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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

FROM SUBJECT TO CITIZEN:
TARLETON BATES AND THE EVOLUTION OF
REPUBLICAN MAN ON THE PENNSYLVANIA FRONTIER

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HISTORY

BY

L. JON GROGAN

CHICAGO, IL

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This dissertation is the result of years of personal hard work and sacrifice, but it would not have been possible without the inspiration and support from a lot of great people.

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I also want to acknowledge two men who passed well before their time. The first is Serafino “Foge” Fazio, who was my high school football coach. Foge encouraged me to attend Tufts and my life would have taken a different course had I not followed his advice. The other man is Dr. Doug Long, who was my first boss after I retired from the Marine Corps. Doug also encouraged me to complete my studies at Loyola, and he

gently threatened to harass me until then. Sadly, Foge and Doug are not around to share my accomplishment. I miss them both very much.

I often wondered why writers took the time to thank the obscure archivists, librarians, and researchers in their Acknowledgements. I certainly understand now. The staff at the Darlington Library and Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh provided me with guidance and information about the history of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania. The archivists and librarians at the Missouri History Museum in St. Louis and the Burton Library in Detroit provided access to the Bates family papers that included letters written by Tarleton Bates. Tarleton's letters and those written by his brothers gave me insight into what life was like on the frontier at the turn of the eighteenth century. The Historical Society in Goochland County, Virginia sent articles and helped me to research on Belmont, the Bates family's plantation. Finally, the Research and Special Collections Librarian in the Pelletier Library at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania located and then made copies of Tarleton Bates' leather-bound journal.

Finally, I would not have been able to finish this dissertation and my studies in general without the support of my family. My mother gave to me the gift of a Tufts education when there were less expensive alternatives. My sister, Claudia, edited the final draft of this paper for me proving it is a good thing having a retired English teacher as a sister. My three children, Elizabeth, Cydney, and Aidan, inspired me with their love and laughter. However, the highest appreciation goes to my wife Lorraine who for nearly fifteen years put up with my dream of earning a Doctorate. I cannot imagine there are many spouses in the world that would have done the same thing.

For Lorraine

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INTRODUCTION

During the 2004 election an incident took place that illustrated the continued tension between political journalism, rhetoric, and individual reputation. The exchange featured Chris Matthews, a combative cable television reporter and political commentator. The name of his television show, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, is suggestive of his aggressive style of journalism. During the 2004 Republican National Convention, Matthews interviewed Senator Zell Miller on MSNBC as part of that network's continuing election coverage. The Georgia Democrat had just given a fiery speech many people thought questioned the patriotism of Democratic Candidate John Kerry. After a few pleasantries Matthews asked Miller if he believed that Kerry, who was a two-time recipient of the Purple Heart award for service in Vietnam, was soft on national defense. "Do you truly believe," Matthews chided Miller, "that Senator Kerry wants to defend the country with spitballs?" This angered Miller, and the feisty Southerner accused Matthews with twisting his words. At one point he told Matthews to "get out of my face," but the journalist continued until the exasperated Miller finally exclaimed "You know I wish we lived in the day where you could challenge a person to a duel. Now that would be pretty good!" Startled by the Georgian's outburst, Matthews made a weak attempt to laugh it off, but it was clear Miller had struck a nerve. The incident made for great television and Zell Miller became an instant folk hero for standing up to a member of the

“liberal establishment” and the “mainstream media.” But the general response was mixed. Some believed Matthews had goaded Miller into the challenge, but others thought the Senator’s nostalgia for dueling was absurd in twenty-first century America. This ambivalence is part of the history of dueling.

Duels and dueling have fascinated Americans for years. The image of two men standing tall in the face of death is human drama at its best. Dueling makes us ask “Why did they do it?” the same way we wonder why Civil War soldiers refused to break ranks at battles like Gettysburg and Cold Harbor. Historians and scholars have attempted to answer the question, and the popular culture has analyzed the psychology of dueling in a variety of interesting (and entertaining) ways. In literature, for example, Anton Chekhov and Joseph Conrad wrote short stories entitled *The Duel* about such contests fought respectively in Czarist Russia and Napoleonic France. In 1947 tenor saxophonists Dexter Gordon and Teddy Edwards cut *The Duel*, an album that included jam sessions played between the two musicians. In the early 1970s Steven Spielberg directed *The Duel*, a movie about a confrontation on a lonely road between a motorist and a demonic truck driver. The film *Deliverance* based on James Dickey’s novel of the same name featured the song “Dueling Banjos,” one of the most popular instrumentals of all time. Finally there were sword duels in classic movies like *Robin Hood* and *Rob Roy* and duels fought with light sabers in the *Star Wars* movie series. The common thread among these examples is the voluntary nature of dueling. Men were not led by the nose to the dueling grounds; they went there willingly.

Most likely the dust-up between Matthews and Miller would have resulted in a duel two hundred years ago. Then a gentleman was bound to defend his honor even if it meant losing his life in the process. However, neither Matthews nor Miller were gentleman in the nineteenth-century sense of the term. Miller was born poor and reared in rural Georgia by his widowed mother and Matthews grew up in a middle-class household in Philadelphia. Their working careers began at the bottom; Matthews started as a security guard on Capitol Hill and Miller served in the Marine Corps not as an officer but as a sergeant. By 2004, however, both Chris Matthews and Zell Miller belonged to America's political elite where losing face could very well result in a significant loss of power and prestige. Backing down from a challenge could also be interpreted as a sign of weakness. However, the fact that Miller and Matthews settled their disagreement without resorting to violence shows how far America had come in two centuries. Their shaky truce stands in stark contrast to an incident in early nineteenth-century Pittsburgh that involved a local merchant Thomas Stewart and a public official Tarleton Bates.

Little is known about Stewart, but the life of Tarleton Bates is relatively well documented. His parents were relatively well-off plantation owners in the Piedmont region of Virginia. The American branch of his family tree extended back to the Jamestown settlement, and several of his ancestors were prominent landowners and merchants. Additionally, his parents Thomas and Catherine Bates were on a first-name basis with the Randolphs and other prominent Virginian families; his mother, Catherine, was distantly related to the Jeffersons. Tarleton Bates lived a privileged life as a child,

and he was destined to join Virginia's gentry as a gentleman farmer, but by 1790 his family was deep in debt and in jeopardy of losing their plantation. Convinced that his opportunities in Virginia were limited, Bates joined the state militia in 1794 before it marched to western Pennsylvania as part of a patchwork army mobilized by President Washington to suppress a farmers' revolt against a tax on distilled spirits. When the so-called Whisky Rebellion collapsed shortly before the army reached Pittsburgh many militia members like Bates were mustered out on the spot. Most chose to return to Virginia, but a significant number like Bates remained behind and settled in Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania. Bates quickly learned his family's name and its connections meant nothing on the Pennsylvania frontier where men were expected to prove themselves on a regular basis. Undaunted, Bates worked at a number of menial jobs to earn a living. Fortunately, these jobs gave him access to several of Pittsburgh's leading families. Hard work and persistence eventually paid off, and by 1805 many Republican leaders regarded Tarleton Bates as a rising star in the party.

One of these leaders was William Duane. Duane was a powerful political figure, and his Philadelphia newspaper, the *Aurora*, was the most influential Republican newspaper in the United States. Republican politicians feared Duane because he could end a promising career with the stroke of a pen. Duane's radical brand of politics eventually contributed to a split in the Republican Party of Pennsylvania. The intra-party squabble was so acrimonious that in August 1804 Thomas Jefferson wrote to his friend Robert Smith that "Pennsylvania seems to have in its bowels a good deal of volcanic

matter, and some explosion may be expected.”¹ Leading the charge in Pennsylvania were the radical Republicans like Duane who favored limited government and broad personal freedoms. Moderate Republicans like Alexander Dallas², on the other hand, favored an activist government that promoted business and limited personal freedoms. The fight within the party could not be contained in Philadelphia, and it eventually made its way west to Pittsburgh where it engulfed Bates, Stewart, and several other men.

Political fireworks at this time were not unique to Pennsylvania; politicians all around the country were challenged by constituents and by other politicians. In July 1795, for example, an angry mob heckled Alexander Hamilton in New York City when he tried to give a speech supporting the Jay Treaty. Even President Washington was not immune to criticism. The same year that Hamilton was heckled in New York newspaper editor Benjamin Bache wrote the President had abrogated his “claim...either to the gratitude or confidence of his country.”³ Because organized political parties were still in

¹ Dumas Malone, *Jefferson The President: First Term, 1801 – 1805* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1970), 440. A year earlier, Jefferson wrote his Treasury Secretary, the Pennsylvanian Albert Gallatin that he was concerned a schism in the Keystone State between “moderates and high flyers” would eventually spill over into the Republican Congress. Andrew Shankman, “Democracy in Pennsylvania: Political, Social, and Economic Arguments in the Jeffersonian party, 1790 – 1820.” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1997), 1.

² Alexander Dallas was one of America’s most influential, non-elected public officials. He was a Jamaican of Scottish background who emigrated to the United States at the end of the Revolution, entered law practice in Philadelphia, and rose in politics as a protégé and adviser of Governor Thomas Mifflin. More skillful behind the scenes than as a public figure, Dallas disdained elective office but continued in the powerful post of Secretary of the Commonwealth when Thomas McKean was elected Governor in 1799. He resigned in 1801 to accept President Jefferson's appointment as federal District Attorney. Dallas' position as the city's highest ranking Republican officeholder, his close friendship with Secretary Gallatin, and his influence over Governor McKean all ensured him of top political standing. Kim T. Phillips, “William Duane, Philadelphia's Democratic Republicans, and The Origins of Modern Politics.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 101 (July 1977): 367-8.

³ Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers: Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville, VA, University of Virginia Press, 2002), 88.

their infancy, politicians were required to either defend themselves or form temporary alliances with other politicians. With no party structure to absorb and deflect criticism politics was personalized and volatile. This political turmoil occurred at the same time that cultural and economic factors changed the role of men in society. The patriarchal family was disappearing rapidly and men were measured by their personal wealth. Aggression and passion became socially acceptable provided those emotions were channeled appropriately. The practice of dueling filled the need for politicians to remain in control while also protecting their reputations. Of course neither all men nor all politicians resorted to dueling, but in the early nineteenth century the practice became a socially accepted – if not tolerated – way for two men to settle their differences.

What makes the duel between Tarleton Bates and Thomas Stewart significant? Amateur and professional historians have analyzed the duel between Bates and Stewart and concluded it was the result of either an outmoded sense of personal honor or partisan politics.⁴ Therefore, what is new to study? Moreover, the literature about duels and dueling is equally extensive, although most of it is pedestrian. How would another analysis help us understand why two otherwise intelligent and rational men would willingly expose themselves to serious injury or death by trading shots at point blank range? Additionally, noted scholars like Alan Taylor, Daniel Herman, John Mack

⁴ A number of local historians have analyzed the duel from different perspectives. James Van Trump and James B. Cannon (“An Affair of Honor: Pittsburgh's Last Duel,” *Western Pennsylvania History* 57 (July 1974): 307-15)), for example, concentrated on the affect that honor and reputation played in Bates’ decision to duel Stewart. Michael Franchioni (“The Next Page: Pittsburgh’s Last Duel,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 22, 2006) studied the political aspects of the duel. Finally, Leland Baldwin (*Pittsburgh, The Story of A City: 1750-1865* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970)) and Charles Dahlinger (*Pittsburgh: A Sketch of its Early Social Life* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916)) describe the duel within the context of early life in Pittsburgh.

Faragher, Richard C. Wade, and others have analyzed the American frontier from different perspectives. Similarly, monographic studies by Solon and Elizabeth Buck, Randolph Downes, Leland Baldwin, and Russell Ferguson during the 1930s about frontier Pennsylvania paved the way for latter-day Pennsylvania historians like Robert Harper, Scott Martin, and Andrew Shankman. What more would we learn about frontier Pennsylvania by looking into the life of Tarleton Bates? Finally, the body of work about early politics and political parties is vast and includes works by luminaries like Richard Hofstadter, Dumas Malone, Merrill Peterson, and Noble Cunningham, and more recently by Joanne Freeman, Jeffrey Pasley, Richard Ellis, and Gordon Wood. Bates was a relatively obscure political figure; how would knowledge about his political activities including his involvement with a Pittsburgh newspaper named the *Tree of Liberty* add to the formidable body of work that already exists about the Federalist and early Jeffersonian periods?

In *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier in the Early American Republic*, historian Alan Taylor examines life in post-Revolutionary America through the experiences of William Cooper, the founder of Cooperstown, New York, and father of writer James Fenimore Cooper. William Cooper was born into a poor Quaker family in 1754 and as an adult worked as a wheelwright and storekeeper in New Jersey. In 1790 Cooper moved his family to Ostego County, New York, where he had made a fortune speculating in land. During the 1790s Cooper joined the Federalist Party and became a county judge, in addition to serving two terms in Congress. Buoyed by his business and political successes, Cooper attempted to elevate himself into elite society by

recasting himself as a gentleman. He acquired all the trappings of gentility: a manor house named Ostego Hall, a fine carriage, private schooling for his children, and a personal portrait by Gilbert Stuart. But the traditional elites did not accept him as an equal and he alienated many in the Republican Party. Eventually he lost everything and died in 1809 a poor and broken man. Cooper's life provides a window into American life during the formative period of its social and political development.

Although their backgrounds and politics were different, both Cooper and Tarleton Bates tried desperately to find their niches in the new republic. Unfortunately, they tried when America's economic, political, and social institutions shifted beneath them like tectonic plates during a major earthquake. The Revolution bestowed on Americans the personal freedoms of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." However, it also conferred the freedom to fail. Americans were not strangers to failure; people failed during colonial times as businessmen, farmers, politicians, and soldiers. Personal failure then often was attributed to divine intervention or the inability of the patriarch to manage the affairs of his family, which he ruled over like a mini-commonwealth. Failure in the early Republic on the other hand was intensely personal (particularly for men), and in addition to financial ruin carried with it the loss of personal honor and prestige. Additionally, men were expected to conform effortlessly to the model of the virtuous republican man. Taylor shows how Cooper struggled with the changes occurring around him, but Bates' story is as relevant as Cooper's because it helps fill in the gaps of the general histories of the period. Gordon Wood argues "...there is a time for understanding

the particular and there is a time for understanding the whole.”⁵ In Wood’s words Bates’ story is one of those “monographic studies of eighteenth [and early nineteenth] century life” that allows us to better understand life in the early Republic. Tarleton Bates was a kind of republican *everyman*. His experiences mirrored those of other ordinary men who dealt with the significant cultural, political, and social changes that occurred in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

As suggested earlier, this period of American history has been analyzed by successive generations of historians. For example, in the late nineteenth century historians like Henry Adams wrote that famous men and important events were responsible for change in the early Republic. A half-century later Charles A. Beard and other Progressive historians downplayed the role of men and events and instead believed that progress occurred as a result of conflict between competing interest groups. Consensus historians like Richard Hofstadter and Daniel Boorstin wrote after World War II that the differences between the groups was relatively benign and added America in its formative period evolved in a general atmosphere of relative calm and harmony. In the 1960s and 1970s the New Left historians shattered these views by de-emphasizing American exceptionalism and at the same time stressed the importance of the common man (and woman) in the evolution of American society. In recent years there has been renewed interest in synthetic histories in the tradition of Adams and Beard in addition to traditional works written about the revolutionaries. However, there is no question that

⁵ Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 6.

the New Left school of historical interpretation profoundly changed our way of interpreting the past.

Perhaps no area of study has been scrutinized more closely in recent years than early American politics. Contested presidential elections, deficit spending, and most recently the federal government's role in economic matters have contributed to a desire to become more knowledgeable about America's political origins, particularly the beginnings of political parties. Scholars and non-scholars alike have looked for answers beginning with classics like Richard Hofstadter's *The American Political Tradition* and *The Idea of a Party System* and Noble Cunningham's studies about the Jeffersonian Republicans. James Roger Sharp more recently developed a theory of political parties based on the notion of "proto-parties" that were loosely organized around Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. The works of Hofstadter, Cunningham, Sharp and many others highlight the roles played by party leadership, party machinery, and campaign practices, in party formation. However, all of them lack the human element; politics were practiced in the early Republic by individuals and not organizations. Jeffrey Pasley explains in *The Tyranny of Printers* that non-elected public officials like William Duane, John Israel, and Tarleton Bates worked diligently behind the scenes to establish the foundation of America's first party system. Historian Joanne Freeman also placed a human face on politics and politicians in *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. Freeman explains how Cunningham, Sharp, and others overstated the maturation of the political system. Parties formed slowly and politics became a deadly serious game of dare and counter-dare between individuals. Passing legislation was

relatively easy for politicians compared with the challenge of convincing citizens to vote for them. The days of commanding respect solely because of one's station in life were gone; politicians were expected to prove their virtue and worth on a continuing basis.

Freeman's work dovetailed with Bertram Wyatt-Brown's written nearly twenty years earlier. Wyatt-Brown scholarship is acknowledged as a definitive work on honor and reputation, and on the related subject of dueling. He defines honor as, "the cluster of ethical rules, most readily found in societies of small communities by which judgments of behavior are ratified by community consensus."⁶ Additionally, he argued that honor since earliest times has been "inseparable from hierarchy and entitlement, defense of family blood and community needs."⁷ Antebellum Southerners living within a hierarchical social system readily embraced the concept of personal honor, and they added to it the notion of gentility, which involved how one was seen within the community. Inner strength was important, but how one dressed, spoke, and dealt with others - especially inferiors - was considered the mark of a true gentleman. A man was a gentleman only if other men publicly conceded that he had crossed - by breeding, education, and acquisition - that critical line separating the genteel few from the common many.⁸ In a sense gentility created a "tyranny of the community." Wyatt-Brown added that the North was not unlike the South in the early Republic, but by 1820 it changed in favor of a system where personal honor "became akin to respectability, a word that

⁶ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), xv.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸ Alan Taylor, "From Fathers to Friends of the People: Political Personas in the Early Republic." *Journal of the Early Republic* 11 (Winter 1991): 465-66.

included freedom from licit vices that once were signals of masculinity.”⁹ More recent works on the same subjects include those written by Dickson Bruce, Dick Steward’s, Jack K. Williams, and James Landale. All of these authors generally tell the same narrative of men who were required to prove themselves or risk being ostracized by their respective communities. Honor, reputation, and the role of men in society all were in transition during the early Republic. A significant number of books and articles dealing with the gender history of men have appeared in recent years. The most useful for examining the life of Tarleton Bates are: Mark Kann’s *Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* and E. Anthony Rotundo’s *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. Both of the authors demolish the myth of the rugged male pioneer and describe how man’s role in society evolved during the formative period of the nation’s history. Reading their analyses and the letters and documents written by and about Tarleton Bates and his family help put into perspective what life for men must have been life on the edges of the American frontier at the turn of the eighteenth century. Bates’ aspirations and character also come into clearer focus. Moreover, Kann’s and Rotundo’s books underscore the fact that Republican women¹⁰ were not the only Americans required to adapt during the formative period of the nation’s history.

⁹ Wyatt-Brown, 19-20.

¹⁰ In contrast to the relatively few books written about men in the early Republic, there is a significant amount of scholarship about women. The most notable female authors are: Mary H. Blewett, *Men, Women, and Work: Class, Gender, and Protest in the New England Shoe Industry, 1780-1910* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1990); Navy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780 – 1835* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); Jeanne Boydston, *Home & Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York

Rotundo's study deals with middle-class northern men. The author described the evolution of masculinity in the early nineteenth century from communal usefulness to the self-made man, and linked it to the emergence of an expanding market economy. Men's passions were given freer rein during this time (it was now acceptable and in some cases admirable to be ambitious and aggressive) and manhood was defined not in contrast to boyhood but to womanishness. Like Gordon Wood, Rotundo emphasized the growing importance of work. He de-emphasized class, which limits the usefulness of his study, but his conclusion that gender is dependent on prevailing cultural and social factor is critical. Mark Kann examined the speeches and writings of the revolutionary generation to describe their vision for America. According to Kann, the revolutionaries wanted to defuse growing democratic tendencies in the country and recreate the previous hierarchal society along republican lines. Thus their "grammar of manhood" encouraged American men "to reform themselves, restore order to the hierarchical ranks of men, and foster social stability, political legitimacy, and patriarchal power."¹¹ Many of the revolutionaries, for example, placed bachelors like Tarleton Bates at the bottom of a hierarchy of masculine identities to encourage fraternity and deference to authority. Next on the rung was the family man who was the bedrock of republican society. Both the

and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); May P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789 – 1860* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1987); and Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), and *The Republican Ideology of the Revolutionary Generation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1985).

¹¹ Kann, 1.

bachelor and family deferred to the “the better sort,” and all three groups looked to the “heroic man” who was expected to lead with virtue and wisdom.¹²

Tarleton Bates and his fatal duel have potential as the subject of a microhistory. Unlike a local history that does not go beyond a narrow focus, a microhistory analyzes small events that involve obscure people and a few sources and extracts from them meanings that presumably throw light on society at large.¹³ Historian Richard D. Brown pointed out that “By exploring a finite subject exhaustively [though not definitively], the microhistorian commands the evidence on that subject beyond challenge; so within that topic readers learn to accept his or her authority.”¹⁴ Italian historians first coined the term microhistory in the early 1970s, but the genre gained popular acceptance in 1992 with the publishing of Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, a short story about an outspoken miller who is dragged before Roman inquisitors in sixteenth century Italy.¹⁵ A notable American microhistory was Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale*, which is based on a diary kept from 1785 to 1812 by Martha Ballard, a midwife and healer living in a small town in Maine. Ulrich used Ballard's story as the basis for her broader analysis into the role of women in the community, marriage and sexual relations, and the medical profession in the early nineteenth century. Timothy J. Gilfoyle explored the seedier side of New York City in

¹² Ibid., 5–11.

¹³ Gordon Wood, ed., *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Users of History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 127.

¹⁴ Richard D. Brown, “Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (Spring 2003): 16.

¹⁵ Ibid., 11.

his microhistory *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York*. In that work he employs a memoir written by a small-time criminal named George Appos.¹⁶ Finally, Patricia Cohen examined the beginnings of tabloid journalism in *The Murder of Helen Jewett*, the story of a brutal murder of a twenty-three-old prostitute that occurred in New York City in 1836. Instead of a diary Cohen draws from news articles, police reports, and personal letters between Jewett and the murder suspect.¹⁷

Tarleton Bates did not write a diary like Martha Ballard or an autobiography like George Appos, but he left behind dozens of letters and a personal ledger that he kept between 1798 and 1805. Additionally, his brothers (Fleming, Frederick, and Richard), his sister Sally, and their father Thomas Bates corresponded often with one another. Many of the letters have been lost but enough remain to allow the historian to form opinions about the Bates family and the time in which they lived. Tarleton's personal ledger also includes notes about a trip he took on the Ohio River in 1798, numerous tables and graphs, personal and professional transactions, and several personal entries that provide a window into his character. Although he and his brothers shared thoughts on many things, their favorite topic was politics. They debated back and forth in their correspondence on issues ranging from American support for France to the constitutionality of a standing army. Their letters also reveal the human side of frontier life.

This paper's format is arranged to focus on the Bates-Stewart duel and the contributory factors in Bates' life that led up to it. The first chapter describes events as

¹⁷ Ibid., 13-17.

they unfolded on the day of the duel in addition to providing a general history on the practice of dueling up to that time. It does not address duels that were fought later in the nineteenth century except as they are relevant to this story. It concludes as the duelists are preparing for the first volley. Chapter Two takes the reader from the field of honor to the Bates family plantation (Belmont) in Goochland County, Virginia and an examination of how Tarleton's early life prepared him for manhood. In Chapter Three Tarleton explains in his letters what life was like on the Pennsylvania frontier in addition to how he viewed himself as both an American and a republican. Tarleton's personal and political maturation paralleled that of his adopted hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that was also undergoing dramatic changes at this time. His letters, providing a glimpse into his feelings about life, love, politics, and his place in the new nation, are particularly poignant. Chapter Four describes Bates' evolution from political neophyte into party apparatchik and places that evolution within the development of the Republican Party on the national, state, and local levels. Americans in general tend to be whiggish about their history, but in reality citizens living in early Republic were uncertain where the new experiment in government and society was headed. For example what was unthinkable – namely the development of formal political parties – during Washington's first administration had become a fact of political life by Jefferson's first term. Tarleton Bates was part of that evolution at the grass-roots level. Chapter Five returns the reader to the dueling field and the eventual climax. Bates' feelings as expressed in his letters show how far the young Virginian had come since arriving in Pittsburgh while providing a personal account of his disagreement with Stewart.

The public outburst between Chris Matthews and Zell Miller is generally forgotten, and the careers and reputations of both men have not suffered as a result. We look back to the early nineteenth century with a twenty-first century perspective and wonder aloud why Tarleton Bates and Thomas Stewart were unable peaceably resolve their differences. Americans today wax nostalgic for the simpler times of the early Republic, but the reality was very different. The country was in economic, political, and social turmoil. No one was certain if the republican experiment would succeed, and ordinary Americans were conflicted between living up to their Revolutionary heritage and to old ways of doing things – like settling personal disputes. The goal of this study then is to provide the reader with a sense of that tension and why a peaceable resolution between Bates and Stewart was not possible.

CHAPTER ONE

A DEADLY INTERVIEW

*We're just beginning our political violence. God knows where it will end.
I have not time to amplify.*

Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, May 10, 1805

Duelists referred to duels euphemistically as appointments, interviews, and meetings to disguise their true purpose. Historians¹⁸ have divided duels into three types: the judicial duel, the duel of chivalry, and the duel of honor. The most interesting of the three types is the duel of honor because the stilted ritual of the practice appears more like theater than reality. From dueling pistols carried about in baize-lined, mahogany boxes to politely written letters between participants that are closed with elegant phrases like, “Your most obedient and very humble servant,” the duel of honor is regarded today as a romantic anachronism. In order to understand why two men – and dueling was primarily a man’s domain – would risk their lives over an insult, real or imagined, we must examine the psychology of dueling in addition to understanding its aristocratic heritage, which required

¹⁸ The earliest general histories on duels and dueling include: Lorenzo Sabine, *Notes of Duels and Dueling: Alphabetically with a Preliminary Historical Essay* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, and Company, 1855); Ben C. Truman, *Dueling in America* (San Diego: Joseph Tabler Books, 1883); and Lewis Melville and Reginald Hargreaves, *Famous American Duels and Assassinations* (New York: J.H. Sears & Co., 1930). More recent general studies include: Hamilton Cochran, *Noted American Duels and Hostile Encounters* (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1963); Don C. Seitz, *Famous American Duels: With Some Account of the Causes That Led Up to Them and the Men Engaged* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1966); Robert Baldick, *The Duel: A History of Dueling* (New York: Spring Books, 1970); Barbara Holland, *Gentlemen's Blood: A History of Dueling, From Swords at Dawn to Pistols at Dusk* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2003); and Paul Kirchner, *Dueling with the Sword and Pistol: 400 Years of One-on-One Combat* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 2004).

that a gentleman defend his honor and reputation with his life.¹⁹ This heritage distinguished the personal combat fought between gentlemen from the rough and tumble brawls that occurred in the American backcountry.²⁰ America's contribution to the legacy of dueling was politics, and American politicians in the early Republic regarded the duel as one of the tools at their disposal for demonstrating the quality of their character and fitness for office.²¹ This chapter describes the opening moments of the Bates-Stewart duel and includes a history of the practice with a focus on the duel of honor.

In the wee hours of January 8, 1806, two men, neatly dressed in brown suits and white shirts, stood in a clearing on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They faced each other holding loaded dueling pistols. Tarleton Bates and Thomas Stewart came to this place as gentlemen and of their own accord to settle a personal grievance rooted in a

¹⁹ Historians who wrote general histories about dueling have also addressed the related issues of character, honor, and reputation. In particular are Bertram Wyatt-Brown, who wrote *Southern Honor and Behavior in the Old South* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), and "Andrew Jackson's Honor," *Journal of the Early Republic* 17 (Spring 1997): 1-36; and Joanne Freeman, who wrote: "Grappling with the Character Issue." *Reviews in American History*, 28 (December 2000): 518-22; and *Affairs of Honor, National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

²⁰ Elliott J. Gorn "'Gouge and Bit, Pull Hair and Scratch': The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry." *The American Historical Review* 90 (Feb 1985): 41. Gorn described the differences between dueling and bare-knuckle fighting: "While a gentleman's honor insisted on cool restraint, eye gougers gloried in unvarnished brutality. In contrast to duelist's aloof silence, backwoods fighters screamed defiance to the world."

²¹ Joanne B. Freeman, "Dueling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53 (April 1996): 293-7.

political dispute. Neither Pennsylvania's stringent laws against dueling²² nor public opinion against the practice dissuaded them. The two men were in the prime of their lives and had much to lose by dueling. Nonetheless, this was a matter of personal honor. Reputations were at stake, and a gentleman in the early republic was expected to defend his, even if it meant dying in the process. Other than the fact they believed dueling could resolve their differences, Bates and Stewart had little in common.

Tarleton Bates came from a large and prominent Virginia family with roots that went back to the founding of the Jamestown colony. His parents were not as well to do as the Tidewater elite, who became fabulously rich growing tobacco on lavish plantation estates. Nonetheless, Bates and his eleven siblings lived a relatively comfortable and privileged life on their plantation in Goochland County, which was west of Richmond. When Tarleton turned nineteen in 1794, the seductive lure of America's westward expansion combined with limited opportunities at home compelled him to abandon Virginia, like thousands of others, in search of something better.²³ After serving with the Virginia militia during the Whiskey Rebellion, Bates settled in Pittsburgh where he

²² The 1794 Pennsylvania law that outlawed dueling stated "... if any person within this commonwealth shall challenge, by word or writing, the person of another to fight at sword, rapier, pistol, or other deadly weapon, such person, so challenging, shall forfeit and pay for every such offence, being thereof lawfully convicted in any court of record within this commonwealth, by the testimony of one or more witnesses, or by the confession of the party offending, the sum of two hundred and eighty dollars, or shall suffer twelve months imprisonment, without bail or mainprize..." The law also punished "... any person (who) shall willingly and knowingly carry and deliver any written challenge, or shall deliver any message, shall, for every such offence, forfeit and pay the sum of one hundred and forty dollars, or suffer six months imprisonment."

²³ Virginia was the most transient state in the Union. Bates was part of mass exodus from Virginia between the 1790s and the Civil War. David H. Fischer and James C. Kelly in *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement*, (Charlottesville, VA and London: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

became one of the leaders of the moderate faction of the Republican Party²⁴ in addition to the appointed Prothonotary of Allegheny County.²⁵

Friends and family members variously characterized Bates as “elegant,” “handsome,” and “mild and delicate.” His foes, on the other hand, used words like “tyrannical,” “headstrong,” “arrogant,” and “hothead.” Both friends and foes agreed, however, that Bates had a sharp mind and charismatic personality. He got along well with most people and they liked to be around him. The only portrait of him shows a well-dressed man with dark and curly hair tied in the back with a pigtail lying neatly on his shoulders. He has a prominent nose and chin, and his deep-set eyes are set below bushy eyebrows. He is dressed in a plain dark suit and a white shirt with a ruffled collar. One can imagine looking at this portrait that Tarleton Bates was careful about how he appeared to others in public.

In contrast to Bates, Thomas Stewart is a mystery. His parents were Scotch-Irish immigrants and that he was co-owner of a local dry goods store that probably catered to westward-bound travelers. Like many Scotch-Irish in Pittsburgh, he lived in the less affluent section of town, right across from its center on the southern bank of the Monongahela River. By the early nineteenth century, the Scotch-Irish were a significant cultural, economic, and social force both within Pittsburgh and the United States. Their

²⁴ This is covered in greater detail in Chapter 4, “Bates and The Pennsylvania Republicans”. Briefly, after Thomas Jefferson was elected President in 1800 the Republican Party in Pennsylvania split into radical and moderate factions. The groups differed on the role and power of the judiciary, on Presidential appointments, and on the need for a new state constitution.

²⁵ The Prothonotary is the chief clerk of the civil court.

rise to prominence was the culmination of sixty years of migration from Northern Ireland to America, and their political involvement increased in relation to their numbers.²⁶ In Pennsylvania before the Revolution, for example, Scotch-Irish leaders were effective at making the governor and assembly responsive to the need for more frontier defense and security. Like Bates, Stewart was also involved in local politics but as a member of the radical faction of the Republican Party. He and Bates were not friends, but the two probably knew each other by reputation, which was not uncommon in small and isolated communities like Pittsburgh that dotted the American frontier.

Stewart arrived at the dueling grounds first and was accompanied by his second, William Wilkins. Bates arrived shortly afterward with a doctor and his second, Morgan Neville, who carried the dueling pistols. The seconds also knew each other, but unlike the principals they had a great deal in common. They were roughly the same age (Wilkins was a few years older), but more importantly their families were part of Pittsburgh's small but influential elite. Their paternal grandfathers were Revolutionary War heroes, and Morgan's father Presley Neville was Lafayette's aide-de-camp. Additionally, both were college-educated; Neville matriculated at the Pittsburgh Academy (forerunner to the University of Pittsburgh), and Wilkins attended Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The final similarity between them was neither man

²⁶ Informative works about the Scotch-Irish were: Robert Garland, "The Scotch-Irish in Western Pennsylvania." *Western Pennsylvania History* 6 (April 1923): 65-105; Edward R. Green, "Scotch-Irish Emigration: An Imperial Problem." *Western Pennsylvania History* 35 (December 1952): 193-209; James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962); and finally David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

had done anything up to this point to distinguish himself in the community. Thus, the duel provided them with the opportunity for testing their mettle, without risking death or serious injury in the process. The parties politely exchanged salutations when Bates appeared, and then they prepared for the duel. Neville and Wilkins had decided upon this remote site²⁷ to keep the duel a secret from the general public and local authorities.

Secrecy was a huge concern as a result of the public outcry over the death of Alexander Hamilton two years earlier. In the most famous duel in American history, Vice President Aaron Burr killed the former Treasury Secretary with a single shot in the lower abdomen on July 11, 1804, at the Heights of Weehawken in New Jersey.²⁸ Their seconds, William Van Ness and Nathaniel Pendleton, respectively, selected Weehawken because dueling was against the law in New York, and they wanted to protect the principals from possible prosecution. Their attempt at secrecy failed, however, when a mortally wounded Hamilton was carried to a friend's home in Manhattan. The source of the discord between Burr and Hamilton was also politics. Burr at the very least resented Alexander Hamilton, who backed Jefferson in the 1800 Presidential election. Burr's resentment intensified in April, 1804, when the *Albany Register* published a letter that

²⁷ Pittsburgh did not have dueling legacy and dueling grounds like Southern cities like Charleston and New Orleans. Moreover, unlike Hamilton and Burr, Bates and Stewart could not relocate their dueling site to another state. Instead, their seconds found a place far from the center of Pittsburgh at the Chadwick Farm, located today in the Oakland section of the city.

