NEW WINE IN OLD WINESKINS: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE MAKING OF 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN CALVINISM

By

Justin Rowe

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

History—Doctor of Philosophy

2015

ABSTRACT

NEW WINE IN OLD WINESKINS: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE MAKING OF 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN CALVINISM

By

Justin Rowe

The following analyzes the social structure and intellectual change of an American antebellum community. Essentially, this dissertation focuses on the Presbyterian Church in the early 19th century and suggests that by historically examining its structural dynamics historians and social scientists alike can better understand not only American intellectual history but also the sociology of ideological change. Using the Presbyterian Church as a case study, the project hypothesizes how the social organization of early American Presbyterianism influenced not only the Old and New School schism of 1837, but the transformation of American Calvinism in general. It theorizes that the reason Hopkinsian modifications to Westminster Calvinism successfully diffused across the Presbyterian Church was because the construction of the Erie Canal better connected many of the more progressive, innovative, presbyteries initially isolated on the frontier—thus increasing their capacity to influence the denomination as a whole. In essence, when the canal facilitated an enormous amount of material development in western New York during the 1820s, those presbyteries most affected were also the recipients of numerous Congregational immigrants who had adopted many of the Rev. Samuel Hopkins' modifications to Calvinism. Thus, while these presbyteries were transforming economically and intellectually, they were also changing structurally as the canal elevated their standing within the church from "peripheral" status to a more influential and connected "semiperipheral" position which ultimately accelerated the diffusion of Hopkinsian theology and the creation of New School Calvinism.

Copyright by
JUSTIN ROWE
2015

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

According to the Psalms, the LORD of Heaven and Earth is our helper and guide, a fountain of inspiration and strength.[1] As such, I would like to begin by giving any glory and honor associated with this manuscript to the One who sustained me through the project's development process. If this dissertation is meritorious or praiseworthy in any way, it probably has more to do with the LORD's agency and guidance than anything else. Yet He works just as much through human agents as He does directly and of this class there are many deserving of credit and recognition.

Thanks then must go first and foremost to my wife and partner, Amanda, who has patiently walked alongside me through the many years of undergraduate and graduate school, listening to all my ideas and helping me see what I need to see, be where I need to be. She has truly been an enduring and unwavering ally through the various stages of my academic and professional maturity and it is she who has made the journey sweeter and brighter. Secondly, I would like to thank my family and close friends for their prayers and support over the years. As a constant source of encouragement, they have been there in every situation, in times of scarcity and plenty, in breakthrough and disappointment.

There are many who have contributed to the creation of this manuscript intellectually as well. To them I am extremely grateful. Above all I would like to thank and honor my advisor Dr. David Bailey. As perhaps the most original and out-of-the-box scholar teaching today, he has been a tremendous example and resource over the years—pushing me to ask deeper questions and

[1] Psalms 118:2,7; 31:3, 48:14; 73:24; 27:1; 28:7.

consider alternative interpretations. I would also like to express gratitude to Dr. Thomas Summerhill not only for allowing some doe-eyed undergraduate to take his graduate seminar back in 2007, but likewise for actually collaborating with an untrained doctorial candidate on a major research and publishing project. Because of this I have received invaluable professional advancement and have been exposed to fields of study that otherwise would have remained inaccessible to me. Similarly I am indebted to Drs. Peter Alegi and Leslie Moch. Even though each has achieved great success as an international scholar, it is their passion as teachers and educators that has most impacted my life. In this vein I must also express gratitude to Dr. Peter Knupfer for the friendship, support, and feedback he has given me over the years. He has a very rare talent for creative teaching and pedagogy. I would die a happy man to know that I have served my students as skillfully as he.

I am also very grateful for the feedback I have received over the years on this project—Drs. Michael Stamm, Malcolm Magee, Zachary Neal, Peter Wallace, and of course the unnamed reviewers for the *Michigan Academician* and *Journal of Historical Sociology*. Their comments and insights have certainly made this a better, tighter, study from what it initially was. Additionally, thanks must go out to the American Historical Association for the grant they awarded me (the Michael Kraus Grant in American Colonial History) which made some of the travel for researching this topic possible. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Michigan State University History Department, College of Social Science, Graduate School, and Council of Graduate Students for their very generous support over the years; not only as a graduate and research assistant, but also for funding the conferences I participated in.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the archival staffs of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Union Theological Seminary's Burke Library, Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, and Princeton Theological Seminary Library. Their dedication to the sources makes studies like these possible. I must say that the irreplaceable artifacts of the past are in good hands at these institutions. Lastly, I would like to thank the faculty at Great Lakes Christian College, particularly Drs. John Nugent, Lloyd Knowles, Dan Cameron, and George Brown. Without them I never would have become a doctor of storytelling. Thank you.

—Justin

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES....x

LIST OF FIGURES....xi

Introduction
The Intellectual Crisis of Albert Barnes and the Diffusion of New School Calvinism....1
Project Overview: The Presbytery of Philadelphia as Denominational Microcosm....12
Theory and Hypothesis....18
Methodology....25
Historiography....29
The Fate of Albert Barnes and the Beginning of the Story....40
Aftermath and Project Outline....49

Chapter 1
The Crisis of American Calvinism and the 1801 Plan of Union....56
Introduction....56
Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and the Softening of American Calvinism....64
The Rise of Millennial Ecumenism....68
Courting Union....72
A Proposal from the Forest....77
The 1801 Plan of Union and Frontier Accommodation....86
Implicating the Plan of Union....93
Fleeing Egypt for Sinai—The Migration of Yankee Christianity....98
Crossing the Jordan—The Foundation of Auburn, New York....104
From Chaos to Order—The Genesis of Union Calvinism in Canal County....109
Conclusion....123

Chapter 2
The Erie Canal—Prosperity Comes to the West....127
Introduction....127
The Erie Canal—A Vision of Union....131
The Erie Canal—Prosperity Comes to Upstate New York....146
Conclusion....156

Chapter 3
The Quantitative Analysis of Presbyterian Ecclesiastical Structure....159
Introduction....159
Explanation of Commonly Used Methodological Models....165

The Process....168
Collecting and Testing the Data....172
Results....177
Confirming the Results....182
Conclusion....187

Chapter 4
The Institutionalization of New School Presbyterianism....190
Introduction....190
Dirck Cornelius Lansing and the Fight for Relevance....198
Building in the Woods—Auburn Theological Seminary....205
Assembling the Structure—The Plan of Union Enters Higher Education....214
Auburn Theological Seminary and the Catechization of New School Calvinism....224
Conclusion....240

Chapter 5
The Triumph and Diffusion of New School Presbyterianism....243
Introduction....243
Auburn Seminary Graduates and the Diffusion of Innovation....250
The Rev. Albert Barnes and the Apogee of New School Diffusion....257
The Hopkinsian Controversy Reaches a Conclusion....273
Epilogue....279

CONCLUSION....286

APPENDIX....300

BIBLIOGRAPHY....316

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Selected Presbytery Membership Levels 1815 and 1825.....308

Table 2: Selected Presbytery Charitable Giving Levels 1810s and 1820s Avg.....309

Table 3 Selected Ranked Presbytery Factor Scores (Decline).....310

Table 4 Selected Ranked Presbytery Factor Scores (Incline).....311

Table 5 Selected Ranked Presbytery Tripartite Scores.....312

Table 6 Undergraduate Affiliation of Admitted Auburn Students (1821-1830).....313

Table 7 Regional Affiliation of Admitted Auburn Students.....314

Table 8 Regional Placement of Auburn Alumni Ministry (1824-1830).....315

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Appointment Spreadsheet.....301

Figure 2 Presbytery Factor Rankings 1810s.....302

Figure 3 Presbytery Factor Rankings 1820s.....303

Figure 4 Presbyterian Elite Committee Network 1820s-Presbytery.....304

Figure 5 Presbyterian Elite Committee Network 1820s-Individuals.....305

Figure 6 State Survey of Central New York (1792).....306

Figure 7 Regional Map of American Presbyteries 1810-1837.....307

Introduction—The Intellectual Crisis of Albert Barnes and the Diffusion of New School Calvinism

Feeling his hamstrings tighten, the Reverend Albert Barnes shifted in place, face pressed firmly to the ground of his study. Despite the cold, his brow continued to gather sweat as the seconds ticked. It would be sunrise soon but he refused to move and continued to wait on God for direction. While the minister began virtually every day in prayerful meditation, divine guidance was of particular importance this morning. At 10 o'clock his enemies would use the full weight of their combined influence and attempt to remove him as pastor from the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. He may even be forced to leave the city itself. Barnes was not sure what that would mean for his family, if it would even be possible to find employment after such a disgrace. The charge of heresy held considerable weight in 1830, as it did centuries before in Europe.[1]

Struggling to his feet, Barnes wiped his forehead with his shirt sleeve and looked at the clock. It would not be long now and he mentally calculated how long it would take to walk the twelve blocks from his office to the corner of Cherry and Ninth Street. There the fight would take place. Finally satisfied that now was the time, he gathered his papers together in a neat pile and put on his wool jacket. He then said a final prayer and unconsciously tugged at the collar of his coat, heading out into the chill of the clear autumn morning.

Without warning, a gust of wind caught him in the face. The preacher did his best not to breath in the biting air but his lungs and throat nevertheless protested. As he moved forward

[1] Presbytery of Philadelphia, "Records of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Volume 3" (Philadelphia, 1826), VAULT MI45 P5, Presbyterian Historical Society, 181; Richard W. Dickinson, "Reminiscences of James P. Wilson, D.D., and Rev. Albert Barnes," *The American Presbyterian Review* no. 11, Third Series (July 1871), 397.

Barnes took note of the dead leaves scattered along the street, the wind stirred them about in no particular direction, rustling with every move. He heard other sounds as well, echoing off the stone walls of neighboring buildings and pavement—the clop of horse hooves and carriage wheels, the cries of street merchants, the whistle of traffic wardens. It all was so familiar yet this morning everything seemed worth remembering as these could be his last moments as a minister.

It was November 30, 1830 and the city of Philadelphia felt every bit as busy and lively as it did when it was the nation's capital 30 years before. Although Washington was now the site of national politics, and New York had recently become the nation's principle port, the city was still a hive of activity and social status. The former home of revolutionary printer John Dunlap for example was clearly visible as Barnes walked from Washington Square to Cherry Street; the impressive four story estate arguably the grandest in the city. Similarly the city's principle luxury hotel, The United States Hotel, sat directly across from Nicholas Biddle's Second Bank of the United States—each visible to anyone crossing Chestnut.[2]

Yet the minister's mind was no doubt as much on the past as it was the present. It had been a long road leading to this point and it was hard to believe his career would end in disgrace. Perhaps the controversy was more about sectional prejudice than anything else. No doubt the eastern bred elites in the presbytery chafed at his frontier mannerisms and accent, scandalized by his direct, down-to-earth, attitude. In many ways Barnes didn't even belong in the big city and his enemies likely saw him as every bit the dimwitted yokel or bumpkin that he felt at times walking the city streets. In truth, the preacher would always consider the western

[2] John Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609-1884*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Company, 1884), 926, 993-994.

frontier of central New York home. In fact, at times like these he longed to return to a simpler life on the outskirts of Rome, New York. The West had nothing like the machine politics of the "City of Brotherly Love" and the preacher's hometown was only just beginning to grow beyond its 70 buildings and 2000 residents. In this way, he might argue, home was pure and undefiled. But here, at what seemed the epicenter of civilization, Barnes was surrounded by a mass of 160,000 people and the very physical history of the nation itself. With that came the agendas of kings and the warring of kingdoms; the horse-trading, the alliances, the machinations of affluence. Indeed, the preacher had lost count of how often he had to comfort himself with the Savior's words: "My Kingdom is not of this world." Barnes had been in Philadelphia for little more than five months and already the city was threatening to consume him as the most prominent members of the Presbyterian Church were no doubt sharpening their carving knives for the moment he walked through their front door.[3]

Lost then in thought, Barnes assessed his chances of withstanding yet another assault from the Rev. Ashbel Green; chief architect of his current ordeal and perhaps the most intimidating man in all the city. Despite his affable disposition, the elderly minister was a serious threat and held tremendous influence. First and foremost was the fact that he was editor of the *Christian Advocate*, an evangelical publication that was read across the entire eastern seaboard. Moreover, Green's prominence was augmented by his position as sitting President of the Presbyterian General Assembly Board of Trustees, his past residency as

[3] Albert Barnes, "Church Manual for the Use of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia" (Philadelphia, 1841), BX 9211.P49103 F502, Presbyterian Historical Society, 30; Samuel W. Durant, *History of Oneida County, New York: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Philadelphia: Everts & Fariss, 1878), 381-382; J.D.B. DeBow, ed., *Statistical View of the United States: Embracing Its Territory, Population-White, Free Colored, and Slave-Moral and Social Condition, Industry, Property, and Revenue* (Washington, DC: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854), 192.

president of Princeton College, and his current post as president of Jefferson Medical College. Green was likewise a former moderator and stated clerk of the General Assembly and the Presbytery of Philadelphia, altogether making him unequivocally the titular leader of the city's presbytery. It was within this presbytery then—the Presbytery of Philadelphia—that the approaching battle would be fought and Barnes had little at his disposal to defend himself. Already Barnes had been attacked twice during the council's deliberations; once during the month of April in absentia, and again at the beginning of the summer. Today would be the third such engagement and it looked as if Green's crusade was building to its climax for, among other things, the crusader now had the blessing of the region's Synod.[4]

According to his supporting deacons and elders, Barnes knew that officially his trouble began even before he had arrived in the city. Months earlier, on April 20th, commissioners from the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia entered the proceedings for the Presbytery of Philadelphia and offered a petition to seat Barnes as their pastor. At the time the church was without a minister. Its previous clergyman, the Rev. James P. Wilson, had recently resigned due to age and the church was desperate to secure Barnes as quickly as possible. While the minister was attractive to First Church for a variety of reasons, perhaps the greatest was the hope that

[4] Organizationally speaking, 19th century American Presbyterianism was a well structured machine, ordered into various geographical units. The principle component of organization was the presbytery, similar to a Roman Catholic or Anglican parish, where individual congregations were institutionally bound together geographically under the authority of a council of ministers and elders from member churches. In the early 19th century, anywhere between 10 and 30 congregations could make up a presbytery. Following this was the synod which was a council of commissioners from each presbytery that had the power to adjudicate over the presbyteries. Above the synod was the General Assembly, the denominational supreme court and central authority. This body met annually, typically in the city of Philadelphia, and was composed of delegates from every presbytery of the Church. For more information see PCUSA, *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as Ratified by the General Assembly, at Their Session in May, 1821 and Amended in 1833* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1839), 418-427; Ashbel Green, *The Life of Ashbel Green*, ed. Joseph Huntington Jones (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1849), 151-152, 329, 338, 340-342; Edward B. Davis, "Albert Barnes, 1798-1870: An Exponent of New School Presbyterianism" (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1961), 122-123, 133.

Barnes would replicate the phenomenal success he was experiencing across the river in New Jersey. Beginning sometime in November of 1828, the Presbyterian Church of Morristown had suddenly become swept up in revival enthusiasm, with Sunday morning attendance swelling and membership applications reaching extraordinary levels. This made Morristown the third fastest growing congregation in all the denomination and turned Barnes into a denominational celebrity.[5]

Unfortunately many of the established, old-guard, elites on the council weren't impressed and found troubling evidence that Barnes had resorted to questionable practices in order to facilitate and sustain the revival. As such when the commissioners from First Church presented their request, it was opposed on the grounds that the prospective minister had departed from the denomination's Articles of Faith. Immediately a standoff ensued. For nearly the whole week nothing could be resolved as First Church vigorously debated with the Presbytery officials, all with Barnes entirely separate from the affair. Surprisingly, however, something rather remarkable took place—a handful of formally conservative members suddenly switched sides and began supporting First Church and the installation of Barnes. In response to this the guard supporting Green were no doubt speechless and unexpectedly found themselves surrounded, feeling control of the issue slipping from their grasp. Consequently, and to the utter shock and horror of the traditional faction, when the final vote was called the morning of April 23rd, as many as fourteen of the ministers at the meeting voted to grant First Church's request and approve the installation of Barnes (assuming of course that the minister

[5] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 131-140; Letter from Albert Barnes to Rev. George Bush, January 29, 1829, quoted in Davis, 86; Davis, 129-130, 132; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1829* (Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1829), 448; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1830* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes and L.R. Bailey, 1830), 74, 59-141.

agreed to the proposition). This left Green's contingent with only eight votes, placing them in a decided minority and awoke them to a rather disturbing fact—that the Presbytery of Philadelphia, once the very core and center of the American Presbyterian Church, was no longer the stronghold of Calvinist orthodoxy it was.[6]

In 1830 it was common knowledge that American Presbyterianism was essentially the natural outgrowth of British Calvinism. Barnes understood this and so did his opponents. Indeed, as early as the 1780s the denomination had fully committed itself to this intellectual course. Emerging from the English Civil War over a century earlier, the Westminster Confession of Faith quickly became the unofficial doctrinal standard for not only American Calvinists, but all English speaking Calvinists throughout the world. Originally initiated by the largely Puritan English Parliament of 1643, an assembly of English clergymen was called to convene at Westminster Abbey. The purpose of this convention was to essentially reform the Church of England and secure the help of Scottish Covenanters in their struggle against Charles I. Because the Scottish had successfully defeated the king at Newburn, Northumberland three years earlier—thus securing an important measure of sacred and secular independence—a move away from the “popish” High Church Episcopacy of the English Royalists was already well under way in Scotland. In its place was a robust Reformed Presbyterianism. Accordingly, and as a prerequisite for Scottish support, Parliament was urged to adopt Scottish reforms to further facilitate the anti-Royalist alliance; to which the Solemn League and Covenant and Westminster Confession of Faith were the ultimate result.[7]

[6] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 142.
[7] John MacPherson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: With Introduction and Notes* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1881), 11-28.

Barnes also knew that this inherited sacred confession had additionally become formally significant for American Presbyterians in the 1780s. At the time, the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America was under the jurisdiction of a central body of ministers called the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. Due to rapid growth, however, it was deemed appropriate to divide into more manageable administrative components and the Synod promptly segmented into four smaller synods in 1786. To maintain order it was resolved to place each of the synods under an overarching democratic ruling entity of presbytery delegates which would adjudicate over the entire church. The body came to be known as the General Assembly and would formally meet in 1789 after a series of important preliminary arrangements were made.[8]

Logically, the most pressing of these concerns was a new Church constitution which officially incorporated the Westminster Confession of Faith into the denominational constitution in 1788. Thus, after making only a handful of minor changes, the Confession was ceremonially adopted, obliging all judicatories in communion with the church to strictly observe the statutes therein. Broadly speaking, this committed American Presbyterians to a system of orthodox Calvinism which affirmed the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture, the Doctrine of the Trinity, the foreknowledge of God, the concept of Predestination, the Substitutionary Theory of Christ's Atonement, The Doctrine of Original Sin, Total Depravity, and the concept of Irresistible Grace.[9]

Yet this 40 year-old sacred covenant of faith, believed Rev. Green and his allies, had been recently broken by a tactless westerner named Albert Barnes. Of particular concern for

[8] Guy S. Klett, *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church In America: 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1976), 608-611.
[9] Ibid., 628, 636; PCUSA, *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church,* 12-14, 20-21, 23-27, 68, 63-64.

them was the preacher's belief in the doctrine of Irresistible Grace and man's ultimate inability to participate in conversion and spiritual regeneration. To theological conservatives this was disturbing for a number of reasons, one of which was the potential erosion of their institutional power base. Ever since the formation of the General Assembly in 1789, eastern Middle-State clergymen like Ashbel Green had dominated nearly every aspect of the denomination—dictating, among other things, the allocation of resources and the standards to which men were admitted into the ministry. This was achieved primarily through General Assembly administrative committee appointments that presbyteries like Philadelphia held an iron grip on for over thirty years. One of the defining characteristics of this group of elites was their historical commitment to traditional Calvinism which stemmed in part from a Scots-Irish immigrant ancestry that was historically antagonistic to 18th century English Latitudinarianism and its corresponding emphasis on human reason over Divine revelation. This migration stream was strongest in the States of New Jersey and Pennsylvania and thus layered an important regional component to Presbyterian orthodoxy. Therefore, those like Barnes who gave evidence of departing from a strict interpretation of Total Depravity or Irresistible Grace, for example, became immediately conspicuous not only as intellectual rivals, but also as sectional outsiders who were a threat to the continuation of eastern denominational power within the church.[10]

[10] For more information see Ian McBride, *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Leo P. Hirrel, *Children of Wrath: New School Calvinism and Antebellum Reform* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 58; Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949), 38-52, 225-227.

But Albert Barnes was also fully aware of a second major reason why Philadelphia traditionalists were upset—there was a very real danger that the church was heading the way of New England Congregationalism. Back in 1811 the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely warned the church that Boston's slip into Unitarianism was contagious and that measures needed to be taken to prevent its spread into the Delaware River Valley.[11] This became all the more critical after the Rev. William Ellery Channing sounded a Unitarian call to arms in 1819 and appeared to suggest that he intended to eradicate Reformed theology completely from the continent, declaring:

> "Calvinism, we are persuaded, is giving place to better views. It has passed its meridian and is sinking to rise no more. It has to contend with foes more formidable than theologians, with foes from whom it cannot shield itself in mystery and metaphysical subtitles, we mean with the progress of the human mind…Society is going forward in intelligence and charity and of course is leaving the theology of the sixteenth century behind it…We think the decline of Calvinism one of the most encouraging facts in our passing history."[12]

While Barnes understood that some of his recent statements could certainly be viewed as trending toward just such a humanistic and rationalist direction he, however, objected to being categorized with those who outright distained The Confession of Faith and considered it a "palsy" on the human spirit and a perverted "deformity" of Divine misrepresentation.[13]

But Ashbel Green, Barnes quickly surmised, didn't care about the distinctions which separated him and Channing. A small departure from the Articles of Faith was equal to a major one and in the eyes of the venerable minister, the new pastor of First Church was Channing's lackey, determined to bury the Reformed tradition. Barnes though refused to see himself this

[11] Ezra Stiles Ely, *A Contrast between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism* (New York: S. Whiting & Co., 1811), 279.
[12] William Ellery Channing, "The Moral Argument Against Calvinism," in *The Works of William E. Channing*, vol. 1 (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1872), 240.
[13] Ibid., 218, 223.

way and often self identified as a committed Calvinist publically.[14] Nevertheless, the minister actually had more in common with the Bostonian than he cared to admit; specifically his attempt to redefine the harsher elements of the Reform system and reconcile it to the notions of human liberty and moral justice that were popular at the time. In doing so, Barnes adopted something external, rather alien, to American Presbyterianism—something from New England and Congregational Christianity.

According to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Constitution of the early 19th century Presbyterian Church, mankind is utterly unable to respond to the call of the Gospel without the supernatural regenerative influence of the Holy Spirit. Lacking this divine impartation, he is "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of the soul and body." [15] This unfortunate state is the result of an imputed corruption of nature which began with Adam's fall, rendering all the race naturally disposed to evil and hostile to the things of God and his Kingdom. Indeed because of this fall, man:

> "Hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation… [and] is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself there unto. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin…All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, He is pleased…effectually to call by his word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death…enlightening their minds…renewing their wills…effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ…This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit.[16]

So as Barnes drew closer to the ominous Presbytery meeting that brisk fall morning, these constitutional concerns certainly continued to run through his mind. Yet at the end of the

[14] Albert Barnes, "The Way of Salvation: A Sermon Delivered at Morristown, New Jersey February 8, 1829" (Morristown: Jacob Mann, 1830), SCP 6448, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, 27-29.
[15] PCUSA, 39.
[16] Ibid., 59-64.

day, beyond all the rhetoric, abstractions, and hermeneutics, the minister ultimately could not bring himself to tell his parishioners that they were completely passive in their relationship with God; something the Constitution so clearly stated. Furthermore, he simply refused to accept the stark reality that Rev. Green was so famous for advocating when elaborating upon the Articles:

> "the *understanding* of man, in his natural depraved state, is darkened and blinded…'the carnal mind,' says St. Paul, 'is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be'…You will observe then, that by *total depravity*, we mean that *all* the human powers are depraved by sin."[17]

In defiance of this, Barnes stubbornly dug in and clenched his jaw, turning once again to the more moderate Congregational Calvinism he had inherited as a young man in the West. Although few understood it at the time, this softened theological system had not only fully penetrated the Presbyterianism of his home region, but had effectively surrounded much of the East as well. The fact that Barnes was in Philadelphia at all was evidence of this and in no way was he simply going to abandon the very notions and customs he had acquired on the frontier. How could he—such mores were critical to the success he enjoyed over the last three years. Ascribing to Green's version of passive Christianity then would in many ways be a betrayal of both his spiritual roots and what recently took place at his former church in New Jersey. Submitting to Green, therefore, would by default illegitimatize not only the revival of Morristown, but that of virtually every location back home in New York. In such places the doctrines of Election and Irresistible Grace were not only odious and rank, but so too was the idea that human depravity could make men unable to repent and reach for God's saving grace.

[17] Ashbel Green, "Lectures on the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines-Addressed to Youth: Lecture 18," *The Christian Advocate* 4 (February 1826): 50-52.

Such a doctrine, Barnes nodded to himself, encouraged a hardness of heart and spiritual laxity. Indeed, he basically said as much in a sermon the year before:

> "The rejection of the gospel, then, is to be traced to some cause where man will be to blame, not God…This is a matter of common sense. If God requires more of men than *in any sense* they are able to perform, then in the practical judgment of all men, according to the reason He has given them, He is unjust…No man is compelled against his will to be saved…The Spirit compels no one: He shuts out no one…It is no part of this scheme, as you will see, that God made men on purpose to damn them."[18]

So it was clear—Green had to be opposed; God is just and would not condemn mankind for things they had no power to change. Consequently, having stiffened his resolve, the only question that remained was whether Barnes could survive as minster of First Church with his beliefs intact? Considering the administrative power of Green, he would need powerful allies and as Barnes slowly approached the building that would potentially host his professional execution, immediately his mind turned toward the very men who had come to the rescue back in April—the conservative defectors. This cohort included men like the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, for example, who had inexplicitly switched sides and supported the settling of a western revival preacher from central New York. Whether he would side with First Church again, however, remained to be seen.

Project Overview: The Presbytery of Philadelphia as Denominational Microcosm

On the surface the actions of the fourteen ministers who came to the aid of First Church earlier that April may seem inexplicable, yet things begin to make a bit more sense after viewing three critical phenomena. Firstly, in comparison with the eight conservative ministers who composed the opposition, the fourteen who supported the installation of Barnes had

[18] Albert Barnes, 14, 17-18, 20.

congregations that were, on average, far larger than anything Green and his men were responsible for. In fact, the four largest churches in all the presbytery were pastored by men who eventually supported Barnes.[19] While numbers alone hardly allow for any reasonable conclusions, the statistics do suggest that the reason these men eventually supported First Church had something to possibly do with a modest sympathy and tolerance for revival measures; in particular the very practices Barnes employed to help facilitate the rapid growth of Morristown in 1829.

This hypothesis is further supported by a letter written from Barnes to a friend in Indiana during the month of October, 1830. Here he states that although there seems to be only a handful within the Presbytery of Philadelphia that fully ascribe to the softened Calvinism of the West, a present majority of the ministers do favor the "measures to promote piety and revivals"—in other words, making parishioners keenly aware of the idea that they and only they were responsible for their eternal spiritual destiny.[20]

The second key to understanding why a majority of ministers broke ranks with Rev. Green in April was the fact that nearly half of the fourteen weren't even firmly established figures within the presbytery. Indeed their membership was no more than a year old. Being relatively new, these ministers originated far outside the city, migrating from places as distant as Oneida County, New York—the very same area that Barnes had originated from. This would suggest that by 1830 the presbytery no longer composed the Middle-State Presbyterianism of

[19] These churches were James Patterson's 1st Church North Liberties with 1039 members, Joseph Sandford's 2nd Church Philadelphia with 687, Ezra Stiles Ely's 3rd Church Philadelphia with 440, and 1st Church Philadelphia with 419 members. The largest body led by a conservative clergyman in the presbytery was William McCalla's 8th Church Philadelphia with 322 members; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly… A.D. 1830*, 88-89.
[20] Letter from Albert Barnes to James H. Johnston, October, 1830, quoted in, *The Dead Who Die in the Lord, Blessed: A Sermon Preached in the Centre Church Crawfordsville, Indiana* (Philadelphia: William F. Murphy's Sons, 1874), 8-9.

the past 30 years, as ministers from various geographic regions brought with them an assortment of intellectual traditions from across the country.[21]

The third and final explanation of conservative defection that April, however, is drastically more complicated and concerns the overall premise of this dissertation in that it regards a significant social shift in both the overall structure of the American Presbyterian Church and the intellectual transformation of American Calvinism in general. Directly related to the recent migration of outside ministers into Philadelphia, the division of the city's presbytery that spring was but a very late consequence of something that had already covertly divided American Presbyterians years before.

While the presbytery officials were unaware of it the morning of November 30th, by the time that Barnes finally arrived at Cherry Street and entered into the room of his third presbytery trial, Presbyterianism across the nation had already become thoroughly divided between two distinct doctrinal and geographic factions. To the right was the Middle-State "Old School" party which, again, held a firm commitment to the Church Constitution and Westminster Confession of Faith. To the left was the western "New School" faction whose strength generally lay outside the Delaware River Valley, across the vast land west of the Appalachian Mountains. Unlike the former, the latter was committed to the softening of Calvinism, emphasizing not so much the hand of God but the responsibility of the individual.

This bifurcation began thirty years prior and by 1830 had found its way into even the oldest and most centralized sections of the Presbyterian Church. The specific mechanics of the diffusion process started in 1801 with a denominational merger between American

[21] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 142; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1828* (Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1828), 330.

Presbyterians and Congregationalists from the General Association of Connecticut. Called the "Plan of Union," the marriage involved the sharing and pooling of resources—including parishioners and actual congregations—on the western frontier. The purpose was for eastern Calvinists to join forces in an attempt to not only better evangelize the West, but also challenge the explosive popularity of western Methodism and Anabaptism. Initially things went very well but by 1810 many of the involved Congregational churches in upstate New York began to abandon their duel membership and removed themselves from the Congregational Church completely—becoming solely Presbyterian in the process.

While the two denominations had much in common, many of the New York Congregationalists that were now formally entering into the Presbyterian network ascribed to a modified form of Calvinism called "New Divinity" which was inspired by Congregationalist theologian, the Rev. Samuel Hopkins. For Hopkins the notion of total and complete depravity was problematic. How could the human race be guilty for a condition they had no power to affect? Accordingly, the minister concluded that although the human heart may have been wholly corrupted by the Fall, the human intellect and mind were not. In this way, reasoned the Connecticut divine, mankind maintained a certain sense of liberty and was therefore fully culpable for sin unless repentance and conversion took place. Moreover, Hopkins was also responding directly to contemporary Enlightenment criticisms of Calvinism that addressed this very issue. In so doing, Hopkins was attempting to both satisfy his own doctrinal misgivings and make Calvinism socially relevant in the age of Deism and a growing 18th century Unitarianism.

With this distend of intellectual innovation entering into the Presbyterian Church on the frontier of New York, the region quickly became dominated by New Divinity adherents.

Ultimately this would not have been a problem for the more centrally located conservative Presbyterians in places like Philadelphia or New York City because, generally speaking, the New Divinity—or Hopkinsian—presbyteries on the frontier had very little influence and power in their isolated, peripheral, positions on the hinterland. Yet unfortunately for Old School conservatives, construction began on the Erie Canal in 1817 and things began to change structurally as the canal brought enormous development and prosperity to these formally marginal frontier presbyteries—raising their overall influence in the denomination and increasing their capacity to transmit Hopkinsian Calvinism across the country. This was primarily because the canal gave unprecedented access to not only Ohio and Michigan, but also New York City and the eastern seaboard; effectively crystallizing differences between Middle-State conservatives and western innovators. As a result, following completion of the Canal in 1825, ministers from west-central New York began rapidly migrating across the United States, mostly west into Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. A minority, however, moved east, deeper into conservative territory and the Delaware River Valley—with men like Albert Barnes being a prime example.

At its heart then, this dissertation is a case study into the social and intellectual mechanics of ideological diffusion. Although primarily a work of narrative history, the project does intersect with a sizable body of social science literature, particularly that which concerns the dynamics of social structure and community organization. Most notably the late Everett Rogers is often credited with offering the best working theory of the subject in 1962 with his eminent *Diffusion of Innovations*. Since then the question of diffusion—and how social structure influences its proliferation—has proven to be an especially interdisciplinary topic,

uniting scholars from disciplines as different as Mathematics, Physics, and Organizational Theory;[22] with those from Communication, Psychology, Sociology, and even History.[23]

In like manner this work uses a variety of methods and approaches to better understand how the early 19th century American Presbyterian Church changed both intellectually and socially. While the author interrogates narratives from archival sources and primary accounts, much of the theoretical support for this project is based on understanding the sources quantitatively—utilizing a modified or original form of statistical scoring, or "Standard" Scoring, Social Network Analysis, and Factor Analysis.[24] Consequently, this project can best be described as a work of historical sociology, similar to Charles Tilly, John Padgett, Christopher Ansell, and

---

[22] Harrison C. White, *An Anatomy of Kinship: Mathematical Models for Structures of Cumulated Roles* (Englewodd Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963); Harrison C. White, "Can Mathematics Be Social? Flexible Representations for Interaction Process and Its Sociocultural Constructions," *Sociological Forum* 12, no. 1 (1997): 53–71; Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360–80; Duncan J. Watts and Steven H. Strogatz, "Collective Dynamics of 'Small World' Networks," *Nature* 393, no. 6684 (1998): 440–42; Albert-László Barabási and Réka Albert, "Emergence of Scaling in Random Networks," *Science* 286, no. 5439 (October 15, 1999): 509–12; David Krackhardt, "Viscosity Models and the Diffusion of Controversial Innovation," in *Dynamics of Organizations: Computational Modeling and Organizational Theories*, ed. Alessandro Lomi and Erik R. Larsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).

[23] Jacob L. Moreno, *Who Shall Survive?: A New Approach to the Problem of Human Interrelations* (Washington, DC: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1934); Jacob L. Moreno and Helen H. Jennings, "Statistics of Social Configurations," *Sociometry* 1 (1938): 342–374; Everett M. Rogers, "Categorizing the Adopters of Agricultural Practices," *Rural Sociology* 23, no. 4 (1958): 346–354; Jeffrey Travers and Stanley Milgram, "An Experimental Study of the Small World Problem," *Sociometry* 32, no. 4 (1969): 425–443; Charles Tilly, *The Vendee: A Sociological Analysis of the Counter-Revolution of 1793* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (1983): 147–160; Eric Richards, "Scotland and the Atlantic Empire," in *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Philip D Morgan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (May 1, 1993): 1259–1319; Roger V. Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); John F. Padgett and Walter W. Powell, *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[24] For a full discussion of Standardization see chapters 4 and 7 of Roxy Peck, Chris Olsen, and Jay Devore (2012). Similarly, a full historical and methodological survey of SNA can be obtained from Linton Freeman's *The Development of Social Network Analysis: A Study in the Sociology of Science* (2004). Finally, for an introduction to Factor Analysis see Jae-On Kim, *Factor Analysis: Statistical Methods and Practical Issues* (Newbury Park: SAGE, 1978); UCLA, "Annotated SPSS Output," *IDRE, UCLA*, January 31, 2014, http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/output/factor1.htm; Alfred P. Rovai, Jason D. Baker, and Michael K. Ponton, *Social Science Research Design and Statistics: A Practitioner's Guide to Research Methods and IBM SPSS* (Chesapeake: Watertree Press LLC, 2013), 439-450.

Rodger Gould's research into how social structure and organization facilitates the spread of various political and cultural innovations, ultimately resulting in profound institutional change.[25]

Theory and Hypothesis

The historical analysis of social structure and its influence on widespread cultural change primarily began with Charles Tilly. He is often credited for establishing the field of historical sociology and his most celebrated accomplishment, *The Vendée*, did so by demonstrating the value of archival research to sociologists and the utility of quantitative methods to historians. Tilly's principal goal was to understand why certain regions in late 18th century France supported the Revolution while others did not. To do this he analyzed local social structures; measuring how class cleavages, intermarriage, landowning, the textile industry, and the clergy all influenced revolutionary sentiment. Broadly speaking, Tilly's work suggests that although social systems can be emotionally charged and subject to arbitrary forces, they also possess rational features that are conducive to measurement and quantitative analysis.[26]

Nothing better illustrates this reality than John Padgett and Christopher Ansell's brilliant study of 15th century Italian state formation. Offering insight into the marriage and financial network of the Medici family in 15th century Florence, Italy, the two demonstrate how the Medici's position between the middle and upper-class facilitated their takeover of city

[25] To define this study's use of the term 'social structure' see Fredrick L. Bates and Walter G. Peacock, "Conceptualizing Social Structure: The Misuse of Classification in Structural Modeling," *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 4 (1989): 565–577, in which social structure is assumed to be "the differentiated and bounded units that constitute the parts of society and the network connections between and among the constitute operating units. Likewise, this article refers to 'diffusion' in keepings with Rogers' definition: "a process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system—a special type of communication" (Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations, 5th Ed.* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 5.
[26] Tilly, *The Vendee*.

government in the 1430s.[27] While most of the Florentine upper-class maintained a complex network of marriage alliances within the city, The House of Medici were able to construct an alternative network with the city's merchant class and geographically peripheral noble families. Essentially, by cementing a business relationship with city merchants through lending practices supported by the Medici Bank—and keeping their own marriage alliances at a distance from the city—the Medici were able to bridge the gap between two very different social bodies. This allowed them to serve as a central hub whereby an enormous amount of resources and information flowed directly to their agents. Padgett and Ansell explain that in this centralized position the Medici were able to grow politically and financially powerful enough to successfully challenge the rival patrician houses for control of Florentine government in 1433, leading to a Medici ruling dynasty that lasted for three centuries.

Yet the Medici ascendency of 1433 and 1434 also serves to illustrate an extremely significant dynamic of group organization that Padgett and Ansell did not anticipate—the importance of semiperiphery districts within a communal system. In other words, how the internal nuances of societal structure can directly influence the economic and social standing of historical actors. To elaborate, a little must first be said about the general framework and theoretical approach to which this dissertation follows.

Utilizing a three-part centrality model, this project organizes quantitative data collected between 1810 and 1830 from the General Assembly Minutes and Statistical Appendices of the Presbyterian Church, to rank American presbyteries according to their relative influence nationwide. The information is arranged into three separate categories—core, semiperiphery,

[27] John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," American Journal of Sociology, 98 (6) (1993), 1259-1319.

and periphery—which provide the theoretical baseline of an hypothesis regarding the link between social structural, intellectual change, and diffusion. The first part of the argument flows from organizational theorist David Krackhardt's concept of "Peripheral Dominance" and suggests that 19th century American New Divinity Calvinism was able to spread across much of the Presbyterian Church during the 1810s and 20s because it first began in the hinterland of the western frontier. This stems from the fact, reasons Krackhardt, that if a social network is highly centralized then it is far more likely that an innovation will successfully diffuse throughout an organization if the mother site is located on the periphery. If, alternatively, the mother site is located at the center of a highly centralized system, the innovation will likely not diffuse.[28]

However, Krackhardt's theory alone is hardly enough to explain something as complex as real-world doctrinal diffusion and requires the help of additional social theorists. To begin, Mark Granovetter's highly lauded concept of "the strength of weak ties" is of particular value and postulates that innovation or new information does not generally appear from the center of a network, but instead enters externally, via the "weak ties" that connect separate and distinct information collectives. To put another way, the acquaintance chains between individuals, not the strong ties among close friends and family, are usually the major channel of intellectual innovation and discovery. Granovetter made this breakthrough as he studied job placement, finding that those closest to us typically do not provide the necessary information for a new employment opportunity, yet the links of distant friends and acquaintances do.[29] Granovetter concluded that this was because a network's strong ties tend to be between

[28] Krackhardt, 260-263.
[29] Granovetter, 1360, 1362.

homogenous members; individuals who all share the same relative information. Ideas from within a network then do not usually lead to new opportunities or innovation because the information has already been processed and the network as a whole tends to be resistant to instability. Instead, innovation generally comes from outside familiar channels of communication, through links to outside systems.

In relation to the 19th century Presbyterian Church, the outside system and primary source of Hopkinsian diffusion were the Congregational churches of central and western New York who formally entered the denomination after abandoning their affiliation with the General Association of Connecticut during the 1800s and 1810s. Yet all this begs the question: "why would a central governing body be so inert or absent from the process of social change?" To answer this question it's necessary to briefly explore the work of German sociologist Max Weber and American sociologists Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell.

For Weber, human institutions have a fundamental propensity to become more stable as they age, producing a central bureaucratic ruling class that draws its authority and legitimacy from established institutional traditions. With the most to lose if power or values shift, this central body tends to value intellectual stability over innovation. In a very broad sense, Weber describes this conservative tendency as "Rationalization;" a process whereby innovative or charismatic ideas formalize into dogma, doctrine, and tradition. Weber sees this development as fluid, happening through a process of codification in which communal norms are established. Eventually the process matures such norms into the community's fundamental telos, whereby

its reason for existence stretches beyond the circumstances of its origins and founding members.[30]

Furthermore, as this process of bureaucratization and stability occurs—reasons DiMaggio and Powell—the organization in question tends to homogenize around its central elements with resource supply proportionally influencing overall conformity; "the greater the centralization of organization A's resource supply, the greater the extent to which organization A will change isomorphically to resemble the organizations on which it depends for resources."[31] Therefore in the case of the 19th century Presbyterian Church, an important sociologically reason that the established Middle-State central elite were largely resistant to Albert Barnes and his western allies—theological preferences not withstanding—was on account of the fact that the New Divinity threatened the general institutional stability of the denomination.

So, if the periphery of a social network is where innovation most successfully enters in from or is the place that is most successfully persists, how then does it successfully spread? Just such a question leads to the principal topic of the project—the critical importance of semiperipheral districts. On their own, the New Divinity presbyteries within the Presbyterian Church would have remained marginal and ineffectual precisely for the very reason they trend toward innovation in the first place—their lack of institutional influence and connections. Yet the Hopkinsian presbyteries of upstate New York did not remain marginal and peripheral. Instead, after completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, those that were once on the margins of the

[30] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, vol. 2.*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoff, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 1122, 655-657, 813, 815, 848, 1117.
[31] DiMaggio and Powell, 149, 154.

church quickly grew financially, demographically, and institutionally. As demonstrated in the following narrative, this did not suddenly make the churches of the canal corridor the center of the church, yet it did significantly raise their comparative standing from one that was insignificant to one that very much was. In this way, the author hypothesizes that the semiperipheral presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church were particularly important because it was they who were in a uniquely middle-ground position of denominational influence; one that was far enough from the center to resist the Isomorphic pull of conformity, but close enough to the supply of resources to have influence on the denomination as a whole.

Returning then to Padgett and Ansell, this dynamic can quickly be illustrated in the Medici business network of 15th century Florence. After supporting a working-class revolt in 1378, The House of Medici became a pariah among the other Florentine noble families. This forced them to the margins of the patrician community, effectively forcing them to marry into geographically distant Houses.[32] The loss in social status also inclined them to form stronger business ties with the city merchant class than the other noble houses. In this way, the structural strategy of Medici networking was far from intentional. Nevertheless, it placed the family in an important semiperipheral position that was far enough away from the rationalization and isomorphism of the central noble houses to foster independence. The Medici, however, were still members of the upper-class, with considerable material resources at their disposal. This middling position between the merchants and nobility then allowed the family to avoid direct competition with the core Florentine families, yet simultaneously placed them in a situation to dominate the city merchants and rural patrician families connected to

[32] Padgett and Ansell, 1298.

them through marriage. Such a scenario served to direct an enormous amount of financial and human capital into their hands. Consequently, this arrangement eventually led to their eventual ascendency and takeover of Florentine government; as well as the indirect birth of the Italian Renaissance in Tuscany.

The advantages of semiperipheral status can also be illustrated in the general history of 16th century Scotland and the emergence of the Scottish Enlightenment. Following union with England in 1707, the Scottish aristocracy and middle-class were now politically and economically subservient to the English gentry. To compensate, many in Edinburgh began seeking opportunity and profit outside of Europe, opening the door for Scottish imperial activity. Like the Medici family, Scotland had been marginalized by its more powerful neighbors but at the same time had access to the enormous resources of the British Empire and its colonial holdings in Ireland, North America, and the Indies. Consequently, the Scottish upper and middle-class enjoyed a semiperipheral imperial position that was close enough to the material and intellectual wealth of London to utilize English prosperity, but far enough away to enjoy those resources in relative freedom. It comes as no coincidence that immediately following this move to semiperipheral imperialism, such writers and thinkers as Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid managed to find success in, and more importantly beyond, the boundaries of Scotland.[33] In this way, the middle position between a network's periphery and core can offer unique intellectual and material advantages which often lead to profound cultural and political change.

[33] Richards.

Methodology

To test this semiperipheral hypothesis in a 19th century American context, the author utilized a common statistical process known as "Factor Analysis." Very broadly, the approach uses observable phenomena as measurement proxies for forces or factors that are not directly observable. While more will be said of this procedure in the statistical chapter, it is important to note that Factor Analysis not only allows one to score and rank each unit of analysis—in this case a presbytery of the church—but it also provides the means to assess whether one's measurement proxies, or metrics, are reliable enough in the first place. For the purposes of this study, the 19th century Presbyterian denominational structure was reconstructed using a combination of statistical data found in the yearly General Assembly minute appendices between 1810 and 1836.[34] The goal was to understand the comparative level of influence or power one presbytery had over another. In other words, rank the presbyteries from most influential to least and answer the question: which presbyteries had a comparatively greater ability to exert their denominational interest over the church as a whole? This was done by collecting data on three metrics of analysis—the size of a presbytery, its yearly level of charitable giving (wealth), and the number of General Assembly committee appointments its delegates receive.

