. p. 234.

“The U.S.A. represents a revolution in human affairs, which had been in preparation for many hundreds of years, but which was actually undertaken in the eighteenth century and has been carried on ever since. It is the revolution of the human individual against all forms of enslavement; against all forms of earthly power, whether spiritual, political, or economic, that seeks to govern man without consulting his individual will.”²²

The article, in a sense, was an updated version of the ideals of the revolution designed to work with a 1950s audience. Its emphasis on the triumph of the individual as well as the spiritual, political and economic powers enslaving the world was a reference to the expansion of Soviet communism which was what many believed to be the very threat against the American way of life. The articles in this edition outlined the American way of life to which Wendy Kozol referred, as well as the American way of life that was an important part of Colonial Williamsburg’s brand of patriotism in the early years of the Cold War. The issue was divided into three parts that examined such topics as the general characteristics of American democracy, how Americans have translated these characteristics into certain fields, and the problems that the guardians of the “American proposition”²³ faced in the modern world.

The essays contained in this issue of *Fortune* solidified the idea that the American way of life was linked to the current state of crisis that existed throughout the world. The preface to this issue placed the current world struggle in historical perspective:

There comes a time in the history of every people when destiny knocks on their door with an iron insistence. In

²² “U.S.A. The Permanent Revolution.” *Fortune* February 1951: XLII, p. 68.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

the history of America, destiny has knocked thus three times: once when we faced the seemingly impossible odds of British power to gain our independence; once at Fort Sumter, when we faced the bloody task of preserving our union: and it is knocking today.²⁴

By placing the current state of crisis in good historical company of the American Revolution and the Civil War, this statement linked the struggle against world communism with the morally righteous causes of the American past. If the Revolution was about independence and the Civil War about preserving the union, then the Cold War was about preserving the American way of life.

While this article rarely mentioned communism and the Soviet Union by name, it was clear that the current state of crisis referred to was the struggle between American capitalism and Soviet communism. The page entitled “The American Way of Life” was set next to a full-page picture of a city sidewalk crowded with people outside a Woolworth’s store. The caption, “Saturday afternoon shopping on main street,” painted an effective picture of American capitalism at work. The link between this scene of capitalism in action and the title on the opposite page “The American Way of Life,” created an image that suggested the American way of life was, indeed, capitalism.²⁵

The article defined the American way of life as a combination of a “vast complex of manners, customs, techniques, ideas, laws, and principles.”²⁶ On the following page the tone changed into a defense of American capitalism. Referring to

²⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 62-63.

²⁶ Ibid., p.63.

socialist and communist claims that capitalism exploited workers for the sake of profits, the article stated:

It is perfectly evident...that it is not the capitalists who are using the people, but the people who are using the capitalist. Capital has become, not the master of this society, but its servant.²⁷

The article continued to state that the people use capitalism to achieve a better standard of living, and this is evidenced through the listing of material goods not necessary for survival that have come to be listed on the consumer price index. The “vast complex of manners, customs, techniques, ideas, laws, and principles” that make up *Fortune's* definition of the American way of life can be summed up in one word: capitalism.

Throughout the article there is an attempt to link the current struggle with the ideals of the American Revolution. The language used throughout the article at times mimicked the language of the Declaration of Independence by invoking the idea of destiny and applying it to a current situation. Thomas Jefferson began the Declaration of Independence with the phrase “When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another...” This implied that the struggle against the British in the eighteenth century was a part of national destiny. As previously stated, the *Fortune* article began with the phrase “There comes a time in the history of every people when destiny knocks on their door with an iron insistence.”²⁸ Just as the Declaration of Independence had done for the colonists, this edition of *Fortune*

²⁷ Ibid., p.64.

²⁸ Ibid., p.61.

placed twentieth-century Americans in the midst of national destiny, linking the struggle of the founding fathers to the modern struggle against communism. This connection was reinforced throughout the article by images of John Adams, Thomas, Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton. The article took this link a step further by implying that the individual rights that are cherished as a part of the American way of life were given to the American people by God. Building off of the idea put forth in the Declaration of Independence, that individual rights were endowed upon men by their creator, *Fortune* inserted the Christian concept of God in the place of the creator and suggested that there was a divine link between God and the American way of life. This concept placed the United States in a morally superior position to that of the totalitarian, militaristic, and most importantly, godless nature of the Soviet Union.²⁹ The fact that this position was also a part of Colonial Williamsburg's idea of patriotism was confirmed in the report by the Colonial Williamsburg president in 1951. Speaking of the purpose of Colonial Williamsburg, he stated that the restoration was "a place where history would speak to modern Americans; where they would hear a proud voice – a strong faith in god, in democracy and liberty, in integrity, high moral purpose, a sense of public duty, and responsibility...a shrine to the American faith."³⁰ In short, the American way of life was divine and moral while the unspoken implication suggested that the Soviet way of life was godless and amoral.

This edition of *Fortune* magazine suggested that the American way of life was

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.88-89.

³⁰ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, "Colonial Williamsburg: The First Twenty-Five Years, a Report by the President. December 31, 1951.

one in which individual rights held a place of greater importance than the government. It was one in which the American people had a moral advantage over those who opposed democratic ideals and, perhaps most importantly, was one that was ruled by the idea of capitalism as a way of improving life.

The idea of using Colonial Williamsburg as a tool in contemporary world affairs was championed by Rockefeller III. While John D. Rockefeller, Jr. considered the primary purpose of Williamsburg to be a place in which Americans could learn about the ideals that had shaped the nation, Rockefeller III was promoting the idea of expanding the educational programs to be used in the context of the Cold War. Despite the efforts of Rockefeller III, Rockefeller Jr. was determined to keep restoration as the primary purpose of Colonial Williamsburg. In late 1945 Rockefeller Jr. and Rockefeller III met to discuss the post-war plans for Williamsburg. The product of this meeting was an agreement between the two men that outlined the four major areas Colonial Williamsburg would focus on in the post-war years.³¹

According to the agreement Colonial Williamsburg's efforts would be concentrated on: "1) activities that would produce income; 2) the 'enrichment' of the environment and interiors of the buildings; 3) the completion of projects currently approved or to be approved by the trustees; and 4) educational and extension activities."³² Rockefeller Jr. felt that there was much work to be done in terms of historic restoration and that should be the priority. He wanted to be sure that the

³¹ Harr, John Ensor and Peter J. Johnson. The Rockefeller Century. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988. p.490.