²⁸ . All of the books written on the general history of dueling devote considerable space to the events leading up to the Hamilton-Burr duel. Books written about Hamilton and the duel are: Thomas Fleming, *Duel: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr and the Future of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); Arnold A. Rogow, *A Fatal Friendship: Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); and Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004). A sympathetic work about Burr is Nancy Isenberg's recent book *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

contained negative comments apparently made by Hamilton about the Vice President. For several weeks, Van Ness and Pendleton delivered notes between the two political giants, but many historians doubt the two did much to resolve the crisis. The press excoriated Burr, Van Ness, and Pendleton after Hamilton's death, and many people wanted them tried for murder. Neville and Watkins were determined to avoid the same fate.

Bates, Stewart, and their associates were acting out a real-life drama that had appeared in various forms since the beginning of recorded time. The Book of Samuel,²⁹ for example, describes the duel between David and Goliath; Homer relates the clash between Hector and Achilles during the Trojan War; and histories about the Roman Empire are incomplete without accounts of gladiatorial contests between heavily armed combatants. Some historians characterize confrontations between famous generals as duels: Wolfe and Montcalm at Quebec, Lee and Meade and Gettysburg, and Rommel and Montgomery at El Alamein. The word "duel" is derived from the Latin *duellum* (*duo* plus *bellum*) or literally "war between two." It is important to distinguish the previous examples that are part of warfare or staged for entertainment and the choreographed "affairs of honor" that were conducted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries between gentlemen according to the a set of rules known as the *Code Duello*.³⁰ Dueling was a practice designed for resolving conflict, and Bates and Stewart followed a script that was nearly two thousand years old.

²⁹ Samuel 1:17.

³⁰ Baldick, 11-12.

Dueling as practiced here can be traced to the “judicial duel” in which God would bestow victory on the virtuous man. Both Tacitus, the first-century Roman historian, and the fourth-century theologian St. Augustine subscribed to this divine intervention. In 501, Gundebald, king of the Burgundians, sanctioned the judicial duel by declaring, “It being just that every man should be ready to defend with his sword the truth which he attests, and to submit himself to the judgment of the heavens.”³¹ In other words, God and not man would decide whose cause was the most just.³² The judicial duel had no rules per se; antagonists simply pleaded to the local chieftain who would either settle the disagreement or order the participants to fight. The practice was not restricted to the nobility; anyone harboring a grudge or with a score to settle could challenge another individual. However, nobles reserved for themselves the right to fight with swords and decreed that commoners use clubs or their bare hands.³³ During this time the rationale for dueling was established. Supporters claimed the practice prevented societal chaos by providing consenting adults with a civilized way for resolving disputes. Left unchecked, they argued, disputes would develop into *rencontres*, assassinations, and family feuds.

Dueling’s aristocratic roots took hold during the Middle Ages when knights jousted on horseback with other knights, and oftentimes under the watchful eye of the king who needed to curry favor with his nobles to remain in power. In addition to settling disputes, jousts were also useful for displaying one’s bravery and prowess. The

³¹ Holland, 9.

³² Sabine, 1 – 2.

³³ Holland, 9 - 14.

quintessential saga about this period was Sir Thomas Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, which featured a duel between Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawain. Lancelot defeated Gawain, but spared his life, a harbinger of the belief that duels were fought to defend one's honor and not for taking the life of an opponent. This chivalric phase ended with the emergence of nation-states led by powerful monarchs who regarded dueling as a threat to their authority and as inconsistent with orderly government and society.³⁴ Although anti-dueling laws and proclamations were enacted in the sixteenth century, many nobles ignored what they considered to be unwarranted intrusions by the state into their personal affairs. Some aristocrats found an outlet in the army that was "ambivalent about dueling, outlawing it in theory and cheering it in practice."³⁵

At the same time that European nation-states attempted to stamp out the practice, French and Italian sword makers upgraded the technology of dueling. Chief among these improvements was the *rapier*. Unlike heavy military swords designed for chopping and hacking, the long and lightweight rapier was intended for thrusting at an opponent.³⁶ The rapier required skill rather than brawn, a physical trait that was considered unflattering by many gentlemen. A trained swordsman with a rapier could carve an opponent with almost surgical precision. However, because proficiency was dependent on practice, only the nobility, who had ample free time, were able to master it. Moreover, the rapier was more than just a personal weapon. The weapon was also a symbol of the bearer's social

³⁴ Holland, 13-19.

³⁵ Holland, 92.

³⁶ Holland, 61.

status and a not-so-subtle threat that he was prepared to defend it with his life. Thus, in contrast to judicial duels that relied upon divine intervention and medieval jousts that were public spectacles, duels with rapiers were personal affairs between gentlemen who sought redress from real or imagined transgressions. Swords remained the weapons of choice for duelists until the beginning of the eighteenth century when they were gradually replaced by pistols. Pistols made dueling more democratic and more deadly.

Duelists first used military pistols, but eventually gunsmiths manufactured firearms specifically for dueling. Because duels were tests of character and courage, gun makers strived for reliability instead of accuracy. The first true “duelers” were flintlocks equipped with long (nine or ten inch) smoothbore barrels treated with either a matte blue or browned finish to minimize glare. They were made heavy to steady the shooter’s aim and absorb recoil. Duelists preferred large calibers up to fifty-seven millimeters, and ammunition consisted of lead balls loaded with about one-half the powder charge used for a musket. Gunsmiths later improved duelers by installing hair triggers that made it easier to fire and trigger guards that provided for a steadier grip.³⁷ Because pistols were easier to use than swords, a novice could become an acceptable shot in a relatively short period time. However, pistols were also more inherently dangerous. Cutting a sleeve or slicing another’s cheek with a sword might quickly restore one’s honor and reputation, but pistol wounds, even if they did not result in death, created their own set of physical

³⁷ Jeffrey Kinard. *Pistols: An Illustrated History of Their Impact* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 29.

problems. Andrew Jackson, for example, sustained a serious wound in his 1806 duel with Charles Dickinson that never healed fully and bothered him until his death.³⁸

Inexpensive and readily available handguns popularized dueling in the second half of the eighteenth century. Ireland in particular witnessed hundreds of duels that were fought between gentlemen and would-be gentlemen; the phrase, “Did he *blaze*?” became code for inquiring about a man’s courage. Despite the carnage the government was indifferent to dueling. Sir Jonah Barrington, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty in Ireland from 1757 to 1791, remarked, “A duel was, indeed, considered a necessary part of a young man’s education...when men had a glowing ambition to excel in all manner of feats and exercises they naturally conceived that manslaughter, in an honest way, was the most chivalrous and gentlemanly of all their accomplishments.”³⁹ In light of this sentiment from a prominent jurist, anti-dueling laws were generally ineffective, and the public was indifferent about what happened between consenting adults. Increased bloodshed finally compelled advocates of dueling to create written rules to regulate the practice. In 1777 delegates from the counties of Tipperary, Galway, Sligo, Mayo, and

³⁸ Andrew Jackson fought many duels, but his most famous was with Charles Dickinson. The account of the Jackson-Dickinson affair can be found in all general histories about dueling, but Wyatt-Brown’s explanation about the culture of honor behind the duel is the best. Wyatt-Brown attributed much of Jackson’s pugnacity to Old Hickory’s mother. The memories of his mother that Jackson most often repeated were her words of warning about survival in a harsh, unfeeling world: “If ever you have to vindicate your feelings or defend your honor, do it calmly.” In another phrasing of the sentiment, Jackson recalled her commanding him never to sue at law for “insult or battery or defamation. The law affords no remedy for such outrage that can satisfy a gentleman. Fight.” These were lessons that she had learned from the Scots of Northern Ireland, having herself descended from Robert the Bruce. The Scots-Irish were more prone to personal violence and more conscious of honor than any group then settled in the country. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “Andrew Jackson’s Honor,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 17 (Spring 1997): 28.

³⁹ Cochran, 15.

Roscommon met at Clonmel Summer Assizes and created dueling rules for adoption throughout Ireland. The “Irish Code” as it became known consisted of twenty-five rules that addressed the four elements of any duel: handling apologies, etiquette, the role of seconds, and concluding the duel. Rules for dueling were not new. Both the Germans and the Italians had developed them, but the Irish Code was the first set of rules for duels that involved firearms.⁴⁰

In addition to reducing the number of duels, the code’s creators wanted to defuse the passion of the participants. As a result handling apologies is addressed in no fewer than eight rules. The code also included rules of etiquette to ensure that participants did not take the proceedings lightly. Rule Fifteen mandated; “Challenges are never to be delivered at night, unless the party to be challenged intends leaving the place of offense before morning; for it is desirable to avoid all hot-headed proceedings.” Rule Thirteen also discouraged “...children's play [e.g. dumb shooting or firing in the air] must be dishonorable on one side or the other, and is accordingly prohibited.” Thus the message for potential duelists was clear: Challenge another at your own risk, but be prepared for the consequences, including death.

Ironically, the Irish Code did not condone killing, although this was the outcome of many duels. Rule Twenty-Two specified, “Any wound sufficient to agitate the nerves and necessarily make the hand shake, must end the business for that day.” Unlike the German and Italian codes that presumed the inevitability of a duel, the Irish Code required reflection and reconciliation on the participant’s part. Because duelists were too

⁴⁰ Holland, 24.

involved emotionally to seek reconciliation, the code placed this onerous burden squarely on the shoulders of the seconds.⁴¹

Traditionally, a second filled in for his principal if the latter was incapacitated, but the second could also participate as a co-combatant. Rule Twenty-Five did not prohibit seconds from fighting, but like other parts of the code the rule attempted to circumscribe behavior by requiring that seconds “fight at right angles with their principal.” The only qualifications for a second was that he “be of equal rank in society with the principals they attend, inasmuch as a second may choose or chance to become a principal, and equality is indispensable.” Because dueling did not include judges, the code expected that seconds take charge of all activities associated with a duel. This included deciding which duelist gave the first offense (Rule Three), establishing the time and terms of firing (Rule Seventeen), loading pistols for the participants (Rule Eighteen), and giving firing commands (Rule Nineteen). Most importantly, the Irish Code required that seconds “attempt reconciliation before the meeting takes place, or after sufficient firing or hits, as specified.” The method for achieving reconciliation before the duel was left up to the seconds, but the code typically involved negotiating on behalf of the principal to avoid a meeting on the dueling field. The Irish Code was exported to Europe and adapted to

⁴¹ In his 1838 guide on dueling former South Carolina Governor John Lyde Wilson claimed that “nine out of ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred duels originate in the want of experience of seconds.” Wilson exhorts seconds to “be cool and collected,” and to “use every effort to soothe and tranquilize your principal; do not see things in the same aggravated light in which he views them.” John L. Wilson, *The Code of Honor or Rules for the Government of Principals and Seconds in Dueling* (South Carolina: By the Author, 1838).

meet local conditions and preferences. By the time the code reached America, Britain and her rebellious colonies were in open warfare.

America was introduced to dueling in the seventeenth century. The first recorded duel was fought not between gentlemen, but between two servants: Edward Doty and Edward Lester from the Massachusetts colony. Doty and Lester fought to a draw with swords, and there is no record they were prosecuted for their indiscretion. A few duels were fought in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but the popularity of dueling increased significantly during the Seven Years' War. That conflict brought to America British and French armies who were officered by aristocrats with traditions of dueling. The war also created a new and as yet undefined role for many American gentlemen, that of officer in the Colonial Army. Newly minted American officers strove to communicate to peers and subordinates that they were gentleman deserving of respect. Dueling was not restricted to junior officers. General Horatio Gates, the hero of the Battle of Saratoga, fought a duel with a friend of John Hancock. No one was hurt and Washington transferred Gates to the South. Duels between gentlemen-officers reached epidemic proportions in General Anthony Wayne's American Legion that fought the Indian Confederacy of the Ohio River Valley in the early 1790s. Following the deaths of two officers, one of Wayne's majors lamented the fact that fifteen duels had been fought within a year, "all by young officers who had no experience in the Revolution to give

them status.”⁴² Offended pride was the driving force behind the problem, and most reasons for sending a challenge now seem "ridiculous in both purpose and practice."⁴³

The American military at this time was not being appropriated by a group of fanatical, neo-aristocrats who were determined to model it in the image of the English and French armies. Incidents like the Gates affair and the duels that occurred in Wayne’s Legion were anomalies. Armies everywhere have experienced discipline problems, particularly when soldiers have an abundance of free time on their hands. Wayne’s officers, for example, dueled each other in garrison and not when they were in the field fighting Indians. Nonetheless, the military was a fertile breeding ground for the kind of culture that encouraged dueling. Charles Royster claimed that soldiers in the Continental Army became more aloof and isolated from the general population after the “rage militaire.” The reason for their isolation was the sense that they alone embodied the true spirit of the revolution, in contrast to ordinary civilians who seemed so eager to fight at the beginning of the War for Independence, but who so quickly dropped out as the dangers of engaging in warfare increased.⁴⁴

The Newburgh Conspiracy in 1783, when a group of officers issued a veiled threat to Congress for their back pay, a pension, and other privileges including land grants, is another example of this feeling of exclusivity. Historians have focused on the

⁴² Alan D. Gaff. *Bayonets in the Wilderness: Anthony Wayne's Legion in the Old Northwest* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 125.

⁴³ Ibid. 199-200.

⁴⁴ Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 127-31.

collapse of the conspiracy and George Washington's impassioned speech but at the same time ignored the role played by class in the affair. The conspiracy was composed of officers, who generally were better educated and reared than enlisted soldiers. To paraphrase historian Joanne Freeman, they were not traditional aristocrats competing for glory and preferment at court. Instead, they constituted a novel hybrid: they were "republican aristocrats" who had fought valiantly for the principles of equality, liberty, and virtue while viewing the world through the lens of entitlement and privilege.⁴⁵ These republican aristocrats found new life in the Society of the Cincinnati, an organization that was founded in 1783 and whose membership was restricted to officers who had served at least three years in the Continental Army or Navy. Wayne's officers were simply carrying on the tradition established by their Revolutionary predecessors.

A uniquely American brand of aristocracy also developed in two other groups: the plantation society of the South and in factions that evolved into the Federalist and Republican parties. In general, the latter two groups were outwardly committed to the principles of the Revolution like their military brethren, but they were also mired in a kind of cultural flypaper that prevented them from progressing forward to a stage of republican "enlightenment," as described by Gordon Wood.⁴⁶ In hindsight, had they been able to do that, then the duels fought between Bates and Stewart, and Burr and

⁴⁵ Freeman. xxi – xxiii. Freeman was referring to early American politicians. Freeman argues "In the early American republic, the culture of honor met with a burgeoning democracy and an ambiguous egalitarian ethic of republicanism; the former questioned assumptions about political leadership, and the latter renounced the trappings of aristocracy without offering a defined alternative...They were aristocratic democrats, fighting battles of honor as part of the democratic process."

⁴⁶ Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 189-212.

Hamilton would not have occurred. However, this is expecting too much from people whom a generation earlier were paying homage to a king. Change does not move precisely as described by Gordon Wood; it lurches between action and reaction. Wood concedes the transformation of American society was neither uniform nor smooth because it was affected by local, regional, sectional, ethnic, and class differences that made the change uneven and at times contentious.⁴⁷ His opinion is shared by historian Joyce Appleby, who adds, “Not every person born after the Revolution took part in configuring their society; many stayed at home and replicated their parents’ world as closely as they could.”⁴⁸ Nowhere was the reluctance to change more evident than among Southern plantation owners.

Southern planters identified closely with the English gentry. Rural land ownership was one similarity they shared, but planters also emulated the English by attempting to maintain a hierarchal society rooted in deference. Similarly, whereas the patriarchal family structure was disintegrating in the North, Southern planters tightened their grip on their extended families, including their slaves, which in turn reinforced the culture of deference. Additionally, while Northern men turned increasingly to commerce, trade, and new forms of employment and self-fulfillment, Southern planters remained tradition-bound and resistant to change. Slavery was a dying institution in the North, but in the South it became a source of personal wealth and prestige. Thus, at the end of the

⁴⁷ Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 5 – 8.

⁴⁸ Joyce Appleby (*Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 8.

eighteenth century, Northern men became more self-sufficient and respectability was earned through personal achievements. Southerners, on the other hand, clung to the notion that reputations were defined by the community.⁴⁹ The planter community Virginia, which included the family of Tarleton Bates, created a lifestyle for themselves that was fiercely competitive. Social hierarchy often clashed with republican principles, and young men caroused, gambled, and hunted – much like their English role models – to prove themselves. Physical prowess was also displayed in bare-knuckle fights with peers until non-gentlemen followed suit. Thereafter, dueling pistols replaced bare knuckles for gentlemen as the preferred weapons of choice for settling disputes.⁵⁰

Closely tied to dueling's aristocratic legacy was the issue of gender. Women have fought duels, but most often they have been the *casus belli* that compelled men to fight other men. Perhaps the most famous duel fought over a woman occurred in 1806 between Andrew Jackson and his fellow Tennessean named Charles Dickinson. Jackson took exception to remarks Dickinson made about Jackson's wife Rachel, although there had been bad blood between the political rivals for some time. Both Jackson and Dickinson were attorneys, but neither man considered settling their differences in a courtroom, in front of a judge and jury. Both regarded themselves as gentlemen and men of honor, and for a man in the early republic to turn toward the legal system to repair his honor by filing a libel or slander suit was akin to admitting that he was unable to protect himself and his family. Jackson's mother cautioned her son at a young age, "Never tell a

⁴⁹ Wyatt-Brown, 46-8.

⁵⁰ Gorn, 20-1.

lie, nor take what is not your own, nor sue anybody for slander, assault, and battery. Always settle them yourself.”⁵¹ Dickinson’s intemperate remarks might have been all Jackson needed to challenge his rival. Although Dickinson was an excellent shot and experienced duelist, Jackson killed him on the first volley.⁵²

By the beginning of the nineteenth century men were more self-centered and less community-minded than their fathers. In colonial America, according to historian E. Anthony Rotundo, the ideal man was pleasant, mild-mannered, and devoted to the good of his community.⁵³ He governed his family like a little commonwealth by supervising his wife’s piety and productivity, managing the education of his sons, and arranging for the marriages of his children to perpetuate the family line.⁵⁴ Patriarchs were not prone to emotion; they were masters of self-discipline and fathers were the primary role models for their sons. The patriarch also represented his household in the various hierarchies that ordered the larger society. This also meant he recognized, respected, and deferred to *his* superiors – the fathers and tender parents of his communal family.⁵⁵ Historian and political scientist Mark E. Kahn attributes the breakdown of the patriarchal family in part to Whig rhetoric that encouraged skepticism of unchecked authority. The patriarchal

⁵¹ C.A. H. Wells, “The End of the Affair? Anti-Dueling Laws and Social Norms in Antebellum America.” *Vanderbilt Law Review* 54 (May 2001): 1823.

⁵² J. Winston Coleman, Jr., known in his home state of Kentucky as “Squire of Winburn Farm,” wrote a colorful essay about the Jackson-Dickinson duel entitled *Pistols at Ten Paces* (Cincinnati: C.J. Krehbiel Company, 1962). Coleman describes the duel as “A Tragedy in One Act.”

⁵³ Anthony E. Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 10-18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Kahn, 7-8.

model deconstructed further during the Revolution with the spread of republican values of equality, freedom, and personal virtue into the domestic culture.⁵⁶ The breakdown accelerated during the early 1790s with changes in America's economic system. The traditional home workshop that employed a husband, his wife, and often their children was increasingly replaced by larger workshops and small manufactories that hired men for wages. What's more, government policies accelerated the change. One of the criticisms of Alexander Hamilton's financial policies was they favored concentrations of capital and economic power at the expense of home businesses where husband and wife worked together. Historian William Hogeland asserts that one of Hamilton's objectives for passing a tax on the production of distilled spirits was to drive small producers out of business.⁵⁷

These changes presented men with tremendous opportunities but also left them with many new threats. Republican rhetoric encouraged personal success, which

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ William Hogeland. *The Whiskey Rebellion: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton and the Frontier Rebels Who Challenged America's Newfound Sovereignty* (New York: A Lisa Drew Book/Scribner, 2006), 28 – 33. Hogeland argued the Whiskey Rebellion was part of Hamilton's economic plan that favored large producers over small ones. His economic analysis differed from Thomas P. Slaughter's interpretation that the rebellion was part of an east-west conflict. Dorothy Fennell analysis is closer to Slaughter's. She believed the seeds of the revolt can be traced back to the pre-Revolution. William Miller shows the links between the Rebellion and local Democratic Societies. Washington believed the Democratic Societies were behind the uprising. Finally, Richard H. Kohn disagrees with historians who believe the Federal harsh response was Hamilton's idea. Kohn claims President Washington was much more involved in the planning and execution than previously thought. Thomas P Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Dorothy E Fennell, "From Rebelliousness to Insurrection: A Social History of the Whiskey Rebellion, 1765 – 1802" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1981), William Miller, "The Democratic Societies and the Whiskey Insurrection," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 62 (July 1938): 324-349; Richard H. Kohn, "The Washington Administration's Decision to Crush the Whiskey Rebellion," *The Journal of American History* 59 (December 1972): 567-584.

translated into making money. The surest way for making money was believed to be hard work, especially in a republican society that rejected nobility and whose citizens increasingly regarded inherited wealth with skepticism. The new male icon was the self-made man, who earned his wealth fairly and honestly. Whereas in colonial times personal achievement was generally downplayed, it was now celebrated. Unlike Rotundo's ideal colonial man, the new republican man was driven, self-centered, and highly individualistic. The passions of men, once feared to be socially destructive, were regarded now as potentially useful provided they were channeled into worthwhile pursuits. In particular, personal ambition and aggression, not timidity and deference, were the new yardsticks for measuring manhood.

For example, the former wheelwright turned land speculator William Cooper unabashedly capitalized on the forced removal of British loyalists from upstate New York and amassed a fortune. Cooper's Federalist acquaintances measured others and each other in relation to their dress, the company they kept, the schools they or their children attended, and the furnishings for their homes. This quest for aristocratic gentility was limited only by the size of a person's pocketbook, which contributed in turn to the desire for more trappings of gentility. However, historian Richard Bushman points out that aristocratic gentility was inconsistent with republican equality. As the nation embraced republican government, Bushman claims, gentility was extending deeper into the middle class. For men, gentility included the concepts of personal honor and reputation, which had been unknown in the patriarchal family. Bushman believes the paradox of the

Revolution was that patriots associated aristocracy with corruption, but still sought to capture aristocratic culture for use in republican society. Men of middling means or humble beginnings, like William Cooper, bought books to teach themselves the details of “genteel” speech and conduct; they purchased homes and objects that testified to their refined status; and they sought social respectability by admission to the ranks of polite society and participation in public leadership.⁵⁸ Another republican contradiction, according to Kahn, was the existence of a small group of community leaders – Kahn refers to them as “the trusted few”, who served as role models for newcomers and strangers in the highly mobile society that characterized the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This privileged group of educated and well-heeled leaders was the bedrock upon which the Federalist Party hoped to construct its vision of a republican nation.

As noted earlier, America’s contribution to the legacy of dueling was politics. European aristocrats dueled to preserve and protect their family name; duels were intensely personal, but there were no issues other than the fear of shame or social ostracism. Politicians in the early republic, on the other hand, feared that the loss of personal honor and reputation would result in political impotence. For historian Joanne Freeman, personal honor was more than a vague sense of self worth; it represented the ability to prove oneself a deserving political leader. The night before his fateful meeting with Burr, Hamilton attempted to explain his reasons for fighting a duel with the Vice

⁵⁸ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), xi-xiv.

President. “My religion and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of dueling,” Hamilton confessed, “and it would ever give me pain to be obliged to shed the blood of a fellow creature in a private combat forbidden by the laws.” He clearly recognized the irreparable harm his death or that of Burr would have on the families, and he pledged to perform the Christian act of throwing away both his first and second shots to give Burr an opportunity to “pause and to reflect.” However, Hamilton also understood the implications of not accepting Burr’s original challenge. “My relative situation...,” Hamilton explained, “imposed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call. The ability to be in the future useful, whether in resisting mischief or effecting good, in those cases of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular.”⁵⁹

Other prominent public figures besides Hamilton and Jackson fought duels at this time. One of them was William Crawford, who served as Secretary of War from 1815 to 1816 and Secretary of the Treasury from 1816 to 1825, and was a candidate for President of the United States in 1824. Crawford was born in Virginia in 1774, a year before Tarleton Bates, but moved with his family to Georgia. That state at this time was a fertile ground for dueling. J.E.D. Shepp, an early biographer of Crawford, wrote, “In the early history of Georgia, the crime of dueling was prevalent among the better class of her citizens...The fatal practice became general when the virtuous and best citizens – Governors, Congressmen, and Legislators – on the most trivial excuses and slightest

⁵⁹ Truman, 70 – 73.

provocations, were shedding each other's blood."⁶⁰ Before Crawford was old enough to raise a dueling pistol, a number of Georgia politicians settled their differences on the field of honor. In 1780, General James Jackson, Governor of Georgia, killed the state's Lieutenant Governor because he could no longer endure the man's, "overbearing disposition." Regarding the linkage between dueling and politics, Shepp reiterated, "Dueling was looked upon by society as the honorable way of settling differences between gentlemen"⁶¹

Crawford got into trouble during the late 1790s with speculators in the Yazoo land scandal. He supported the repeal of a Georgia law that opened up millions of acres of prime land between the Yahoo and Chattanooga Rivers. The Georgia legislature repealed the law, and for several years thereafter its supporters and opponents fought a series of duels. Governor James Jackson was involved in three such confrontations, and he sustained a non-fatal injury in the last one. Crawford, a staunch Jeffersonian, was singled out by a Federalist lawyer named Peter Lawrence Van Allen, who in 1802 challenged Crawford to a duel. Crawford recognized that declining Van Allen's challenge might destroy both his law practice and political aspirations, so he agreed to fight Van Allen at Fort Charlotte, South Carolina. Crawford killed his opponent on the second shot. In 1804, General John Clark challenged Crawford to another duel over the Yazoo affair but unlike Van Allen, Clark was an experienced duelist. The two men met in a clearing eleven miles from where Crawford had killed Van Allen, but the duel was

⁶⁰ J.E.D. Shepp, biographer of William Crawford, quoted in Seitz, 109.

⁶¹ Ibid.

stopped before the firs shot by Georgia Governor John Milledge, who urged Clark and Crawford to settle their differences peaceably.

The détente was short-lived. In December 1806, Clark challenged Crawford again. This time the duelists agreed to abide by written rules similar to the Irish Code. This time, Crawford was hit on the first volley and, at the urging of his second, retired from the field. Six months later, Clark challenged Crawford one more time, but the latter declined with the words "...the contest is at an end. I therefore shall decline the appointment of time and place."⁶² Declining the third challenge had no negative effect on Crawford's career; he honorably accepted Clark's other challenges, remained cool in the face of death, and also was wounded. A year later, the Governor of Georgia appointed Crawford to replace Abraham Baldwin in Congress.⁶³ Ironically, Abraham's younger brother, Henry Baldwin, was Tarleton Bates' closet friend in Pittsburgh.

Crawford, Hamilton, and other public figures fought duels to preserve their political careers. However, they also dueled because, as was the case with Crawford, it was the gentlemanly way to settle a quarrel with an equal. Crawford regarded Clark's repeated and unprovoked challenges as ungentlemanly and declined for that reason, despite the fact he and Clark were peers. Partisan politics added a different wrinkle to

⁶² Seitz, 121.

⁶³ Abraham Baldwin graduated from Yale and later served as a chaplain in the Revolutionary War. After the war, he migrated to Georgia to practice law. Baldwin became a member of the state legislature, planned the University of Georgia, and was its president for a time. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress from 1785 to 1788, a member of the Constitutional Convention and one of the signers of the Constitution, and when the new government was organized he represented Georgia as a United States Senator in the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Congresses. He was president, pro tempore, of the Senate in 1801 and 1802 and died in Washington in 1807. M.F. Taylor, "The Political and Civic Career of Henry Baldwin, 1799 – 1830," *Western Pennsylvania History* 24 (March 1941).

dueling, but they did not change a fundamental rule: duels were always fought between equals. A gentleman was not required to respond to the challenge of a social inferior. Take James Beckley, for example.⁶⁴ Beckley was not an elected public official; instead, he belonged to an emerging group of political operatives who attempted to make a living in politics at the end of the eighteenth century. Beckley might have been active politically, but a man like Hamilton would never have looked upon him as an equal. Instead of a duel, Beckley would have been treated with a horsewhipping.⁶⁵ The reason is Hamilton and other Federalists believed that leadership qualities resided only in a “better sort” of gentlemen who possessed the requisite bearing, character, and intelligence to lead others; ordinary citizens would defer automatically to this group.⁶⁶ Beckley and others like him would never qualify for such a distinction. Historian Richard Beeman suggested that the Federalist model of government and society was doomed from the beginning because it depended on a silent contract between this group

⁶⁴ James Beckley was a personal friend of Thomas Jefferson, who with Jefferson’s help was appointed Clerk of the House of Representatives, where he worked from 1789 to 1797, and again from 1801 to 1807. He was devoted to Jefferson until his death in 1807. Beckley was the focus of Jeffrey Pasley’s doctoral dissertation. Jeffrey Pasley, “*Artful and Designing Men: Political Professionalism in the Early American Republic, 1775-1820.*” Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1993. Beckley’s political role is also analyzed in Bernard Fay’s “Early Party Machinery in the United States: Pennsylvania in the Election of 1796.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 60 (October 1936).

⁶⁵ The most famous incident treatment of this type in American history happened in 1857 when Congressman Preston Brooks from South Carolina severely beat Massachusetts Congressman Charles Sumner with a cane on the Senate floor over remarks Sumner had made about Brooks’ uncle, fellow Congressman Andrew Butler, also of South Carolina.

⁶⁶ Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 13. Taylor wrote “Taking their cue from the hierarchical social order in Great Britain, most colonists conceded that public authority should be exercised by men such as William Franklin (Benjamin Franklin’s illegitimate son and pre-Revolutionary governor of New Jersey), who claimed to be the “better sort.” The phrase referred to an elite who combine superior wealth with polished manners, classical learning, and a reputation for honor and integrity.”

of natural leaders and followers. To the Federalists' horror, Americans were unwilling to accept their part of the unwritten agreement. Federalists were not alone; many Republicans also believed in the leadership of virtuous elites. Jefferson and Madison, for example, were the products of a political system that was highly personal and deferential. Unlike the Federalists, however, they believed that representatives and constituents would possess a "similarity of interests" even though the two might be from different socioeconomic classes.⁶⁷

Federalists and Republicans had another thing in common; they were on their own when dealing with other accusatory politicians and the general public. Organized political parties were still in their infancy in the early Republic, and things like party discipline, political platforms, and a loyal opposition taken for granted by the twentieth century were unknown. Compounding the confusion, politicians belonging to both groups swung back and forth frequently on key issues. Politics in the late eighteenth century was a fluid environment of temporary agreements and allowances.⁶⁸ As a result, politics was an intensely personal business.⁶⁹ Formal parties were not available to help absorb or deflect recriminations. Oftentimes, politicians fought duels because they were

⁶⁷ James R. Sharp. *American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 65.

⁶⁸ The volatile state of early American politics has been covered by dozens of historians, but two works stand out, written nearly thirty years apart, that characterize the organized chaos of the early party systems. They are Richard Hofstadter's *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780 – 1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) and Joanne Freeman's book, previously cited, *Affairs of Honor, National Politics in the New Republic*.

⁶⁹ Freeman wrote "Raised up to the eminence of national office, scrutinized on all sides by a widespread audience, the fate of the republic and their reputations hanging in the balance, national politicians lived a self-conscious existence." *Affairs of Honor*, 9.

truly offended by the actions and words of a rival, and in those instances the traditional character of dueling prevailed. On other occasions, however, political duels were not the result of an angry slip of the tongue but were intentionally provoked partisan battles, couched in the gentility of the code of honor.⁷⁰ By participating in a duel - specifically one with a political opponent - a politician displayed to his followers that he valued his principles more than his life.⁷¹ In sum, duels were part of the part of the political culture of that time.

Men like James Beckley were part of that culture, but they worked in the background and were for the most part out of public sight. Beckley was unique because of his relationship to Jefferson, but there were hundreds of other political apparatchiks, mostly Republicans, who either worked for or on behalf of elected public officials. Among this group were newspaper editors, many of whom were sponsored or supported by politicians. The linkage between journalism and politics grew stronger as a result of the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798 that helped mobilize a new generation of editors. Several editors, men like William Duane at the *Aurora* in Philadelphia, became very powerful. However, this newfound notoriety had its down side. Typically, early newspapers had less to do with news and more to do with promoting political careers. As a result, editors often found themselves involved in heated disputes with opposing politicians or other editors. Sometimes these disputes resulted in duels. What might have

⁷⁰ Joanne Freeman, "Dueling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53 (April 1996): 307.

⁷¹ C.A. H. Wells, 1817 - 18.

started as a personal quarrel could quickly devolve into a battle of competing political ideologies.⁷² Additionally, editors – and by extension their newspapers – were silent accomplices in duels. Newspapers were the chief means of communication between the infant government and its citizens. Thus, they were an integral part of defining the laws as well as shaping social mores. By justifying the ritual of dueling, or at the very least not condemning the practice as murder, newspapers communicated that such behaviors was socially acceptable. For politicians dependent on popular opinion and votes, this meant that dueling could be an opportunity to demonstrate character and bravery to a regional, statewide, or even national audience. More importantly, by reprinting the handbills and notes of duelists, newspapers sanitized the practice to a wider audience than just the dueling party. Editors and newspapers did not necessarily promote killing, but they did little in the early Republic to stop the practice. Instead, dueling was characterized as a civilized alternative to America’s fledgling legal system.⁷³

Thus, dueling in early nineteenth-century America was a curious amalgam of biblical righteousness, Middle-Age chivalry, European aristocracy, and turn-of-the-eighteenth century republican manliness. The North and South differed in many ways, but according to Bertram Wyatt-Brown dueling was not one of them; men as far north as Rhode Island⁷⁴ emulated their Southern countrymen on the field of honor. What’s more,

⁷² Ryan Chamberlain, “Knights of the Pen and Pistol: Connecting Nineteenth-Century American Journalism to the Ritual of the Duel” (Ph.D. diss., Ohio University, 2005), 4.

⁷⁴ Walter Austin, *A Forgotten Duel: Fought in Rhode Island between William Austin, of Charlestown, and James Henderson Elliot, of Boston, March 31, 1806*. (Boston: Self Published, 1914). Austin and Elliot were from Massachusetts. Austin wrote a newspaper article Eliot believed disparaged his elderly father. He challenged Austin to a duel that was fought in Rhode Island. Dueling was against the

dueling provided a way for a man to display his manhood in response to the collapse of the traditional family structure and rise of the market economy. Advances in firearm technology made it easy for anyone to play gentleman for a day, but would-be gentry found that acceptance into gentile society would be more difficult. Politics added a uniquely American dimension to dueling. Political parties were not fully developed to keep its members in line, thereby leaving politicians with the task of defending themselves against political and personal attacks. Moreover, they and their agents in the press believed the political culture at that time would not suffer cowards. Dueling was a matter of political survival.