Because this third metric of analysis is the more unorthodox of the set, further explanation here may prove helpful here. Ultimately, General Assembly committee appointments are useful for assessing power and influence within the Presbyterian Church

[34] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855).

because the individuals appointed to these positions had a disproportional amount of authority related to the bureaucratic affairs of the denomination, particularly for issues involving intellectual conformity. To understand this phenomenon, Rogers' work on social leadership is of particular relevance. Although most known for his five part typology of innovation adoption, Rogers also sheds light on how influential, well-connected, individuals facilitate the spread of information throughout a network. Referred to as "opinion leaders," Rogers defines these change agents as influential social models—or network hubs—whose behavior is imitated by others. Acting as a direct reflection of the social system they are members of, opinion leaders generally conform to the overall values and mores of their network, acting as pillars of the status quo.[35]

Consequently, by locating opinion leaders, one can identify the most powerful and influential members of a community and perhaps even use the frequency of their appearance to get a sense of an institution's overall administrative contours. Concerning 19th century Presbyterianism, locating these actors is actually a fairly straightforward process because the administrative and executive committees created by the denomination—particularly the General Assembly—featured so prominently in the routine affairs of the church. For example, The Board of Education was a particularly powerful committee and was responsible for setting Presbyterian educational policy. Getting elected to this body, done by ballot among the General Assembly delegates, was a great honor and lasted usually for a three year term that was renewable. Another example would be the Judicial Committee which adjudicated, among other

[35] Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 27.

things, appeals in heresy investigations and often had final say on matters relating to discipline and conduct.

Moreover, by looking at who was specifically appointed to these committees, one will also notice that the vast majority were 1) largely cosmopolitan, and 2) of a relatively higher socioeconomic class—two important generalizations Rogers makes about opinion leaders and their defining characteristics.[36] Similarly, by taking Rogers's generalization of conformity into account, one will also see that the elected members for many of these committees were largely the conservative Old School men; individuals particularly concerned with maintaining, enforcing, and participating in system-wide conformity.[37] Therefore, if the General Assembly appointees were among the opinion leaders of the church, tabulating how often they served on a committee can serve as a measurement of their affiliated presbytery's level of relational influence. Put another way, totaling how many times a presbytery delegate is elected or appointed to a committee can serve as a useful metric for how influential that presbytery is in the denomination as a whole.

Assembly appointments then are critically important when attempting to explain how and why particular sections of the Presbyterian Church were first exposed to, and eventually adopted, Samuel Hopkins' innovations because—as Rogers theorizes—it was precisely these committeemen, these opinion leaders, who managed and controlled overall intellectual consistency. For this reason, a running total of each presbytery's annual committee appointments in the General Assembly was used as the third and final metric for measuring a

[36] Ibid.

[37] The generally conservative presbyteries of Philadelphia, Ohio (Pittsburgh), New York, and New Brunswick dominate these executive and administrative boards quite regularly.

particular presbytery's overall influence from year to year. Adding then these appointment sums to the demographic and charitable giving totals found in the yearly appendices of the General Assembly minutes, and a three dimensional picture of Presbyterian Church structure emerges—one which combines a presbytery's size, wealth, and executive appointments to capture its relative power and influence across the denomination over space and time.

Once this data was collected, a Factor Analysis was done using a statistical software program developed by IBM called "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" or SPSS as it is commonly known. After these computations were completed the data was organized into three groups (core, semiperipheral, and peripheral) with any presbytery score under zero standard deviations falling into the "peripheral" category.[38] After having then the presbyteries tentatively ranked and categorized according to their Factor Scores, the results were subsequently verified with an entirely different methodological process known as "Standard Scoring." Again while the statistical chapter will go into more detail, it is important to note that this second approach also analyzes unobservable phenomena (presbytery power and influence) using social measurement proxies. The key difference, however, is that it does so with an entirely different mathematical procedure which scores individual datum according to comparable distance from the aggregate statistical mean of the data set. While Factor Analysis does this as well, it does so by *weighing* the metrics based on correlation coefficients. Standard Scoring, meanwhile, weights the

[38] The differentiation between "core" and "semiperipheral," however, was more subjective and depended on the specific dispersal of the data set in question.

variables evenly according to the formula $z=(x-\mu)/\sigma$. As expected, the two methods produced similar rankings with the Presbytery of Philadelphia dominating the denomination as a whole.[39]

A second verification was then done to not so much to confirm the Factor and Standard Score rankings themselves, but to further validate the appointment total metric used in both approaches because, again, this metric was the more experimental of the three. Using Social Network Analysis, the author proceeded to record overlapping General Assembly committee appointments for the years 1815 and 1825. The rationale behind this was that just as the sum total of appointments, population size, and wealth all measure different aspects or dimensions of a presbytery's capacity to exert influence on the church, so too do the elite networks that formed as a result of the General Assembly's deliberations. Essentially, these network rankings were created by calculating the aggregate degree of each presbytery (or total number of links for every committee appointee associated with a particular presbytery) and comparing them with the ranking produced by total appointments. Fortunately the results of the network analysis had great correlation with the appointment totals and further confirmed the use of appointments as a measurement proxy.

Historiography

If social science research then provides the theoretical and methodological skeleton for this dissertation, American Intellectual History has supplied the narrative muscle. Perhaps the most heavily studied event in this literature—and the central social phenomenon during the New Divinity controversy within the Presbyterian Church—has been the cultural upheaval

[39] For a more complete breakdown see Statistical Chapter.

produced by the Second Great Awakening. Originally named the "Burned-over District" by revivalist Charles Grandison Finney, the regions of Western New York, Pennsylvania, and northern Ohio all served as the epicenter of a massive wave of religious excitement and enthusiasm during the early 19th century. At the time, American society was developing into a modern bureaucratic nation-state. Structural changes were introduced, changes that quickly resulted in deeper social division. As governmental and cultural forces reorganized the American landscape and connected communities together that were previously separate—particularly through State sponsored turnpike and canal building projects or the proliferation of newspaper media—social instability ensued, quickly leading to social upheaval in many communities, particular in areas that were not very well established. As a result, the predictable religiosity of 18th century eastern Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians quickly lost ground to western revival fire and the spontaneity of the Holy Ghost. Virtually all Presbyterians attempted to compensate for this loss in status. Indeed, by the 1820s even conservative Old Schoolers timidly accepted the instability of revival in hope of denominational growth. In the end, however, Presbyterian responses created more problems than they solved.

The specific literature that covers the Second Great Awakening and the divide between Old and New School Calvinists, unfortunately, is fairly one-dimensional—focusing on a single issue while ignoring the broader cultural or structural characteristics of the controversy. Initially, Presbyterians themselves provided the bulk of the analysis, publishing great tomes of institutional history that generally reflected the Old or New School bias of the author. Ezra Hall Gillett and Charles Briggs accomplished as much during the 1860s and 80s where they featured everything from the 17th century immigration of American Presbyterian founder Francis

Makemie, to the fallout of the 1837 schism. More overtly partisan works were, likewise, produced during this time. Most attempted to explain the Old and New School divide from a particular position. Here the legitimacy of either faction was emphasized. Harvey Woods's 1843 *History of the Presbyterian Controversy* or Samuel Miller's 1839 *Report of the Presbyterian Church Case: the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Ashbel Green and Others* are both good examples of such literature.

As the Presbyterian Church moved into the 20th century, denominational historians largely forgot about the Old and New School schism. Although the passage of time is partially to blame, the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy in the 1920s would do much to redirect denominational attention from 19th century issues. Fortunately, a different group of scholars would pick up where church historians left off. In the 1930s, professional historians discovered the Old and New School debate for the first time after Gilbert Hobbs Barnes demonstrated its impact on the Anti-Slavery movement. Since then the topic of slavery has always been an important component of any analysis of both the Second Great Awakening and the divide within the American Reformed tradition. Although Barnes will be covered in-depth later, it's important to note that he was the first intellectual historian to connect the Schism with the issue of slavery. William Warren Sweet would later pursue this connection in the Presbyterian portion of his *Religion on the American Frontier* series. Here he argues, rather convincingly, that slavery was one of four reasons for the Old and New School separation.[40]

For the next decade Sweet's interpretation would dominate Old and New School scholarship until a seminal article appeared in 1949. In line with Sweet, Bruce Staiger supported

[40] William Warren Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier Vol II: The Presbyterians—1783-1840* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), 100-117.

the idea that slavery was a leading factor in the split but pushed the argument farther. In essence, Staiger concluded that the Old and New School controversy was much less complicated than previous scholars had thought. Yes Congregationalism, via the 1801 Plan of Union, was a factor but New Haven mores, he argues, could easily have led to a number of different outcomes between the two factions. Instead, Staiger posits, the key for understanding why the Schism happened at all was the New School affinity for Anti-Slavery; that slavery and slavery alone was the deciding force in dividing not only Presbyterians but the nation in general.[41]

For 20 years a handful of scholars would respond to Staiger's thesis but little changed one way or another, with most generally acknowledging the role of slavery as a major catalyst to varying degrees. In 1970, however, George Marsden completely overturned Staiger with his immensely authoritative *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience*. Here Marsden argues that the rise of hostilities between the Old and New School, and the flowering of Presbyterian antislavery, was merely a coincidence—that theological differences were really the deciding factor in the split and that slavery had virtually nothing to do with the breakdown among Reformed communities.[42] Marsden proceeded to support his position by diving into the Old and New School controversy with such intellectual rigor that to this very day alternatives do not appear possible. In this respect Marsden is one of the few scholars that can claim to of virtually ended an academic debate once and for all.

---

[41] Bruce Staiger, "Abolitionism and the Presbyterian Schism of 1837-1838," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* vol. 36 no. 3 (1949): 391-392.
[42] George Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003 [1970]), 93, 250.

In fact the studies that follow Marsden evidence this. For example, ten years after Marsden published the *Evangelical Mind*, the two works that most overtly feature slavery and Presbyterianism in any way appear rather timid in comparison with Staiger: Lawrence Lesick's investigation of abolition and Lane Seminary and C.C. Goen's investigation of denominational schisms and the eventual secession crisis each come nowhere near the boldness of Staiger's thesis.[43] Accordingly, the major shortcoming of Old and New School Historiography to this day is that it cannot seem to free itself from the dominant paradigm which Marsden, and to a smaller extend Staiger, established. Although the scholarship addressing the 1837 Schism provides a detailed account of the exchange between Old and New Schoolers, there was much more going on than a simple intellectual and cultural contest.

To understand this we must look beyond Old and New School, beyond Presbyterian history, beyond Staiger, beyond Marsden, and consult the historiography of 19th century revival America. To this day no one has performed the task more comprehensively, or with more rigor, than Whitney Cross. In *The Burned-over District*, Cross examines the intellectual anatomy of the period and demonstrates the vital importance material forces played in facilitating the spread of New England culture and the growth of American Christianity. According to Cross, 19th century New York, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Michigan:

> "[provide] a case history in the westward transit of New England culture…this section was the storm center, and religious forces were the driving propellants of social movements important for the whole country…neither the causes of the Civil War nor the origins of national prohibition…can be thoroughly understood without reference to the Burned-over District."[44]

[43] Lawrence Thomas Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1980); C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985).

[44] Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), vii; Western New York, however, did not encompass

With these words Cross threw down the gauntlet, arguing that without an *overall* understanding of the region, historians cannot even begin to understand American church, cultural, or political history. Prior to Cross, material on the subject was disjointed, lacking a theoretical framework. By no means, however, is this literature insignificant. Indeed a number of the monographs preceding Cross continue to populate graduate seminar reading lists. An excellent example is *The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844* by Gilbert Hobbs Barnes. Published in 1933, the work "was immediately recognized by reviewers in 1934 as 'significant,' 'important,' and even 'revolutionary,'".[45] Before publication, Barnes was an economist and had little professional experience in history. As if by fate, however, Barnes happened upon a long-forgotten trunk of letters and papers written by Theodore Dwight Weld and his wife Angelina—two prominent New School Presbyterian abolitionists.[46] After researching the couple for some time, Barnes concluded that it was Weld, not William Lloyd Garrison, who was the true leader of early American Anti-Slavery; that the Welds deserve the real credit for founding the abolition movement in the United States.[47] Yet Barnes wasn't finished. Not only did he attack the established narrative of American Anti-Slavery but he proceeded to then dismantle the accepted explanation for why the Civil War took place. Barnes essentially argued that the war was not caused by economics or a cleavage in culture per se (which was the dominant

---

all of the District. Cross argues on page 76 that "Anti-Masonry, Anti-Slavery, and Temperance; Revivalism, Perfectionism, Millerism and Spiritualism—all of these flourished in the Yankee belt extending from New England into the Middle West. Their strength in most cases was greatest, after New York, In New England, next being northern Ohio and eastern Michigan."

[45] Gilbert Hobbs Barns, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1930-1844: with a new Introduction by William G. McLoughlin* (New York: Harbinger, 1933, 1964), vii.

[46] Ibid., viii.

[47] Interestingly, embedded within Barnes advocacy for the agency of Weld, he goes even further to suggest that not only did Weld hold duel leadership with Finney *and* begin the anti-slavery crusade, but Weld also "plant[ed] the seed of the women's rights movement in the land of its origin" and that of the temperance crusade as well. (13, 15)

explanation at the time) but by a genuine moral missionary movement birthed by revivalists like Charles Grandison Finney and the Second Great Awakening.[48] Although historians would later charge Barnes with exaggeration, thanks to him no one has been able to discount the importance of either the Welds, or religion, to American cultural and political history.

Another significant work that set the stage for Whitney Cross was David Ludlem's *Social Ferment in Vermont*. Ludlem is significant because he essentially gave Cross his theoretical understanding of where religious enthusiasm comes from. Here Ludlem argues that the primary source of northern radicalism was the State of Vermont. Limiting himself to 1791-1850, Ludlum demonstrates that Vermonters where prone to a wide assortment of anti-Calvinist sentiment (Arminianism, Universalism etc.) and various intellectual movements e.g. Anti-Masonry, Anti-Slavery, Temperance, Deism, Revivalism, Millennialism, and even prison and educational reform. These culminated, suggests Ludlum, into "Ultraism" or the espousal of "radical views and the employment of extreme measures by religious men who fixed their attention on a single object without regard for its various relationships."[49] Too often debate raged within New England communities as radicals demanded that denominational creeds incorporate their particular variety of 'ism.'[50] One of the reasons for this was the background of the population. According to Ludlum, Western Vermont had a population that was fiercely independent and hostile to the orthodox doctrines and political hegemony of the more Calvinist

[48] Ibid., x, xxii, xxiv-xxv; Other arguments at the time included a Marxist interpretation that Northern bourgeois capitalism sought to wage war against Southern agrarian feudalism; the 'Southern Revisionist' thesis that the war was unnecessary and was purely the result of fanatical abolitionists and 'fire-eating' Southern hotheads only trying to defend their agrarian identity; or finally, the Beard thesis that with the rise of industrial capitalism, the sovereignty of King Cotton was shaken and an economic instability began to grow, eventually stabilizing through the war. (xxiii)
[49] David M. Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont: 1791-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 62, 55.
[50] Ibid., 56.

Congregationalists. This made for a cultural environment prone to excess. In the end, Ludlem's construct of Ultraism provided Cross with the inspiration he needed to develop his lifecycle of reform paradigm—a framework that is actually very reminiscent of modern theories found within the field of Historical Sociology. Thus, with the religious significance established by Barnes and the paradigm developed by Ludlum, the pieces were largely in place for Cross to pull the his seminal study together. [51]

It was in 1950 that Cross published *The Burned-over District.* Upon publication, Alice Felt Tyler, an eminent scholar of the era, immediately praised Cross, calling the work a "worthy companion," "excellent," and a "valuable addition to American social and intellectual history…of which David Ludlum's *Social Ferment in Vermont* was an outstanding example."[52] Others also praised the work despite that fact that the book was barely published (Cross had to sign an 800 dollar subsidy agreement with Cornell Publishing).[53] His publisher's hesitance was reasonable. Among scholars, Cross is known for having theoretical issues. At times his organization can be confusing and his prose particularly vague. Yet despite these weaknesses, Cross transformed the field of American Intellectual History by showing why sections of New York, greater New England, Ohio, and eastern Michigan were the birth place of so many 19th century reform movements.[54] According to his logic, if a particular population is numerically and economically stable, if its material infrastructure is relatively developed, if the majority of

[51] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Jun., 1944), 313, 315; Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History from the Colonial Period to the Outbreak of the Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), v.
[52] Alice Felt Tyler, *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Feb., 1951), 83-84.
[53] Judith Wellmen, "Crossing Over Cross: Whitney Cross' Burned-over District as Social History", *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Mar., 1989), 168.
[54] Whitney Cross, *The Burned-over District* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), 76.

residents are women[55], and if the population is extremely literate and college trained, then the potential for intellectual upheaval is high because social energy will be free to pursue ideological matters.[56]

Adding nuance, Cross then explores how the Erie Canal facilitated this process. Again, an area has to be economically stable in order for religious enthusiasm to take hold. This, states Cross, occurred with the creation of the Canal, arguing that "the canal guarded…from the extreme booms and the ensuing reaction of…more westerly competitors. Growth was relatively steady, solid, and unspectacular."[57] It is here then that Cross introduces Ludlum's Ultraism argument into the calculus. Whereas Ludlum described how Ultraism worked within a community, Cross went further and made the concept the climax of an entire social cycle of activity—The Revival Cycle—a sequence that begins with stability, develops into enthusiasm, peaks with Ultraism (which increases sectarian distinctions) and results in the decline of movement membership.[58] Cross intended this formula to explain not only District revivalism but also more secular movements like 19th century women's rights, Abolition, Mormonism, Anti-Masonry, and Temperance. Despite his technical weaknesses and perhaps quaint (to put it kindly) understanding of gender, Cross not only united previous scholarship, but developed a general sociological paradigm which explains the emergence of intellectual enthusiasm. Cross emphasized this in his personal correspondence saying his goal for *The Burned-over District* was

[55] Cross seems to intimate that women were more "susceptible" to the revival impulse. Thus as the communities "matured" the ratio of single women increased along with the communities susceptibility to enthusiasm. (178,84,87)
[56] Cross says that "it is likely that" more people went to college in the Burned-over District than in the rest of the U.S. He goes on to argue the there were also more secular newspapers and "specialized periodicals" there (religious in nature) than in any other part of the country; Ibid 93, 98, 103-104.
[57] Ibid., 64.
[58] Ibid., 257; Cross also goes not the note that every major denomination was harmed by Ultraism in this way during the 19th century. (267)

not so much to analyze reform movement history, but instead explore the "psychology and sociology" of social radicalism.[59]

Not since the publication of *The Burned-over District* have any prominent studies attempted to comprehensively understand the intellectual sociology of the region. Judith Wellman, a specialist of the 19th century woman's rights movement, speculates that the reason stems from the book's lack of organizational and theoretical clarity. As a result, subsequent research has tended to use Cross more as a launching platform for smaller, more focused studies than build upon his behavioral and sociological insights. For example in 1978, Paul E. Johnson explored the revival history of Rochester, New York, examining the impact of religion on the region's manufacturing.[60] Three years later, Mary P. Ryan performed a micro-study of her own, investigating the region's domestic space and its connection to revivalism.[61] Michael Barkun and David Rowe performed a similar analysis in the mid 1980s, tracing how the millennialism of the period added to the enthusiasm of the District, while in the early 1990s, Lawrence Foster continued this emphasis on district millennial patterns with an analysis of gender and community organization.[62]

Pulling the literature into the 21st century, in 2001 Marianne Percianccante comes the closest to actually revising Cross's theoretical framework. Focusing on Jefferson County, New York, Percianccante argues that until Charles Finney bridged the gap between pro-reform

---

[59] Wellman, 165.
[60] Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*(Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978).
[61] Mary P. Ryan. *Cradle of the Middle Class*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1981).
[62] David L. Rowe. *Thunder and Trumpets: Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate New York, 1800-1850* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985); Michael Barkun, *Crucible of the Millennium: the Burned-over District of New York in the 1840s* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Lawrence Foster, *Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 13, 224.

"formalist" denominations like New School Presbyterians and pro-revival "antiformalist" denominations like the Methodists and Baptists, the Second Great Awakening could not gather the momentum it needed to become a national phenomenon.[63] Although Percianccante's paradigm lacks the sophistication of more sociological treatments, it does attempt to explain *how* the revivalism of the period spread and tentatively points to Charles Finney as a major network hub linking the two networks. Similarly, Judith Wellman's *The Road to Seneca Falls* echoes Percianccante with a look at why upstate New York was an auspicious place for the first women's rights convention of 1848.[64] Over the course of the work, Wellman shows how Elizabeth Stanton brought together three very different reform movements.[65] Much like Percianccante's focus on Finney, Wellman identifies Stanton as the primary bridge between religious egalitarians, abolitionists, and legal reformers concerned with women's property rights.[66]

Although Percianccante and Wellman dabble in structural analysis to some extent, Cross himself ironically has more in common with the aforementioned historical sociologists at the beginning of the chapter (Tilly, Padgett and Ansell, Gould, and Richards). His use of population figures and statistical methods is also very inconsistent with traditional intellectual narratives. This is unusual because Cross is credited as the father of an entire sub-branch of intellectual

[63] Marianne Percianccante, *Calling Down Fire: Charles Grandison Finney and Revivalism in Jefferson County, New York, 1800-1840* (Albany: State of New York Press, 2003), 8.
[64] Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Women's Rights Convention.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 12.
[65] For example many legal reformers where drawn to New York due to the 1848 Marriage Property Act which allowed widowed women to retain property rights of their dead husband's land. Signers of the Declaration of Sentiments were strongly represented among families who had daughters or female heads of house. Quakers were likewise heavily represented as signers of the Declaration, totaling one quarter of all who penned the Declaration. Finally, those political and abolitionist forces represented at the convention, the Free Soil party, could boast of 69.2 percent of all signers, drawn together by the leadership of the Stantons. (205, 206, 208)
[66] Ibid., 12-13.

history. For the past sixty years subsequent historians have failed to consider or develop the theoretical implications of *The Burned-over District*—particularly the social and intellectual impact of the Erie Canal. This dissertation, however, attempts to do that very thing.

Essentially, Cross was concerned with *how* the social enthusiasm of the region grew and spread. By developing an argument that accounts for population figures, infrastructure, and cultural values, Cross was able to roughly diagram the mechanics of social upheaval. This is invaluable, yet it doesn't mean that the argument is complete. In fact there are elements to the theory that are in need of serious revision. For example, his understanding of female spirituality is quaint at best, his definition of demographic stability and agrarian maturity needs deeper exposition, and he ultimately includes very little regarding how national, sociopolitical, forces influenced the enthusiasm of the period. This project will by no means attempt to rectify all of these shortcomings but it will address Cross' central theoretical component, offering an explanation for how specifically the Erie Canal—the primary pivot point of his hypothesis—mechanically affected doctrinal and intellectual development along the canal corridor.

The Fate of Albert Barnes and the Beginning of the Story

By the time that Albert Barnes entered the Session-Room of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, the Moderator of the meeting was already preparing to address those in attendance. As Barnes quickly surveyed the room, taking stock of what he was up against, he was surprised to find so many present. He counted as many as 35 ministers and around 25 elders—a sizeable number for any presbytery gathering. In addition to this he noticed a number of public spectators as well. A few he recognized from his own congregation but there were certainly those he had never seen before. With such a crowd, he mused with a sigh, at least

credible witnesses would not be difficult to come by. Perhaps if things got out of hand public testimony would swing his way.[67]

Without much effort Barnes was able to find a seat near the other ministers, silently avoiding Rev. Engles, Rev. McCalla, and Rev. Latta. The three were allies of Green and while not as respected as the venerable divine, made up for it in sheer aggressive intensity. Rev. McCalla was particularly hostile and had previously taken what seemed to be great pleasure in prosecuting this case. If only his energies could be channeled in another direction—thought Barnes to himself—he would make a formidable ally. Instead the man was a formidable opponent and served as the perfect foil to Green for while Green was reserved, calculated, subtle, and level-headed, McCalla was like a mad bull who knew only one mode of confrontation—direct and overt. Of the opposition Green of course was the most dangerous but underestimating McCalla would be a mistake. Fortunately the three had sat together on the opposite side of the room, pretending to pay no mind to Barnes. Conversely, Rev. Ely, Patterson, and McAuley quickly gave him a reassuring nod. It was not much, simply a modest show of support. Nevertheless, Barnes appreciated the gesture even if it did little to ease his

[67] Presbytery of Philadelphia, "Records of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Volume 3", 181-182; William B. Davidson, *A Report of the Debates in the Presbytery of Philadelphia: At a Special Meeting Held in the City of Philadelphia on the 30th of November* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1831), SCP 4304, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, 2-3; William M. Engles, *A True and Complete Narrative of All the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Presbytery and of the Philadelphia Synod in Relation to the Case of the Rev. Albert Barnes* (Philadelphia: Russell & Martien, 1830), 22-23; Davidson was a lay observer of the November 30th meeting and recorded the proceedings with an amateur shorthand. He later published his record two months later, using one of the publishers that the General Assembly utilized for publishing their annual meeting minutes. While Mr. Davidson admits to not being a professional stenographer, his account is remarkably consistent with the Presbytery of Philadelphia's minutes. Davidson explains that part of the reason why he attended the meeting was because he was a parishioner of the First Church of Philadelphia since childhood and wished no know what the objections were to his new pastor's infamous sermon.

anxiety. It was then that all eyes turned to the Moderator who cleared his throat and began to address those in the Session-Room.[68]

As usual the meeting began with prayer, then the minutes of the last session were read aloud. Already Barnes could see agitation in the face of McCalla. It was clear from his posture that things were not moving fast enough. This of course only intensified as an application was ceremonially read from the congregation of Cape May for the appointment of William Moses Williamson. Apparently they were hoping he would supply their pulpit for the next six months. Barnes knew relatively little of the situation but everything appeared in order as the presbytery collectively granted the request. Following this Dr. Green slowly stood to his feet and Barnes braced himself as the contest finally began.[69]

In usual form Dr. Green held a manuscript in his trembling hands. The man was nearly 70 but carried himself as if 20 years older. Barnes wondered if it was more performance than anything else and did his best to look impassive. What followed was rather strange as it was part summary, part resolution, part exegesis. The substance of the address contained meticulously worded objections to Barnes' "Way of Salvation" sermon and ran for 12 handwritten pages, each word read aloud as if Green was delivering a sermon. At the end of each lengthy paragraph, the divine paused, licked his lips, and swallowed as if the entire act was draining the very life from his body. Eventually Green began to conclude the exhibit with the following:

> In discoursing on human ability, the sermon contains expressions which do not seem to be well judged. In page 14 it is said 'it is not to any want of physical strength that this rejection [of God] is owing'...on the same page [the author]

[68] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 182; Davidson, 3.
[69] Ibid.

> represents man's inability as solely in the will...that men are not saved simply because they *will not* be saved. Here physical ability is represented as competent to the performance of moral action...which is contrary to the Confession of Faith...On the whole, the Presbytery express their deep regret that Mr. Barnes should have preached and published a discourse so highly objectionable...They earnestly recommend to Mr. Barnes to reconsider and renounce the erroneous matter...with a view to afford time to Mr. Barnes for reflection and reconsideration...and for opportunity for such of the brethren [to]...converse freely with him on the subject. [The] Presbytery do suspend their final decision on the case until their next stated meeting.[70]

At first no one really knew what to say, Green's opening barrage had been massive, well planned, and comprehensive. In frustration Barnes let out a long breath and unclenched his fists, unaware that he had in the first place. Across from him McCalla was looking rather smug, while Green made a pathetic display of returning to his seat. The silence in the Session-Room hung in the air for almost a full minute. Those observing shifted uncomfortably in their seats. Much of the Presbytery itself appeared dazed. Then, confidently, Rev. Ely gave Barnes a discreet wink and stood up. What he had fully planned the minister did not know but whatever it was needed to be equally cunning. The problem was—as Green had so masterfully organized—was that the doctor had managed to position the prosecution in such an ambiguous position that responding to the statement would be difficult. On the one hand Dr. Green had simply presented a common, unremarkable, resolution for adoption—something the Presbytery would vote on or not. This it did all the time. Simultaneously, it was a condemnation, a judgment, a sentencing, similar to if Barnes had already been to a heresy trial been found guilty. The advantage to this was that if the statement failed to carry, it would simply be a failed resolution, nothing more. Such a thing happened very frequently and Green even coyly stated that the proposal was meant only to serve as a baseline for the Presbytery to

[70] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 188-192; Davidson, 3; Engles, 42-44.

proceed from and could be modified or adopted in part. This of course protected him against embarrassment and appearing like an inquisitor to the public.[71]

Were Green's resolution to succeed, however, Barnes would be compelled to accept the judgment. He also would be denied the opportunity to vote on the matter as an acting member of the presbytery. Additionally, the minister would be denied the benefit of a formal trial, a fact that was important for two reasons. Most importantly, Barnes knew a trial would eventually end up in the General Assembly as he had the right to appeal anything the Presbytery decided—that is if things remained official. Such a scenario would be good because by now, virtually everyone in the church had realized that the number of western delegates in the Assembly was approaching majority, a majority that sympathized with the kind of Calvinism that Barnes embodied. Green certainly knew of this recent turnaround and was why he was attempting to keep things as local and as informally ambiguous as possible. Moreover, a formal trial would also benefit Barnes in the newspapers because he would be seen more as the victim of an Old World style European tyranny, in an age where public consensus was in favor of the right to freedom of thought and opinion.

Accordingly, Rev. Ely must have assessed the situation exactly the same way because when he finally spoke it was to this very fact—he wanted the accusers to formally identify themselves in the public eye, forward charges, hold a trial, and not hide behind the pretense of conducting ordinary Presbytery business. Ely's first move then was to stall for time and immediately he attacked with a motion to postpone the Presbytery's consideration of Green's resolution. In point of fact he probably needed the time to think and perhaps confer with his

[71] Davidson, 8.

allies. He also likely wished to speak with Barnes—if he had not already—and cue him in on what to do next; Ely knew not only how the game was played but also how Philadelphia politics operated. Thus, the meeting that followed quickly devolved into an utter circus as Ely carefully directed the Presbytery into a perfect parliamentary maze, dragging the proceedings out for three days.[72]

The real excitement began when Ely demanded that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery recite charges against Barnes, stating that the entire proceeding was out of order unless proper protocol was followed. Green and company, however, knew the dance just as well and countered that Barnes was not on trial, that the business set before them was simply to investigate the sermon in accordance with a Synod resolution that was issued back in October. Moreover, Green added that presenting charges against Barnes was already ruled out of order by the Moderator of a previous meeting.[73] With this then it suddenly became clear to Ely that Green could hide behind protocol just as masterfully as he could and for a brief moment or so the two remained deadlocked like a pair of rutting bucks.[74]

In the meantime, as Green managed to keep pace with Ely step for step, a Dr. Thomas H. Skinner thought to himself how best to break the stalemate. Skinner, like Green and Ely, was a long standing luminary in the Presbytery who not only was pastor of a sizable church in the city, but had served on various executive boards with the two over the past decade. While Skinner's congregation was slightly smaller than First Church—or for that matter Ely's Third Church—he was no less sympathetic of Barnes' position. In his mind no doubt, Green had directed the

[72] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 192-193; Engles, 23; Davidson, 3-4.
[73] Whether this was the Presbytery meeting in April or the Synod meeting in October is unknown.
[74] Davidson, 3; Engles, 16, 20.

Presbytery on a course it would never recover, drastically falling from the dignity it once enjoyed. Something had to be done and without warning the minister called for the attention of the Presbytery. Fully exasperated and radiating sarcasm, Skinner then feigned deference to Green's age and proceeded to remind those gathered of procedural guidelines, arguing that Moderator rulings were relevant only to the deliberation in which they were made. From here pandemonium predictably ensued, as the two sides then began to overtly attack the other. Indeed, at one point the festivities had descended to such a level that the Rev. McCalla felt it appropriate to give a colorful anecdote about selling bags of rice in the South, comparing Ely and his allies to scheming general store grocers. Consequently, for the rest of the morning no progress was made as each side did their best to hurl insults at the other. Meanwhile, the Rev. Barnes kept quietly to himself, unsure of what to do.[75]

Later that day, after the Presbytery had recessed and concluded to reconvene at 3:00pm, Barnes finally decided that he needed to say something.[76] After having no doubt fully strategized with Ely and company over a late lunch, Barnes placed himself before his opponents, clearing his throat and squaring his shoulders. In the heaviness of the Session-Room, he took a long, deep, breath. What he was about to say was a gamble, unlikely to succeed, and may simply serve to further antagonize his detractors; in fact it may prove to further expedite his exit from the city once and for all. If it worked, however, the minister could finally be done with the whole nightmare and he would be free to pastor his church in peace. The plan was to lay a trap for Green and the prosecution, Green in particular. So far he had

[75] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1830* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes and L.R. Bailey, 1830), 88-89; Davidson, 3-9; Engles, 23.
[76] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 193.

brilliantly managed to strike while at the same time keeping his position nebulous enough to remain untouchable. Ely had the right strategy in mind: smoke out the enemy so he's visible. But what if they needed to be more discreet, more indirect? In some respects Ely had been rather straightforward in his attempt to move the case to a sympathetic judicatory. Demanding a presentation of heresy charges was like attempting to storm a fort through the front gate. Perhaps entering through the back would be more useful.

As such, Barnes said a silent prayer and proceeded to set the trap—formally requesting that the Presbytery outline his present position within the body. In other words, Barnes wanted to know whether he had voting privileges as a regular member of the meeting or not. The idea was that if the Presbytery decided that Barnes was not a member, it would be all the more possible to force the case into a sympathetic General Assembly meeting. It would also paint him as the victim of religious persecution and earn him favor with the public. One the other hand if Barnes was granted the ability to vote, it might just upset the narrow factional balance in favor of his defense. Something that happened with his first victory back in April. Rubbing his hand then anxiously over his brow, Barnes finished speaking and waited for Green to respond, eyeing the minister as he visibly considered his options. The Moderator of the meeting had stated that he did not wish to officially decide the matter so everyone looked to Green with anticipation.[77]

Green, however, was not immediately sure what to do and during his internal deliberation, what probably pressed most heavily on his mind was the very real possibly that he could, yet again, be defeated at home. The Presbytery of Philadelphia was Green's territory, it was his central citadel—a bulwark against the forces of Arminianism, popery, Humanism, and

[77] Davidson, 8.

Jacobinism. If he couldn't succeed here then where could he? Back in April the minister had been humiliated by First Church and their ability to simply dismiss out of hand the need to properly test their candidate. And to think that a virtual barbarian, a practical savage from the wilderness, could ruin all that he had built over the last 30 years. This was unthinkable. Barnes represented all that was wrong with the denomination, his leadership of First Church was a travesty. He and his allies had been fools for not seeing this in time and now it might be too late: "The wise virgins were slumbering with the foolish and this act compelled them to awake."[78] Indeed, he thought to himself, the Barnes appointment might only be the vanguard in a whole army of western Mongols bent on—as McCalla so succinctly put it—the dismantlement of all ecclesiastical order and discipline throughout Christendom. This darkness has already swept over their once, northern, Congregational allies and now:

> Presbyterianism is abhorred in New England—because they have gone into errors of doctrine. Once they were willing to be Presbyterians; but now they are not...for an éclat has been produced by their doctrines. Now they would suppress ecclesiastical dominion and the enforcement of discipline...when a parent calls his child to account and the child treats him with contempt, the poor old parent becomes warm and there is evil speaking on both sides: therefore, he cannot enforce discipline in his family...how will this appear to posterity?[79]

No, measures must be taken here and now. Barnes cannot be allowed to vote, cannot be allowed to upset the majority he had barely managed to assemble. Therefore, Green knew what he had to do and at long last announced to all who could hear that Barnes should not be permitted to sit as a regular member of the Presbytery, arguing that it would be improper for him to vote on the orthodoxy of this own sermon. As these words then echoed across Session-Room, a sudden wave of collective relief appeared to wash over the defense. Barnes struggled

[78] Letter from Ashbel Green to Dr. How, February 3, 1834 in Green, 585-586.
[79] Engles, 47.

to hide a smile while Ely seemed to be congratulating himself and his party on a job well done. It did not make sense to him. In what possible way could Barnes benefit from a loss of privileges?[80]

Looking around in sudden confusion, Dr. Green quietly asked what the problem was yet before he could get a complete response his friend and Stated Clerk Dr. Engles rushed to take the floor—the penny had dropped and Green's supporters were now realizing what had happened. Desperate to put out the fire, Engles made a formal motion that Barnes be granted the right to deliberate and vote as a regular member. Almost concurrently, and before Engles could slow their momentum any further, Ely then pounced on Green's comment and made a motion that Barnes be disenfranchised and formally sent to trial. From here more pandemonium ensued, more insults were exchanged and even though the issue would continue to go back and forth for the next few hours, in the end the damage had already been done. Indeed, no matter how much Green's allies attempted to repair the breach, their fortification had been irrevocably compromised, the case was formalizing and would soon be in the hands of a higher court. [81]

Aftermath and Project Outline

For the remainder of the meeting very little of note actually transpired. Although Green's faction persisted in their attempt to keep matters ambiguous, the rest of the Presbytery, including those who were on the fence, were now becoming thoroughly exhausted. Perhaps formalizing the case would be best for everyone. As such, by the end of the day a vote was finally called as to whether Barnes was actually a member of the body. The final tally was

[80] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 193-194; Davidson, 8-9.
[81] Davidson, 9-14.

23 for and 25 against—Barnes had now been formally divested of his Presbytery privileges. Thus, with his position at last officially defined, Barnes could now move forward with a proper defense and grabbed his coat, proceeding to leave the meeting. Before he walked out, however, there was one last salvo he needed to fire and with little ceremony he openly declared his intention to appeal the case to the General Assembly.[82]

Unfortunately, even this could not end what was quickly turning into a three day Presbytery meeting and for the next 48 hours the legality of the appeal was debated ad infinitum. Ultimately though, the disenfranchisement would prove to be the most important event of the three day session. This is ironic because for the entirety of the following day, December 1, the Presbytery went back and forth as to whether Barnes actually had the right to submit an appeal. The debate itself placed the accused in an unusual position. What the prosecution was essentially arguing was that the minister could not vote because his orthodoxy was in question, yet at the same time he could not appeal to a higher judicatory if found in error—a perfectly uncertain state that would give Barnes no solid footing to defend himself. Such was why the ambiguity of Green's position was so important to maintain if Barnes was to be eliminated.

In due course, the Presbytery eventually decided that Barnes did not have the right to an appeal, a shock that was no doubt difficult to stomach for Barnes or the parishioners of First Church. Victory appeared certain with Green's statement the day before but amazingly the prosecution had once again demonstrated their formidable ability to navigate parliamentary mechanics. In response, Barnes left the meeting in utter disgust, refusing to participate any

[82] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 193-194; Davidson, 15; Engles, 23-25.

further. The next day the Presbytery finally considered the resolution Dr. Green had delivered on November 30th. The entire meeting then ended somewhat anti-climatically as it was resolved that nothing further could be done until Drs. Green and McCalla, along with the Rev. Latta, speak with Barnes "freely and affectionately" about the theology he was promoting at his congregation. This committee was then expected to report what resulted from the exchange at the next Presbytery meeting.[83]

In the end though, while the Presbytery session of November 30th to December 2nd may have been a disappointment for Ezra Stiles Ely and Albert Barnes, in the grand scheme of things the ruling never really mattered and would interestingly carry no weight whatsoever in the subsequent unfolding of events. What did seem to influence the future development of the case was the previous ruling that occurred on November 30th; that Barnes be denied the right to sit as a member in regular standing. This was because when Green, McCalla, and Latta eventually did appear on the minister's icy front porch later that February, Barnes only acknowledged the legality of his disenfranchisement and refused to speak with the men as a formal committee, stating that to receive such a committee would be unconstitutional and out of order. Accordingly—and rather hilariously—Barnes demanded to keep things as informal and ambiguous as possible, eventually agreeing to dialogue with the three separately, as individuals. Consequently, the case was not settled at the local Presbytery level as Green had hoped. As such, Barnes eventually managed to get what he wanted and a few months later in

[83] Presbytery of Philadelphia, 194-196, 205-206; Davidson, 15-39, 76.

May of 1831, the case was considered by the collective delegates of the Presbyterian General Assembly.[84]

What immediately proceeded from this historic gathering was so disruptive that the denomination would forever be redefined. Indeed, it was here that the Old and New School factions finally became aware of themselves and each other. The meeting was also seminal because it actually divided the Presbytery of Philadelphia in half—one side managed by Green, the other by Barnes and Ely—and set in motion a series of events that would ultimately lead to denominational schism in 1837. The specific story, however, of the 1831 Assembly, and indeed the continuation of the Barnes drama itself, will be covered later on in the dissertation as there are many other stories yet to tell and additional factors to consider. It must be emphasized again that this opening saga, the trials and tribulations of Albert Barnes, is but one piece in a much broader tale of 19th century American social change, change that happened on such a large scale that the very intellectual fabric of American Calvinism, and therefore Christianity, was never fully the same since.

As with most stories, in order to more fully understand this cultural transformation one must go backward, not forward, in time—into the twilight of the 18th century. Here the antecedents of New School thought took shape as Trinitarian Calvinists in New England attempted to confront the spreading specter of a value system that threatened to submerge the entire continent in humanistic secularism. The standoff here was in some ways very similar to what had taken place in the Presbytery Session-Room on November 30th, 1830 as the

[84] Edward B. Davis, "Albert Barnes, 1798-1870: An Exponent of New School Presbyterianism" (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1961), 135-136.

consequences of this clash produced a variant of Calvinism that accommodated many contemporary conceptions of individual freedom and liberty.

In order to facilitate this journey back through time, the following outline should help with navigating and managing what by seem at first a cacophony of people, ideas, themes, and social forces. Chapter 1 of the project begins with this very crisis just mentioned as the Enlightenment sweeps through the Atlantic Seaboard during the late 18th century, threatening to wholly marginalize Christianity in American society. In response, New England Congregationalists like Samuel Hopkins responded by modifying traditional Calvinism in a number of ways to better conform to popular notions of individual freedom, autonomy, and personal agency. The social and intellectual consequences, however, of these innovations proved unexpectedly profound as settlement intensified in the land west of the Hudson River.

This story then continues in Chapter 2 as the industrial revolution washes over Upstate New York, utterly transforming the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in the Finger Lakes region that had adopted the Hopkinsian system of modified Calvinism. Here the construction of the Erie Canal leads to a dramatic rise in land values and job availability, bringing with it unexpected prosperity. Consequently, the Presbyterian congregations of the Canal Corridor changed dramatically in size and in available resources, thus developing the ability to rationalize intellectually with the establishment of various ecumenical institutions.

In Chapter 3 the specifics of the canal transformation are more closely analyzed as the particular sources, methods, and data are each dissected individually, and as a complete unit. The purpose here is to work toward a way of understanding the intellectual salience of Presbyterian institutional structure *comprehensively*, not representationally as is common for

many Intellectual History projects. This flows from a conviction that representational analysis—using one or two subjects to stand in for an entire social system or community—often leads to severe misrepresentation because the nuances and particulars of an individual subject will always tempt researchers into making impressionistic conclusions. Unfortunately for historians, the use of proxies will always be necessary as sources can never be entirely forthcoming or possible to completely assess. Nevertheless, Chapter 3 works toward fighting this methodological pressure by employing a quantitative approach that makes comprehensive study a bit more feasible.

Returning to the narrative, Chapter 4 uses the statistical insights of Chapter 3 to showcase an important primary example of how specifically the canal allowed for and led to the rationalization of Hopkinsian Calvinism in the Presbyterian Church. While this was done in a number of ways, the most important force that drove this intellectual development was Dirck C. Lansing and the construction of Auburn Theological Seminary in Auburn, New York. Here it is demonstrated that without the canal boom fueling construction, the formal institutionalization of Canal Calvinism via Auburn Seminary would never have led to the formation of the New School faction within the Presbyterian Church. Hence, just as Princeton became a stronghold for orthodoxy in the 19th century, Auburn became a central place for the New Divinity.

To conclude the story, Chapter 5 explores how Auburn specifically participated in the diffusion of Canal Calvinism across the nation as a whole. Whereas Chapter 4 delineates the formation and concatenation of Canal Calvinism itself, Chapter 5 ends by tracing the various ways that the theological system spread from the Finger Lakes region to the rest of the United States. The first way that this transpired was formally. Like any center of higher learning,

Auburn produced graduates who moved and traveled as professionals, all the while promoting their system of thought. Yet the diffusion process also proceeded informally as the many converts and ministers of the Canal Corridor likewise migrated across the countryside over the course of their lives. In this way the story begins and ends with the Rev. Albert Barnes because not only was he the central figure who inaugurated the contest between the Old and New School in Philadelphia, but as a native of Rome, New York, he also serves as a prime example of how specifically the diffusion of the New Divinity spread informally as well.

Chapter 1—The Crisis of American Calvinism and the 1801 Plan of Union

Introduction

About a year before his death in 1802, Samuel Hopkins once again ascended the stairs to the pulpit—he knees shaking violently, his feet swollen, his right side virtually useless. While his speech had been greatly affected by a stroke four years prior, he was determined to deliver his prepared sermon. Close behind was his faithful friend and sexton Newport Gardner who steadied his body at each step and stood ready to catch him if he fell. Hopkins was 81 and had pastored the 1st Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island for over 30 years. Time, however, was weighing heavy on his body and many no doubt wondered how much of it he had left. In fact, Hopkins even admitted publically "I speak with difficulty…I am hastening to the grave, and do not find that I am doing any great good, if any."[1] Nevertheless, the venerable theologian knew he had at least one more sermon within him and quaked with authority, as he grasped the lectern, opened his mouth, and declared that though it was Thanksgiving Day, the people of Newport "had no reason to be thankful…the distinguished blasphemer of Christ and Christianity, and reviler of our beloved Washington—Paine—[had] come to America, and that he was invited here and caressed by many who were in high station!"[2]

Hopkins' rage was to be expected. For one he was a strong Federalist and had no patience for the frenchified irreverence of Jefferson and his allies. Secondly, many looked to him as the primary apologist for North American Christianity—the sole bulwark in an age of increasing secularization and atheism. Much to Hopkins' dismay, the chief architect of that

[1] Samuel Hopkins, Edwards Amasa Park, and Sewall Harding, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Port, R.I. with a Memoir of His Life and Character*, vol. 1 (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1854), 245, 252.
[2] Ibid., 166.

secularization, Thomas Paine, had come to Newport to no doubt steal the souls of his flock into Hell and spread the plague of anti-Christ that had already consumed much of Europe. For many New England clergymen, the prophesies contained in the Book of Revelation were in the process of being fulfilled right before their very eyes, just as St. John had predicted. For example, the Whore of Babylon—the Catholic Church—who had seduced kings and kingdoms, was quite literally being "burned with fire" as Deism, Atheism, and Jacobinism ravaged through France. Unfortunately, according to Hopkins, nothing was safe from the "seventh bowl" of divine retribution, not even the United States for:

> in the last century there has been a greater spread and prevalence of error, infidelity, and all finds of immorality and wickedness than was ever before known…America has not escaped the fangs of these unclean spirits of devils. There are traces and fruits of their operation…one man in Europe wrote a pamphlet against the Bible, which is reprinted and spread in America, and was read with avidity by multitudes, both youth and others…and a number of books and pamphlets have been published against Christianity, and in favor of deism and atheism, which are spreading and highly approved by many.[3]

In the eyes of many the situation in New England was grave, especially for the up and coming generation. At Yale College for instance, President Ezra Stiles reportedly lost control of a student body which apparently had become completely drawn into the wiles of French infidelity. Things were supposedly so perilous at Yale that it was rumored scarcely one in ten openly professed the Christian faith and indeed wine, profanity, gambling, and licentiousness were extremely common as most students were in the habit of nicknaming one another Voltaire, Rousseau, and D'Alembert![4]

---

[3] Samuel Hopkins, Edwards Amasa Park, and Sewall Harding, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Port, R.I. with a Memoir of His Life and Character*, vol. 3 (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1852), 165-167.
[4] Lyman Beecher, *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D. D. Ed.*, ed. Charles Beecher, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864), 43.