³² Ibid., p.490.

restoration would be complete and therefore wanted to limit the amount of money that went into the “educational and extension activities.” After this meeting, Rockefeller III was placed in charge of the educational aspect of Colonial Williamsburg and in 1948 he began to donate an annual gift of \$50,000 of his own money to support the educational programs of Colonial Williamsburg.³³

Between 1945 and 1953, the patriotism promoted at Colonial Williamsburg incorporated all of the previously mentioned aspects of the American way of life in its effort to combat the evils of communism. Despite the concerns of his father, as Rockefeller III became increasingly involved in the operation of Colonial Williamsburg he saw an opportunity to expand the education and interpretive program at Williamsburg in such a way that it could influence the outcome of the present state of crisis that existed throughout the world. Called on to address the employees of Colonial Williamsburg in February of 1948, Rockefeller III outlined his concept of Colonial Williamsburg as a player in national policy. Entitled “Our Opportunity,” Rockefeller’s address was ambitious and not at all discreet in its anti-communist sentiment:

A problem which knows no borders, and to all intents and purposes, encircles the world. I refer to the head on clash of two ideologies – two different ways of thinking and of life. It is the conflict between a free society and a police state... Colonial Williamsburg could bring to the people fundamental basic human qualities – courage, self reliance, faith, initiative, self sacrifice, devotion to common welfare... Colonial Williamsburg has the opportunity, indeed the responsibility, to help show that our democracy is a living, vital force and way of life today; that it is a goal and an objective which is as worth working for in everyday life as it is in fighting for in war.³⁴

³³ Ibid., p.490-491.

³⁴ Rockefeller III, “Our Opportunity.”

Rockefeller III's address marked the beginning of efforts at Colonial Williamsburg to promote a patriotism that invoked the concepts and ideals of the American revolutionary era to help combat the communist threat that existed in the early years of the cold war.

If there was any doubt regarding the nature of what Rockefeller III referred to as the "problem that knows no borders," it was made clear through the work of a newly created committee. In 1950 Rockefeller III formed the Special Survey Committee (which he funded with his own money) to research, plan, and implement the idea of expanding Colonial Williamsburg's mission in order to influence world affairs. Through this committee Colonial Williamsburg singled out communism as the preeminent threat that was facing the United States. Two staff members, John C. Goodbody and Kershaw Burbank were selected to form the committee and they reported only to Kenneth Chorley, the president of Colonial Williamsburg, and Rockefeller himself.³⁵ Within a year's time, Goodbody and Burbank had traveled to "trouble spots" behind the Iron Curtain and had written a report that outlined the purpose of the committee and highlighted the dangers of communism and the possible ways in which Colonial Williamsburg could work to counter those dangers.³⁶ The stated purpose of the Special Survey Committee was to research the feasibility of creating a long-range educational program that would identify and explain important

³⁵ Kammen, p. 582.

³⁶ Ibid., p.582.

eighteenth century concepts and how those concepts related to the contemporary political scene as well as their relation to free people around the world.³⁷

The report of the Special Survey Committee was divided into three sections. The first section outlined eighteenth century concepts that were particularly appropriate to Williamsburg. In this section, the committee detailed eight concepts, and while they referred to colonial America, their contrast to communism was very clear. The first concept was entitled “Dignity and Integrity of the Individual,” and claimed that the rights of the individual were vital to the survival of any democratic society. “Today it provides the fundamental reason for the survival of the democratic way of life; it is the essential motive of any free society.”³⁸

In a veiled critique of the communist system, the report talked about individual liberty and stated that individuals must be protected from “unwarranted intrusion by the government or by his fellow men.” The importance of the individual discussed in the *Fortune* magazine article was mentioned several more times in this section of the Special Survey Committee’s report. The civic responsibility of the individual, opportunity of the individual and reason of the individual, not the state, were all listed as important eighteenth century concepts in Williamsburg.³⁹ The report also linked the idea of self-determination to the ideals of the American nation and ended the section stating that the last important concept was faith and morality, once again drawing attention to the lack of religion in the communist system.⁴⁰

³⁷ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, Survey Committee (Special) folder, Working Notes, February 20, 1951.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Section I.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Section I.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Section I, part B.

Part B of section one of the Special Survey Committee's report highlighted concepts that were shared by free people around the world. It suggested that ideas such as self-determination, the dignity of the individual, and freedom of religion were, among others, basic elements of freedom regardless of nationality. Implying that it is the responsibility of the free world to extend freedom to those nations controlled by totalitarianism, the report stated:

Man, because of the changing patterns and increasing complexities of life, has come to realize that his security as a free man depends in large part on the welfare and security of his fellow men.⁴¹

This section of the report suggested that the American ideals that were espoused in the interpretive program of Colonial Williamsburg were the ideals that would lead nations under control of communism to freedom.

The second section of the Special Survey Committee's report entitled "Some Basic Concepts of Stalinist Communism" used a variety of quotations from the likes of Marx, Engles, and Stalin to prove that Soviet communism was indeed totalitarian, violent, godless and amoral. Stalin was quoted explaining why the Communist Party was anti-religion, and thus confirming the American perception of a godless and amoral society. Labor Unions were referred to as sources of government propaganda and the purpose of education in the Soviet Union was explained to be nothing other than a way to instill communist political ideology in Soviet youth.⁴²

This was followed by section three, "Some Key Points Now at Issue in the Ideological War Between Democracy and Communism," in which twenty points were

⁴¹ Ibid., Section I, part B.

⁴² Ibid., Section II.

listed. With points such as “Dignity of the individual vs. primacy of the state,” and “Government by the will of the people vs. government by force,” this section directly contrasted American and communist ideals. This report of the Special Survey Committee served two primary functions. The first function was to provide a clear distinction between the ideals of American democracy and those of communism. The second purpose was to identify the exact nature of the current state of crisis as well as the nature of the communist threat to the American way of life. While there were few, if any, direct suggestions of what Colonial Williamsburg could do to combat this threat, the report was effective at explaining that the nature of the communist threat was something with which Colonial Williamsburg should be concerned. This was a document of ideas rather than action and it suggested that the fight against communism was not only taking place on the battlefield, but was also taking place within the hearts and minds of the American people – the very realm in which Colonial Williamsburg could be effective.⁴³ This fight against communism was just as much about ideas as it was about political power and influence, and Colonial Williamsburg could shape those ideas within the minds of the people.

Similar anti-communist rhetoric was found in other documents relating to the Special Survey Committee. In a letter to the Projects Committee, John C. Goodbody stated:

The logical theme into which Colonial Williamsburg fits is that of ‘the true revolution.’ – i.e., the theme of independence and self government, and the constant struggle of free men throughout the world against aggression and tyranny. Williamsburg is certainly and properly to be identified as the focal point for much of the political philosophy which contributes to these concepts, and as

⁴³ Ibid., Section II

headquarters for American patriots who argued and fought to incorporate these concepts into the governmental and spiritual structure of the new republic.⁴⁴

These sentiments were translated for the public in the official guidebook of 1951 which stated:

As documents and debates of the period indicate, this appreciation of the individual was continuous and fundamental in the struggle for freedom and self-government. It remains today the essential motive of any free society.⁴⁵

The Special Survey Committee believed that Colonial Williamsburg could be most effective by educating people about traditional American ideals and how they were needed to combat the modern evils of the world, namely, communism. The rhetoric of the Special Survey Committee suggested that the patriotism promoted at Colonial Williamsburg should be one of ideas. By educating people about the ideas that make freedom possible, Americans would gain a better understanding of their heritage and why those ideals were still necessary in modern society. The *Fortune* magazine article reinforced this need for a clear understanding of American ideals. If Colonial Williamsburg and *Fortune* magazine could help Americans understand that the American way of individual rights and god-loving morality was being threatened by communism then they would be helping the American way of life prevail throughout the world, over the evil, godless way of communism.