On the morning of their encounter, it is unlikely that either Bates or Stewart reflected on the history of dueling. Their main concern was remaining calm – or *appearing* to remain calm -- even as the weather and their nerves worked against them. The morning was seasonably cold and a winter storm had dumped several inches of fresh snow on the ground the night before. Neville and Wilkins directed the principals to stand ten paces or about thirty feet apart, holding their dueling pistols pointed down in their non-shooting hands. On command, they would switch pistols to their shooting hands, raise, and fire in one motion.⁷⁵ It would be as simple as that. Misfires were counted as shots. The seconds also warned Bates and Stewart that throwing away a shot or deloping

law in Rhode Island, but the law was not strictly enforced. Austin was hit twice in the duel, but he refused to quit. The duelists fired a third volley, but neither man was hit. Both men left the field, their “honor satisfied.”

⁷⁵ One of dueling’s enduring myths is that the participants stood back-to-back, stepped off and paced ten (or fewer) steps, turned and fired. There might have been an incident where participants behaved like this, but the inaccuracy of early dueling pistols made such a scenario highly unlikely.

would not be tolerated and might result in an unchallenged shot. The seconds agreed that if neither man were hit on the first attempt, then Stewart, as the offended party, would decide on a second volley. The seconds cast lots for the choice of position and for who would give the command to fire; Stewart got the choice of position, but Morgan Neville won the coveted privilege to issue firing commands. The seconds then proceeded to carefully load the dueling pistols in front of each other.

Things appeared calm on the surface but everyone was on edge. Hoping to ease tensions a little, Neville joked that Bates and Stewart should have delayed their disagreement until the spring and nicer weather, but his weak attempt at humor was ignored. By now the cold air was taking its toll. The boat trip was strenuous enough, but to make matters worse the seconds ordered the duelists to remove their coats because the extra clothing might provide an unfair advantage by absorbing a bullet. Bates and Stewart grudgingly obliged, but their level of discomfort was clearly rising. They were not strangers to guns but this situation was different. The thought of shooting at another human being, let alone being shot at, was frightening. Moreover, neither had practiced beforehand because that would have violated the spirit of the honor code. As everyone assumed their positions, Bates muttered to himself how things had reached this point.

CHAPTER TWO

BATES AT BELMONT

I experience a kind of gloomy happiness, when thinking on those scenes of youthful pleasure, which nothing but fancy can enjoy. Every object when then surrounded me, appears now replete with beauties. Even the sandy road, in which we trudged to school together, has something in it inexpressibly charming. Yet they shine with borrowed lustre; it is you – It is the Belmont family, which bestows on them, their pleasing attractions.

Frederick Bates to Sarah (Sally) Bates, May 5, 1799

Frederick Bates wrote these words to his sister shortly after arriving in Detroit to work for the US Army. Letters written from Pittsburgh by his older brother Tarleton expressed similar expressions of nostalgia and sadness mixed with affection for his family and their plantation home. Belmont and places like it in the South represented a world of privilege. Historian Stephen Ambrose compared plantation life to that in ancient Athens, full of “political independence (and) political talk about the nature of man and the role of government.”⁷⁶ Despite Ambrose’s sublime description of plantation life, approximately two hundred thousand people, including Tarleton Bates and several of his brothers, left Virginia in the late eighteenth century for the western frontier.⁷⁷ Many young men like Tarleton Bates carried with them “cultural baggage” acquired on

⁷⁶ Stephen Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 33.

⁷⁷ Fischer and Kelly claim nearly one million people left Virginia. David H. Fischer and James C. Kelly, *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Charlottesville, VA and London: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

plantations, including the concepts of honor, gentility, and reputation.⁷⁸ Plantations served as cultural petri dishes where young gentlemen were nourished emotionally and psychologically on a mixture of aristocratic heritage and family history. They were places gentlemen learned how to be condescending⁷⁹ without being objectionable. One cannot understand the reasons Tarleton Bates fought a duel without appreciating his early life at Belmont. This chapter describes life as it might have existed at Belmont for Tarleton and his family during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The historical records for this period are sparse, but there is enough information about Belmont and Virginia plantations in general to make educated assumptions. The chapter concludes with Tarleton leaving Virginia on a republican crusade to save the Union from an insurrection of western Pennsylvania farmers who were outraged by a tax on the production of distilled spirits.

Tarleton Bates was born on May 22, 1775, in Henrico County, Virginia. Two months earlier, Patrick Henry gave his famous “Give me liberty or give me death!” speech to the Second Virginia Convention at St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia. One month

⁷⁸ Jennings L. Wagner credits historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown for sharpening our understanding of southern honor by distinguishing between two closely related, symbiotic manifestations of the ethic: a general culture of "primal" honor that encircled all southern whites and a more specialized and refined concept called "gentility." Wagner believed there existed among the slave holding gentry of antebellum Virginia a sustained and self-conscious effort to perpetuate the culture of the English aristocracy. Subtle marks of status -- manners, proper forms and topics of speech, tastes in clothing styles and home furnishings -- reflected class and social standing that mattered enough to be consciously passed on from one generation to the next in the "better" southern families and to be sought by new claimants to gentry status. "Honor and Dishonor at Mr. Jefferson's University: The Antebellum Years," *History of Education Quarterly* 26 (Summer 1986): 155-79.

⁷⁹ Condescension was one of the qualities of a gentleman. Safe within his own skin, a gentleman did not fear purposely lowering himself at times to the level of common folk. Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 41, describes condescension as “that voluntary humiliation, that willing descent from superiority to equal terms with inferiors.”

earlier, American Minutemen and British regular soldiers clashed on Lexington Green and at Concord North Bridge in Massachusetts. Two weeks before Bates was born, John Hancock was elected President of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, and Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold, and the Green Mountain Boys of Vermont captured Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York. Despite the bitter fighting and the fiery speeches, John Dickinson and many others in Congress hoped to defuse the situation by appealing directly to the king. In response to their request, Congress approved the Olive Branch Petition, but George III refused to consider the colonist's entreaty and issued "A Proclamation of Rebellion" against the American colonies. Britain's American colonies were now in open revolt.

Belmont was unscathed during the first six years of the Revolutionary War. Located in Virginia's Piedmont region, Belmont and nearby plantations successfully avoided the fighting that ravaged many parts of New England, New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania. The relative tranquility enabled Tarleton's parents, Thomas and Catherine Bates, to devote attention to their plantation and rapidly growing family.

Belmont was located in Goochland County, approximately mid-way between Richmond and Charlottesville, Virginia. The county is named for Sir William Gooch, the Royal Governor of Virginia from 1727 to 1749. It is blessed with abundant and fertile, if clayey soil, dense forests, and rich mineral deposits, all of which in the eighteenth century enticed people who lived on the lower James to migrate upriver. Thomas Jefferson, Goochland's most famous native son, was born in Shadwell, four miles west of Goochland Courthouse, in 1743, and he spent his youth on the Tuckahoe Plantation,

fifteen miles east of Goochland Courthouse. Jefferson owned a 669-acre plantation named Elk Hill in Goochland County that was ravaged in 1781 by Cornwallis and his invading army.⁸⁰

Geographically, Goochland County lies on the eastern edge of Virginia's Piedmont Region. In contrast to the pancake-flat Tidewater, the Piedmont is a plateau with rolling hills that rise from 3,000 above sea level along the Fall Line to between one and two thousand feet at the eastern foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Prior to the construction of the Kanawha Canal in 1840⁸¹, farmers and plantation owners living in the Piedmont were required to use winding county roads to transport their tobacco, grain, and oils to market. Towns like Richmond located near the Fall Line became major transportation centers and grew rapidly.

As in most parts of the United States during the late eighteenth century, agriculture was the primary occupation, and there were hundreds of subsistence farms

⁸⁰ In a 1788 letter to Dr. William Gordon, Jefferson complained Cornwallis, "...destroyed all my growing crops of corn and tobacco, he burned all my barns containing the same articles of the last year, having first taken what corn he wanted, he used, as was to be expected, all my stocks of cattle, sheep, and hogs for the sustenance of his army, and carried off all the horses capable of service: of those too young for service he cut the throats, and he burnt all the fences on the plantation, so as to leave it an absolute waste. He carried off also about 30 slaves..." Margaret Walker, "Goochland Losses from British Depredations, 1781," *Goochland County Historical Society* 4 (Spring, 1972): 16-23.

⁸¹ Ronald E. Shaw, *Canals for a Nation: The Canal Era in the United States, 1790 – 1860* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 116 - 7. The canal began as an idea of George Washington and other leaders during the 18th century to connect the tidewater of the James River with the Ohio River. The Virginia Assembly in 1785 passed a bill, which made provisions for the James River and Kanawha Company to construct a canal linking the James River with the Ohio River and the Midwest. By constructing a series of twelve locks, the canal connected Maidens Adventure in Goochland with the tidal basin in Richmond. This provided a navigable waterway which made it possible for packet boats to travel westward into Goochland County and beyond into the Virginia frontier. By the year 1840 the James River Company was regarded as a successful venture. Goochland County contains 25% of the Canal.

and plantations in the Piedmont and Tidewater regions.⁸² The term *plantation* was applied in Virginia and throughout the South to describe an agricultural unit of hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of acres on which one or more cash crops were grown. The most important cash crop in Virginia was tobacco. The typical plantation in Virginia was between one hundred and fifty and two hundred and fifty acres, but many near the coast were much larger.⁸³ A subsistence farm, on the other hand, was a much smaller agricultural unit that produced a wider variety of foods and other agricultural products to meet the needs of the owning family. The subsistence farmer and his family actually farmed, but the plantation owner, although referred to as a “planter,” neither planted nor performed manual labor. Instead he served as the chief executive officer of what was for its time a complex form of agribusiness. A small plantation - one of a few hundred acres - was often called by the name of the owning family, but other plantations were named in honor of places in the British Isles from which the settlers or their ancestors came. Seventeenth century Virginia was marked by relatively small plantations, but by the early eighteenth century huge establishments developed such as those seen along the James

⁸² An excellent overview of plantations and how they were organized is contained in Michael P. Conzen, ed., *The Making of the American Landscape* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990). For Virginia plantations in particular see: Lorena S. Walsh, “Plantation Management in the Chesapeake, 1620-1820,” *The Journal of Economic History* 49 (Jun 1989); Allan Kulikoff, “The Economic Growth of the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Colonies,” *The Journal of Economic History* 39 (March 1979); and Isaac Rhys, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1982).

⁸³ Conzen, 110. Additionally, a study on residences located on the Northern Neck of Virginia suggests plantations there were much larger. Plantation-sized estates (i.e. those larger than 200 acres) comprised nearly one-third of the nearly 1600 farms in that region. Of that total, about 550, or about 40%, were between 200 – 299 acres. The remaining plantations were between 300 and 2000+ acres. Camille Wells, “The Planter’s Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 28, no. 1 (1993): 5.

River below the Fall Line.⁸⁴ These large plantations were essentially self-sufficient communities that traded directly with England.

Belmont Plantation, the homestead of Thomas Fleming and Caroline Matilda Woodson Bates, was originally part of a 1719 patent [land grant] for 3,090 acres sold to Tarleton Woodson. Woodson's land was situated on a bend of the James River, approximately two miles northwest of Goochland Courthouse, on both sides of River Road (present Virginia State Route 6). He paid sixteen pounds plus the importation of thirty-five persons for the patent.⁸⁵ The property included several thousand feet of James River shoreline, but because it was on the western (upstream) side of the Fall Line, navigation downriver to Richmond and the Chesapeake was impossible. However, river access provided transportation upriver and a virtually unlimited source of fresh-water fish including smallmouth bass, channel catfish, flathead catfish, and various sunfish species such as redbreast, bluegill, and rock bass. The property was also heavily wooded with black, red, and white oaks, hickory, plum, walnut, and elm trees. Topographically, the property consisted of flat ground next to the river, rising gradually to two hundred feet above sea level. It was also drained by numerous streams.⁸⁶

Thomas and Caroline Woodson Bates traced their roots to the Jamestown colony. John Woodson arrived in Virginia in 1620. Thomas had a similar ancestry. John Isaac Bates, the family patriarch, emigrated from Kent County in England to Jamestown in

⁸⁴ These included the sixteen hundred acre Sherwood Forest plantation that was owned by President John Tyler, and the twenty-five acre Evelyton Plantation.

⁸⁵ Elie Weeks, "Belmont," *Goochland County Historical Society Magazine* 12 (1980), 37 – 8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

1624. Many in the Bates family became Quakers. For example, John Isaac's son George and his eldest John II converted to Quakerism.⁸⁷ John II was the great grandfather of Thomas Fleming Bates, who was born in 1741. In 1765 Fleming Bates, who had acquired part of Tarleton Woodson's original patent, bequeathed, "for love of my son Thomas, I grant him a tract of land in Goochland County containing two hundred and fifty acres bounded by the James River on the south, Robert Pleasants on the east, Charles Jordan on the north and Thomas Pickering on the west."⁸⁸ Thomas Bates named his property Belmont. Based on their shared histories, the Bates and Woodson families probably knew each other, and this would have facilitated the courtship between Thomas and Caroline. The couple married in 1771 and originally settled in Henrico County. Despite his family's ancestry, Thomas needed to work and he found it as a merchant.⁸⁹ In 1776 he moved his family, which now consisted of Caroline and three, small children, Charles, Sarah whom they called Sally, and Tarleton, to Belmont.⁹⁰ A year later, Thomas purchased an additional one hundred and fifty acres for 350 pounds. In 1788, despite financial losses incurred by the Revolution, he acquired two hundred acres more for the sum of 225 pounds. This brought his total landholdings to six hundred acres, making him

⁸⁷ John II was known as the "Quaker Merchant." In 1990 the site of his store became a well documented archaeological dig entitled, "The Bates Site: Investigation of a Quaker Merchant." This report contains an inventory of the Bates' estate valued at over £1,903. In inventory included cloth, hardware, clothes, and 30 named slaves. Like many plantation owners, a high percentage of his estate value was in slaves, who ranged in value from a low of £10 to a high of £50.

⁸⁸ Weeks, 37-49.

⁸⁹ In an 1801 letter to his son, Frederick, Thomas wrote, "...though my paternal inheritance was small, I embarked early in mercantile pursuits."

⁹⁰ Onward Bates, *Bates et al of Virginia and Missouri* (Chicago: By the author, 1914), 73.

one of the largest landowners in Goochland County at the time.⁹¹ These acquisitions suggest that Thomas Bates envisioned himself not as a subsistence farmer, but as a gentleman planter in the style of the men who owned the large and luxurious estates that lay along the James River below the Fall Line.

However, the early years for the Bates family at Belmont were challenging. Upon arrival, the couple and their children needed basic quarters. Their first house was typical for the period:⁹² a two-story, log house eighteen feet wide by thirty-two feet long. A shed was attached to one end of the house. The logs were squared and mortised, *chinked* with plaster and trimmed with wood. In the center of the house stood a large stone chimney and dividing walls that created two rooms on each floor. Each room on the first floor had a fireplace. Illumination was provided on the first floor by two windows located on each side of the house and on the second floor by a single window placed at each of the gable ends. The floor consisted of wooden planks laid directly on the bare ground, and the roof was covered with wooden shingles. The house was shaded by several “ancient” trees.⁹³

In addition to family living quarters, Thomas also built detached structures called

⁹¹ Weeks, 41.

⁹² Plantation houses in the Piedmont Region at this time were not the luxurious affairs seen in the Tidewater Region because Piedmont owners were not as wealthy as their down-river cousins. Tobacco in the Piedmont remained a significant cash crop, but as tobacco yields decreased, Tidewater planters made up for lost revenue by planting grains and by loaning money to less affluent plantation owners. Allan Kulikoff, “The Economic Growth of the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Colonies,” *The Journal of Economic History* 39 (March 1979): 275-288.

⁹³ Weeks, 45. The second house at Belmont was a two-story building

“outbuildings” that were subordinate to the main house.⁹⁴ The primary purpose of the outbuildings was organizing activities on the plantation, but their number, size, and construction also offered an architectural index to the owner’s financial well being, the diversity of his agribusiness, and scope of his influence.⁹⁵ The exact nature and number of outbuildings at Belmont are not known, but based on similar plantations would have included a kitchen and attached storeroom, slaves’ quarters, a barn, a tobacco curing house, a granary, a cow house or stable, a dairy, a smokehouse, and a warehouse.⁹⁶ Based on the historical records, Thomas might have also constructed an icehouse and quarters for an overseer, if he had one. The overseer’s house would have been built at the same time as the main house and slaves quarters.⁹⁷ Finally, Frederick’s letter to Sally (i.e. *Even the sandy road, in which we trudged to school together...*) suggests that Thomas might have constructed a schoolhouse at Belmont to educate his children and those of his neighbors.

Like other plantations the Bates’ family house was located at the highest point on the property in order for Thomas to survey his holdings at a glance. From his front porch Thomas could see his slaves’ quarters and other outbuildings buildings that were close to

⁹⁴The exact number, age, and gender of slaves at Belmont are not known. A claim made against the British government seeking payment for damages done by Cornwallis’ army includes “1 Valuable Negro fell, 30 yrs old,” and “a likely Girl 14 years old” A smaller plantation owned at the same time by Peter Cox of Northumberland County (VA) had 26 slaves, so one can assume a plantation as large as Belmont would have had as many slaves to be productive and to support a family as large as the Bates’. Camille Wells, 12 – 13.

⁹⁵ Camille Wells, 14.

⁹⁶ Claim against Great Britain for damages done to Belmont by Cornwallis’ soldier in 1781.

⁹⁷ Camille Wells, 28.

the main house but not at the same elevation. He could also see his grain and tobacco fields, orchards, gardens, and livestock pens; this genteel panorama stretched from his front door down to the James River. Thomas and Caroline built a larger house in 1793 and decorated it with luxuries purchased with money from the sale of their cash crops.⁹⁸ The couple never achieved the wealth and status of the Tidewater planters, who were among the wealthiest and most influential families in America,⁹⁹ but within a few years, the Bates' created a successful commercial enterprise, and their house and its contents were testament to the family's success. Everything at Belmont fell under the watchful eye of the family patriarch, Thomas Fleming Bates.

Thomas and Caroline had a total of twelve children, seven boys and five girls, born between 1772 and 1793. No record indicates how Tarleton and his siblings interacted among themselves or with their parents as children, but we can make assumptions based on correspondence written when they were adults. For example, their letters suggest they were very close, even after Tarleton and several of his brothers left the Old Dominion for the American frontier. Tarleton, in particular, was always

⁹⁸ Bates wealth is revealed in what he was forced to give up to pay creditors. In 1795, for example, Bates signed a deed of trust as security for a debt owed to several creditors. The security pledged included slaves, livestock, and furniture; the furniture included one mahogany and three walnut tables, two armchairs, and twelve common chairs. Later, in a letter to son Frederick on October 31, 1801, Bates lamented the sale of personal items to satisfy a debt. "My land, slaves, stock, and furniture have been sold to satisfy my old British Creditors... (however) We yet retain the furniture, three work horses, two yoke of oxen, and five cows and calves....."

⁹⁹ T. H. Breen. *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Breen believed that the great Tidewater planters of mid-eighteenth-century Virginia fathered the American Revolution. More importantly, they were also anxious tobacco farmers who struggled with deteriorating soil, shipping risks, and uneasy relations with English agents. Moreover, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and their contemporaries stressed the virtues of freedom and independence, but were dependent on foreign credit to keep their plantations running. For a description of Virginia's tobacco plantations, see also Walsh, 393-406.

inquiring about the health of his father, mother, and “dear little sisters.” What’s more, the sibling who neglected to write was subject to scorn. “Tell brother Richard,” Fleming wrote to Frederick in 1795, “if he does not write to me I will disown him for a brother.”¹⁰⁰ The surviving letters also indicate who among the children might have been the most precocious or at least the most vocal. Tarleton was probably the most outspoken, followed by Richard and Fleming. Charles and Frederick were more taciturn, and the sisters spoke up rarely if at all. James, the second youngest son, might have been a problem child, and Edward, the future Presidential candidate and Attorney General of the United States, did no doubt impress his parents and siblings with his intelligence.

Charles (1772-1808) was the oldest and the first-born son. As a child he probably stood aloof from his younger brothers and sisters. At various times, for example, Tarleton described his only older brother as: “cold and phlegmatic” and “a cynical Hanoverian,” who often treated people with “a cold formality.” Charles became a lawyer in Richmond, and he must have been a successful one because in 1802 Frederick Bates asked Charles, “I am desirous of obtaining the office of Secretary of the [Indiana] Territory...You may possibly be acquainted with some member of Congress...who might be persuaded to tell the Government that I am very deserving of this advancement.”¹⁰¹ It is not known if Charles’ input helped his younger brothers, but eventually the eldest son rescued his family from financial ruin.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Bates to Frederick Bates, May 5, 1795, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁰¹ Frederick Bates to Charles Bates, September, 26, 1803, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

Tarleton confided in his letters most often with his younger brother Frederick (1777-1824). One suspects they were also close as children. They were only three years apart in age, and Frederick took over from Tarleton as the Deputy Postmaster in Goochland County when his brother left Virginia on his crusade to put down the whiskey rebels. At Tarleton's urging and with his assistance, Frederick left Virginia in 1797 to take a job working for Captain Matthew Ernest, the Deputy Quartermaster at Detroit. Ernest was a family friend in addition to being a staunch Federalist. Like Tarleton, Frederick was politically ambitious, but he was also careful to keep his republican politics from his Federalist employer. Unlike Tarleton, however, Frederick was less confrontational and impulsive. For example, Tarleton ventured alone into Pittsburgh looking for work, but Frederick left Virginia only after his brother had made all of the arrangements, to include securing the passage to Detroit, for his job with Captain Ernest. Moreover, once there, he was careful not to offend. Younger brother Richard observed, "You have all the inclination in the world to pour upon me an inundation of arguments evincing the necessity of federalism...I cannot think your politics are radically changed, but only dissembled for your own convenience while among those miscreants in Detroit."¹⁰²

Despite their youth, both Fleming (1779-1830) and Richard (1781-1811) Bates were attuned to the political issues of the late eighteenth century. When Fleming was still a teenager, he wrote to Frederick, "...a republican form of government is not as well suited to the tract of country as large as this...indeed it is my opinion that no country

¹⁰² Richard Bates to Frederick Bates, May 14, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

after being thickly settled can be governed by republican laws in their natural parity.”¹⁰³

Richard, also a teenager, told Frederick, ““The sole topic of conversation in this part of the world is a French War which has banished from those who once were thought zealous friends to the sovereignty of the people even the thoughts of republicanism.”¹⁰⁴ Not only do these statements indicate the brothers were intelligent and well read; they also show that ordinary Americans discussed and voiced opinions on matters of public policy that affected them. In contrast to pre-revolutionary America, Gordon Wood writes, the society of the early republic had thousands and thousands of ordinary people, like Fleming and Richard Bates, who participated in the creation of this public opinion.¹⁰⁵

Sarah Bates (1773-1859) lived the longest of the Bates children. She never married and was devoted to her mother. “Sally” as she was known to her siblings, was also a confidant for her younger brothers - only Charles was older than her – and a mediator between them and their parents. Tarleton and Frederick in particular sought out her advice and counsel. Tarleton wrote to her, “It has given me a great deal of pain to understand...on what footing you are with father as everything that inflicts a pang upon your breast must very sensibly affect mine.”¹⁰⁶ Frederick confessed from Detroit, “I do not often get beastly drunk, but I must acknowledge that I am sometimes gentlemanly

¹⁰³ Fleming Bates to Frederick Bates, July 17, 1796, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Bates to Frederick Bates, June 12, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁰⁵ Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 364.

¹⁰⁶ Tarleton Bates to Sarah Bates, October 13, 1797, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

gay. Be not alarmed, I shall not lose sight of those restraints which a young fellow should impose on his conduct."¹⁰⁷ Thomas saw himself as the family patriarch, but as that institution withered away in the late eighteenth century women like Sally Bates facilitated the transition to a society with an expanded role for women.

Perhaps no two of Tarleton's siblings were more different than James (1787-1846) and Edward (1793-1869) Bates. They were polar opposites as boys. Edward was described at various times as, "sensitive," "brave," and "a good speller...who is learning to read." Tarleton had very little contact with him before leaving Belmont in 1794, but he mentions his youngest brother with fondness in his letters home. On the other hand, he once characterized James as, "an extravagant dog" for being a spendthrift, and Richard claimed James needed "neither ability nor application, but --- morality!"¹⁰⁸ Based on these characterizations, one can imagine the family's emotional extremes dealing with the two boys. James would continue to have problems in college, but eventually he would become one of the nation's prominent frontier politicians. Edward's abilities would ultimately take him to Washington DC where he would join Lincoln's cabinet. James, Edward, and the other Bates boys ultimately benefited from Thomas Bates' insistence that his sons receive a sound education.

Thomas Bates was a proponent of education and he wanted his sons to be equally bullish. He blamed in his will "unpropitious fortune" for preventing his bequeathing

¹⁰⁷ Frederick Bates to Sarah Bates, January 1, 1799, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Bates to Frederick Bates, July 24, 1799, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

much if anything to his sons, but he also stated, “Whereas I have (by divine permission) been favored to raise and educate my eldest sons in such a manner that by the same permission they will be enabled to support themselves.”¹⁰⁹ His last will was written in September 1803, or well after financial pressures forced him to sell Belmont, but the legacy of his sons indicate that education was stressed early on in the Belmont household. He applauded Frederick, for example, for studying law, “at your leisure hours...because if not practiced as a science, knowledge of state laws as well as those of nature and nations are ornamental, and lead to promotion.”¹¹⁰ His influence also touched Tarleton who, despite bearing most the costs, was determined to send his brother James to college. In a letter to Frederick, he explained, “Mr. Hopkins [James teacher in Pittsburgh] says he is coming on very well...He wishes me to send James to Princeton, [but] Yale is my choice...I hope to advance the first year at Yale. I can after that call on you for assistance.”¹¹¹

The Bates family was not alone in its focus on education. In upstate New York, for example, William Cooper believed the community needed an academy where boys could learn classical language and literature as a means to gentility and, perhaps, admission to college.¹¹² In South Carolina, John Ball Sr. thought an advanced education

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Bates will, September 21, 1803.

¹¹⁰ Thomas Bates to Frederick, November 30, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹¹¹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, February 16, 1804, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹¹² Taylor, 209.

would provide his sons with refinement, the development of reputation, and preparation for leadership.¹¹³ Further north in Virginia, St. George Tucker considered an education as the mark of a gentleman and the means of rising in the world. Bates, Cooper, Ball, and Tucker recognized the need for a young man to distinguish himself as a gentleman in a society that had rejected the notion of a natural aristocracy.¹¹⁴ Moreover, an education was consistent in republican society that, according to Gordon Wood, was pushing back the boundaries of darkness and barbarism and spreading light and knowledge.¹¹⁵ Spreading knowledge, according to Dumas Malone, was also Jefferson's way to inoculate the country against tyranny by providing citizens with the facts of history, in order that they would recognize dangerous ambition in any shape.¹¹⁶ Southern planters and aspiring northern gentlemen were not alone in their desire to educate their children. The Scotch-Irish built churches and schools almost simultaneously with the construction of houses and barns, suggesting they also saw the value of providing children with the tools necessary in a post-Revolutionary society where personal achievement would matter more than personal name.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Lorri Glover, "An Education in Southern Masculinity: The Ball Family of South Carolina in the New Republic," *The Journal of Southern History* 69 (February 2003): 43.

¹¹⁴ Philip Hamilton, "Education in the St. George Tucker Household: Change and Continuity in Jeffersonian Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 102 (April 1994): 189.

¹¹⁵ Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 191.

¹¹⁶ Dumas Malone, *Jefferson the Virginian*. (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1948), 282.

¹¹⁷ Garland, 70.

Most parents in the early Republic taught their children to read and write at home using a bible and a hornbook, consisting of lessons attached to a wooden board with a handle. Wealthier parents, like the Bates, could afford to hire a private male tutor or member of the local clergy to educate their children in a separate facility. The only reference to a school at Belmont is in Frederick's letter to his sister. In addition to confirming the existence of a school, Frederick's use of the phrase "*We* trudged to school" indicates that the Bates girls, or least Sally, joined their brothers in the classroom. Evidently, Thomas Bates thought it was important for Sally to learn more about the world than merely how to cook, sew, preserve food, and direct servants. The clearest evidence that Thomas and Caroline invested well in the education of their children is the quality of their letters. Thomas' letters are distinctive for the neatness of his penmanship and the clarity of his thought. These qualities were either taught or learned naturally by Tarleton, Frederick, Fleming, Richard, and Sally. The Bates home, as suggested by Ambrose, must have witnessed many scintillating conversations between a father and his offspring about a variety of topics like the nature of man and the role of government. There is no reference anywhere of the teachers or the subjects that were taught to the children, but we know other plantation schools can be examined for insight into how Tarleton and his siblings were educated.

The most famous tutor of his day was Philip Vickers Fithian. In 1773 Robert Carter III hired Fithian to teach his children. Carter's plantation, with twenty-five hundred acres and one hundred and fifty slaves, was much larger than Belmont. However, Fithian's curriculum is instructive to understand what courses were important

at that time. The young school master taught Latin, Greek, spelling, grammar, reading, writing, arithmetic, surveying, and literature. Dumas Malone added Fithian also taught dancing because "...it was little short of a social necessity" for a gentleman.¹¹⁸ In 1774 Fithian wrote in his diary, "any young gentleman, traveling through the colony...is presumed to be acquainted with dancing, boxing, playing the fiddle, and small sword, and cards."¹¹⁹

Nearly a quarter-century later, another planter named John Ball also desired an education for his sons that would go beyond academics. He realized the Revolution had ended many of the privileges traditionally bestowed on America's elites; from now on, success would be measured by personal achievements and not by lineage. However, he was also committed to an educational philosophy that stressed masculine conduct. In his mind, masculinity required men to be always in control of their physical and emotional selves and ever conscious of public perceptions of their behavior.¹²⁰ Additionally, he wanted an education that would not reject his southern heritage but instead would marry it with the emerging vision of the American future, which prized individual merit and self-determination. An important component of this education was the advice literature that swept America in the late eighteenth century. Notable was the book *Letters to His Son: By the Lord of Chesterfield on the Fine Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman*. *Letters* provided tips for managing one's time, choosing friends, how to be

¹¹⁸ Malone, *Jefferson the Virginian*, 47.

¹¹⁹ Mabel Davidson, "Philip Fithian in Virginia." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 49 (January 1941): 18.

¹²⁰ Glover, 70.

open-minded, and the dangers of drinking to excess. It helped to codify the new ideals of genteel society and encouraged a conscious attention to the publicly represented self. At the same time, it defined acceptable and unacceptable masculine characteristics. American men increasingly followed its advice and that of other self-help works,¹²¹ rigorously attending to outward signs of refinement and manliness.¹²²

George St. Tucker of Virginia, like John Ball, also realized that academic training alone would not guarantee future success, especially in a society that was becoming increasingly competitive and fluid. As a result, Tucker's sons received an education that stressed the bourgeois values of self-reliance and hard work to deal with the challenges posed by republicanism, independence, and freedom. He counseled his sons that in a post-revolutionary world every man had "to place reliance on himself."¹²³ A formal education provided the sons of Carter, St. Tucker, Ball, and Thomas Bates with the tools to behave and look like a gentleman. It took hard work and time acquiring the skills to speak a new language, ride a horse and dance a minuet or reel. Plantation ownership on the other hand made them natural leaders in the eyes of the community. Many rose to the occasion like Meriwether Lewis who at eighteen in 1792 moved his mother, her household, and slaves from Georgia to Virginia.¹²⁴ Slave ownership perpetuated paternalism and the social hierarchy the Revolution was supposed to have destroyed.

¹²¹ Other self-help books included Benjamin Franklin's *Way to Wealth* and the one hundred and ten precepts of George Washington's *Rules of Civility*.

¹²² Glover, 49-51.

¹²³ Hamilton, 177-8.

¹²⁴ Ambrose, 28.

Slavery made slave owners feel superior to non-slave owners, and the institution made both feel superior to slaves and poor whites. Tarleton Bates and his brothers grew up with slaves on the family plantation that was dependent on slave labor to make a profit. This was common among the Virginian gentry, and young men like Tarleton Bates acquired an immediate kinship with fellow slave owners like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Edmund Burke observed, "...To the masters of slaves, the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortified it, and makes it invincible."¹²⁵

As noted previously, the Bates family was not affected by the Revolutionary War during the first six years of that conflict. Thomas and Caroline were free to rear their young children and manage their growing plantation without fear. Their world would change, however, when Great Britain changed its strategy for defeating the Americans after France entered the Revolutionary War. British leaders reasoned that, rather than attacking in the North, they would instead concentrate on defeating the Americans from the South because they believed most Southerners supported the king. The campaign began in 1778 with General Clinton's attack on Savannah. General Cornwallis continued the strategy and waged a punitive campaign against soldiers and civilians that resulted in American defeats in 1780 at Charleston and Camden. After the British were defeated in 1781 at Cowpens and badly bloodied at Guilford Courthouse, Cornwallis wheeled his army of between five to seven thousand men north into Virginia where he hoped to regain the offensive and capture Lafayette before turning east toward the coast. Realizing

¹²⁵ Ambrose, 34.

that he would not catch Lafayette, Cornwallis opted instead for a scorched earth campaign in central and western Virginia. During June 1781 his forces moved into Goochland County where they either carried off or destroyed crops, livestock, slaves, food supplies, accounts and records, and valuable personal and household objects from dozens of plantations including Belmont.¹²⁶ Thomas became so enraged that he temporarily renounced his Quaker heritage¹²⁷ and joined Washington's army at Yorktown where it defeated Cornwallis. Upon returning to Goochland County, he and other plantation owners surveyed the damage that had been done by the British army.

In May 1782 the Virginia General Assembly passed an act "to ascertain the losses and injuries sustained from the depredation of the enemy within this commonwealth."¹²⁸ The purpose of the legislation was to establish the basis of a claim against Great Britain that would be presented at the end of the hostilities. As a result, a court was held in Goochland County to ascertain the losses of its residents. A total of 223 individuals applied for relief under the act including Thomas Bates and Thomas Jefferson who claimed losses of nearly sixteen hundred pounds. Bates' losses were approximately

¹²⁶ Mack Curle, "Cornwallis in Goochland County." *Goochland County Historical Society* 29 (1997): 53-62.

¹²⁷ There is no indication that he had ever been a devotedly religious; his son Edward later wrote that Thomas' decision to join the Quakers was only to please his wife. The Society expelled Thomas shortly after the war, and Caroline voluntarily withdrew from the Society of Friends in 1788.

¹²⁸ Margaret Walker, "Goochland Losses from British Depredations, 1781." *Goochland County Historical Society* 4 (Spring, 1972): 16. The act required counties to hold special courts or to appoint members of the court to collect information and proof of the various losses and injuries sustained during the Revolutionary War. The proceedings or reports and the supporting documentation were to be submitted to the governor and council to be laid before the next general assembly.

thirty-eight hundred pounds, an amount that was the second highest in the county, and included the following items as they were listed in the recorded claim:

Number	Description	Value (£)
	My store books with all the bonds, mortgages, list of debts	3,000.00
	Tobacco burnt at Byrds Warehouse	10.2.8
1	Valuable negro fellow 30 yrs old	100
1	A likely girl (negro) 14 years old	100
1	Bay saddle horse (uncommonly large and valuable)	75
2	Well-blooded brood mares	200
1	Strong mare, heavy w/foal	30
1	Mare colt (uncommonly likely)	30
4	Valuable oxen	24
1	Fine English bull	6
6	Large milk cows	26
2	Calves	6
3	Heifers	6
2	Fine barren cows (with calf)	8
1	Wheat mill	7.1
50 (est.)	Barrels of corn	25
1	Bushel of oats	40
200	Barrels of corn	50
200	Bushels wheat	20
400	Bushels oats	20
100	Bushels rye	7.1
500	Pannells of fence, hoes, axes, tools, barrels, tubs, ploughs, with all my farming materials	10
	Total	3,795.2.8

Thomas Bates came before me, a Justice of said county (Goochland) and made oath that the above list is hereby stated, to the best of his knowledge and believed and that the books and tobacco were by Arnold and the remainder of his losses by Cornwallis.