Whether this was actually the case in New Haven is difficult to determine. It is clear, however, that for the first time in American history the clergy had encountered a cultural rival whose vision for society was altogether antithetical to their own. If America's fundamental telos was to usher in Christ's millennial kingdom and spread representative democracy throughout the Earth, then a universal acceptance of Atheism and Deism could only postpone God's plan for mankind and produce untold misery from across the Atlantic. Yet it was just this very thing that so many American clergymen felt was happening for in virtually every way it appeared that America's youth were adopting Voltaire for Blake, Hume for Edwards, even Paine for Wesley. Indeed how could ministers like Hopkins not reel with worry against accusations such as David Hume's that "no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle and make it a just foundation for any such system of religion"[5] or Paine's assertion that:

> it is the fable of Jesus Christ…against which I contend. The story, taking it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene. It gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and while under this engagement, she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost…[O]bscenity in matters of faith, however wrapped up, is always a token of fable and imposture…[T]his story is, upon the face of it, the same kind of story as that of Jupiter and Leda, or Jupiter and Europa, or any of the amorous adventures of Jupiter; and shows…that the Christian faith is built upon the Heathen Mythology.[6]

Yet the men of the Enlightenment were not merely content to criticize a belief in miracles, but similarly found the doctrines of the Atonement, Original Sin—and especially certain elements of Calvinism like Predestination and Election—to be equally absurd. From the perspective of many New England clergymen, if American Christianity was going to survive the Enlightenment, something needed to be done, a response needed to be made, in order to turn

[5] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: And Selections from a Treatise of Human Nature, with Hume's Autobiography and a Letter from Adam Smith* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1912), 134 .
[6] Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (New York: G.N. Devries, 1827), 137.

the hearts and minds of the public back to God. It was of course Samuel Hopkins and his allies then that were the ones who rose to such an occasion and by the turn of the century had managed to fashion a theological system from which they could not only refute humanist heresy, but render the entire system of Calvinist theology entirely more attractive to a culture wholly enamored with logic, liberty, empiricism, and scientific process. The only problem was that a few minor alterations were necessary, alterations that unintentionally transformed both the Congregational and Presbyterian Church in the United States. Taken as a whole, these innovations made by Hopkins and other ministers—like Bethlehem, Connecticut's Joseph Bellamy—quickly became known as "New Divinity" or "Hopkinsianism" by their conservative opponents. Of the modifications made by these men, one in particular had a profound impact on the fate of American Presbyterianism—the concept of rational free agency—and it is around this intellectual principle that the following narrative primarily revolves.

* * *

By the late 18th century American society had become thoroughly shaped by not only extreme confidence in the power of the human mind, but also the Radical Whig optimism of the Revolution. In addition to this was a kind of moderately secularized Christian Millennialism that had existed in the public consciousness ever since the Great Awakening. Here national destiny and human salvation were one and the same as Whig Republicanism and Christian eschatology fused together to produce a public ethic that was sympathetic to human action and extremely optimistic of its ultimate outcome. This helped to create an environment—particularly in the West—of profound interdenominational cooperation because it was, of course, the divine destiny of the United States to finally fulfill what God had intended for the

human race. Some of the earliest evidence of this can be traced to the Rev. Samuel Sherwood who, in addressing an audience on a cold January in 1776, asserted not only his distaste for a "bigoted attachment to the low singularities of a party," but also his belief that the Gospel includes all of Protestantism—even the Anglicanism of the South.[7] Echoing the sentiment of prominent fellow ministers like Ezra Stiles, Ebenezer Baldwin, and Abraham Keteltas, Sherwood promoted the idea that:

> this American quarter of the globe seemed to be reserved in providence, as a fixed and settled habitation for God's church, where she might have property of her own, and the right of rule and government…[I]n bringing his church from a state of oppression and persecution, into this good land, [God acted in a very similar fashion] to His dealing with the Israelites in delivering them from the tyrannical power of the haughty…[E]very attempt to oppress and enslave her, must be absolutely unrighteous, and a gross violation of justice and truth…These United Colonies have arose to such a height as to become the object of public attention thro'all Europe…and this union, by the blessing of heaven, is become as general, perfect and complete, as could well be expected in such a corrupt disordered world as this in which we live.[8]

While this simultaneous spirit of American political union and divine purpose manifested in the proliferation of numerous social projects during the late 18th century, by 1801 the optimistic ethos that ministers like Sherwood embodied would actually produce something which tangibly transformed the cultural landscape, especially in the unsettled West. The mechanism by which this happened was interestingly enough a product of institutional policy and bureaucracy and was essentially a semi-formal alliance which united the majority of the Reformed Tradition in the United States—the de facto marriage covenant between American Presbyterians and Connecticut Congregationalists called the "1801 Plan of Union."

---

[7] Samuel Sherwood, *Into the Wilderness: An Address on the Times, Containing Some Very Interesting and Important Observations on Scripture Prophecies* (New York: S. Loudon, 1776), 3.
[8] Ibid., 20, 19, 21, 15, 14.

In some respects, the 1801 Plan of Union was perhaps the single greatest expression of millennial ecumenism in early 19th century North America. Never before had two major cultural institutions so deeply intertwined their respective resources, membership, and governance. Internationally speaking, only the London Missionary Society had even came close in terms of interdenominational influence and scope. Yet beyond any expression of eschatological hope and unity, the Union also was functionally important to how the Presbyterian Church developed intellectually. As previously stated, the modifications to Westminster Calvinism made by Congregational theologians like Samuel Hopkins and Joseph Bellamy were a direct response to the increasing popularity of rationalist, Enlightenment, thinkers and writers. For Calvinist clergymen, it was unthinkable that the writings of Hume, Paine, and Voltaire could ever be considered fashionable by the upper echelons of society. Nevertheless they were, especially among the young, and a response was needed if the church stood any chance of weathering the storm and remaining relevant in public discourse. Now although Hopkins and Bellamy would ultimately be very successful at reconciling Calvinism with the Enlightenment, at the same time the New Divinity reaction unintentionally introduced innovations that would forever change not only the intellectual composition of American Congregationalism, but that of Presbyterianism as well.

Broadly Speaking, the 1801 Plan of Union was the primary gateway through which the liberalizing innovations of Hopkins' New Divinity theology entered the Presbyterian Church; innovations that directly challenged not only the doctrinal purity of traditional Reformed Theology but the very social machinery of 19th century American society. Strictly speaking, these innovations initially entered Presbyterianism independently of the Union, via radical

frontier ministers who wished to see practical changes made within the Presbyterian Church. To marginal hinterland clergymen, the New Divinity was extremely attractive not only because westerners had more to gain from doctrinal change, but also because they saw in it a system which granted greater support to revival methods (which better competed with western Methodism) and sufficiently answered Deistic critiques of Predestination, Election, Original Sin, and Irresistible Grace. After the Union, however, it was no longer the occasional frontier Presbyterian radical who introduced the teachings of Hopkins and Bellamy to the rank and file, but instead a flood of frontier Congregationalists who were fully committed to the New Divinity.

While this took place across the West as a whole, there were two primary theaters of contact: upstate New York and northern Ohio.[9] Broadly speaking, although the Plan of Union operated differently depending on the local circumstances, in general it served to facilitate the collision of two separate social systems, streamlining the introduction of outside ideas and accelerating the diffusion of New Divinity innovations into the Presbyterian Church. This institutional marriage with Congregationalism then made the scope of such change structurally overwhelming for Presbyterian conservatives who had a vested interest in maintaining the doctrinal status quo. This was due, among other reasons, to the sheer size of the invasion through which these innovations had entered the states of New York and Ohio. Indeed with the sudden entry of entire Congregational Associations into the Presbyterian network, the intellectual changes already at work by frontier radicals were quickly accelerated much faster than any single group of individuals could have ever enacted on their own.

[9] In the Southwest a third theater existed in southern Kentucky/northern Tennessee, yet it had more to do with the invasion of Arminian, Methodist, innovations than Hopkinsian Calvinism—Hezekiah Balch being the exception.

Yet the union of North American Presbyterians and Congregationalists was not comprehensive. It was only on the frontier, only on the margins and periphery, that the two technically intermingled. Even though interdenominational cooperation between American Reformed churches was at an all time high, the ecumenism of the day did have its limits. Accordingly, the Union was only designed to operate in the West, not among the more central eastern churches. Furthermore, the Presbyterian Church entered into this arrangement more or less as a united body, yet only those Congregationalists from the State of Connecticut formally participated. This left many Congregationalists within Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and Rhode Island outside the Union—at least initially. Nevertheless, even with this single, preliminary, connection to New England mores, the diffusion of Samuel Hopkins' New Divinity became a significant threat to Presbyterian purists who were protective of their denominational particularities and traditions. Something, however, was developing in upstate New York that would make this threat all the more alarming.

Regarding the two major theaters of Congregational migration into American Presbyterianism—New York and Ohio—New York stands out for it was here and only here that dramatic infrastructural changes took place which allowed for startling increases in interstate and intercontinental commerce, manufacturing, and transportation. These increases were—as was mentioned in the previous chapter—made possible with the construction and completion of the Erie Canal in 1825.[10] Because this material and demographic growth happened concurrently with the post 1801 influx of Congregational churches, upstate New York ultimately

[10] Noble E. Whitford, *History of the Canal System of the State of New York: Supplement to the Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York*, vol. 1 (Albany: Brandow Printing, 1906), 922-923, 918; In the counties along the canal corridor for example (Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Ontario, Niagara, Erie etc.) the number of individuals engaged in commerce rose 683 percent after the completion of the waterway while the population in these areas rose by 200 percent between 1814 and 1825.

played a disproportional role in the diffusion of Hopkinsianism across the Presbyterian Church. Granted, northern Ohio, southern Kentucky, and northern Tennessee were important, but they were important for very different reasons—few of which had much to do with the diffusion of Hopkins' modifications to Reform Calvinism during the 1810s and early 20s. While the next chapter will attempt to unpack how precisely the canal facilitated such social transformation, the purpose of this present chapter will be to explore the composition and implications of the Plan of Union, demonstrating how exactly west-central New York was the primary flashpoint for the intellectual transformation of the Presbyterian Church in the early 19th century.

Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and the Softening of American Calvinism

Although the effect of the New Divinity had its most profound impact in west-central New York State, it is New England where our story really begins. Here it is necessary to go one step backward from Samuel Hopkins, to the Rev. Jonathan Edwards for it was Edwards that laid the intellectual foundation for Hopkins' eventual departure. By the late 18th century, Edwards was considered to be the exemplar of traditional Reformed Calvinism in New England and the Middle-States. Accordingly—James Dana notwithstanding—few Trinitarians felt comfortable departing from him to any great extent. For this reason any modifications made by Hopkins and Bellamy were initially intended to appear merely superficial or "refinements" of his thinking. In one respect Edwards was the first in North America to accommodate Calvinism to the threat of Enlightenment Deism. His innovations, though, appeared more an explanation on Calvin and the Westminster Confession of Faith than a creative departure. In this regard it was Edwards' understanding of "Moral Inability" and "Regeneration" that were most important. To elaborate, in 1754 Edwards published his groundbreaking work, *A Careful and Strict Inquiry Into the*

Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will; Which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame. Here Edwards argued that mankind has two primary avenues of expression: one that is "natural" and one that is "moral." This "natural ability" or "agency," Edwards posits, constitutes one's capability to pursue what one desires.

For example, if one wishes to visit the city of New York then it would be one's natural, mechanical, ability—via their skill and understanding of how to logistically undertake such a journey—that would get them there. Obviously this premise in and of itself is not very significant. Yet what if one had the ability to *choose* what they desire? Thus, instead of having the impulse to visit New York, one could instead choose to desire a visit to Philadelphia? This, argues Edwards, would be *moral* ability—something wholly outside the powers of human experience. While this may appear a little ridiculous at first, it is precisely what Edwards meant by the fact that human freedom only truly consists of the ability to follow the appetites or dictates of one's heart, not the freedom to dictate the heart.[11] Edwards' purpose then was to apply this idea of moral inability to man's relationship with God and suggested that while the human race is naturally able to follow God's law, meaning they have all the tools necessary to mechanically do it, they are morally unable by want of inclination or desire.

In this sorry condition, argues Edwards, supernatural intervention is necessary because the heart and mind are both wholly and completely dead. Yet there is indeed hope, a hope in the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit who radically and overwhelmingly transforms both

[11] Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will, Which Is Supposed to Be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, 1860), 25-29, 173-174.

the heart and mind; birthing one anew with a new nature, understanding, desires, and inclinations.

> Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often in Scripture compared to the giving of a new sense, eyes to see, ears to hear…[and] is the same that the Scripture calls the circumcision of the heart…in which are attained the habits of true virtue and holiness…it is abundantly manifest, that being born again, spiritually rising from the dead to newness of life, receiving a new heart, and being renewed in the spirit of the mind, are the same thing with that which is called putting off the old man, and putting on the New Man.[12]

Predictably this restriction on human freedom did not sit well with many Anglo or Francophile thinkers who considered any such limitations on man's moral agency as largely tenuous, if not downright ridiculous. Instead they argued that the fundamental difference between man and animal—perhaps said best in the words of Rousseau—could be found in Man's "capacity as a free agent. Nature commands all animals, and the beast obeys. Man receives the same impulsion, but he recognizes himself as being free to acquiesce or resist."[13]

Yet it was precisely here where Hopkins modified Edwards to better adapt to a culture enamored with European humanism. For Edwards, the Holy Spirit regenerated both the heart and the mind. He put the two together "because the scripture puts them together (Acts 3:19) and because they plainly signify much the same thing."[14] For Hopkins and Bellamy, however, the two were not the same and it was at this junction that the New Divinity made one of the most historically significant changes to Reformed Theology.

---

[12] Jonathan Edwards, Sereno Edwards Dwight, and Edward Hickman, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, (London: F. Westley and A.H. Davis, 1835), 266, 213-214.
[13] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, trans. Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), 88; John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Hackett Publishing, 1996), 110.
[14] Edwards, Dwight, and Hickman, 213-214, 290.

Whether done intentionally or not, Samuel Hopkins successfully managed to modify Edwards and make him not only more attractive to late 18th and early 19th century secular society, but also more amenable to the growing culture of revivalism within the American Church. He did this by referring to his predecessor's distinction between natural and moral inability and separated the regeneration of the human heart from that of the mind, rendering them two entirely different events. For Hopkins, the human mind was only darkened to the extent that one's heart was darkened; the key difference being that Edwards emphasized the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost upon all parts of the individual to more or less an equal extent. Hopkins on the other hand emphasized the regeneration of the heart as being more the independent variable by which the state of the mind was dependent upon. According to the New Divinity, once the heart was reborn by the Spirit of God, the mind was then free again to operate as it was originally intended—rightly discerning truth, rightly understanding the laws of God and the Gospel:

> when the heart is totally corrupt or sinful, which is true of every unrenewed heart, as has been proved, this blindness, this moral darkness, is total...[T]herefore, in regeneration, the heart being changed and renewed, light and understanding take place; and there is no need of any operation on the understanding, or intellectual faculty of the mind, as distinguished from the heart…[A]s the moral disorder and depravity of man lies wholly in his heart, the cure and renovation must begin and end there; and when the heart is perfectly right, the man will be wholly recovered to perfect holiness.[15]

Even though this innovation was arguably more a matter of emphasis than divergence from Edwards, Hopkins was able to sufficiently retain the doctrines of Original Sin and Total Depravity and likewise reconcile them with more 18th century humanist notions of personal liberty and free agency. Put rather crudely, Hopkins had managed to have his cake and eat it

[15] Hopkins, Park, and Harding, vol. 1, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins,* 401, 370.

too. Consequently he was largely ignored by most secularly inclined American would-be intellectuals, save for the one sentence in his multi volume work which reads—again— "there is no need of any operation on the understanding or intellectual faculty of the mind." For cynics, everything else Hopkins had to say was irrelevant. Rather it was this single idea, this single sentence, that only really mattered for indeed those 15 words changed the course of American Calvinism for much of the following century.

Admittedly, the scale of this innovation may appear minor to modern readers but it had dramatic consequences for American intellectual and cultural development. Essentially, by making the Calvinist understanding of the mind more compatible with Enlightenment notions of rationality, Congregational and Presbyterian ministers were then able to both defend the faith against the likes of Thomas Paine and go on the evangelical offensive by employing more direct and overt techniques in their preaching, without supposedly breaking with the Confession of Faith. Such a scenario allowed more progressively minded Presbyterians and Congregationalists to not only emphasize human responsibility and direct participation in God's ultimate plan for America, but it similarly supported an interdenominational unity movement then at work in the Atlantic world which was fed by Christian Eschatology and the expectation of Jesus Christ's imminent return.

The Rise of Millennial Ecumenism

As was stated before, Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Hopkins were the principle actors in brokering the exchange between Enlightenment Rationalists and committed Trinitarian

Calvinists.[16] This was true because in addition to their interest in reconciling Calvinism and Enlightenment humanism, they also were acutely committed to the patriotic expectation that the United States was special, that it would soon be the site of mankind's apotheosis and the principal agent of Christ's return to Earth. In many ways this began with Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening of the 1740s. Around 1744, Edwards joined a European prayer movement that was initiated by Presbyterian ministers in Scotland. The hope was that by setting aside denominational differences, and committing Saturday evening and Sunday mornings to prayer, God may be influenced to send an:

> abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit on all the churches, and the whole habitable earth, to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom, and to deliver all nations from their great and manifold spiritual calamities…and bless them with the unspeakable benefits of the king of our glorious Redeemer.[17]

To promote the movement in North America, Edwards published *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth*. Its impact upon American society, however, appeared to of been delayed for it wasn't until the 1790s that Americans really began to take notice. In 1794 a new edition of Edwards' *An Humble Attempt* began to circulate across the East Coast. Four years later, Congregationalists from the Hartford North Association, located in the State of Connecticut, then issued an "invitation to the

[16] For more on this dialogue between Rationalists and Trinitarian "Pietists" see Sidney E. Mead, "American Protestantism During the Revolutionary Epoch," in *The Lively Experiment: the Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).
[17] Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth* (Boston: D. Henchman, 1747), 14-15.

ministers and churches of every Christian denomination" to execute the particulars of the pamphlet into everyday practice.[18]

Meanwhile in 1793, Hopkins continued where Edwards had left off and published a stirring exegesis of the prophecies found in the Book of Revelation. This work was ostensibly for mass public consumption and was simply titled—*A Treatise on the Millennium*. In it he describes a coming time in human history when knowledge will increase throughout the earth, "when those things which now appear intricate and unintelligible, will then appear plain and easy." He foresees this period as one when a concern for God and his Law rests at the very center of public education and consequently results in technological and social advances that bring universal peace between communities, nations, and religious denominations. In short he declared an absolute end to the "variety and opposition of opinions and practices which now divide professing Christians into so many sects, parties, and denominations." Hopkins, in fact, paints with minute detail a spiritual and material utopia, arguing that just as personal piety and divine revelation shall soon increase, so too will the material prosperity of humanity—inaugurating an age where sickness, poverty, and intemperance are abolished. Indeed the planet itself "will be so ordered as to render the earth fertile, and succeed the labor of man in cultivating it, and there will be nothing to devour and destroy the fruit of the field."[19]

Hopkins begins his discourse with an end-times spiritual renaissance, fully in keeping with the spirit of 18th century rationalist optimism, and concludes by emphasizing certain cultural and technological advances that will have a large role to play in preparing the Earth for

[18] Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976), 157.
[19] Samuel Hopkins, Edwards Amasa Park, and Sewall Harding, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Port, R.I. with a Memoir of His Life and Character*, vol. 2 (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1852), 273-275, 277, 284-286, 289, 291.

the returning Messiah. Foremost among these discoveries is the establishment of a universal world language, leading to the dissemination of information that will inextricably "cement the world" together. Accordingly in response to this heady vision for the future, American Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and even a few Methodist groups, began holding regular prayer meetings during the late 18th century in order to usher in this promised golden age by promoting corporate Christian unity.[20]

In keeping with this simultaneous mix of human agency and millennial optimism, numerous ecumenical projects began to quickly emerge. By 1787, the first North American missionary society was founded in Boston—the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America (SPGNA).[21] Similarly in England, during the month of October, 1792, a large number of English Baptists established a missionary society that effectively reinvigorated ecumenical sentiment between Nonconformists and State Anglicans. For the next three years this sentiment would develop into a concrete push to work cooperatively. With the help of the *Evangelical Magazine*, a series of interdenominational meetings began in January of 1795 that resulted in the organization of the world's first truly ecumenical missions society with an open membership policy—the London Missionary Society (LMS).[22]

Consequently, this building spirit of cooperation directly affected the organizational pattern of American Christianity well into the 19th century and ushered in a new kind of evangelical enterprise. Whereas before ecumenical efforts in North America were mostly

[20] Chaney, 157; E. Cornelius and B.B. Edwards, eds., *Quarterly Register and Journal of the American Education Society*, vol. 2 (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1830), 159; William Linn, *Discourses on the Signs of the Times* (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1794), 174-175.
[21] Chaney, 138-139.
[22] Ibid., 156.

regional in scope, by 1796 the first interdenominational society in the United States would be established, directly modeled after the policy of open membership that the LMS was chartered under. Christened "The New York Missionary Society", its leadership was truly ecumenical, with a Presbyterian serving as the society's first President, a Dutch Reformed minister serving as vice president, and Benjamin Foster—the pastor of the largest Baptist church in New York City—serving as an executive director.[23] Yet the extent to which this denominational cooperation reached was fairly limited. For example, while the body's constitution was ecumenical in intent, it was strongly Calvinistic and effectively excluded Methodist participation. Anglican or Episcopalian participation was, likewise, virtually nonexistent; unlike the society it was modeled after, the LMS. Nevertheless, the NYMS was an important foundational step in the North American expression of 18th century Christian optimism and the eventual unification of American Presbyterianism and Congregationalism in 1801.

Courting Union

Although the Plan of Union between American Presbyterians and Congregationalists was organizationally, institutionally, and intellectually unprecedented—wedding together two denominations and five separate geographic regions—it was just as much a product of New England social institutions as it was of Enlightenment humanism or millennial ecumenism. Only a portion of New England actually cooperated in the Union, but it was that portion which was the best organized and financially mobilized—The General Association of Connecticut and its missionary arm the Connecticut Missionary Society. Comparatively, while Congregationalism as a whole was organizationally weak, those in Connecticut were by far the most robust in their

[23] Ibid., 159.

institutional structure. Established amid the threat of increasing secular encroachment and religious toleration that had been present in New England since 1662, The General Association of Connecticut was created as a defensive measure at the beginning of the 18th century. To the North, under the terms of a new Crown charter in 1691, the Province of Massachusetts Bay was established. Unlike its previous charter, franchisement was based on property holdings and not church membership. Likewise, toleration was imposed and other creeds were allowed a foothold throughout the province. This resulted in a profound anxiety among the leading ministers in neighboring Connecticut who quickly came to the conclusion that only a stronger ecclesiastical structure could better insulate them from the cultural change that was beginning to sweep New England. Consequently in 1708, the Saybrook Platform was enacted into law by the General Court of Connecticut. As opposed to Massachusetts's Cambridge Platform of 1648 (which only granted advisory powers to ministerial councils), the Saybrook Platform created local associations and a "General Association" of ministers across virtually all of Connecticut. This provided a means not only for ministers within a region to enforce discipline and conformity among individual congregations, but it also assured that the clergy would maintain control of ordination and the examination of new ministers.[24]

As the missionary arm of the General Association, The Connecticut Missionary Society was formed in 1798 and represented the second major organizational leap for Christian New England. Its purpose was twofold. First, as an expression of millennial purpose and mission, it

[24] *The Cambridge and Saybrook Platforms of Church Discipline, with the Confession of Faith of the New England Churches, Adopted in 1680* (Boston: T.A. Marvin, 1829), 118-122; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 154-164.

was to spread the Kingdom among the Native Americans in the western wilderness.[25] The institution's second purpose though was slightly less imperial and concerned Yankee settlers who were "losing, by degrees, a knowledge of the principles and a regard for the precepts of Christianity."[26] To further support this work, in 1800 the society established its own periodical, *the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, to broadcast and promote the work of domestic and global missions.[27] Among the nascent 18th century benevolent institutions in North America, the CMS was one of the most consistently active. Along with the Society for the Propagation of the

[25] A side development worth noting here is how many of these missionary ventures conceptualized and interacted with the people they were commissioned to. Here it was a commonly held belief that the Native Americans were directly descended from the 10 tribes of Israel. As such, early colonial efforts at Indian conversion were deemed important but were generally scattered and piecemeal because of the relative immaturity of colonial institutions. The establishment of an Indian mission on Martha's Vineyard in 1642 represented one such concerted effort to evangelize entire villages however. Although Thomas Mayhew, an English merchant and shipbuilder, established the colony, his son Thomas, Jr. quickly threw himself into proselytizing the native Wampanoag people. Similarly, John Eliot established a mission to the Massachusett Indians near Plymouth in 1646. Organization for such ventures initially came from England when in 1649 the Long Parliament established a missionary society that primarily operated in New England. After Charles II secured the throne following the Civil War and English Interregnum, the society's charter was quickly renewed and the organization renamed: "the Company for Propagation of the Gospel in New England." The Company originated in London but administrative responsibly was quickly transferred to the colonial commissioners of the General Courts within the New England Confederacy. This firmly placed control of evangelical outreach officially into the hands of the colonial State, more firmly binding early missionary ventures with territorial expansion. As a result, with the outbreak of hostilities in 1675 between colonists and the Wampanoag people, many early attempts to proselytize New England's native peoples were momentarily interrupted. Consequently, the effects of King Phillip's War served to not only accelerate territorial hostilities, but it temporarily halted structural growth among New England Congregationalists (Edward Winslow, ed., *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England Manifested by Three Letters Under the Hand of That Famous Instrument of the Lord, Mr. John Eliot, and Another from Mr. Thomas Mayhew...: Together with an Appendix to the Foregoing Letters, Holding Forth Conjectures, Observations, and Applications, by I.D.* (London: Hannah Allen in Popes-Head-Alley, 1649), 22-23; Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976), 106-107).

Not until the 18th century would any major evangelization of Native Americans resume. Propelled by the revival enthusiasm of the 1730s and 40s, a second push began. In 1734 Samuel Hopkins and Stephen Williams initiated a mission to the Chippeway Indians of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. With support from the New England Company's Commissioners and colonial Governor Jonathan Belcher, Williams and Nehemiah Bull secured land on the Housatonic River and the mission was established with John Sergeant, a tutor at Yale, as principal missionary. After Sergeant's death in 1749, the eminent Jonathan Edwards assumed control. Under Edwards, the mission in Stockbridge would prove to be the Company's most successful attempt at evangelical advancement and organizational growth, continuing well into the 19th century (Electa Fidelia Jones, *Stockbridge: Past and Present; or, Records of Old Mission Station* (Springfield: S. Bowels & Co., 1854), 38-43).

[26] *The Constitution of the Missionary Society of Connecticut: With an Address from the Board of Trustees, to the People of the State, and Narrative on the Subject of Missions* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1800), 7.

[27] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 423.

Gospel in New England, and the recently formed London Missionary Society, the activities and influence of the CMS naturally helped lead to the establishment, growth, and organization of similar societies across North America—each advancing the cultural mission of millennial ecumenism.[28]

While the CMS did not formally partner with other benevolent societies during the late 18th century, the General Association had been in communication with southern and middle-state Presbyterians as early as the 1760s. What eventually resulted was a convention between the two bodies at Elizabethtown, New Jersey in 1766. Although this meeting had no formal authority over the participating ministers, its general purpose was to "preserve religious liberty." During the course of the initial summit, a plan for subsequent conventions was drafted and later adopted by both institutions the following year. Hence, between 1767 and the opening of the Revolution, the two institutions proceed to meet annually. At these gatherings many grandiose projects were envisioned, some of which even contemplated the construction of an American Establishment similar to what existed in Britain at the time; one in which any dissenting sects would be taxed just as surely as if they had been in England.[29]

Following the disruptions caused by the Revolutionary War, correspondence was renewed between the two denominations when the Presbyterians appointed Rev. John Rogers and Alexander McWhorter to initiate steps for reinstating annual meetings with the General Association. By 1792 it was agreed that three visiting delegates be exchanged in order to attend

[28] William W. Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1850: The Congregationalists*, vol. 3 (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964), 43-51; Examples of such societies include the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, the American Education Society, the American Sunday School Union, the American Tract Society, the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance.
[29] E.H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1864), 163-165.

the other's annual convention. A year later, Rev. Mattias Burnet, Jonathan Edwards Jr., and Timothy Dwight were sent as delegates from the Association to the Presbyterian General Assembly. The following year in 1794, it was then suggested that visiting delegates be granted voting privileges in the other's caucus. This was finally adopted by both bodies in 1795.[30]

Thus, by the mid 1790s the institutional foundation had been laid for a formal marriage between the General Association and General Assembly. Since the 1760s the two had been in friendly collaboration and enthusiastic courtship, each exploring the similarities of the other. Indeed both optimistically saw themselves—and the continent of North America for that matter—as the vehicle for God's greatest work in human history. More importantly, both also saw the rise and rapid spread of western Arminian Methodism as particularly troubling for although the spirit of the age was millennial collaboration and cooperation, tolerance could only be extended so far beyond the Reform tradition. In the words of the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*: to the "Arminian and men of unholy principles and practice, we cannot extend our charity…Whatever opinion darkens the glory of the God-man Mediator…must be essentially adverse to the gospel, and cannot be espoused by an evangelical believer."[31]

Eastern American Calvinists of the late 18th century then were unified not only around the Westminster Confession, but also in the task of defending Enlightenment humanist

[30] Guy S. Klett, *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church In America: 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1976), 438; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 29, 52, 64, 80; Robert H. Nichols, "The Plan of Union in New York," *Church History* 5, no. 1 (March 1936): 32-33; William W. Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1850: The Presbyterians*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936), 38-39; Similar agreements were later made between the General Assembly and the Congregationalists of Vermont in 1803-4, New Hampshire in 1810, Massachusetts in 1811, and Maine in 1828.
[31] "Letter from a Respectable Physician in Connecticut, to His Sister in a Defiant State," in *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine: From July 1801 to June 1802*, vol. 2 (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1801), 186; *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, vol. 6 (Hartford: Peter B. Gleason and Company, 1813), iii.

challenges to Predestination, Original Sin, and Election. Moreover both entities emphasized the authority of ministerial ruling councils and understood their destiny to be one of righteous crusade; reasoning that it was only from their shores, only from their ecclesiastical bosom, that the riches of God's Kingdom could extend throughout the earth. All that need now take place in order to conquer North America for the Kingdom was for one to offer the other a formal proposal of union. Interestingly enough, the impetus for this development came from the frontier.

A Proposal from the Forest

It was the summer of 1796 when a young missionary by the name of Eliphalet Nott headed west through the dense brush beyond the town of Albany. He was far from anything familiar, far from his home in Plainfield, Connecticut—in a dangerously wild and densely wooded region. For starters bears were said to be particularly numerous here, surviving on what seemed a near limitless supply of small game and deer. More ominously, however, were the Mohawk, an Iroquoian-speaking tribe famous among the whites of Albany for their eighty foot "Longhouses" and a particularly gruesome raid about fifteen years earlier. Rumor was they were blood thirsty and enjoyed kidnapping young girls. Nott likely knew little of the incident having come from Connecticut, but virtually everyone in the United States had heard about the indiscriminant bloodshed that had taken place in the town of Cherry Valley. It was to this town that Nott was headed.[32]

[32] Eliphalet Nott, C. Van Santvoord, and Tayler Lewis, *The Memoirs of Eliphalet Nott D.D. LL.D., President of Union College* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1876), 39-41; Alan Taylor, *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 94; Nancy Bonvillain, *The Mohawk* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005), 10; John Sawyer, *History of Cherry Valley from 1740 to 1898* (Cherry Valley: Gazette Print, 1898), 22-30, 74.

Despite the fear, the uncertainty, and the lack of navigable roads, however, Nott was justifiable excited; he had recently been married and passed his examinations for ministry. While a number of churches near Plainfield had already invited Nott to pastor their church, to the disappointment of family and friends he decided to forsake the safe and certain, setting his eyes on the land beyond the Hudson.[33] Having learned of Nott's commitment to the West, the CMS quickly offered him a commission and the freedom to operate as Providence directed. Thus, leaving his bride with family, Nott departed to secure a home in central New York and settled in Cherry Valley, about nine miles east of Otsego Lake. Although Nott was trained as a Congregationalist, the Presbyterian Church there offered him a pastorate almost immediately after his arrival. The fact of the matter was they were desperate. Ministers this far west were rare and to make the situation all the more dire, the congregation was also responsible for a small academy which the Rev. Solomon Spaulding had formerly been an instructor. With both the church and academy then without a pastor, Nott assumed responsibility and began his career as a minister and educator on the frontier.[34]

Two years later, Nott once again found himself walking through the wilderness, struggling his way northwest from Cherry Valley to attend a presbytery meeting at the town of Salem in upper New York. Resting in Schenectady for the night, he noticed that a prayer meeting was beginning nearby and felt compelled to attend. No doubt his feet were badly swollen and his legs weak, yet the warm yellow light from the service was so inviting, deliciously spilling out across the cool darkness of the village, that the scene proved impossible

[33] Nott, Santvoord, and Lewis, 39-41, 43.
[34] Ibid., 41-47; Spaulding is most known for his alleged authorship of the Book of Mormon. Supposedly, Spaulding wrote a novel which described how the Native Americans in the region were the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. As some claim, Joseph Smith acquired this manuscript and later fashioned it into the Book of Mormon.

to resist. Before he knew it Nott was fully dressed and in the street, aggravating blisters in pursuit of something mysterious or divine. During the meeting itself the minister presiding—Dr. John Blair Smith—took special note of Nott as if the two had met before. One could easily imagine their eyes locking for a brief moment, neither knowing why or how the other was important. Whether or not this unnerved the young man is unknown. At one point during the course of the service, Smith suddenly paused. Then before all seated, he awkwardly stood dead still with his gaze to the floor, as if listening to a voice. To the agony of everyone present not a breath or whisper could be heard. No one dare speak. Then, without warning, and to Nott's utter horror, the preacher made eye contact with him and slowly began to move toward him. Finally within arm's reach, Smith proceed to actually call Nott out before the crowd of strangers, inviting him to formally address everyone in the room. Although Nott was unaware of it at the time, the minister who had embarrassed him was the sitting president of Union College and had an enormous amount of influence in the area—the man would not be denied.[35]

Unfortunately history does not record what Nott immediately said or did, only that he somehow managed to deliver an impressive impromptu sermon right there and then to the utter satisfaction of all in attendance. After the missionary finally finished speaking and the service drew to a close, Smith was so overcome that he actually invited Nott to his residence where to two talked late into the night. There with lamplight and fraternal admiration in the air, the president inquired into the young man’s background and began to impress upon him the importance of uniting the Presbyterian and Congregational churches into a single Christian

[35] Ibid., 54-55.

body. No doubt Smith had given this idea a considerable amount of thought for it was unlikely that this was the first time the college president had spoken on the subject.[36]

To fully understand or appreciate this strange encounter, a brief look into the early history of Union College maybe helpful because as president, Smith was the caretaker of a peculiar institutional tradition that was rather unique in the late 18th century United States. By 1798 there were fewer than 10 colleges in North America—Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Columbia, Brown, Rutgers, and Dartmouth. For the Dutch settlers in the State of New York, Columbia (NYC) and Rutgers (New Jersey) were the only realistic options for higher education. This effectively meant that the white populations along the Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys were without a seat of learning. This was particularly troubling considering how rapidly the region was growing. In response, two publicly initiated petitions were circulated across the State during the Revolution, each demanding the Legislature to incorporate a committee to erect a college somewhere in the vicinity of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers.[37]

Due to the exigencies of the war though, little came of the effort until the State finally created a licensing and accreditation body for public and private institutions—the University of the State of New York in 1784. After the University's Board of Regents was established three years later, public education grew considerably with the foundation of various local academies and the expansion of public support for Columbia University. Then in 1795 the Board chartered its first college in response to considerable pressure from the community. Although support for

[36] Ibid.
[37] Andrew Van Vranken Raymond, *Union University: Its History, Influence, Characteristics, and Equipment: With the Lives and Works of Its Founders, Benefactors, Officers, Regents, Faculty, and the Achievements of Its Alumni*, vol. 1 (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1907), 3-5.

the venture came from various directions, the effort was largely spearheaded by Rev. Dirck Romeyn, pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church in Schenectady. Romeyn himself was a member of the NHK (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*), but his sectarian loyalties were rather weak and he attended Princeton College in the late 1760s. After graduation, Romeyn pastored several Dutch churches in New Jersey and New York before finally settling in Schenectady. There he remained steadfastly committed to the liberal view of ecumenical, interdenominational, cooperation and became the principle agent for securing a college charter from the State.[38]

Consequently, in Union's final application to the Board of Regents, the citizens of Schenectady explicitly specified that the college would be directed and ran by twenty-four Trustees, the majority of which could not at any one time be composed of persons from the same Christian denomination. This move was unprecedented for nowhere in the United States, or the Western Hemisphere for that matter, had such an institution been created. Moreover, to help ensure that this spirit of cooperation remained sustainable, the original charter for the college stipulated that no student could be excluded or discriminated against on the basis of creed, doctrine, or denominational affiliation. Finally in the College Law and Rulebook of 1802—Chapter 3, Section 6—Union's staff and faculty were directly ordered to "avoid as much as possible those controverted points which have so long divided the Christian world" during their class lectures and student instruction.[39]

Again, and this cannot be emphasized enough, Union's form of officially institutionalized interdenominational cooperation was wholly unique in the United States, no college in the late 18th century was this progressive in its approach to either education or ecclesiastical fellowship.

[38] Ibid., 8, 12-14.
[39] Ibid., 24, 37, 90.

Accordingly then, as the lamplight grew dimmer in the Smith home, the college president was strongly invested in the ecumenical mission of his school that night and earnestly attempted to convince Eliphalet Nott that because the churches of New England hold "substantially the same faith as the Presbyterian…would it not be better for the entire Church that these two divisions [make] mutual concessions, and thus effect a common organization on an accommodation plan?"[40]

Whether it was the prominence of Smith, his personal charisma (which Nott acknowledged was considerable), or simply the proposition itself, the meeting in Schenectady would prove seminal for a number of reasons. For Nott's life specifically, it directly led to a pastoral position at the First Presbyterian Church of Albany, an appointment Smith vigorously pursued and personally orchestrated. Moreover, years later the association would also position Nott to eventually succeed Smith as the fourth, and longest running, president of Union College—serving from 1804 to 1866. Yet the implications of this meeting stretched far beyond the life of one man's career. According to Nott, the idea of organizing the Congregational and Presbyterian churches into a single body "gave a new direction" to his ministry and he afterward proceeded to advance the idea among the Congregational ministers within his sphere of influence.[41]

While it is impossible to know who exactly Nott was able to interact with, it is clear that his position as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Albany placed him in direct contact with virtually any Congregational minister who wished to travel between western New York and

[40] William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Presbyterian*, vol. 3 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), 403-404; Nott, Santvoord, and Lewis, 54-56.
[41] Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 393-394; Nott, Santvoord, and Lewis, 55.

New England. Situated along the Hudson River, Albany was an important junction for early American immigration, commerce, and communication. Even before the Treaty of Paris, stability quickly fell upon the Hudson River Valley following General Burgoyne's surrender to Horatio Gates in 1777, providing the region with years of growth and development.

Indeed almost immediately after the surrender, immigrants from Vermont and Connecticut began flowing into the city of Albany and Troy. The draw was predictably trade, specifically the markets and land that were suddenly available at the junction between the Hudson River and the great wilderness to the west. In fact, so rapid was the growth that the area which constituted the County of Albany was divided four times, into six separate counties between 1786 and 1800. The town of Albany, for instance, grew dramatically even before canal fever swept the region in the 1810s and 20s, increasing over fifty percent between 1790 and 1800. This trend was then further accelerated when the State capital moved from New York City to Albany in 1797, virtually doubling the population in only 10 years.[42] As such, numerous stage coach companies were extremely anxious to establish stage lines across the State with Albany as the central hub. The Albany post office also became extremely important, servicing not only the adjoining towns, but also the towns of Schenectady, Cherry Valley, the counties of Orange and Dutchess, and even portions of Vermont. Moreover, so great was the importance of the city that by 1797 the postal routes emanating out from Albany would extend as far as New Haven, Niagara, Montreal, and even Philadelphia—totaling over 1,000 miles in one

[42] George B. Anderson, *Landmarks of Rensselaer County New York* (Syracuse: D. Mason & Company, 1897), 67-68; George Howell, ed., *Bicentennial History of Albany: History of the County of Albany, N.Y., from 1606-1886*, vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1886), 276.

direction.[43] This sudden increase in the ease of travel made New England emigration a year-round affair. In 1795 one observer recalled how Albany was absolutely flooded with pilgrims even in midwinter, with as many as 500 sleighs passing through daily in the months of January and February.[44]

Given Nott's geographic location, he certainly could not have been in a more advantageous position to influence emigrating Congregationalists who were settling westward. Though Nott was the Pastor of a Presbyterian church, many of his professional connections remained Congregational. In this way one may be able to explain Jonathan Edwards the Younger's eventual involvement with Smith and Nott's interdenominational ambitions. Only one year after Nott was settled in Albany, Edwards left his pastorate in Colebrook, Connecticut and traveled across the Hudson River to Schenectady, New York. The purpose here was to serve as second president of Union College. As with Eliphalet Nott, Dr. Smith was the one who initiated Edward's appointment. At the time, Smith was growing restless. Perhaps it was the relative insignificance of Schenectady, the responsibilities of leading a fledgling college, or the fact that he was simply homesick. Regardless of the reasons, after only three years as president he earnestly desired to return to his congregation in Philadelphia.[45] Before Smith resigned, however, he was able to secure a suitable successor—yet another talented minister from the Congregational Church—and promptly recommended to the college trustees Jonathan Edwards for his "extensive reading…critical studies and comprehensive mind." Consequently, Edwards

[43] Joel Munsell, *The Annals of Albany*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1869), 246-251.
[44] Stewart H. Holbrook, *The Yankee Exodus: An Account of Migration from New England* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 17; Frank H. Severance, ed., *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, vol. 9 (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1906), 440.
[45] Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Presbyterian*, 399.

was elected president of Union College and found himself on the western frontier in May of 1799.[46]

Now the ultimate reason Nott, Smith, and Edwards are important to this chapter's overall discussion of theological change and interdenominational cooperation lies precisely in the role Edwards was to play in both the General Association of 1800 and the General Assembly of 1801. To explain Edwards' sudden involvement with the inner workings of Presbyterian politics, it is essential to first understand that the President of Union College was customarily offered a seat and vote in the nearby Presbytery of Albany; making Union's president directly connected with the internal affairs of the presbytery's proceedings. This began with Dr. Smith who had previously been a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia and one time president of Hampden-Sydney College. The practice, however, stretched far beyond Smith, well into the 20th century. While this started with Smith, who was thoroughly Presbyterian, the practice continued even after his resignation to ministers who had been ordained by other denominational judicatories. Consequently, Edwards was not only made a member of the Presbyterian Church via Albany by virtue of his presidency in 1799, but he was likewise eligible to represent the presbytery at the annual General Assembly meetings. Meanwhile, Edwards retained his connection with the Congregational Church and participated in its internal affairs as a delegate in the General Association. In this way Edwards was a formal bureaucratic bridge between the two denominations leading up to the Plan of Union.[47]

---

[46] Tryon Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, D.D., Late President of Union College: With a Memoir of His Life and Character*, vol. 1 (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co, 1854), xxi-xxii.
[47] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 202; Williston Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1894), 316.