Despite the efforts of the Special Survey Committee, Rockefeller Jr. remained

⁴⁴ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, Survey Committee (Special) folder, John C. Goodbody to the Projects Committee, August 23, 1951.

⁴⁵ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, The Official Guidebook and Map of Colonial Williamsburg, 1951, p.4. .

committed to the restoration of Williamsburg over all other concerns. The influence that Rockefeller Jr. continued to have on the restoration did indeed limit the extent to which Rockefeller III could incorporate his vision for Colonial Williamsburg into practice. Sensitive to the issue of racial discrimination, Rockefeller III realized that the Jim Crow practices in Williamsburg would dull the effectiveness of the argument that he wanted Colonial Williamsburg to make. He understood the hypocrisy of promoting Colonial Williamsburg to the world as a beacon of freedom and democracy while it did not live up to those ideals in its own practice.

In order to correct this problem Rockefeller III wanted to change the discriminatory practices of Colonial Williamsburg by issuing a statement of equality: “In answer to questions we have been asked by many people, we now therefore say that all who come here to draw inspiration from this Restoration will be welcomed and housed and fed in the facilities of Colonial Williamsburg without regard to race, creed or color.”⁴⁶ Rockefeller Jr., not wanting to tackle the race issue in Williamsburg, opted to follow the customs of the community. He had the final phrase of the statement changed to say that visitors “will be welcomed and housed and fed in so far as that is reasonably possible.”⁴⁷ Not only did this undercut Rockefeller III’s efforts, it illustrated the scope of the differences that existed between the two Rockefellers.

⁴⁶ Harr, p. 494.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p 494-495.

Chapter Three

America and Cold War Patriotism

The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg had begun under the guidance and funding of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in 1927. By the time the cold war had come to dominate American life, Colonial Williamsburg was the largest ongoing restoration project in the nation, and was extremely popular with visitors. In 1945, 94,000 people visited the restoration; that number jumped to 166,000 the following year.⁴⁸ In the post war years “an influx of middle class families changed the makeup of visitors from the wealthier set that had come before the war to a broader assortment of Americans. No longer did just the local people or those with great expertise and interest in the colonial period come to Colonial Williamsburg; a more democratic cross section of the country appeared on the streets of the restored village.”⁴⁹ Not only were more visitors coming, a greater variety of visitors traveled to the restoration in the years following World War II. In light of this degree of popularity, the question remains, why did Colonial Williamsburg feel the need to shift the focus of the restoration from that of a center of historical study to purveyor of American democratic ideals both at home and abroad? It is unlikely that this shift was the result of an attempt to increase revenue by attracting more visitors. As the post World War

⁴⁸ Kammen, p. 551.

⁴⁹ Greenspan, Anders. Creating Colonial Williamsburg. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002. p.80.

If a spike in visitation suggests, Colonial Williamsburg did not have to change its mission to attract visitors. The visitors were already coming. The seriousness of the new mission of Colonial Williamsburg seemed to have come from concerns that were more genuine than increased visitation and higher profits. The rhetoric of the Special Survey Committee report suggested that the struggle against communism was indeed a grave and serious situation and institutions such as Colonial Williamsburg had a responsibility to do their part to combat this threat. The report created by the Special Survey Committee was a reaction to the anti-communist messages that were everywhere in American society. These messages, sent through such staples of popular culture as Hollywood films and the *Saturday Evening Post*, presented Americans with a serious communist threat that became an accepted reality for the American public and Colonial Williamsburg alike.

Post war America found itself dealing with a new world. The end of the war did not restore America to a place of peace and prosperity. Instead, it placed the country in a world riddled with new concerns and conflicts. With the cessation of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific, America could not return to a state of peaceful slumber or blissful prosperity. The nation had to face a new conflict, one that would shape world hegemony for the next fifty years.

The Cold War unfolded as a conflict in which the United States would politically, economically, militarily, and socially combat the perceived evils of world communism and the Soviet Union. This conflict was not only a battle between governments, it reached the masses of people on both sides. Various attempts were made to convert them to a dominant political ideology, either capitalism or

communism. While governments would debate and argue, the everyday people of the United States were exposed to the threats of world communism in voluminous ways. Newspapers, magazines, motion pictures, political campaigns, schools, churches, and museums, such as Colonial Williamsburg, all contributed to America's common perception of communism and democracy. Anti-communist messages perpetuated the idea that communism was an evil force bent on world domination and it was the duty of the democratic nations of the world to prevent communist domination.

In the years immediately following the end of World War II, the United States was either involved in or witnessed events that reaffirmed the anti-communist messages pervading American society. From Winston Churchill's now famous "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946 to the commitment of American combat troops in Korea in 1950, events confirmed for the American people that communism was on the march throughout the world. In the late 1940s, through the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine, the American government committed hundreds of millions of dollars to help Europe rebuild. This money served the dual purpose of building a Europe that would be a prosperous trading partner of the United States as well as a Europe that was strong enough to resist communist advances. The crusade against communism provided the United States with the moral justification for spending millions of dollars on foreign aid, and those who criticized this massive outpouring of American money were smothered by the blanket threat of the evils of communist expansion. The Soviet Blockade of Berlin in 1948, the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact, the fall of China to the communist forces of Mao Tse-tung in 1949, and the Korean War all helped to reaffirm the idea that the

communist threat was expanding. As the American public witnessed one communist threat after another it became easy to equate anti-communism with patriotism.⁵⁰

Many leaders in the late 1940s and early 1950s feared, however, that despite of the communist threat Americans were losing sight of the traditional values of their democracy, and that the nation was experiencing a severe decline in civic participation and patriotism. President Truman stated that “We live in a time sadly in need of discipline, particularly self-discipline, that quality of personal responsibility so essential in the individual called to discharge the duties of citizenship in a democracy.”⁵¹ In an address to employees of Colonial Williamsburg on February 4, 1948, John D. Rockefeller III stated his concern regarding the apathy of American citizens:

The average American knows very clearly what he is against, but he does not fully appreciate what he is for. He is against communism, militarism, totalitarianism, nazism, and the like, but he is too complacent about that in which he does believe. If we should put as much emphasis and energy in support of our democracy – our way of life – as we use in condemning what we are against, we should not need to worry about the many isms.⁵²

Rockefeller’s call for increased civic appreciation was not a new issue. “I Am An American Days,” the origins of which date back to the late 1930s, became extremely popular expressions of national pride during the war years. During these celebrations communities would organize to pay tribute to the virtues of American democracy.