*Certified this 11 October 1782.
John Woodson¹²⁹*

Thomas Bates' list gives us insight into his wealth while also providing an understanding of the diversity of his agribusiness. Unlike Virginian farmers and planters who concentrated on growing tobacco, Bates practiced mixed farming that protected him from

¹²⁹ Ibid, 17-23. A Guide to the Goochland County (VA) Citizens' Claims of Property Lost to the British Army, 1782.

soil depletion and vagaries of weather.¹³⁰ However, the judge who certified his claim was a relative of his wife, so this claim should be accepted with caution and some skepticism. After all, the bulk of the claim is for an unspecified number of “store books with all the bonds, mortgages, list of debts.” Although it is impossible for us to determine the true nature and worth of Thomas' claim, we can accept as fact that British forces inflicted significant and serious damage to Belmont.

Bates was also harmed by the Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War in 1783. In return for its independence, the United States agreed that “...creditors on either side shall meet with no lawful impediment to the recovery of the full value in sterling money of all bona fide debts heretofore contracted.”¹³¹ Damages caused by war were not included in the treaty. This meant that Bates was still liable to his British creditors in addition to having to bear the full cost of repairing the damages done by Cornwallis' troops. Having few options, he took advantage of changes in laws that permitted British lenders to offer credit again to American merchants and plantation owners.¹³² He used part of those borrowed funds in 1788 to purchase an additional 200 acres called the Glebe Lands but was forced five years later to deed 100 acres from that purchase to his son

¹³⁰ Walsh, 397. Walsh explains that tobacco production in the Piedmont region exceeded that in the tidewater as early as the 1730s. Initially planters like Thomas Bates grew only enough grains for consumption, but once farms were established, they grew grains as well as tobacco on a commercial basis.

¹³¹ Charles F. Hobson, “The Recovery of British Debts in the Federal Circuit Court of Virginia, 1790 to 1797,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 92 (April 1984): 176.

¹³² W. A. Low, “Merchant and Planter Relations in Post-Revolutionary Virginia, 1783-1789.” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 61 (July 1953): 311. According to Low, Scottish storekeepers extended credit to small farmers, and they lobbied for repeal of the Virginia act “to restrain excessive credits.” Another feature of this lending, according to Gordon Wood, was to further erode the patriarchal system between large and small farmers. Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2003): 15.

Charles. His financial problems were not unique; other Virginia planters like Thomas Jefferson struggled for years with indebtedness to creditors. However, Jefferson had fewer mouths to feed and more chances to acquire wealth than his fellow Virginian.

Virginia had the largest number of debtors and their combined debt totaled two million pounds. British creditors after the war attempted to recoup their losses through the state court, but most judges simply ignored their demands. The fact that the former colonial power refused to address war damages, particularly compensation for slaves, was resented by many Virginians. The establishment of the federal court system in 1789 improved the situation for British creditors, but it would still be several years before their cases gained any traction. In 1795, desperate for cash, Bates signed a deed of trust to one of his neighbors to secure an indebtedness of 350 pounds that he owed to three of his creditors. The security pledged under this deed included slaves, livestock, and furniture. Thomas, who was a proud man, must have been able to keep many of his financial problems from his family, because it was not until September 1796 that they were referenced by any of the brothers, at least in their letters.

Altogether, these hardships made it next to impossible for Thomas Bates to bequeath anything to his children. The sons might have been unaware of the severity of his financial problems, but it is likely they realized early on that plantation ownership would not be in their futures. For one thing, there were simply too many of them. A contributing reason, however, was Thomas and his wife educated their children for careers other than farming. Charles left Belmont and became a lawyer in Richmond. Tarleton's first job was working as a clerk in the Goochland post office, a position that

was passed on to his brothers Frederick and Richard. Fleming held a similar position at the post office in Hanover County. None of the brothers' letters express any interest in agriculture, farming, and plantations. Besides their family, they most wanted to discuss and know more about current events and politics.

Working at the post office and living at home must have frustrated Tarleton who by now, the early 1790s, was in his late teens. Thomas was unlikely to sympathize with his son because he was under increasing pressure from his creditors. Charles was gone, and Sally was able no longer to serve as a mediator between her father and brother. Eventually the conflict between father and son was irreparable, and Tarleton left Belmont and Virginia for good in 1794. Writing from Pittsburgh a year later, Tarleton confessed to Frederick that his decision not to return was due "...not entirely to wild caprice, but in part to my situation with my nearest relation [Thomas Bates], whose peremptory commands to return generally weighed down ideas of disobedience, and threw me into lethargic irresolution, in which situation, between interest and inclination on the one hand and duty on the other, the impulse of the movement generally determined me."¹³³

The event that triggered Tarleton's departure from Virginia was one of the first challenges to the authority of the new government. Shortly after taking office in 1789, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton proposed an excise tax on the production of distilled spirits to raise funds to pay down the national debt. Unlike tariffs paid on imported goods, this was a direct tax on Americans who produced whiskey and other alcoholic beverages. Its critics, mostly small farmers who produced whisky in limited

¹³³ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, July 8, 1795, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO. Explanation.

batches, objected because the law deprived them of a key source of their income while imposing the requirement that all payments had to be made in cash to the local tax collector. Largely ignoring the farmers' protests, Congress passed The Distilled Spirits Act in 1791. Not surprisingly, small-time distillers in western Pennsylvania organized against the new law and threatened tax collectors with physical violence. President Washington decided to suppress the so-called Whisky Rebellion by force, and in September 1794 he assembled an army composed of Federal troops and state militias from New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia.

Militias have been an integral part of American society for over four hundred years. Colonists at the Jamestown colony organized a militia for defense against hostile Indians. In 1671, Governor William Berkley claimed that in his militia "all our freemen are bound to be trained every month."¹³⁴ Despite their history, however, President Washington disliked militias. He learned during the Revolution that regular troops won victories, not undisciplined militia commanded by untrained officers. Nonetheless, he was desperate for troops because General Anthony Wayne's campaign against the Indian Confederation drained the army. Fortunately for Washington, Congress passed the Militia Act in 1792 that "...provide (d) for the National Defense by establishing a uniform militia throughout the United States."¹³⁵ The act provided standards for enlistments, organization, deferments, training, and discipline.

¹³⁴ Maxwell G. Wallace, "Legislation in Virginia Regulating the Enrolling and Training of the Militia" 5 (May 1918): 525.

¹³⁵ Jean Martin Flynn, "South Carolina's Compliance with the Militia Act of 1792" 69 (January 1968): 26-27.

Washington appointed Henry Lee to command the makeshift army. Known by the nickname “Lighthorse,” Lee was the governor of Virginia at the time. He had been one of Washington’s best commanders during the Revolution, and Washington trusted him. Washington and Lee soon discovered that raising the necessary number of militiamen would be challenging. Governor Mifflin from Pennsylvania, for example, hesitated committing his militia against fellow Pennsylvanians, regardless of their transgressions. In Virginia, Lee issued a general order to raise the state’s quota of 3,300 soldiers [3,000 infantry and 300 cavalry], and he appointed another Revolutionary War general, Daniel Morgan, to take command. Morgan managed to raise nearly 4,800 troops that he divided into two Brigades. He appointed General William Drake of Berkeley County to command the western brigade [composed of soldiers from the western part of the state] and General James Mathews of Norfolk to command the eastern brigade [not surprisingly composed of soldiers from the eastern part of the state]. Tarleton Bates most likely joined or was assigned to the eastern brigade.¹³⁶

Tarleton joined his unit before it arrived in Cumberland, Maryland on its march toward Pittsburgh. This was a heady experience for Tarleton and the other young men who had been children during the war for independence. For years, they listened to stories about combat and heroism as told by fathers and uncles, and now they wanted to share in a similar experience. Some hoped the government would generously reward them for their patriotism with land grants as it had done with veterans of the

¹³⁶ Kevin T. Barksdale, “Our Rebellious Neighbors: Virginia’s Border Counties during Pennsylvania’s Whiskey Rebellion,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111, no. 1 (2003): 21-3. Drake’s brigade consisted of soldiers from Ohio, Monongalia, Randolph, Hardy, Pendleton, Hampshire, and Berkeley counties. Mathews had the rest of the state, which included Goochland County

Revolutionary War. Within weeks, however, euphoria turned into disillusionment as the realities of everyday soldiering took their toll. Lack of discipline and the tedium of camp life combined with the lack of basic supplies to make life miserable for the common soldier. Officers fared better as most of them came from wealthy families and carried many of their own supplies.

Because of his age Tarleton was an enlisted soldier, like his friend Meriwether Lewis. Also like Lewis, he might have been welcomed into the company of junior officers of the Virginia militia because he was a planter and a member of the gentry.¹³⁷ The Whiskey Rebellion was the catalyst that took Tarleton Bates and many others from Virginia forever. Tarleton's next stop was Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

¹³⁷ Ambrose, 40.

CHAPTER THREE

BATES IN PITTSBURGH

I have thought of making this western country my home – tho' it will be long, very long, before I can prevail upon myself to disavow that dear and much revered appellation of a CITIZEN OF VIRGINIA.

Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, July 8, 1795

A little less than a year before writing these words to his younger brother, Tarleton Bates was a soldier in the Virginia militia. The militia was part of a larger force mobilized by Washington to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania. At the same time militia units from Virginia and three other states descended on Pittsburgh, federal commissioners negotiated a deal with leaders of the rebellion in early September 1794. Wary the deal might fall through, Washington ordered General Henry Lee to press ahead. Lee and his army arrived in Pittsburgh at the end of October. Confident that the insurrection was over, Lee began sending troops home in mid-November. However, Tarleton Bates elected to remain in Pittsburgh instead of returning to Virginia.

The year 1794 was an opportune time to settle in Pittsburgh. The whiskey rebels were defeated and General Anthony Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers eliminated the threat of Indian attack on the frontier. Additionally, the town was incorporated as a borough. The former, gritty outpost located on the fringe of the American frontier was

evolving rapidly, and it desperately needed ambitious, young men like Tarleton Bates to fill positions of leadership in business and local government.

Tarleton's initial view of Pittsburgh might have been from Fort Fayette shortly after he was mustered out of the Virginia militia. From the walls of the fort, Bates could see a community of about thirteen hundred people, which was a four-fold increase since the 1790 census. Newcomers like Bates might have been unimpressed with Pittsburgh, but the hardy few who first settled at the "Forks of the Ohio" could attest that the town's evolution had been nothing short of remarkable.

Traveling to the "forks" in the early eighteenth century meant a trip to the area in western Pennsylvania where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers joined to form the Ohio. In 1753 twenty-one year old George Washington concluded the area was "extremely well situated for a fort; as it has absolute command of both rivers." Prior to the Revolution, British, French, and Indian forces fought to control the forks because of its strategic importance.¹³⁸ Hostilities did not end there. Pennsylvania and Virginia quarreled over control of the forks and southwestern Pennsylvania until 1784.¹³⁹

The town was laid out in a modified grid pattern. Penn and Liberty Avenues ran parallel to the Allegheny on the north, and the main part of town was laid out at right

¹³⁸ In 1755, General Edward Braddock led a combined force of colonial and regular troops to defeat the French and their Indian allies. Braddock's defeat and the area's growing strategic importance prompted the British in 1758 to send a second expedition led by General John Forbes. Forbes captured the forks and constructed Fort Pitt that withstood Indian attacks during Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763. The British abandoned Fort Pitt and the forks for good in 1772.

¹³⁹ Virginia claimed the forks and many Virginians migrated from the Old Dominion to southwestern Pennsylvania. In 1774 Virginia attempted to enforce its claim when Dr. John Connolly claimed Fort Pitt in the name of Virginia governor Lord Dunmore. The dispute over the region would not be resolved in 1784 when the Mason-Dixon line was extended to its present location.

angles with the Monongahela on the south. Most of the town's streets and pathways were unpaved, so heavy rains made travel difficult.¹⁴⁰ Architecturally, Pittsburgh retained much of its frontier character. Most of its 250 buildings were made of logs, but a few were constructed of bricks salvaged from nearby Fort Pitt.¹⁴¹ Pittsburgh's shorelines, its links with the outside world, teemed with activity. The flatter shoreline on the Monongahela River was dotted with boat builders.¹⁴² Before the steel industry defined the region, Pittsburgh's first major industry was shipbuilding.¹⁴³ In addition to employing craftsmen of various types, boat building also spurred the local manufacture of nails, rope, and sails. A year after arriving in Pittsburgh Tarleton reported to Frederick

¹⁴⁰ In 1763, Colonel Henry Bouquet defeated the Indians at Bushy Run, about thirty miles east of Fort Pitt. Bouquet's victory probably saved the fort from Indian capture during Pontiac's Rebellion. A year later the British created a permanent plan for Pittsburgh. The plan created lots and streets and was referred to as "The Old Military Plan." The new layout embraced that portion of the present city lying between Water Street and Second Street and Market and Ferry Streets. George H. Thurston, *Allegheny County's Hundred Years* (Pittsburgh: A.A. Anderson & Son, 1888), 16.

¹⁴¹ Traveler Thomas Chapman reported that about three-quarters of the two hundred homes were made of logs. Charles W. Dahlinger, *Pittsburgh: A Sketch of its Early Social Life* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 31. In 1793 visitor Andre Michaux counted about 250 houses and claimed the number was "growing." His son, Francois, traveled to Pittsburgh in 1803 and counted about 400 houses, made principally of brick. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Travels West of the Alleghenies: Made in 1793-6 by Andre Michaux; in 1802 by F. A. Michaux; and in 1803 by Thaddeus Martin Harris, M.A.* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 32, Francois Michaux, *Michaux's Travels to the West of the Allegheny Mountains* (Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 1805): 156.

¹⁴² Following the Louisiana Purchase, westerners gained free access to the port of New Orleans and thereby the commercial centers of the east coast. This increased the demand for agricultural goods produced in southwestern Pennsylvania, in addition to products being churned out by Pittsburgh's small, but rapidly emerging, manufactories. As a result, the construction of river and ocean-going vessels increased between 1803 and 1810. In 1803, alone, "boatbuilding" held a position of third among Pittsburgh's increasingly diversified industries. According to one estimate, the yearly value of boatbuilding enterprises was \$40,000. William F. Trimble, "From Sails to Steam: Shipbuilding in the Pittsburgh Area, 1790 - 1865." *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 58 (April 1975): 153-54; Leland Baldwin, "The Rivers in the Early Development of Western Pennsylvania," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 16 (May 1933): 79-98; Thaddeus M. Harris, *The Journal of a Tour into the Territory Northwest of the Allegheny Mountains; Made in the Spring of the Year 1803* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1805): 39-46

¹⁴³ The first blast furnace for producing iron in Pittsburgh was built in 1792, but it was abandoned two years later because not enough iron ore could be found in the vicinity to keep it in operation.

“...a newly constructed vessel built on the Monongahela River 10 or 12 miles above this place - it is 125 feet long, 80 tons burden and is worked by wheels with six horses which move round on a platform.”¹⁴⁴ Ferries connected the main part of town with the opposite shorelines.

Leaving Fort Fayette and walking west along Penn Avenue, Bates passed the King’s Orchard on the right. The orchard was planted in 1759 by Colonel Henry Bouquet, who commanded the British at the Battle of Bushy Run in 1763. There were few houses in this part of town. Just before Fort Pitt was the home of Maria Butler, the widow of General Richard Butler.¹⁴⁵ Around the corner from Maria Butler’s house was the Sign of the Green Tree Tavern, the site of many political and social gatherings and a meeting place for Lodge 45 of the Masons. Turning left on First Avenue, one entered the heart of Pittsburgh.

The town’s most prominent residents lived on this side of town. James O’Hara, James Ross, John Neville, and Isaac Craig all owned houses on a strip of land between West Street and Market Street. Samuel Semple’s Tavern, where George Washington stopped in 1770, was nearby. Two blocks north of John Neville’s house lived Charles Richard, a free black, who owned the tavern named the Negro. Residents in this area looked south across the Monongahela River toward Coal Hill [now Mount Washington]

¹⁴⁴Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, September 16, 1796, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO. Michaux noted the same in 1805: “What many are ignorant of in Europe is that they build large vessels on the Ohio and at the town of Pittsburgh. One of the principal ship yards is upon the Monongahela...On my Journey to Pittsburgh in the month of July 1802, there was a three-mast vessel of two hundred and fifty tons, and a smaller one of ninety, which was on the point of being finished.” Michaux, 160.

¹⁴⁵ Bates would later meet and have a long conversation with Maria Butler on his trip to Natchez, Mississippi.

and saw buckwheat growing in a sandbar in the middle of the river. One historian¹⁴⁶ described the area as “life under the poplars” referring to the profusion of Lombardy poplars, locusts, and weeping willows that had replaced the primeval forest.

Pittsburgh’s commercial activity occurred on Market Street. On the way to Market Square located in the center of town was John Scull’s residence that also housed his printing shop and the town’s post-office. Across the street was the home of Pittsburgh’s first citizen, Hugh Henry Breckenridge, who had promoted the city heavily during the 1780s. Lining Market Street were stores like John & Samuel Colhoun’s that advertised receipt of a “fresh assortment of dry goods and groceries...sold on the lowest terms for cash, oats, whiskey, beeswax, and tallow.”¹⁴⁷ There was also Kuntz and Welch’s that sold the “...latest hats in the newest fashion.”¹⁴⁸ Market Street was also home to physicians like Doctor Murray, who practiced “physics, surgery, and midwifery at his shop on Market Street, Corner of the Diamond [Alley].”¹⁴⁹ Finally, small manufacturers existed on Market Street like Plumer and Gormley’s, who advertised a, “...scythe and blacksmith business at their shop, corner of Third Street, fronting Market Street, Pittsburgh. They have on hand a quantity of iron, which they will sell wholesale or retail to reasonable buyers.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Leland Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750 – 1865* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1937), 154.

¹⁴⁷ *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 21, 1795.

¹⁴⁸ *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, November 7, 1795.

¹⁴⁹ *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 6, 1795.

¹⁵⁰ *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 12, 1795

Leaving Market Street, a visitor would see Hogg's Pond, a large and shallow lake between Smithfield and Grant Streets. According to an early historian a long and ugly drain [stream] extended from Hogg's Pond to the Monongahela River. Heading back to Fort Fayette one passed John Marie's Tavern on Grant Street and the site where in 1758 a combined force of French and Indians massacred an advance column led by Major James Grant. There was not much else on the return to Fort Fayette except for a few huts and log cabins built by squatters.

Newcomers like Bates saw first-hand evidence of how the town earned its reputation for depravity, filth, and poor sanitation. In 1783 Captain John Wilkins, father of William Wilkins, reported that, "All sorts of wickedness were carried on to excess, and there was no appearance of morality or regular order."¹⁵¹ A year later, diplomat Arthur Lee wrote, "Pittsburgh is inhabited almost exclusively by Scots and Irish, who live in paltry log-houses, and are as dirty as in the north of Ireland or even Scotland..."¹⁵² Another visitor shortly thereafter called Pittsburgh "the muddiest place I have ever seen."¹⁵³ As late as 1800, a resident complained, "the streets are full of hogs, dogs, drays, and noisy children."¹⁵⁴ Air quality was so poor that one borough leader was compelled to

¹⁵¹ Sewell E. Click, "William Wilkins: Pittsburgher Extraordinary," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 22 (December 1939): 218.

¹⁵² Virginia Beck, "The Evolution of Government in Allegheny County, 1788-1808," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 26 (December 1941): 215.

¹⁵³ Dahlinger, 30.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

sponsor an ordinance requiring stovepipes to be raised to prevent the smoke produced by coal fires from offending other residents and passers-by.¹⁵⁵

All, however, in Pittsburgh was not rough and tumble. The frontier town also had a respectable side. In October 1787, for example, Mary Dewees visited Pittsburgh on a trip west and described as “delightful” the view from James O’Hara’s house along the Monongahela. Years later, Henry Marie Breckenridge, who apprenticed under Tarleton Bates in the early nineteenth century, fondly remembered the area around Grant’s Hill as “peculiarly picturesque, and beautifully diversified with hill and dale, having undergone some little change from the state of nature...The hill was the favorite promenade in fine weather and on Sunday afternoon. It was pleasing to see the line of well dressed ladies and gentlemen, and children, nearly the whole population, repairing to this beautiful green eminence.” Near Grant’s Hill, according to Breckenridge, was the town’s racecourse that provided residents with “all engrossing interest, and every business or pursuit was neglected during their (horse races) continuance.”¹⁵⁶ Associations also flourished in Pittsburgh including Free Mason’s lodges, fire companies, a mechanical society founded in 1788, a Hibernian and Tammany society, missionary and Bible societies, and chemical and medical societies.¹⁵⁷

Bates would have also seen slaves and indentured servants, not to the same extent as in Virginia, but perhaps more than he might have expected. The local newspaper

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Henry M. Breckenridge, *Recollections of Persons and Places in The West* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co, 1868), 60.

¹⁵⁷ Beck, 209-28.

routinely published notices that offered rewards for runaway slaves¹⁵⁸ and advertisements for buying and selling slaves. One such advertisement read “To be sold for cash only, a likely negro man. Nineteen years old, understands the farming buildings and drives a team well. Also (offered) a Negro woman, 25 years old, with a child 2 years old.”¹⁵⁹ Slavery in eighteenth century Pittsburgh was treated in the same matter-of-fact manner as in the South, and as many as four hundred families who settled west of the Monongahela River were from Virginia. Most likely, these settlers brought their slaves with them when they migrated to the region, and since the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Virginia was so indefinite after the Revolution, many probably believed they were still residents of Virginia.

Pittsburgh was nothing like life on the plantation. At Belmont Tarleton could find companionship and support from among family and close friends. His mother’s family, the Woodsons, was there to assist him, and Charles Bates, now a lawyer in Richmond, might have used his connections to help his younger brother. In Pittsburgh, however, Tarleton was just a stranger in a town full of strangers with English, Welsh, German, and Scot-Irish surnames. His Virginia heritage was of little value to him here. His first order of business was finding a job that paid a decent wage.

Bates arrived in Pittsburgh at a time that the region was undergoing significant economic changes.¹⁶⁰ A year earlier in 1794, while Bates was with the expedition that

¹⁵⁸ J. C. Andrews, *Pittsburgh's Post-Gazette: "The First Newspaper West of the Alleghenies,"* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1936), 23.

¹⁵⁹ *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 21, 1795.

crushed the Whiskey Rebellion, General Anthony Wayne and his Legion of the United States were defeating an Indian army at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in northwestern Ohio. These military victories opened up the frontier for settlement, but they also ended the steady flow of government money that had sustained southwestern Pennsylvania for nearly forty years. Beginning in the 1750s with the French, a succession of armies provided Pittsburgh with much of its hard currency and a great deal of its culture and infrastructure.¹⁶¹ The drying up of government money and the traditional challenges of conducting business with cities east of the Alleghenies convinced local leaders that Pittsburgh's future depended to a great extent on its ability to support America's westward expansion with products produced in its "manufactories." This included provisioning pioneers passing through Pittsburgh on their way west to places like Illinois and Missouri. Indian traders who had dominated local commerce since the 1750s were replaced by general store owners, who in 1795 were still dependent upon the importation of cloth, tools, nails, kitchen implements, furniture, and clothing from eastern merchants.

¹⁶⁰ Solon J. Buck and Elizabeth H. Buck, *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1939), 288. According to the Bucks "The quarter century from 1790 to 1815 witnessed the beginning, but only the beginning of the transformation of the original self-sufficing agricultural economy of Western Pennsylvania into an industrial economy based largely on manufacture of commodities for the outside world."

¹⁶¹ The Army's primary contribution to the frontier community was financial. For example, General Arthur St. Clair's troops, in 1791, spent more than \$19,000 in Pittsburgh. General Josiah Harmar's expedition had spent about as much a year earlier. General Anthony Wayne's large body of troops was quartered in the town for several months, and when the soldiers marched out of Pittsburgh in 1792 for the Indian Country they left behind large amounts of money with Pittsburgh storekeepers and farmers for supplies. In 1794, the troops sent to Pittsburgh to quell the Whiskey Rebellion brought another large sum with them. However, armies also provided the cultural, legal, and organizational glue that kept a community together. The US Army, according to historian Francis P. Prucha, was the primary agency for the maintenance of law and order, and the harbinger of intellectual and cultural developments. Francis Paul Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860* (Madison (WI): The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1953).

The trend began to change in the late 1790s, but the twenty-one-year-old Bates was too young and too poor to take advantage of the situation. Perhaps his father's ill-fated attempt at being a merchant discouraged him from pursuing that line of business.

However, Tarleton had military experience and that probably helped him find a job working for Isaac Craig, the Deputy Quartermaster of the Army. Bates accepted the offer, but he was less than enthusiastic about the salary of thirty-five dollars a month and two rations per day. Writing to his brother, he said, "What I shall be able to buy of this I can only say will not equal my first expectations."¹⁶² Craig managed to sweeten the offer by including a place to live that Bates described as "very genteel...at half a guinea a week – and seventy cents for washing."¹⁶³ Additionally, the job had the extra benefit of including Bates with Craig's small group of officers, a distinction that conferred "gentlemanly" status upon the young Virginian. Genteel living conditions and being regarded as a gentleman were important to men like Tarleton Bates, but his new employer was among a group of men in the northern states who were changing the definition of a gentleman. Isaac Craig is what we would refer to today as a "self-made man."

Craig was born in Ulster (Northern) Ireland in 1742, but in 1765 he left for America and settled in Philadelphia. He worked as a journeyman and master carpenter until 1775 when he enlisted in the Continental Army, later distinguishing himself at the battles of Trenton and Princeton. In 1780 Craig reported to Fort Pitt where he was put in

¹⁶² Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, July 8, 1795, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

charge of artillery and ammunition supply to regiments of the American army, a position he held until 1783. After the war, Craig decided to remain in Pittsburgh, and in 1784 he and Steven Bayard purchased a three-acre tract in Pittsburgh from the Penn family. This was the first piece of land that the Penns sold in Pittsburgh, and the purchase made Craig a wealthy and influential man. His prominence increased in 1785 when he married Amelia Neville, the only daughter of General John Neville. Shortly thereafter Craig was appointed Deputy Quartermaster, a position he held until early in Jefferson's first administration. Along with his duties, Craig was also responsible for the construction of a series of forts that included Fort Fayette, which replaced Fort Pitt as a depot and storage facility for the U.S. Army.

Craig identified with the Washington administration and its supporters who were known as the Federalists. In general, the Federalists favored a strong federal government, friendship with the British, and opposition to the French Revolution. Their base of political power was among merchants, property owners, and urban workers who were tied to the commercial economy. They subscribed to the notion that power should accrue only to those who proved their gentility to the satisfaction of the established families of old status. Moreover, they wanted to sustain a society where men could clearly identify their superiors, from whom patronage flowed, and their inferiors, from whom deference was due.¹⁶⁴ Craig's politics were the same as most of Pittsburgh's early leaders, many of whom were Revolutionary War veterans. Their views differed sharply from small

¹⁶⁴ Alan Taylor, "From Fathers to Friends of the People: Political Personas in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 11 (Winter 1991): 468-470.

farmers living outside of Pittsburgh, who were increasingly alienated by government policies like the whiskey tax.

Craig's politics were also different than those of his new employee. Bates typified a significant number of Americans who had, at least prior to 1798, an abiding affection for the French and a corresponding hatred for anything British. Although he was careful about not alienating his employer, Bates shared his feelings freely in his letters. During his first few years in Pittsburgh, for example, he was fond of closing his letters with "Adieu" and often referred to acquaintances and friends as "Citizen," as was the custom in France during the French Revolution.¹⁶⁵ He also closely followed French military successes in Europe. He was particularly inspired by successive French victories against the Austrians in 1796 that caused him to exclaim, "The French are killing the Austrians by tens of thousands...convincing them by 'the logic of kings' that it is madness to contend with enthusiastic Gauls...*Viva Res Publica!*" In contrast, Tarleton's feelings toward the British were similar to those of his younger brother Fleming, who wrote to Frederick, "I have heard no news but that Great Britain has declared war against Spain which will perhaps bring us into a squabble, a thing I heartily wish."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Also, his younger brother Fleming addressed Frederick in a letter as "Citizen Brother," and wrote that, "Citizen Todd will in a few days go up to Charlotte and by you...." Marion Morse Davis, who chronicled the exploits of the "Bates Boys," described Fleming as a "Jacobin" because of his political leanings. Mrs. Davis wrote: "The Letters of Tarleton Bates, 1795 – 1805," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 12 (January 1929): 32-53. "The Bates Boys on the Western Waters, Part 1," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 29 (March – June 1946): 1-34. "The Bates Boys on the Western Waters, Part 2." *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 29 (September – December 1946): 85-138; "The Bates Boys on the Western Waters, Part 3." *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 30 (March – June 1947): 15-67; and "The Bates Boys on the Western Waters, Part 4." *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 30 (September – December 1947): 107-44.

¹⁶⁶ Fleming Bates to Frederick Bates, October 17, 1795, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

The pro-French sentiments of Bates and others can be traced to the Proclamation of Neutrality and the Jay Treaty. The Proclamation of 1793 and ensuing Neutrality Act of 1794 declared that the United States would remain neutral in the war between France and Great Britain. Those opposed to the Federalists, like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, believed that the proclamation and subsequent legislation abrogated the 1778 Treaty of Alliance between the United States and France. Jefferson was already distressed by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's economic policies that favored commercial interests over those of yeoman farmers. The anti-French legislation convinced Jefferson and Madison that the Federalists had overstepped their constitutional authority. The Democratic Societies concurred and characterized Federalist policies as "not only a questionable constitutional acts "... [but also] derogatory to the honor, inconsonant with the interest, and hostile to the Liberties of our Country."¹⁶⁷

If critics of the Washington administration believed the Neutrality Act severed the special relationship between France and the United States, then they felt the Jay Treaty was an overt attempt by the government to ally itself with the hated British monarchy. The treaty was signed in 1794 but was not ratified until 1796. By its terms, the United States gained control of forts in the Northwest Territory in addition to limited trading rights with India and the British West Indies. The treaty also established a commission to settle boundary disputes in the Northeast and other points of contention. In exchange the United States agreed to surrender not only its traditional position on maritime rights but also to accept commissions that would settle the question of prewar debts owed to

¹⁶⁷ Matthew Schoenbachler, "Republicanism in the Age of Democratic Revolution: The Democratic-Republican Societies of the 1790s," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18 (Summer 1998): 245.

English merchants. However, the treaty did not address either the contentious issue of impressments or that of compensation to be paid to southerners for slaves carried off during the Revolutionary War. Critics argued the treaty gained little for the United States, but the Federalists contended that the treaty was perhaps all that the young, weak country might plausibly have expected to gain from the British.¹⁶⁸

Like other, pro-French and anti-British Americans, Tarleton objected to the one-sided nature of the Jay Treaty, but he and his brother Fleming were pleased to see the United States expand its control into the Northwest Territory. Writing to Frederick in Virginia, he exclaimed, “On the 11th of August the United Stars were floating on the ramparts of Detroit...it was an object to which the citizens looked forward with enthusiastic ardor.”¹⁶⁹ Fleming Bates writing nearly a year earlier from Virginia was less sanguine about Britain’s intent: “Yesterday, I believe was the day stipulated in the treaty with Great Britain for the delivery of the northwestern posts so long ceded to us, and as there is not the least doubt on my mind that they will not be given up I suppose there will be a greater paper war throughout the continent than has been since our remembrance - for the blood of every republican must be raised at the non-compliance with the stipulations which were before their [the British] ratification seen as offensive.”¹⁷⁰ From his new home in Pittsburgh, Tarleton also foresaw, “the loss of the role of supplying the

¹⁶⁸ Todd Estes, “Shaping the Politics of Public Opinion: Federalists and the Jay Treaty Debate,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (Autumn 2000): 398-99.

¹⁶⁹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, August 12, 1796, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO. Frederick was working at the time as the Assistant Postmaster in Goochland County.

¹⁷⁰ Fleming Bates to Frederick Bates, May 5, 1795, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

army with provisions...which has raised this country [western Pennsylvania] to its present prosperous state, but which will now be procured through easier and cheaper channels - New York will be principally benefited.”¹⁷¹

The Neutrality Act and Jay Treaty galvanized the opponents of the Federalists. Opposition was based upon more than policy disagreements. It was rooted also in a complete distrust of the honesty, integrity, and motives of the other person. Political parties were still in the embryonic stage; meaning politics was intensely personal, and politicians were quick to attribute to their enemies the darkest of purposes. Thomas Jefferson once said of Alexander Hamilton, "His system flowed from principles adverse to liberty, and was calculated to undermine and demolish the republic, by creating an influence of his department over the members of the legislature."¹⁷² Bates was a receptive audience for this anti-Federalist rhetoric. Shortly after arriving in Pittsburgh, he wrote a letter to Frederick in which he condemned a Federalist writer who “reprobated the principles of our Revolution and our Constitution, abused the Apostles of Liberty, calumniated the supporters of the rights of man, and has with impious effrontery even presumed or affected to abhor the sacred rights themselves.”¹⁷³

Madison nominated Jefferson for President in 1796, but Jefferson remained aloof from the electoral process because actively campaigning for oneself was still considered

¹⁷¹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, October 12, 1796. The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁷² John R. Howe, Jr., “Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s,” *American Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1967): 149.

¹⁷³ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, February 12, 1797, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

beneath a republican gentleman. Eventually, Jefferson and Madison realized that their opposition, Republican “party” could not prevail by remaining passive. Instead, it required a vigorous grass-roots organization to compete against the Federalists. Jefferson hoped to promote the Republican cause by having Madison and others campaign for him, while maintaining the nonpartisan appearance of a patriot leader and avoiding the electioneering that most gentlemen of the period professed to find so distasteful.¹⁷⁴

Before the end of the decade, republican leaders in Pittsburgh recruited the opinionated and receptive Tarleton Bates to their cause.¹⁷⁵ Responding to a letter from Frederick on the 1796 election, Tarleton wrote, “Among the candidates...you have omitted to mention, the honest but monarchial Adams: if Pittsburgh were American I fear he’d be elected...I am really of your sentiments with respect to Washington...He is certainly the hobby-horse of America, the admiration of mankind. It would be too much for anyone but a Jefferson to succeed him.”¹⁷⁶

Discrete about sharing his political opinions, Bates attempted to fit in with his new surroundings. Within weeks after arriving in Pittsburgh, he attended a Fourth of July

¹⁷⁴ Pasley, “‘Artful and Designing Men’: Political Professionalism in the Early American Republic, 1775-1820”, 103.