The 1801 Plan of Union and Frontier Accommodation

The air was likely very warm the day that Jonathan Edwards the Younger entered the town of Stamford, Connecticut. It was June, 1800 and by 3 o'clock in the afternoon the brackish breeze from Long Island Sound no doubt smelled of salt, fish, and seaweed. Virtually all of New England drains into the Sound and Edwards probably thought of home as the water from northern Connecticut lost itself in the mighty expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. Accompanied by Rev. John Rodgers, Asa Hillyer, and Jonathan Freeman, Edwards was on his way to meet with a committee from the General Association. Unfortunately, little remains of these men and while all that is known of Freeman is that he belonged to the Presbytery of Hudson, both Rodgers and Hillyer were ordained Presbyterians. Rodgers himself was a member of the Presbytery of New York, a convert of Whitefield, Trustee of the College of New Jersey, and served as a Chaplin during the Revolutionary War. Hillyer, though much younger, was likewise a member of New York Presbytery and would soon rise to prominence as one of the first directors of Princeton Seminary. Thirty-seven years later, amid the denominational turmoil of the Old and New School controversy, Hillyer would also cast his lot with the New School and his brethren in upstate New York.[48]

While the initial purpose of the visit was to examine various alterations Timothy Dwight had made to Watt's *Hymnbook of the Psalms*, the Presbyterian General Assembly also appointed the men, with the exception of Rodgers, to act as visiting delegates to the General Association. During the early 19th century, the Association met in the homes of prominent

[48] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 202, 168-169; Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Presbyterian*, 154-161, 533-534.

ministers rather than churches. In 1800 it was the honor of Mr. and Mrs. Ammi R. Robbins.[49] It is difficult to know what exactly transpired between the Presbyterian delegates before the meeting, but it is very possible that they discussed Smith and Nott's hope for union between the two denominations, even strategizing how they would blend the two churches into one. The reason for this is that by the time the meeting actually commenced, Edwards—with no apparent objection from his fellow delegates—single handedly initiated the historic proposal that would forever change American Christianity and Calvinism: a motion to affect a merger between the Presbyterian Church of the United States and the Congregational Churches of Connecticut.[50]

Despite the fact that modern historians have virtually ignored the Plan of Union as a salient event in American History, Edwards's motion was far from ordinary or serendipitous and constituted a deliberate effort to mobilize the nation around its God-given millennial mission. To the men involved, such a vision was too grand to be the product of mere human ambition for the goal was no less than the logical conclusion of the Reformation—a unified, purified, Christendom destined to inherent the earth and hold the reins of civil government. Amid this optimism and ecumenical purpose, the sitting delegates of the General Association quickly passed Edwards' motion and immediately appointed a committee to prepare a report on the subject.[51] Following this, the Association then promptly consigned an additional committee to

[49] Robbins was a member of the Litchfield North Association-Norfolk and otherwise would have remained relatively unknown to American History save for a journal he kept during his time as a chaplain in the continental army which was published several decades after his death in 1850.
[50] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 202; *Acts and Proceedings of the General Association of Connecticut: 1801* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1801), 3; Walker, 316.
[51] Albert E. Dunning, *Congregationalists in America: A Popular History of Their Origin, Belief, Polity, Growth, and Work* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1894), 321.

discuss the specific terms of the union with the Presbyterian Church. Consequently, a year later on May 22nd, 1801, the following letter was read before the General Assembly:

> Report of the Committee on Friendly Intercourse of Missionaries—The Rev. John Smalley, Levi Hart, and Samuel Blatchford, are hereby appointed a committee of this General Association to confer with a committee to be appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, if they see cause to appoint such a committee, to consider the measures proper to be adopted both by this Association and the said Assembly, to prevent alienation, to promote harmony and to establish, as far as possible, an uniform system of Church Government…[52]

In regard to who precisely from the Congregational Church it was that made the address, it is likely that Rev. Samuel Blatchford actually delivered the letter in person owing to the fact that of the appointed visiting delegates from the General Association, only Blatchford appeared at the 1801 General Assembly meeting in Philadelphia. As the only official Congregational representative in the Assembly, Blatchford was virtually the lone Congregationalist when he was then later appointed to the committee created by the Assembly on the 27th to establish the specifics of the union. Of the additional committee members, all were Presbyterian delegates from the General Assembly, with only Edwards to join Blatchford as the other Congregationalist in negotiating the position of the Association.[53]

Two days later—after much theorizing, negotiation, and speculation—the committee concluded their deliberations and declared the following terms of union between the Presbyterian and Congregational churches: First, that the missionaries and ministers of both institutions should endeavor to promote the utmost forbearance and cooperation between the

[52] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 212.
[53] Ibid., 221.

residents of the "new settlements," i.e. the West, that hold to the Presbyterian and Congregational forms of government.

Second, that the churches of this region must be allowed to select for themselves a minister from either the Congregational or Presbyterian Church. If a Congregational church settles a Presbyterian minister, they would be permitted to conduct their discipline and examinations according to a democratic vote of all male church members. If any difficulty arises between the minister and the church body, however, the case shall be referred to the presbytery to which the minister belongs, provided that both parties agree; if not, a special council would be arranged that consists of equals numbers of Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

Third, the same agreement was made for churches of Presbyterian polity that selected Congregational ministers, yet instead of a popular vote of all members, a session of elders was to conduct internal affairs. The fourth and final provision in the plan related to possible congregations of mixed composition. If such an event happened, the form of discipline would be a perfect mix of governmental forms with a select standing committee of church members. In the event that an individual condemned by this committee's judgment was Presbyterian, they had the right to appeal to a nearby Presbytery. Alternatively, if the subject was Congregational then they had the right to appeal to the popular vote of all male members. Such were the specifics the Assembly committee drafted, which were then quickly submitted to the General Association and adopted without alteration in late June of the same year.[54]

[54] *Acts and Proceedings of the General Association of Connecticut: 1801*, 4-5.

Although the committee that created the terms of union took great pains to design specific parameters by which interdenominational cooperation would take place, in the years that followed it ultimately proved to be unnecessary as the churches that were actually intended to put the union into practice did so by only marginally adhering to the committee's specifications. The reason for this was that by 1801, the West was quickly becoming overrun by American Methodism. Indeed, Methodist itinerancy was perfectly suited to the frontier environment and did much to help the denomination spread where settlement was just beginning. Since Methodism had weak educational requirements for ordination, and because it required that its ministers travel along a "circuit" in many locations, not only were a larger number of men eligible to preach, but they did so more frequently and in more places. Alternatively, few Presbyterian or Congregational churches existed in the West as they were quickly outpaced by these policies. No more than a handful of Presbyterian churches, for instance, actually existed in upstate New York and on the Western Reserve a proper presbytery would not emerge until 1814. The same was true for the Congregational Church and of the few that did exist on the frontier, the General Association had no formal authority or jurisdiction to dictate denominational policy.[55]

For this reason, the Plan of Union was primarily a creation of eastern churches who assumed the right to shape the religious lives of their western brethren. Although those living in the West were enthusiastic of the arrangement, in reality the actual implementation of the Union was slightly different than originally intended. According to Kennedy, those on the

[55] James H. Hotchkin, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1848), 226; William S. Kennedy, *The Plan of Union*, 161.

Western Reserve, for example, generally received the Plan of Union favorably. During the early 19th century the missionaries across northern Ohio—both Presbyterian and Congregational alike—were in large part supported by the same organization—the CMS. Thus, this institutional connection served to facilitate acceptance of the union on the frontier where by one western missionary under the employ of the society wrote that he and his peers "felt under obligation to put forth every constant effort to unite together in one harmonious body"[56]

But while the *spirit* of the union was largely accepted by those on the frontier, execution was another thing entirely. Generally speaking, Presbyterian and Congregational churches in the hinterland did not operate on equal footing for while it was common for western Congregational churches to settle a Presbyterian minister, very rarely did a Presbyterian church settle a Congregational minister without that clergyman having first become a member of a local presbytery.[57] Similarly, as will be soon demonstrated, it was entirely more common for whole Congregational churches and associations in the West to drop their membership and join the Presbyterian Church than for congregations to maintain any mixed membership or discipline that would have been more in keeping with the fourth prevision of the Plan of Union.[58] This has been explained by the fact that a more robust form of social organization was necessary to connect the scattered frontier congregations with the badly needed support, discipline, and resources of the East—something that Presbyterian polity had no trouble

[56] Ibid., 151-153, 61, 46, 36-37.
[57] Hotchkin, 226-227.
[58] The same cannot be said of Presbyterian practice in the west. Generally speaking, frontier Presbyterians were more attached to their inherited forms of organization and discipline than Congregationalists, resulting in very few (if any) instances where Presbyterian churches abandoned their membership in preference for Congregational fellowship.

doing.[59] Such can be illustrated by the testimony of Rev. John B. Hoyt who was originally a Congressional minister but later led his church into formal membership with the Presbytery of Chenango in the State of New York. He states that because much of central New York was still largely wilderness and cut off from the institutional support structures of New England, it quickly became problematic for him and his fellow ministers to enforce conformity. He writes:

> Some of the members of the Association (Union) were vexed at its want of established rules. When any new case came up, we had no rules to meet it. But the most potential cause was the trial of the Rev. Joshua Knight…During this trial the brethren were as heretofore tried by the want of rules, and at its close felt the need of a judicatory beyond the local excitement and prejudice to which a difficult case like that before us might be appealed or referred. From that trial Presbytery was determined on.[60]

As such, after 1801 it was entirely more common for western presbyteries and congregations to adapt the Plan to better fit local circumstances or sentiments than for the Union to function as it was originally drafted.[61] In central New York for example, the Presbytery of Oneida invited the Oneida Association to formally join them in 1814, provided that they maintain church records according to Presbyterian standards of Synod examination.[62] Similarly in Ohio, it was more the spirit of the Union that was followed when presbyteries across the Western Reserve regularly began receiving New England Congregational ministers in the same way that middle-state Presbyterians from one presbytery were received by another.[63] Yet the most common way the Plan of Union was modified at the local level in the West involved what came to be known as "The Accommodation Plan." This involved entire Congregational churches

[59] Gillett, 401; Hotchkin, 101.
[60] P.H. Fowler, *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York* (Utica: Curtiss & Childs, 1877), 58.
[61] Nichols, 37.
[62] Fowler, 62.
[63] Kennedy, 154.

attaching themselves to a nearby presbytery but retaining their intellectual principles and democratic system of internal management. Broadly speaking, these congregations would be Presbyterian on paper, but remain primarily Congregational intellectually and procedurally with church government and discipline administrated by a vote of all adult male members. The notable differences, however, would be that the minister would have elevated authority, as opposed to being merely another male member of the body, and would be required to join a local presbytery along with an elected delegate. Finally, any incoming Congregational minister was required to formally adopt the Confession of Faith—something moderate Calvinists like those within the General Association and New Divinity had no trouble doing.[64]

Implicating the Plan of Union

Taken together, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the 1801 Plan of Union was more a template from which localized plans of union were fashioned and only in their aggregate did they have the kind of lasting influence that could transform the social landscape. Yet regardless of whether it was in detail or not, this change happened and it happened very quickly. Again, the speed to which Samuel Hopkins' doctrinal modifications spread from Trinitarian Congregational Connecticut into American Presbyterianism was directly related to what was happening on the periphery of the Presbyterian Church. Initially, before 1801, it was mostly radicals on the margins (ministers like the Rev. Hezekiah Balch in Tennessee who will be covered in the following chapter) where any substantial intellectual deviance took place. This was because any external links to innovation were categorically confined to areas that had something to gain from change and were beyond the control of central elites—the marginal

[64] Ibid., 58-61; Hotchkin, 86; Sweet, 464.

and institutionally weak presbyteries in the far West, as opposed to those in Philadelphia or New York. Yet this handful of radicals along the frontier were not enough to make any lasting impact because it was their very marginal nature and lack of status which not only made them sympathetic to innovation, but likewise prevented them from influencing those closer to the center of the denomination.

The 1801 Plan of Union and its subsequent localized manifestations, however, were the first of two significant developments that transformed the frontier's ability to influence the rest of American Presbyterianism. Moreover, the independent nature of Congregational polity only compounded the sense of isolation on the frontier. Consequently, a very large percentage of Congregational churches in the West saw the Presbyterian Church—and its robust institutional organization—as a possible solution to their seclusion and lack of eastern support. To make matters worse for frontier Congregationalists, in 1803 the trustees of the Connecticut Missionary Society established a new policy which effectively reduced the pay of many western missionaries under their charge. Predictably, this compelled frontier ministers like Joseph Badger to terminate ties with the CMS and seek employment elsewhere—in this case with the Western Foreign Missionary Society under the direction of the Presbyterian Synod of Pittsburgh.[65] Thus, the Union not only encouraged ties between western Congregationalists and Presbyterians, but did so at the precise moment those on the frontier needed more institutional and material support.

As if this were not enough to induce New England settlers to become Presbyterian, even the Congregational parenting bodies back in New England were encouraging those in the West

[65] Joseph Badger, *A Memoir of Rev. Joseph Badger: Containing an Autobiography, and Selections from His Private Journal and Correspondence* (Hudson: Sawyer, Ingersoll and Company, 1851), 68-69, 112.

to formally connect themselves to frontier synods and presbyteries. Moses Stuart for example—a theologian at Andover Seminary in Massachusetts—is even quoted saying that the directors of the American Education Society were accustomed to encourage "all young men who go from New England into the boundaries of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to unite with Presbyterians and not to hold [to] Congregationalism." To further illustrate, Stuart estimated that as many as half of the graduates from Andover eventually became Presbyterian and that New England congregations who had members emigrate west similarly encouraged them to become Presbyterian.[66]

Interestingly enough, the reason for this surprising behavior can be found by quickly looking at the broader context of early 19th century New England. Indeed, it was the threat of Unitarianism that actually convinced many Trinitarians in Connecticut and Massachusetts that the loose free-church structure of Congregationalism was incapable of dealing with threats from within. Theoretically they reasoned that if the more eastern bodies were currently struggling to maintain conformity, then it could only be worst on the frontier where Anabaptism and Methodism were much stronger. Yet the alliance with Presbyterians offered a partial solution for if New England Trinitarians could secure their western flank from the heresies of Arminianism and Pelagianism by shifting responsibility for frontier congregations to the General Assembly, then more of their resources could be devoted to dealing with the likes of William Channing and Andrews Norton. Such was the case for Rev. Lyman Beecher who spent much of his career attempting to forge an evangelical coalition to battle the Unitarian

[66] Dunning, 326-327.

prophets of Boston. Indeed when reflecting on the Plan of Union, Beecher recalled that as much as three fourths of the Congregational churches in the West:

> became Presbyterian. New England ministers looked on and approved. Dr. Dwight did, and I did. But it was in this way that the New School element increased in the Presbyterian Church. Wholly, wholly. Now, as long as the Old School had the sails and tiller to manage, they never grumbled, but were hugely tickled; for Presbyterianism grew so fast that Methodists used to complain...but when, without any previous maneuvering (for we never had any of that foolish feeling about it), we chose the moderator in the General Assembly five years out of seven, there began to be uneasiness.[67]

The decision then to transfer responsibility for the West to the Presbyterian Church was of course made even more attractive amid the cooperative millennial ecumenism that was prevalent among Reform churches at the turn of the century. This then added to the near unanimous belief to "set a higher value on those great truths in which they were entirely agreed, than on those minor points in which they were disagreed."[68] Consequently, during the early 19th century it became rather commonplace to think of Presbyterians and Congregationalists as fundamentally the same. Indeed, when compared with Unitarians to the east and Methodists to the west the statement was difficult to refute. Unfortunately, the decision made by New England clergymen to relinquish responsibility for the frontier ultimately served to not only weaken the Congregational Church but divide the Presbyterian, for once western Congregationalists understood that the General Assembly was both willing and able to offer support—while those in Connecticut and Massachusetts were not—a near flood of Congregational immigrants began pouring into hinterland presbyteries and synods.

[67] Lyman Beecher, *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D. D. Ed.*, ed. Charles Beecher, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), 349.
[68] Hotchkin, 103.

Again, this sudden infusion occurred primarily in upstate New York and northern Ohio, where many Congregationalists had already adopted many of Samuel Hopkins' doctrinal innovations. To be sure at the individual level there were exceptions but in keeping with Beecher's previous assertion, those who emigrated from the Congregational Church generally subscribed to some variety of New Divinity theology.[69] Thus, due to both the scale of this exodus, and the fact that it was theologically distinct, the sheer magnitude of change became structurally overwhelming for Presbyterian conservatives. Essentially, with the sudden entry of so many frontier congregations—and whole associations—into the outlining western presbyteries, the intellectual diffusion already initiated by many isolated hinterland radicals quickly expanded to proportions beyond the control of the more central sections, i.e. presbyteries like Philadelphia or New Brunswick (Princeton).

However, to make the story all the more complex, just as these neglected Congregationalists were pouring into New York and northern Ohio, construction began on the Erie Canal. This artificially accelerated the growth rate of the frontier presbyteries in upstate New York, specifically those along the planned canal route, allowing the churches there to develop much faster than not only their western peers in northern Ohio or southern Kentucky, but even the more influential eastern presbyteries in the Delaware River Valley. Precisely because of this explosive financial and demographic growth, it was as little as ten years before the once marginal presbyteries in western and central New York began to institutionally rival or compete with the older, more conservative, presbyteries back east—thereby dramatically shifting the institutional center of power ever westward.

[69] Ibid.; Leo P. Hirrel, *Children of Wrath: New School Calvinism and Antebellum Reform* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 61.

First identified by Whitney Cross in 1950, the significance of the canal to American Intellectual History has long been acknowledged. However, while Cross saw the canal as merely the mechanism by which New York Yankees freed themselves from material concerns, in exchange for spiritual ones, the remainder of this chapter will examine how the Plan of Union and New England migration worked together to first transform the denominational composition of upstate New York, then the intellectual nature of American Presbyterianism.

Fleeing Egypt for Sinai—The Migration of Yankee Christianity

Lieutenant John L. Hardenburgh awoke to the sound of fife and drums as he packed his belongings and prepared to leave winter quarters. It was the morning of May 1st, 1779 and his regiment was less than seven miles from the Hudson River. Consequently the day was quickly becoming muggy and Hardenburgh reached for his water without even thinking. Word around camp was that General Washington had ordered Hardenburgh's Second New York to Fort Penn to await orders. Beyond that, information was speculative at best. It took twelve days to reach the fort, twelve days amid a constant swarm of biting insects accustomed to a diet of young patriots. By the time the Second New York arrived, the weather was awful as the bug infested humidity finally gave way to a steady parade of violent thunderstorms. For two days the rain pounded their position. The men sat, they slept, talked, played games—perhaps even fought a little—as they waited for the sky to clear. Hardenbrugh did his best to keep his men in line but every officer knew that a soldier's greatest enemy was not necessarily bullets, but boredom.[70]

[70] John L. Hardenbergh and Charles Hawley, *Collections of the Cayuga County Historical Society: The Journal of Lieut. John L. Hardenbergh of the 2nd New York Continental Regiment* (Auburn: Cayuga County Historical Society, 1879), 11, 23, 26-30.

On the 14th the regiment received new orders but few likely found the news of any comfort; they were to immediately begin some of the most arduous and exhausting labor one could perform—road construction from Fort Penn to Wyoming, Pennsylvania. From there the Second New York would eventually work their way up the Susquehanna and Chemung rivers, into the Finger Lakes region of central New York State, all the way building new road, hacking new paths through the forest. In this manner thousands of colonial soldiers first experienced both the beauty and brutality of the western frontier. Here they were exposed to the tests and trials of the wilderness. For some, this was but something to suffer through, to endure and never think about again. For others—the bold, the opportunist, perhaps even the romantic—the frontier was more like a crucible, a purifier that eliminated the dross in a man's heart, giving him a strength, a confidence, a clarity of vision, for what the future could offer. For these, the wilderness also held an overwhelming nostalgia, one that birthed a desire that was one part mystical, another certainly material, and compelled many to return one day, initiating a powerful wave of New England migration ever westward. The lieutenant himself writes:

> Friday, [May] 21st.—Foggy, rainy weather with thunder and lightning; remained in camp. This day Ensign Swartwout arrived in camp from the State of New York, brought news that Indians were lurking about Rochester and Wawasink…
> Sunday, 23rd.—The morning fair and clear. Received orders to march. At 8 o'clock the General beat; struck tents, proceeded on our march till a creek in the Great Swamp called Tackhanack, the road very bad, the baggage could not come up; went back and mended the road and encamped…
> Tuesday, 25th.—Left our camp standing and continued making the road; built a bridge and causeway at Tobehanna…The creek is considerably large and abounds with trout. Some good land along the creek; the road very difficult to make…
> Friday, September 3rd.—The signal gun fired at 7 o'clock, the army marched off at 8 o'clock, marched about twelve miles and encamped in the wood on the east side of the Seneca Lake. The land good…[71]

[71] Ibid., 28-30, 47.

As illustrated, the greatest component of this 18th century migration was mostly utilitarian as men like Hardenbrugh sought the means to grow crops and make a name for themselves. Yet while this may have been largely about resources and economic opportunity, in a cultural and immaterial sense 18th century migration from the East coast into New York and Ohio resulted in the virtual extension of New England values and customs well beyond the Hudson River Valley. Indeed, so much of what made the Plan of Union possible beyond the Atlantic Seaboard was the reality that New England essentially spread itself to the Great Lakes. So great was the Yankee migration to this area that at the turn of the century many traveling through the region easily concluded that the residents east and west of the Hudson River were "substantially one people….inseparably blended [with] not a natural or rational cause of division."[72]

Certainly in some measure the cause of this exodus can be attributed to the promotional efforts of early pioneers, as a vanguard of men like Judge Hugh White of Middletown, Connecticut sent back the region's choice samples of corn, oats, wheat, and potatoes. In fact in 1784, White described Oneida County as a lush countryside of charming animal life where the soil was rich and the land's produce far excelled anything yet seen.[73] Although late 18th century boosterism was certainly at work here, there had to of been some truth to all the excitement for twenty years later even more level-headed accounts, such as Timothy Dwight's early 19th century travel memoir, reported "excellent soil" where wheat yields were "forty-five bushels an acre; maize, from seventy to eighty; and oats seventy."[74]

[72] Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York*, vol. 4 (London: William Baynes & Son, 1823), 513-514.
[73] Holbrook, 16.
[74] Dwight, 33-34.

Indeed, traveling through what would soon be canal country in 1804, Dwight judiciously remembered not only dilapidated villages and dangerous marsh lands "disagreeable to the eye," but also peach trees of the "utmost luxuriance" and "the most beautiful [lakes] west of the Hudson."[75]

Yet perhaps the greatest stimulus that drew those from the shores of Cape Cod to the vast wilderness west was not so much simple economic opportunity as it was the war itself and the spoils of conquest. By 1779 a semblance of stability slowly began to reassert itself across much of New England resulting from Continental victories against the Iroquois and British armies. Consequently the Iroquois Confederation was in shambles and its leader, Thayendenegea (Joseph Brant), had retreated to Quebec for further British support. Following the massive exodus of New England Tories into Quebec, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, those remaining quickly turned their attention west, prompted by accounts like Lieutenant Hardenbergh's that the land beyond the Hudson River was beautiful, verdant, and simply there for the taking. Such were the stories of many other young continental soldiers who had personally marched across much of central and western New York. Upon discharge, many of these men returned to the land of their war time misadventures. In the process, numerous towns were established, drawing increasing numbers west. This was the case in Oneida County, for example, where fourteen such veterans from Plymouth, Connecticut returned to the site of their military exploits, settling along the Oriskany Creek and founding the town of Kirkland, New York.[76]

[75] Ibid., 25, 36, 38.
[76] Holbrook, 15-16; Taylor, 3, 94-95.

Concerning how precisely central New York became such a major theater in this post-war migration, the Continental government of the 1770s knew that despite the high rhetoric of patriotism, it would take much more than simple words to stimulate troop enlistment. At first crop or cash bounties were offered to entice volunteering but those were quickly exhausted and the Legislature was soon without a means to pay their army. Lacking capital, the State needed some means of credit in order to maintain their prosecution of the war and a solution quickly presented itself in the form of conveniently abstract land grants, many of which were promised in what was Iroquois territory at the time. Unfortunately for the State, by the early to mid 1780s public pressure was such that these promises had to be satisfied. The precise terms of this compensation were then quickly outlined and established at a minimum of 500 acres for an entry-level private and 5,500 for a major general.[77] Each veteran was to be assigned a parcel within the bounds of Lake Ontario to the north, Seneca Lake to the west and south, with a line running south from Lake Oneida to the east (Figure 6).

Although from the perspective of the State this region was enemy territory—and thus rightly subject to seizure—the fact of the matter was that a brutal removal campaign had to be first engineered to clear the land of the remaining Iroquois communities that had held the territory for generations.[78] The process itself was organized by George Clinton who was governor of the State of New York. Clinton, who was ever the strategic thinker, theorized that if he could secure different settlement agreements with the Iroquois nations—for example the Cayuga, Oneida, or Onondaga—then it would make it easier to eventually evict them as a

[77] Richard H. Schein, "Framing the Frontier: The New Military Tract Survey in Central New York," *New York History* 74, no. 1 (1993): 6-8.
[78] A sizeable white squatter population led by a Colonel John Livingston was also selected for removal by the State.

whole. Essentially, if the State could manipulate the nations into separate and isolated reservations, as opposed to one large reservation as some preferred, then the Iroquois could be divided and conquered, unable to support one another in the face of subsequent State expansion. Once conceptualized in such a manner, the actual implementation of the project progressed rather rapidly and by the 1790s Clinton had successfully managed to remove the Onondaga and Cayuga population from their homes. Failing to trap the other nations in such a way, the State was able to systematically confine the Onondaga to a reservation that lay south of Onondaga Lake while the Cayuga were removed to an area that straddled Lake Cayuga (Figure 7). The remainder of the territory that Clinton secured totaled over 1,500,000 acres and would soon be known as the "New Military Tract," as much of it was reserved for the veterans who were now demanding that the State deliver on its promise of compensation.[79]

In order to better facilitate the distribution of the land to grantees, in 1789 a state supported survey expedition set out from the Hudson Valley to begin dividing the Tract. Led by Moses DeWitt, the recently promoted Captain John L. Hardenbergh, his older brother Major Abraham Hardenbergh, and twenty-five armed guards, the survey team fought like salmon up the Mohawk River with almost two dozen wagon loads of supplies in their wake. Their purpose of course was to continue Governor Clinton's conquest of Indian removal by pushing the Iroquois nations into ever smaller, isolated, reservations—each surrounded by American

[79] Ibid., 10-11, 5; Alan Taylor, 189, 199-201; The region became known as the "New" Military Tract due to competing land claims with the State of Massachusetts. In response to Massachusetts' protest that its veterans were entitled to land in the northern part of New York State, a second tract of land in the Finger Lakes region was set aside in case the first tract became unavailable. This second tract, though, was open to settlement in 1786, five years before the original was made available, hence the name "new."

settlements.[80] DeWitt's actual survey, however, took nearly three years to complete as the nations were not simply going to sit passively by as outsiders threatened their families. The resistance itself began near Geneva, New York and sufficiently stalled DeWitt and Major Hardenbergh's progress well beyond any initial development deadlines. Added to this was the impossibility of traversing the thick and difficult terrain at certain times of year so for what should have taken a single season, actually stretched on for years. Nevertheless, by 1791 the woods of central New York were eventually filled with defaced tree trunks, carefully notched with surveyor markings, ready for hundreds of war veterans to claim their land holdings. Ironically, and perhaps due to the length of time it took to make the allocations themselves, many veterans never appeared to claim the land they were granted and of the few that did, later sold their holdings to speculators often for a fraction of their worth. Typically, these speculators intended to further subdivide the land into conventional townships and sell them off for an aggregate total well beyond their initial investment.[81] There were, however, those who did claim their territorial prize, Captain Hardenbergh being an excellent example.

Crossing the Jordan–The Foundation of Auburn, New York

The Hardenbergh name is one of the oldest in the State of New York, stretching back to 1644 with the immigration of Arnoldus van Hardenbergh, a "free merchant" from Holland who quickly became one of the founding patriarchs of New Amsterdam, later New York City. Arnoldus' son, Leonard, had seven children, the youngest of which was John who was described

[80] Benjamin B. Snow, Charles F. Rattigan, and Willis J. Beecher, eds., *History of Cayuga County New York* (Auburn: Cayuga County Historical Society, 1908), 6; Schein, 5; Taylor, 189, 192.
[81] Schein 12, 19, 21.

as being "a tall swarthy man of vigorous habits and iron frame."[82] Having participated in the first and second battles of Stillwater, John Hardenbergh and the Second Regiment of the New York militia not only helped to compel the surrender of British General John Burgoyne, but also suffered through the crucible that was Valley Forge during the winter of 1777 and 1778. It was for this service that John finally got promoted to Captain from Lieutenant and later returned to the Hudson River. There Hardenbergh performed perhaps his greatest act of heroism, leading nine men against a body of 300 that were under the command of British Captain William Caldwell. As the Tory force moved to sack a series of settlements in Ulster County, Hardenbergh effectively engaged Caldwell and his Indian allies long enough for Colonel Henry Pawling to arrive, forcing Caldwell's retreat.[83]

In payment for his service, Hardenbergh was eventually awarded land in Onondaga County but instead decided to sell the patent in exchange for one owned by a Captain Thomas Doughty who was also a veteran of the Second New York. Apparently Doughty had sold his patent to the "Hoffman brothers" who appear have been land speculators. While it is unclear why Doughty's plot was preferable, Hardenbergh, nevertheless, purchased the land on February 16th, 1792 for 180 pounds and settled along the Owasco River where he built a log home and a "gig" mill capable of grinding twelve bushels of grain a day. Owning the only mill in the area (previously his neighbors used the pestle and mortar method of grinding grain) Hardenbergh quickly became the focus of the region. In response to an ever increasing demand for flour, in 1802 a second mill was constructed that would drastically increase his output capacity to 130 bushels per diem. Predictably, many families began to cluster around the mill,

[82] John L. Hardenbergh, 7, 19; Snow, Rattigan, and Beecher, 6.
[83] Hardenbergh, 9-14, 20-21.

initiating the settlement of Hardenbergh's Corners, which was also called Aurelius, then eventually the town of Auburn. For the first ten years of the village's existence, town meetings were actually held in Hardenbergh's own home. After the village, however, was selected to be the county seat of Cayuga County in 1805, its name was changed (despite the protest of Hardenbergh) to Auburn and a proper court house and jail were erected.[84]

In this way much of western New York was settled, as servicemen and adventures established for themselves businesses that satisfied specific material needs, attracting further settlement. Among those who eventually congregated around Hardenbergh's mill were additional war veterans, various physicians and artisans, as well as a party of ten Dutch Calvinist families from Pennsylvania. It was with this group that Hardenbergh became particularly connected as he helped them to organize a church, offering his own home for services. Eventually as time passed and he got to know the families better, Hardenbergh would later marry into the group by wedding a certain Martina Brinkerhoff. Together the two would have a son and daughter. Unfortunately the marriage did not last long for in 1806 Hardenbergh took ill at the age of 59 and died, leaving his wife, two children, and a daughter from a previous marriage. Now, it is important to note that although Hardenbergh had connected himself with the Dutch Reform Church, on the frontier the distinction between sects mattered very little, especially between the varying breeds of Calvinism (Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reform). Consequently, it was a minister from the nearby Congregational Church, the Rev.

[84] Snow, Rattigan, and Beecher, 5-7, 9, 11-18; Hardenbergh, 15-16.

David Higgins, who delivered Hardenburgh's funeral sermon as virtually the entire town of Auburn paid tribute to their founder and benefactor.[85]

With the passing then of John L. Hardenbergh, the Hardenbergh family connection to Congregationalism—and eventually New School Presbyterianism—only increased as his son, John H. Hardenberg, and most likely his mother, became members of Higgins' Congregational Church, donating land to the body for its permanent home at the very center of downtown Auburn. Likewise in 1818, just as construction on the Erie Canal was occurring ten miles north, the Hardenberghs donated six additional acres for the foundation of Auburn Theological Seminary, the eventual stronghold of Hopkinsian New School Presbyterianism.[86]

In many respects the Rev. David Higgins is a perfect example of this westward social development for as a native New Englander, graduate of Yale Seminary, and agent of the Connecticut Missionary Society, Higgins embodied everything that a pioneer Congregationalist was. His significance in large part stems from how he quickly found himself at the very epicenter of the Plan of Union and its implementation in central New York. Ultimately, Higgins' journey into Presbyterianism began during his ministry at the Congregational Church of Aurelius/Auburn in 1802. At the time there were only a handful of Congregational ministers in all the Finger Lakes or Military Tract region and virtually no settled Presbyterian presence. Consequently, Higgins was one of the first to permanently settle in the area when in 1801 he began a missionary tenure under the CMS, ministering to newly established Congregational Churches throughout the counties of Otsego, Chenango, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Ontario. A year later, however, in the summer of 1802, Higgins encountered a congregation that was able

[85] Snow, Rattigan, and Beecher, 11-12, 14-15; Hardenbergh 16-18.
[86] Ibid 17; Hotchkin 211.

to permanently support a pastor and quickly accepted an offer from the Congregational Church of Aurelius.[87] Afterward, several additional ministers were installed in churches nearby, prompting Higgins to write the following letter to the editors of the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* during the winter of 1803:

> [I]t has been thought expedient to communicate for publication the following statement of facts and circumstances relating to the religious interest of this part of the country…Before the first of October last, there was one respectable minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and a number of Baptist elders settled on this tract; but none of the Congregational or Presbyterian order. On the sixth of October I was installed over the church of Christ in this town [Aurelius]…On the fifth of January last the Rev. Hugh Wallis was installed over the church on the west hill in Pompey. And on the second instant the Rev. Nathan B. Darrow was ordained over the church in Homer…I would further add, that there are…three Presbyterian and fourteen Congregational churches, all of which I believe to be in a state of flourishing harmony.[88]

However meager this excitement may appear to modern eyes, the fact that churches across the West were beginning to acquire the organizational and material resources necessary to support professional clergymen was an important developmental milestone. Almost fifteen years prior, not only were the majority of churches in upstate New York scattered and isolated from one another, but any Calvinist ministers there had to draw their salaries almost exclusively from eastern institutions. This forced most to travel continuously in order to fulfill the terms of their appointment. Often institutions like the CMS or General Assembly appointed mission agents in response to a particular regional need where budding congregations desperately lacked a literate pastor.[89]

---

[87] George Punchard, *History of Congregationalism from About A.D. 250 to the Present Time: Congregationalism in America*, vol. 5(2) (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1881), 42-43; Hotchkin, 28-30, 32-35, 44-47.
[88] David Higgins, "Religious Intelligence: To the Editors of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine," *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* vol. 3, no. 11 (1803): 438–439.
[89] PCUSA, *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 1798* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1803), 10-11.

Accordingly, eastern executive councils appointed the young and fervent to cover as much territory as possible because the supply of seminary graduates could never match the pace of western settlement. Although this was adequate to continue expansion, frontier congregations would never actually be part of the denominational body corporate until an organizational structure was in place that connected them with the national community. This could not happen until the region acquired enough administrative consistency to allow for the formation of indigenous governing entities upon which western Calvinism could attach itself to. In this way the independent settlement of frontier pastors like David Higgins was structurally critical to the development of the West because until there was an established professional elite, there would never be judicatories to connect the hinterland to the greater church network.

From Chaos to Order—the Genesis of Union Calvinism in Canal County

As New York Presbyterian and Congregational churches began to settle clergymen in the 1800s, it became an immediate priority to form alliances and share resources. Broadly speaking, the state of western Christianity during this time was so fragile that the vast majority of congregations could at any moment cease to exist, and indeed many did. To further demonstrate the unique challenges the frontier presented to congregations and clergymen alike, the testimony of the Rev. David Smith, a missionary to northern New York for the Massachusetts Missionary Society, is perhaps helpful:

> Haverhill, October 29, 1804—Yesterday I returned home from my mission to the new settlements in the northwestern parts of the State of New York, having been out upwards of 17 weeks; during which time, I rode 1320 miles, preached 88 sermons, admitted the Lord's Supper 5 times, baptized 35 children, admitted 18 persons into the church, attended 14 conferences, and 5 church meetings, visited 7 schools, and made 157 family visits, attended 3 funerals, and visited 9 sick persons.

> In most of the towns churches [were] formed…few have obtained ministers. In [a] number of places, the people are very desirous of obtaining candidates for settling. I found very encouraging attention to preaching in almost all places and was pressed above measure, by the solicitations and tears of many, to stay longer with them or visit them again. Many times after preaching…the people would refuse to go away and still hold me in religious conversation, interesting inquiry, or serious conference until midnight, and sometimes till one and even two o'clock in the morning…They often expressed a concern, lest they should trespass on my time and strength, and in apology said it was so seldom they had the opportunity.[90]

Similar to Smith's experience in the Black River country, Rev. David Higgins found that being a settled pastor on the Military Tract was almost as difficult as touring the wilderness. Following his settlement at Aurelius, Higgins discovered just how delicate a position his congregation was in, despite the fact that it had the resources to hire a minister. Although it likely was not apparent to him during his tenure as a missionary, it was a virtual miracle that the Congregational Church of Aurelius had not disbanded entirely. Higgins quickly learned the congregation extended over so large a territory that Sunday services had to be held alternatively in four different locations, rendering it difficult to maintain a stable base of attendance and making further growth all but impossible. In response, Higgins and a handful of other ministers organized a meeting in February of 1803 (concurrently with his letter to the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*) to discuss the weak and scattered state of western Congregationalism and the possibility of forming an Association to which the churches of the Military Tract could appeal to in times of difficulty. While the actual minutes of this gathering are not available, the meeting was apparently so successful that another was scheduled a year later at Marcellus in January of 1804—about ten miles from the modern city of Syracuse. The conference of 1803 was likely where a large portion of the negotiations took place but it was

[90] David Smith, "Missionary Intelligence," *The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine* vol. 2, no. 6 (1804), 245-246.

during this subsequent meeting at Marcellus that a final agreement was finally reached between Higgins and his cohorts. There the "the Middle Association on the Military Tract and its vicinity" was established, less than seven miles from the future path of the Erie Canal.[91]

Following the creation of the Middle Association, the number of Congregational ministers and churches almost immediately began to expand across the Military Tract as an increasing number reached the level of stability necessary to settle clergymen. What is interesting here, however, is that although this was an important development for frontier New York Congregationalists, Presbyterians were never far behind, and in many cases directly participated in Congregational structural growth—and vice versa. This was essentially because while the two denominations certainly had their distinctions, and were busy building two sets of institutional networks, the difficulties of the frontier were such that cooperative exchange became not only useful but necessary for survival.

To further elucidate, of the seven ministers that initially made up the Middle Association, one of them was actually an ordained Presbyterian—the Rev. Jedidiah Chapman of Oneida Presbytery. Nor was the Middle Association by any means unique in its connection to the General Assembly for many other Congregational organizations in the West similarly had Presbyterian, or Presbyterian affiliated, ministers as early governing members. Indeed an excellent example can be found by examining the Ontario Association, one of the oldest associations in New York. Established in 1800, the Association of Ontario covered the land south of modern Rochester, near Lake Canandaigua in the western part of the State. While the precise role of the Rev. Joseph Grover is unclear, this Presbyterian from Parsippany, New

[91] Hotchkin, 44, 48-49; Gillett, vol. 2, 107.

Jersey—who had since separated from the Presbytery of New York earlier in 1779-1780—was like Jedidiah Chapman, a founding member, and perhaps major initiating force, in the creation of Ontario at the turn of the century. [92]

Blended then as these early Associations were, frontier presbyteries likewise had congregational members as founding officers in their executive bodies. For instance, much like the genesis of western Congregational associations, the creation of the Geneva Presbytery was in part an ecumenical affair, demonstrating that as western Christians confronted the isolation and scarcity of the frontier, union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians occurred first in detail—individual by individual—before it expanded institutionally. Ultimately, the origins of Geneva Presbytery can be traced back to 1800 where Jedidiah Chapman first uprooted his family from Orange, New Jersey and eventually settled in the village of Geneva, on the northern shore of Seneca Lake. At the time Chapman was a stated missionary of the General Assembly in the Finger Lakes district. His assignment was divided into two parts. The first was as a missionary for the whole region—giving aid and direction to the ministers sent to the area as well as providing regular reports to the Assembly. Chapman's second responsibility was to organize and supply a Presbyterian congregation in his home village. Upon inception, Chapman's church was a member of the Presbytery of New York, which at the time inconveniently covered virtually all of the State—minus the territory along the Hudson River and around the city of Albany. In 1802, however, everything west of Montgomery and Schoharie County was reconstituted into the Presbytery of Oneida. The region was then divided again as additional churches were added in 1805. This latest division of territory occurred at the

[92] Gillett, vol. 1, 210; Hotchkin, 33, 40, 181-182; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 252.

General Assembly of 1805 where the delegates designated everything west of Oneida and Chenango Counties as the Presbytery of Geneva.[93]

Predictably, Chapman was the primary minister of the newly constituted body and was directed to preach the opening sermon for the presbytery's first conclave on September 17th, 1805. Chapman, however, was not the one who delivered the message but instead deferred the honor to none other than the Congregationalist David Higgins of Aurelius/Auburn. While it is unknown why Chapman declined the privilege, it is clear that the reason was not because of absence since Chapman constituted the meeting with a prayer. In the end, this gathering would prove to be extremely seminal to not only western Presbyterians, but also Congregationalists as it appears that the primary function of the gathering was to immediately incorporate ministers from other denominational bodies into their executive membership.[94]

Chapman and his colleagues began the summit by discussing the following question: "Can the presbytery consistently receive as a constituent member of their body a minister belonging to an association, without his discontinuing his connection with the association?" After some debate the Presbytery agreed that such an arrangement would be mutually beneficial and proceeded to examine the Rev. Garritt Mandevill, a minister from the Dutch Reformed Church. After Mandevill provided the council with satisfactory evidence of his integrity and belief in the Articles of Faith, he was then accepted as a member of the

[93] Hotchkin, 385, 264, 79; Gillett, vol. 2, 103-104; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 187, 197-198, 252, 324-325.

[94] Ibid., 324; Hotchkin, 80; After consulting the extracts from the General Assembly of 1805, Hotchkin's initial date for this meeting—1803—appears to be inaccurate accounting for the fact that the Presbytery of Geneva did not exist until May 16th, 1805. Similarly, it appears unlikely that the meeting was held by the Presbytery of Oneida, the parenting body of the Presbytery of Geneva, because the only ministers present were precisely the ones directed by the General Assembly to meet at Geneva on the 17th of September 1805; 'the third Tuesday of September next' as the minutes specify.

Presbyterian body. Following Mandevill, Higgins himself was examined, as was a fellow Congregational member of the Middle Association—the Rev. Hezekiah North Woodruff. After the two men presented their consent to the Confession of Faith, they likewise were accepted into the Presbytery.[95]

In retrospect, not only was this one of the earliest, if not the earliest, point an American presbytery organized around an interdenominational cadre of ministers, but it unintentionally opened a deluge of additional Congregationalists into the Presbyterian Church. Following the induction of Higgins and Woodruff, further individual additions from the Middle Association were made to the Presbytery of Geneva between 1805 and 1807. According to the Rev. James H. Hotchkin—a Congregational minister who lived in western New York and personally witnessed many of the events which transpired in this chapter—the practice of allowing simultaneous membership between the Presbytery of Geneva and the Middle Association proceeded so successfully that by 1807 the Association appointed the Rev. Joshua Leonard to attend an important conference the Presbyterian Church was holding in that region—a meeting of the Synod of Albany at Cooperstown. At the time Leonard was the pastor of a Congregational church in the village of Cazenovia which was about fifteen miles south of Lake Oneida. Although his health could have been better, he was nevertheless selected as a delegate and made the journey to Cooperstown without incident, arriving on October 7th, 1807. After Leonard was cordially received by the council, Leonard stood before the Synod and prepared to make an historic announcement. No doubt making eye contact with his follow Congregationalists in the

[95] Ibid.; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A.D. 1805* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1805), 82.

room, Leonard proceeded to formally announce the Middle Association's desire to join the Presbyterian Synod as an active member of their body; an unprecedented move that would essentially place the governing body of one denomination in the administrative jurisdiction of another.[96]

Undoubtedly, this did not come as a great surprise to the councilmen for not only were there already those in the room who were also members of the Association, but it was none other than Hezekiah Woodruff who was among the clergymen selected to draft the synod's following response:

> Cooperstown, Oct. 9th, 1807: Dear Brethren,—We received your communication by the Rev. Mr. Leonard with great pleasure…Situated as our judicatories are in a new country, rapidly increasing in its population; blended as our people are in the same sentiments, and holding the same divine doctrines, it is certainly an object of interesting importance that we should cement together…Such a union would make us better acquainted and increase our attachments to one another as servants of our common Lord…We most cordially invite you to become a constituent branch of our body, by assuming the characteristic and scriptural name of a presbytery, and adopting our standard of doctrine and government…Deeming the name, however, to be far less important than the thing…should you be solicitous to retain yours, it will not be considered, on our part, as a bar to so desirable a union…Should you accede to this plan of union and correspondence, and our General Assembly permit us to form it…[the] churches in this northern region will form one great phalanx against the common enemy [Methodists, Anabaptists etc.], and combine their exertions to advance the mediatorial kingdom of our exalted Lord.[97]

Predictably, the letter was received favorably by the Association who quickly had the Synod forward it for examination to the Presbyterian General Assembly where it was approved without incident the following summer. To then complete the union, the Synod of Albany symbolically met over 100 miles further west from its last meeting (and almost 200 west of

[96] Punchard, 57-59; Fowler, 60-61; Hotckin, 82, 308-309.
[97] Ibid., 83.

Albany) in the town of Aurora, on the shores of Lake Cayuga, in the very heart of Middle Association territory. At the gathering it was decided the Association would become an official branch of the Synod while still retaining its system of internal government and Congregational name, essentially disregarding the Synod's request to at least superficially become Presbyterian.[98]

As such, by 1809 all seventeen Congregational churches of the Middle Association became legally bound within the Synod's institutional hierarchy, structure, and jurisdiction—which at the time composed virtually every Congregational church along the Military Tract in central New York. The proceeding year, at the meeting of the General Assembly for 1810, Joshua Leonard was again selected to represent the Association, his name appearing on the Assembly roll call of delegates between the Presbytery of Londonderry and Albany. Indeed upon reading the minutes, the Middle Association's appearance is eminently conspicuous and must have made a number of Presbyterian purists back East uncomfortable seeing that among the twenty-nine presbyteries that made up the denomination, the Association was the only body in regular standing that appeared without the venerable name of "presbytery." Such a reality suggested that the Plan of Union, though technically confined to the West, was already having national implications for the church corporate. In this way Congregational infiltration was well underway by the 1810s, infiltration that not only penetrated western Presbyterianism structure and government, but that of an entire continental denomination.[99]

---

[98] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 404; Hotchkin, 84.

[99] John Treadwell and Seth Williston, "A Narrative on the Subject of Missions and a Statement of the Funds of the Missionary Society of Connecticut for the Year 1809," *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* vol. 3, no. 2 (1810), 41-42; Gillett, 441; Hotchkin, 84; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 433.

Following the initiation of the Middle Association, tension almost immediately mounted further east as a handful of watchful Presbyterian conservatives began to cry foul. An example of this can be found in New York City where in 1811 the consequences of such a large infusion of New Divinity adherents were already washing up downstream along the Hudson River. Arriving as they did in such a central location, it was none other than the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely—the same who would later defend Albert Barnes 20 years later—who remarkably led an early *conservative* offensive to check the spreading innovation by publishing a line by line exegesis of Hopkinsian and traditional Calvinist doctrine. In the end he concluded that:

> [N]o person, who is fully convinced of the truth of this system [New Divinity]…can conscientiously unite himself to the Presbyterian Church…To admit any one who is known to be a Hopkinsian, is nothing less than connivance at a false profession…A confession of faith should be a bond of union…The New England Churches formerly had a confession and system of ecclesiastical government; but the admission of multitudes, who disregarded those standards, to every privilege and office, has finally produced this effect, that few churches acknowledge the authority of their platforms of government, and very few have any government at all. The Presbyterian Church should take warning; for a family or city divided against itself cannot stand.[100]

While easily lost to contemporary ears, this allusion to a New England disregard for proper standards was carefully designed to provoke Presbyterian conservatives into action. Essentially, by suggesting that the current state of New England Congregationalism was a direct result of the "admission of multitudes who disregard standards," Ely was directly comparing the admission of western Congregationalists to the ascendency of Boston Unitarians and the doctrinal controversy then at work in Massachusetts. Regardless of this plea, however, Ely's

[100] Ezra Stiles Ely, *A Contrast Between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism* (New York: S. Whiting & Co., 1811), 278-279.

agitations ultimately amounted to very little and the migration of frontier Congregationalists quickly continued.[101]

Accordingly, it was not long before the churches of the Middle Association were thrust even deeper into the institutional embrace of the American Presbyterian Church. Because the West was extremely undeveloped in the 1800s, churches across the frontier were forever striving to keep pace with not only changing settlement and migration patterns, but to also maintain communication with the East. Seeing that the Presbytery of Geneva and the Middle Association were now under the same governing body—and that both institutions covered the same geographic territory—almost immediately after the Association's induction, the Synod of Albany resolved to reorganize the churches of both organizations into three separate presbyteries in October of 1810. Those that were situated west of Cayuga Lake remained within the Presbytery of Geneva, while those to the east (a large portion of the Middle Association) constituted the Presbytery of Cayuga. The churches and ministers to the south, meanwhile, made up the Presbytery of Onondaga. Together, the three constituted an entirely new synod, the Synod of Geneva, which met for the first time on October 2nd, 1811. Interestingly, it was again David Higgins who actually opened the meeting with a sermon. Then, in a most unprecedented display of interdenominational cooperation, Higgins was elected Moderator of the Synod assembly.[102]

---

[101] One of the great mysteries in researching this dissertation has been the inexplicable turnaround Rev. Ely made between 1811 and 1830. As a young man he was perhaps an even greater advocate of Presbyterian conservative purity than men like Ashbel Green, who at the time was completely oblivious to the threat posed by western Congregationalism. What caused Ely's change of mind is impossible to know as he does not directly reflect on his change of heart in the sources I have consulted.