⁵⁰ Nevins, Allan and Henry Steele Commager. A Pocket History of the United States. New York and London: Pocket Books, a Division of Simon and Schuster Inc., 1976.

⁵¹ Fried, Richard. The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. p. 19.

⁵² Rockefeller III, “Our Opportunity.”

The celebrations became so popular that in 1940 Congress mandated “I Am An American Citizenship Day” to take place on the third Sunday in May.⁵³ At its peak during World War II, the I Am An American Day celebration in New York City’s Central Park attracted over one million people.⁵⁴ The crisis of the World War awoke American patriotism and united Americans in a common cause. After the war, these celebrations lost some of their appeal. The 1946 I Am An American Day celebration in Central Park numbered only 150,000 people,⁵⁵ and the “Wake Up America” rally planned for Honolulu in May of 1950 was cancelled due to poor attendance figures.⁵⁶

While the “American Day” celebrations may have declined in the absence of an actual fighting war, the anti-communist sentiment that pervaded American society in the late 1940s and early 1950s encouraged the proliferation of many holidays and events designed to increase American patriotism. In the late 1920s and early 1930s the Veterans of Foreign Wars, distressed by May Day celebrations staged by communist organizations in New York City, attempted to outshine communist demonstrations by staging its own patriotic rallies. These anti-communist May first rallies became known as Loyalty Day. Thomas Dewey, Governor of New York in 1950, expressed concerns that the first of May each year had been taken over by subversive groups and it had become known as “disloyalty day.”⁵⁷ The purpose of Loyalty Day parades and celebrations was simple. The objective was to force communist May Day celebrations off the city streets and out of the view of the public

⁵³ Fried. *The Russians are coming*, p.15.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.14.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.28.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.55.

eye. In 1948 the Loyalty Day celebration in New York City attracted 30,000 to 40,000 marchers and a crowd estimated at 750,000 people.⁵⁸ In 1950 Loyalty Day became national as VFW posts organized celebrations across the nation and by 1952 the day was observed in forty-four states.⁵⁹ To its founders, Loyalty Day was the official declaration of the American people that they rejected communism and stood up for the ideals of American democracy. The success of Loyalty Day celebrations in comparison to the decline of the American Day celebrations of the late 1940s suggests that perhaps Rockefeller was right in the comments he made in his February 4, 1948 speech at Colonial Williamsburg. Maybe Americans only celebrate in opposition to ideas, not in favor of ideas they may come to take for granted.

The American government responded to these patriotic demonstrations by creating official patriotic holidays. In 1947 the branches of the military were organized together under the Department of Defense. In order to celebrate the military might of America, President Truman declared the third Saturday in May to be Armed Forces Day. Throughout the early 1950s cities and states organized Armed Forces Day celebrations complete with displays of military power such as flyovers by air force fighters and military maneuvers staged for public viewing. Many Armed Forces Day celebrations included reminders to protect against the communist threat. Our continued military involvement in the Korean War seemed to validate such warnings.

The effort to demonstrate American patriotism created a calendar that was congested with patriotic events. The month of May saw the observance of Loyalty

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.55.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.57.

Day, Mother's Day (which came to represent American family values as a way to obliterate the communist threat), Memorial Day, Flag Day and I Am An American Day. Despite this congestion, Americans seemed eager to participate. Most celebrations in major cities attracted tens of thousands of participants and onlookers.

Those who lamented the decline of patriotic activity in the post war years measured American patriotism against the backdrop of World War II and the massive levels of patriotism that accompanied that conflict. Many looked back upon the war years as a time in which Americans banded together for the good of the nation.

"World War II and the (sometimes imagined) social solidarity that accompanied it became models for the commitment that the nation's leaders sought from citizens for the perduring struggle that the cold war quickly seemed to impose."⁶⁰ As David Lowenthal suggests, "The past's difference is, indeed, one of its charms: no one would yearn for it if it merely replicated the present. But we cannot help but view and celebrate it through present-day lenses."⁶¹ In the early years of the Cold War some Americans yearned for the patriotic unity of the war years, and at the same time injected their present concerns into a nostalgia for a time past.

In the early 1950s the American public did have reason to believe claims that the Soviet Union was attempting to achieve world domination. Following the string of events beginning in 1946 and leading to military involvement in the Korea War, the American public was constantly exposed to communist threats, whether they were in Berlin, China, or at home in America. The idea of subversive communist agents

⁶⁰ Fried, p.9.

⁶¹ Lowenthal, p.xvi.

within the fabric of American society became an increasingly common topic of discussion, and anti-communist thought united Americans in the effort to defeat a common enemy. This helped to rekindle the patriotic fervor that existed during the Second World War.

Anti-communist propaganda was abundant in post war America. The idea that communists were on the march towards world domination was reinforced through current and recent political events as well as anti-communist government reports, Hollywood films, and a massive number of magazine articles. The American public was presented with anti-communist messages in a variety of forms and they enthusiastically consumed this propaganda. Government reports expressed the fear of communist agents within the framework of the government with investigations such as 1948's *Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments* and the congressional reports, *Soviet Espionage Within the U.S. Government* and *One Hundred Years of Communism*.⁶² The United States Chamber of Commerce provided its share of anti-communist literature with the publication and distribution of booklets such as *Communist Infiltration in the United States*, and *Community Action For Anti-communism*.⁶³ Magazines across the nation began publishing articles with anti-communist content. *Catholic World* printed an article entitled "How Communists Get That Way" and *Business Week* published "Lets Make it a Professional Red Hunt," while *Newsweek* published "Commie Citizens."⁶⁴

⁶² Rose, Lisle. *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999. p.33.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.34.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.35.

Even the widely read *Saturday Evening Post* took part in this anti-communist campaign. In April of 1948 a one page editorial appeared entitled “Is America Immune to the Communist Plague?” The first line of the editorial read: “As more lights go out in Europe, it is time Americans began asking themselves how much this country has been softened up for a future communist coup.”⁶⁵ The editorial continued to criticize liberal New Deal policies more than it examined the possibilities of a communist takeover of America, but the message was clear. The author argued that political policies he did not support helped communist insurgents gain a foothold in America. He complained about the income tax, claiming that it weakened private businesses by reducing the capacity of investors to encourage private industry. The end result of this was increased financial support of businesses by the government, which was the beginning of the shift to communism.⁶⁶ The author used the threat of communism as a way to advance his own political beliefs. The point was not necessarily what his beliefs were, it was the idea that communism was seen as the ultimate danger to America. The decisions our government made and the policies our government took would either have helped us resist communist advances or have made us susceptible to communist advances.

The Saturday Evening Post continued to print articles warning about the dangers of communist advances. In March of 1949 an article appeared entitled

⁶⁵ Nelson, Frederic. “Is America Immune to the Communist Plague.” *The Saturday Evening Post*. April 24, 1948. vol.220 no.43. p.15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.15.