¹⁷⁵ Politicians on both sides were on the look for men like Bates. Historian Paul Goodman states that Republicans and Federalists sought out, “new recruits for leadership...and the nation was fortunate in the skill and imagination of the political lieutenants, cadremen, and foot soldiers who came forward to administer public affairs and developed party-formations. Paul Goodman, *The Federalists vs. the Jeffersonian Republicans* (New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 120.

¹⁷⁶ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, October 12, 1796, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

celebration at the Sign of the Bear tavern¹⁷⁷ where with forty-five others he celebrated with “fifteen toasts, accompanied by the discharge of cannon...and a procession through the streets with three huzzas before almost every respectable house in town.”¹⁷⁸ Events like this served to introduce him to other, ambitious and like-minded individuals in Pittsburgh who chafed at a Federalist political faction they believed favored a self-appointed aristocracy. Years later, Tarleton expressed his continuing contempt for the Federalist mindset. Describing a local ball to which both Republicans and Federalists were invited, Tarleton wrote, “We’re carrying on here our old game. The federal ladies in meekness and modesty still refuse or decline to visit new comers, however respectable...our ladies are of too high origin, they have too pure blood, of ancestry flowing in their veins, to mix with any but patricians.”¹⁷⁹ Bates’ sentiments indicate the nation was beginning to reject the notion of automatically deferring to traditional authority. Instead, the country was becoming more democratic and liberal.

¹⁷⁷ Historian John W. Harpster describes the evolution of taverns and inn in his article “Eighteenth Century Inns and Taverns of Western Pennsylvania,” *Western Pennsylvania History* 19 (March 1936): 5-16. Taverns have a long history of serving as forums for debate and disagreement. Todd Estes writes they provided a place for the “thoughtful (or rational-critical) discussion of public matters.” Estes 398-9. Gordon Wood believes taverns provided an outlet for expressing newly liberated economic, political, and religious “interests” that arose unexpectedly and jostled for recognition. These newly emergent “interests,” Wood believes, were not at all the settled forces that James Madison envisioned in the Federalist Papers. Their energy and competitiveness, he argues, brought “a spirit of locality” that undermined “the aggregate interests of the community.” When the old constraints of monarchy, hierarchy, and paternalism fell away, the contentiousness that had arisen in political and commercial activity poured out in urban rioting, in “street tavern and theater rowdiness,” labor strikes, and ethnic conflicts. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 232.

¹⁷⁸ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, July 8, 1795, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁷⁹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, January 28, 1804, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

However, the late eighteenth century was also a period of transition and Bates, despite the previous statement, was a product of both his time and his Virginia heritage. He was careful, for example, about preserving his public image as that of a refined gentleman, and he was not reluctant to demand the same from members of his family. "I would not advise you to be shamefully neglectful of your exterior," he cautioned his brother Frederick, "for Volney says that cleanliness by which I understand neatness is a great virtue."¹⁸⁰ Tarleton, like his father, was also keen about improving his social status through education.¹⁸¹ Writing to Frederick, he boasted, "I began to translate [French] with the assistance of a dictionary, and in two more months, my master tells me, I shall be able to read and perfectly understand my French book...The only certain time I have to attend to this business is from eight to eleven in the evening and on this time not even reading shall infringe until I can translate without a dictionary."¹⁸²

Bates soldiered on through his first three years under Craig. It must have been tedious duty, but Tarleton was either ill suited or not inclined for other types of work. The monotony of the work combined with Pittsburgh's relative isolation undoubtedly took its toll because in addition to sharing political opinions, Bates in his letters also

¹⁸⁰ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, May 23, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO. Bates was influenced considerably by his southern heritage. According to Bertram Wyatt-Brown, antebellum society attempted to emulate the culture of the English aristocracy. This included its manners, forms and topics of speech, tastes in clothing styles, and home furnishings. These were passed consciously from one generation to the next. Wyatt-Brown, 122.

¹⁸¹ Education was both the mark of a gentleman and the means of rising in the world; it was the possession that set the man of the world apart from the lowborn. Every man who would talk with the cultured, or associate with the fashionable, had to have a degree of learning. Most families of position in colonial Virginia, therefore, saw to it that their children got at least a smattering of erudition. Hamilton, 7.

¹⁸² Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, June 19, 1797, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

expressed unremitting homesickness and loneliness. These subjects have been largely ignored by scholars of the frontier; the myth is pioneers were either too busy to notice how lonely they were or found solace in the company of family or other pioneers. Social historian E. Anthony Rotundo, for example, writes, “At the dawn of the nineteenth century, young men of the North faced a world of immense opportunity. The settlement of vast new areas inspired visions of great wealth...the spread of the market economy created new opportunities.”¹⁸³ But Rotundo’s statement ignores the psychological element because, despite Bates’ efforts at assimilation, he often expressed sadness about his personal situation. Several months after declaring he wanted to make the “western country...home,” he complained to Frederick, “I have not received a letter from any of you since I came down although I have written several dozen.”¹⁸⁴ The following summer, he lamented, “I am situated amongst strangers...I fear I am misanthropic... [and I require] sincere, unalterable friendship.”¹⁸⁵ A short visit to Belmont, he suggested, would help because “I long to see my dearest little sisters and all the Belmont family...”¹⁸⁶ Clearly, Bates is not an example of the rugged stereotype we have been taught to accept. The freedom Americans obtained when they rejected a society that was based on deference and paternalism now required them to create and nurture social and professional networks

¹⁸³ Rotundo, 19.

¹⁸⁴ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, October 17, 1795, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁸⁵ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, August 12, 1796, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁸⁶ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, October 12, 1796, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

with other citizens. These networks were like social contracts. Like business contracts they were “voluntary, explicit, and consensual, much less declaratory of previously existing rights and duties and much more the consequence of conscious acts of will.”¹⁸⁷

Perhaps looking for a cure of his loneliness, Tarleton became obsessed in 1798 about finding a wife. He was initially attracted to a young girl named Betsey Murphy, step-daughter of Patrick Murphy, the owner of the Sign of the General Butler Inn. The General Butler was another favorite watering hole for Republicans. Patrick died in 1797 and the inn was inherited by Molly Murphy, Betsey’s mother. Bates courted Betsey, who was described as “...not very handsome...too short to be graceful, but is worth at least \$8,000.”¹⁸⁸ Despite numerous advances Betsey Murphy was unimpressed with Tarleton. He lamented to Frederick, " I sincerely loved Betsey Murphy...I wrote her some letters but she deigned not to answer, and when I went to the house would rather avoid me. This I could not bear; with some fortitude, a little pride and not a little counter-balancing influence, I have divested myself of her chains."¹⁸⁹ The next object of Bates’ affection was Emily Neville, the twelve-year-old daughter of Presley Neville¹⁹⁰ and the niece of

¹⁸⁷ Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 162.

¹⁸⁸ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, February 19, 179, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁸⁹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, June 7, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁹⁰ Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania were generally untouched by the Revolutionary War. Nonetheless, local leaders established a Committee of Safety in 1775 that approved the action of the colonies in their revolt against the Crown, and resolved that it was the "indispensable duty of every American" to resist tyranny. The Committee also selected a young, Virginian-born soldier named John Neville to lead one hundred Pennsylvania militiamen and capture Fort Pitt. Neville would eventually become a key person in Pittsburgh’s early development, and he and his family would greatly influence the life and career of Tarleton Bates, who at this time was a one-year old boy living with his family in

Isaac Craig. Bates first described her to Frederick as a “little angel... well grown, tall, genteel, strait as nature could have formed her. The smiles of Venus, the majesty of Juno, the serenity of Minerva, in short every charm, every grace, every fascination that my mind can possibly conceive.”¹⁹¹ Tarleton was so devoted to Emily that on his trip to Natchez he cut her initials “E.M.N in a beech tree” that was located on the banks of the Ohio River.¹⁹²

Tarleton’s words reveal more than an advanced crush on a young girl. Bertram Wyatt-Brown states that it was not uncommon for a Southern gentleman to marry a younger woman.¹⁹³ Additionally, the age difference between Bates and Emily did not automatically signal a patriarchal relationship, although Wyatt-Brown points out that a significant disparity in ages “could affect family polity.”¹⁹⁴ Finally, Tarleton’s emotional

Goochland County, Virginia. John Neville was born in Price William (now Fauquier) County, Virginia, on July 26, 1731. He had a remarkable military and public service career, serving under Washington at Fort Necessity and later with the ill-fated Braddock expedition. He also fought for Washington at the battles of Trenton, Germanton, and Monmouth. In 1783, Neville was brevetted Brigadier General by the Continental Congress. He later served in the Superior Executive Council of Pennsylvania and represented Washington County to ratify the U.S. Constitution. In 1794, President Washington called upon Neville again, this time to be the Inspector of Revenue for Western Pennsylvania and to collect the excise tax on distilled spirits. The result was the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, and anti-Federalist farmers heaped hatred on the Neville family. Neville fled his Woodville Plantation and moved to Pittsburgh in 1794. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Nevilles were Pittsburgh’s leading family and their power and influence were unmatched. Hugh Henry Brackenridge claimed Nevilles, “suffered from avidity for office, which seems to possess them, as if there were no persons out of their family, capable of holding offices.”

¹⁹¹Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, June 17, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁹² Tarleton Bates Journal, 1798 to 1805, Pelletier Library, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA.

¹⁹³ Wyatt-Brown. 203. Wyatt-Brown cites examples in several Southern states that show the average age for brides was 18.8 whereas in the North was 24.9. Therefore, Emily might have been too young when Tarleton first laid eyes on her, but she would have been nearly twenty years old at the time of his duel with Stewart.

¹⁹⁴ Wyatt-Brown, 204.

advances toward Betsey and Emily were not “manly,” but he seemed at least to reconcile them in his mind as simply part of the cost of finding a mate. His repeated attempts at romance suggest he was fearful of remaining a bachelor. Historian Mark Kann claims the Founders believed bachelors like Tarleton Bates were a threat to the Republic. Unmarried men were, according to Kann’s interpretation, associated with “promiscuity, licentiousness, sex crimes, itinerancy, pauperism, frontier lawlessness, racial taboos, and martial violence that destroy families, foster social anarchy, and invited political tyranny.”¹⁹⁵ Rotundo offers a similar opinion, but he contends that society, not just the Founders, “feared that, with the male tradition of public usefulness fading, men would no longer protect the bonds of society. Thus it was that women became guardians of civilization and the common good in the new order of individualism.” Tarleton Bates didn’t see himself as a threat to the Republic, but he was certain that his life lacked a stabilizing force – like a wife. Similarly, Alexander Hamilton, despite his personal brilliance, astutely married into the prominent Schuyler family. His marriage benefited him financially and politically. The same can be said for Isaac Craig who married into the Neville family.

Despite Bates’ personal problems, his work for Craig was noticed by General James Wilkinson who, on July 11, 1798, offered Bates the position of quartermaster in Natchez. He was anxious to leave Pittsburgh for his new post, but he agreed to remain with Craig until September of that year because he was “unwilling to incur the imputation

¹⁹⁵ Kann, 52.

of ingratitude,” although the new assignment was “a business on which [my] heart was entirely fixed.”¹⁹⁶

On September 12, 1798, a few days before leaving for Natchez, Bates met with Maria Butler, the widow of General Richard Butler who was killed in November 1791 at the Battle of the Wabash, where Indians routed an American army under the command of General Arthur St. Clair. During their conversation, Mrs. Butler cautioned Bates not to “profess principles that were so incongruous with the ruling [Federalist] sentiments.” Referring to him as a *democrat*, Mrs. Butler lectured the young man the Republicans were “a party...determined to disunite and disorganize,” and she added the current [Federalist] government, “was so perfectly possessed of the truth and so tremblingly alive to its consequences that it had firmly resolved to give no countenance to any of democratic sentiments, or to defer any who did not approbate en masse every governmental measure.”¹⁹⁷ She also believed Bates would succeed, provided he “had the prudence to keep silent upon such measures as [Bates] did not approve.”¹⁹⁸ Mrs. Butler’s guidance to Tarleton was timely because it was given less than two months after the Federalist-controlled Congress passed the Sedition Act, which declared that any treasonable activity, including the publication of “any false, scandalous and malicious writing,” was a high misdemeanor, punishable by fine and imprisonment. The Federalists specifically wanted to suppress the growing number of Republican newspapers, most of

¹⁹⁶ Tarleton Bates Journal.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

which were critical of the Adams Presidency. By virtue of this legislation twenty-five men, most of them who were editors of Republican newspapers, were arrested and their newspapers forced to shut down.

Mrs. Butler discerned Tarleton's political abilities at the same time he was developing an interest in newspapers and newspaper publishing. According to historian Jeffrey Pasley, the Sedition Act temporarily crippled the Republican press but did not eliminate it entirely. Instead, it politicized many artisan printers who previously had been non-partisan. Bates was receptive to the pro-Republican press and shared his enthusiasm with Frederick, who had moved to Detroit. Shortly after accepting the Natchez assignment, he advised him, "On my departure, I had intended to have Bache still forwarded to you. I am myself subscribed for Smith's *Universal Gazette*. If you do not like this distribution I must content myself with Bache and have Smith sent to you. But as Captain [Matthew] Ernest [Frederick's Federalist-leaning employer in Detroit] takes "Porcupine," it might not be amiss to balance his vile abominable lucretrations with the unblushing democratic insolence of Bache."¹⁹⁹ By Bache, Bates is referring to Benjamin Franklin Bache, editor of the *Aurora* in Philadelphia. Porcupine was "Peter Porcupine," the pen name of William Cobbett²⁰⁰ and Smith was Samuel Harrison Smith at the *Universal Gazette*, also published in Philadelphia, which was the forerunner of the famous *National Intelligencer*

¹⁹⁹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, July 13, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁰⁰ Cobbett published *Porcupine's Gazette* from 1797- 1799. Born in England, Cobbett defended the British monarchy and praised aristocratic government in preference to democracy. His politics made him a frequent target for the Jeffersonian Republicans. Dr. Benjamin Rush won a \$5,000 libel suit against him. Between 1800 and 1819, Cobbett moved several times between the United States and Great Britain, where he eventually died in 1835.

that for years supported Republican administrations. The availability of Republican newspapers in Pittsburgh must have pleased Tarleton because the town's only newspaper was John Scull's pro-Federalist *Gazette*. In September 1798 Bates read with interest how the yellow fever "raged in Philadelphia with, perhaps, unexampled violence," and how it claimed the lives of John Fenno, editor of the pro-Federalist newspaper *Gazette of the United States*, and his wife, in addition to causing Cobbett and Bache to flee the city.²⁰¹ Bates departed Pittsburgh for Natchez on September 29, 1798. He documented the trip in his personal journal, a leather-bound notebook, four by eight inches, in which he kept both his diary and memoranda on many topics, including loans and personal accounts, tables of weights and measures, gun calibers, and notes on politics and politicians. The first entry for the journey to Natchez was made on September 29 at 9 A.M: "Left Pittsburg in a skiff 20 1/2 feet long...a beautiful day...few residents on the River...Slept in the barge with two blankets rather uncomfortably."²⁰² Thereafter, he recorded his actions and observations every day until October 14 and then stopped writing until October 27. Bates had both an eye for detail and a flair for the dramatic. On October 12, for example, he described bedding down for the evening when suddenly he and his party were "serenaded with the howling orgies of a canoe's crew, whose lungs were the lungs of Stentor and whose every muscle was a cord of risibility, who did not honor our fire with the presence, but moved down and were succeeded by a boat's crew going to general

²⁰¹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, July 13, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁰²Tarleton Bates Journal.

muster, who would have graced the shores of the Cape of Good Hope, if black guardism, brutality, and indecency could have added grace to any shore.”²⁰³ Tarleton also continued to carry a torch for young Emily Neville in Pittsburgh. During a stop near Wheeling, Virginia [now West Virginia] he marveled at the scenery and wrote wistfully, “...under whose willows maples and sycamore, with the entwining grape might tempt the Gods to take up their abodes under their delightful shade – too happy would I be in their Arcadian bowers to enjoy with her whom nature has robbed the Graces to adorn - my lovely Emma [Emily Neville] - an Elysium that the Ancients fancied, but which I alone, in that sweet charming spot with my divinity might taste.”²⁰⁴ Less than a week later, on October 7 he wrote, “Dined...about 13 miles above Kenhawa [Kanawha is in present-day West Virginia] - cut E M N. in a large beech...”²⁰⁵ On October 14 in Cincinnati, Bates “teaed” with General Wilkinson’s wife and dined with William Henry Harrison, who had been appointed the preceding July as Secretary and Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territory.

It was noted earlier that Bates stopped writing in his journal on October 14. Most likely he learned about that time that General Wilkinson had filled the quartermaster position in Natchez. Bates was devastated by the news. Writing from Cincinnati he complained to Frederick, “Wilkinson had deceived me,” and added “...although in Pittsburg, has not

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

even condescended to drop me a line, but desired Craig to see he wished me to return,”²⁰⁶ Bates was encouraged by his former employer to return to Pittsburgh; Craig...added his own wishes and [those of] Colonel O’Hara’s which...has in no inconsiderable degree influenced my decision [to return to Pittsburg].”²⁰⁷ Being noticed by James O’Hara was no small thing, and Bates was undoubtedly flattered by his interest and words of encouragement.

General James O’Hara was born in County Mayo, Ireland in 1752. Ten years younger than Isaac Craig, he left Ireland for Paris in 1765, where he attended a school run by Jesuits. He left school in 1770 to accept a commission in the Regiment of the Coldstream Guards. His service with the Guards lasted eighteen months and, after a short stint with a Liverpool shipbroker, O’Hara sailed for Philadelphia in 1772. He accepted a position as an Indian trader in Western Pennsylvania enabling him to become familiar with the area surrounding Fort Pitt. Recognizing the potential of the area, he began purchasing property. When the Revolutionary War started, O’Hara went to Virginia where he raised a regiment of militia. In 1781 he was appointed Assistant Quartermaster of the Army, and in 1792 he became its Quartermaster General, a position that was responsible for paying troops, arranging transportation, and procuring supplies. He held that position until 1796 but continued government contracting until 1802. James O’Hara was Pittsburgh’s first industrialist; he owned two breweries, a glass manufactory (with Isaac Craig), a sawmill, shipbuilding yard, gristmill, and dry goods store. O’Hara, Craig,

²⁰⁶ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, November 5, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

and John Neville would form the nucleus of the Federalist Party in Western Pennsylvania. Despite their political differences, Bates recognized that knowing and possibly working for James O'Hara had its benefits.

The year 1799 began with Bates working for O'Hara as a clerk for the salary of "thirty dollars per month and expenses," or about the same as he made working for Craig.²⁰⁸ O'Hara sent his new employee to Philadelphia on business in January, and Bates took advantage of the assignment by meeting with Republican politicians from Virginia and elsewhere who were in the process of creating the organization that would elect Jefferson to the Presidency. Bates by now regarded Pittsburgh, "as my home," and he returned in April with a greater awareness for the political process. This was a propitious time to become involved in partisan politics. The July 20 edition of the *Gazette* reported, "The anniversary of the day that gave birth to the United States of America was celebrated by the citizens of the borough with all the zeal due to so important an occasion...the [town's] citizens, together with the gentlemen of the Army...sat down to dinner in a bower erected for the purpose on the banks of the Allegheny."²⁰⁹ Although the *Gazette* was referring to harmony between Federalists and Republicans, the election later in the year of Republican Thomas McKean as Pennsylvania governor would trigger a struggle between moderate and radical Republicans who, according to historian Andrew Shankman, "wanted very different –

²⁰⁸ Tarleton Bates to Richard Bates, February 25, 1799, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁰⁹ *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, July 10, 1799.

even irreconcilable – outcomes from the victory they had all produced.”²¹⁰ This struggle presaged a similar political battle at the national level between Thomas Jefferson and radical Republicans, notably William Duane, who became editor of the *Aurora* newspaper following the death of Benjamin Franklin Bache. The pro-Federalist *Gazette* also published in November a rumor that a pro-Republican newspaper would soon be published in Pittsburgh. This was welcome news for Tarleton and other Republicans because John Scull at the *Gazette* refused to publish articles that were critical of the Adams administration. By the end of the decade, political divisions were forming in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the United States.

In addition to his romances, politics, and work, Tarleton Bates remained concerned during this time about his father Thomas Bates and the fate of his family at Belmont. Although the two men had a falling out before Tarleton left Virginia in 1794, in 1796 Tarleton asked Frederick, “Don't omit to inform me the precise state of the execution against the estate of [our father]...I shall have about 150 dollars this fall which if of any service at Belmont could be safely transmitted by post in Bank Paper.”²¹¹ His concern for his father and family was elevated two years later when he wrote to Frederick, ““The only thing that may give you concern is that our father’s affairs are near a crisis much to be dreaded...There are several mortgages on the land and several debts

²¹⁰ Andrew Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy: The Struggle to Fuse Egalitarianism & Capitalism in Jeffersonian Pennsylvania*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 72-3.

²¹¹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, September, 16, 1796, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

to a large amount have lately been discovered of which the family, until now, knew nothing...Alas, our poor sisters!”²¹²

As 1799 ended Tarleton Bates assessed his accomplishments during his first five years in Pittsburgh. He worked for two of the town’s leading citizens, both of whom were Federalists, which gave him access to other local leaders like the Nevilles. Tarleton worshipped George Washington like most Americans, but politically he gravitated toward Jefferson and the Republicans, a fact he kept from his benefactors. Like many fellow Virginians it took time for him to adjust to frontier life, but eventually he embraced it and jumped at an opportunity to relocate when a better opportunity opened up in Cincinnati. The sentiments he shared in 1795 with Frederick, “I have thought of making this western country my home...” had come true, and he never returned to Belmont. His adopted hometown also changed. Pittsburgh’s population increased nearly four-fold during the 1790s to about 1,600 people. The town and surrounding area were not the “howling wilderness” settled by early pioneers, but they retained enough of its frontier character to pose challenges for a Virginia gentleman, and Bates never stopped seeing himself as a gentleman. The town’s rapid population growth mirrored the nation’s, which increased from about 3.9 million to over 5.3 million; much of it was due to immigration. Tarleton Bates had the political wind at his back in 1800 as he began the new century.

²¹² Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, February 25, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

CHAPTER FOUR

BATES AND THE PENNSYLVANIA REPUBLICANS

The American Phoenix is no more...It is hoped that his inestimable loss will in some degree be repaired by the election of our illustrious Jefferson to the presidential chair.

Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, March 16, 1800

After his aborted trip to Natchez, Tarleton returned to Pittsburgh where he worked for James O'Hara as a government contractor. His disappointment over losing the Natchez job was matched by his determination to succeed in Pittsburgh. Charismatic and outgoing, he picked up where he had left off before leaving Pittsburgh for Natchez and continued to cultivate his network of influential friends and acquaintances. Politically, he clung to the republican ideals espoused by George Washington ("The American Phoenix"), but he also became interested in partisan politics as practiced by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Like a growing number of young men Tarleton saw politics as a possible career option instead of either business or manufacturing. Moreover, he regarded Jefferson's election as more than a return to the principles of the Revolution; he also saw it as an opportunity for personal advancement. His personal ambitions eventually drew him into a nasty political feud between rival sub-factions with Pennsylvania Republican party. On a personal level, he had not completely cut his

emotional ties to Belmont, but it was clear that he would not return. His father was in declining health and nearly bankrupt, and in his stead Tarleton served as mentor and surrogate father for his younger brothers Frederick, who was working in Detroit, and James, who would join him later in Pittsburgh.

His first five years in Pittsburgh matured Tarleton Bates. He still had bouts of homesickness and loneliness (“I will not suspect you of ingratitude, but I will charge you with forgetfulness and infraternity. How otherwise could you omit to write for one entire year...,”²¹³) but also he no longer considered himself a “Citizen of Virginia.” Through his employment with Isaac Craig and James O’Hara, he became acquainted with other members of Pittsburgh’s elite, although he continued to downplay his Republican sympathies. His affection for Emily Neville, for example, was complicated probably by the fact her father and grandfather were staunch Federalists. Yet, despite the unpopularity of the Adams administration, Pittsburgh remained in the Federalist camp. There were other reasons that Tarleton was settling in to his new home. For one thing, he had become too “urbanized” to return to the relatively slow pace of plantation life. In contrast, brothers Charles and Fleming lived about a day’s ride from Belmont, and Richard lived even closer; they would not move from the Old Dominion during the course of their lives. Tarleton Bates did not remain in Pittsburgh because he was complacent. He decided to stay because the town was acquiring the trappings of urban

²¹³ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, March 16, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

life: commercial expansion, cultural sophistication, and social stratification.²¹⁴ He did not want to miss out on Pittsburgh's development.

During this time Tarleton also developed a keen interest in organized politics. His life and career changed permanently with the 1799 Pennsylvania gubernatorial election. That year Pennsylvania voters elected Thomas McKean to be the state's second governor. McKean was born in 1734 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, where his parents had emigrated from Northern Ireland as children. He began his career as an attorney in Delaware and held a number of elected offices there. He favored independence from Britain, and his opinions almost resulted in a duel with the President of the Stamp Act Congress, of which he was a member. He was also involved in the debate over the Declaration of Independence and commanded a militia unit at the Battle of New York. Returning to Congress in 1777, McKean helped draft the Articles of Confederation and had the distinction of serving as the second President under the Articles. McKean worked at the same time as the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, a position he held until his election as Pennsylvania's governor. He endorsed ratification of the Constitution, and he favored a powerful executive at the head of a strong central government. McKean was a

²¹⁴ According to early historian Charles Dahlinger, "The extent of comforts and luxuries enjoyed in Pittsburgh were surprising...The advertisements of the local merchants told what people ate and drank, and of the materials of which their clothing was made...In the stores were tea, coffee, red and sugar almonds, olives, chocolate, spices of all kinds, muscatel and keg raisins, dried peas and a score of other luxuries, besides the ordinary articles of consumption...(to drink) There was Madeira, sherry, claret, Lisbon, port, and the Teneriffe wines, French and Spanish brandies, Jamaica and other spirits... Materials for men's and women's clothing were endless in variety and design and consisted of cloths, serges, flannels, brocades, jeans, fustians, Irish linens, cambrics, lawns, nankeens, ginghams, muslins, calicos, and chintzes. Dahlinger, 63 – 66. Pittsburgh's business development was also analyzed by: Patricia Luella Bisland. "Early Life in Pittsburgh, 1758 – 1810." (Master Thesis, American University, 1962); and Howard C. Douds, "Merchants and Merchandising in Pittsburgh, 1759 – 1800," *Western Pennsylvania History* 20 (June 1937): 123-32.

pragmatic politician. Although he was a Federalist until 1796, he disputed many of the party's domestic policies and its rapprochement with England, particularly the Jay Treaty. Thereafter, he joined the Jeffersonian-Republicans, but he was not averse to accepting support from Federalists when it was politically expedient.

In addition to his keen political instincts, Thomas McKean won because of the public's dissatisfaction with Federalist policies coupled with the rising popularity of Jefferson and the Republicans. Even incidents such as the Genet scandal, the XYZ Affair, and the undeclared war with France were not enough in the end to save the Federalists. The Republicans' cause was further strengthened by their common hatred for John Adams and the Federalists. Republican politicians and Republican-supported newspapers accused the Federalists of being neo-monarchists, a characterization John Adams and others could not dispel. Despite fines and imprisonment, newspaper editors like Benjamin Bache and William Duane at the *Aurora* in Philadelphia continually challenged the Federalists. Historian Jeffrey Pasley attributes a great deal of Republican success to these newspapers and their editors who became the foundation of political parties.²¹⁵

McKean's victory was also a boon for Hugh Henry Breckenridge, the brilliant and eccentric Pittsburgh lawyer. The son of Scottish immigrants, Breckenridge was educated

²¹⁵ Pasley's "Artful and Designing Men": Political Professionalism in the Early American Republic, 1775-1820," focuses considerable attention on James Beckley as the model of the political operative. However, Pasley also analyzes the role of early newspaper editors in the formation of organized political parties. Together, pre-party political operatives provided Republicans in particular with the focus and organizational muscle that was required to unseat the Federalists from their positions of power.

at Princeton where he was a close friend of the journalist Philip Freneau;²¹⁶ he served as a chaplain in the Revolutionary War; and in 1780, at age thirty-two, he was admitted to the bar in Philadelphia. He left Philadelphia in 1781, however, because he saw "...no chance for being anything in that city, there were such great men before me."²¹⁷ Breckenridge traveled west to Pittsburgh when it was nothing more than a scattered collection of log cabins surrounding the old British fort. He immediately became its biggest promoter. In 1786, for example, he reported that there were 100 houses and 1,500 people in Pittsburgh, which was an exaggeration of about 300%.²¹⁸ Breckenridge had a prominent role in the establishment of Allegheny County in addition to helping John Scull start the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, the first newspaper published west of the Alleghenies. Breckenridge also had a knack for becoming embroiled in controversial causes. In 1785, for example, he defended an Indian named Mamachtaga for murder, and in 1794 he attempted to mediate the Whiskey Rebellion. The latter experience almost ruined him. Many believed that he identified too closely with the rebels, but he was exonerated later of any wrongdoing.²¹⁹ Nonetheless, he kept a low profile for the next five years, practiced law, and wrote two

²¹⁶ Philip Freneau published the *National Gazette*, which was designed to counter John Fenno's Federalist newspaper *The Gazette of the United States*. When the *National Gazette* shut down in 1793, Benjamin Bache's *General Advertiser* became the emerging Republican Party's national newspaper. Bache became more deeply and personally involved than Freneau had been in Republican efforts at political organization and electioneering. Philadelphia's Democratic Society provided Bache with a kind of halfway house en route to becoming a full-fledged Republican activist. Pasley, "Artful and Designing Men: Political Professionalism in the Early American Republic, 1775-1820", 254.

²¹⁷ Hogeland, 123. Also William Ellsworth Vincent. *Hugh Henry Brackenridge and the Rising Glory of America* (Frederick (MD): PublishAmerica, 2008), 89.

²¹⁸ Beck, 215-6.

²¹⁹ Hogeland, 260, and Vincent, 298.

more chapters to his novel, *Modern Chivalry*.²²⁰ Breckenridge campaigned actively for McKean in southwestern Pennsylvania, and his efforts were not overlooked by the new chief executive when the time came to dispense political favors. One of McKean's first appointments was that of Breckenridge to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, an assignment that required the new justice to move from Pittsburgh to Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Seeking to consolidate Republican power in Pittsburgh, Breckenridge lobbied McKean in 1800 to remove Federalist James Brison as the Prothonotary of Allegheny County and replace him with Republican John Gilkieson. McKean complied with Breckenridge's request, but Gilkieson was in poor health and Breckenridge encouraged McKean to appoint Tarleton Bates as Gilkieson's assistant. Bates accepted, but he soon learned that his job also required him to tend to his sickly boss. He complained bitterly to his brother Frederick that, "...he [Gilkieson] was and has been confined to his bed, so that I have the double duty of attending the office by day and of him by night." However, Tarleton also acknowledged, "My wages are good."²²¹ Bates would not play nursemaid for long - Gilkieson died on March 21 and nearly two weeks later on April 5 McKean appointed Tarleton Bates the county's third Prothonotary.²²² Thus, through political

²²⁰ *Modern Chivalry* was Breckenridge's five-part satirical novel about American politics and society in the late eighteenth century.

²²¹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, March 16, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO. Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, February 12, 1797, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²²² A total of thirty-five men served as the Prothonotary of Allegheny County between 1788 and 1992. Literally meaning "first clerk," the position was eliminated in the late 1990s, and its functions were absorbed into other departments. The job was an appointed position until 1840 when the voters of the

patronage forged on his own and not due to family connections, Tarleton Bates joined the growing ranks of non-elected public officials who would later become the foundation on which elected leaders would construct formal political parties.

The Prothonotary of Allegheny County was an appointed public official who managed all paperwork involved in civil court proceedings. Unlike civil courts that deal with crimes, civil courts handle controversies between individuals: business disputes, contract disagreements, personal injury, and property ownership. The position became a salaried position sometime during the mid-1850s, but in the early 1800s the Prothonotary earned his money by collecting a fee for every case filed with the court; thus, the size of his salary depended on the number of cases filed. When he was first appointed Tarleton proudly told his family, "...I have the pleasure of this day announcing...I have just received an appointment; that of Prothonotary of the County of Allegheny, which has been worth \$2,000 [annually] although the bounty is just divided, will continue to be worth about \$1,000 per annum..." The last statement is a reference to the legislature's decision in 1800 to reorganize western Pennsylvania. Prior to that time Allegheny County extended from the "Forks of the Ohio" all the way north to Lake Erie. In March 1800, however, the Pennsylvania legislature carved five new counties - Butler, Beaver, Venango, Crawford, and Erie - out of Allegheny. Most of the land was wooded and thinly populated, but the redistricting cut Tarleton's annual salary in half. Still, the

county elected Alfred Sutton. Through the years the position was held by a number of interesting characters including: James Butler (son of Maria Butler, whom Tarleton met on his trip to Natchez); John Birmingham, who also served as the Warden of the Western Penitentiary; and David Roberts, who met President Truman in 1848. When Truman was introduced to Roberts, the President reportedly said, "What the hell is a Prothonotary?" Michael Murphy, *Prothonotaries of Allegheny County, 1788 - 1993*. (Pittsburgh: Allegheny County, PA, 2002).

position paid well and more importantly it elevated Tarleton in the ranks of the Republican Party. Tarleton boasted to Frederick, “Till now my politics have injured me, [but] in this instance, they have been my greatest recommendation.”²²³ The last line is important because it shows that political power in Pittsburgh had shifted from the Federalists to the Republicans, even before Jefferson’s victory in late 1800. It also shows the existence of political patronage jobs in the early Republic.

Bates, like many Americans, was interested in politics, but in the past his interest had been general and theoretical. “Electioneering has run high here,” he told Frederick in 1798, “It has put frowns on the countenances of friends and produced jarring and distrust where amity and concord insisted.”²²⁴ Two years later and after his appointment, he claimed, “Our party I think is gaining much ground... [but] Without a majority in both houses, we cannot have electors, and without our electors Jefferson I fear cannot be elected. Our Feds here...will be nearly as much mortified at Adam’s election as Jefferson’s”²²⁵ The underline of the word “our” is Tarleton’s, and it indicates a sense of personal ownership and entitlement. It also shows awareness of formal political organization at the grass roots level. This wasn’t the first time that Bates identified himself or was identified as part of a political group. Maria Butler cautioned him against

²²³ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, April 17, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²²⁴ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, December 3, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²²⁵ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, August 17, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

belonging to a party that was "...determined to disunite and disorganize."²²⁶ But his appointment as the Prothonotary invested him fully in the success of Jefferson and the Republicans. As Election Day approached in 1800, Bates was more sanguine about Jefferson's chances, but he based his conclusion on facts: "The parties in Maryland and Jersey are making strenuous exertions in the fervor it is presumed that Jeffersonism will prevail as far as to obtain 5 electoral votes; in Jersey there will be all or none. There is little change in North Carolina. In Delaware, the change is considerable, but in Connecticut it is astonishing though true there is not yet a majority. Even in New Hampshire where it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a Democrat to receive office...Upon the whole, we expect a truly and genuinely federal lower house of Congress with the people's idol [Jefferson] at the helm."²²⁷ The efforts by Republican leadership at the national (Jefferson, Madison) and state (McKean) levels to create a network of loyal political operatives were bearing fruit.