[102] Hotchkin, 85-86; James H. Dill, *Congregationalism in Western New York; Its Rise, Decline, and Revival* (Rochester: Benton & Andrews, 1859), 6.

In retrospect, this gathering was significant for a number of reasons. To begin, the election of Higgins as first Moderator of the Synod of Geneva was unusual and extremely symbolic because here an outsider, with virtually no connection to the Presbyterian Church only six years prior, had been given a top position of authority and power at the inauguration of a major Presbyterian institution. To elaborate, a Moderator for that period—be it for a Presbytery, a Synod, or the General Assembly—is the single most important individual of the assembly. In the words of the 1821 Constitution, they are to be:

> considered as possessing, by delegation from the whole body, all authority necessary for the preservation of order; for convening and adjourning the judicatory; and directing its operations according to the rules of the church. He is to propose to the judicatory every subject of deliberation that comes before them…He shall prevent the members from interrupting each other and require them, in speaking, always to address the chair…He shall silence those who refuse to obey order…He shall, at a proper season, when the deliberations are ended, put the question and call the votes. If a judicatory be equally divided, he shall posses the casting vote…And he shall likewise be empowered, on any extraordinary emergency, to convene the judicatory, by his circular letter, before the ordinary time of meeting.[103]

In sum, the Moderator was not only the head of the ecclesiastical council he was elected to, but also the heart, for he maintained procedural discipline, decided when and how to introduce issues for debate, and had the power to end debate or excuse a delegate. In general he set the tempo of any meeting. Thus, Higgins' election to Moderator of a Presbyterian Synod was seminal because here a man trained in a Congregational environment, who presently

[103] PCUSA, *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as Ratified by the General Assembly, at Their Session in May, 1821 and Amended in 1833* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1839), 450-451.

pastored a Congregational Church according to Congregational polity and principles, was in effect running the show for an entirely different denomination in the West.[104]

With the reorganization then of Middle Association churches and the creation of the Cayuga Presbytery and the Synod of Geneva, the Congregational churches across central New York had become fully incorporated into the Presbyterian denominational network—effectively ceasing to exist as a distinct social body while at the same time retaining what made them uniquely Congregational. Consequently, churches from additional Associations would enter into membership with the General Assembly throughout the 1810s and early 1820s, effectively expanding the transformation of western Presbyterianism and the diffusion of New Haven Theology. The first Congregational body that followed the Middle Association into the Presbyterian Church was none other than the Ontario Association, again one of the oldest Congregational bodies in the State of New York. Among their principle members were Rev. James H. Hotchkin (who later became a Vice President of the New School Auburn Convention in 1837), the Rev. John Niles of Bath, and the Rev. Howell Powell of Phelps—a town about seven miles from where the Erie Canal presently is. Then, on June 13th, 1810, at a meeting held approximately thirty miles south of Rochester in the village of Richmond, the three aforementioned ministers were appointed delegates to attend a major Congregational summit of all the Associations in the State. The purpose of the convention was to discuss the possibility of forming a General Association for the State of New York, much like their parent body the General Association of Connecticut. Accordingly at a subsequent meeting held on July 5th, Hotchkin and the other members of the Ontario Association arrived now in the town of Clinton

[104] Hotchkin, 344.

to further pursue the possibility of further Congregational organization. The Middle Association as a whole, having already been incorporated into the Synod of Albany, however, did not participate in the convention.[105]

Apparently considerable debate ensued at the convention with one group arguing for the formation of a General Association, while the other urged conference attendees to dissolve their respective Associations and unite with whichever Presbyterian Presbytery was closest. This latter position was in large part advocated by Hotchkin and his fellow representatives because at the time much of the Ontario Association already had ministers connected with the Presbytery of Geneva. Among their objections to greater association as Congregationalists, they complained about the waste of time, labor, and expense of attending two judicatories when only one was necessary. Furthermore, they continued by appealing directly to the Middle Association and its recent incorporation into the Synod of Albany, reasoning that by uniting with the Synod under the terms specified in 1807, New York Congregationalists could not only retain their unique internal discipline and principles, but likewise strengthen American Calvinism and evangelicalism on the frontier. In the words of Hotchkin, the goal was to establish "a strong barrier against the inroads of error; preserve the churches from being divided by impostors and unauthorized men…who were frequently endeavoring to palm themselves on the churches in the new settlements" and in purely ecumenical fashion "enable those churches which had the same common faith…to act with more united energy in their endeavors to advance the cause of Christ in the wilderness." In addition to the support Hotchkin and his fellow delegates gave for interdenominational unity, the Oneida Association, situated east of

[105] Dill, 7; Hotchkin, 99-100, 479, 380, 248.

the Military Tract, similarly instructed its delegates to take no steps toward the formation of a General Association, preferring instead to negotiate a union with the Presbytery of Albany. Resulting from this lack of support, the meeting disbanded with no progress made for greater Congregational organization in the State.[106]

Given the Ontario Association's aggressive position regarding cooperation with local presbyteries, it came as no surprise that two years later in October of 1812, the body met again to discuss the possibility of union with the Presbytery of Geneva. Ultimately the attraction, says Hotchkin, was that he and his fellow ministers saw Presbyterian polity as better able to protect and develop their struggling frontier churches from the challenges of the frontier. Consequently, the following spring in April of 1813, the subject was brought before the Presbytery of Geneva who welcomed the Association's desire for unity and offered to accept their churches under the terms of union enjoyed by the former churches of the Middle Association.[107] After receiving this response, the Ontario Association quickly convened a special session at Prattsburgh a few weeks later, declaring on the 25th of May, 1813:

> Whereas it appears from the Holy Scriptures of immense importance that all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ should be united in the strictest bonds of Christian fellowship, that they may with one heart and voice unite…this Association [sees] no reason why those denominations of professing Christians, usually called Presbyterian and Congregationalist, should not receive each other as brethren and be united as one body…Therefore, resolved, that…this Association become united with the Presbytery of Geneva. Resolved, that as a means of forming this union, it is expedient that this Association be dissolved.[108]

[106] Hotchkin, 100-101; Gillett, 113.
[107] Ibid., 101-102; Fowler, 59, Gillett, 114.
[108] Hotchkin, 102.

Following the Ontario Association's dissolution, the two perhaps most important Congregational bodies in upstate New York were now formally incorporated into the Presbyterian Church, while at the same time retaining their unique form of government and principles. Given the generous terms western Presbyterians offered their Congregational neighbors—along with the precedence set by both the largest and oldest judicatories in the region—it became increasingly difficult for the remainder of Congregational churches in the State to resist the gravity of ecumenical fellowship. As a result, a number of additional Associations disbanded in the State and were similarly incorporated into the Presbyterian network. Meanwhile these organizations likewise retained many of their Congregational characteristics. Such was the case for the Union Association, bordering along the northern border of Pennsylvania, who officially dissolved and was then incorporated into the Presbytery of Chenango in 1822. That same year the Congregational churches in the eastern portion of western New York, then known as the Oneida Association, suspended their existence and united with the Presbytery of Oneida. Finally in northern New York, the Black River Association, although having never officially joined with any Presbytery, had a large majority of its members join the Presbytery of St. Lawrence which was accordingly located along the St. Lawrence River.[109]

Conclusion

With the sudden influx of four major Congregational Associations, the "Presbyterian" Church in upstate New York had become arguably more Congregational than it was Presbyterian. While this was certainly facilitated by the humanist and ecumenical optimism of

[109] Dill, 4-5; Fowler, 11, 59; Hotchkin, 122.

the day, there is no doubt that more mundane forces were at work—the isolation of the frontier and the material scarcity of the wilderness. Separated by miles of thick forest and marshland, travel between congregations as little as ten miles apart became all day affairs. Often there was nothing through the underbrush but a narrow walking trail no wider than a man's shoulders. As such, anything that broadened the net of fellowship took precedence over minor intellectual particularities and the Plan of Union certainly accomplished that in abundance.

In summary, with the actions of Eliphalet Nott and Jonathan Edwards the Younger, the Congregational and Presbyterian Church in the United States entered into an alliance that effectively inaugurated an unprecedented denominational migration of western Congregationalists into the Presbyterian Church. With the General Assembly's endorsement of interdenominational cooperation in 1801, presbyteries west of the Hudson River accordingly organized themselves in tandem with frontier Congregationalists—intimately entwining materially, legally, structurally, and intellectually. As demonstrated with the lives of David Higgins, Jedidiah Chapman, and James H. Hotchkin, the process occurred in detailed before it ever took place institutionally. Nevertheless, when the shift happened, it happened rapidly, suggesting that once individual development transitions to wider institutional change, the transformation of a social system will proceed very quickly.

As illustrated at the beginning of the chapter, this transformation of western 19th century Presbyterianism resulted directly from how an external network—in this case late 18th century Connecticut Congregationalists—adapted to many social concerns created by the Enlightenment and the growing irrelevance of Reform Christianity. In response to this

skepticism, empiricism, and general American affinity for individual autonomy, men like Samuel Hopkins modified Calvinism so successfully that not only did he find supporters in the East, but his system was perhaps even better suited in a western milieu where individual initiative became a matter of utter survival. Accordingly, as thousands of New Englanders migrated toward the Great Lakes in the 1790s, they brought with them a theological system that was deceptively similar to, but notably different from, Middle-State Presbyterianism. Paired then with the challenges of the frontier, cooperation became the order of the day. Hence a plan of union was implemented to strengthen both Congregationalists and Presbyterians who were isolated in the woods. This union, however, would require both Congregationalists and Presbyterians to overlook minor theological and operational differences. Yet on the frontier the cost was worth the reward as one strengthened the other and both rapidly matured. Unfortunately for Presbyterian conservatives, it was not long before notable changes began to manifest across the corporate body as those from central and western New York began to influence and migrate to different sections of the national church, carrying with them the minor doctrinal innovations of Samuel Hopkins and his New Divinity.

However, to further complicate the entire process, just as this developmental change was taking place, construction began on the Erie Canal in 1817. Although the canal will be covered at length in the next chapter, it is important to immediately note that it did not directly affect every western church within North American Presbyterianism, but only those directly within its vicinity—thereby accelerating their growth rate and economic base. These structural changes therefore had significant intellectual implications because not only did Plan of Union presbyteries in central and western New York make up over fifteen percent of the entire

denomination in the early 1820s, but much of that percentage became dramatically more powerful demographically and financially after the completion of the Erie Canal.[110] This increase in status, especially from a demographic and monetary perspective, worked to directly pull most of the canal presbyteries up from the structural periphery of the church, into more semiperipheral or middle-ranking positions of power and authority; directly affecting their ability to influence the denomination as a whole. Broadly speaking then, the Plan of Union and Erie Canal ultimately facilitated the spread of New Divinity across the greater 19th century Presbyterian Church by first hybridizing the hinterland, then increasing its ability to communicate with and influence its neighbors.

[110] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1825), 374.

Chapter 2: The Erie Canal—Prosperity Comes to the West

Introduction

In the summer of 1821 a young New Yorker by the name Phillip Stansbury set out on a walking tour of North America, eager to visit historical sites and battlefields from the early history of the United States. He began his journey 175 feet above the Hudson River, taking in a mouthful of fresh evening air, stealing a final look at the beautiful city of New York. His moment, however, was quickly interrupted by a courteous cough for attention. Stansbury in point of fact was not alone and slowly conceded to follow his guide as the two carefully navigated a rocky bluff above the town of Weehawken, New Jersey. Despite the height, Stansbury was in good spirits. The weather was pleasant and the countryside picturesque, even reminding him of the Giants' Causeway in northern Ireland. Coming to a rather treacherous path, Stansbury no doubt took a breath and paused with apprehension before further descending to a level ledge barely ten paces wide. His trepidation was to be expected. The ghosts of many still haunted the place for it was at this infamous dueling ground that Alexander Hamilton, and numerous others, gave their lives for the sake of aristocratic honor and chivalry. Just seventeen years earlier, while crossing the river to Weehawken, General Hamilton also had turned in his small boat to look back at the splendor that was Manhattan, prophesying to his companions the future greatness of the great borough. Unfortunately for Hamilton, he would never witness this greatness. Yet as Stansbury presently paid his respects to the departed General, upriver a feat of engineering brilliance was taking place that would quickly catapult the island of Manhattan to global prominence. Indeed it was precisely the architectural sorcery of

the Erie Canal that Phillip Stansbury first intended to visit on his epic continental journey—a marvel that would not only transform the city of New York, but that of virtually every community in the State.[1]

A little vain, and without question of the adventurous and romantic persuasion, Stansbury left Weehawken on August 20th fully equipped with all the maps and writing implements necessary to record his experiences for posterity. He knew his trip was fraught with peril and likely reflected on the fact that not only was injury in the wilderness deadly, but soon the warm summer breeze would give way to a cold and biting autumn wind. In this respect he really was running out of time. It would be Fall soon and temperatures were known to drop considerably in upstate New York, especially during the month of October. To make matters worse, although his pilgrimage up the Hudson was by no means easy—having a near scrape with death in the Ramapo Mountains—the great wilderness west would be enormously more dangerous for pedestrian travel. Given these circumstances, Stansbury planned to follow the most developed route he possibly could—the Mohawk River and future path of the Erie Canal.[2]

By the time he reached the city of Albany, it was nearly September and construction on the canal had been underway for almost four years. With plans then to head west along the river toward Buffalo, on September 1st Stansbury made a brief detour to Saratoga Springs for a rest, then proceeded to the village of Schenectady where he finally observed the inventive wizardry of the canal's engineering:[3]

---

[1] Phillip Stansbury, *A Pedestrian Tour of Two Thousand Three Hundred Miles in North America: To the Lakes, the Canadas, and the New England States* (New York: J.D. Myers & W. Smith, 1822), 13-14; Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 700.
[2] Stansbury, 13, 19-20.
[3] Ibid., xii, 34, 53, vii.

> I observed the line of the great Western Canal, marked out by stakes…The broad sheet of the river extended before me as I advanced, interspersed with numerous bush-clothed islands; abrupt mountains lifted their brows at a distance, bright and majestic in the rays of the sun…A bold shore on the opposite side of the stream presented its verdant declivities with the busy laborers of the Great Canal employed in piling up embankments of earth and stone and vociferating at the oxen wearily dragging their loads; whilst the thunder of the rocks they were blasting, rebounded from hill to hill and rolled in frightful echoes along ravines of surrounding mountains.[4]

Later, arriving in Utica on September 7th, Stansbury at last saw the waterway in all its glory and found himself standing before a great chasm in the earth, measuring forty foot wide and four foot deep. Looking west, the trench stretched on for miles and looked as if God Himself had sunk his finger into the soil and dragged it toward the setting sun. After enquiring upon the construction's progress from the workmen, Stansbury learned that the trench itself stretched all the way to the Seneca River system, covering over ninety miles of flat countryside. Again, his recollections are worth quoting at length:

> The western turnpike from Albany to Utica is one great channel through which the abundant produce of the remote counties of the State passes to the eastern markets…and on account of its being so well frequented, it is supplied with such a number of inns that we will meet them at least every mile…The Canal [middle section] at this time, was finished and completely navigable, ninety six miles to the west and several miles to the east…The stage boat Oneida-Chief started for Montezuma at eight…Two stout black horses were attached tandem to a rope from the prow and with a velocity equal to that of some stagecoaches, we darted smoothly between the straight and regular banks of the canal. We passed through Whitesborough, Oriskany, Rome, and other increasing villages…Of the whole route of this great canal…between Utica and Montezuma is the most level, marshy and disagreeable for passengers. Its course winds for the greater part through pestilential swamps...[this, however,] will be remedied in time and will render traveling in this mode much more gratifying.[5]

[4] Ibid., 53, 55.
[5] Ibid., 65, 67-68.

Following his arrival at long last in Buffalo, Stansbury crossed to Queenston, Ontario where he then carefully made his way up to Montreal and back down through New England to New York City—the entire tour totaling over 2,300 miles. Although Stansbury would not return home until early November, the fact that he arrived in New York when he did is testimony to the canal's utility in early American life. Bearing in mind that Stansbury was able to cover such a distance in a little over two months is remarkable considering how ten years earlier, in 1810, it took De Witt Clinton thirty-two days to travel the 300 miles from Albany to Buffalo. In reality, if Clinton had taken the trip again in 1825 he would have needed less than a week. However, it was accessibility to and from New York City that really mattered and the canal's effect was no less remarkable. Before the 1820s, travel time between the Great Lakes and Manhattan was as much as six weeks, yet after the completion of the canal exports of lumber, textiles, and perishable goods could arrive in as little as ten days.[6]

In retrospect, not only did the Erie Canal allow travelers like Phillip Stansbury to quickly float across central New York behind a team of draft horses, but it connected people, resources, and ideas in unprecedented ways—ways that directly influenced the region's intellectual and social history. Indeed, just as the Plan of Union was busy conflating frontier Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, the canal was directly nourishing those hybrid churches by increasing property values, creating jobs, and growing surrounding communities at levels nearly unmatched anywhere in the nation. This allowed the hybrid presbyteries in upstate New York

[6] Ibid., 121, 144, 272; John J. Anderson and Alexander C. Flick, *A Short History of the State of New York* (New York: Maynard, Merrill & Company, 1902), 149; Peter L. Bernstein, *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 327.

to outpace virtually anyone in the Presbyterian General Assembly and effectively changed the hierarchical structure of the church, shifting denominational power westward.

Overall, this chapter explores how the canal and its outlying presbyteries facilitated the western shift in early 19th century Presbyterian power, while at the same time illustrating what the implications were for the denominational structure of the church itself. As its social architecture rapidly began to change in the 1820s, the Hopkinsian innovations pouring into the presbyteries of western New York were suddenly given an enormous opportunity to spread across the State and down the East Coast. Yet simple geographic mobility was just the prelude as the canal presbyteries also grew in numeric strength and financial power, each influencing the parliamentary process of the General Assembly and shaping how denominational resources were used and allocated. For example, not only was presbytery population size directly proportional to delegate strength in the General Assembly, but it was also relevant—as Lyman Beecher had earlier described—to who was elected as Moderator of the Assembly's deliberations. Similarly, the more money a presbytery comparatively controlled, the more power it had to nurture and support the causes, projects, and institutions in keeping with its legislative agenda. In this way the canal is particularly salient as it allowed for startling increases in interstate and intercontinental commerce, manufacturing, and transportation; effectively propelling the communities and churches along its path into denominational centrality and national prominence.

The Erie Canal—A Vision of Union

With all that the United States stood to gain from connecting the Atlantic with the Great Lakes, in some ways it is surprising that the canal was not constructed sooner, especially

considering that the technology certainly existed well before the Revolution and discussions to establish such a waterway began as early as the 1760s. For instance, by 1761 Francis Egerton, the Third Duke of Bridgewater, completed perhaps the most important canal in British History—the Bridgewater Canal. Connecting the Duke's coal mines near the town of Worsley to Manchester, the project was engineered by James Brindley, a man of questionable literacy but unmatched brilliance. Unaided by notes or drawings and doing much of his calculations mentally, Brindley's canal was a marvel of human engineering for not only did he design a man-made current of water ten miles from Worsley Mill to Manchester, or engineer an impressive network of subterranean canals within the mine system itself, but Brindley also created a forty foot high aqueduct that crossed above a major river as it continued the canal east to Manchester. The sight must have certainly been dramatic as boats transporting over ten tons of coal quietly sailed along the tree tops and over the Irwell River, unhindered by such trivial things as geography.[7]

Yet despite these innovations in England, it is easy to forget that American contemporaries hardly understood the Erie Canal's construction as inevitable. In fact to many, the long series of false starts and aborted failures was proof that North American engineering was entirely out of its element and would never contend with the sheer ambition and sophistication of British construction. The first serious attempt to build an inland waterway in the United States came from none other than Washington himself who, having retired to life as a "private citizen," quickly began contemplating the necessity of "inland navigation [in] these

[7] Samuel Hughes, "Memoir of James Brindley," in *Quarterly Papers on Engineering*, ed. John Weale, vol. 1 (London: George Woodfall and Son, 1844), 11, 45-49; Elkanah Watson, *Men and Times of the Revolution; or Memoirs of Elkanah Watson, Including Journals of Travels in Europe and America, from 1777 to 1842*, ed. Winslow C. Watson (New York: Dana and Company, 1856), 164-165.

United States and could not but be struck with the immense diffusion and importance of it."[8] As Washington sat pensively in his study, brow furrowed forward, he failed to shake the feeling that the division of the Appalachian Mountains posed perhaps a greater threat to the nation than the British Empire ever could. One can almost see the General biting his fingernails at the prospect of Pennsylvania or Virginia separating along the spine of the mountain range. Thus, Washington decided to do something about it and immediately following the Treat of Paris, he took a trip west to the Ohio River in the autumn of 1784. His goal was to explore the possibility of using the nation's rivers for wedding his republic together and afterward wrote the Governor of Virginia, envisioning a means to connect Ohio with the Chesapeake in order to prevent the European powers from luring the West out of the Union with promises of commerce. His solution was characteristically practical:

> The more communications we open [to the West], the closer we bind that rising world…to our interests and the greater strength shall we acquire by it. Those to whom nature affords the best communication will, if they are wise, enjoy the greatest share of the trade…[We must] prevent the trade of the western territory from settling in the hands of either of the Spaniards or British. If either of these happen, there is a line of separation drawn between the eastern and western country at once, the consequences of which may be fatal.[9]

Logically, Washington believed that the Potomac River, which flowed across much of his 33, 000 acres in Virginia and Pennsylvania, offered a solution to the nation's problem of sectional disunity. Although the river certainly flowed in the direction he wanted, unfortunately its topographic features proved too much an obstacle for the ingenuity of American engineers. With the clearing of large stones and debris, along with the construction of several locks,

[8] George Washington, *The Life of General Washington, First President of the United States, Written by Himself, Comprising His Memoirs and Correspondence*, ed. Charles W. Upham, vol. 2 (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851), 120; David Hosack and De Witt Clinton, *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix, Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life* (New York: J. Seymour, 1829), 275.
[9] Ibid., 276-278.

navigation certainly improved but ultimately the project collapsed under its own weight in the early 19th century.[10]

Meanwhile in New York, an Irish immigrant by the name Christopher Colles was busy attempting to convince the State government that a venture similar to Washington's would work on the Mohawk River. Born in Ireland, Colles began life as an orphan under the guardianship of an Anglican clergyman who would later become the Bishop of Ossory. Serving as an engineer in young adulthood, Colles spent time on an internal improvement project designed to make the River Shannon more navigable but afterward traveled to America, delivering lectures on the subjects of pneumatics and lock navigation. With the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Colles became involved with the Continental Army and proceeded to begin work on improving American artillery doctrine. He devoted himself to the subject of internal improvement, however, following the Revolution, quickly surmising that what he had achieved on the River Shannon could be done on the Mohawk. Accordingly, on the 6th of November, 1784, Colles presented his vision for upstate New York to the State Legislature. While the Legislator certainly welcomed Colles' proposal, in the end it was unwilling to devote public funds to finance the project. Undaunted, Colles turned to the State Chamber of Commerce but ultimately they too felt it beyond their abilities to support such an ambitious enterprise, stating for the record that:

> the Chamber entertained the highest ideas of the utility of [Colles'] scheme, wishing it may meet with every possible success, but in their incorporated capacity, owing to the lowness of their funds, it was out of their power to lend him any aid.[11]

[10] Bernstein, 74-75.
[11] John A. Stevens, "Christopher Colles, the First Projector of Inland Navigation in America," *The Magazine of American History: With Notes and Queries* 2 (1878): 340–343; Ronald E. Shaw, *Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal, 1792-1854* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1966), 12-13.

Following Colles' setback, for the next few decades the dream of a two-way channel across the State of New York would only find expression in the writings of various promoters and boosters. The first was none other than Elkanah Watson who years earlier had personally witnessed the majesty of the Bridgewater Canal in the 1780s. An inveterate traveler, Watson spent much of his early life touring the world and developed an appetite for engineering. Over the course of his travels he had the privilege to spend some time at Mount Vernon and soon discovered that Washington likewise shared his enthusiasm for grandiose development schemes. Learning of the General's plans for the Potomac, Watson apparently became a "canal disciple" and later departed to central New York in the summer of 1788, extending his tour of North America to the Great Lakes. His initial plan was to visit a friend who lived in Johnstown, between the village of Utica and Schenectady. On his way from Johnstown to Lake Ontario, however, Watson stopped in Rome at Fort Stanwix, also known at the time as Fort Schuyler, to observe a rather monumental event in American history—the Treaty of Fort Schuyler between the State of New York and the Oneida Indians. Essentially, As Watson witnessed five million acres of western real estate transfer into the hungry hands of George Clinton, he suddenly had a revelation of where America's financial future really resided. If, he reasoned, an artificial waterway could be constructed from the Mohawk River to Wood Creek and Lake Oneida—eventually accessing Lake Ontario via the Oswego River—then the entire west would consequently lay open and the United States could "by a grand stroke of policy…divert the

future trade of Lake Ontario, the Great Lakes above, from Alexandria and Quebec, to Albany and New York."[12]

Committed then to this idea of shutting out Canadian trade and uniting the East and West, Watson finally settled down in Albany and proceeded to publish a series of documents that promoted the development of a waterway to Lake Oneida. Although a number of these documents were articles to local newspapers, the most important was an official address sent to the New York State Legislature in 1791. In general, the address argued that if the State constructed a two mile long canal from Fort Stanwix to Wood Creek, "a water communication of several thousand miles will be opened from the Atlantic to the most extensive inland navigation [the Great Lakes] found in any other part of the world."[13]

Aided by the support of Governor Clinton, state senator Philip Schuyler, and former congressmen Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, the Legislature responded enthusiastically to Watson's address, passing in March of 1792 "An Act for Establishing and Opening Lock Navigation within this State," an act which essentially incorporated two private development companies: the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company and the Northern Inland Lock Navigation Company. To preside over both organizations senator Schuyler was chosen as President. Watson, likewise, was appointed as one of over fifty other directors. Regrettably the New Yorkers had only marginally more success than the Virginians, falling into many of the same difficulties as Washington and his Potomac Canal Company. The primary problem lay in the relative inexperience of American civil engineering and when appeals were initially sent to England for

[12] Elkanah Watson, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Existing Condition of The Western Canals in the State of New-York, from September 1788 to Completion of the Middle Section of the Grand Canal in 1819* (Albany: D. Steele, 1820), 7-9, 11, 15-16; Alan Taylor, *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 181-185.
[13] Watson, 19-21.

assistance—less than ten years since the conclusion of the Revolution no less—help did not materialize for some time. As such, Schuyler had to appoint himself chief engineer and the directors became quickly overwhelmed by logistical obstacles. In the end this no doubt contributed to the falling out Schuyler and Watson had concerning, among other things, the use of wooden locks and Schuyler's salary. This compelled Watson to finally walk away from the project and move to Massachusetts. Thus, after having built only a few locks between Schenectady and Utica—clearing stones, trees, and sandbars along the way—the company was hemorrhaging financially, only collecting revenue at 2.5% of costs by 1803.[14]

Meanwhile, beyond the efforts of Elkanah Watson, the most significant early booster for New York State canal development was an imprisoned flour merchant by the name Jesse Hawley. Like many New England settlers, Hawley left the confines of Connecticut for a life of adventure and riches in the trans-Hudson West, eventually finding his way to Seneca Lake sometime around 1800. There he established a modest shipping business to New York City, sending cargo east by wagon and boat. Because the cost of transportation, however, rose dramatically in the summer, Hawley began to agonize over his dwindling margins and the overwhelming debt he was accumulating. Deciding to avoid his creditors, he fled toward Pittsburgh for a short time but eventually gave up and returned to central New York to serve a two year sentence in an Ontario County debtor's prison. There Hawley sat brooding, reflecting on his financial tribulations. At this point things truly looked bleak for the young man. He was penniless, had no friends or family to speak of, and to make matters worse, had nothing to look

[14] William A. Bird, "Early Transportation, New York State," in *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, vol. 2 (Buffalo: Bigelow Brothers, 1880), 20; Philip Schuyler, "The Inland Lock Navigation Company: First Report of the Directors," in *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, vol. 2 (Buffalo: Bigelow Brothers, 1880), 162-165; Watson, 22-23; Shaw, 15-21; Bernstein, 96.

forward to when he eventually got out of prison. The situation truly appeared hopeless and Hawley found himself slowly drowning in despair.[15]

Everything changed, however, with a sudden flash of insight as Hawley recalled a conversation he had in 1806 with James Geddes, a local judge and surveyor for Onondaga County. At the time, Hawley was residing with the judge's relatives in Geneva, which later led to Hawley's meeting with Geddes sometime in February. One way or another, the topic of canals came up and Geddes informed Hawley of a discussion he had with Simeon De Witt, then Surveyor General of New York. Although the details are difficult to determine, the dialogue between the judge and the surveyor had something to do with Gouverneur Morris, a one-time senator for the State of New York and co-author of the United States Constitution. According to De Witt, instead of dealing with the inconsistency of natural rivers, Morris figured that an artificial waterway, dug from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, was the key to connecting the undeveloped West with civilization.[16] While De Witt thought the idea rather absurd, he likely discussed it with a number of his associates, one of them being James Geddes who in turn discussed the plan with Hawley. The proposal apparently remained with Hawley for years because at some point during his imprisonment, he resolved to occupy himself by stimulating public interest in a grandiose canal project.[17] Thus, in the confines of a jail cell during 1807, Hawley wrote fourteen articles for the *Genesee* and *Ontario Messenger*, urging his readers to consider:

---

[15] Hosack, 301-302; Shaw 24.

[16] Hawley disputes this fact and claims that Gouverneur Morris initially proposed a 'lake route' to Lake Erie and that he was the first to conceive of an 'overland' route well before his meeting with Geddes, back in April of 1805 during a meeting with his supplier, a Colonel Mynderse of Seneca Falls (See Hosack 302; Shaw 24).

[17] Jesse Hawley, "Letter from Jesse Hawley to David Hosack: Rochester, 24th July, 1838," in *Memoir of De Witt Clinton*, 301–306; Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996); Shaw, 22-25.

> [For] what are we destined—servilely, to copy the splendid folly of all ancestry, or to borrow wisdom at their expense? Nations have often mistaken the true path to wealth and greatness…The impious project of a Babel, the renowned Pyramids, the magnificent Hanging Gardens, the stupendous Colossus—all were but as so much splendid folly and prodigality…[yet] internal improvements have proved the certain and more speedy road to national greatness…Our territory, from one extremity to the other, is either intersected or interlocked with current waters or inland seas. Here is a vast field opened to American enterprise…I will presume to suggest, [therefore], that [internal] improvement...would afford the most immediate and consequently the most extensive advantages which any other in the United State can possibly do. It is connecting the waters of Lake Erie and those of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers by means of a canal.[18]

Unfortunately for Hawley, his essays never received the wide acceptance he was hoping for and were initially, "treated with much ridicule and, by some, were considered as 'the effusions of a maniac.'" Yet despite the public's lack of foresight, a number of powerful individuals began considering his proposal more seriously.[19] Thus, with Washington and Colles' early exploits, along with Elkanah Watson's efforts in the 1790s, and Hawley's promotional campaign in the 1800s, the stage was at last set, all the major pieces were in place requiring only that some key player pull the components together and initiate the undertaking industrious Americans had dreamt of for over fifty years.

---

[18] Hawley, "Observations on Canals: No 1," in *Memoir of De Witt Clinton*, 310-311; Hawley, "Introductory Essay," in *Memoir of De Witt Clinton*, 307.

[19] Hawley, "Letter to David Hosack," 302; Shaw, 29-30, 35-36, 40-41; One example was New York State Assemblyman Joshua Forman who, along with Onondaga County representative Benjamin Wright, presented a canal resolution on the floor of the Legislature in 1808, calling for a survey of the most practical route for a canal between the Hudson and Lake Erie. Their ultimate goal was to take advantage of President Jefferson's Sixth Annual Address to Congress in 1806 which called for the federal support of "roads, rivers, canals, and such other objects of public improvement as it may be thought proper to add to the constitutional enumeration of federal powers." Indeed, Jefferson reasoned that "By these operations new channels of communication will be opened between the States, the lines of separation will disappear…and their union cemented." In the end, however, Forman and Wright found Jefferson was far from interested in supporting the New Yorkers, citing that Virginia already had such a project underway, requiring only a fraction of the money Forman and Wright were requesting. (see Thomas Jefferson, "Sixth Annual Message of Thomas Jefferson, December 2, 1806," in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Containing His Autobiography, Notes on Virginia, Parliamentary Manual, Official Papers, Messages and Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private*, ed. Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh [Washington, DC: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903], 423 and Joshua Forman, "Letter from Joshua Forman to David Hosack, Franklin N.J. October 13, 1828," in *Memoir of De Witt Clinton*, 347).

By 1810 that player came in the form of Thomas Eddy, a founding director and treasurer of the private business Watson and Schuyler had created back in 1792—the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company. Responsible for discovering some way to allay the company's financial woes, save it from insolvency, and pay shareholders, Eddy reasoned that the company's operation needed to be extended farther west—perhaps as far as Seneca Lake—for it to be of any real value to merchants. No doubt reflecting on Colles, Watson, and State Assemblyman Joshua Forman's work with the Legislature, Eddy reasoned that if he could officially involve the State in improving navigation across the waterways of New York, then perhaps a state sponsored project could push further west and thereby secure higher tolls.[20]

Eddy began moving forward in March by personally contacting Federalist State Senator Jonas Platt. Coincidently, Platt was running for governor at the time on a platform of economic development. As the men talked, Platt suggested that he expand his application to include a canal, independent of any existing rivers, that would cut clear across the State to Lake Erie. Platt also emphasized his "conviction that no private corporation was adequate to, or ought to be entrusted with, the power and control over such an important object…[because] the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company had disappointed public expectation." How Eddy received this rebuke against his company is unknown as neither Platt nor Eddy go into much depth regarding the substance of what transpired that night. What is known is that Eddy originally balked at the idea, fearing the immensity of the plan would prejudice the Legislature against helping the lock company. This is certainly understandable considering that Eddy primarily came to Platt to help alleviate the financial situation of Western Lock, not create a

[20] Thomas Eddy, "Canals," in *Memoir of De Witt Clinton*, 375-376.

world wonder. According to Platt's recollection, a debate ensued for nearly the whole night as Thomas Eddy appeared "startled" by Platt's comment regarding the Erie bound waterway. Nevertheless, owing perhaps to Platt's charisma or Eddy's desperation, the treasurer eventually relented and allowed Platt to draft a joint resolution that a board of commissioners be appointed to survey the State as far as Lake Erie, for the purpose of constructing a trans-Hudson canal. Likely reflecting on past attempts to secure public support, Eddy and Platt knew it was essential to have the endorsement of the Democratic-Republican Party. Indeed, an entirely partisan commission was sure to fail. At the time not only were Eddy and Platt firm Federalists, but the Western Lock Company was likewise considered to have undeniable Federalist leanings.[21]

With this in mind, Eddy approached the State Senate Chamber the next morning to meet with Platt, praying his gamble on the man would pay off. While in the chamber, and in accordance with their agreement to gather bipartisan support, Platt called over De Witt Clinton and pitched the idea to the Republican senator. Because Clinton was between terms as mayor of New York City, much of his attention was presently devoted to Manhattan. Consequently, he admitted to the men that he knew very little of canal navigation and the present situation on the western frontier. Yet regardless of these concerns, Eddy and Platt were able to convince the senator to second the resolution after it was presented. With the endorsement of such a prominent Republican, Platt and Eddy knew they were ready in the Senate, yet Platt wanted to secure support in the House Assembly as well and approached Stephen Van Rensselaer and Abraham Van Vechten with their vision for the State. Both men quickly agreed to aid the

[21] Jonas Platt, "Letter from Jonas Platt, Esq. to David Hosack: New York, May 3, 1828," in *Memoir of De Witt Clinton*, 382-383; Eddy, 375-376; Shaw, 38-39; Sheriff, 19; Bernstein, 130-133.

resolution but Van Rensselaer had a condition—that his friend William North be added to the list of designated commissioners. Apparently neither Eddy nor Platt had a problem with this arrangement and proceeded to introduce the proposal before the Senate that morning where it was unanimously approved and Gouverneur Morris, De Witt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Simeon De Witt, William North, Thomas Eddy, and Peter Porter were accordingly appointed as commissioners. In this way, the board was rather evenly balanced politically with Morris, Van Rensselaer, North, and Eddy representing the Federalist Party and Clinton, Porter, and De Witt representing the Republicans.[22]

Given 3,000 dollars from the Legislature to defray expenses, Eddy and Clinton left from New York City by steamboat on June 30th, 1810. Their initial task was to confer with the other five commissioners in Albany.[23] There it was decided Morris and Van Rensselaer would travel by land westward to Buffalo, while the remaining men would proceed by water, taking a short detour down the Oswego River to Lake Ontario. The second group would then move back along the central lake route toward Lake Erie. Along the way, the two parties would meet again in Rome, then in Geneva after Eddy's band returned from the Oswego and Lake Ontario. In Geneva, on the shores of Seneca Lake, the party was to resume their fellowship and arrive at Buffalo together. Meanwhile, during the actual journey itself, Clinton took great pains to

[22] Eddy, 376-377; Platt, 383-384; Shaw, 39; Moreover, to further motivate the commissioners and perhaps explain some of their operating motives in supporting Eddy and Platt, every one of the seven, excluding North and Porter, were stockholders in the Western and Northern Inland Navigation Lock Companies. North and Porter's exclusion, however, does not mean that they didn't stand to financially benefit if a canal was made. North, for instance, held land near Rome and Porter owned property along the Niagara River.

[23] Three thousand dollars was a healthy spending budget in 1810, amounting to around $40,000 in the 21st century.

maintain a journal of the entire experience, recording a wide variety of personal observations, wildlife, natural features, frontier communities, and personalities.[24]

After the expedition was finished, and the commissioners returned to Albany, the men began preparing their report to the Legislature. In general, all were agreed that channeling along the Oneida and Oswego Rivers from Lake Oneida to Lake Ontario would entirely defeat the purpose of the project, reasoning that if this were to happen the sheer difficulty of the route would compel any imported or exported material to "go to Montreal, unless our British neighbors are blind to their own interest." Beyond this unanimity, there was substantial disagreement concerning the course of the canal west of the Genesee River and whether construction should terminate up or downstream from Niagara Falls. Practically speaking, there should have been no question seeing that ending south of the Falls would not only avoid the problem of navigating around them, but also more firmly cut Lake Ontario, and by extension Montreal, out of any markets in Ohio and the Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois Territories. Yet as often is the case, self interest was at work, compelling Peter Porter to create dissention among the other six commissioners.[25]

Porter argued for a terminus near the town of Lewiston which is around 12 miles downstream of the Falls, effectively leading to Lake Ontario and the Saint Lawrence River. According to Clinton, Porter owned a business that carried freight around the Falls over dry

[24] De Witt Clinton and William W. Campbell, "His Private Canal Journal-1810," in *The Life and Writings of De Witt Clinton* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849), 29-30, 52, 54, 57, 70, 73-75, 79, 85, 101; Additionally—and typically unmentioned in most histories—the commissioner's expedition across the State of New York put the men face to face with the Plan of Union and its social implications as they met with the Rev. Jedidiah Chapman of Geneva Presbytery and were eventually convinced, Clinton in particular, to financially support the further development of Union religion with a generous donation. (see Ibid., 98, 151).

[25] Governeur Morris et al., *Report of the Commissioners Appointed by Joint Resolutions of the Honorable Senate and Assembly of the State of New York, of the 13th and 15th of March, 1810; to Explore the Route of an Inland Navigation, from Hudson's River to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie* (New York: Prior and Dunning, 1811), 6-7.

land, a business to which he held an effective monopoly. As the system worked, those shipping east from Erie would offload their goods at Porter's establishment in Black Rock (Buffalo) which he would then haul downstream to Lewiston. Conversely, those traveling west would offload in Lewistown and embark from Black Rock on their way to Detroit and the remaining Great Lakes. In the end, however, while Porter's determination to protect his monopoly threatened to divide the Commission's report and cause further debate in the Legislature (potentially derailing any progress made), the other six fortunately managed to compel his eventual consent.[26]

Of the resolutions made by the commission, there was an especially surprising conviction regarding the role of private industry. Surveying the history of previous attempts to engineer a waterway that linked the East and West, the commissioners ultimately decided against any kind of "grant to private persons or companies. Too great a national interest is at stake…It must not become the subject of a job, or a fund for speculation," they concluded when assessing how best to complete such a project. Indeed, in light of Porter's efforts to personally profit from the development plan, it is rather remarkable that the other six came to this decision at all, particularly when considering Thomas Eddy's initial motivation to promote the project as a way to advance the interests of the Western Lock Company—a business, again, to which five of the seven were shareholders.[27]

Yet the second and perhaps most important conclusion of the report regarded the canal's general nature. Again, having witnessed Washington's difficulties at improving the Potomac, and Western Lock's failed attempt at making the Mohawk navigable, the

[26] De Witt Clinton ("Tacitus"), *The Canal Policy of the State of New York: Delineated in a Letter to Robert Troup, Esq* (Albany: E. & E. Hosford, 1821), 24-25, 38.
[27] Morris et al., 36.

Commissioners ultimately recommended that natural rivers be avoided. Instead they suggested that an artificial river be dug overland, supplied by lakes across the State. They wrote:

> Experience, moreover, has in this country declared against following the course of rivers more decidedly than in the Old World for there, notwithstanding the excellence of the highways, transportation is performed between Rouen and Paris, for instance, in boats drawn up the river but along the Mohawk [the road],…far from being good, is frequently preferred…Moreover, it is found that canals, depending on rivers, frequently like rivers themselves, want water in the season when it is most necessary…[and when] streams swollen by showers will bring down, mixed with their waters, a proportion of mud…the stillness of a level canal will subside and choke up.[28]

With these recommendations sufficiently outlined, the commissioners issued their report to the Legislature during the month of February, 1811. By and large the report was received favorably, with the State government passing a series of canal laws quickly afterward. The most important of these laws, however, came the following year in June of 1812 with the State authorizing the commissioners to purchase the assets of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company on its behalf. This was an important step because now the Legislature was virtually free of any developmental competition along the land where construction was to take place, allowing for practically complete control over the natural features required to build the canal across the State.[29] Unfortunately, further progress would be temporarily stalled as war broke out with the British Empire in the summer of 1812.[30] The interruption though proved to

[28] Ibid., 4, 9-10, 18-20.