“Here’s Where Our Young Communists are Trained.” This article examined a chain of independent progressive schools across the nation that many believed to be a training ground for communists. The epigraph of the article read “Do you imagine that all the youthful dupes of United States reds are embittered misfits from underprivileged families? Then this article, telling how and where American youngsters are taught contempt for their country, will enlighten you – and shock you.”⁶⁷ The sensational rhetoric of this article suggested that the danger of communist insurgents was more extreme than most believed. This type of anti-communist propaganda was everywhere in American society and presented the people with a picture of a communist threat that could very well be real.

After being targeted by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in the late 1940’s, Hollywood contributed its share to the anti-communist propaganda spreading throughout American society. Hoping to avoid the label of communist sympathizer, major Hollywood studios released anti-communist films such as *The Red Menace*, *Red Danube*, and *I Married a Communist*.⁶⁸ This studio response to HUAC allegations was unfortunately too late to save the many careers already destroyed in the name of anti-communism, most notably those of the “Hollywood Ten,” a group of screenwriters who refused to respond to HUAC’s allegations.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Thompson, Craig. “Here’s Where Our Young Commies Are Trained.” The Saturday Evening Post. March 12, 1949. Vol.221, no.37. p.38.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.37.

⁶⁹ O’Neill, William L. American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945 – 1960. New York: The Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1986. p.144-145.

One of the most interesting examples of anti-communist propaganda in 1950s film is Don Siegel's 1956 film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Most of the anti-communist movies of the 1950s were made as propaganda films and as a result were somewhat blatant in their dealing with the issue of communism. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was much more subtle. The story was set in the California town of Santa Mira, which served as the representation of any small, suburban American town. Normal life was interrupted in Santa Mira as giant pods began to appear and slowly turned the citizens into mindless, emotionless clones of themselves while they slept. Dr. Miles Bennell (Kevin McCarthy) was determined to find out what was happening to the people of Santa Mira only to find that the pods have taken over everyone in the town, even those closest to him.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers was subtle in the sense that communism was never mentioned in the film. The threat in the film came from pods, which were explained to have come from "seeds drifting through space" and were found in a farmer's field. The horror and tension of the film did not come from aliens, monsters, or killers and the ultimate fear was not the fear of death. It was the fear of losing individuality. When Miles was confronted by his friends who had already been taken over, he asked if he would wake up and still love his girlfriend. It is only then that the nature of the threat Miles had been running from becomes clear. The men explained to Miles that "there is no need for love, no emotions, and you have no feelings, only the instinct to survive.... Desire, ambition, faith, without them life is so simple." Similar to the *Fortune* magazine article and the Colonial Williamsburg Special Survey Report, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* made the point that any system that

destroys individuality, ambition, and faith was a threat to the American way of life. The worst thing that can happen to the people of Santa Mira in the film, and the people of America in reality, was the loss of individual identity. It is the communal nature of communism that did just that. As Miles realized that the pods were spreading to other towns he stated “it’s a malignant disease spreading through the whole country.” This is what many perceived communism to be. A disease that if not stopped would some day spread to the United States.

Within this culture of anti-communism and fear came perhaps one of the most interesting efforts to promote patriotism in post-war America. This was a traveling exhibition of major American historical documents known as the Freedom Train. Its purpose was to awaken pride and patriotism among those who viewed it. The idea originated with an exhibit in the National Archives containing German surrender documents from World War II and a copy of Adolph Hitler’s last will and testament. William Coblentz, the assistant director of the public information division at the Department of Justice viewed the exhibit and was struck by the comparison that could be made between the fascist documents on display and documents of American liberty. He pitched the idea of such an exhibit to Attorney General Tom C. Clark who was outspoken regarding his anti-communist sentiments. Clark saw the Freedom Train as an opportunity to aid “the country in its internal war against subversive elements and as an effort to improve citizenship by reawakening in our people their profound faith in the American historical heritage.”⁷⁰ Clark vigorously endorsed the idea as did President Truman. To meet the costs of the tour, Clark turned to the

⁷⁰ Kammen, p.574.

Advertising Council which had been successful selling war bonds in previous years. In January of 1947 the American Heritage Foundation, a non-profit group, was created to carry out the tour.⁷¹

As the project came together, the idea of contrasting Nazi documents with American documents was dropped in favor of an all American collection that would showcase the American spirit. After deciding that the exhibit should refrain from including partisan documents, the foundation included such pieces of history as a copy of the Gettysburg Address in Lincoln's handwriting, the Bill of Rights, the Emancipation Proclamation, the 1783 Treaty of Paris, and the Mayflower Compact. The public response to the Freedom Train was enormously favorable. In every city people waited in line for hours to see the documents as well as the train, which was decorated appropriately for a carrier of democracy. Newspapers covered every stop on the tour and included numerous stories about the effectiveness of the exhibit on the public. One popular story was that of a 108-year-old former slave who had waited in line for hours just to see Abraham Lincoln's papers.

While the patriotic response to the Freedom Train was overwhelming, Attorney General Clark hoped the train would also serve as a symbol of freedom for all Americans. In 1947 Clark warned that prejudice was the greatest threat to the nation and he insisted that the American Heritage Foundation not permit any segregation during the tour. The idea of viewing the Freedom Train in segregated facilities was an issue that was not ignored. Perhaps the most eloquent comment on this potentially destructive issue was Langston Hughes' poem *Freedom Train*. In the

⁷¹ Ibid., p.574.

following excerpt from his poem, Hughes questioned whether or not African Americans would have to view the documents of freedom in Jim Crow rail cars.

Down south in Dixie only train I see's
 Got a Jim Crow car set aside for me.
 I hope there ain't no Jim Crow on the Freedom Train,
 No back door entrance to the Freedom Train,
 No signs FOR COLORED on the Freedom Train,
 No WHITE FOLKS ONLY on the Freedom Train.

I'm gonna check up on this
 Freedom Train.⁷²

In his poem, Hughes continued to wonder if a segregated line was the way onto the Freedom Train and if everyone would have the right to board the train when it stopped in Mississippi. Most cities were willing to cooperate with the American Heritage Foundation and all but two agreed to the no segregation policy. When Memphis and Birmingham refused to give up a system of segregated viewing, the two cities were simply removed from the tour.⁷³ Between 1947 and 1949 the Freedom Train traveled for 413 days, 37,000 miles and accommodated 3.5 million people in all 48 states.⁷⁴

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the American public was saturated with such anti-communist propaganda. These efforts to vilify world communism, specifically the Soviet Union, helped to reinforce ideas of American democracy. As anti-communist propaganda portrayed communists as evil, it helped restore interest and

⁷² Hughes, Langston. Selected Poems of Langston Hughes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971. p.276-278.

⁷³ Kammen, p.578.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.574-575.

faith in the ideals of the American republic. The anti-communism that existed in the years following World War II allowed Americans to feel that they were a part of something greater than their individual lives. It connected them to the narrative of the United States and allowed them to feel that they were a part of a process that had begun almost two hundred years earlier and would continue long after they are gone. They felt that they were a part of American democracy combating the forces of evil around the world. Anti-communism created a climate in which Americans were invited to identify their national identity in strict, specific terms. It also provided institutions such as Colonial Williamsburg with the necessary motivation to become an active player in the fight against communism.