Jefferson's success was important also for Thomas Bates at Belmont, but for personal reasons. He wanted Jefferson to appoint his son Frederick as his personal secretary. Stephen Ambrose describes Jefferson's appointment of Meriwether Lewis to that position in early 1801,²²⁸ but months earlier Thomas Bates and probably others were lobbying Jefferson to appoint someone else. "Though the prospect of Mr. Jefferson's election to the Presidency is at this time less flattering than heretofore," Thomas wrote

²²⁶ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, September 12, 1798, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²²⁷ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, September 21, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²²⁸ Ambrose, 59.

Frederick in late 1800, “I have not lost sight of the object [Frederick’s appointment]; am now inclosing copies of two papers [letters of reference] for your perusal...”²²⁹ Tarleton knew for months about his father’s plan, and he advised Frederick against overconfidence, “...you seem impressed with my idea of the Secretary[ship], [but] Father is too partial and has too little influence.”²³⁰ Ironically, it might have been Tarleton who delivered a letter from Jefferson to General Wilkinson that requested Meriwether Lewis for the position.

Thomas Jefferson was elected the nation’s third president when the House of Representatives voted him in on the thirty-sixth ballot. Tied in electoral votes with Aaron Burr, Jefferson’s victory was due in part to the efforts of anti-Burr forces led by Alexander Hamilton. Perhaps sensing the need for reconciliation, Jefferson in his inaugural address on March 4, 1801 said, “We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it.”²³¹ His victory was the culmination of years of political organizing, led at the top by Jefferson and James Madison, but executed at the grass-roots level by men like Tarleton Bates.

²²⁹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, February 11, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²³⁰ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, August 17, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO. On become Jefferson’s secretary.

²³¹ Malone, *Jefferson The President: First Term, 1801 – 1805*, 20.

Jefferson's election secured, Tarleton settled back into his new position and adopted hometown. The work of Prothonotary was relatively mundane, but it provided him with a title, a steady income, and, most importantly, continued access to elites at the state and local level. It also enabled him to repay Breckenridge for his appointment by hiring his son, Henry Marie, as Assistant Prothonotary.

As one of Pittsburgh's most eligible bachelors, Bates was invited to social events around town, including many sponsored by Federalist families like the Craigs and the Nevilles, who still had considerable influence in the area. Although a gentleman in their presence, Bates could not conceal his contempt for his hosts. "We're carrying on here an old game," he told Frederick. "The federal ladies in meekness and modesty still refuse or decline to visit newcomers, however respectable." He cited the example of two officials from the Bank of Philadelphia who came to town with their families to establish a new branch. They should have been welcomed to the community, Bates claimed, but instead were rebuffed because, "Our [Federalist] ladies are of too high origin, they have too pure blood, of ancestry flowing in their veins, to mix with any but patricians!" He added, "I fear we are fast becoming the reproach, the laughing stock of, if not the Union, of at least Pennsylvania."²³²

Bates was an emotional person, judging from his letters, and his antipathy for the Federalists might have surfaced on more than one occasion. This might explain why, despite his professional success, he was unable to court Emily Neville for whom he still

²³² Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, January 28, 1804, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

carried a torch. “O could you see her, could you gaze on and admire her,” he wrote to Frederick, “I measure no beauty but by her fact no accomplishment but by her merits.”²³³

During this time, Tarleton also associated with a group of local Republican leaders known as the “Clapboard Row Junto.”²³⁴ The name of the group reflects the demographic and political changes occurring in Pittsburgh at that time. The town’s first houses were made of logs laid horizontally and interlocked on the ends with notches. Log houses were easy to build and provided protection from the elements, but they were also very crude and did not comport with the town’s emergence from its frontier phase.²³⁵ Affluent merchants and politicians wanted homes that provided more than basic protection; they also wanted homes that were visual symbols of their success and that of their town.²³⁶ James O’Hara’s house was made of brick, but the preferred choice for Republican men was clapboard siding. Clapboards are thin strips of wood that are milled for width and thickness and secured horizontally on a house frame; sometimes

²³³ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, August 17, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²³⁴ A similar group existed at this time in Richmond Virginia, and its origin paralleled that of the Clapboard Row Junto. Richmond, like Pittsburgh, was a Federalist stronghold at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Also like Pittsburgh, its leading citizens were Revolutionary War veterans who were loyal to Washington and Hamilton. Seeking to increase Republican power, Virginia judge Spencer Roane started a Republican newspaper in 1804 named the *Richmond Enquirer* that competed locally with the Federalist *Gazette*. Roane recruited others including his brother-in-law, who was director of the state bank. The group was known by several names including the Essex Junto, the Richmond Party, and finally the Central Junto. Rex Beach, “Spender Roane and the Richmond Junto,” *William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine* 22 (January 1942): 1 – 17.

²³⁵ In Pittsburgh, rich people lived on Penn Street, which boasted ‘most of the fashionable residences’ and was ‘quiet, airy and clean in comparison with other parts (of the town).’ Not surprisingly, prosperity exacerbated the housing shortage. Wade, 206, 215.

²³⁶ Wade, 206. Bushman, 17-19, 132-33.

homeowners painted them off-white, another sign of gentile living.²³⁷ Clapboard-clad houses were cheaper to build and less pretentious than brick, and they allowed for more variety of design. Members of the Clapboard Row Junto were leaders of the local Republican Party. As such they developed plans and schemes for increasing the party's power. One of these schemes was to encourage and assist immigrants to become naturalized.²³⁸ Breckenridge introduced Bates to the group prior to his departure from Pittsburgh, and Bates brought in a young, Connecticut-born attorney named Henry Baldwin and his protégé Walter Forward. The three young Republicans were known as "The Great Triumvirate of Early Pittsburgh."²³⁹

Henry Baldwin ancestry was even more impressive than Tarleton's.²⁴⁰ He was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on January 14, 1780, the son of Michael and Theodora Wolcott Baldwin; he had illustrious family connections in American and Europe. In fact, he traced his ancestry as far back at the Norman Conquest. He graduated from Yale in 1797 and emigrated to Philadelphia to study law under Alexander J. Dallas. Dallas knew Henry's brother Abraham who had settled in Ohio several years earlier. Believing like Breckenridge that his opportunities in Philadelphia were limited, Baldwin moved west to

²³⁷ Bushman, 133-4.

²³⁸ Dahlinger, 128.

²³⁹ M.F. Taylor, 41.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. 37. According to Taylor, Henry Baldwin was "...the "Pride of Pittsburgh" and the "Idol of Pennsylvania" for the first forty-four years of the nineteenth century, (who) came to Pittsburgh in 1799 at the age of nineteen to begin his career as a lawyer, and rose to prominence as a representative of Pittsburgh and its vicinity in local, state, and national affairs. His cosmopolitan interests in law, manufacturing, tariff, internal improvements, and education made him one of the most distinguished leaders of western Pennsylvania in the early nineteenth century."

join his brother in Ohio, but for some unknown reason he remained in Pittsburgh. Perhaps he stayed after considering the opportunities offered by the bustling town. Nonetheless, Baldwin hung his shingle and began practicing law. His practice eventually took him beyond Allegheny County into all of Southwestern Pennsylvania and even into Erie County in the north. Henry Baldwin, much like Bates, was a young man on his own and away from home. Nearly seven years younger than Bates, Baldwin regarded the young Virginian as a friend, confidante, and political ally.

The third member of the Triumvirate was Walter Forward.²⁴¹ Like Baldwin, Forward was born in Connecticut on January 24th, 1786, the son of Samuel and Susannah Holcombe Forward. He grew up on a farm in Old Granby, Connecticut, but his family moved to Aurora, Ohio, in 1800 when Walter was about fourteen years old. Not content with the opportunities offered in Aurora, he packed a few belongings and traveled to Pittsburgh in 1803 with the goal of studying law. Baldwin took a liking to the seventeen-year-old and hired him as an assistant. Although very young, Forward possessed a keen intellect and had a knack for writing. Moreover, he was a staunch Republican and a supporter of Governor Thomas McKean.

McKean's first term (1799 – 1802) was relatively calm. During this time Bates continued to expand his social network; in August 1802, for example, he joined the local Masonic Lodge.²⁴² Bates and the Pennsylvania Republicans continued to bask in the

²⁴¹ Robert W. Ewing, "Hon. Walter Forward." *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 8 (April 1925): 78.

²⁴² Masonic lodges offered another venue for Republican men. According to Albrect Koschnik, Federalist's attacks on Masonry were triggered by a Republican takeover of many lodges in the late 1790s,

glow of Jefferson's first administration, and relations were generally positive among the disparate groups in the Party. The Louisiana Purchase, for example, was praised by most Republicans, to the chagrin of Federalists. "The Louisiana business," Tarleton told Frederick, "has put Federalism in its true colors – hypocrisy."²⁴³ Intraparty peace was not a small feat because Pennsylvania was the most diverse state in the Union.

Geographically it is divided in half by the Appalachian Mountains that for decades created a natural barrier between east-west communications and trade. Isolation from the eastern seaboard compelled Pittsburgh's merchants and its growing number of industrialists and manufacturers to look toward New Orleans as a trading partner. There were also cultural differences. Pittsburgh's residents were just as likely to have come from Virginia in the south as from Philadelphia in the east. Immigrant Germans and Scots were more likely to settle near Philadelphia than were Scotch-Irish who traversed the rugged countryside to Pittsburgh. However, these disparate groups found common cause in their hatred for the Federalists.²⁴⁴ They expressed that anger first in

not by the Masons' mode of association per se. Albrecht Koschnik, "The Democratic Societies of Philadelphia and the Limits of the American Public Sphere, Circa 1793-1795," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58 (July 2001): 628

²⁴³ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, November, 24, 1803, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁴⁴ The rift in the Pennsylvania Republican Party at the beginning of the nineteenth century has been analyzed by Harry M. Tinkcom in *Republicans and Federalists in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1950) and in *Republicans and Federalists in Pennsylvania: A Study in National Stimulus and Local Response* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1950); and extensively by Andrew Shankman in *Crucible of American Democracy: The Struggle to Fuse Egalitarianism & Capitalism in Jeffersonian Pennsylvania* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004); "Democracy in Pennsylvania: Political, Social, and Economic Arguments in the Jeffersonian party, 1790 – 1820." (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1997); and finally in "Malcontents and Tertium Quids: The Battle to Define Democracy in Jeffersonian Philadelphia." *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (Spring 1999).

1799 when they elected McKean and again in 1800 with Jefferson's election. However, once the common foe was defeated, the groups realized they wanted very different – and even irreconcilable – outcomes from the victory they had worked so hard to achieve.²⁴⁵

No one was more determined to reap the fruits of electoral victory than William Duane, the editor of the *Aurora*. Duane was the preeminent editor of his day and his newspaper set the standard for political journalism. Born in upstate New York of Irish parentage, Duane learned the printer's trade in Ireland and in 1787 went to Calcutta, India, where he edited the *Indian World*. His attacks on the local government resulted in his deportation and the confiscation of his property. Unable to secure redress in England, Duane moved to Philadelphia and joined Benjamin Franklin Bache in editing the *Aurora*. Upon Bache's death in 1798, Duane became the sole editor. Under Duane, the *Aurora* became the leading Jeffersonian newspaper of its day. His sharp criticisms of the Adams administration resulted in his arrest under both the Alien and Seditions Acts, but the charges were dismissed when Jefferson became President. Duane lost much of his influence when the federal government relocated from Philadelphia to Washington, DC, but he remained active in state politics. Duane hoped his political activity would catch the attention of Thomas Jefferson, but his politics proved too divisive for the third President.

Frustrated, Duane allied himself with other radicals like Dr. Michael Lieb, who shared many of Duane's opinions on government, the economy, and the court system of

²⁴⁵ Shankman and others have claimed that the unifying force during the late 1790s and into the early nineteenth century was the Republicans' fears that Federalism would make resurgence. When that no longer appeared likely, then Republicans, Shankman claimed, turned on each other.

Pennsylvania. They were supported by many in the countryside and within the artisan community in Philadelphia, those who felt betrayed by passage of the 1790 state constitution, which mirrored the federal constitution in many respects. Additionally, Duane, Lieb, and other radicals believed the state's legal system and many of its jurists had been corrupted under the existing constitution. Accordingly, they wanted a new constitution and a revamped legal system that reduced the number and power of the judges. Duane's influence was so pervasive in 1802 that moderate Republicans like Alexander Dallas feared for their political lives and for that of Thomas McKean. After McKean won a narrow victory in 1802 Duane and the other radicals pressed the Governor for their reforms. Eventually the radicals were challenged by a coalition of moderate Republicans and Federalists, whom the radicals derisively dubbed the *Tertium Quids*, which is Latin for "a third something." The Quids favored government that protected property rights and supported the development and diversification of the American domestic market.²⁴⁶ The political infighting occurring in Pennsylvania did not go unnoticed by Thomas Jefferson. "Pennsylvania," said Jefferson, "seems to have in its bowels a good deal of volcanic matter, and some explosion may be expected."²⁴⁷ Historian Andrew Shankman observed that the same energies used to defeat the Federalists were now being employed against one another.²⁴⁸ Personal attacks were

²⁴⁶ Shankman, 108-9.

²⁴⁷ Malone, *Jefferson The President: First Term, 1801 – 1805*, 440.

²⁴⁸ Shankman, 72-3.

played out daily in newspapers loyal to one side or the other, and the only thing that kept Federalists from reclaiming power was their own political decrepitude.

Back in Pittsburgh, Bates remained loyal both to McKean and to the moderate Republicans. McKean's reelection in 1802 guaranteed Bates three more years as the Prothonotary, and he became more involved in partisan politics while performing the duties of his appointed office. Like James Beckley, Alexander Dallas, Benjamin Bache, and dozens of others, Bates made a living from politics, and his career was tied to that of an elected official. He took his political duties seriously. As early as 1801, for example, he recorded in his journal a conversation with a local Republican who contemplated running for state office. The potential candidate bitterly complained to Bates that a member of the Clapboard Row Junto, in an effort to split the party, was spreading false rumors that he (the candidate) was being supported by the Federalists. "He said it is all a damned lie," Bates wrote, "...and he pledged that he was firmly resolved to support...and remain with the Republicans."²⁴⁹ Bates also kept lists of Pennsylvania politicians that included their party affiliation ("R" for Republican and "F" for Federalist), their counties, and finally the years they were scheduled to "go out" of office. Additionally, he kept track of Presidential appointments made by Thomas Jefferson. He recorded the following in his notebook; William Duane, who believed Jefferson should have replaced all Federalists with Republicans, would not have been surprised with Bates figures:²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, February 25, 1801, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁵⁰ Tarleton Bates Journal. Jefferson irritated Duane and other radical Republicans with his refusal to remove all Federalists from public office. However, Kim Tousley Philips believed Jefferson's

There are in the United States offices in the gift of the President	203
Of which Mr. Jefferson found Democratic	32
Removed without special cause	29

Everything in life was not serious for Tarleton; he could also have fun with his new career. For example, he loved to bet – perhaps a vice he learned on his family’s plantation in Virginia – and one of his favorite pastimes was betting on the outcome of elections. In April 1803, he wagered one hundred dollars that, “Mr. Jefferson will have at next election for President at least thirty votes above the Federal candidate”²⁵¹ What’s important here is Tarleton Bates joined the ranks of a new category of partisan, public officials who were not elected. Their continued loyalty was rewarded with political favors and government offices. Together they created the foundation of organized political parties.

During this time Tarleton also became interested in buying land, not only like his Federalist sponsors Isaac Craig and James O’Hara, but also like prominent Republicans such as Hugh Henry Breckenridge and William Findley. He focused his attention on land near the Forks. “I have given \$1,030 cash for twenty acres of land in Grant’s Hill in sight of the Borough,” he boasted to Frederick in January 1804. He also purchased former “donation” land including, “two hundred acres...for as many dollars with a little

controversial decision was grounded on sound statesmanship. “There were other highly influential Republicans (besides William Duane)” Philips wrote, “who feared removals from office and the permanent disaffection of Federalist voters as a threat to national safety. A.J Dallas thought that the party should hold wide the ‘door of reconciliation’ to the opposition, ‘lest the parties...continue almost equally to divide the nation. In that event, he believed, ‘every Federalist will become a Conspirator; every Republican a tyrant; and each general election will involve the hazard of a civil war.’ Kim Tousley, “William Duane, Revolutionary Editor.” (Ph.D diss, University of California, Berkley, 1968), 144.

²⁵¹ Tarleton Bates Journal

expense of brokerage.” Finally, he acquired “seven acres of hill and one and one-half acres of bottom below Robinson’s on the Allegheny River nearly opposite its confluence with the Ohio. These two last I consider good bargains.”²⁵² Bates was by no means a wealthy man, but he had saved enough to invest in the town’s potential. With good timing and some luck, he hoped to amass a small fortune and be in a position to provide more for himself and his family at Belmont, who continued to struggle financially. He was not an industrialist like Craig and O’Hara, but like them he recognized that political power was linked with wealth.²⁵³ Several years earlier, he told his brother Richard that poverty was not a virtue and that "...most of us are content to take upon ourselves the burden of riches..."²⁵⁴

Bates’ financial position was stable so long as McKean remained Pennsylvania’s governor. Between late 1802 and early 1805, McKean successfully resisted Duane and

²⁵² Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, January 28, 1804, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO. Donation lands were grants awarded to Pennsylvania’s Revolutionary War veterans. The Federal government during the Revolution was extremely weak and depended entirely on the cooperation of the states. It could levy taxes, but it had no power to collect them. States were required to pay their troops out of state funds. The troops of the Pennsylvania line were paid in continental currency, which decreased or depreciated in value as the war progressed. This depreciation in the value of the soldiers’ pay naturally caused considerable discontent and dissatisfaction, which at times approached mutiny. To remedy this condition and to offer a further inducement to the officers and men in the Pennsylvania line to continue in the service, the legislature promised a bonus or *donation* of public lands at the close of the war to all who continued in the service. John E. Winner “The Depreciation and Donation Lands.” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 8 (January 1925).

²⁵³ According to historian Robert Harper, western Pennsylvania at this time was governed by men drawn from the highest levels of the class structure. Economic leadership and status - as indicated by such factors as total taxable wealth, landholdings and speculation, large herds of livestock, slaves, mills or industry - and political leadership - as indicated by the number and level of offices and years of service - were so closely related that one can meaningfully talk of a wealthy governing class dominating the class structure and political life of western Pennsylvania. “The Class Structure of Western Pennsylvania in the late Eighteenth Century,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1969).

²⁵⁴ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, April 17, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

the party radicals. In 1805, however, radical Republicans nominated Pennsylvania Congressman Simon Snyder for governor. McKean was supported by the Quids. Backed by Duane and his newspaper, Snyder was a formidable opponent, and Bates and other moderates knew that victory was dependent on turning out the vote. “I have made a bet of \$200,” he told Frederick in July of 1805, “My calculation is on a majority of at least 10,000 [votes] for McKean.” In the next sentence, he recognized the importance of a McKean win; “If I lose my money I shall also lose my office.”²⁵⁵ Bates was more confident in September. “McKean will be elected by between 10,000 and 20,000 [votes].” The next sentence was prophetic: “I ordered the *Tree* to be set to you, and have taken the *Freeman’s Journal* instead of the *Aurora*.”²⁵⁶

The *Tree* in question was the *Tree of Liberty*, Pittsburgh’s second newspaper, and Bates’ interest in it marked a significant step forward in his political evolution. The town’s first paper was the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, which also had the distinction of being the first newspaper published west of the Alleghenies. Other newspapers followed in Greensburg, Uniontown, and Meadville, Pennsylvania, but the *Gazette* was the leader and its editor John Scull was an important figure in Pittsburgh politics. Scull was born in 1765, the son of Quaker parents. He owned a newspaper in Philadelphia, but Hugh Henry Breckenridge in 1786 coaxed him west to Pittsburgh where Breckenridge was busy promoting the town to anyone who would listen. With financial assistance from

²⁵⁵ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, July 22, 1805, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁵⁶ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, September 14, 1805, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

Breckenridge, Scull and his partner John Hall published their first newspaper on July 29, 1786, on a press purchased from the *Philadelphia Federal Gazette*. In 1794 Scull became the town's postmaster, a position that paid him a steady salary in addition to giving him liberal franking privileges.²⁵⁷ Additionally, he had a lucrative printing business on the side, printing everything from pamphlets, almanacs, books, and, in 1793, Breckenridge's third volume of *Modern Chivalry*.

During this period, Scull and other newspaper editors were regarded as artisans.²⁵⁸ The physical demands of newspaper publishing were similar to those of a cooper or blacksmith. Printing a newspaper took nearly ten hours of backbreaking work to print seven hundred copies, and delivering them took an equal amount of stamina and strength. Scull and other editors also had difficulty obtaining paper and being paid. The construction of a paper mill in nearby Fayette County [Pennsylvania] solved the paper shortage, but the lack of specie forced editors to accept payment in the forms of pelts, wheat, corn, barley, and whiskey.²⁵⁹ In the minds of Federalist leaders, these factors prevented newspaper editors from rising above artisan status. The thinking was this: because popular virtue was required for the survival of a republic and newspaper editors

²⁵⁷ Tarleton Bates and his brothers Frederick, Richard and Fleming all served as postmasters at one time or another. The franking privileges were valuable because, as Marion Morse Davis explained, "The delivery of letters was always paid by the recipient of the letter, not the sender." The postmaster, on the other hand, was granted free franking or postage privileges. Davis adds that travelers typically avoided telling anyone of their trip for fear of being laden down with mail. "The Bates Boys on the Western Waters," Part 1, page 11.

²⁵⁸ Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 24-33.

²⁵⁹ J. C. Andrews, *Pittsburgh's Post-Gazette: "The First Newspaper West of the Alleghenies"* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1936), 45.

lacked the intellectual and material independence to exercise virtue, it thus followed they would never become gentlemen. This made them susceptible to charlatans and demagogues.²⁶⁰ Scull's *Gazette* did not deviate from the formula of a late-eighteenth-century Federalist newspaper. It contained European news at least four to seven months old, local gossip, advertisements, and letters to the editor from personages like "Vindex," "Observer," and "Farmer." He would occasionally include fiction, but the *Gazette* and other Federalist newspapers were generally apolitical up to the end of the 1790s.²⁶¹ Until then Federalist politicians did not believe it was necessary to appeal to a broader audience. They believed that a small core of enlightened leaders was sufficient to help the general public make informed political decisions.

However, the newspaper business was evolving. The Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 was the first internal threat to the new Republic, and in addition to inciting farmers to revolt, the tax on distilled spirits also raised the ire of men who rejected outright Hamilton's economic and financial plans. Many were pro-Jefferson printers who rejected the artisan label and wanted to broadcast their political opinions to a wider audience. Many others were elected officeholders who looked for a way to espouse their own brand of anti-Hamilton and pro-Jefferson politics. For the former group, newspapers provided a means to escape artisan status and become gentlemen; for the latter, they offered a vehicle to articulate political positions discretely and without participating in the unseemly practice of campaigning. Thus, the synergy between the groups simultaneously

²⁶⁰ Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 123.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 130.

democratized politics while it threatened the incumbent government. Washington's vision for America was a citizenry who could put aside personal and group goals and prejudices for the common good. The emergence of anti-Federalist newspapers might have been consistent with Madison's Federalist 10, but for Washington and most Federalists it was the beginning of organized political opposition that would result in the creation of permanent political factions or parties. Newspaper editors played a prominent role in that evolution.

Scull and Breckenridge remained on friendly terms despite their political differences through the 1780s and most of the 1790s. Breckenridge often contributed articles and editorials for the *Gazette* under various pseudonyms. However, the relationship changed in 1798 when the two men had a falling out over Scull's support for the Alien and Sedition Acts. Breckenridge, who once had lured Scull to Pittsburgh, now wooed a young editor named John Israel who was living in Washington, Pennsylvania, to move to Pittsburgh to start a pro-Jefferson newspaper. Israel was among the new breed of newspaper editors. Trained like Scull to be a printer, Israel was an educated and partisan firebrand who embraced Jeffersonian Democracy and used his newspaper, *The Herald of Liberty*, to articulate his pro-Jefferson brand of politics. Like William Duane in Philadelphia, Israel railed against the Federalists for their policies and criticized them for their cultural and social exclusivity. John Adams and Alexander Hamilton were particular targets for Israel's criticism, and in Pittsburgh he was prepared to level the same type of invective against the icons of local Federalism: John Neville, Isaac Craig, and, his fellow editor John Scull.

On August 25, 1800, John Israel published in Pittsburgh the first edition of the *Tree of Liberty*, and Tarleton proclaimed to Frederick, ““Last Saturday, the *Tree of Liberty*...was planted in Pittsburgh...It will keep fanned the mighty flame of party spirit that consumes us.”²⁶² Israel and Breckenridge lost no time attacking Scull in addition to local Federalists like the Nevilles. The *Tree of Liberty* under Israel was an effective mouthpiece for Republican opinions during Jefferson’s first administration. For the next four years, Israel and Scull hurled barbs and insults against each other. Israel won most of the battles, assisted by the editorial input of Hugh Henry Breckenridge. Pittsburgh Federalists accused Israel and editors like him of being rabble-rousers, but Israel defended his actions in an 1801 editorial. In it he wrote, “...we can assure our friends that the same zeal which has been displayed in our exertions to assist in the achievement of the republican ascendancy shall be continued to its support.”²⁶³ Bates read both newspapers, but he favored the *Tree* and sent copies of it to Frederick who was living in Detroit.

Israel decided sometime in 1805 to sell the *Tree of Liberty* and leave Pittsburgh. The daily grind of publishing Republican newspapers in two towns on the Pennsylvania frontier had worn him out, and he yearned for a simpler life working as the Washington County Recorder, a position he held before coming to Pittsburgh. In a relatively short period of time, Israel successfully created a Republican counterweight to Scull’s pro-Federalist *Gazette* and contributed to electing McKean to two terms as governor. Also,

²⁶² Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, August 17, 1800, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁶³ *The Tree of Liberty*, August 15, 1801.

he provided a journalistic outlet for Breckenridge and members of Pittsburgh's Republican community, including the Pittsburgh Triumvirate of Henry Baldwin, Walter Forward, and Tarleton Bates. Finally, his paper, like other Republican newspapers, served as an organizing arm for the party, and Israel, like Duane in Philadelphia, played an important leadership role. A great deal had been accomplished since Jefferson's election in 1800 to organize the Republicans, but political candidates were still pretty much on their own. This was undoubtedly not lost on Triumvirate members, and they were receptive to Israel's offer to sell the paper to them. After all, McKean was up for reelection one last time in October 1805, and Bates knew his financial and political fortunes depended on retaining him in the Executive Mansion. Additionally, Bates by now realized newspaper ownership would elevate him higher in the Party, perhaps alongside powerful men like William Duane, though by now Tarleton believed the *Aurora* editor was bound for "perdition."²⁶⁴

Before the deal was consummated, however, a twenty-year-old protégé of William Duane arrived in Pittsburgh. His name was Ephraim Pentland and his mission was to publish a radical Republican newspaper that would challenge the moderate *Tree of Liberty* for leadership of the local Republican Party. Pentland had worked for Duane at the *Aurora* and was described by many as "arrogant and irascible." He was fiercely dedicated to Simon Snyder and his candidacy for governor and was equally unapologetic about his political radicalism. By 1805 it became clear that the Federalists would not challenge Pennsylvania Republicans. There were a few in the legislature, but most

²⁶⁴ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, September 14, 1805, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

Federalists had been demoralized and frustrated by nearly six years of Republican dominance, and therefore they posed no real threat on election day. However, Federalists still retained some clout in several eastern counties and many had been courted successfully by moderate Republicans to form the Quids that supported McKean. Duane recognized this and among other actions he dispatched Pentland to Pittsburgh to help shore the radical base of the party. Therefore, for Pentland and the other radicals, their real target was McKean and not the Federalist candidate James Ross, and their political goal was the election of Simon Snyder to the governorship.

Shortly after launching the *Commonwealth*, Pentland attacked Israel and Bates as leaders of the moderate Republican faction. He referred to the former as an “old goat,” although the editor at the *Tree* was only in his late twenties. Pentland went after Bates by questioning his virility. Referring to him in print as “Master Bates,” Pentland mocked Tarleton for his “simpering sweetness” and for serving as a domestic (“clerk and butler”) when he lived in James O’Hara’s household. Pentland also ridiculed Tarleton’s participation in the 1794 Whisky Rebellion: “Mr. Bates,” Pentland sneered, “...had scarcely put on his first breeches when General Burgoyne was captured at Saratoga,”²⁶⁵ but, Pentland continued, “it appears the *brave lad* actually did march...to attack liberty poles and disperse the whiskey boys.”²⁶⁶ Bates was undoubtedly aware of these insults, but he took no action during the Fall of 1805. He had more important things to occupy his time. McKean’s victory was not a certainty, so he and other moderates doubled their

²⁶⁵ Major General John Burgoyne was defeated and captured at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777. Tarleton Bates would have been three years old at the time.

²⁶⁶ *The Commonwealth*, September 5, 1805.

efforts to turn out the vote on election day. More than likely, Bates, Baldwin, and others convinced Israel to remain at the helm of the *Tree of Liberty* until after the election.

There would be time later to deal with Ephraim Pentland.

The strategy paid off. Thomas McKean defeated Simon Snyder by a mere five thousand votes. Bates was elated and wrote to Frederick, “We have carried McKean by...nearly the same number as in 1799. *The Feds acted nobly* [italics added]. I believe we will have a majority in both (Pennsylvania) houses, but certainly in the lower. *This saves Pennsylvania, saves the Union* [italics added] - We will probably have...a Bank next spring, which will add something to our prospects.” Bates acknowledgement that McKean’s election depended on Federalist support is another example of his political pragmatism. Despite his close personal relationship with the Craigs, Nevilles, and O’Haras, Bates was a staunch anti-Federalist. However, like Thomas McKean, Alexander Dallas, and Hugh Henry Breckenridge, he was not above seeking help from the hated Federalists when it was necessary. Bates believed the coalition of Duane’s city democrats and Snyder’s country republicans was dangerous for the state and the nation [“This saves Pennsylvania...saves the Union”]²⁶⁷. McKean depended on grass roots men like Bates to turn out the vote, and Bates relied upon McKean for continued employment. If a temporary alliance was required to win, then that was the strategy. The political

²⁶⁷ Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 124. Like Shankman, Wilentz explodes the notion of Jeffersonian homogeneity. Shankman believes politicians like Snyder formed the core of the Whig Party. Wilentz is less specific and argues the achievements of Snyder and others were limited (125). However, both historians cite what Wilentz refers to as “persistent divisions within American politics at the state as well as the national level (125).

horse-trading continued in 1807 when all Republican factions (Quids, radicals, and Snyder's country party) united to defeat a resurgent Federalist party.²⁶⁸

Bates' euphoria over McKean's re-election was tempered by Pentland's continual barbs in the *Commonwealth* and by problems with his brother James. In 1802 Tarleton brought James from Virginia to attend school in Pittsburgh. In 1805 James was attending Yale, Henry Baldwin's college, and was spending money like "...an extravagant dog. He has expended...at the rate of \$570 a year besides traveling expenses!!!" Frustrated and feeling a financial pinch in the wake of losing business because of legislative redistricting, he complained to Frederick, "...You are poor, as am I. He is a heavy tax and will continue for four or five years more. It can't be helped."²⁶⁹ But he added, "I wish you could get subscribers for the *Tree of Liberty*; it is a great object to make it a leading paper."²⁷⁰ Two months later on December 4, Ephraim Pentland reported in the *Commonwealth*, "We understand, from good authority, that Israel has sold the...*Tree of Liberty* to Messrs. Bates & Baldwin – and – that - Forward, a young student of morality²⁷¹ from Connecticut, and who for three months preceding the last election, in company with a spurious branch of the Brackenridge family, employed his leisure hours

²⁶⁸ Wilentz, 125; Shankman, 180 – 181.

²⁶⁹ Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, October 17, 1805, The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ A "student of morality" was slang for a lawyer.

in pasting obscene caricatures on the market house in this borough, will shortly commence his editorial career, immediately under the patronage of these gentlemen."²⁷²

At the same time Bates looked forward to another McKean term and Pentland considered another strategy for discrediting the Prothonotary and his cohorts a young Irishman named Thomas Stewart was working with his partner named Robinson in their dry goods store. Stewart's parents came to America sometime in the mid-eighteenth century amid the last wave of immigrants from the Ulster Plantation in Northern Ireland.²⁷³ Unlike Bates who corresponded regularly with members of his family, Stewart did not leave a paper trail. Nonetheless, we can speculate upon his early life based on what we know about the "Ulstermen." His family disembarked in either Philadelphia or Baltimore, where they initially lived among other Irish immigrants. The Ulster-Irish, who later would be called Scotch-Irish because of their Scottish roots, moved away from the eastern seaboard and settled in western Virginia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Stewart eventually migrated to Pittsburgh where he lived in the Coal Hill section of town.²⁷⁴ Living on the frontier was demanding, but the Ulstermen found it

²⁷² *Commonwealth, December 4, 1805*

²⁷³ Immigration from Northern or Ulster Ireland is analyzed by James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962) and David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Leyburn and Fischer state the first wave began in 1717 and continued for nearly six decades. Fischer argues that the motives for migrating were "fundamentally unlike those of New England Puritans, Delaware Quakers, and even Virginia cavaliers. Among the North Britons (including the Ulstermen), there was no talk of hold experiments, or cities on a hill. These new emigrants came mainly in search of material betterment." Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 611.

²⁷⁴ The dominant social groups in Pittsburgh in 1790 were English (43%), Scotch-Irish at (36%), and Germans at 4%. The population consisted of "frontiersmen, Indian traders, trappers, and desperate men anxious to elude the law, armies followers, half-breed Indians, and polished and educated gentlemen from families like Butlers, O'Hara's, Craigs, Wilkins, and Stevenson." Beck, 212.

to their liking, much as their ancestors preferred the Ulster Plantation in Northern Ireland over their previous home in the Scottish Lowlands, where living conditions were primitive. On the frontier, many Irish gravitated to farming, but Stewart was not interested in being a farmer. Instead, he preferred like Tarleton Bates to work in town. Lacking sufficient capital to own his own business, he partnered with Robinson, who perhaps also needed help. Although success depended on his ability to service the public, owning a business also gave him a measure of independence. If the success of a republic depended on individual virtue and if virtue were dependent upon freedom of action and thought, then Thomas Stewart reasoned he was a republican man.

Stewart was driven by other factors as well. As a merchant in early nineteenth century America, he realized success would be measured by the amount of money he made. Undoubtedly, he looked around at his competition and saw merchants who did well and others who did poorly; he was determined to be part of the former group. Without knowing it, he was a willing participant in the market revolution that was beginning to change American society. Any loss of personal prestige might be disastrous to his business. Stewart was influenced also by non-economic factors. As the son of Presbyterian minister, he was taught at an early age to distinguish between right and wrong, and he developed a "Presbyterian conscience" that compelled him to stand firm on principles, without qualification or variation. He learned that compromise was evil and that yielding a point, whether for the sake of politeness or to attain a larger end, reflected a character flaw.²⁷⁵ His religion also introduced and reinforced in him the

²⁷⁵ Leyburn, 291.

concepts of rank and social class, but like other Ulstermen he believed deeply that the United States offered him and other republican men an opportunity to succeed based on their abilities. Tarleton Bates' sense of honor grew out of his Virginia heritage, but Stewart's came from a combination of hardheaded economic survival and his religious background.