[29] Alternatively, if Western Lock had maintained a presence on the Mohawk River and Wood Creek, it would have been extremely difficult for the State to tap these sources of water for the waterway. This reality is important because in the end the Legislature did not follow the commission's suggestion to avoid rivers and creeks for supplying water to the canal. This idea was chiefly Morris' and with his death in 1816 the issue faded. To resolve the problems outlined in the report of February, 1811, the State utilized a system of weirs to control excess runoff and debris, regulating water flow to acceptable levels. (See Bernstein, 193, 260)

[30] New York State Legislature, "An Act Further to Provide for the Improvement of the Internal Navigation of This State: June 19, 1812," in *Laws of the State of New York, Passed at the Thirty-Fifth Session of the Legislature,* (Albany: S. Southwick, 1812), 461–463; Bernstein, 157-159.

be short lived and following the Treaty of Ghent two years later, progress resumed once again as the Legislature passed at long last a law that would officially authorize the construction of a canal "between the navigable waters of Hudson's river and Lake Erie." Beginning then in May of 1816, things progressed very rapidly as the commissioners divided the project into three successive sections and assigned a separate engineer to each. Following this, on July 4th 1817, the State formally broke ground in Rome and the greatest public works project in American history commenced.[31]

The Erie Canal—Prosperity Comes to Upstate New York

Red and orange light scattered across West Dominick Street as a large parade marched its way through downtown Rome, New York. It was early morning, July 4th, 1817. Although the sunrise cast a perfect haze across the countryside, it was easy to spot the Honorable Joshua Hatheway as he proudly led the town to a prepared excavation site. His chest and chin were firmly in the air, his smile as broad as a barn door. Indeed, the country judge had all the makings of a fully bonafide peacock or marching band leader and surely felt every bit as good as he looked. Coming to an unremarkable clearing, various dignitaries gathered about Hatheway, the most prominent being De Witt Clinton, the newly elected governor of New York. Meanwhile, the assembled crowd bore shovels, some smiling, others carried nervous expressions. Most, however, were simply eager to participate in the momentous event that would forever change their town and usurer in a new era of prosperity. Likely lost within this mass of onlookers was a young man of slender frame by the name John B. Jervis, a boy whose

[31] New York State Legislature, "An Act to Provide for the Improvement of the Internal Navigation of This State," in *Laws of the State of New York, Passed at The Thirty-Ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-First Sessions of the Legislature* (Albany: Websters and Skinners, 1818), 295-296; Shaw, 63.

imagination was thoroughly captured by what would soon take place. Waiting patiently as the judge addressed the crowd, Jervis could hardly resist speculating about what it all meant for his family, the people of Rome, the citizens of New York, and the nation itself. Finally, after a litany of speeches were made, the moment had at last arrived and the Judge's ceremonial spade pieced the black soft earth. Without warning a cannon fired, shaking Jervis to the bone, echoing for many miles. Recovering, the boy joined his neighbors as they dug, shoulder to shoulder, the first shovelfuls of grass and soil that would not only auspicate the excavation of the "Great Canal," but also the transformation of Plan of Union Christianity.[32]

With news of the celebration traveling as far as Nashville, Tennessee, anyone involved with the project was suddenly under the national spotlight. For the next seven years numerous technological advances and professional careers were made. Jervis was one such individual as he diligently worked his way up from lowly axeman to that of superintending engineer. In fact, the canal catapulted the young man from utter obscurity to national notoriety, establishing him as one of the country's eminent leaders in public works development. Later in life Jervis would then go on to supervise the construction of many other high profile projects including additional canals, numerous railroad networks—designing the first American locomotive—as well as the building of fresh water systems for the cities of New York and Boston.[33]

Yet engineering was not the only important thing to the young man. As a New England immigrant, Jervis was raised in the Congregational Church, to a family of solid, unquestionable,

---

[32] "From the Utica N.Y. Gazette," *The Nashville Whig and Tennessee Advertiser*, September 29, 1817; John B. Jervis, *The Reminiscences of John B. Jervis: Engineer of the Old Croton*, ed. Neal Fitzsimons (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 24-26; Oswald P. Backus, "Rome, Romans and the Canals," in *Memorial of Centennial Celebration of the Turning of the First Shovelful of Earth in the Construction of the Erie Canal Held at Rome, N.Y. July 4th, 1917* (Rome: Rome Chamber of Commerce, 1917), 55-56; Shaw, 83-85.
[33] Jervis, 26-27, 45, 54, 59, 3-13.

piety. Indeed, at the age of sixteen he formally joined the First Congregational Church of Rome to which he was a member for much of his early life. While the precise details of Jervis' theology are hard to determine, the congregation at Rome was a model of Union Christianity, blending the theology of New England with the structure of Middle-State Presbyterianism. Its pastor, the Rev. Moses Gillett, was known as a biblical Calvinist among his peers and parishioners but his Hopkinsian, New School, affinities came quickly to bare as he passionately supported the revivalism of Charles G. Finney during the late 1820s. Like the majority of frontier Congregationalists, Jervis entered Presbyterian communion after Gillett led the church into the Presbytery of Oneida in 1819; among the first of such pastors do make the transition from the Oneida Association before it dissolved in 1822. Consequently, Jervis' life would forever be linked to Plan of Union Calvinism as he gave generously to neighboring Presbyterian churches and missionary societies until his death in 1885.[34]

Yet in 1817 Jervis' career was only beginning and would forever be shaped by his contribution to the construction effort. As excavation began in Rome, the project was organized into a series of segments or mini canals often separated by brooks or ravines. These segments initially ran east and were individually contracted to unskilled local labor. Jervis was initially a member of such a group near Rome. His involvement with the project began after chief engineer Benjamin Wright, also a native of Rome, contacted the boy's father asking for workers. Enthusiastic to participate is such a grand scheme, Jervis quickly accepted the offer and was immediately assigned to a segment not far from town. Unfortunately the section was a

[34] Ibid., 22-23, 16; Charles G. Finney, *The Original Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*, ed. Garth M. Rosell and Richard A.G. Dupis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 129-141; Henry J. Cookinham, *History of Oneida County New York: From 1700 to the Present Time*, vol. 1 (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912), 311; PCUSA, *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States: A.D. 1819* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1819), 215.

dense cedar swamp that ran for miles in either direction, an area of extremely thick brush and soft ground. Nevertheless, having brought one of his father's farmhands, Jervis was in good spirits as he set to work clearing trees, bushes, and scrub through the marshland. Like the many thousands simultaneously employed on the canal, the ultimate goal was to excavate a forty foot wide and four foot deep trench across the State, the first sixteen miles of which would lead to Utica. After this section was finished, a second series of segments would be dug running from Rome to the Seneca River. Together, this ninety mile stretch over flat countryside was designated the "middle section" and was completed by 1820—allowing traffic from both ends of the route to immediately travel back and forth. Almost overnight business boomed and the towns all along the completed section began to grow rapidly as commerce increased and employment opportunities continued to abound.[35]

Meanwhile, as Jervis cleared trees and hammered site pegs, he quickly became preoccupied with, what appeared to him at the time, the mysterious instruments of the site surveyors. Before long, Jervis could hardly contain his curiosity and started asking questions, learning with each conversation, even studying at home in his free time. On April 10th, 1818 all this hard work actually paid off and Jervis was promoted from simple axeman to site surveyor or "target man." By this time much of the work from Rome to Utica was done and Jervis was moved to a segment running from Syracuse to Montezuma and the Seneca River. There Jervis helped finish the middle section, carefully measuring sight lines and forever battling mosquitoes, exhaustion, and the envy of his fellow axemen.[36]

[35] Jervis, 25-26; Bernstein, 206-208, 217, 260-261; Shaw, 69, 84, 98.
[36] Jervis, 26-31, 43.

After completing the final stretch between Utica and Montezuma, Jervis proceeded east to the Mohawk River after yet another promotion—this time as resident engineer. Now in charge of a seventeen mile stretch near the village of Amsterdam, Jervis was personally involved in the second major section of the Great Canal, the "eastern section," running from Utica to Albany, terminating at the Hudson River. Completed by 1823, this section was more difficult than the middle owing to the fact that the terrain was less level and required numerous locks and dams to which Jervis had no experience building. Yet Jervis was up to the challenge and it was precisely here that he really began to learn his craft. Either by Divine Providence, persistence, or perhaps a combination of the two, the challenges of the eastern section began to slowly yield themselves and by 1824, the lad had completely mastered how to repair leaks and build locks, eventually resulting in his promotion to superintending engineer and a salary increase that allowed for him to pay off the mortgage to his father's farm. With the eastern section completed, business boomed yet again as ships traveled from New York City, all the way to the Seneca River—allowing for 190 miles of uninterrupted commercial access across the State.[37]

In the meantime, work from Montezuma to Lake Erie was progressing well, despite the challenges imposed by the Irondequoit Creek Valley and the Genesee River, both running perfectly perpendicular to the path of the canal. To overcome these difficulties, two massive structures were built. The first, known as the "Great Embankment," was essentially a large mound of dirt—with a twenty-five foot high culvert at the bottom for the creek—that filled in the Irondequoit Valley from end to end. This allowed the canal to continue unimpeded across

[37] Ibid., 45-46, 54-55, 59.

the chasm and onward to Rochester. The second structure was the Genesee Aqueduct which was very similar to Brindley's Barton Aqueduct over the River Irwell in England. Composed of numerous classical stone arches fifty feet across, the aqueduct carried the canal a distance of over two football fields right through the center of Rochester, supporting around 2,000 metric tons of water. After having overcome these obstacles, there was comparatively little left standing in the way of ultimate completion and by October of 1825 the western section finally broke through to the Niagara River, the entire waterway spanning over 350 miles from the Hudson to the Great Lakes.[38]

As progress was being made from Rochester to Buffalo, however, much of Jervis' attention was directed toward general maintenance and breach repairs, something he apparently had no taste for. As such, he decided it was time to finally cut ties with the familiarity of New York State and venture out on his own, eager to see what providence had in store for him. Thus, despite the pleas of canal Commissioner Henry Seymour to stay and manage the ongoing maintenance of the waterway, Jervis eventually decided to set off and meet his destiny during the month of March, 1825—just as construction began to wind down in the West. Ultimately, Jervis would go on to work as chief engineer for the Delaware and Hudson Canal, as well as play a central role in eastern railroad development in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s. Jervis, however, would become most famous for his "Croton Aqueduct," a complex municipal supply system which distributed fresh water around forty miles north from the Croton River to the city of Manhattan, a project that was completed in 1842.[39]

[38] Bernstein, 267-272; Shaw, 126-128.
[39] Jervis, 61-65, 98-102, 119-126, 176, 180-181.

Having thus risen from truly humble beginnings, the life of John B. Jervis can perhaps best be thought of as a metaphor for the relationship between Union Christianity and the Erie Canal. Over the course of Jervis' time on the waterway, he gained extremely sophisticated experience and expertise in a field that was only just beginning to come into existence in the United States; making him one of the modern forefathers of American civil engineering. Similarity, Jervis made critically important political and professional contacts working on the project, contacts that further propelled him to national prominence and influence. In similar fashion, national prominence and social influence came to much of upstate New York as frontier communities swelled with people drawn by jobs and financial growth. This likewise stimulated the development of virtually every social institution caught in the middle. Indeed, between 1817 and 1825 not only was the canal completed as a young New Yorker fell headlong into civil engineering, but Plan of Union Congregationalists likewise found themselves in the Presbyterian Church just as unprecedented material prosperity quickly shoot them to the upper echelons of the General Assembly and Presbyterian power structures.

Overall, the canal met nearly every expectation and delivered on virtually every promise made by its long cadre of various promoters. In fact, by 1827 not only were any outstanding debts from construction paid off, but travel times from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean were but a fraction of what they were only ten years prior. As stated before, a trip from Albany to Buffalo that had once taken thirty-two days was now only six. Consequently, communities that were once wholly isolated on the western frontier were now roaring to life as factories and mills brought the industrial revolution to the New York countryside. For example, the number of individuals employed in manufacturing for Monroe County and the City of Rochester rose

astronomically between 1820 and 1840, ranging from 569 to 5,164 respectively. Similarly, the number of manufacturing establishments rose considerably for Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse. In 1821 there were but four textile factories in Onondaga County but that number quickly rose to thirteen by 1835. Rensselaer County, meanwhile, rose from eleven to thirty-two textile facilities within the same timeframe. Logically, this growth in manufacturing had a subsequent effect on land values for in the county of Onondaga the assessed value of real property rose as much as 200 percent between 1820 and 1835 while the value of personal property in Oneida County and the cities of Rome and Utica rose almost 250 percent. This of course can only be explained by the stratospheric rise in population the canal bought the towns and villages along its path. The population of Albany for instance doubled from 1820 to 1830, yet the population increases for Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester were even more impressive climbing to 281, 313, and 512 percent for the same ten year period.[40]

Communities outside the canal corridor were no less affected. The city of New York for instance had been in a heated race with Philadelphia since the Revolution. Even in terms of sheer population the competition had been intense. For example, in 1800 New York and Brooklyn were slightly behind Philadelphia and its surrounding boroughs by around 20,000 people as they jostled for most populous city in the Union. In 1820, that margin had decreased to around 6,000. However by 1840, after 15 years of canal invigorated commerce, New York was suddenly ahead of Philadelphia by almost 100,000 people. A similar relationship can be seen when doing a State by State comparison. For much of the early 19th century, the States of New York and Massachusetts were the nation's leading exporters, primarily because of New

[40] Bernstein, 325, 327; Whitford, 923-925, 920-921, 914.

York City and Boston. From the 1790s to 1821 the two were very evenly matched, in some years differing as little as 300,000 dollars worth of exports. Yet after 1821, and the completion of the middle and eastern sections of the canal, New York began to rapidly outpace Massachusetts, first in 1822 by 4.5 million dollars, then 5 million, then 12, then 23 million in 1825. Such commercial growth consequently affected real-estate values for New York City specifically. For instance, increases for the assessed value of both real and personal property for Kings and New York County were shocking. In the fifteen year period between 1820 and 1835, real property values increased by 60 million dollars, or 231 percent for New York and Brooklyn, while personal property increased by as much as 331 percent.[41]

Farther north, this explosion of developmental growth also had implications for 19th and early 20th century popular culture as a distinct folk tradition sprang up along the Erie corridor. Some of the earliest evidence of this can be seen in the numerous tall tales that spread throughout the region, stories about outrageous canal boat romances, giant frogs and sturgeon, even carp drunk on hard cider. Regional musicians and minstrel performers also memorialized the canal. Unfortunately these early songs were not regularly printed, due in large part to their lurid content, but later songs such as "Oh! Dat Low Bridge," "I'm Afloat on the Erie Canal," "The Aged Pilot Man," and "Canawler, Canawler, Hoggee on the Towpath" were preserved. Perhaps the most famous of these tunes, recently revived by Bruce Springsteen's 2007 Sessions Band Tour of North American and Europe, was "Low Bridge, Everybody Down." Written in the 1900s by Thomas S. Allen, a New York vaudeville musician and performer, the

[41] J.D.B. DeBow, ed., *Statistical View of the United States: Embracing Its Territory, Population-white, free colored, and slave-Moral and Social Condition, Industry, Property, and Revenue* (Washington, DC: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854), 187; Whitford, 911, 920.

song tells the story of an old mule by the name of Sal who has spent the last fifteen years towing freight from Albany to Buffalo.[42] The first stanza and chorus run as follows:

> I've got an old mule and her name is Sal,
> Fifteen years on the Erie Canal.
> She's a good old worker and a good old pal,
> Fifteen years on the Erie Canal.
> We've hauled some barges in our day,
> Filled with lumber, coal, and hay,
> And ev'ry inch of the way I know,
> From Albany to Buffalo.
>
> Low Bridge, ev'rybody down,
> Low bridge, we must be getting near a town,
> You can always tell your neighbor,
> You can always tell your pal,
> If he's ever navigated on the Erie Canal.[43]

Similarly, the first time the canal was prominently featured in American literature was in 1837 where James Kirke Paulding wrote a story entitled "The Ride of St. Nicholas on New Year's Eve." Here St. Nick is thoroughly disgusted with New Amsterdam's Dutch community and their irreverent "backsliding." Fortunately, after discovering the canal and the fact that the people of New York had not totally degenerated from the industry of their ancestors, St. Nicholas changes his mind and resolves to distribute more than his usual supply of New Years cookies to the city's inhabitants. Later in 1843, the first proper novel of the canal was published by children's novelist Jacob Abbot entitled *Marco Paul's Travels and Adventures in the Pursuit of Knowledge on the Erie Canal*. The canal also went on to be featured in the works of prominent poets,

[42] Lionel D. Wyld, *Low Bridge!: Folklore and the Erie Canal* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962), 111, 114-117.
[43] Ibid., 104-106.

novelists, and playwrights—artists like Phillip Freneau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Dean Howells, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, and William Dunlap.[44]

Conclusion

Just as the canal altered the cultural composition of New York State and brought with it explosive demographic and commercial growth, it accordingly affected the social status and prosperity of western Presbyterianism—further facilitating not only the expansion of frontier churches in western New York, but also the immigration of Congregationalists from New England into hinterland Presbyteries and Synods. To illustrate, the minutes of the Presbyterian General Assembly for the 1810s and 20s can be rather useful as they show how Presbyteries directly situated along the canal route were as radically transformed as the cities they were affiliated with. For example as illustrated in Table 1, during the ten year period of simultaneous canal construction and Congregational migration, the Presbyteries of Geneva, Oneida, and Cayuga—again those in the West that received the largest number of Hopkinsian adherents—all more than doubled in active membership, swelling by 147, 213, and 308 percent respectively between 1815 and 1825. Compare this with Presbyteries elsewhere in the United States during the same period, Presbyteries like Ohio (Pittsburgh), Orange (north-central North Carolina), New Brunswick (Princeton), Carlisle (south-east Pennsylvania), or Lancaster (east-central Ohio), and we see more modest numbers: -27 percent, -8, 17, 30, and 108 percent respectively.[45]

[44] Ibid., 118-121, 124, 127-130;"Literary Notices," *The Knickerbocker* vol. 9, no. 3 (1837): 311.
[45] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 603; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1825), 374.

Even more dramatically a similar phenomenon emerges when looking at Presbytery statistics for charitable giving (Table 2), with decade average percentage increases from the 1810s and 20s at 586 percent for Oneida, 888 percent for Geneva, and 1,209 percent for Cayuga. Meanwhile Presbyteries in other parts of the United States only had average decade increases of 305 percent for Orange (north-central North Carolina), 173 percent for Lancaster (east-central Ohio), 134 percent for Philadelphia, 75 percent for Carlisle (south-east Pennsylvania), 49 percent for Ohio (Pittsburgh), and -8 percent for New Brunswick (Princeton). Comparatively, Cayuga, Geneva, and Oneida ranked in the top-most category of increased giving for this 20 year period, suggesting that while the canal certainly aided the growth of Union membership rolls and ushered people into the Presbyterian Church, its direct effect on the material and financial composition of the church in the region was even more pronounced and remarkable.[46]

Given then this statistical evidence it is clear that west-central New York was an important junction of growth for American Presbyterians during the early 19th century. While not the only locus of development in the church, the canal corridor was unique in that here a union emerged which wed together communities that were physically and institutionally separated from one another. In this respect the Erie Canal and Plan of Union achieved the same ends for not only were both collaborative efforts, but each connected the West with the East—uniting frontier Congregationalism with frontier Presbyterianism. Although the Union was an institutional development, the canal itself gave flesh to what was already happening socially.

[46] These figures are decade averages derived from the statistical appendices of the General Assembly minutes for the years 1810-1819, 1820-1823, and 1825-1829. Statistical information for the year 1824 was not available. Decade averages were used here instead of comparing increases from the years 1815 and 1825 because of how inconsistent charitable giving was from year to year. This was especially true in the West.

Like with the Plan of Union, the canal's genesis was more an ad-hoc collaborative effort than the work of any one individual. With numerous schemes of development, the creation of a trans-Hudson waterway involved national visionaries as different as the venerable General Washington and the indebted Jesse Hawley. Moreover, neither the canal nor the Union were entirely implemented as originally planned, but were transformed according to the realities of local circumstances (as the canal commissioner's suggestion to avoid area rivers and streams was ultimately ignored with the construction of selected run-off systems and weirs).[47] Finally, and most importantly, both the canal and Plan of Union allowed west-central New York to prosper, creating access not only to important denominational and material resources in the East, but also facilitated explosive numerical growth in the West which brought industrialism to the frontier and further extended Calvinism across the Appalachian Mountains.

Nowhere then can the broader picture of this social and economic change be better seen than in the quantitative data itself. Unfortunately a cursory survey of real-estate values or denominational statistics offers nowhere near a sufficient understanding of the overall structural impact the Erie Canal had on American Presbyterianism. As such, it may prove helpful to briefly depart from our story and analyze any aggregate data before proceeding further. This, perhaps, would best be done in an entirely separate chapter which outlines and details the methodological process of the study and the ultimate results of its findings.

[47] Bernstein, 193, 260.

Chapter 3: The Quantitative Analysis of Presbyterian Ecclesiastical Structure

Introduction

In order to understand the broader social and economic patterns at work in the 19th century American Presbyterian Church, the general structure of the institution must first be evaluated. To do this it is necessary to briefly depart from the more traditional qualitative analysis and venture into the realm of latent variable modeling and inferential statistics—the reason being that no individual, historical actor, or amount of narrative sources can fully illustrate, nor comprehend, the overall forces which shaped the development of an institution as large as antebellum Presbyterianism.[1] Indeed, only a wider lens, which assembles evidence comprehensively, can delineate the general scope of social change that took place within Union Christianity during the 1810s and 20s. Unfortunately over the last thirty years the systematic application of mathematical methods and statistical models has fallen out of fashion among the majority of historians who, in their enthusiasm for nuance and complexity, have forgotten the utility of generalization and aggregate synthesis.

While experiencing decline during the late 1980s and early 90s, Quantitative History—or Clinometrics as it is known by its detractors—enjoyed considerable exposure in the 1960s and 70s. The work many consider to have inaugurated this methodological approach is Alfred Conrad and John Meyer's *The Economics of Slavery in the Antebellum South* which argued, among other things, that American slavery was not only profitable for southern planters but would have continued indefinitely were it not for the Civil War. Following Conrad and Meyer,

[1] According to the statistical appendix of the 1830 General Assembly, the number of members in regular communion within the national church was nearly 200,000 (PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1830* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes and L.R. Bailey, 1830), 145).

quantitative research quickly spread from the historical study of economics, into the field of historical cultural analysis, particularly the investigation of local American antebellum politics. In this respect the quantitative study of 19th century American society began with Lee Benson's ethnographic examination of party politics and regional voting behavior in New York State. To be sure other studies appeared during the late 1950s, but it was Benson's *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy* that was arguably the most influential in advancing the "quantification revolution" or "New History" of the mid to late 20th century.[2]

While Benson's work was highly impressionistic, he nevertheless helped to popularize statistical methods in the field. This led to a dramatic shift in historical focus away from specific historical actors and toward the operational mechanics of popular elections, legislative roll calls, and ethnocultural quantification. Broadly speaking, Benson set out to attack Schlesinger's *The Age of Jackson* which identified class as the dominant force in antebellum political affairs. Instead, Benson argued that religious membership, ethnicity, and party affiliation were the independent variables in 19th century politics (which, he declared, were only visible from the proper "scientific" vantage point). While his conclusions, however, would quickly set a new standard in political and social history, ultimately upon closer inspection much of Benson's statistical support was rather weak as it was based almost solely on approximations found in

[2] Other significant studies using quantitative methods from the 1950s include V.O Key, Jr's., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, vol. 17 no. 1 (1955); Alfred Conrad and John Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South," *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 66 no. 2 (1958); Merle Curti, et al., *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959).

period newspaper editorials, county histories, and letter correspondence (as opposed to election returns or demographic census data).[3]

Almost a decade later—and following Joel Silbey's quantitative call to arms—James Roger Sharp would likewise add his name to the Cliometrician's pantheon of significance by employing a statistical approach that reasserted Schlesinger's class thesis.[4] Sharp's study, however, was a little more numerically grounded than Benson's. Based on county presidential election returns, the 1840 census, and various state property tax records for 1840, Sharp argued that he found a strong corollary between wealth/Whig affiliation and poverty/Democratic affiliation in American counties during the late 1830s and 1840s. This, in turn, was to have a large role in the hard-money Jacksonian critique of the banking system after 1837.[5]

Only a year later in 1971, Ronald Formisano immediately responded to Sharp's hypothesis, suggesting that when one examines aggregate data from the 1850 Census, or county election returns between 1840 and 1852, the supposed liner relationship between wealth and party affiliation is nowhere to be found. Instead Formisano supported Benson's ethocultural thesis by pointing to relatively high Pearson correlations between census county regional birth percentages and Democratic mean electoral percentages (1848-1852).[6] He then

---

[3] Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton University Press, 1961), 171-172, 177, 185.
[4] Joel H. Silbey, "The Civil War Synthesis in American Political History," *Civil War History*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1964).
[5] James R. Sharp, *The Jacksonians Versus the Banks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 328, 333; Methodologically, Sharp ranked State counties from those with the highest Democratic presidential election plurality to those with the lowest, while doing the same for county per capita property tax values for 1840. He then analyzed the two sets of variables using the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient. The States of Mississippi and Ohio, however, were the only ones with notable correlation coefficients of .771 and .428 respectively.
[6] Ronald P. Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 53-55; Formisano based his conclusion on a case study of the State of Michigan which correlated occupation and land values from the 1850 Census with mean Democratic county percentage strength from a

extended this argument further by evaluating the "nonpopulation" records of the 1850 Census and demonstrated a strong association between townships that had over a 50 percent Democratic majority in the 1852 presidential election with those that were Catholic in "religious preference."[7]

During the 1980s statistical methods would continue to grow among 19th century historians but remained primarily confined to the historical study of politics and economics, failing to spread to other historical topics. Most notably in 1981, Allan Bogue conducted a study of Senate Republicans during the Civil War and concluded that a profound divide existed within the Republican Party of that period (one that was more concrete than fluid and indeed quantifiable).[8] Bogue's ultimate goal was to categorize specifically which Republican senators voted "radical", or supported legislation intended for racial equality, and which did not.[9] Drawing a large portion of his data from the *Senate Journal*, Bogue employed a wide variety of statistical methods ranging from roll-call cohesion scores and agreement matrices to Gutman scale rankings. It was Gutman Scaling, however, that most notably influenced Bogue's study for through it he first assessed the "extremeness" of legislation that affected southern institutions

---

variety of elections. Using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, he found that the highest value of correlation between land values and party affiliation was only .316, with the majority ranging between -.2 and .2. However, he found a much stronger relationship between ethnicity and political affiliation with correlation coefficients as high as -.621 (Yankee to Democrat in Ingham County) and .561 (foreign born to Democrat in Wayne County) for 1850.

[7] Ibid., 138-140, 166; Formisano's method here was derived from an unpublished dissertation by Philip A. Nordquist that utilized the social statistic schedules of the 1850 Census in order to determine the total number of seats a particular denomination had in a township. This was possible because the schedules listed each church in a township by denomination and provided the number of "accommodations" for its building. This was then used as a relative measure of denominational strength which he called "township religious preference." The values derived from this method, however, prevented correlative analysis because the number of seats could not be compared to church membership or the adult male electorate. Nevertheless, Formisano developed another method that was able to offer correlative comparisons. Unfortunately, this was only capable of assessing the city of Detroit in that he utilized a census that was done of the city by a private publisher in 1853. The denominational numbers here were comparable with voting returns and Formisano was able to compute a Catholic to Democratic correlation for the wards of Detroit at .673, while the Protestant to Democratic correlation coefficient was -.667.

[8] Allan G. Bogue, *The Earnest Men: Republicans of the Civil War Senate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 10.

[9] Ibid., 92.

between 1861 and 1866. He then ranked the senators who either voted for or against that legislation according to scale type. This ranking allowed Bogue to then designate which Republicans were more committed to racial equality and which were less, thus allowing him to categorize specific individuals—quantitatively speaking—as either radical or moderate.[10]

Continuing with Bogue's study of Republicans, William Gienapp, likewise, utilized qualitative methods with a look at the Republican Party in general. In the *Origins of the Republican Party*, Gienapp not only rejected Beard or Foner's contention that economics and labor were the heart of Republican doctrine, but suggested that instead ethnocultural fears—along with temperance and antislavery—were the primary forces in the Republican political ascendency.[11] Methodologically speaking, Gienapp drew from a truly impressive volume of manuscript collections, newspapers, diaries and correspondence, but also from election returns, and State and Federal census data. Likewise he used an equally impressive assortment of statistical techniques including correlations, factor analysis, two-way variance analysis, and ecological regression analysis. His ecological regressions, however, fueled the majority of his quantitative insights whereby least squares not only allowed him to estimate the magnitude of various population cohorts, but also helped him to identify the relationship between 19th century geography, sectarianism, ethnicity, occupation, and voting preference.

In many ways Bogue and Gienapp represent the highpoint of quantitative analysis within the field of History which was, again, primarily confined to the study of politics. By the late 1980s and early 90s, however, linguistic-structuralist and post-structuralist paradigms (that

[10] Ibid., 93-98; Bogue, however, did not solely base his study on statistical analysis but further supported his senatorial typology with a detailed examination of correspondence, floor speeches, memoirs, newspapers, and most importantly, material from the *Congressional Globe*.
[11] William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party: 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 44-67.

were pioneered by scholars like Saussure, Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva**,** and Butler) began to more strongly influence the way history was professionally studied. Consequently, many within the field exchanged a quantitative approach for a more nuanced qualitative one and while numerical comparisons were never wholly abandoned by historians during the 1990s, they were often softened to conform to the realities of language and social constructs.

A good example of this is James McPherson's textual analysis of letters written by Union and Confederate soldiers in 1997. In *For Cause and Comrades*, McPherson explores the reasons why recruits both volunteered and reenlisted in the army. Although he concludes that there was a wide variety of motivations, the most common generally pertained to patriotism, comradery, honor, and duty.[12] McPherson arrived at this conclusion by analyzing the documents of over 1,000 soldiers, enumerating with *very* rough percentage estimates the various literary motifs contained within. McPherson then extended his generalizations from these documents to political sentiment across the North more broadly, concluding that "pro-emancipation conviction did predominate among leaders and fighting soldiers of the Union Army. And that prevalence increased after the low point of early 1863 as a good many anti-emancipation soldiers changed their minds."[13]

Throughout then this 30 year rise and fall of Quantitative History, the field of Intellectual History remained largely unaffected and removed, virtually passed over by these methodological developments. Consequently, no major work within the field has attempted to

[12] James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12-13.
[13] Ibid., 100-102, 123-124. McPherson was able to identify that pro-emancipation sentiment appeared in 42 percent of the Union officers within the sample, while 33 percent of northern enlisted men expressly voiced their support for emancipation. Similarly, McPherson found that "patriotic" motifs appeared more than 60 percent of the time, overall, but changed significantly when accounting for class, rank, and occupation.

statistically study the 19th century transformation of American Protestantism, for example, or assert its primary conclusions from a quantitative standpoint. At its core, however, this dissertation attempts to do exactly that—understand the transformation of American Calvinism from not only a narrative perspective, but from a statistical one as well. For indeed, it is only from this wider platform that one can identify the broader social forces that shaped the ideological composition of 19th century Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

Explanation of Commonly Used Methodological Models

In order to examine the larger social dynamics of the 19th century Presbyterian Church, one must first identify the architecture of Union Calvinism, then how that structure facilitated doctrinal change. Regrettably, the primary social mechanism that drove this transformation—power disparities between segments of the church—cannot be directly measured and is what statisticians refer to as a "latent variable;" something that has to be indirectly observed. Because so much of this project is concerned with assessing something as abstract as denominational power and influence, a methodological explanation for why Factor Analysis, Standard Scoring, and Social Network Analysis are utilized is perhaps necessary.

Of the typical approaches quantitative historians have used to study 19th century America, the most common has been correlation coefficients and regressions. Most often this has been done while attempting to explain the breakdown of the Second Party system and how various independent cultural variables like ethnicity or religion facilitated the process. As mentioned before, Formisano and Sharp utilized Pearson and Spearman Correlation Coefficants to analyze midcentury Whig politics. This enabled them to determine whether two variables have a liner relationship to one another and if so, measure the strength and intensity of that

relationship. If Roman Catholicism in the 7th Ward of Detroit during the 1850s, for instance, was perfectly correlated to, or had a perfect linear relationship with, Democratic Party affiliation, then the two would have a coefficient of 1. This essentially means that if one doubles the other doubles. Conversely, if the coefficient is -1 then if one doubles the other decreases by 100 percent.

Another popular way historians have analyzed American society is to run regressions. Gienapp's *Origins of the Republican Party* is one of many salient works that have utilized this approach. Most commonly, regressions are employed as a predictive tool e.g. estimating changes in voting behavior from one election to the next, or identifying the social basis of support for political parties over time in locations where data is available to places where it is not. Similarly, regressions have also been regularly used by sociologists to understand the interaction between social forces within a community, for example, to what extent does the intensity of a community's religiosity impact its "trust" of insiders versus outsiders.[14]

Although correlations can also have a predictive feature, regressions have more precise predictive power because they typically incorporate more than two variables (although this is not necessarily true for logistic, or binary, regressions). This is done by essentially calculating the relational trend or direction of multiple variables through the use of "least squares" to trace a predictive line. When utilizing least squares, one assumes that the best way of pairing a predictive line with field data is to find the line which has the minimal sum of deviations squared from the data set. Once this line is calculated one can then estimate for unknown circumstances or to fill in gaps of data. This allowed Gienapp, for instance, to illustrate how the

[14] Jeffrey Seymour et al., "Generating Trust in Congregations: Engagement, Exchange, and Social Networks," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* vol. 53, no. 1 (March 2014): 130–44.

Know-Nothing Party became a critical halfway house for Protestant nativist Whigs and Democrats on their journey to the Republican Party during the 1840s and 50s.

Two lesser known methods historians have used are Scale Analysis and Factor Analysis. Of the two approaches, Scale Analysis is particularly successful at analyzing latent variables like ideological orientation. This is typically done by triangulating data from observable variables to better understand *known* unobservable ones. Two excellent examples are Bogue's *The Earnest Men* and Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal's *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. Each compiles roll-calls on 19th century congressional legislation and seeks to rate a politician's ideological orientation on a progressive/conservative continuum. Essentially both projects quantify or rank how "liberal" or "conservative" any one congressman was during the respective periods of study by tabulating roll-call yea or nay's, then comparing those responses relative to other congressmen from a large data set.

Factor Analysis on the other hand helps to *locate* latent independent variables that are unknown or otherwise hidden from the researcher. Returning then to *The Origins of the Republican Party*, Gienapp uses Factor Analysis to locate discreet breaks in voting alignment during the 1840s and 50s by identifying the latent relationships between his dependant or observed variables (party percentages) and his latent or independent variables (religion, ethnicity, and geography). This ultimately allowed him to conclude that 1854 marked the final overthrow of the Second Party System.[15]

Of the aforementioned methods, it is Factor Analysis that most directly pertains to this project because the first step in evaluating the power dynamics within the 19th century

[15] William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party: 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 161.

Presbyterian Church is to first assess which metrics do an adequate job of measuring our latent variable of denominational power and influence. Moreover, the second step of the study—using the analysis to rank the various components of the church according to a single denominational power scale—is also possible with Factor Analysis. It is for this reason then that the explanation of this study's statistical process begins here.

The Process

In order to do a Factor Analysis must first determine which units of measurement they wish to work with. In other words, for a structural examination of power discrepancies within the Presbyterian Church, the church needs to be broken down into reasonable components. Fortunately, 19th century American Presbyterianism had a vigorous institutional structure and was already subdivided into manageable segments: congregations, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. Of the four, a study of individual congregations would have been impossible and was quickly removed from consideration. There were simply far too many churches by the 1810s and 20s and examining them sequentially would have been statistically overwhelming. Conversely, the General Assembly as a single unit would have offered no variation from which to make structural comparisons so presbyteries and synods were then considered.

While Synods would likely have worked well because there were relatively few of them, it would have been difficult to identify regional contours of power because they typically covered such a large geographic area. Therefore, the institutional component that made the most sense also happened to be directly related to the primary way that administrative power operated within the church itself; the elite ruling minority that formally controlled so much of

the denomination's internal government—the Presbytery. In the early 19th century the actual size of a Presbytery generally ranged from ten to thirty ministers and elders. Usually each congregation in a geographically bounded area would contribute one representative minister and elder to the Presbytery ruling council. Most of the time, the Presbytery would try to maintain an equal balance of ministers and elders but this was not always possible. Regarding the Presbytery's functional role in the church, its members were responsible for a wide assortment of routine duties including the examination, appointment, discipline, and removal of ministers within their jurisdiction. Similarly, they were responsible for maintaining a congregation's doctrinal and intellectual conformity to the Confession of Faith, as well as managing the material resources of the churches within its bounds. The Presbytery also had the power to divide or unite existing congregations and to form or receive new ones. Broadly speaking, a presbytery was to do "whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care."[16] For these reasons the specific members of each presbytery had enormous administrative power, especially when it pertained to the intellectual and doctrinal composition of its congregations. Granted, the parenting Synod and General Assembly had the power to receive appeals and overturn decisions made by the presbyteries, but typically it was the decision of the Presbytery that was the most important.[17]

[16] PCUSA, *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as Ratified by the General Assembly, at their Session in May, 1821 and Amended in 1833* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1839), 418-421.

[17] A regional Synod was the ruling council above the Presbytery but below the General Assembly and was usually composed of no fewer than three geographically neighboring presbyteries. According to the Church Constitution, whenever any seven ministers met who were members of the Synod's presbyteries, a sufficient quorum was attained to transact synodical business. This was provided that not more than three of the seven belonged to the same presbytery.

However, while analyzing every presbytery member for the entire church in a given year would certainly offer a localized picture of Presbyterian denominational structure, even the number of presbyteries makes such a project impractical. This fact then would support the use of synods as a unit of measurement for the project were it not for an organizational trick made possible by Presbyterian parliamentary procedure. Returning then to the General Assembly, it is possible not so much to analyze the General Assembly as a single unit, but to examine it rather as the Church in microcosm. This stems from the fact that the Assembly was made almost exclusively of elected delegates sent by the presbyteries to represent their interests—with the precise number depending on the overall size of the sending presbytery. As such, the presbyteries would still be the unit of analysis but each delegate would serve as a statistical representative of their affiliated council. This also simplifies locating the required primary sources because Assembly information is more readily available than individual presbytery or synod records which at times are impossible to access or locate.

With the unit of analysis accordingly settled, it then becomes necessary to determine what to measure specifically. Fortunately a general knowledge of how the church operated was immediately forthcoming and naturally led to three preliminary avenues of data. The first was based on the fact that presbytery population size matters, for it was size that determined how many Assembly delegates a presbytery was allowed to send, and size that indicated the amount of resources it had access to. The second metric of analysis follows from the first and pertains to material resources specifically—money. While it is impossible to know how much each presbytery had in its treasury comprehensively, it is possible to know how much each gave for various charitable causes. In this way one can indirectly measure the precise wealth of a

presbytery (or at least its relative generosity which is arguably proportional to its available resources) and thus the financial power it had within the denomination.

The third metric that was initially tested, however, requires a little more explanation. During the 19th century the General Assembly met once a year for a few weeks during the summer to transact denominational business, usually in the city of Philadelphia where the church was strongest. During this time numerous Administrative and Executive committees were created. Overall, these committees had a significant amount of power within the church as a whole for each legislated ecclesiastical policy, established standards of intellectual conformity, and allocated denominational resources. Therefore while demographic size and financial status is important for understanding variations in church structure, whether or not a presbytery's delegates sat on these administrative or executive councils had a direct impact on that presbytery's ability to influence the denominational at the national level.

For example, an important committee created by the General Assembly during the early 19th century was the Board of Education. This council set educational policy for most of the church and distributed funds to various institutions. Another council that was extremely powerful was the Judicial Committee which made decisions in various matters of discipline, organizational procedure, and intellectual conformity. Assembly councils like the Board of Education or Judicial Committee then are critically important when attempting to explain how and why particular sections of the Presbyterian Church were first exposed to, and eventually adopted, Samuel Hopkins' innovations because it was precisely these committeemen who managed and controlled many of the disciplinary or doctrinal heresy investigations that took place. Moreover, as already mentioned in the Introduction of this project, a detailed study of

Assembly delegates also provides a convenient way to map or analyze Rogerian "opinion leaders" within the church, thus leading to a better understanding of relational centrality and structure.[18] For this reason, a running total of each presbytery's annual committee appointments in the General Assembly was the third metric to be tested. The goal then was to add the appointment sums to the demographic and charitable giving totals and develop a three dimensional picture of how Presbyterian power was structured.

Collecting and Testing the Data

Gathering the population and charitable giving data was relatively straight forward. At the end of the minutes for each General Assembly is an appendix which records this information.[19] Consequently all one need do is input the data into a spreadsheet and immediately it is ready for a Factor Analysis. Collecting the Assembly appointments, however, is more complicated. The appointments themselves appear in the minutes chronologically within the meeting narratives, as they were filled during the course of the proceedings. This makes recording difficult because the entire record must be carefully combed for each year. To date, six years have been entered into a series of Excel spreadsheets which catalog every appointment and elected position in the General Assembly for the years 1815/1816, 1825/1826, and 1835/1836. Sampling each decade in pairs was preferable to chronicling every year between 1810 and 1837 because of the natural constraints and limitations imposed on the project.

[18] See pages 26-28.
[19] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive*.

Moreover, the data itself has been restricted only to those delegate appointments which can be directly linked to a corresponding presbytery. This then excludes ambiguous appointments e.g. “Mr. Smith’s appointment to the Judicial Committee” when multiple delegates with the name Smith were present. It also eliminates presbytery elders for while they would certainly be helpful for the study, it was deemed necessary to categorically exclude them because there was no consistent way of tracking their presbytery affiliation from year to year. On the other hand minister affiliations were possible to trace because regular church registers were maintained for the clergy during this period.

Figure 1 is an example of the database for the year 1825. The first 25 names from the Presbytery of New Brunswick (Princeton) are illustrated. Here, column A records whether or not a particular individual served as an Assembly delegate in 1826. Column B records if subjects were delegates in 1825. The most important column, column C, records delegate names. Biographical information is recorded in column D. This usually was a simple post-office address. Column E records the Presbytery that the individual was associated with in the year of interest and columns F and G are page numbers in the minutes where the subject and their presbytery information can be found or deduced. Appointments begin on column H and appear in pairs; the leftmost being the appointment and the rightmost being the page number of the minute where the appointment can be found. These appointment pairs extend for as long as necessary in order for the individual with the most cumulative appointments to be recorded. In 1825, this individual was Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely from the Presbytery of Philadelphia who had 11 appointments in a single year.

To streamline the process of creating new yearly spreadsheets, appointments were categorized into two categories.[20] The first set (which extends from the page citation columns F and G) is composed of termed executive committee appointments that stretch across multiple years. For example, the Board of Directors for Princeton Theological Seminary was typically a 3 year position. Thus, being elected to the Board in 1825 would not only constitute an appointment point for that delegate's presbytery in 1825, but would also provide a point in 1826 and 1827. The second category of committee appointments were those strictly made within and for the General Assembly of that year. Examples include the committees that examined each synod's yearly minutes, the committee of Bills and Overtures (which organized what and what is not brought to the Assembly's attention), or the various committees that counted election ballots for legislative decisions or executive boards. These committees typically lasted only for the length of the current Assembly and were not renewed from year to year. Within the database itself, particular attention was also paid to who was and who was not physically present at the Assembly. This directly affected appointments in that only sitting members could be appointed to committee positions. However, for executive boards and interdenominational ambassadors, men could be elected in absentia.

If certain prominent members of a presbytery were not physically present, died, or moved from one presbytery to another, the presbytery count could be dramatically affected from year to year, especially if that individual was particularly well connected. One such example is the Presbytery of Carlisle which averaged around 15 appointments in the 1820s but

[20] The reason appointments were divided is when a spreadsheet is made for a new year, the name and presbytery information from the preceding year is copied and pasted into the sheet. With the appointments that extend beyond a single year (like termed appointments), they can more be easily included if clustered together.

dropped to 1 appointment in 1836. For this reason geographic distance often played an important role in determining appointments because presbyteries farther away were less capable of sending delegates. Likewise, presbyteries close to more prominent presbyteries had a tendency to draw talented and prestigious men away from the hinterland and middle-ground areas, causing a brain drain of weaker presbyteries.

Initially, the database began with the year 1826 but grew considerably as each year was added. This resulted in well over 2,000 entries but not 2,000 appointments. The reason for this stems primarily from how stratified the Presbyterian Church was at the time for though there may be around 1,000 ordained ministers in the church for a particular year, few had the level of social influence and capital necessary to receive an appointment within the General Assembly. Of the 2,000 names in the database, only approximately a third received appointments at all, and only about ten percent were regularly appointed to Assembly positions from year to year.

Once the appointment totals were thus assembled, the metric pair totals were then averaged by their corresponding decade (1810s, 20s, and 30s). From here Factor Scores were calculated of the averages and their statistical reliability was assessed. Of particular concern were the three metric's capacity to measure the project's latent variable—the comparative ability of a single presbytery to influence the overall denomination. This was done rather easily in a statistical software program developed by IBM called "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences." For the purposes of this project there were three thresholds of statistical reliability that the aforementioned metrics needed to adequately satisfy.

The first is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and determines whether the sample size for a data set is large enough and if the proportion of variance among

the variables is caused by underlying factors. The suggested threshold for this score is anywhere between 1 and .5, with values closer to 1 being more desirable. The second reliability measure is Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and tests the Null Hypothesis; in other words whether the metrics or variables in the data are uncorrelated. Here a low score is preferable, meaning that the variables do in fact relate with one another and should be utilized. Conversely if they are uncorrelated then they are useless. Anything from .000 to .05 is considered by most statisticians to be acceptable. The third statistical test is the level of total variance explained or "Initial Eigenvalues." This measures the variance or scatter among the metrics and indicates how many latent variables are influencing the data. Because this project hypothesizes that only one factor (or latent variable) is affecting presbytery population, charitable giving, and Assembly appointments—the power a presbytery has in influencing his neighbors—there needed to be considerable separation between the single factor Eigenvalue and the second and third Egienvaules. In this case there are three Eigenvalues because the procedure is testing whether three latent variables are influencing the three metrics independently of one another (or if the three variables have their own separate factors). Ideally there should be only one factor affecting all three metrics. This would be indicated by a single factor Eigenvalue greater than 1, with second and third Eigenvalues each less than one. The greater the difference between the single Eigenvalue and the others, the stronger a single latent variable is in affecting data outcomes. For all three of these tests, the measurement of presbytery population size, charitable giving, and Assembly appointments all fell within acceptable statistical parameters.[21]

[21] The metrics were tested by decade. The KMO scores for the 1810s, 20s, and 30s were as follows: .656, .642, and

Results

With the three variables having passed their reliability assessments, the individual Factor Scores for each presbytery were then analyzed and grouped into three categories: Central/Core, Semiperipheral, and Peripheral.[22] To separate the statistical types any presbytery score falling below zero standard deviations from the general mean was considered Peripheral. Separating the Central and Semiperipheral categories, meanwhile, was more subjective and depended on the specific dispersal and clustering of data.

Returning then to the Erie Canal and its effect on New York Presbyterianism, it is clear from the factor scores of Figure 2 that the presbyteries which received the greatest number of Congregationalists during the 1810s were firmly within the lower stratum of the church's organizational hierarchy—Oneida ranking 19th, Geneva 27th, and Cayuga 29th. Conversely, after the successive sections of the canal were completed during the early 1820s (Figure 3), one notices a significant rank increase for those presbyteries specifically along the canal route—Oneida ranking 15th, Cayuga 11th, and Geneva 14th. This disparity becomes even more considerable in light of the fact that the church doubled in presbyteries during this time and the first threshold presbytery that fell below zero standard deviations from the mean was 27th in standing during the 1820s, not 16th as it was in the 1810s. Thus with more competition, the canal presbyteries continued to rise in prominence. Indeed even the Presbytery of Albany,

---

.697. Meanwhile, the score for Bartlett's test was .000 for the 1810s, 20s, and 30s. Finally the Eigenvalues for the 1810s were: single factor influence 2.326, double factor .494, and triple factor .180. For the 1820s the scores were 2.083, .613, and .304 respectively. For the 1830s the values were 2.208, .491, and .301; Tarek M. Sobh, *Advances in Computer and Information Sciences and Engineering* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 231-232; Amran Rasli, *Data Analysis and Interpretation: A Handbook for Postgraduate Social Scientists* (Skudai: Penerbit UTM, 2006), 15-21; www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/output/factor1.htm.

[22] A helpful and straightforward video tutorial, by University of Sussex Professor Andy Field, on how to do Factor Analysis in SPSS can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWP9OEoaNnE

which did not receive quite as many Congregationalists as its neighbors, but was directly between the canal and the Hudson River, also rose in prominence between the 1810s and 1820s—moving from 11th in the nation to 4th.