Chapter Four

Spreading the Message of Colonial Williamsburg

Colonial Williamsburg's anti-Communist message was not limited to rhetoric alone, nor was it limited to domestic concerns. In the post war years, Colonial Williamsburg actively worked to spread its idea of patriotism around the world. It was hoped that Williamsburg's message of democracy would encourage people to work for free, democratic societies by providing them with the necessary ideals needed to resist communist temptations.

Colonial Williamsburg's interpretation of the American Revolution highlighted the concept of a small group of patriots rebelling against the authority of an unjust colonial power. This concept of anti-colonialism, while almost two centuries old in the case of the American Revolution, was anything but anachronistic in the 1950s. In fact, the anti-colonial theme that was a part of Colonial Williamsburg's message was a perfect fit for the post World War II era that witnessed the unraveling of colonial empires around the world, in particular, the empires of Britain and France.

Throughout the 1950s the United States found itself in a unique position. While Europe was struggling with the threats of communism and decolonization, the United States was able to replace European nations as a major colonial power

throughout the world. “By the late 1940s, there was also an emerging assumption in the public sphere generally that decolonization and independence were inevitable for most of Britain’s and France’s colonial possessions and that the United States would be heir to a new world order.”⁷⁵ Since the end of World War II England faced or was dealing with rebellions in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East while France was struggling to retain control of its empire in south east Asia. In order to justify the new colonial status of the United States, which was seemingly at odds with America’s anti-colonial past, the United States interpreted its colonial status in terms of the Cold War. America positioned itself to identify with nations coming out of colonialism by drawing on the anti-colonial nature of the American Revolution. The rhetoric used by the United States helped to justify the new colonialism by referring to decolonization as a process that freed people from the “slavery” of colonialism, much like the American Revolution had done almost two centuries earlier. This language appealed to the people emerging from colonialism, while at the same time, the rhetoric could be used in a Cold War context by equating the slavery of colonialism with the perceived slavery that accompanied communist rule. This gave the United States an advantage over the Soviet Union when it came to courting the nations emerging from European colonialism after World War II, while defending American colonialism in the name of anti-communism.⁷⁶

The colonial status of the United States and its Cold War implications in the 1950s was something that was not limited to American foreign policy and national

⁷⁵ McAlister, Melani. Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000. Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.p.53-54.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.50-54.

politics. It worked its way into popular culture as well. The biblical epic became one of the most popular products of Hollywood throughout the 1950s accounting for three of the decades' five top grossing films.⁷⁷ *The Ten Commandments*, *The Robe*, *Ben-Hur*, and *Quo Vadis* are examples of biblical epics produced during the 1950s by the Hollywood film industry, all of which deal with the theme of freedom versus slavery. Most of the epics set the stage by placing Hebrews or Christians as people struggling against the slavery and oppression of the empire. The empire, whether it is represented by Egyptians or Romans, is portrayed as corrupt and in decline.⁷⁸ As Melani McAlister stated in her discussion of these films “the biblical epics should be read not simply as anti-totalitarian narratives but as anti-colonial ones, situated at the moment when the United States took over from the European colonial nations the role of a preeminent world power.”⁷⁹

The link between the Hollywood epics and the current state of world affairs in the 1950s can also be seen in Cecil B. DeMille's prologue to *The Ten Commandments*. Before the film begins DeMille appears on screen to provide an introduction to the film. In his prologue he states that the subject of *The Ten Commandments* is “the story of the birth of freedom...The theme of this picture is whether men ought to be ruled by God's law or whether they are to be ruled by the

⁷⁷ Nadel, Alan. Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.p.92.

⁷⁸ McAlister, p.61.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.46.

whims of a dictator like Rameses. Are men the property of the state or are they free souls under God? This same battle continues throughout the world today.”⁸⁰

DeMille’s prologue sets up the theme of slavery versus freedom. He emphasizes this idea by asking if men are the property of the state. In the context of the times this could be interpreted as a reference to the collective nature of communism. This point is reinforced when he states that the same struggle is happening in the modern day world. It is reasonable to assume that many watching the film would make the connection between the story being presented to them and the modern day struggle against communism.

In this context of anti-colonization as well as anti-communism, the Special Survey Committee, with cooperation from the United States State Department, led the way in the effort to promote the patriotic ideals of Colonial Williamsburg. In a memo to the Projects Committee regarding cooperation between the State Department and Colonial Williamsburg, John C. Goodbody outlined two categories of joint activities that would help to spread Colonial Williamsburg’s message. The first was through the use of the State Department’s information program. Goodbody suggested disseminating Williamsburg’s story “By means of radio and television; motion pictures, slides, and film strips; newspaper and magazine articles and/or photographic releases; and books and exhibits.”⁸¹ The second category regarded the idea of bringing foreign visitors to Williamsburg through the State Department’s educational

⁸⁰ Nadel, p.93.

⁸¹ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, Survey Committee (Special) folder, John C. Goodbody to the Projects Committee, August 23, 1951.

exchange program. The hope was that by introducing non-Americans to Williamsburg and allowing them to witness the birth of democratic ideals would encourage visitors to bring those ideals home with them and work towards the creation of free and democratic societies. While all of this would be achieved with State Department cooperation, Colonial Williamsburg, specifically the Special Survey Committee, assumed the initiative in implementing these programs due to what Goodbody described as “administrative headaches” at the State Department.⁸²

One of the first efforts made to spread Colonial Williamsburg’s message around the world was through the use of the Voice of America radio broadcasts. Established as a part of the Office of War Information in 1942, the Voice of America program came under the authority of the State Department at the close of the war. Because it was an already established program, it was easy for Colonial Williamsburg to send its messages over the airwaves. Working with Charles Hulten, the manager of the State Department’s International Information and Educational Exchange Program, John C. Goodbody and Kershaw Burbank established a number of radio programs that told the story of Colonial Williamsburg and its role in the creation of the foundation of American democracy. Voice of America crews traveled to Williamsburg and recorded the sounds of democracy, such as the blacksmith’s hammer, a pistol firing, the bell of Bruton Parish Church, or carriage wheels and hoof-beats as they moved down Duke of Gloucester Street.⁸³

The Voice of America radio programs were designed to illustrate the human side of democracy. The programs often recorded visitor responses to the story of

⁸² Ibid., p.2.

⁸³ Ibid., p.3.

Williamsburg, providing an idea of what the average American felt about Colonial Williamsburg. Other programs interviewed craftsmen and talked about the way of life of colonial Americans, no doubt highlighting those important eighteenth century concepts of Williamsburg outlined in the Special Survey Committee's report.