The impending clash between Bates and Stewart paralleled that between radical and moderate factions of the Republican Party that extended from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. Jefferson's victory in 1800 and his impassioned inaugural address were inadequate to keep his party from fracturing along ideological lines. With no natural political foe, the Republicans turned inward and attacked one another because moderates and radicals each regarded themselves as the party's true standard bearers. Because the party lacked a formal structure, newspaper editors became de facto party chairman and they wielded considerable power to sway public opinion. Tarleton Bates and his associates Baldwin and Forward confidently cast their lot with the moderates, and they regarded ownership of the *Tree of Liberty* as a way to voice their Republican beliefs. Ephraim Pentland believed in the radical cause and published his *Commonwealth* newspaper to espouse that political philosophy. The two sides were on a collision course that would not be settled in either the courts or editorial pages of their newspapers.

CHAPTER FIVE

“FIRE! ONE, TWO, THREE, STOP!”

He was insulted in the grossest possible manner, and accepted, what my friend considered a slight acknowledgement – that he was entitled to be treated as a Gentleman.

Tarleton Bates to Frederick Bates, December 1803,
Referring to a disagreement with William Christie, a Pittsburgh merchant

Tarleton Bates had enjoyed five years in office through his support for Governor Thomas McKean. McKean’s reelection in 1805 guaranteed Bates’ job through 1808. Additionally, Bates continued his relationship with Hugh Henry Breckenridge and befriended newcomers Henry Baldwin and Walter Forward, with whom Bates eventually would take over Pittsburgh’s moderate Republican newspaper, *The Tree of Liberty*. His professional life was enhanced further by his relationship with the Clapboard Row Junto, a group of prominent Republicans in Pittsburgh. Bates now made a living at politics like a growing number of other men. His personal life also showed signs of improvement, despite his father’s death in 1805.

All Bates had worked for, however, was jeopardized by a serious rift in the Pennsylvania Republican Party. Because the party had no formal structure *Aurora* editor William Duane assumed a leadership role, and in 1805 he dispatched Ephraim Pentland to Pittsburgh. Pentland’s mission was to publish a newspaper that was sympathetic to the radical cause. It was only a matter of time before the moderate Bates and the radical Pentland clashed. Political feuds like the one brewing between these two men occurred

often during this period, fueled by the personal nature of early politics and sharpened by changing concepts of manhood and masculinity. Many of these personal feuds resulted in duels of honor as described in the opening chapter. There are numerous accounts of duels fought by notables like Alexander Hamilton, Andrew Jackson, and William Crawford. Seconds, bystanders, and professional historians have chronicled in painstaking detail every aspect of their affairs of honor. However, this is only one eyewitness account and a newspaper article about the duel between Bates and Thomas Stewart. Hence the following recreation of event is as they might have occurred based on available records and similar duels fought at that time.

Bates and Stewart prepared themselves while their seconds readied the dueling grounds by removing small brush from the area, pacing off the required distance between the shooters, and marking the shooting positions with wooden pegs. Off to the side, the physician made ready what medical supplies – mainly bandages and tourniquets – he had carried on the boat trip. When the seconds finished with their preparatory work, Bates found himself standing about thirty feet, or ten paces, from where Thomas Stewart fumbled with the grip on his heavy pistol. Adrenaline was surging through the veins of the duelists as they hunched over slightly to protect themselves from the numbing effects of the sub-freezing wind. Bates was particularly careful to avoid any movements that might be misinterpreted by Stewart or disrupt the tricky firing mechanism of his weapon. Looking in the direction of the physician, he noticed a scrolled newspaper the doctor had used to secure his medical supplies. The sight of the newspaper made him remember the

rush of events that had led him to this cold and desolate field alongside the frozen Monongahela River.

McKean's gubernatorial win had enraged Ephraim Pentland at the *Commonwealth*. He decided that if he could not defeat the leader of the moderate Republicans, then he would topple those who supported him at the local level, namely the new ownership at the *Tree of Liberty*. Pentland's strategy was the type of bare-knuckle, partisan politics Washington feared would destroy the republic. In the December 4 issue of the *Commonwealth*, Pentland characterized Forward, Bates, and Baldwin as "a spurious branch of the Breckenridge family."²⁷⁶ On Christmas Day Pentland editorialized, "The *Tree*...is the product of two of the most abandoned political miscreants [i.e. Bates and Baldwin] that ever disgraced the State—despicable sycophants. Both have been caned and kicked and excluded with disdain from Federal Society, yet like spaniels they lick the foot and court the favor of those inhospitable and despotic wretches."²⁷⁷

These charges infuriated Bates who felt Pentland's goal was to eliminate him as a political rival by goading him to challenge Pentland to a duel, an act that would have cost him the job as Prothonotary.²⁷⁸ This was something Bates could ill afford either financially or socially. Instead of reaching for a dueling pistol, Bates purchased a "cow skin" or rawhide whip and waited for the opportune time to teach Pentland a lesson. A

²⁷⁶ *Commonwealth*, Dec 4, 1805.

²⁷⁷ *Commonwealth*, Dec 25, 1805

²⁷⁸ Pennsylvania state law stated that office holders risked fine and loss of public office for dueling, planning to duel, or participating in a duel as a second.

week later on January 2 when Bates saw Pentland walking alone at night through Market Square in Pittsburgh. Bates was accompanied by Henry Baldwin and Steele Semple who said later, "We heard three strokes of a cow skin, and saw Pentland run across the street..." Rather than defend himself, Pentland retreated to the local constable who summarily ignored his complaint. More humiliated than hurt by the beating, Pentland wrote a personal note to Bates, "Your assassin-like attack on me this evening is perfectly in character; and is cowardly, dastardly and mean," and he reported later in the *Commonwealth* that "...the editor of this paper was attacked in a most outrageous manner by Tarleton Bates...in company with some persons."²⁷⁹

Despite Pentland's angry words, Bates refused to take the bait and on January 4 responded to Pentland in an editorial published in the *Tree of Liberty*. Referring to Pentland as "too pitiful for anything but a cow skin notice... and too recreant even to resent that," Bates accused the *Commonwealth* editor of "[consistent] slander and abuse of a private as well as a public nature," and characterized himself as the wronged party who was left with, "...no alternative but chastisement." Pentland was a schemer, according to Bates, who conspired with others to force the Prothonotary into a duel. Finally, Bates explained that he had acted alone on January 2. Pentland, Bates claimed, was "...like one of Shakespeare's heroes; his fears have converted a cow skin into a stiletto; a single arm into a host of "six or eight gentlemen."²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ *Commonwealth*, Dec 7, 1805.

²⁸⁰ *Tree of Liberty*, January 4, 1806.

The entire affair might have ended here, but the conclusion of Bates' editorial would prove to be his undoing. He acknowledged a visit from an acquaintance of Pentland on Friday, January 3. Apparently, this person demanded an apology for the events of the previous evening. According to this person, Pentland was due "...the satisfaction of a gentleman." Bates was incredulous; who was this upstart to demand an apology? Had it not been Bates, as the true gentleman, who exhibited self-restraint and indifference toward Pentland, a pathetic inferior? "Pentland is no gentleman," Bates angrily told the friend, "because a gentleman would not have fled under the smart of the cow skin and appealed to the civil authority."²⁸¹ Bates went on that that Pentland's cowardly actions confirmed what he had suspected all along: Pentland was a fraud as a gentleman. Both men might be journalists, but that is all Pentland did in contrast to Bates who was an established and respected public figure in town. Bates regarded Pentland as his social inferior. Discouraged about failing to get an apology out of Bates, Pentland's friend departed for home. That evening placards were seen posted in Pittsburgh proclaiming Bates to be "coward and a poltroon." Bates did not need to look far for the perpetrator of this "posting"; he knew Pentland was behind the latest outrage.²⁸²

²⁸¹ Paraphrased from Bates' January 4 article in the *Tree of Liberty*.

²⁸² "Posting" was uniquely American, and it might have had a lot to do with the nation's relatively high literacy rate. To "post" an opponent meant to call him out in a public manner. Gentleman recognized that postings were one of the steps in the journey from insult to the dueling grounds. When someone proffered an insult but refused a challenge, the offended party was entitled by custom to "post" his attacker in a broadside, newspaper article, or placard hung in a public place. The posting denounced the other person as a coward, poltroon, liar, rascal, and assortment of insults. Words like this demanded an immediate challenge because they struck at the core elements of manliness and gentility. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 121-3. Cochran, 20-1.

The acquaintance in question was none other than Thomas Stewart to whom Pentland turned when two other friends declined to visit Bates. Stewart's relationship with Pentland is unclear. The most likely scenario is they met either in a public place like a tavern or through a common friend. Because of competition both men needed to be among the public on a regular basis either selling their opinions of their products. It is also likely that Pentland patronized the dry-goods store Stewart owned with Mr. Robinson; it is certain that Stewart read the *Commonwealth*. Pentland and Stewart fumed when they read Bates' editorial the next day, specifically the final few lines that particularly irked Stewart. Without identifying Stewart by name, Bates wrote, "the bearer of his [Pentland's] challenge was ignorant of the circumstances, *for no gentleman knowing them could be the bearer of such a message* (emphasis added) from such a man, and if I had no more respect for him than for his friend, I should treat him as his friend had been treated."²⁸³ Bates concluded by quoting Franklin that "the licentiousness of the press should be corrected by the liberty of the cudgel."²⁸⁴

It is difficult nowadays to imagine how that seemingly innocuous statement, "*for no gentleman knowing them could be the bearer of such a message,*" could be regarded as an insult, but that is exactly how it was interpreted by Stewart. In his mind, Bates had accused him of being either a willing accomplice or an ignorant dupe. Moreover, by stating, "I should treat him as his friend had been treated," Bates intimated that Stewart like Pentland was also a candidate for a cow skin whipping. It did not matter that Stewart

²⁸³ *Tree of Liberty*, January 4, 1806.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

was not identified in the article by name; Pittsburgh was a small town and word would get around quickly. Most likely egged on by Pentland and other radical Republicans, Stewart believed that he needed to act quickly. He turned to Pentland for advice. Bates had refused Pentland's challenge on the grounds that Pentland, who was only a newspaper editor, was a social inferior. Stewart, on the other hand, believed he was as entitled as Bates to claim gentlemanly status, and he asked himself and others what Bates had done that would make him believe he was superior to others. Absolutely nothing, Stewart believed, and he had reasons for feeling this way.

By 1806 the Indian traders and government contractors who had contributed to the town's early development had been largely superseded. They were replaced by a generation of merchants who, like Thomas Stewart, sold both to westbound travelers passing through Pittsburgh and to the local market, which by now was demanding a greater variety of consumer goods. Certainly the demand was not as great as in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, but it was significant compared to what it had been in the 1790s. In 1802 Pittsburgh's merchants sold a variety of goods, including shoes, brushes, cabinets, chairs, candles, clocks and watches, cloth, hats, pottery, and glass, in addition to the standard fare of nails, pumps, saddles, wagons, coaches, scythes, sickles, and other tools.²⁸⁵ Many merchants sold products that were manufactured in their workshops with

²⁸⁵ *Cramer's Pittsburgh Almanac*, 1802. Zadok Cramer was born in New Jersey in 1773, one year before Tarleton Bates was born in Virginia. Cramer is best known as an author and observer of the times. Ironically, his career and Bates intersected when Prothonotary Gilkieson died in 1800. In addition to being the Prothonotary Gilkieson also owned a bookstore. Cramer purchased the business from Hugh Henry Breckenridge who settled Gilkieson's estate. In the same way the *Tree of Liberty* provided Bates with a tool to espouse his republican beliefs, the bookstore enabled Cramer to publish and sell books to the general public. His most famous publications were his *Almanacs* and *Navigators*. The *Navigator* was the

hired labor. Other shopkeepers were still required to ship things from the East over the Alleghenies. The rapid business growth had the effect of shifting power from the Revolutionary War generation to the merchant-manufacturers. Historian Richard Wade notes that local businessmen acquired greater political power in direct relation to the success of their businesses. In Pittsburgh the effects of creeping urbanization demanded that local leaders take a more hands-on approach to governing, which included: regulating local markets; cleaning, repairing and paving streets; removal of nuisances; and providing water, lighting, and safety in the form of police and fire departments.²⁸⁶ The merchant-manufacturers were simply better prepared to deal with these challenges than the earlier generation.

Thomas Stewart and others like him could point to his membership in the civic-commercial class and claim they had as much right as Tarleton Bates to be considered as a gentleman. For one thing, Stewart was not a political appointee who owed his job to the capriciousness of an elected public official. On the contrary, he was an independent businessman who was required to compete for business on a daily basis with other, like-minded, self-made businessmen. He did not have the same stature as James O'Hara and Isaac Craig, but like other Americans he embraced the belief that hard work would pay off one day.²⁸⁷ Stewart could also claim membership in the merchant class that was

result of an original idea of Cramer's. He had been in Pittsburgh only a short time when he realized the necessity for a publication giving detailed information for navigating the Western rivers.

²⁸⁶ Wade, 75.

²⁸⁷ In contrast to work, leisure was regarded increasingly as "idleness and...subjected to scathing criticism – criticism that went well beyond anything experiences in England or Europe in these years." Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 277.

rapidly gaining political strength at the local level.²⁸⁸ If he failed to respond appropriately to Bates' editorial, Stewart feared his good name and reputation would be sullied permanently. In an era when dueling and the Code Duello ought to have been regarded as anachronistic and contrary to his republican beliefs, Stewart was being pulled to the dueling field not only by notions of honor and manliness, but also, like Alexander Hamilton, by the fear he might become irrelevant in a nation which equated success with personal achievement.

There is no written record of what Tarleton did over the weekend, but the following is a possible scenario. On Saturday he went to his office early to deal with unfinished business that had accumulated over the holidays. He met with friends that evening at one of the local taverns and discussed his favorite subject, national politics. The next morning he attended church services on the second floor of the courthouse near Market Square, only a few steps from where he had struck Pentland with the cowskin. He liked this congregation because his friend Morgan Neville and his sister Emily were members; if nothing else, it gave him an excuse to sit near her.²⁸⁹ Bates had always considered himself to be a good Christian, but the sermon this morning was dull and uninspiring. His thoughts wandered. For some reason he reminisced about his aborted

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 112. Merchants extolled the value of hard work and sacrifice. According to Wade “(they) took their business very seriously, rising early, working late, and often traveling extensively...(their) commanding social and economic position paved the way for political leadership.” Politically, they aligned themselves with the Federalists. Wade points out “Even after the virtual disappearance of the part at the national level, its adherents remained powerful in frontier cities. Indeed, in Pittsburgh it was not until 1810 that the Democratic Republicans won a borough election.”

²⁸⁹ Perhaps as a show of independence, Morgan and Emily belonged to the Trinity Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh. True to their Scotch-Irish heritage, however, both their parents and grandparents were members of the local Presbyterian Church.

trip to Natchez in 1798. He had kept a diary of his trip and carefully recorded the people and places he encountered before turning back to Pittsburgh. On one occasion, his thoughts turned to religion, specifically Hinduism. Ironically this day, he remembered writing that the Hindus believed, “God created things perfectly good, but that man being a free agent may be guilty of moral evil which may be injurious to himself, but can be of no detriment to the general system of nature.” Duels were like that, he thought. If a duel were fought between two, honorable gentlemen and one were to die, then how would society be adversely affected? In fact, wouldn’t it benefit society by allowing gentleman to settle differences privately, and not clog up the legal system with frivolous libel cases?²⁹⁰

An advocate of dueling had made this conclusion a year earlier in 1805. Writing under the pseudonym “Posthumous,” the writer took exception to the anti-dueling newspaper articles and church sermons that condemned the death of Alexander Hamilton in 1804. Characterizing Hamilton’s death as an accident, Posthumous claimed that individuals who possessed free will could resolve differences more efficiently and honorably than the courts. After all, he claimed, dueling was about restoring character and not for determining right and wrong. Posthumous also feared that outlawing dueling would weaken national character and jeopardize national security. “A people who were habituated to submit to the insults of each other at home,” Posthumous feared, “would very probably support with too much forbearance indignities from abroad.” As proof he cited the success of the Spanish conquistadors who with four hundred men overwhelmed

²⁹⁰ Tarleton Bates’ Journal

an empire whose members did not duel. Finally, Posthumous declared that dueling was consistent with republicanism because it represented personal liberty and rights. The public was understandably upset over Hamilton's untimely death, he concluded, but it was necessary now to, "divert the public mind from the gloomy reflections which have created its despondence, and to direct it to a calm consideration of principles, and to a just estimate of effects resulting from the exercise of them."²⁹¹

Bates also may have reflected on a near-duel that occurred in 1803 with a local merchant named William Christy. Christy was a Federalist in a town that was becoming increasingly Republican. The nature of their disagreement is unknown, but it is clear from Bates' letters that he insulted Christy, who issued a challenge. Some of Tarleton's friends learned of the problem between the two men and intervened, but to Bates' surprise they did not support him. Bates later admitted to his brother Frederick, "My most intimate friends have either treated me ill or are dissatisfied with my conduct." The duel was averted when Tarleton apologized, but he admitted later to Frederick that his decision was motivated in part by the fact that "No man could be suspected of cowardice in making arrangements [an apology] to Mr. Christy [who]...had given general notice by *borrowing of ladles to make bullets* (emphasis added)." Making bullets was a clear indication that Christy meant business and intended to fight a duel. Bates might not have been Andrew Jackson, who would fight another man at the drop of hat, but his last-minute change-of-heart is revealing. It appears he realized that Christy was the wrong person at the wrong time to insult despite a boast to Frederick that "The time

²⁹¹ Posthumous. *Observations on the South Carolina Memorial upon the Subject of Dueling: In a Letter to a Friend* (Charleston, SC: By the author, 1805), 10-12.

and manner of the meeting [duel] had not been fixed, although I had given the most express directions to fix it at the earliest moment.” A belated clue to his behavior might be an entry dated January 16, 1804, in his personal journal that records the sale of two pistols from Henry Wolf to Bates for the sum of twenty-two dollars. It was not unusual for a gentleman to purchase a pistol; many carried pocket or “traveling” pistols for self-defense or as part of their wardrobe. Dueling pistols, on the other hand, were purchased in pairs. The pistols purchased by Bates for twenty-two dollars were dueling pistols; Tarleton Bates was determined to be prepared the next time.

Monday was uneventful. Bates had numerous court papers to file, but business remained sluggish after the holidays and that gave him additional time to catch up. Later in the day he walked to the *Tree of Liberty* office where he and his friend Walter Forward reviewed content for the next edition.

Bates was back at work on Tuesday, but his routine was interrupted by a messenger who delivered a note from William Wilkins. Bates and Wilkins knew each other socially but they were not friends. For all of his connections, Bates was still not able to crack Pittsburgh’s social elite that was dominated by the Nevilles, the Craigs, the Wilkinses, and other old-line families. Nonetheless, the two men, barely five years apart in age, were not enemies. On September 25, 1802, for example, they wagered, “one pair of silk stockings,” on a local election. Two days later, they made another bet for one pair of boots on another election; Bates lost. However, there was nothing friendly about his note; Wilkins was deadly serious. He informed Bates that Thomas Stewart rejected Bates’ version of the Pentland affair and that he (Stewart) was personally offended by

Bates' editorial, specifically the part that suggested Stewart was not a gentleman.

Wilkins claimed Stewart "regrets the necessity which has produced the present communication, but a sense of duty, justice to himself, and a regard to his character will not suffer him to pass over your statement in silence." He signed the letter, "Your very humble servant." Later that day Wilkins sent another letter that reiterated the wrong done to Stewart and demanded of Bates "...a satisfactory apology or the alternative... He will accept of the *enclosed as atonement* [my emphasis] for the injury... but your publication is such that nothing short of it can do justice to his character."²⁹²

The "enclosed as atonement" was an editorial drafted by Wilkins on behalf of Stewart for publication in the *Tree*. In the editorial, Bates would admit he had insulted Stewart and ask Stewart to accept his apology for what were "...unfavorable impressions which my statement may have made on the public mind." He exonerated Stewart of any scheme to get him to duel and described him as "too much of a gentleman...and a man of spirit... to be concerned wittingly in so ignoble a design."²⁹³ Wilkins had figuratively thrown down the gauntlet and completed the first step required by the Code of Honor, namely to formally notify the offending party of a breach of honor.

Bates was in quandary. He realized immediately that publishing Wilkins' editorial would be political suicide. Friends and enemies might confuse an apology to Stewart as capitulating to the hated Pentland. Bates was equally certain that the circle of friends and supporters he had cultivated over the years would evaporate overnight if he

²⁹² The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

²⁹³ The Bates Family Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

issued an apology, especially so soon after the Christy affair. He had spent nearly ten years creating a career and life in Pittsburgh. There was nothing for him either in Virginia or at Belmont, where creditors had forced the sale of the property. Besides, he had outgrown the isolation of plantation life and had become accustomed to urban living. He would certainly miss the variety of institutions characteristic of urban life - newspapers, post offices, churches, political groups, libraries, professional organizations, and other voluntary organizations.²⁹⁴ Moving west to a place like Louisville or Cincinnati was also not an option because he would be a stranger again without a mentor to guide him like Craig, O'Hara, or Breckenridge. Richard Wade observed that Ohio River towns like Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Louisville were not egalitarian settlements where newcomers were afforded an equal opportunity for success. Instead, as Bates learned in Pittsburgh, class lines were drawn almost from the beginning and were steadily tightened during the pioneer period and early Republic.²⁹⁵ Moreover, Bates felt that he had done nothing that was ungentlemanly. He had rightfully defended himself by whipping the dastardly Pentland in addition to measuring his words very carefully in describing any accomplices. In his mind, he had shown the restraint required of a gentlemen, so why was he being challenged for playing by the rules? Like Alexander Hamilton, Tarleton Bates realized that his "relative situation, as well in public as private,

²⁹⁴ Richard D. Brown, "The Emergence of Urban Society in Rural Massachusetts, 1760-1820," *The Journal of American History* 61 (June 1974): 31-2. Brown points out that "in colonial America urban society was a highly restrictive phenomenon, limited to port towns that were also administrative centers. This changed dramatically by the mid-nineteenth century." Brown states "cities appeared north, south, east, and west, coastal and inland. All were not equal sharers of urban society, yet they did all possess the variety on institutions characteristic of urban life."

²⁹⁵ Wade, 203-4. Wade argues that as population grew in frontier towns like Pittsburgh "class divisions deepened, and the sense of neighborliness and intimacy weakened."

enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honor, imposed on me a peculiar necessity not to decline the call.”²⁹⁶

Shortly after receiving Wilkins’ letters, Bates sent for Morgan Neville and asked him to be his second. Neville, like Wilkins, had never been a second in a duel, but he was eager to help his friend. Bates wrote his response and asked Neville to deliver it quickly to Wilkins. Bates’ response was pointed and terse. He told Wilkins “It is it is not necessary for me to read more than the first paragraph of your enclosed project of atonement to reject it.” If circumstances were different, he continued, then he might have been more sensitive to Stewart’s sense of honor, but he didn’t regret anything. He concluded by saying, “...I owe myself to grant nothing but what truth demands.” He signed his letter, “Your most obedient servant, Tarleton Bates.” Wilkins read Bates’ note and asked Neville, “Sir, do you and does Mr. Bates understand the seriousness of the matter?” “He does, Sir,” replied Neville, “And it is my duty to inform him of your decision.” Wilkins asked him to wait while he drafted a response. In it, Wilkins characterized Bates’ rebuttal as “unsatisfactory to the feelings of that gentleman” and demanded a “personal interview as soon as possible.” By interview, Wilkins was referring to a duel. Perfectly calm, he handed the note to Neville who accepted it with a smile and a slight bow. Once outside, however, Neville struggled to remain calm because he realized that his friend would not decline Stewart’s demand for an duel; this was a challenge to a man’s character and it could not be ignored. Morgan Neville grimly

²⁹⁶ Seitz, 100.

carried Wilkins' response to the boarding house where Bates lived. All of this occurred on Tuesday, January 6, 1806.

The duel fought between Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton took nearly two weeks to arrange from the time the first letter was written to the fatal shot. During that time, William Van Ness and Nathaniel Pendleton, the two seconds, delivered numerous notes and had multiple conversations with the two principals. While they were working behind the scenes, Hamilton and Burr continued to conduct business as usual at their respective law practices. Hamilton even attended a party. On the surface, the casual observer would not have known what was to transpire. The affair between Thomas Stewart and Tarleton Bates, on the other hand, was decided upon in less than twenty-four hours. One of the reasons was the need for secrecy; word traveled quickly in Pittsburgh, and the principals wanted to avoid either a controversy or prosecution. Another explanation is that Bates and Stewart were determined to prove themselves on the dueling grounds. Bates might have had additional incentive in the wake of his poor showing with William Christy. Perhaps this was the reason he chose Morgan Neville instead of his closest friends, Henry Baldwin and Walter Forward, for assistance.

On Wednesday, January 7, Bates went to his job as Prothonotary as he had done the previous six years. The extra effort had reduced but not eliminated his backlog of work. The Court of Common Pleas had issued judgments, mostly on cases involving insolvent debtors or estates where the owner had died intestate, and Bates needed to record their rulings and schedule follow-up hearings. He completed his work by the early afternoon and walked to the *Tree of Liberty* office where he met Walter Forward. The

two men discussed the upcoming edition, but Bates did not reveal his secret to Forward. Afterward, Tarleton made his way to the General Butler where he ate dinner and drank several glasses of strong brandy. He could have eaten dinner at the boarding house but preferred to be with friends at the tavern that evening. It was very dark when he left the tavern for the boarding house. Shortly after settling in, he sat down at candlelight and wrote his last will. Appropriately, he began it with the words “This is my last will” and assigned Henry Baldwin, “my dear friend” as the executor. He directed Baldwin to dispose of his estate and, after paying his debts, to use the balance to pay for the education of this brother James. “Burn my body, or at least bury it without any direction,”²⁹⁷ were his wishes in the event of his death. The list of his possessions belied his gentlemanly manner. It consisted of simple furnishings like chairs and tables, several small rugs, writing instruments, candleholders, a few books, and other assorted items. He estimated the value at about four hundred dollars.²⁹⁸

Bates finished writing his will and turned in for the evening. He knew he needed as much rest as possible before Morgan Neville arrived the next morning. When Neville showed up at Mrs. Earle’s boarding house²⁹⁹ just before dawn, he was met at the door by Bates who was dressed and ready to leave. Tarleton had downed a couple more glasses of brandy for his nerves and to brace him for the boat trip on the cold river. The two men

²⁹⁷ Bates Will, January 7, 1806.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Both Tarleton and Henry Marie Brackenridge lived at the same boarding house run by a Mrs. Earle.

walked together through the unpaved streets of Pittsburgh and toward the banks of the Monongahela River where Neville had arranged for a boat to take them upriver to the dueling grounds at Chadwick Farm. Their short journey took them past several groups of teamsters who were delivering supplies to several of the local shops. The streets were empty for the most part. Smoke from coal fires curled from chimneys and stovepipes and hung in black clouds.

They passed once more through Market Square and near the office of the *Tree of Liberty*. Bates asked when they arrived at the river, “Are we traveling alone or with the other party?” Neville told him that Wilkins, Stewart, and the physician would meet them at the designed spot. Neville cradled the small box holding the dueling pistols. He had cleaned the gun barrels and firing mechanisms the night before to guard against any malfunctions. Additionally, he packed extra flints, ammunition, and black powder. The two men pushed off from shore and rowed upstream about three miles to a point where Three Mile Run made its way out of the nearby hills. They disembarked upon reaching the shore and pulled their small boat aground. There they climbed up to a flat, wooded area, and then walked a short distance until reaching a clearing. Wilkins and Stewart waited for them in the middle of the clearing. .

The dueling parties had successfully battled the elements and their nerves and were now ready to proceed. More than a test of one’s marksmanship, the duel was a measure of a gentleman’s coolness in the face of death. Fatalities, however, were uncommon; there was only a one in fourteen chance of being killed³⁰⁰ Of course, one

could improve the odds of eliminating the other party by practicing, but that was considered ungentlemanly, and if discovered, would surely have invited criticism and scorn from one's peers. A gentleman was required to be indifferent to death even as he looked down the barrel of a .57 caliber pistol. Bates and Stewart were neither Hamilton and Burr nor Jackson and Dickinson, but they were required by custom and tradition to adhere to the same rules as more illustrious duelists.

The rules established, Neville and Wilkins handed the loaded pistols to the duelists, who took them into their non-shooting hands and assumed their firing positions. Each man stood at a slight angle with his right leg in front of the left, and looked over his right shoulder. This shooting stance, which was permitted by the code, provided a smaller target for one's opponent. Another dueling tactic that reduced the shooter's profile was bending the arm slightly and turning the wrist on the shooting hand slightly to the left. However, turning completely sideways was forbidden by the code. Bates and Stewart nodded to Neville that they were ready to proceed. At that moment, Morgan Neville gave the command, "Gentlemen," and Bates and Wilkins transferred their pistols to their shooting hands. The attending physician immediately turned his back to the proceedings; in the event charges were brought against him, he could honestly testify he

³⁰⁰ Robert B Shoemaker, "The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence in London, 1660-1800," *The Historical Journal* 45 (September 2002). According to Shoemaker, fatalities between 1660 and 1800 became much more limited and ritualized and consequently the chances of fatalities decreased considerably...More than a fifth of the 105 participants in sword duels were killed, and another quarter were wounded; only half (51 per cent) escaped without significant injury. In contrast, only about 6 per cent of the 214 participants in pistol duels were killed (1 in 13 chance), and 71 per cent escaped without any injury. Based on these numbers Shoemaker estimated that the switch to pistols thus improved the chances of surviving a duel by a factor of approximately three, and also improved the chances of escaping without injury.

did not witness the shooting.³⁰¹ At the command, “Ready?” Bates and Stewart raised their pistols. This was to be followed by the command, “Fire...One...Two...Three...Stop.” But Neville never got to “One,” and the sounds of two pistols echoed off the nearby hills. When the smoke cleared, both Bates and Stewart remained standing. Their shots had disappeared into the wood nearby.

The duel could have ended here with Bates and Stewart leaving the dueling grounds not as friends but as fellow, republican gentlemen. Each had proven to himself and to his opponent that he was courageous and principled. Additionally, they eschewed the “rough and tumble” type of fighting that was practiced by backcountry ruffians to resolve their differences. Was there anything left to prove? Many affairs of honor, in fact, fizzled out before ever reaching this stage. When his son Philip was involved in a duel in 1801, Alexander Hamilton assumed the matter would be resolved without firing a shot; he and many of his colleagues avoided the dueling grounds because over time people became less angry. According to the authors of the Irish Code, time was the duelist’s greatest ally because it helped to defuse passions. Thirty years later, John Lyde Wilson, an experienced duelist and second in addition to being Governor of South Carolina, wrote a detailed set of dueling rules, patterned after the Irish Code, that he claimed would save lives by requiring participants take time for personal reflection and

³⁰¹ It was customary to have physicians present at duels, a practice that was not inconsistent with the spirit of the Code Duello. Physicians were present at the Burr-Hamilton and the Jackson-Dickinson duels and it is likely that one was made available at the Bates-Stewart affair, though the name of that individual is not known. They were present to attend to the wounded party and, if necessary, to save his life. For example, the physician present at the Burr-Hamilton duel worked feverishly to save the life of the former Treasury Secretary. The same occurred at Jackson’s duel with Dickinson that resulted in Dickinson’s death.

self-assessment. The two-week gestation period before his duel with Hamilton apparently did little to calm down Burr, but the Vice-President eventually learned that killing one's opponent was a poor political move. The fact is, despite its aversion to dueling, the general public³⁰² admired men who were willing to risk their lives over principles, but they were less in a forgiving mood when a life was taken.³⁰³

But politics was only one factor in the Bates and Stewart duel. Bates feared backing down from Stewart's challenge would leave him politically impotent, but Stewart had no such fear. For him the duel was simply a matter of economic survival in a country of workaholics who were obsessed with making money. The Republican Party, still in its infancy, was not equipped to mend the rift between two of its most dedicated followers. On the one hand the quarrel was part of a larger struggle coalescing in the Republican Party between its moderate and radical wings that would result in the formation of the Whig Party in the 1830s. On the other the duel was an aristocratic anomaly in a nation founded upon republican principles. Legislatures first tried to

³⁰² Juries were still reluctant to convict duelists in the North as late as 1820. In the South, which had a weaker system of state and local courts, duels were common despite state laws that forbade the practice. The anti-dueling campaign began after Hamilton's death and was led the clergy, notably Timothy Dwight and Lyman Beecher. Thomas Carmody argued "The anti-dueling movement was the progenitor of other better-know social movements of the nineteenth century, such as abolition and temperance. The movement began to solidify as a result of Lyman Beecher's 1804 sermon against dueling. The movement was led by ministers and politicians, all educated." "'Arise and Stand Forth': A Fantasy Theme Analysis of American Clergy and Their Calls for Social Action in the Nineteenth Century Anti-Dueling Movement, 1804-1856" (Ph.D. diss., Regent University, 2004): 5.

³⁰³ Killing Dickinson in 1806 did not seem to hurt Andrew Jackson's career. In fact, it might have elevated his stature as a paragon of manly virtue. A similar situation occurred further west in Missouri where Thomas Hart Benton killed Charles Lucas in 1816. Benton went on to have a successful political career in the US Senate. Benton believed that "organized violence" was infinitely better than the mayhem of the Bowie knife or the revolver. Dick Steward, *Duels and the Roots of Violence in Missouri* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 120.

eliminate dueling by banning duelists from public office.³⁰⁴ Failing that, legislators then teamed up with members of the clergy to educate the public on the evils associated with dueling, specifically the loss of loved ones and its anti-republican character. Anti-dueling laws gave legislatures one of their first opportunities to act as “moral entrepreneurs” by passing laws that sought to protect the public welfare.³⁰⁵

When the smoke cleared, Wilkins asked Bates, “Sir, will you retract your earlier statements and apologize to Mr. Stewart?” Bates responded, “No, sir, I will not. You are welcome to continue as you see fit.” Wilkins looked toward Stewart and the young merchant said, “Sir, let us continue.” Stewart’s words required that Neville and Wilkins reload the pistols and conduct a second round. This time it was Wilkins who would give the commands. On cue, Bates and Stewart raised their pistols, took aim, and fired a second time.