Conversely, similar increases in denominational standing for western presbyteries in other parts of the United States were not as dramatic. This becomes surprisingly clear when examining the second primary front of Plan of Union Presbyterianism—northern Ohio. Unlike the Plan of Union in upstate New York, Ohio Congregationalists united with their Presbyterian neighbors to form entirely new ecclesiastical judicatories. This they did instead of attaching to preexisting bodies as the Middle Association or Ontario Association had done in 1809 and 1813. The first of such organizations was the Presbytery of Grand River which formed in 1814 and included approximately every Presbyterian and Congregational church on Ohio's Western Reserve—with the exception of a few churches on its southeastern corner near Pennsylvania. The second Plan of Union presbytery to form in this area was the Presbytery of Portage four years later after congregations near Cleveland and Portage County were divided from Grand River in 1818. Together these presbyteries represented virtually all of Union Presbyterianism in the State of Ohio. Like its New York counterparts during the 1810s, Grand River was firmly marginal at this time, ranking 34th for the decade. However, in contrast to the canal presbyteries of New York during the 1820s, Grand River actually fell or declined in proportional national influence, ranking 38th despite continuing western settlement into the State.[23]

[23] Although comparing Portage's ranking between the 1810s and 20s would not be entirely helpful on account of its rather late genesis in 1818, the presbytery's ranking for the 1820s was similarly low, resting at 61st for the decade. William S. Kennedy, *The Plan of Union: Or a History of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches of the Western Reserve* (Hudson: Pentagon Steam Press, 1856), 160-180.

Meanwhile, Presbyterianism in western Virginia experienced similar setbacks. Here Hopkinsian doctrinal innovations developed differently than in New York and Ohio because there was relatively little Congregational presence to assist with New Divinity diffusion. Nevertheless, such diffusion did happen, only on a much smaller scale as western radicals like Rev. Hezekiah Balch began agitating for more Arminian versions of the Confession of Faith. Balch, a Presbyterian from North Carolina, began dabbling in Hopkinsian innovations as early as 1795 following an extended tour of New England. Predictably, his actions almost immediately caused controversy among Virginian traditionalists. Unable to control Balch and his supporters, the conservatives of Balch's home presbytery of Abingdon left the body and formed their own "independent" presbytery in protest.[24]

Two years later in 1797, the synod to which Abingdon was a member, the Synod of the Carolinas, attempted to address the issue by convincing the conservatives to return after it was agreed that Balch and his churches would separate from Abingdon and form an entirely new presbytery, one that they hoped would effectively quarantine the innovations in the wilderness of Tennessee. This new body was ironically named Union Presbytery. The situation, however, continued to deteriorate as Balch and company persisted in promoting this modified version of Calvinism. A year later the Synod appealed to the General Assembly for help in 1798. Thus, supported by the more centrally located conservatives in Philadelphia, New York, and New Jersey, Balch was declared in error and was promptly suspended from the ministry; a situation very much like that of Barnes 30 years later. Unlike Barnes, however, Rev. Balch was easily able to ignore the ruling and continued to minister due to the geographic and relational distance he

[24] Ernest T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South, vol. 1: 1607-1861* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), 353-354.

enjoyed on the far periphery of the church in the wilderness of late 18th century Tennessee.[25] For the next twenty years, Abingdon's status on the frontier would deteriorate much like its neighbor's in Ohio as it ranked 41st in the 1810s and 71st in the 1820s.

Just as presbyteries in Ohio and the Southwest were on the decline between 1810 and 1829, so too were those in Kentucky and the Southeast. The presbyteries of Orange, Fayetteville, Concord, and Harmony (North and South Carolina) all experienced institutional decline within the denomination, falling from 16th to 18th for Orange, 8th to 52nd for Fayetteville, 31st to 45th for Concord, and 25th to 74th for Harmony. Likewise the presbyteries of Muhlenburg and Transylvania in southeastern Kentucky dropped dramatically from 38th to 75thth and 21st to 42nd between the 1810s and 20s (Table 3).

With remarkable decay in most of the south and southwestern hinterland, it is important to note where there was stability. This constancy predictably emanated from the most central and most powerful presbyteries within the denomination. Organized in 1706, the Presbytery of Philadelphia was the oldest and most powerful local body in the church. Throughout the 1810s and 20s it ranked 1st in terms of executive and administrative appointments, population, and charitable giving.[26] Ranking 3rd was the Presbytery of Jersey in the 1810s, while during the 1820s it dropped in status after being divided in half and renamed—Elizabethtown 9th and Newark 6th—it nevertheless remained fixed in the upper echelon of denominational power. Ranking 2nd in the 1810s was the Presbytery of New York

[25] Ibid; E.H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1864), 366-367.

[26] Calling the first presbytery in the United States the "Presbytery of Philadelphia" is somewhat of a misnomer seeing that ministers from across the colonies were initially its members. Nevertheless, when the presbytery did meet it was almost always in Philadelphia despite the fact that ministers from as far away as New England participated.

which remained fairly stable in the 1820s ranking 3rd. Meanwhile, the Presbytery of New Brunswick—home to Princeton College and later Princeton Theological Seminary—ranked 4th both in the 1810s and 2nd in the 1820s, while the Presbytery of Ohio (Pittsburgh) fell slightly from 5th to 8th (Tables 3 and 4; Figures 2 and 3).[27]

Yet with all this denominational stability and degradation, there was, to be sure, growth outside the State of New York. For example, Hezekiah Balch's Union Presbytery catapulted from ranking 40th in the 1810s to 19th in the 1820s. Also the Presbytery of Carlisle (south-eastern Pennsylvania) rose from 13th to 5th in the nation, as did the Presbytery of West Lexington in Kentucky (30th to 17th). Nevertheless, when this growth is compared to that of New York presbyteries along the canal route, it quickly becomes clear that virtually any increase in status outside the canal corridor was scattered and geographically isolated. Indeed this becomes apparent after closely examining the neighbors of these growing presbyteries. Returning then to Union Presbytery, it neighbored Abingdon, West Tennessee, Concord, and Transylvania; all of which experienced decline or stagnation. Finally Washington (south of Pittsburgh), like Union, represented a respectable pocket of growth (but was itself isolated as its surrounding presbyteries—Ohio (Pittsburgh), Redstone, and Winchester—fell in their denominational standings: Ohio moving from 5th to 8th, Redstone from 17th to 20th, and Winchester from 7th to 48th. Finally, the Presbytery of Carlisle, although it's growth was significant, was surrounded by Philadelphia which experienced no change, and Baltimore, which fell significantly from 18th to 43rd (Tables 3 and 4). In this way one can see that upstate New York stands out rather conspicuously within the denomination as persistent institutional growth uniformly affected

[27] Guy S. Klett, *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church In America: 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1976), 1-29; Gillett, vol. 1, 18-82.

nearly every presbytery within the canal corridor, while most outside it either remained where they were or fell in respective standing. In fact this can be seen well into the 1830s as newly created presbyteries along the canal sustained their growth rate while others did not, in effect suggesting that the waterway directly and immediately rose the denominational influence of those formally marginal presbyteries along the corridor just as they were becoming inundated with doctrinal innovation by Plan of Union Congregational migration.[28]

Confirming the Results

Because these findings have potentially enormous implications for the ultimate development of American Calvinism in the antebellum period, the aforementioned data was then verified with two additional methodological processes in order to confirm the overall Presbyterian social structure discovered by the Factor Analysis. The first way this was tested was by developing a similar statistical methodology to that of Factor Analysis which analyzes latent variables, but does so using an entirely different mathematical procedure. As opposed to *weighing* the impact of the individual metrics, as Factor Analysis does, this second approach *evenly* standardizes or normalizes the data by analyzing each datum relative to its position from its set's aggregate mean.[29] Like with Factor Analysis, the distance from that mean is measured in standard deviations (the average level of variance or scatter from a mean). With these two

[28] For example, the presbyteries of Rochester and Buffalo—formed in 1819 and 1823—rose from an overall denominational ranking of 40th and 69th in the 1820s, to 18th and 35th in the 1830s. In similar fashion, the Presbytery of New York, which had always been trailing the Presbytery of Philadelphia for top position in the denomination, finally surpassed it, rising from 3rd in the 1820s, to 1st in the 1830s. Meanwhile, such presbyteries as Grand River, Abingdon, Union, Redstone, Carlisle, and New Brunswick all fell in influence: Grand River 38th to 76th, Abingdon 71th to 119th, Union 19th to 48th, Redstone 20th to 26th, Carlisle 5th to 24th, and New Brunswick 2nd to 9th. For more information on Rochester and Buffalo see James H. Hotchkin, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1848), 107; Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, vol. 2, 265 .

[29] For a full discussion of normalization see chapter 4 and 7 of Roxy Peck, Chris Olsen, and Jay Devore, *Introduction to Statistics and Data Analysis 4th ed.* (Boston: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning, 2012).

values the metrics were then scored separately according to the formula: $z=(x-\mu)/\sigma$ where z equals a datum's final standardized score—a "Z-Score." Ultimately, this allows measurements from a wide range of sources to be compared on the same footing for comparative or integrative purposes.

While standard scoring is commonly used within the fields of Education, Economics, or Political Science, it is rarely used among historians. Nevertheless, to begin this 'Tripartite Standardization Analysis,' a running total of presbytery population size and charitable giving was calculated for the years 1810-1836. Next, committee appointments were likewise recorded in pairs for the 1810s, 20s, and 30s (1815/16, 1825/26, 1835/36).[30] Once this was completed the metric data (population, giving, appointments) for each presbytery was also averaged, like the factoring approach, by decade to compensate for anomalies. This, again, was particularly important for charitable giving. The averages were then Z-Scored per decade. Finally, the values were combined by averaging the three metric decade Z-Scores for each presbytery, producing a single score per presbytery, per decade. Based on these values the presbyteries could then be ranked either by decade—to examine change over time—or averaged yet again for an overall assessment of a presbytery's relative standing for the thirty year time period (Figure 7). After these computations were completed the data was organized into the same three categories as the Factor Analysis (core, semiperipheral, and peripheral) with any presbytery score under zero standard deviations falling into the "peripheral" category.

[30] Again, appointments were not recorded comprehensively like the population and financial figures were because this information had to be meticulously combed from the minute narratives.

Happily, the results of this process very nearly matched those of the Factor Analysis (Tables 3-5). For instance in both approaches the Presbytery of Philadelphia ranked 1st during the 1810s and 20s, while New York ranked 1st in the 1830s. More importantly, however, the growth of the canal presbyteries identified by the Tripartite Method was similar to that identified by the Factor Analysis. Under the Tripartite approach the presbyteries of Oneida, Geneva, and Cayuga were sufficiently marginal in the 1810s and fell well below zero standard deviations, ranking 20th, 23rd, and 32nd respectively. For the 1820s post-canal boom, a sharp increase occurred that was slightly greater than the one evidenced by the Factor Analysis, with Oneida ranking 9th, Geneva ranking 15th, and Cayuga ranking 12th. Moreover, Albany also rose sharply from 8th to 3rd; while New Brunswick (Princeton) remained relatively stable (4th to 5th). Regarding areas of decline, many of the same presbyteries fell in ranking for the Tripartite method as the Factor Analysis. This can be seen of Ohio, Orange, Fayetteville, Grand River, Abingdon, and Baltimore (Table 5). There were differences to be sure. Redstone for example did not decline in the Tripartite method as it did in the Factor Analysis but instead remained fixed at 17th in standing. The same was true for Carlisle at 6th for both decades. Meanwhile, West Lexington declined in the Tripartite study from 31st to 41st while according to the Factor Analysis it rose in status. Nevertheless, beyond a handful of exceptions the results were extremely similar and ultimately confirmed the same denominational power structure.

The second methodological process used to verify the Factor and Tripartite scorings was a little different and is not originally intended to analyze latent variables but, regardless, proved helpful in identifying where power did and did not reside within the Presbyterian Church. Here the purpose was not so much to confirm the Factor and Tripartite scores themselves, but to

better understand the relational architecture of the Assembly delegates and further validate the appointment total metric used in both approaches. Using Social Network Analysis, a record of overlapping General Assembly committee appointments was complied for the years 1815 and 1825. The rationale here was that just as the sum total of appointments, population size, and wealth all measure different aspects or dimensions of a presbytery's capacity to exert influence on the church, so too do the elite networks that formed as a result of the General Assembly's deliberations. Essentially, these network rankings were created by calculating the aggregate "degree" of each presbytery; or total number of links to other individuals each committee appointee had. A link was created by an overlapping appointment so if Delegate A served on the same committee as Delegate B, a link between the two was recorded and accordingly associated with their particular presbytery. This information was then processed and visualized using two social networking programs—NodeXL and Gephi.[31] Predictably, the elite network produced by the overlapping Assembly appointments was highly centralized with the ultraconservative Rev. Ashbel Green and the Presbytery of Philadelphia dominating the system. Additionally, it was discovered that there was a modest east-west dichotomy of individual delegates. An example of this can be seen in Figures 4 and 5.

Ultimately, there was extremely strong correlation between the rankings produced by the Assembly appointment totals and that of the Social Network Analysis. In fact the correlation was so strong that the Spearman Coefficient for the 1825 General Assembly was .71 while the

[31] A full historical and methodological survey of Social Network Analysis can be obtained from Linton Freeman's *The Development of Social Network Analysis: A Study in the Sociology of Science* (Vancouver: Empirical Press, 2004).

1815 Assembly was .87.[32] This can also be illustrated another way by referring to specific examples. For instance, both the network degree ranking and the appointment total ranking placed the Presbytery of Philadelphia in the top most position for 1815 and 1825, while the Presbytery of New Brunswick ranked 2nd in each method for both years. The rankings for the Presbytery of New York, meanwhile, were very similar as the total degree for the Presbytery was 3rd in both years, while the appointment total was 4th in both years. Similar results were attained for those presbyteries along the canal. Oneida ranked 14th with both methodologies in 1815, while Geneva ranked 13th in the network and 19th in the appointment total analysis for 1815. Those outside the canal corridor held similar correspondence with the appointment totals. For the year 1815, Fayetteville ranked 22nd in the degree tally and 20th for the appointment total, while Washington ranked 17th and 15th, and Miami (Ohio) 28th and 28th. Some examples for 1825 include 35th and 33th for Transylvania, 7th and 5th for Carlisle, 27th and 30th for Grand River, and 12th and 12th for North River (southern New York State-Hudson River).

The biggest surprise, however, was that in a small number of instances one or two presbyteries had notable discrepancies, suggesting that while a presbytery may have proportionally received either fewer or more appointments in the General Assembly than their degree totals, those individuals that were appointed were either very well connected across the church's various presbyteries, or were comparatively isolated from the rest of the

[32] A coefficient of 1 denotes a perfect correlation while a coefficient of -1 denotes a perfectly negative correlation. This fact is especially important when assessing how best to conduct the Tripartite Standardization of the presbyteries because one could either use the degree totals or appointment totals when Z-Scoring for executive committees (the individual component of the analysis). The fact that both approaches correspond so well with one another suggests that either approach would produced very similar results. For a full discussion of Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient see Ronald Deep, *Probability and Statistics with Integrated Software Routines* (Burlington: Academic Press, 2006), 623-626.

denomination. These disparities were most pronounced as the network grew larger. Accordingly such cases of hyper connectedness in 1825 include: West Tennessee, Redstone, and Portage (8th in degree and 26th in appointment total for West Tennessee, 14th and 32nd for Redstone, and 28sth and 48th for Portage). Meanwhile, those examples of relative network isolation are Elizabethtown (New Jersey) and Londonderry (New Hampshire and Massachusetts)—each were 20th in degree and 9th in appointments; and 41st and 20th respectively.[33] Nevertheless, as a general trend for the network as a whole, those presbyteries that had the most appointments typically had the highest degree of network interconnectedness as evidenced by the correlation coefficient of the two metrics.

Conclusion

Broadly speaking, the high level of correlation between the Factor Analysis and the Tripartite Standardization Analysis confirms the overall skeletal architecture identified by this project: high levels of stratification with most presbyteries falling into the lower third (periphery category) of the denomination, while only a very small number ranked in the core or most central category. Together, the methodologies illustrate how the canal not only directly transformed the communities of upstate New York and the structure of 19th century Presbyterianism—by raising the influence and general standing of certain western presbyteries from a peripheral to more central position within the church—but how it did so in a region that was particularly salient to the introduction of doctrinal innovation.

[33] It should be further noted that Elizabethtown's isolation in the network analysis further supports the contention that Albert Barnes enjoyed intellectual freedom there, as opposed to Philadelphia, because of its relative structural distance from the primary power centers of the Church and their isomorphic pull.

This salience of course resulted from how the Plan of Union operated in New York as numerous Congregational churches, and often whole associations, entered western Presbyterianism in an attempt to confront the challenges of the frontier. Indeed, although the canal did not directly affect every western church within the denomination, it had a dramatic effect on those congregations and presbyteries directly within its vicinity—artificially accelerating their growth rate and economic base. These structural changes therefore had significant intellectual implications for North American Presbyterianism because not only did Plan of Union presbyteries in central and western New York make up over 15 percent of the entire denomination by the time the canal was finished, but much of that percentage became dramatically more influential after the completion of the waterway.[34]

Ultimately then, this increase in status, especially from a demographic and financial perspective, directly pulled most canal presbyteries up from the periphery of the church and firmly placed them in more semiperipheral positions of influence and power. Again, this middle status between the central and marginal elements of a network offers unique opportunities for intellectual and theological freedom. While these semiperipheral presbyteries were on the one hand better connected to denominational resources and communication channels than their peripheral counterparts, they were also able to enjoy a greater level of intellectual liberty due to their relative distance from the rationalization and isomorphic gravity of the central governing bodies. Therefore, while the Westminster Calvinism of the more central presbyteries remained the intellectual status quo of the denomination, the innovations within the hinterland

[34] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1825), 374.

and semiperipheral bodies of the Burned-over District were freely able to develop. Simultaneously, with the positional advantages these New York semiperipheral presbyteries enjoyed, the diffusion of New England inspired New School theology spread much more rapidly than if it had only been confined to the marginal sections of the network—as it was in Ohio and eastern Tennessee with radicals like Hezekiah Balch. In this way, the Plan of Union and the Erie Canal together facilitated the spread of Samuel Hopkins' New Divinity across the greater 19th century Presbyterian Church—transforming both Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the process.

Chapter 4: The Institutionalization of New School Presbyterianism

Introduction

In late June of 1826 the Rev. Dirck Cornelius Lansing anxiously pulled at his beard, doing all he could to keep himself composed. As he stood in the front doorway of his home, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, Lansing no doubt ran through his mental checklist, confirming all was prepared and ready: the bed sheets were clean, towels hung, floor swept. There was nothing left but to wait—and it was waiting that was the hardest to do. Consequently, a part of him hoped the weather would turn sour as it would help distract him for at least the next hour or so. Nothing like a good thunderstorm to take your mind off matters. Looking out across his front yard, however, the minister's head suddenly fell in disappointment, all was perfectly calm and agreeable; the wind was light, the air sweet, no darkness to speak of. Indeed, all Lansing could do now was relax, and perhaps reflect, reflect on his opportunity to host arguably the most high profile and controversial person in the entire State of New York—Charles Grandison Finney.

Reflecting on his first meeting with the revivalist earlier that spring, Lansing recalled how Finney's "new measures" were quickly turning towns along the Erie Canal into virtual cauldrons of social upheaval as the expanding Middle-Class attempted to enforce some measure of proper social order.[1] To make matters worse the "Canal Boom" as it was called, was bringing with it an overwhelming number of people who where wholly unaccustomed to the informality that was characteristic of religious life in the West. In the town of Utica specifically, the population had nearly doubled between 1820 and 1825 and by the time that Finney finally

[1] Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978) 55-61.

finished in the city (after almost three months of activity) 500 new proselytes would be left in the wake of his revival fire. It was utterly amazing.[2]

Upon learning about this great move of the Spirit, Lansing had traveled from his home in Auburn, 80 miles east to Utica, hoping to witness the outpouring first hand before it ended. Indeed Lansing was something of a revivalist himself. At the beginning of his career a revival broke out in 1807 as he ministered to his congregation in the frontier village of Onondaga. Following Lansing's labors and three years of spiritual enthusiasm, the church had increased from 20 to 90 communicants. Lighting then struck twice for the young preacher after accepting a call from a Presbyterian congregation in the village of Auburn. Arriving in March of 1817, Lansing preached a dedication sermon from 1 Kings 8:1-27, comparing the congregation's newly erected church edifice to Solomon's Temple. Opening with a brief criticism of American Desists, the young minister proceeded to invite the Shekinah glory of God to settle within the four walls of the new building—just as it did for Israel nearly three thousand years before.[3] This service then led to Lansing's second revival experience later that May where the congregation at Auburn suddenly ballooned from around 14 members to nearly 200 by early August and 246 by the end of the year.[4]

---

[2] Presbytery of Oneida, *A Narrative of the Revival of Religion, in the County of Oneida, Particularly in the Bounds of the Presbytery of Oneida, in the Year 1826* (Utica: Hastings and Tracy, 1826), 23-24; Charles G. Finney, *The Original Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*, ed. Garth M. Rosell and Richard A.G. Dupis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 156; Noble E. Whitford, *History of the Canal System of the State of New York: Supplement to the Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York*, vol. 1 (Albany: Brandow Printing, 1906), 914; Keith J. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 80, 89-90.

[3] Dirck C. Lansing, *A Sermon Preached March 6, 1817 at the Dedication of the New Presbyterian Church in the Village of Auburn* (Auburn: H. C. Southwick, 1817), 7-16.

[4] Ibid., 3; James H. Hotchkin, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1848), 327, 124, 128; Charles Hawley, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church, Auburn, N.Y.* (Auburn: Dennis Brothers & Company, 1869), 33.

These experiences then likely fed Lansing's building anticipation as he waited for the revivalist to appear. Would revival bless him a third time? Would Auburn become the center of a nation-wide, perhaps even global, phenomenon? Would Finney be the one to deliver it or would the Spirit pass him over? Fortunately, Lansing would soon find out because without warning Lansing's thoughts ground to a halt as he suddenly caught sight of the evangelist cresting the hill toward his home. Flanked by his wife, and striding like a Spanish conquistador, Finney appeared as the paragon of frontier Christianity—bold, confident, with a fire in his eyes. In fact one can almost picture the scene as the pastor leapt from the front porch and walked out to greet his guests, smiling as he led them inside, laughing as they exchanged pleasantries and shared testimonies over a meal. In weeks that followed, unprecedented growth did come—yet at a cost—for Finney also brought with him explosive division and upheaval. Apparently the problem lay with Auburn's newly found canal prosperity. It had been a year now since the Erie waterway had been completed and unbeknownst to even Lansing himself, an invisible barrier stood between the minister's congregation and the Holy Spirit.[5]

While Auburn's post-canal transformation was not the greatest in the State, it was nevertheless impressive. Between 1820 and 1825 the village grew by almost 1,000 inhabitants. Located approximately ten miles south of the canal, Auburn did not have the same geographic proximity to the waterway as Albany, Utica, Rome, Syracuse, or Rochester but was, regardless, firmly within the canal corridor, auspiciously situated along the banks of the Owasco River which ran northward into the artificial channel. Through its access to Erie commerce, Auburn quickly developed from a frontier village to a modern town of contemporary commerce and

[5] Finney, 157, 162.

progressive social engineering. The burgeoning community was also fully in line with all the intellectual and material fashions of the day. First and foremost was of course the newly constructed State prison, built along the north bank of the Owasco in 1816. This prison employed a contemporary, evangelical, approach to penal correction and management. Developed in conjunction with Congregationalist clergyman Louis Dwight, Auburn officials sought to create a penitentiary environment that emphasized penitent introspection, hard work, and spiritual development. As such, the "Auburn System" regulated inmate activity with silent communal labor in the day, and solitary confinement at night; a program that was intended to ultimately cultivate self-refection and repentance.[6]

Yet beyond this budding interest in social reform, Auburn was developing politically and physically. By 1818 the town had two opposing political newspapers in circulation—the *Western Federalist* and the *Cayuga Patriot*. Concurrently, local grassroots organizations were also beginning to emerge with the formation of the Agricultural Association of Cayuga County that same year. In 1817 the town's first cotton mill began production which then led to a town market in 1820. In 1824 manufacturing and enterprise continued to grow with the town's first stone mill grinding away in 1824 and the first bank vault opening in 1825. In the meantime, Auburn's streets were straightened, graded, and macadamized, while shade trees were planted wherever possible. Reminiscing over this burst of 19th century progress, one of the town's

[6] Thomas F. Gordon, *Gazetteer of the State of New York: Comprehending Its Colonial History, General Geography, Geology, and Internal Improvements* (Philadelphia: T. K. & P.G. Collins, 1836), 378; Elliot G. Storke and James H. Smith, *History of Cayuga County, New York: With Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Syracuse: D. Mason & Company, 1879), 149, 154-155; David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), 79-102; Jennifer Graber, *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons & Religion in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 74-75.

lifelong inhabitants and first historians recalled that in the years directly following the completion of the canal:

> there was scarcely any limit to the expenditure for public or private improvements, so, for several years before that of 1837, the expenditures for buildings, street and other improvements, and in the purchase of real estate, had been on the most extravagant scale. Everyone believed himself rich, or at least, that he would soon be so. Money was abundant, easily obtained, and very liberally used.[7]

Accordingly, with the rapid rise of Auburn's fortunes, some began to forget their humble beginnings and became perhaps a little too preoccupied with social status and material prosperity. As Finney saw it such was certainly the case for Lansing's Presbyterian parishioners. To the evangelist's surprise, however, the catalyst for Auburn's change of heart did not so much come from him as it did from Rev. Lansing. According to the evangelist's memoirs, the incident took place soon after he arrived in Auburn. As usual, Finney proceeded gently Sunday morning; his voice almost soft, probing the congregation's current attitude and spiritual state. He spoke on what he perceived was a profound concern among the parishioners for refinement, fashion, and material status. The message was simple and to the point yet afterward little happened, the church remained immoveable and frankly unimpressed. Finney then called upon Lansing to address the congregation. As the pastor stood before his flock, he thought to himself for a moment and instead of immediately engaging in prayer to end the service, made a short but very earnest address to the church, confirming everything the evangelist had said. Unannounced, a man shot to his feet with black smoke billowing from his ears and exclaimed that he did not believe one word of it, especially in light of the fact that Lansing himself was

[7] Henry Hall, *The History of Auburn* (Auburn: Dennis Bros. & Company, 1869), 157-160; Storke and Smith, 147-149, 250; Benjamin B. Snow, Charles F. Rattigan, and Willis J. Beecher, eds., *History of Cayuga County New York* (Auburn: Cayuga County Historical Society, 1908), 19, 29-32.

presently wearing a ruffled shirt and a gold ring on his little finger. Meanwhile—as the man pointed out—Lansing's wife and daughters were likewise arrayed in all the latest fashions from New York City. Immediately tension slammed upon the assembly like an iron hammer. Neither Lansing nor Finney could reply, both were paralyzed as sweat began to bead down their minister's spine and Finney stood uncharacteristically silent. Then, to everyone's shock and perhaps horror, Lansing threw himself pathetically across the side of the pulpit and began to sob.[8]

Following this scandalous display, the congregation almost universally dropped their heads in shame, overcome by the conviction that perhaps the privilege and refinements of their canal boom were enticing them away from the Lord. Not long afterward, Lansing led his church in an act of public confession and repentance. No longer would they allow themselves to be distracted from Kingdom values by the allure of high fashion and material pretense. Unfortunately, several "wealthy" men took offense at the renunciation and quickly decided to formally break from the congregation, requesting that the Presbytery of Cayuga recognize them as the 2nd Presbyterian Church of Auburn. Among the reasons for this separation the protesters insisted that:

> it would, under present circumstances, conduce to the advancement of the Presbyterian interests, and to the promotion of real and genuine religion; and that in consequence of dissatisfaction that had arise among many on account of certain measures adopted to promote revivals of religion, a new and separate organization would be desirable.[9]

---

[8] Finney, 162-163; Samuel M. Hopkins, *In Memoriam: Dirck C. Lansing, D.D.* (Auburn: Knapp, Peck & Thomson, 1883), 8-10.

[9] Henry Fowler, *History of the Church of Christ in Auburn, a Discourse Preached at the First Presbyterian Church, Thanksgiving Day, November 28th, 1867, Containing a Review of the Planting and Growth of All the Denominations in the City and of the Theological Seminary* (New York: Charles Scribner & Company, n.d.), 16-18; Storke and Smith, 205; Finney, 162-163; Hotchkin, 345-346.

In addition to this public declaration of repentance, other manifestations of social anxiety surfaced as well. For example, one prominent Auburn man, having been reportedly invited to attend a service at Lansing's church during that very revival summer of 1826, responded violently to the request by thrusting a fist into his pocket—pulling out a handful of silver dollars—and proclaimed: "These are my gods!" Apparently hours later the man was found in Lansing's church, flat upon the floor, and did not leave until midnight. This phenomenon, however, was not merely confined to Auburn for in the city of Rome, Finney encountered a similar conviction where in the Presbyterian Church of Rev. Moses Gillett, a profound guilt swept through, even prompting Mrs. Gillett to renounce her fondness for dress and material excess.[10]

Why the above communities responded in this way to their newly found canal prosperity is unclear. Often times an empirical analysis of invisible social forces can be frustratingly slow and produce very little in tangible insight. What is certain, however, is that regardless of the spiritual or mystical impact of the canal boom—in a purely sociological sense—the region was at this point no longer cut off and isolated from the rest of the United States. Indeed, with an enormous amount of money flowing into western and central New York, much was flowing out as well, an exchange was taking place. This then had an influence on more than just the devotional status or personal piety of the canal congregations, but served to facilitate the spread of something far beyond the region. Referring again to the assessed value of commercial *exports specifically*, it is evident that sharp increases in the export of textiles, flour, lumber, iron, salt, alcohol, and meat coincided directly with the excavation of the canal,

[10] Fowler, 32; Finney, 140-141.

increasing from annual totals as low as 10 million in 1815, to aggregates as high as 35 million in 1825. This translated into over 85,000 tons of material traveling east in 1824, to over 400,000 traveling the same direction in 1834.[11] Similarly in an attempt to assess the growth of both commercial and passenger transit, one need only look at the total revenue collected for the waterway during various years. Directly after completion in 1826, toll revenue approximated to 700,000 dollars annually. Alternatively by 1835, that number doubled to $1,400,000 and again to $3,300,000 in 1847.[12]

With this sharp increase in passenger travel, the towns and villages of the Finger Lakes region that were once inaccessible to only the most adventurous of pioneers were now becoming thoroughly embedded within both the market and intellectual national economy. Thus, as cultural fashions like Rev. Lansing's ruffled shirt or pinky ring flowed from New York City west, theological innovations like the New Divinity flowed increasingly east. Yet as important as this material development was to the diffusion of Union Christianity, it does not tell the complete story. In fact an equally significant force was concurrently at work in the canal corridor, one that directly dictated the intellectual composition of this hinterland diffusion process—the founding of Auburn Theological Seminary and the formal institutionalization of Hopkinsian Calvinism in the American Presbyterian Church.

Opening its doors in October of 1821, Auburn Seminary emerged just after the middle section of the Erie Canal reached completion. Whether real-estate speculation and job growth made the establishment of Auburn fiscally possible or not is impossible to prove, yet the timing

[11] J.D.B. DeBow, ed., *Statistical View of the United States: Embracing Its Territory, Population-white, Free Colored, and slave-Moral and Social Condition, Industry, Property, and Revenue* (Washington, DC: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854), 180-183, 187-188; Whitford, 950-954.
[12] Noble E. Whitford, *History of the Canal System of the State of New York: Supplement to the Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York*, vol. 2 (Albany: Brandow Printing, 1906), 1064-1068.

of its founding, and the comparatively high level of fundraising it initially enjoyed, makes it extremely likely that the waterway had something to do with its genesis. On the surface Auburn was an unremarkable school for unknown frontier preachers. Unlike Princeton Seminary, it had no previous history and was not even sanctioned by the denomination's ruling elite. Yet the school was far more than a mere backwoods nest of western piety and very quickly became the de facto nerve center and headquarters of Hopkinsian Presbyterianism. The purpose then of this present chapter is to examine the circumstances leading up to Auburn's foundation, and explore the intellectual composition of its faculty members who facilitated the diffusion of New Divinity Theology through the education of students, their own published writings, and the professional or administrative relationships they maintained. Accordingly, a look back at the life of Rev. Lansing is necessary for not only was he significant as Auburn's first Professor of Sacred Rhetoric, but also because of his unusual interest in western institution building—a force without which Auburn never would have existed.

Dirck Cornelius Lansing and the Fight for Relevance

Tall, with coal-black hair, aristocratic in dress, and of Dutch patrician descent, Dirck C. Lansing is characterized by most who remembered him as a sparkling, dramatic, orator who carried himself with "an air of lofty courage and self confidence that made him dominate every congregation like a king of men."[13] Graduating from Yale College in 1804, Lansing was thoroughly a product of Union Calvinism, receiving his theological training from the Rev. Samuel Blatchford who at the time was both a member of the Presbyterian General Assembly and Congregational General Association of Connecticut. Founded by Lansing's own paternal

[13] Hopkins, 7.

grandfather, the town of Lansingburgh lay directly at the intersection of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. There Blatchford acted as minister for the United Congregations of Lansingburgh and Waterford: a blended collection of Presbyterians and Congregationalists that were united in ministry but separate in church government and eldership. Moving then to Lansingburgh after graduation, Lansing was instructed by Blatchford in the theology of New England's most eminent theologians—Samuel Hopkins, Joseph Bellamy, and Jonathan Edwards. Three years later, and likely resulting from Blatchford's contacts in the Presbyterian Church, Lansing set off on his own and was quickly ordained by the Presbytery of Geneva in 1807, making him pastor of the 1st Presbyterian Church of Onondaga, about nine miles southwest of modern day Syracuse. There Lansing enjoyed almost immediate success as a preacher and frontier revivalist, growing his home church from around 20 to 90 members in only 2 years. Additionally, these early accomplishments also led to the planting of another congregation about 7 miles east in Onondaga Hollow.[14]

With the mighty hand of Providence then firmly on the young preacher, Lansing found that his name was quickly becoming rather reputable as he continued to stir the Calvinist churches of the hinterland. Resulting from this rise in local notoriety, Lansing was approached by the trustees of Hamilton Oneida Academy, a small frontier school near Utica that needed his help to become a proper college—potentially the second such institution in upstate New York. Located in Clinton, New York, the trustees had almost everything they needed to earn accreditation from the State. All they lacked was a larger pool of support and sponsorship from

[14] Ibid., 13-15; Samuel Blatchford and Eliphalet W. Blatchford, *Blatchford Memorial II: A Genealogical Record of the Family of Rev. Samuel Blatchford, D.D., with Some Mention of Allied Families, Also Autobiographical Sketch of Rev. Dr. Blatchford from "The Blatchford Memorial"* (Chicago: Privately Printed, 1912), 38, 44-45; Hotchkin, 327; E.H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1864), 396; Snow, Rattigan, and Beecher, 180.

prominent citizens in the region, support Lansing was certainly willing to give. Accordingly, Lansing was officially made a trustee of the newly established Hamilton College by the New York Board of Regents on May 26, 1812.[15]

While it was certainly unknown to the young preacher at the time, Lansing's decision to participate in the creation of Hamilton College actually redirected the trajectory of his life. Before 1812 Lansing was well on his way to becoming an evangelical sensation, earning a reputation as a revivalist and dynamic orator that could with one glance of the eye, or one point of the finger, humble even the proudest of heart.[16] Yet after the formation of Hamilton College, Lansing's destiny changed dramatically as he soon discovered that institution building, not revival preaching, was what really seemed to satisfy.

No doubt reflecting on Hamilton's recent establishment, just three months later on August 18th 1812, Lansing walked into a meeting for the Presbytery of Cayuga, fully determined to do in his home town of Onondaga what the trustees of Hamilton had done 60 miles east in Clinton. Allied then with canal enthusiast and New York Assemblyman Joshua Foreman, that morning Lansing slowly stood to his feet, squared his shoulders, cleared his throat, and announced to the assembled councilmen his intention to found an academy in Onondaga. Yet Lansing's vision was no mere attempt at parroting Hamilton's institutional development. Instead, the academy he proposed would not only train young men in an eastern style liberal

[15] Franklin B. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History: June, 1792 to September, 1805*, vol. 5 (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1911), 676; Joseph Darling Ibbotson and Simon Newton Dexter North, *Documentary History of Hamilton College* (Clinton: Hamilton College Press, 1922), 107-111; The first institution of higher learning in upstate New York was Union College—which Blatchford was a trustee of—and was founded 90 miles east of Clinton in Schenectady during the 1790s.
[16] Hopkins, 7.

arts curriculum but also, and more importantly, supply the region with its first ever theological seminary.[17]

In response the Presbytery virtually swooned, their eyes and hearts filled to the brim with the sweat syrup of possibility:

> the Presbytery cheerfully states that they view such a theological institution as highly necessary to this portion of our country and calculate [such a venture to be] extensively useful to the establishment of gospel truth, and the building up of the kingdom of the Redeemer; and they do most cordially concur with the abovenamed gentlemen and their associates in soliciting the aid of those who love the cause of the great King of Zion; in furthering an object of such deep importance to the churches of Christ in this region; and (through the Divine blessing which we humbly implore) to generations yet unborn.[18]

Wasting no time at all, the Onondaga Academy at Onondaga Valley was subsequently established directly following the Presbytery meeting. Thus, Lansing had for himself an institution he could care for and father into a little Princeton of the West. Unfortunately, tragedy struck and Lansing took severely ill. Indeed, the disease was apparently so severe that the minister had to suspend not only his work with the fledgling academy, but his pastoral responsibilities as well. Retreating then to a quiet farm closer to the Hudson River, Lansing likely felt despondent and hopeless over his future prospects for not only was he unable to work, living off the charity of friends and family, but the fate of the Onondaga Academy was now securely in the hands of others. To make matters worse, whoever it was that was now in charge of the institution was busy shaping it into more a primary school than a theological seminary. Sick, powerless, and thoroughly depressed, Lansing began looking for some way to

[17] John Quincy Adams, *A History of Auburn Theological Seminary, 1818-1918* (Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918), 33-34; Adams places the meeting on the 12th but the actual minutes record the meeting on the 18th.
[18] PCUSA, "Manuscript Minutes of the Presbytery of Cayuga, vol. 1." VAULT BX 8958.C28 A3. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society (1811-1822), 42-44.

distract himself from the horrendous state of affairs and accordingly began to preach whenever his health allowed. Thus, for the next few years Lansing would minister as best he could, as often as he could, in and around the Saratoga County mineral springs. Yet amid all the disappointment and setback, the preacher refused to let the illness permanently enfeeble him and by 1816 his health began to slowly return. Added to this, numerous doors began opening as well, the most significant of which was a unanimous invitation to return west and pastor the Presbyterian Church of Auburn, New York that very same year.[19]

With his health fully restored and again ministering in the Finger Lakes region, Lansing's attention almost immediately returned to Onondaga Academy. The problem, however, was that his pastorship afforded him little opportunity to oversee, much less visit, the school 20 miles east in Onondaga. This reality no doubt accounts for the minister's change of direction and explains why he quickly initiated steps within the Presbytery of Cayuga to build yet another educational institution—one preferably closer to where he now lived that would educate aspiring clergymen for the frontier. Two years later Lansing's efforts finally began to produce tangible results when at a presbytery meeting held in Auburn on January 27th 1818, he was elected moderator and subsequently presented a resolution for the construction of a theological seminary somewhere within the bounds of the Synod of Geneva. To the minister's satisfaction the resolution was quickly adopted without incident, debate, or opposition.[20]

With the Presbytery now in official support of this second venture, Lansing's first obstacle was now behind him. Yet an important synod meeting lay directly ahead and while it

[19] Hopkins, 14; Adams, 34; Dexter, 676-677; Timothy Holmes, *Saratoga Springs, New York: A Brief History* (Charleston: The History Press, 2008), 17, 22-24; As early as the late 18th century, bathing in and drinking mineral water like that of Saratoga Springs was seen by many Americans and Europeans to have regenerative, healing, power.

[20] Adams, 36-38.

was unlikely that anyone would outright oppose the idea—the need for clergymen being far too great—it was certainly possible that someone would attempt to secure the actual location of the seminary for themselves, far from Auburn, as the idea proved to be extremely popular. Whether this occurred to the minister consciously or not is impossible to know and sadly for Lansing, the issue would not be resolved any anytime soon. Instead at the Synod meeting in Rochester, little was actually decided for the body had resolved to refer the entire matter to the Presbyterian General Assembly in an effort to secure their support.[21]

In retrospect, it is unclear precisely what the Synod expected to hear from the General Assembly. Did they want simple approval? Were they hoping the Assembly would finance the project? Did they expect the entire denomination to rally around them and create a Princeton of the West? At the time Princeton was the only official seminary for the Presbyterian Church and was under the direct supervision and support of the Assembly—specifically committeemen who primarily resided in and around the city of Philadelphia. This consequently placed control of denominational education in the hands of theological conservatives and likewise predisposed the construction of any subsequent institutions to be well within the influence of eastern elites. Predictably this created an immense burden for many of the western presbyteries, both in terms of their ability to support the institution materially, and their capacity to send prospective ministers for training. Yet such issues on the periphery mattered little to the more central presbyteries of eastern Pennsylvania, New York City, and New Jersey for while the West was certainly important theoretically, actually diverting resources in that direction was much harder to contemplate. In fact such a move would require an unprecedented institutional

[21] Ibid.

restructuring that few were prepared to seriously consider at the time. Accordingly, it comes as no surprise that when the Synod's question of building a seminary on the frontier was finally read before the Assembly on June 1st of 1818, the following was resolved:

> That the Assembly are not prepared at present to give any opinion or advice on the subject of the overture from the Synod of Geneva, which contemplates the establishment of an Academical and Theological Seminary, believing the said Synod are the best judges of what may be their duty in this important business.[22]

On the surface it is clear that benign neglect was the General Assembly's response of choice when it came to the prospect of a western Princeton. This was likely the result of two very real concerns. First, an institution expressly designed to support and strengthen the western periphery would almost surely create rival avenues of denominational power. The second was that such an organization would be extremely difficult to control so far away. This was unacceptable, especially if the East was expected to financially support the project. In fact, it must be remembered that the agitation Ezra Stiles Ely created in New York City during 1811 had not been fully resolved, nor had his warning regarding the spread of Hopkinsianism been completely forgotten by some of the more zealously orthodox.[23] With Ely's claims then still relatively fresh in the minds of many eastern conservatives, the action of the Assembly appears almost level-headed, especially when considering the fact that Ely himself was a sitting delegate at the 1818 Assembly, representing the Presbytery of Philadelphia.[24]

In this way one begins to understand the General Assembly's indifference to the request of Dirck Lansing and his hinterland upstarts. Indeed, why would a primarily eastern General

---

[22] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 686-687.
[23] Ezra Stiles Ely, *A Contrast Between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism* (New York: S. Whiting & Co., 1811), 278-279.
[24] PCUSA, *A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive,* 669; Whether Ely had by this point made his conversion to the New Divinity is not entirely clear.

Assembly, one with at least guarded suspicion of western heterodoxy, actively promote a rival institution? Conversely, in the eyes of the denomination's central presbyteries, benign neglect perhaps offered the best way to handle the situation for no one really expected anyone outside the core of the church, much less the rural yokels of Upstate New York, to successfully finance such a project on their own.

In any other location this would have proven to be a reasonable assessment, for how could the underdeveloped West ever match eastern economic power? Yet the Finger Lakes region was unlike any other and would not remain inconsequential for long. What the central elites of Philadelphia, New York City, and Princeton then failed to consider was the 40 foot wide, 4 foot deep, canal which at that very moment was inching its way from the Hudson River to Lake Erie—a canal that would in fact change the way Presbyterian denominational politics was played and give the West the economic muscle it needed to academically and institutionally challenge the Delaware River Valley.

Building in the Woods—Auburn Theological Seminary

Without doubt there was disappointment as the Synod's delegates returned with their heads hung low, reporting of the Assembly's indifference. Indeed, one is reminded of a similar attempt at securing the support of eastern centralized power when Lansing's friend and supporter Joshua Foreman traveled to Washington in order to secure the financial backing of President Jefferson for the Erie Canal back in 1809. Like with the General Assembly of 1818, those in authority balked at the idea of diverting resources to upstart frontier New Yorkers

whose ambitions appeared larger than their means or social station.[25] In response, however, Lansing and his allies were undaunted and their resolve only further stiffened to pursue the project—on their own if necessary.

As such, only a few days after news of the Assembly fiasco, an informal gathering was called later that June at Canandaigua by Lansing, David Higgins (now of Bath), James Hotchkin of Prattsburgh, and Henry Axtell of Geneva, (formally of Morristown, New Jersey). The purpose of this emergency summit was essentially to decide if moving forward was really possible, particularly if fundraising would become the exclusive responsibility of the Synod. While the minutes of this meeting are either not available or never recorded, it is clear that the men decided to proceed further with the project because another, more official, meeting was scheduled for August 5th at Auburn.[26]

In those days, and in this area of the county, any gathering over 50 people was considered large; churches of this number were considered extremely healthy and robust. As such when the 58 ministers and 45 elders gathered in Auburn from the surrounding countryside that warm August morning, it was evident that New York solidarity remained strong and that deferring to the edicts of the East was no longer acceptable. In addition to those assembled from the Synod of Geneva, there were also those from outside the area who likewise felt it was time that Upstate New York developed into a political, institutional, and spiritual stronghold. Among the most eminent were Henry Davis, D.D., President of Hamilton College, Rev. C. TenEyck of the Dutch Reformed Church, and representatives from several Congregational

[25] For more information see Peter L. Bernstein, *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 119, 124-125.
[26] Adams, 38, 41.

Associations. In this way the gathering was rather ecumenical as the creation of a theological seminary in the nation's Northwest could impact not just Presbyterians or Union Congregationalists, but any Christian denomination claiming membership in the Reformed tradition.[27]

Opening up this process to those outside the Synod, however, also had a rather negative effect as competing interests quickly began to vie with one another. If Lansing was worried back in February about someone hijacking his vision, the sudden participation of external forces only heightened the likelihood that others would reap what he had carefully sown. Interestingly enough, this threat did in fact materialize and ironically came from none other than Hamilton College and President Davis who, along with allies in the Synod of Geneva, probably saw Lansing's dream for an "Academic-Theological" school as potentially detrimental to the interests of Hamilton. For example, one supporter of Davis, the Rev. Miles P. Squier of the newly formed Presbytery of Niagara, argued that taking young men from the field and workshop, without the advantages of a college course, would fail to produce clergymen of sufficient quality for ministry. Let prerequisite instruction go to those better prepared and positioned, reasoned Davis and his supporters, and let theological training go where it too is better suited.[28]

Accordingly at this meeting in Auburn, the ultimate fate of Lansing's dream would eventually be decided and so for the morning of August 5th, 1818 Lansing and Davis faced off and attempted to maneuver the other into a position of defeat. The debated, however, could

[27] Adams, 41; Hotchkin, 479, 465.
[28]Hotchkin, 205; Miles P. Squier, *The Miscellaneous Writings of Miles P. Squier, D.D., Late Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Beloit College, Wisconsin*, ed. James R. Boyd (Geneva: R.L. Adams & Son, 1867), 23-24; Adams, 42.

only last for so long and after a rather protracted contest it was Davis and his allies who eventually emerged victorious, persuading the Synod to make the proposed institution exclusively a seminary and not a joint liberal arts institution like Princeton College and Seminary. How Lansing reacted to this decision is unknown. No doubt he refused to simply accept Davis' triumph uncontested. In fact, as an indication of perhaps how vociferous the proceedings got, Squier reflects almost 50 years later that his party experienced considerable "anxiety and struggle" in their bid to make Auburn's curriculum exclusively theological in nature, and that this tension within the Synod had largely been forgotten by those who were present.[29] If the contest then was both intense and bitter, Dirck Lansing did not have long to recover before he was thrust yet again into a difficult battle; there was one last decision to be made—where precisely to place the seminary?