Employees of Colonial Williamsburg were also interviewed about what it was like to live and work in the eighteenth century.⁸⁴

The use of the Voice of America radio broadcasts was part of a direct effort to spread American ideals and oppose those of communism, and John C. Goodbody did not attempt to pretend that the motivation was any different. As he stated in his report to the Projects Committee, the Voice of America program was

Shifting from a haphazard and diffuse policy to a two-fold policy of (A) striking out directly at communism and its phony claims and (B) underscoring those aspects of American life which will help unite the free world in the name of independence, self government, and the importance of the individual in a democratic society.⁸⁵

By the end of 1951, the Voice of America broadcasts had sent eighty different programs about the story of Williamsburg in thirty-three different languages to an estimated three million listeners around the world.

Another popular method of sending Williamsburg's story around the world was through the distribution of films. These films highlighted the democratic ideals of America and encouraged the spread of such ideas. A film entitled *Eighteenth Century Life in Williamsburg, Virginia* was distributed to overseas United States Information Centers that had been established during the Second World War. By

⁸⁴ Ibid., p 3-4.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.4.

1951 there were 140 of these centers overseas, most of which received some kind of information linked to Colonial Williamsburg. These information centers had two primary purposes. The first was to expose false communist claims and the second was to demonstrate that freedom-loving people around the world were united in their opposition to communism. Goodbody's report stated that the mission of the overseas information centers was to emphasize that

We are all in the same boat. American ideas are translated in terms of the varying social, religious, and historical contexts of various areas of the world. Political freedom is described in terms of the problems of each country.⁸⁶

The American ideas espoused in films such as *Eighteenth Century Life in Williamsburg, Virginia* were understood as relevant to those struggling for freedom in any country. While the social, religious, or political specifics may have differed, all shared basic democratic ideals. The film turned out to be an effective way of spreading the message of Williamsburg. Between January 1, 1951 and June 15, 1951 the film was shown abroad 392 times in twenty-seven countries to a total audience of 101,068 people. The largest viewing of the film was in Italy, where it was shown sixty-five times to a total of 46,416 people, and the smallest viewing was in Iran where it was shown once to thirty-nine people.⁸⁷ An article in the *Richmond News Leader* described a viewing of the film in Yugoslavia, explaining how the crowd, curious about the American way of life, responded to the film. According to the paper, the concepts of the American way of life that were in the film were able to transcend the language barrier:

And even if the film on Colonial Williamsburg carried

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.10.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.5-6.

some distortion for the untutored who could not understand our language, the heaping plates of food, the examples of fine living, the freedom of enterprise in our free land carried across the desired message.⁸⁸

If members of the crowd were not able to understand the ideals of American democracy, they all understood the visual interpretation of the capitalist lifestyle.

At the time that the Special Survey Committee was completing its research, a film entitled *Prelude to Independence* was in production. The stated purpose of this film was to “link the crisis of 1776 to the crisis of 1951” which was “certainly of recognized interest and importance almost everywhere this side of the Iron Curtain.”⁸⁹

While these two films identified and explained American ideals of democracy, they also attempted to link those ideas to the current fight against communism. Just being aware of American ideals was not enough. In order to be effective, people had to understand how those ideas were linked to the state of world affairs in 1951.

The program to bring foreign visitors to Colonial Williamsburg had its beginnings the year following the end of World War II, when the State Department had unofficially sent visitors on day trips to Colonial Williamsburg. The Special Survey Committee wished to regularize this process and use the opportunities of foreign visits to help send the message of Colonial Williamsburg abroad.⁹⁰

John D. Rockefeller III saw this program as a way to demonstrate the relationship between progress and tradition in American culture. He felt that many foreign visitors to the United States could not see past the technological and material advancements such as television and automobiles that were a popular part of

⁸⁸ Richmond, Virginia. *The Richmond News Leader*, August 6, 1951.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁹⁰ Kammen, p. 583.

American society. Rockefeller believed that Colonial Williamsburg offered foreign visitors the opportunity to see that the United States was based upon tradition and ideals that were as deep as the founding of the nation.⁹¹

With this purpose in mind, the Special Survey Committee began to investigate the idea of holding an assembly on foreign affairs at Colonial Williamsburg. John C. Goodbody stated, with optimism, that he hoped that Colonial Williamsburg would be able to bring 500 opinion leaders (influential people from various fields such as medicine, government, and public administration) to the restoration through the visitation program. He also hoped to bring 7,000 other visitors such as students, teachers and businessmen to Williamsburg through the same program.⁹² While the visitation program did not quite reach the level Goodbody anticipated, it did succeed in holding a number of educational conferences at Williamsburg, some of which were used to spread the anti-communist message of American democracy. Beginning in 1951, the purpose of these conferences was

To examine objectively some major problems on the international level facing the American people today; to clarify the various aspects of that problem; to stimulate constructive, realistic, and independent thinking about the problem; to foster a mutually better understanding among Americans and people of other nations of the issues involved in the problem and the diverse opinions held about them.⁹³

It was thought that by inviting “Top opinion molders and thought leaders of foreign

⁹¹ Ibid., p.583.

⁹² Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, Survey Committee (Special) folder, John C. Goodbody to the Projects Committee, August 23, 1951. p.11.

⁹³ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, Survey Committee (Special) folder, “Notes on Proposed Williamsburg Conferences on International Affairs,” March 29, 1951, revised May 4, 1951.

countries”⁹⁴ to these conferences, Colonial Williamsburg would be able to disseminate its message to people who would, in turn, disseminate what they had learned to others in their native countries. The conferences were planned to have had twenty-five American participants and twenty-five foreign participants discussing topics such as “The Protection of Human Freedom and Rights in a Crisis World” and “The Need for Positive Action Against Communist Ideology.”⁹⁵

The anti-communist nature of these academic discussions was apparent. The world crisis that was referred to time and time again was known and accepted to be the struggle between freedom and communism throughout the world. The most obvious anti-communist conference held was in 1952 when exiled leaders of eastern European nations were invited to Williamsburg. The result of this conference was the Williamsburg Declaration, which pledged to restore freedom to people living under oppressive governments.⁹⁶ Throughout the 1950’s, leaders such as King Paul and Queen Frederika of Greece, Prince Akihito, the Imperial heir of Japan, U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, Prince Albert of Belgium, King Mohammed V of Morocco, President Theodor Huess of West Germany, and King Sihanouk of Cambodia all encountered the origins of American democracy at Colonial Williamsburg.

⁹⁴ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, Survey Committee (Special) folder, Kershaw Burbank to JDR III, Re: Williamsburg Assembly, May 4, 1951.

⁹⁵ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, Survey Committee (Special) folder, “Notes on Proposed Williamsburg Conferences on International Affairs,” March 29, 1951, revised May 4, 1951.

⁹⁶ Kammen, p. 583-584.