Although deaths by dueling were not common,³⁰⁶ when they happened they were grisly affairs. Try to imagine for a moment the impact of a heavy lead ball tearing into a

³⁰⁴ The earliest anti-dueling laws sought to cut the tie between dueling and honor by banning duelists from the mark of public favor: political office. Massachusetts and Connecticut had disqualified duelists from holding office since before the Revolution. In the South, such provisions became common in the years around 1800. In 1799, Kentucky banned duelists from holding public office, following by North Carolina in 1802, Tennessee in 1809, and Virginia in 1810. In 1812, South Carolina enacted its anti-dueling law and banned duelists and seconds from holding public office, practicing law and medicine, and any other trade. Similar laws were passed in Illinois in 1815, Georgia in 1816, Alabama in 1819, and Mississippi in 1822.

³⁰⁵ David Robert Lewis, “Dissent to Dueling: Arguments Against the Code Duello in America” (Masters Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1984) and Thomas J. Carmody, “‘Arise and Stand Forth’: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of American Clergy and Their Calls for Social Action in the Nineteenth Century Anti-Dueling Movement, 1804-1856.” (Ph.D. diss., Regent University, 2004) analyze the partnership between anti-dueling legislators and the clergy in banning dueling.

³⁰⁶ Freeman claims “Most duels that involved gunplay ended with minor injuries, suggesting a desire to avoid anything more serious. Leg injuries were frequent enough to case doubt on the power and

man's flesh and either shattering a pelvis or lodging itself near a major organ in the torso; this could only result in a fatality. Nineteenth century medicine was rudimentary enough, but picture a man lying bleeding and dying on a barren field and attended to by a doctor who was equipped with little more than a few bandages. Although dueling pistols were terribly inaccurate they were also lethal if the shooter's aim was true. Death came agonizingly slow for the unlucky duelist. In 1802 Alexander Hamilton's son Philip was severely wounded in a duel and died in extreme agony nearly twenty-four hours later. The senior Hamilton's demise was equally gruesome. Burr's shot shattered Hamilton's spine and become lodged in his lower back. The best doctors in New York did what they could to save both Philip and Alexander Hamilton, but their efforts were to no avail. In 1806 Charles Dickinson was shot in the chest by Andrew Jackson, but Dickinson lingered for nearly two hours before dying. In 1820 Stephen Decatur, hero of the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812, died nearly twelve hours after being shot in the abdomen by James Barron. Dueling deaths, unlike the gentlemanly protocol that preceded them, were neither glorious nor honorable; they were gut-wrenching spectacles of blood and gore, and many of the victors regretted their involvement for years afterward. Burr, for example, expressed regret over Hamilton's death and Thomas Hart Benton attempted to destroy all records concerning his duel.

The recoil from Stewart's second shot forced his hand up and toward the left. As before, he saw the spark caused by the flint striking the "frizzen" and the simultaneous

meaning of the practice; hinting that affairs of honor entailed more pretense than peril..." Freeman, "Affairs of Honor": 179. Estimates of dueling deaths are 1 death for every 6 duels.

flash of gunpowder in the pan that ignited the charge propelling the lead bullet out of the barrel. Stewart was certain for an instant that he missed again. He imagined that he and Bates would be required once more to repeat the ritual of charge and counter-charge, reloading the dueling pistols, and then facing each other one more time. The Irish Code was not explicit about the number of volleys that could be fired, but three was considered to be the limit.³⁰⁷ At this point, the seconds were expected to step in and halt the proceedings. Honor was restored and further shooting would only result in either injury or death, which was against the spirit of the honor code. Four years earlier John Swartwout ignored the custom of stopping at three volleys in his duel with Dewitt Clinton of New York. Clinton obliged his opponent's requests and then promptly put two bullets into Swartmout's left leg. Still defiant, Swartmout demanded a sixth volley at which time Clinton left the field in disgust.

But Stewart would not be required to engage in a third volley. His second shot found its mark. The force of the round knocked Bates off his feet and back onto the frozen ground. For a moment everyone stood motionless, transfixed at the sight of the prostrate Bates. The attending physician wheeled around again at the sound of gunfire and immediately ran up to attend to his patient. Tarleton's face was losing color quickly, and a hissing sound was heard emanating from his chest each time he took a breath. The doctor worked feverishly to plug the wound with anything he could find: scarfs, bandages, and handkerchiefs; the dangers of infection were unknown at this time. Stewart came up quickly and asked if the wound was fatal. Wilkins said that it was and

told the shaken Stewart to leave the area immediately. Wilkins remained with Neville and the physician as they attempted to revive Bates, but the young Prothonotary died within an hour. Neville returned Bates' lifeless body to Pittsburgh by boat and then by carriage to his boarding house. Henry Marie Breckenridge described the scene at the boarding house:

Bates was brought from the field into the dining room where we had passed so many delightful social hours, and laid upon the carpet, he seemed to be asleep, his countenance having undergone no change, as the ball had passed through his heart, and his death was instantaneous.³⁰⁸

The community responded to Bates' death with a combination of rage and sadness. Tarleton Bates was a rising star politically and one of the town's most eligible bachelors. The outrage was so great, in fact, that both Stewart and Wilkins were compelled to flee Pittsburgh. Wilkins fled to Lexington where he lived a year with his older brother Charles. Stewart also left town, but his destination is not as clear. Regardless, the dry goods store he owned with Robinson closed in February, but it is not known if the reason was Stewart's negative celebrity or economic factors. Morgan Neville was not forced out of town, but his reputation suffered as a result of his involvement in the duel. The *Tree of Liberty* did not immediately report Bates' death, but John Scull published an account of the duel in the *Gazette* on January 14. In addition to the background and details of the duel, Scull attested to the fact that "The behavior of the principals on the ground was perfectly calm and undaunted, and this unfortunate

*³⁰⁸ Henry M. Breckenridge, *Recollections of Persons and Places in The West* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co, 1868), 122.

transaction was conducted in conformity to the arrangements, which had been previously made, and to the strictest rules of honor.”³⁰⁹

William Duane had a different perspective. In the January 20 edition of the *Aurora*, Duane defended Pentland and criticized Bates, McKean, and the legal system in Pennsylvania. He praised Pentland as an honorable, republican gentleman, who “...conducted his paper with a spirit and an intelligence that is rarely seen... [but who] has been obliged to keep arms about him...to protect his person and his life...” Duane characterized Bates as an unprincipled zealot,³¹⁰ and he criticized Governor McKean for creating an environment in the state that was hostile for Pentland and other printers of republican papers. Duane wrote the threat to their lives was so great that they were “...as accustomed to the use of arms as to the use of ink.” He regarded Bates’ assault upon Pentland as little more than an ambush and defended Pentland’s decision to challenge Bates because “...there is no justice for printers; this and similar cases, pointed out to Mr. Pentland the only remedy left – where the law fails the rights of nature are presumable...” Bates, however, refused Pentland’s challenge because, “...this *haughty* [emphasis added] officer [Bates] would not descend to meet a printer.” Bates demise

³⁰⁹ *The Pittsburgh Gazette, January 14, 1806.*

³¹⁰ *The Aurora*, January 26, 1806. In the same article Duane wrote that Bates’ zeal for “using a vigor beyond the law” included the “cutting off a printer’s ears,” a reference to a punishment often imposed by the Court of Star Chamber or simply the Star Chamber. Henry VII created the Star Chamber in 1487 for overseeing the lower courts of the land in addition to hearing individual cases by appeal. It became a symbol of abuse of power under Charles I and was abolished in 1641 by the Long Parliament. Duane might have been referring to an incident in 1633 that involved a lawyer and printer named Prynne. The Star Court charged Prynne with publishing a scandalous and libelous book against the king, and his punishment included to have one ear cut off. In 1636, Prynne along with two pamphleteers, Henry Burton and John Bastwick, were brought before Star Chamber and they were all sentenced to stand in the pillory, to have their ears cut off, to be fined five-thousand pounds each, and to be imprisoned for life “without the use of pen or paper.” Edward P Cheyney, “The Court of Star Chamber,” *The American Historical Review* 18 (July 1913).

was, according to Duane “...an awful example to men whose headstrong passions know not the restraints of law, not the limits beyond which the rights of opinion cannot be violated without injury to society.”³¹¹

Bates’ funeral was reportedly the largest held in Pittsburgh up to that point, and was attended by most of the town’s leading political and social leaders. Against his wishes, he was not cremated but was buried in the graveyard at Trinity [Episcopalian] Church in Pittsburgh.

On February 14, 1806, Walter Forward wrote a letter to Frederick Bates in an attempt to provide closure for the Bates family. Forward believed that the duel with Stewart was unavoidable because “[Bates] had declined one challenge, had been stigmatized a coward, and was hunted down by the fiends of faction.” He had endured with “silent contempt” Pentland’s abuse and insults, but eventually, “could no longer brook the outrage offered to his feelings.” Pentland, contrary to Duane’s characterization, was a miscreant who had failed to defend his honor by “appealing to civil authority and [for] not being a gentleman.” Forward also told Frederick he was baffled by Wilkins’ behavior. Wilkins had been on “terms of intimacy” with Tarleton, and had even encouraged him at one point to “horsewhip Stewart for becoming a party in the affair of Pentland.” Forward confirmed that Tarleton “went into the field with a mind calm and unruffled and a heart unconscious of injury or offense.” Forward concluded by pointing out Tarleton’s “delicate honor” and “untarnished character,” and he wrote that Bates, “was charitable to the needy, a patron of merit—a faithful friend, an honest patriot...just

³¹¹ The *Aurora*, January 26, 1806.

and humane.” Reportedly when Tarleton’s mother learned of his death, she rejoiced that the Virginia traditions of honor had not been violated and that Tarleton Bates had accepted the challenge and preferred “death to a life of infamy and disgrace.”³¹²

The sudden deaths of great men are followed oftentimes by significant change. In the case of Tarleton Bates, however, after a period of public grief there is no evidence things changed appreciably in Pittsburgh or that westbound travelers avoided the town because of the duel. Violence was common on the frontier and thousands of promising lives were cut short prematurely. The significance of Bates’ life and death go beyond the immediate impact it had on other people. His life was a microcosm of American society at that time, and Bates experienced first-hand many of the major changes that American society felt at the time.

³¹² Onward Bates, *Bates, et al of Virginia and Missouri* (Chicago: By the author, 1914), 57.

CONCLUSION

Unlike members of the revolutionary generation and second-tier political actors (e.g. Hugh Henry Breckenridge) whose collective influence is felt to this day, Tarleton Bates is largely forgotten except for a secondary street in Pittsburgh named in his honor. In fact it is remarkable how truly unremarkable Bates' life was notwithstanding his horrific and premature death. Unlike his closest friends, Henry Baldwin and Walter Forward, Bates never achieved national prominence and recognition. In fact his greatest accomplishment was being appointed – not elected – to public office by a grateful governor. Moreover, his career though promising was cut short not by an unselfish act of bravery or courage but instead by his questionable decision to fight a duel with Thomas Stewart. Today we have the benefit of 20-20 hindsight to criticize Bates for hubris and poor judgment – the same criticisms many people leveled at Chris Matthews and Zell Miller – but unlike Bates and Thomas Stewart those two men did not take their disagreement to the dueling grounds.

At the time, neither Bates nor many of his fellow citizens believed his actions were irrational and reckless. Many people, including his mother, actually regarded his behavior as honorable and manly. If a man was unable or unwilling to defend his honor, then who would? The problem for Tarleton Bates was the rules for settling personal disputes and proving one's manhood were changing faster than he could keep up with them. Bates was not trying to be different; on the contrary he was trying to live up to

what he believed in his heart were society's expectations of him. The life of Tarleton Bates is significant not because he was different, but because his experiences reflect lives of many young men in the early Republic. He was a republican everyman.

Understanding his motivations requires analyzing his personal history.

Born on the eve of the Revolution, Tarleton's father provided him and his brothers with an education and the expectation they would join the Virginia gentry as gentlemen. When economic hardship struck the family in the early 1790s, however, Tarleton searched around for other career options. Like thousands of other ambitious and restless young men Bates saw opportunities on the American frontier. He was not afraid to embrace change, and in 1794 he left Virginia to help suppress a farmer's revolt in Southwestern Pennsylvania over a tax on distilled spirits.

American society was also changing at this time. Concurrent victories over the whiskey rebels and against Indians at Fallen Timbers in northwestern Ohio opened up the frontier for settlement. At the national level the Constitution and a strong central government had replaced decentralized rule under the Articles of Confederation. This did not faze many Americans who still deferred to society's perceived or tested leaders for direction and guidance. At the head of this "better sort" of people was President Washington, America's patriarch, whom many citizens believed would remain in office for life. However, the General decided to retire from public life for good, and in 1796 the country had to adjust to its first contested election for President.

After the Whiskey Rebellion, Bates remained in Pittsburgh at a time the town was emerging from its frontier past. Gone were the army and its money that had sustained the

region for nearly thirty years. Replacing them was an emerging class of businessmen and small manufacturers who produced for the local market and pioneers on their way west. These entrepreneurs spearheaded the region's industrial development and were the forerunners of industrialists like Andrew Carnegie. However, Bates eschewed a business career, preferring instead to make his living in politics.

Bates' interest in politics surfaced shortly after his arrival in Pittsburgh. His metamorphosis from an idealist to a calculating political operative is fascinating. Like other ambitious young men he soon learned that political effectiveness had more to do with success at the polls than republican virtue. He learned to count votes like he inventoried military stores for Isaac Craig and James O'Hara; shortages in either would be costly for his career. He became an active member in local associations like the Masons, and he speculated in land like his mentors Isaac Craig and James O'Hara. He hitched his personal success to that of the Republican Party, although he had no way of knowing the Republicans would dominate national politics for the next thirty years. His hard work and loyalty eventually landed for him a political appointment. By late 1805 Tarleton Bates was a rising star in the Republican Party.

Bates' notoriety required him to be vigilant about his public persona. He paid particular attention to his appearance and manners. He wrote poetry, took music and French lessons, and dressed neatly. He was an incurable and passionate romantic who carried a torch for the daughter of a political enemy. He wanted a wife, but he also enjoyed the company of other men who would validate his manliness. His ill-fated trip to Natchez was an exhilarating experience; it was a great adventure traveling down the Ohio

River by boat. It was not the same thing as his friend Meriwether Lewis would experience years later, but it would validate his manliness and provide him with stories to tell friends upon his return to Pittsburgh.

Bates' political evolution paralleled that of America's first party system. Gentlemen politicians held office, but the grind of campaigning and managing elections fell to political operatives like James Beckley, William Duane, Hugh Henry Breckenridge, and Tarleton Bates. Bates' political apprenticeship also included a brief stint as part owner of a partisan newspaper. Pittsburgh at that time was not immune to newspaper wars. John Scull at the pro-Federalist *The Gazette* had refused to publish anything that was pro-Republican after he had a falling out with Breckenridge in the late 1790s. In response, Breckenridge lured John Israel to Pittsburgh where he published the pro-Republican *Tree of Liberty* in 1800. Scull and Israel were polar opposites; Scull was the artisan printer and Israel was the political ideologue. Israel passed the baton to Bates when he sold the *Tree of Liberty* to the Pittsburgh Triumvirate of Bates, Henry Baldwin, and Walter Forward. Bates' political activism made enemies leading to his duel with Thomas Stewart.

Dueling deaths like Bates' and Alexander Hamilton's spurred government and religious leaders in the North to take action. In March 1806, Pennsylvania passed stronger legislation that deprived duelists of their citizenship rights for a period of seven years in addition to imposing a lifetime ban against public officeholders.³¹³ Dueling

³¹³ The law was passed on March 31, 1806, nearly three months after Bates' death. The new law stated "Whereas the laws heretofore passed to restrain the horrid practice of dueling have proved insufficient, and many citizens of this commonwealth, and others, have found means to evade the penalties

became less attractive in the North as a way to settle disputes. Men looked for other ways to prove themselves in the emerging market economy; manliness came to be measured in terms of wealth and not coolness on the field of honor. Religious leaders, who lost influence and prestige during the First Great Awakening, channeled public anger into anti-dueling campaigns that presaged later efforts against alcohol, slavery, child labor, and women's suffrage.³¹⁴ Lyman Beecher and Timothy Dwight in particular challenged the way people regarded dueling. Believing legislation was insufficient alone

of such offenses, and instigated by deadly feuds have committed murder upon mistaken principles of honor, and have escaped punishment by reason of the difficulty of procuring evidence of the facts: For remedy whereof... if any person within this commonwealth shall challenge, by word or writing, the person of another to fight at sword, rapier, pistol or other deadly weapon; or if any person so challenged shall accept the said challenge; in either case, such person so giving, or sending, or receiving any such challenge, shall, for such offense, being thereof lawfully convicted in any court of record within this commonwealth, by the testimony of one or more witnesses, or by confession, forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred dollars, and shall suffer one year's imprisonment at hard labor, in the same manner as convicted felons are now punished; and moreover shall forfeit and be deprived of all rights of citizenship within this commonwealth for the term of seven years." The law was equally severe on bystanders and seconds: "If any person shall willingly and knowingly carry and deliver any written challenge; or shall verbally deliver any message purporting to be a challenge; or shall consent to be a second in any such intended duel; and shall be thereof legally convicted as aforesaid; he or they so offending shall, for every such offense, forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred dollars, and suffer one year's imprisonment at hard labor, in the same manner as convicted felons are now punished... That if any person shall have knowledge of any challenge to fight with any deadly weapons given or received; or in any manner be Witness to the fact of such challenge, duel, or fighting, not being a second thereat, Or party criminal therein; and shall conceal the same, and do not inform thereof, he or she shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; and upon conviction thereof shall be adjudged to pay a fine of fifty dollars, and moreover suffer nine months imprisonment, without bail or mainprize..." Finally, it prohibited editors from facilitating duels by printing notices or postings: "And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person or persons shall 'presume to publish in any newspaper, or post by hand bills written or printed, or otherwise, any other person or persons as a coward or cowards, rascal or rascals, liar or liars; or use any other irritating, abusive language for not accepting a challenge or fighting a duel; such person or persons shall, for such offense, being thereof convicted, be subject to the same punishment as though he or they had fought a duel, as provided by the first section of this act; and the publisher or printer shall, in all prosecutions under this section, be summoned as a witness, and accepted by the courts as a good witness against the, writer or writers of such publication or hand bill; and if the said printer or printers, when summoned before the court, shall refuse to give up the writer's name or names, the court shall consider him or them as the author thereof, and proceed to punish him or them accordingly." Legislature, Pennsylvania, *Anti-Dueling Law (CHAPTER MDCCXXIX)*, Approved March 31, 1806. Recorded in L. B. No. 10, p. 402. See Act March 31, 1806, P. L. 382 and 453, Section 25.

³¹⁴ Carmody, 45-60. Alden Spooner, *Lyman Beecher and the Reform of Society: Four Sermons, 1804-1828* (New York: Arno Press, 1972).

to discourage the practice, the clergy criticized dueling as out of place within a republican society. Duelists, they claimed, were not men of honor, but common murderers who deprived wives of their husbands, children of their fathers, and the republic of its most able citizens.³¹⁵

The duel between Bates and Stewart was overshadowed by other events. Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania had shed their frontier exteriors and emerged as major centers of commerce and industry. Shipbuilding and glass were important industries, and they were joined by tanneries, iron mills, nail manufactories, furniture makers, and other businesses that supplied locals and cities downstream with necessities until those towns made the transition from frontier outpost into economic epicenter.

³¹⁵ Timothy Dwight, *A Sermon on Dueling, Preached in the Chapel at Yale College, New Haven, September 9, 1804 and in the Old Presbyterian Church, New York, January 21st, 1805* (Baltimore: Fryer and Clark, 1805): 27-32. Dwight passionately asserted "I am well aware, that even under the acknowledged consciousness of its enormity, dueling is defended, on the ground of unavoidable necessity; its supporters alleging, that there are some offenses of so peculiar a nature...as, though in the highest degree irritating and injurious, do not come under the cognizance of the established laws, and which call for immediate redress. But this is an argument, false, both in its origin and application...By this infamous vice of dueling," says a celebrated modern jurist, "how is the name of honor prostituted? Can honor be the savage resolution, the brutal fierceness of a revengeful spirit? True honor is manifested in a steady, uniform train of actions, attended by justice, and directed by prudence. Is this the conduct of the duelist? Will justice support him in robbing the community of an able and useful member, and in depriving the poor of a benefactor? Will it support him in preparing affliction for the widow's heart - in filling the orphan's eyes with tears? Will justice acquit him for enlarging the punishment beyond the offense? Will it permit him for, perhaps, a rash word that may admit of an apology, an unadvised, inconsiderate action that may be retrieved, or an injury that may be compensated, to cut off man before his days be half numbered? And for a temporary fault influence an endless punishment (?)...Dueling seems to be an unnatural graft upon genuine courage, and the growth of a barbarous age. The polite nations of Greece and Rome knew nothing of it...That so irrational and impious a custom which originated in the early ages of ignorance, superstition, and Gothic barbarism, should prevail and be conformed to, by men eminent for wisdom and integrity, in the present enlightened day, is, indeed, truly astonishing. The decision of controversy by single combat...and the attestation of truth by what was called the Ordeal trial, were accommodated to the rude manners of an uncivilized and ferocious. But, when reason assumed her empire, when arts, industry, science, philosophy, and religion, began gradually to expand and illuminate the human mind, to restrain the indulgence of the passions, to refine and elevate the affections, to polish the manners, and to purify the hear; it might naturally be supposed that a practice so absurd, so contrary to the principles of social union, of morality, and of religion would certainly have been suppressed and abhorred..."

Pittsburgh attracted investment dollars from banks and private entrepreneurs located in Baltimore and Philadelphia. The region also benefited from infrastructure improvements like roads and canals, which were designed to incorporate Pittsburgh into the burgeoning national economy. Business leaders continued to look west for economic opportunities. The Louisiana Purchase removed restrictions for trading with New Orleans and the West Indies. Zadok Cramer reported Pittsburgh's trade with New Orleans increased five-fold between 1802 and 1806, and seven-fold between 1806 and 1810.³¹⁶ Economic success further enriched local businessmen like Isaac Craig and James O'Hara and provided business for the law offices of Henry Baldwin, Walter Forward, and William Wilkins (Stewart's second), all of whom played important political roles in Pittsburgh over the next forty years. In the success of his friends and family can be glimpsed the future Tarleton Bates lost on the dueling grounds.

Henry Baldwin's practice and influence grew significantly after Bates' death. He was elected to Congress in 1817. He advocated high tariffs and staunchly defended Henry Clay's "American System." Baldwin also became an industrialist and owned iron mills decades before Andrew Carnegie arrived in Pittsburgh. Walter Forward, Baldwin's colleague at the *Tree of Liberty*, was also successful. In addition to his lucrative law practice, Forward was elected to Congress several times and, like Baldwin, he supported Clay's policies including high tariffs and ambitious public works projects. Forward eventually became a Whig. In 1841 President John Tyler appointed Forward as Secretary of the Treasury, and he just missed serving with William Wilkins, whom Tyler appointed

³¹⁶ Cramer Almanac, 1802, 321.

as Secretary of War in 1844. William Wilkins attempted to atone for his role in the duel by a career in public service. In 1810 he became the Bank of Pittsburgh's first president, and when Pittsburgh was chartered as a city in 1816, he was elected the first president of the city council. He was also elected to the Senate as a Democrat, and in 1834 President Jackson appointed him Ambassador to Russia. He died in 1865 and his funeral, like that of Tarleton Bates nearly sixty years earlier, was a public event in the city. The three men - Baldwin, Forward, and Wilkins - became respected statesmen, a far cry from the rough-and-tumble world of Pittsburgh politics the three men had known in the early nineteenth century.

Bates' death created an unexpected vacancy in the Prothonotary's office that Governor McKean wasted no time filling with Presley Neville. The appointment came at an opportune time for the cash-strapped, former Revolutionary War hero whose family had lost considerable influence and wealth in the wake of Jefferson's two presidential victories. The height of irony occurred a few years later when McKean's successor, Governor Simon Snyder, replaced Neville with Ephraim Pentland, who continued to publish the *Commonwealth* until it ceased operations in 1820. Pentland sat in Bates' former chair as the Prothonotary until his death, by natural causes, in 1834.

Several members of Bates' family also had successful careers. Charles, the eldest son, was a respected lawyer in Richmond until his death in 1808. Belmont remained in the hands of his heirs until 1835 when all 622 acres were purchased by Robert Standard for the total of \$4,817.50, or \$7.75 per acre.³¹⁷ Tarleton's younger brother Frederick left

³¹⁷ Weeks, 43-45.

Detroit for St. Louis in 1807 and became Secretary, Land Commissioner, and Recorder of Land Titles for the Louisiana Territory. Frederick Bates played an important role in the resolution of thousands of conflicting, often fraudulent, land claims from the French and Spanish administrations. He reached the pinnacle of his political career in 1824 when he was elected Missouri's second governor. Ironically, shortly before his death in 1825 he vetoed a bill that would have prescribed whipping for duelists. James Bates, whose spending and poor study habits tormented both Tarleton and Henry Baldwin, graduated from Princeton in 1807, moved to St. Louis to practice law, but then moved again in 1819 to the Arkansas territory. He was elected that year as the non-voting delegate for the territory in the House of Representatives. He lived in Poke Bayou, but in 1821 the town was renamed Batesville in his honor.

Edward, the youngest Bates brother, was the most accomplished. He served during the War of 1812 as a sergeant in the Virginia militia. In 1814 he moved to Missouri with his mother and youngest sister to be closer to Frederick. There he studied law and was active in Missouri politics. He was elected to Congress for the first time in 1827³¹⁸ but was defeated in 1830 for the Senate as the Whig Party's candidate. The

³¹⁸ For all of Bates' political acumen, he misread a famous scandal that occurred during Andrew Jackson's first term. When the President was embroiled in the famous dispute involving fellow Tennessean Senator John Eaton and his wife Peggy, Bates proclaimed in a January 1829 letter to his wife, Julia, that, "I just returned from Mr. Clay's, his hard featured lady, Mrs. Anna Payne Cutts [sister of Dolly Madison]...and Mrs. Holly. Of course there's no getting along in such a party without a little scandal...Mrs. [Peggy] Eaton...was of course talked about, and I gather that she had not received the accustomed visits of congratulation from ladies in the city. But it seems she is very comfortable in the consciousness of being made an honest woman, and consoles herself with the privation of present society, with the belief that the aforesaid ladies, for all they hold their noses to so high now, will be ready enough to wait upon her as soon as President Jackson appoints her husband Attorney General (which I think will hardly occur this century)..." "A Little Scandal," *An Occasional Bulletin: The Virginia Historical Society* 68 (Spring 1990): 8-9.

Whigs continued to pursue Bates and in 1856 he presided over the Whig National Convention in Baltimore. In 1860, Bates was a major candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination only to be nosed out by a dark-horse rival from Illinois named Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln later chose Bates as his Attorney General, and he served there with Gideon Welles, William Seward, and Edwin Stanton. When the Bates brothers - Tarleton, Frederick, James, and Edward - left Virginia, the Old Dominion lost two generations of potential leaders.

The end of the eighteenth century was an awkward time for Tarleton Bates and his peers; they were too young to have fought in the Revolution and the War of 1812 was years away. A similar situation occurred nearly a hundred years later in the period leading up to the Spanish-American War. Millions of young men, inspired by stories of bravery and valor in the Civil War, rushed to enlist to fight the Spanish in Cuba. James O'Hara, Isaac Craig, and John Neville had proven themselves in combat, but Bates, Pentland, Baldwin, Forward, and Stewart could only listen to their stories. Dueling was a controlled, though somewhat risky, alternative to bare-knuckle brawling practiced by non-gentlemen. It also helped preserve the image of the gentleman who was expected to remain calm and cool under pressure.³¹⁹ Henry Baldwin became a pillar of the community, but he fought a duel; he was lucky to learn from the experience. Had Bates survived his duel with Stewart it is conceivable he would have joined his friends Baldwin

³¹⁹ Echoing Elliott Gorn, Nicole Etcheson wrote that the form that violence took depended on class; upper-class southerner's dueled and lower class southerners brawled. Any engagement in violence was also an affirmation of equality. One may shrug aside an affront from a social inferior; to fight a man because of an insult implies that one accepts him as an equal. Among backcountrymen, violence took on a particularly barbaric flair with an emphasis on disfigurement - eye gouging being the equivalent of a knockout punch. Nicole Etcheson, "Manliness and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1790-1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15 (Spring 1995): 64.

and Walter Forward and “War Hawks” like Henry Clay in 1812, who clamored for war against Great Britain.

The need to prove himself on a continuing basis must have weighed heavily on Bates. In addition to showing others they were as manly as their fathers, Bates’ generation, especially those who lived on the frontier, were constantly required to prove themselves in a very dangerous and hostile environment. Anthropologist David Gilmore points out that manhood is uncertain and precarious, and “a prize to be won or wrested through struggle.”³²⁰ It is tested continually in dangerous confrontations.³²¹ According to Garry Wills, “Manhood had to be proved....(man) must ever be tinkering, improving, adjusting; starting over, fearful his product will get out of date, or rot in the storehouse.”³²² Michael Kimmel adds, “Success must be earned, manhood must be proved - and proved constantly... [to] men of power and prestige who had the ability to either accept someone ... or relegate them to second-class status.”³²³ Hamilton feared he would lose credibility if he ignored Burr’s challenge. Bates was able to avoid a duel with William Christie. Would Pittsburgh society have accepted another excuse? Obviously, Bates decided that the risk was worth the reward. The Revolution did not completely erase aristocratic notions of manhood. A gentleman was expected to exhibit courage, compassion, and loyalty. Tarleton Bates mentions these qualities in his letters. He was

³²⁰ David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (Yale University Press (July 24, 1991), 1.

³²¹ Etcheson, 62.

³²² Garry Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (New York: Doubleday, May 1984), 24.

³²³ Kimmel, 222.

caught between the republican ideals of reason and virtue and the aristocratic concept of honor.

The loss of honor and reputation at this time was not a trivial matter especially for politicians. Most men did not resort to dueling to settle disputes, but those who did stood an excellent chance to escape unscathed. Hopefully, their seconds would defuse the situation before it got out of hand; otherwise the duelist was expected to follow the rules, arrive on time at the dueling grounds, demonstrate indifference to the proceedings, and proceed calmly. Most duels ended in a draw because the accuracy of dueling pistols was poor and duelists were forbidden by the code of honor to practice beforehand.

One wonders what Bates might have accomplished had he survived his duel like his friend Henry Baldwin two years earlier. He might have become one of the leading public figures in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania. The Republican Party was gaining traction both in Pennsylvania and in the United States, and Bates had positioned himself advantageously for either a run at public office or, like James Beckley and William Duane, for an influential role as a party apparatchik. Additionally, he might have played a surrogate father role to younger brothers Frederick, James, and Edward as they climbed the political ladder. Based on the direction his political philosophy was headed, he would have remained a moderate Republican politician or become a Whig and, like his friends Henry Baldwin and Walter Forward, would have supported the protection of American industry through high tariffs, the existence of a central bank to help finance public works projects that would improve the nation's infrastructure, and westward expansion. Shankman writes that moderate Jeffersonians like Bates either became leaders in the

National Republican movement (and eventually the Whig Party) or the moderate wing of Jackson's Democratic Party.³²⁴ Although he pined for his childhood home at Belmont, he astutely recognized that America's future existed beyond the borders of Goochland County, Virginia. As Bates began to acquire wealth, he emulated his former employers and benefactors, James O'Hara and Isaac Craig, and purchased large tracts of investment land in Pittsburgh, not for the purpose of recreating Belmont, but in recognition of the money and power that could be gained in land speculation. He had learned well from his father and from the likes of Hugh Henry Breckenridge the importance of making friends in high places, and he did not hesitate using those relationships when he needed help for himself or for a family member.

Lost in this discussion is the fate of Thomas Stewart. There are two theories about what happened to him. The first, and most popular, is Stewart fled to Baltimore, where he settled among the Scotch-Irish diaspora that lived in the seaport town at that time. The other theory about Stewart is he traveled east to Philadelphia where he held an important position in the Customs House.³²⁵ Stewart would not have worried about extradition to Pittsburgh. Although dueling was illegal in many states no one was eager to enforce the law; people both abhorred and admired the practice at the same time. Unlike Bates who had visible connections and a clear career trajectory, it is difficult predicting what Stewart might have accomplished. He might have become a successful

³²⁴ Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy*, 14.

³²⁵ Joseph H. Bausman, *History of Beaver County Pennsylvania* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1904), 311.

businessman or civic leader, but it is more likely he would have blended in with Pittsburgh society.

The title of this dissertation suggests a direct connection or linkage between the life of a minor politician and the evolution of the American republic. On the one hand, it could be argued that Bates contributed to the expansion and influence of political parties at the national, state, and local levels of government. He was also prominent for a very short time in the newspaper business, an industry that encouraged literacy in addition to its role in the evolution of the party system in the United States. However, Bates did not do much beyond these modest accomplishments. Therefore, what can be learned about the early Republic by analyzing the life and untimely death of Tarleton Bates? Alan Taylor had a similar challenge in his study about William Cooper. The title of Taylor's book might lead a reader to assume that his is merely a local study, and it certainly is a study of Otsego County, New York. But the themes of land, politics, power, and identity are applicable for American society during the early republic, especially for the frontier. The fact that William Cooper was James Fenimore Cooper's father and that Taylor also engages the son's memories of the father enables the author to challenge and to illuminate a wide range of assumptions about the transition from Federal, to Jeffersonian, to Jacksonian cultural politics.³²⁶ Jill Lepore argues that microhistories like this dissertation and Taylor's book are an "an allegory for . . . the culture as a whole." Individuals like Bates and Cooper are analyzed as a means of "explaining the culture," and not in order to

³²⁶ Richard D. Brown, "Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (Spring 2003): 15-16.

celebrate the singularity of their subject. It is as if historical episodes like the Bates-Stewart affair contained a kind of social and cultural DNA that, when teased out and closely analyzed, supplied an understanding of the whole design of a past society and its culture.³²⁷

Tarleton's personal evolution paralleled that occurring within his adopted state and hometown. Within a generation, Pennsylvania transformed itself from a colony ruled by the Penn family into a representative democracy that acknowledged the existence of competing, oftentimes contentious, political factions. Pittsburgh also changed from a military outpost that had supported military expeditions against the British, the Indians, and local rebels into a commercial and industrial center.

Bates' life, studied as a microhistory, teaches us in a more dramatic fashion than an ethnographic study of a region or group of people³²⁸ how individuals reconciled their ideals with the realities of life in the United States at the turn of the nineteenth century. His first-hand experiences help to explain the culture as it evolved from just before the Revolution to immediately after the first successful turnover of government in the nation's history. He was born into relative privilege, but because of circumstances and personal choice he was compelled to migrate west in search of greener pastures. Within a

³²⁷ Richard D. Brown, "Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (Spring 2003): 14. Quoting Richard L. Bushman in Jill Lepore's article "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography." *The Journal of American History* 88 (June 2001): 133. Bushman argues in a letter of Oct. 12, 2002 that it is precisely because the microhistory is so compelling "that we can scarcely stop ourselves from turning this single incident into an allegory for the whole.... Its very concrete reality makes it all the more dangerous."

³²⁸ John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Faragher's study of rural people in mid-nineteenth century Illinois is a counterbalance to Wade's analysis of life in frontier cities. Faragher focuses on a group of settlers in a specific geographic area.

relatively short period of time, however, he had achieved through application and hard work a measure of economic and social status – a very “Whiggish,” American success story.

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