Conclusion

John D. Rockefeller III championed the idea of using Colonial Williamsburg to promote American democratic ideas around the world. Inspired by the waves of anti-communist messages that had become a part of American society and through the work of the Special Survey Committee, Colonial Williamsburg followed Rockefeller's lead and implemented programs that linked the American ideals of eighteenth century Williamsburg to contemporary world affairs, and promoted American patriotism worldwide. In 1953 Rockefeller resigned his position with Colonial Williamsburg. Rockefeller III's ideas of the scope of Colonial Williamsburg's mission differed from those of his father. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. wished to expand with more care and detail the physical restoration of the town, while Rockefeller III wished to continue the effort to promote American patriotism worldwide with the hopes of tipping the balance of power in the Cold War struggle in favor of democracy. Out of concerns for the direction of Colonial Williamsburg and out of what Michael Kammen referred to as Rockefeller III's "abiding respect" for his father, he stepped down from his duties at Williamsburg.⁹⁷

Rockefeller III's departure from Colonial Williamsburg did not signal an end

⁹⁷ Kammen, p. 585.

to the expanded, worldwide mission of Colonial Williamsburg. Radio broadcasts, films, and publications continued to be sent around the world. With Rockefeller's departure however, Colonial Williamsburg's expanded mission ceased to be the highest priority of the foundation.

Colonial Williamsburg helped to shape national identity by invoking ideas from the past to which all Americans could relate, and disseminating those ideas to the public. The American ideals promoted at Colonial Williamsburg have also been used to promote a form of patriotism that spoke to a specific policy goal, as was the case in the early years of the Cold War. This form of patriotism, in the context of the Cold War, gave Colonial Williamsburg a relevance that other history museums of the time might not have enjoyed. On May 15, 1953 President Dwight D. Eisenhower, speaking in the Virginia House of Burgesses, reflected upon the purpose and value of Colonial Williamsburg's attempt to spread its message around the world.

I wish – I wish sincerely that every single man, woman, and child that has the proud privilege of calling himself an American, could stand here on this spot and could walk through this building to see the picture of Washington just across the hall, and relive again [our forefathers'] moments, the problems they met in their own times, and thus regain faith to solve the problems of our day.⁹⁸

By promoting a patriotism based on ideas, the hope was to encourage Americans and people around the world to embrace the ideals of democracy and freedom. This was necessary before any action could be taken to establish a free society. In the early years of the Cold War, the American ideals that were promoted at Colonial

⁹⁸ Rouse, Parke Jr., The City That Turned Back Time: Colonial Williamsburg's First Twenty-Five Years. Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1952.

Williamsburg were done so with the purpose of strengthening American power and influence both at home and abroad. Linking these ideals of American democracy to contemporary conflicts in the early years of the Cold War created a form of patriotism that was based upon the foundation of anti-communism. Communism was the problem of the day and faith in the democratic ideals of the American past was the solution to the problem.

It is difficult to tell how effective Colonial Williamsburg's efforts were. Anti-communist sentiment was not unique to Colonial Williamsburg, nor was the restoration able to create an imagined community strong enough to unite all, despite individual identities. In the end, Colonial Williamsburg used the past to push forward a very specific political idea that was a popular part of American society at the time.

Bibliography

- Ames, Kenneth. *Introduction*. In Alan Axelrod, ed., The Colonial Revival in America. New York: Norton, 1985.
- Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London and New York: Verso, 1991.
- Antin, Mary. The Promised Land. London: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912.
- Bhabha, Homi K. ed. Nation and Narration. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Bodnar, John, ed. Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Collier, Peter and David Horowitz. The Rockefellers: An American Dynasty. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.
- Fried, Richard. The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Faragher, John Mack, ed. The American Heritage Encyclopedia of American History. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998.
- Greenspan, Anders. Creating Colonial Williamsburg. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002.
- Gonzales, Donald J. The Rockefellers at Williamsburg: Backstage with the Founders, Restorers and World –Renowned Guests. McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1991.
- Grossberg, Lawrence, ed. Cultural Studies. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Hall, Stuart, ed. Modernity: an Introduction to Modern Societies. Open University, 1996.

- Harr, John Ensor and Peter J. Johnson. The Rockefeller Century. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.
- Hughes, Langston. Selected Poems of Langston Hughes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971.
- Humelsine, Carlisle H. Recollections of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in Williamsburg 1926-1960. Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1985.
- Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Dir. Don Siegel. Videocassette. Republic Pictures Home Video. 1956.
- Isaacs, Jeremy and Taylor Downing. Cold War: An Illustrated History 1945-1991. Boston and New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1998.
- Jacobitti, Edmund, ed. Composing Useful Pasts: History as Contemporary Politics. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Johnson, Paul. A History of the American People. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.
- Kammen, Michael. Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture. New York: Vintage Books a Division of Random House, Inc, 1991.
- Lipsitz, George. Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.
- Lowenthal, David. The Past is a Foreign Country. Cambridge, London, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- McAlister, Melani. Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000. Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.
- Nadel, Alan. Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Nathanson, Stephen. Patriotism, Morality, and Peace. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman And Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993.
- Nelson, Frederic. "Is America Immune to the Communist Plague." The Saturday Evening Post. April 24, 1948. vol.220 no.43.

Nevins, Allan and Henry Steele Commager. A Pocket History of the United States. New York and London: Pocket Books, a Division of Simon and Schuster Inc., 1976.

O'Neill, William L. American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945 – 1960. New York: The Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1986.

Richmond, Virginia. The Richmond News Leader, "Film on Colonial Williamsburg Appeals to Yugoslavian Crowd." August 6, 1951.

Rose, Lisle. The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999.

Rouse, Parke Jr., The City That Turned Back Time: Colonial Williamsburg's First Twenty-Five Years. Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1952.

Thompson, Craig. "Here's Where Our Young Commies Are Trained." The Saturday Evening Post. March 12, 1949. Vol.221, no.37.

"U.S.A. The Permanent Revolution." Fortune February 1951: XLII.

Williamsburg, Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, "Colonial Williamsburg: The First Twenty-Five Years, a Report by the President, December 31, 1951.

----- The Official Guidebook and Map of Colonial Williamsburg, 1951.

----- "Our Opportunity," an Address by John D. Rockefeller III, February 4, 1948.

----- Survey Committee (Special) folder, John C. Goodbody to the Projects Committee, August 23, 1951.

----- Survey Committee (Special) folder, Kershaw Burbank to JDR III, Re: Williamsburg Assembly, May 4, 1951.

----- Survey Committee (Special) folder, "Notes on Proposed Williamsburg Conferences on International Affairs," March 29, 1951, revised May 4, 1951.

----- Survey Committee (Special) folder, Working Notes, February 20, 1951.

· VITA

Luke Edward Roberts

Luke Roberts was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut on March 27, 1974. He graduated from Bunnell High School in Stratford, Connecticut in June of 1992. He attended Central Connecticut State University and graduated in 1996 with a B.S. degree in History and Education. In 1997 he began work as a social studies teacher at Bunnell High School. In the fall of 2000 he enrolled as a M.A. candidate in the American Studies program at the College of William and Mary. The following year he returned to teaching at Bunnell High School.