With every town and village of the Synod technically qualified to host the institution, it was likely that the eventual location of the seminary would end up far from anywhere Lansing lived. If this were to happen it would be the second time that the minister had earnestly worked to both conceive and nurture a school only to later have it taken away from him. Consequently, Lansing did his best to forget about the recent defeat and determined to salvage some semblance of his original vision. To do this, however, Lansing had to demonstrate his hometown's value to the Synod, why it would be the most suitable site for a seminary of not only Presbyterians or Congregationalists, but also Dutch and German Calvinists. Given that the entire Synod directly straddled the proposed location for the Erie Canal, appealing to the fact

[29] Squier, 24; Adams, 43; Squier perhaps makes this final statement because the Rev. James Hotchkin, also an active participant in the deliberations, wrote that the Synod's actions in Auburn were "very harmonious," offering no indication that there was the slightest tension among those assembled.

that Auburn lay only 10 miles from the coming waterway would hardly be effective—too many towns in region enjoyed the same advantage. To make matters worse, Auburn was but one of many affluent towns in the Synod. To illustrate, if Presbyterian charitable giving for a single year can be any measure of a town's pre-canal prosperity, there were at least 4 communities ahead of Auburn in terms of economic power—Pompey, Genoa, Locke, and Geneva.

The town of Pompey, for example, was a member of Lansing's original Presbytery of Onondaga and is situated about 10 miles southeast of modern Syracuse. In 1818 it contributed $57.40 to various Presbyterian charitable projects, making it the most capable, financially speaking, to support a seminary. Genoa, meanwhile, was a member of the Presbytery of Cayuga and is located around 20 miles south of Auburn and 30 miles south of the canal route. In 1818 it contributed a total of $53.62. The town of Locke, perhaps the farthest geographically from the canal route, was also a member of the Presbytery of Cayuga and is located about 25 miles southeast of Auburn. In 1818 it donated $34.50. It was Geneva, however, that was probably Lansing's greatest competition for not only was it the titular headquarters of the Synod, but it was likely stronger economically and, like Auburn, was situated along a major lake and river that would feed into the coming canal—resting about ten miles south of the prospective waterway. In 1818 the town of Geneva contributed $20 to Presbyterian charitable causes. Auburn, meanwhile, gave $18.54, while the Rochester, before it enjoyed its canal boom in the 1820s only managed to donate $14.82.[30]

Despite this comparative disadvantage, Lansing had something going for him—the Synod had placed him on the oversight committee that would dictate where the seminary

[30] PCUSA, *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: A.D. 1818* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1818), 61-63.

would be built and how it would be financed. Unfortunately, Davis and Squier were appointed to the committee as well and it was likely they had their own ideas of where the institution should go. With the arena then arranged for one last battle, Lansing no doubt balled his fists and clenched his jaw, determining to do or say whatever was necessary to secure the seminary for his hometown. Whether this entailed pointing out the weaknesses of his neighbors, or making exorbitant claims of financial strength, it did not matter for defeating Davis and Squier was now more important than realizing his dream for institutional greatness.

With one last card to play, the minister opted for the latter and motioned for the attention of his colleagues. As he summoned the courage to speak, Lansing likely thought of Onondaga Academy, the illness he had fought through after its founding, and the treachery of his rivals. He reflected on Auburn, the church he pastored, and the support he had from his parishioners. And finally, Lansing's mind would have settled upon a tremendous asset he and the town enjoyed—the founding family of Auburn, the much respected Hardenburghs, and their substantial landholdings directly near the Owasco River. With this array of human and material capital then fixed firmly in his mind, on August 6th 1818, Dirck Cornelius Lansing proclaimed in the silent meeting hall that Auburn and Auburn alone would be the site for the seminary because only it was capable of securing not merely the necessary cash to establish the institution, but likewise the land on which to build it.[31]

If Davis and Squier were shocked by the announcement they never admitted as much. Their skepticism of Lansing's pronouncement likewise is unrecorded but had to have been acute for the Auburn preacher recklessly committed an unprecedented amount of money for

[31] Adams, 43; Hotchkin, 205; Storke and Smith, 193.

that time period and section of the country. Proposing the delivery of any sum over $5,000 was a tall order even in the East. In fact Princeton Theological Seminary, the crown jewel and central citadel of American Presbyterianism at the time, had little more than $15,000 in promised subscriptions and donations the year immediately before its founding in 1812.[32] The minister's desperation then had led him into a particularly daunting challenge for not only had he guaranteed a total amounting to $35,000 in donations, but he had heedlessly offered to the Synod ten acres of prime real estate from downtown Auburn; real estate he had no legal control of. Notwithstanding any cynicism on the part of Lansing's rivals, the Synod committee was nevertheless impressed and accepted the offer, concluding the debate by awarding the seminary to Auburn on the express condition that the subscriptions for support "amount to thirty-five thousand dollars, on or before the next Stated meeting of the Synod: and provided, ten acres of land be secured for the site of said institution."[33]

With the proceedings drawing to a close, the clock immediately began ticking. Lansing had approximately six months to come up with an amount of money that exceeded the aggregate fortunes of many affluent American estates and there was no guarantee he could rally enough support in Auburn to unequivocally secure the school. Amid this uncertainty he likely rushed home to his financial books, eager to see what portion of the sum he could eliminate personally. Surprisingly, the minister found that he could donate as much as $1,000 dollars to the cause without leaving himself and his family utterly destitute. Yet after further consideration the $1,000 hardly seemed to matter. The total for the seminary was simply too high, working to be barely three percent of what he needed. Consequently, as the weeks flew

[32] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 486.
[33] Adams, 43.

by, Lansing did little beyond anxiously canvassing Cayuga County for donations. The first place the minister possibly looked to for help was his friends in Auburn itself and miraculously, after meeting with the Hardenburghs and other prominent citizens, he was actually able to secure four acres from Cornelius and Glen Cuyler and six acres of the Hardenburgh estate near downtown. Again, this was no mere backwoods swampland but expensive real estate, six minutes walking distance from the center of town and the Owasco River. Yet Lansing's battle was far from over for he still had to secure the cash he had promised to the Synod and was only able to initially raise about half of the necessary $35,000 from area residents. With this deficit then before him, the minister was certainly worried but not hopeless as he reminded himself that he was not alone in the endeavor and could surely count on the other fundraisers the Synod had appointed for at least an additional fraction of the needed subscriptions. The question was would it be enough to keep his detractors quiet?[34]

Later that winter Lansing muscled through the snow toward Seneca Lake and the town of Geneva, fully aware that the seminary could be erected there if the Synod was unsatisfied with the amount gathered over the last six months. The day was February 7, 1819 and the ever looming Stated Meeting of the Synod was finally upon him. Given the period's lack of modern communication, there was no way the minister could be entirely sure of the exact amount he would have on hand. All indications suggested it was close to the $35,000 initially promised but there was no way to be certain until he had met personally with his fellow agents. While it has been lost to history exactly how the day went for the minister, one can easily imagine Lansing anxiously gathering his companions from among the crowd of delegates upon arrival, spreading

[34] Hotchkin, 206, 211.

their record books across a large table, and carefully tabulating the aggregate totals of each contributor. Amazingly, when all was said and done, the men looked down at the sum in unbelief—perhaps even blinking in astonishment as a collective sigh of relief swept through the room—for they had actually achieved the impossible and had met the $35,000 dollar promise dead on. When the Synod meeting officially commenced, Lansing no doubt eagerly presented his report and forwarded the appropriate documents to the Synod's examination committee. Interestingly, both Davis and Squier were on this committee but the two could do little at this point to further stymie Lansing's progress. Indeed, the minister had promised the sky and actually delivered. The foundation of Auburn Seminary was now set.[35]

Retrospectively, Lansing's triumph over Davis and Squier was not simply limited to securing the seminary for his hometown but existed on a personal level as well. A year later when the act of formal incorporation was made by the New York State Legislature in Albany, it was Lansing who was appointed among the first cohort of seminary trustees on April 14, 1820. While Davis was also appointed trustee, Squier wasn't. Furthermore, neither Davis nor Squier would have a large part to play in the seminary's future affairs beyond a cursory position. Lansing, however, would exert a decided influence over the seminary by not only expanding his network of allies across the State—and thereby replacing Davis as initial President of Trustees—but also as one of the school's first faculty members when Auburn's commissioners met the following year to elect professors. Personally present at the election, Lansing won a majority of votes and was invited to serve as the institution's first Professor of Sacred Rhetoric in May of 1821. With this the minister's victory was complete for he had not only achieved his dream of

[35] Adams, 45; Hotchkin, 206-207.

fathering a educational institution, despite a failed attempt a decade earlier and the opposition of his rivals, but he was more importantly given the opportunity to influence the intellectual composition of the Seminary as a founding member of the faculty.[36]

Assembling the Structure—The Plan of Union Enters Higher Education

Among the provisions made in the seminary's 1820 incorporating act of April 14th, there was an express clause that "no student of any Christian denomination shall be excluded from a participation in the privileges of this institution on the ground of his religious persuasion."[37] While the proviso was only a single sentence in a three page document, it is extremely representative, and perhaps even a little symbolic, of what Auburn Seminary was to both its allies and enemies. To its detractors, this liberal expression of theological tolerance was simply the overflow and outpouring of a deeper intellectual issue, namely that the seminary was a rat's nest of New Divinity heresy. Comparatively, Princeton Theological Seminary was regarded by Presbyterian conservatives as the only proper model from which to base any kind of ministerial instruction and it conspicuously had no such clause in its charter.[38] One early commentator similarly drove the comparison further, remarking in their "Summary of Religious Intelligence" for the *Religious Monitor or Evangelical Repository* that:

> By the catalogue of students in the Auburn Theological Seminary, it appears that there are in all 65 students attending that institution, which is devoted to the propagation of the Hopkinsian heresy. A missionary spirit is said to be increasing among them. At the Seminary at Princeton which is, in opposition to Hopkinsianism,

[36] New York State Legislature, "An Act to Incorporate the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Established by the Synod of Geneva, at Auburn, in the County of Cayuga: April 14, 1820," in *Laws of the State of New York, Passed at the Forty-Second, Forty-Third, and Forty-Fourth Sessions of the Legislature. From January 1819 to April 1821*, vol. V (Albany: William Gould & Company, 1821), 197-199; Adams, 54; Adams and Hinke, 2.
[37] New York State Legislature, 198.
[38] PCUSA, *Charter and Plan of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America-Princeton, New Jersey: With General Acts of the State of New Jersey Affecting the Seminary and by-Laws of the Board of Trustees* (Princeton Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, 1953), 3-8.

> decidedly orthodox, there are in all 93 students. We hope that missionaries will be selected from the latter school.[39]

Meanwhile to its allies, Auburn Seminary was a mighty bulwark of truth in the darkness of the American wilderness. To quote again from New Yorker James Hotchkin: "Among the institutions which have been largely instrumental of promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and of advancing the prosperity of the Presbyterian Church in Western New York, none is more conspicuous than the Theological seminary of Auburn."[40]

Yet the seminary itself was far more than a progressive capital of Hopkinsian Calvinism or factory of western missionaries. Rather, in one important respect the school was historically consistent with the ecumenical spirit of the region—fully in keeping with the mission and purpose of the 1801 Plan of Union which sought to unite American Trinitarian Calvinists. For example, when examining the background of Auburn's first class of admitted students, approximately 40 percent of them expressly came from either Congregational churches or Union churches of Congregational polity. Additionally, after investigating the regional affiliation of every incoming student between 1821 and 1830, it becomes evident that around 45 percent of students entered Auburn from New England localities of great Congregational strength (Table 7). This becomes rather remarkable considering the fact that far fewer students, an estimated 35 percent, were locally from, or were members of, Presbyterian congregations in the Seminary's immediate vicinity of Upstate New York. Finally, and similar to the Plan of Union itself, Auburn graduates of the 1820s not so much returned to and ministered in areas like Connecticut or Massachusetts after graduation—where a large portion of the student body

[39] "Summary of Religious Intelligence," *The Religious Monitor or Evangelical Repository* vol. 3, no. 10 (1827), 487.
[40] Hotchkin, 203.

came from—but remained either in New York State or moved further into the Trans-Appalachian West. This phenomenon of course also served to further augment the western Presbyterian Church at the expense of Congregationalism, while at the same time diluting western Presbyterianism and rendering it more Congregational (Table 8).[41]

Nowhere is this ecumenical dynamic better illustrated than the symbolic role William Johnson played in Auburn Seminary's groundbreaking ceremony of November 30th, 1819. While Johnson's part was admittedly a complementary one, he was given the honor of opening the proceedings with an invocation for Divine blessing before eventually yielding the platform to none other than Dirck Lansing himself. After delivering the ceremony's formal address, Lansing then cheerfully walked toward a prepared team of equestrians and took hold of the plough that would officially break ground and commence construction. Yet this groundbreaking would not be a one man show but a joint affair with Johnson driving the team as Lansing held the plough. Together the men inaugurated the region's first official seminary and the institutionalization of New School Presbyterianism.[42]

Why exactly Johnson was chosen for the honor is unclear. This becomes especially curious when considering the fact that with the exception of Johnson, every major player in both the Seminary's groundbreaking ceremony, and the formal laying of the cornerstone six months later, was either a presently sitting member of the Seminary's Board of Commissioners and Trusties or would be in the near future. Additionally, what makes this all the more fascinating is that at the time Johnson was but a mere licentiate for the Presbytery of Cayuga

[41] Auburn Seminary Faculty, "Faculty Minutes of the Auburn Theological Seminary" (New York, 1821-1890), Series 1:A, Box 34: TX67 Au1 V-M3, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, 1-32; Adams, 58; Adams and Hinke.
[42] Hall, 378-379; Hotchkin 207, Adams 50-51.

and was not officially ordained as a minister until 1825. Furthermore, the young man actually went on to attend Auburn Seminary as a student, graduating in the institution's first class of 1824. The question then becomes why would the ceremony planners select an inexperienced 22 year-old licentiate as the one who would both give the institution's first invocation and symbolically break ground alongside such a regional heavyweight as Dirck Lansing? The answer to this may become a little easier to find when considering a third and final ministerial participant in the Seminary's construction proceedings, the Rev. Benjamin Stockton.[43]

Overall not much is known of Benjamin Stockton. Originally a member of the Presbytery of Cayuga, the minister later moved west in 1822 and became connected with the Presbytery of Geneva. His participation in the seminary's construction proceedings, however, seems to have stemmed in part from his contribution to securing the school's act of incorporation from the Legislature. This then likely led to his appointment as a trustee in April of 1820. A month later in May, and 6 months after the groundbreaking, a second ceremony commenced to formally lay the cornerstone of the Seminary's main building. In this case it was Stockton who was selected to partner with Lansing as the ceremony's ministerial officiate. Instead of delivering a simple invocation, however, Stockton delivered an entire sermon and it was Lansing who gave the benediction. What exactly Stockton said is not so much important as who he was and what he represented because at the time Stockton was the minister for one of the original six congregational churches that had made up the Middle Association. This congregation was the

[43] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1821* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1821), 306; Adams and Hinke, 1-8, 22.

church of Skaneateles; a body that had stubbornly held onto its congregational polity for nearly a decade after its entry into the Presbyterian Church during the 1810s.[44]

Interestingly, Johnson likewise was serving as minister for one of the Middle Association's founding congregations, the First Congregational Church of Scipio. Scipio, however, had split into three bodies by 1818 and the third body, to which Johnson was pastor, was not only composed of former Congregationalists, but also of parishioners from the Associate Reformed Church.[45] In other words, Johnson was pastoring a congregation composed of three denominational traditions; American Presbyterianism, Hopkinsian Congregationalism, and Scottish Secederism. In this way what Johnson and Stockton had in common, and what consequently set them apart within the Synod of Geneva, was the fact that they were stewards of the New York Congregational heritage and were in many ways the figureheads of interdenominational cooperation within the Synod. Yet even more significantly, and to literally cement the ecumenical importance of the Middle Association to Auburn Seminary, the commissioners and trustees of the school selected the name of Col. John Lincklaen to be inscribed onto a silver medallion, which was then deposited into the cornerstone of the seminary. Indeed, the significance of this act was not lost to the crowd of onlookers who had formed a double-file line around the stone and its mooring tackles. In addition to being a famous area surveyor and patriarch of Cazenovia, New York, Lincklaen's reputation as an

[44] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…1825*, 305; Adams, 51-52; Adams and Hinke, 3; Hotchkin, 207, 210, 341.

[45] The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church originated through a union of two Scotch Seceder traditions that immigrated to North America—the Reformed Presbytery of 1743 and the Associate Presbytery of 1733—and opposed, among other things, theological departure from the Westminster Confession of Faith and the growth of Latitudinarianism in the Church of Scotland. For more information see ARPC, *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1803-1903* (Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell Company, 1905), 1-6; Hotchkin, 49, 350-351.

eminent lay leader of the Middle Association had not been forgotten. In fact the Colonel had even represented the body in the General Assembly of 1810 before the Association was reorganized into the Presbytery of Cayuga.[46]

Whether Johnson, Stockton, or Lincklaen were selected exclusively for their connection to the Middle Association cannot be fully known. Nevertheless, the commonality these men enjoyed is significant even if it was not overtly apparent to Auburn's Commissioners and Trustees. Indeed, the way the seminary developed, and what it came to represent within the Presbyterian Church of America, was directly consistent with the 1801 Plan of Union and the ecumenical cooperation of frontier Calvinists. With this ecumenical legacy then firmly in place at Auburn's genesis, its comes as no surprise that when the institution began accepting students in 1821, its professors and faculty quickly turned the school into a Hopkinsian stronghold. Beginning with the first faculty meeting in October of 1821, Auburn boasted of a staff larger than any seminary before it, commencing operations with as many as three professors. The Rev. Henry Mills of Woodbridge, New Jersey served as professor of Biblical Criticism and Oriental Languages; the Rev. Matthew La Rue Perrine, D.D., pastor of the Spring Street Presbyterian Church in New York City, was Auburn's resident expert in Ecclesiastical History and Church Government; and of course the Rev. Dirck Lansing sat as the chair for the Department of Sacred Rhetoric. Comparatively, Andover and Princeton Seminary, meanwhile,

[46] Hall, 380-381; Luna M. Hammond and Mrs Luna M. Hammond Whitney, *History of Madison County, State of New York* (Syracuse: Truair, Smith & Company, 1872), Adams, 51; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly…A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*, 433.

began with but two professors each, the former acquiring its third after 12 years and Princeton persisting with but two until 1822.[47]

Yet Auburn's instructional roster would soon grow even larger with the addition of a fourth professorship two years later in October of 1823. Hailing from Stamford, Connecticut, the Rev. James Richards was a Congregationalist minister similar to that of Rev. Timothy Dwight. In fact, Dwight had personally tutored Richards in the early 1790s, helping him earn, in absentia, a Bachelor's of Arts degree from Yale College sometime in 1794. At the time, Dwight was a leading voice among New England's New Divinity men who were vigorously defending Christianity and the authenticity of the Bible from American Deists and Unitarians.[48] Yet while Dwight's commitment to Westminster Calvinism compelled him to publically defend biblical inerrancy, his orthodoxy extended only so far. Pertaining then to Richard's early theological instruction, Dwight was a solid Hopkinsian, breaking somewhat with the concept of Predestination and divine determinism, arguing that:

> man is an agent, as God is an agent. No difficulty attends the former case which does not in an equal degree attend the latter. If man is an agent, then there is no necessity of tracing his actions beyond himself. We find no necessity, when we think of God as an agent, of tracing his actions beyond himself. There is no more necessity of tracing human actions beyond man; nor is there, so far as I can perceive, any additional light thrown on the subject of human agency by referring our actions to God. That God created us; that he can, and does, influence our actions is various way, as he pleases; and that even *we* can in various ways influence the actions of each other; must be admitted on all hands. But I see no proof, that God is the

[47] While Charles Hodge was appointed as an instructor of Greek and Hebrew on May 21, 1821, he was not elected as Professor until May 24th 1822. Auburn Seminary Faculty 1; Adams, 54; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly*… 1821, 14, 28; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly*…1822, 21.

[48] Timothy Dwight, *Discourse on the Genuineness and Authenticity of the New Testament: Delivered at New Haven September 10th, 1793 at the Annual Lecture Appointed by the General Association of Connecticut* (New York: George Bunce and Company, 1794); William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Presbyterian*, vol. 4 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), 99-101.

> author, or agent, of human actions; nor the least difficulty in believing that he has made us capable of being the agents, and authors, of them, ourselves.[49]

Having then received his doctrinal training from America's most eminent clergyman and Christian apologist at the time, Richards was licensed to preach by a Congregational Association near Fairfield, Connecticut and labored as an itinerant, filling the vacant pulpit of various congregations on Long Island. Richards' first experience as a settled minister, however, came rather quickly in the summer of 1794 where he received an invitation from the Presbyterian Church at Morristown, New Jersey with an annual salary of 440 dollars and allowances for a manse and firewood. Here Richards experienced unusual success and although he had comparatively little experience in pastoral work—having neither ministered in an established capacity nor graduated from a theological seminary—the minister brought both harmony and considerable growth to a congregation that had been divided for some time. Consequently, Richards quickly became known as a dynamic preacher and able scholar, leading to his election of Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1805 at the extraordinary age of 37.[50]

Unfortunately, Richards' income did not evolve in proportion with his achievements. Moreover, the minister had become the father of a large family following his marriage in 1794. With seven children then to provide for, Richards eventually worked up the nerve to request an increase of salary from his congregation. The appeal, however, apparently caused considerable controversy among his Morristown parishioners and likely contributed to why he eventually accepted a unanimous invitation to pastor the Presbyterian Church at Newark shortly thereafter in 1809. Yet Richard's move could not have been better planned for in Newark not

[49] Timothy Dwight, *Theology Explained and Defended in a Series of Sermons by Timothy Dwight, S.T.D. LL. D*, vol. 1 (New Haven: T. Dwight & Son, 1839), 413.
[50] Sprague, 101-102; Adams, 72.

only did his star continue to rise, but his congregation was soon visited by a powerful working of the Spirit from 1813 and 1817. This consequently led to explosive growth as around 500 members were added and Richards suddenly had for himself the largest congregation in all the denomination—excluding the First Church of Philadelphia. As a result of this divine favor, his colleagues could not help but bestow on him honors and accolades. For example, in 1815 Yale and Union College granted him an honorary Doctor of Divinity. Likewise, Richards was appointed a director of Princeton Theological Seminary and in 1820 he was unanimously elected to chair the department of Christian Theology at Auburn Seminary.[51]

Interestingly enough, Richards was actually the first professor elected by Auburn's commissioners. Yet the minister rejected the invitation out of hand, likely because he did not feel the salary large enough to relocate; his previous dispute in Morristown possibly influencing the decision. This is perhaps the best explanation for his behavior considering that six months after Richards' election, Auburn's commissioners met on January 4th, 1821 and anxiously gathered to hear a letter from the minister read aloud. While the manuscript itself has been lost, one of the Seminary's librarians and assistant professors, the Rev. John Quincy Adams, records that the letter declined the invitation on account that Richards did not feel the proposed salary sufficient for his needs and moving expenses, nor were there enough faculty members yet affiliated with the school to convince him of the institution's viability. Apparently, the commissioners took Richards' comments very seriously for not only did they promise to

[51] James Richards and Samuel H. Gridley, *Lectures on Mental Philosophy and Theology: With a Sketch of His Life* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1846), 23-24; Sprague, 101-103; Adams, 73.

increase his salary, but to likewise secure the money for a second professorship by the coming March.[52]

Unfortunately for Auburn, the money proved predictably slow to materialize and in a letter dated March 14, 1821, Matthew La Rue Perrine admonished Richards to make a decision and respond to the Board's counteroffer. Apparently no one had heard from the minister for quite some time and there was an acute anxiety for a response not only among the Board, but also among the area churches who were demanding to know something by May or June of that summer. Perrine even states rather dramatically that "you do not know the general anxiety which is felt with regard to your answer—some hope, some fear, some tremble. If you should negate the call I cannot tell what the consequences will be."[53]

To the dismay of both Perrine and the seminary Board, the following summer did not deliver the response they were hoping for as Richards turned down Auburn's offer for the second time. No doubt the Board worried if they would ever collect enough money to settle a fourth Professor. Indeed the recently completed middle section of the Erie Canal had only been finished a year before and would not connect to the Hudson River for another two years. Consequently, the region's financial boom was only just beginning and fundraising did not yet have a chance to reflect the growing prosperity. Nevertheless, by the time western and central New York were connected with the Hudson River and New York City in 1823, things were beginning to look much better. The catalyst for this change came in the form of Arthur Tappan, a New Englander who had established an importation business around 1820. Among other

[52] Ibid., 52-53.
[53] "Matthew La Rue Perrine to James Richards, 14 March 1821" (Auburn), Series 1:A, Box 15: TX67 Au1 H-M62q, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary.

things, Tappan sold silk from India and no doubt took advantage of the new markets the canal was making available. Within a year or so of establishing his Manhattan store front, the businessman quickly began turning large profits as he sold his merchandise in massive quantities at or near cost. The low prices of course attracted the attention of numerous inland retailers and thus the small margins he was making added in their aggregate to a significant sum.[54]

Accordingly, in late 1823, it was announced at a meeting of Auburn Seminary's board members that Arthur Tappan had just donated the astounding gift of $15,000 for the endowment of a professorship. Almost immediately the commissioners yet again extended their offer to James Richards, offering this time—with the support of Tappan's donation—a $1,200 annual salary, a house, an allotment for wood, and $200 in moving expenses. How Richards immediately responded to this is unknown; whether he prayerfully considered the invitation, agonized over moving to the frontier, or immediately resolved to accept the position. Yet regardless of how Richards finally made his decision, the minister eventually did accept the offer and somewhat anticlimactically took his seat among the seminary faculty as Professor of Christian Theology on October 30, 1823.[55]

Auburn Theological Seminary and the Catechization of New School Calvinism

With Auburn's faculty now fully assembled, the social mechanics of Hopkinsian Calvinism began to change. First burgeoned by the assimilation of frontier Congregationalists in the 1810s, then the passage of canal shipping after 1820, Union Presbyterianism had at last an

[54] Lewis Tappan, *The Life of Arthur Tappan* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1870), 59-61; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), 31-32; Walter Barrett, *The Old Merchants of New York City* (New York: Carleton, 1863), 229.
[55] Adams, 58; Auburn Seminary Faculty, 7.

intellectual base from which to spread. Beginning in 1824, Auburn students quickly started entering key segments of the national Presbyterian Church almost as soon as they graduated; not only spreading into the Trans-Appalachian West, but also the eastern corridor of the United States. This process of course began with the education of students, the academic curriculum, and Auburn's faculty. Sampling the seminary catalogue of 1828 for instance, first year ministry candidates at Auburn were exposed to a variety introductory topics—biblical Hebrew, Geography, and History—but also more speculative subjects; courses on biblical criticism and "Mental Philosophy." Second and third year students, meanwhile, continued in this vein, learning the principles and nuances of Hermeneutics, Didactical Theology, and Polemic Theology.

As such, students frequently examined such issues on their own, even discussing the intricacies of psychological and speculative theology in their social interactions and society meetings. For example, during the regular meetings of the student organized Theological Society, ministry candidates debated such Hopkinsian questions as "Ought Sinners to be Exhorted to do anything preparatory to Repentance?", "Is the Immediate Agency of God Universal?", and "Is Human Depravity Innate?" As a result, by the time Auburn's candidates reached the end of their training, they were fully prepared to publically lecture on these topics; as was done for instance during the week of graduation in 1829 where papers on the "Subservience of Eloquence to the Cause of Divine Truth" and "The Agency of the Spirit in Conversion" were delivered.[56]

[56] Adams, 86, 90, 95.

In an effort then to trace the influence Auburn faculty members had on the student body's psychological and speculative concerns, one must first begin by examining the intellectual moorings of the Rev. James Richards and the theological system he advocated. Published in 1846, Richards' *Lectures on Mental Philosophy and Theology* is essentially a distillation of what the professor taught to first year divinity students at Auburn Seminary. In comparison with Auburn's other faculty members—whose doctrinal orientations are perhaps more straightforward—Richards' system is relatively complicated and deceptive. The major reason for this was that he often attempted to prevaricate between theological conservative and progressive positions. In the end, however, Richards largely produced students that were Hopkinsian in their doctrinal sympathies. This perhaps can best be explained by exploring his insistence on affirming a major cultural trend of the early 19th century—millennial revivalism.

Retrospectively, Richards' background makes his support of revival almost a foregone conclusion. As a student of Timothy Dwight, Richards was exposed to the social benefits and optimism of millennial ecumenism early on. Despite ongoing debate regarding Dwight's specific role in the Second Great Awakening and the Yale Revival of 1802,[57] he nevertheless supported revival for most of his career and understood it to be but the vanguard of a much greater social phenomenon; arguing that in the near future:

> a vast multitude of mankind will be gathered into the Church of Christ. This multitude will, in a great measure, consist of such persons as were not rationally expected to become Christians. These persons will enter the church of their own accord, and with great earnestness of mind…The wonderful change in this world at the commencement of the Millennium will be merely an universal revival of religion

[57] Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1979); Sidney Mead, *Old Religion in a Brave New World: Reflections on the Relation between Christendom and the Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Richard Shiels, "The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut: Critique of the Traditional Interpretation," *Church History* vol. 49, no. 4 (December 1980): 401-415; Kenneth Silverman, *Timothy Dwight* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969).

> throughout the great family of Adam. As this, in unquestionable terms, is predicted by a prophet of God, it will certainly come to pass.[58]

Consistent with his early education, Richards went on to promote revival in both Morristown and Newark, New Jersey. At Morristown his congregation was visited by three seasons of refreshing, the first of which was totally unexpected and ushered in approximately 100 souls. Richards then continued to support and promote the movement in Newark, leading in part to his congregation's explosive growth and the addition of about 500 new members.[59]

As a result of his affiliation with revival means and methods, it is easy to misunderstand Richards as decidedly New Divinity in his theological orientation. Like his Hopkinsian peers, the minister was known for earnestly pressing the importance of an immediate, whole-hearted, response to the gospel message. Nevertheless, ever since a particularly powerful conversion experience in 1786, Richards began to draw ever closer to Reform orthodoxy—in particular the doctrine of Irresistible Grace and the idea that the Holy Spirit transforms the Elects' desires and affections whether they like it or not. Why then did Auburn's commissioners elect Richards in the first place, especially since the institution's other faculty members were firmly Hopkinsian? The answer perhaps lies in the fact that above all, not only was Richards extremely tolerant of Hopkinsian thinkers, but at first glance he even sounded like one. Indeed, how could he not when many from Auburn remember the minister declaring in the classroom that "I was born an Arminian and lived an Arminian."[60] In fact many of Richards' own contemporaries understood him as at least sympathetic of such doctrines. For example, the Rev. James Hotchkin describes Richards in the same intellectual vein as Timothy Dwight and even Joseph Bellamy. Likewise,

[58] Timothy Dwight, *Sermons*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1828), 233, 240.
[59] Richards and Gridley, 32-33.
[60] Ibid., 12.

Auburn's own historian John Quincy Adams states that Richards' "system seems to have been affected and modified in various ways by the systems of Drs. Hopkins, Emmons, Taylor, and Dwight."[61] Accordingly, it should not be difficult to imagine that Richards' own students had similar problems understanding the nuances of their professor's theological views when considering that Richards himself was accustomed to say statements during lecture which fit perfectly well within the Hopkinsian system of self-determination and rational free agency:

> If the sinner's inability to come to Christ be wholly of a moral nature, then it is fit not only to exhort him to *come* to Christ, but to come without delay. This is his next or immediate duty; he cannot neglect it another moment without violating a solemn command and incurring enormous guilt. There is nothing in the way of his coming to the Savoir but a depraved heart…He is bound to come to Christ *immediately*, for the same reason that he is bound to come at all.[62]

On the surface, and certainly to many of Auburn's graduates, this statement appears fully in keeping with the New Divinity and Samuel Hopkins' emphasis on the regeneration of the human heart. Furthermore, Richards' charge that one must come immediately and without delay was perfectly consistent with the culture of early 19th century revival and the notion that "men are intuitively conscious of their free agency, being irresistibly sensible, that they act spontaneously, and without any coercion or constraint."[63] Moreover, such comments could perhaps even be placed side by side with none other than Charles Finney's belief that God:

> has put these states of mind [revivals] just as absolutely under your control as the motions of your limbs…the will can control the thoughts, you can think of one thing or you can think of another, as you please, and thus control your emotions and therefore you are responsible for them.[64]

---

[61] Hotchkin, 281; Adams, 73.
[62] Richards and Gridley, 496.
[63] Dwight, 256.
[64] Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 2nd ed. (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Company, 1835), 84, 427.

Yet despite Richards' insistence that sinners were fully responsible for their depraved state of being—and therefore obligated to repent and immediately turn their life over to Christ—he by no means affirmed one's ability to do so. When fully pressed to outline how revivalism and conversion precisely interacted, he stated that:

> no man can thus come to Him [Christ], unless drawn by the Father. By the drawing of the Father, is intended that work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, which is not only necessary to bring the sinner to Christ, but which never fails of this effect…The true reason, then, why men cannot come to Christ, is not the want of opportunity—nor yet a deficiency in their natural powers—but altogether because they are destitute of right moral dispositions, or of a good heart…God often, indeed, requires men to do things which they have no heart to do; but He never did, and never will, require them to do things which they could not do, if they had a heart…[T]he only reason why persons perplex themselves on this subject is, they do not make a distinction in their minds between a natural and moral inability.[65]

Notwithstanding then Richards' break from the doctrine of Total Depravity and the belief that man lacks nothing in his natural powers, there is little here for those sympathetic of the New Divinity. Indeed, for those students and contemporaries sensitive enough to understand the professor's appeal to Edwardsian Mental Philosophy and the doctrine of Irresistible Grace, they encountered a system with an impossible and hopeless standard. Put another way, many of Auburn's students discovered a scenario in which one was condemned to Hell for sinfulness, with no real power whatsoever to do anything about it. However, to make the confusion even worse, Richards breaks from Hopkins' understanding of human passivity in Regeneration to criticize the idea that such moral inability excused inaction, arguing instead that inactivity and unresponsiveness to the Gospel was precisely what condemned the sinner: "so far is this from pleading his excuse that it only demonstrates the depth of his depravity."[66]

[65] Richards and Gridley, 480, 483, 490.
[66] Ibid., 491-492.

In summary then, Richards had an unusual perspective on revival, arguing in essence that the imperative purpose of it was not so much to break the fallow ground of human hearts—as it was with most Hopkinsians—but to expose and proclaim the tragedy of human moral inability to all society; that the lost are duty bound to come to Christ despite the fact that they never will unless selected for salvation by the Father.[67]

In response to Richards' frustrating theological complexity, Auburn's remaining faculty no doubt supplied a more tolerable doctrinal solution for the majority of students. Auburn's Professor of Church History and Ecclesiastical Polity, the Rev. Matthew La Rue Perrine, is an excellent example for not only did he teach Christian Theology at Auburn before Richards' arrival, but his gradual drift into Hopkinsianism even got him into trouble with watchful conservatives in the denomination during the early to mid 1820s.

Similar to Richards, Perrine was from the State of New Jersey, being licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New Brunswick. A child of the Revolution, and slightly younger than Richards, Perrine was nursed from an early age on the Westminster Presbyterianism of the Middle-States. His early career was most notably as a western missionary where he braved the frontier perils of central New York and northern Pennsylvania. This time spent in the hinterland seemed to of had a pronounced effect on the young minister's theological affinities for it was about this time that he began to shift slightly in his doctrinal moorings. Originally, Perrine ascribed to the usual standards of Reformed Theology. Yet like many of his contemporaries at

[67] Ibid., 493.

the time, not only did he begin questioning the doctrine of Irresistible Grace and the impotency of human agency, but also the Penal Substitution Theory of Christ's Atonement.[68]

While this dissertation primarily focuses on the concept of human agency with regard to Hopkinsian thought, most of Perrine's trouble with Presbyterian conservatives actually involved the Atonement and his support of Moral Government Theory. The controversy began sometime after Perrine was settled as pastor of New York City's Spring Street Presbyterian Church in 1811. There Perrine began advancing the idea that the Crucifixion was not so much a transaction between man and God in which the penalty for sin was legally transferred to Jesus—in accordance with Substitution Theory—but that it was more a punishment as proxy, a display or exhibition intended to maintain God's legitimacy as a just moral governor, while He concurrently pardons human sin. To illustrate, Perrine told his congregation the story of Zaleucus, the Greek King of Locri, Italy in the seventh century B.C. According to legend, Zaleucus forbade his subjects to commit adultery. As punishment for breaking the law the king declared that anyone caught in such an act would have their eyes removed. Unfortunately, Zaleucus' own son was the first caught violating the King's decree. Because Zaleucus loved his son, and did not wish to render him sightless, the King gouged out one of his own eyes, and one of his son's, in order to both save his son and maintain his legitimacy as king and lawgiver.[69]

To modern readers this distinction may appear trifling but to conservative Manhattan Calvinists it represented yet another indication of their ever weakening powerbase and the persistent encroachment of New England Hopkinsianism and Arminianism. Accordingly, to

---

[68] Matthew La Rue Perrine, *Letters Concerning the Plan of Salvation as Deduced from the Scriptures: Addressed to the Members of the Presbyterian Church, Spring Street, New York* (New York: Dodge & Sayre, 1816), 72; Sprague, 237.
[69] Perrine, 1, 94-98.

reassure both his critics and anxious parishioners, Perrine published a 236 page doctrinal statement that defended Moral Government Theory, illustrating its compatibility with the Presbyterian Church Constitution and Confession of Faith.[70] Toward the end of this document, however, Perrine proceeds to briefly depart from the issue of the Atonement and satisfy his critics still further by attacking every heretical sect he can in an attempt to prove his orthodoxy. Here he levels charges against Universalists, Antinomians, Sandemanianisms, and of course Arminian critics of Calvinism. Interestingly, Perrine chooses to defend not so much the sterner aspects of Reform thought, but rather supports Jonathan Edwards and his popular reinterpretation of human depravity, writing:

> How many say, 'faith is the duty of all who hear the Gospel. But alas, no one can believe any more than he can climb to the stars.' Brethren, you have frequently heard the distinction which is made between moral and natural inability. Do you think that this is too metaphysical?…The inability of man to believe, according to the philosophy of our Lord, is wholly of a moral nature; it consists in an active opposition of will to the Gospel, and a determination of soul to seek other objects. The wicked and perverse dispositions of the unrenewed man are fixed—but he is free, and setting aside his voluntary opposition, he has as much power or strength to choose as to refuse, to love as to hate, to believe as to disbelieve…No inability have men to comply with divine requisitions which is incompatible with free agency."[71]

Initially sounding much like Richards himself, Perrine issues a somewhat muddled affirmation of Edwards. Nevertheless, his true colors quickly spring forth because by the end of the discourse he rather awkwardly attempts to insert an escape hatch for his New Divinity; charging that the Hopkinsian doctrine of rational free agency is compatible with Edwards and that both he and the New Englander are essentially the same by sheer typographical proximity. Unfortunately, Perrine's prevarications failed to win conservative approval and his days in New

[70] Ibid., 122-123.
[71] Ibid., 222-224.

York City soon drew to a close. Considering that at the time the minister labored in one of the most powerful and central presbyteries of the denomination, the Presbytery of New York, it is rather surprising that he was able to survive the criticism and controversy as long as he did. Nevertheless, while Perrine would remain pastor of Spring Street Church for another four years, the minister ultimately left Spring Street, of his own accord, by the summer of 1820.[72]

If Perrine was ambiguous in Manhattan, after moving to the hinterland of Cayuga County his system suddenly became much clearer. For example, in an unpublished sermon that was delivered a number of times during the 1820s, Perrine grew bolder in his theological speculations, not only drifting farther from Westminster Calvinism and the doctrine of Irresistible Grace, but even that of the New Divinity itself. Entitled "Heaven Shut by Human Influence," Perrine suggests that the grace of God which regenerates the human heart and suddenly awakens one to the ugly reality of sinful living is not so much a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit—as even Samuel Hopkins asserted—but rather a plain presentation of the gospel message:

> All who are favored with the gospel, and with the means of grace, have the Kingdom brought nigh unto them…[W]here the gospel comes, men enjoy a day of grace. The text teaches that although the Kingdom of Heaven is opened so that all who hear the gospel may enter in who are disposed to enter, still it may be shut by men…that neither they nor others around them shall ever enter into it...If it be shut against any one of us, or if any one of us shall find it shut hereafter we shall discover that our own agency has been principally concerned in effecting it…The influence therefore, which men may exert in shutting the Kingdom of Heaven is two-fold; they may refuse to enter into it themselves and may be the means of causing others not to choose to enter in…Sinners not only shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men as they refuse to enter in themselves, but as they influence others voluntarily to neglect the gospel and to choose the ways of sin in preference to the ways of holiness…[those in authority do this] by their unguarded conversation, by their untender feelings, by their improper conduct they may prejudice the minds of

[72] Sprague, 237.

> many…thus we see how the Kingdom of Heaven is shut against men by human influence.[73]

To better understand this subtle transition from supernatural to natural means of evangelism and conversion, it must quickly be noted that Perrine was largely appealing to yet another intellectual tradition that was then sweeping the United States during the early 19th century—Scottish Common Sense Philosophy. In many ways, the Common Sense School was an Enlightenment inspired reaction to the epistemological skepticism of David Hume and his *A Treatise of Human Nature*. In response, Scottish thinkers like Thomas Reid posited that the human race does in fact accurately perceive and understand the universe—even regarding the perception of abstract principles. Here Reid theorizes that our understanding of such things as human testimony, for example, happens through a sense or "faculty of the mind" beyond the five senses, which is common to all men, and can reliably recognize truth whenever it is observed or presented—Common Sense.[74]

Therefore it was in Perrine's estimation that through Common Sense one could correctly and freely receive the truth of the Gospel during a sermon or revival service. Consequently then, Matthew La Rue Perrine's break from the doctrine of Irresistible Grace must have appeared almost as a relief or soothing balm to the many young 19th century Auburn ministry candidates who were looking for a reasonable justification of revival means and measures. Indeed, as a testimony to this reality, long time friend of Professor Perrine, the Rev. Alfred E.

---

[73] Matthew La Rue Perrine, "Heaven Shut by Human Influence" (Auburn, 1821), Box 1, Matthew La Rue Perrine Manuscript Collection. Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, 5-6, 9-10, 13, 19, 27-28.
[74] Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart, *The Works of Thomas Reid: With an Account of His Life and Writings*, vol. 1 (Charleston: Samuel Etheridge, Jr., 1813), 376-434, 440; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," *Church History* vol. 24, no. 3 (1955), 260-261; George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1970), 47-48.

Campbell, even stated as much, reflecting how there was no doubt in his mind that a considerable number of Auburn's students had their theological views molded by Dr. Perrine's system.[75]

Concerning the influence Auburn's remaining faculty members had on students, sources are rather lopsided. In comparison with James Richards for instance, there is little biographical information regarding the life and background of the Rev. Henry Mills. What is known is that he was a Middle-State native, born near Morristown, New Jersey in 1786—making him the youngest of the faculty. As a graduate of Princeton College in 1802, Mills began his teaching career early, tutoring young undergraduates at his alma mater. The young man also studied theology with James Richards while the latter was still pastoring at Morristown. Mills then was ordained by the Presbytery of New Jersey in 1816 and ministered at the Woodbridge Presbyterian Church until his election as Professor of Biblical Criticism. What remains difficult to determine, however, is where Dr. Mills sat on the theological spectrum. Teaching Hebrew, Greek, and German, Mills appears to have had little appetite for speculative debate or the controversies pertaining to Mental and Philosophical Theology. Instead, the man focused on Middle-Eastern and German literature. In fact, his principle publication, *Horae Germanicae: A Version of German Hymns*, remained his most successful and well-know work, going through two editions by 1856.[76]

Yet if Mills remained largely inert when to came to theoretical matters, Dirck Cornelius Lansing was not. As Auburn's resident expert of rhetoric and homiletics, his influence was perhaps the greatest of all the seminary faculty for it was he who trained students in the real-

[75] Sprague, 239.
[76] Adams, 76-77.

world practicable mechanics of pastoral ministry and frontier revivalism. Like his colleague, Dr. Perrine, Lansing had an affinity for the Common Sense School and often appealed to it when asserting man's rational free agency, writing:

> The ability of sinners, as well as their obligation to repent, appears from the fact that God has commanded them to repent. The command presupposes an ability that constitutes the bases of obligation; for it is a dictate of common sense that no one can be to blame for not doing what he is in no sense able to do…[T]o require of him what lies strictly beyond the reach of those powers that constitute him a responsible moral agent must be inconsistent and unjust.[77]

Unlike Perrine, however, Lansing remained firmly tied to Samuel Hopkins and did not depart from the notion that Regeneration and Conversion were processes supernaturally initiated by the Holy Spirit. To fully understand then Lansing's theological system—and because these theological distinctions are so minute—a review of Edwards and Hopkins maybe in order. Firstly, in *The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended*, Edwards unequivocally states that the human heart *and mind* were corrupted in the Fall—together—not separately, not one or the other, but both, and that both need the supernatural regenerating power of the Holy Ghost:

> The word repentance signifies a change of the mind; as the word conversion means a change or turning from sin to God. And that this is the same change with that which is called regeneration (excepting that this latter term especially signifies the change, as the mind is passive in it)…That a spiritual resurrection to a new, divine, life, should be called being born again, is agreeable to the language of scripture…Thus repentance, the change of the mind, is the same as being changed to a new mind, or new heart and spirit…But none supposes it is the body that is immediately and properly new, but the mind, heart, or spirit.[78]

[77] Dirck Cornelius Lansing, *Sermons, on Important Subjects of Doctrine and Duty* (Auburn: Richard Oliphant, 1825), 20.
[78] Jonathan Edwards, Sereno Edwards Dwight, and Edward Hickman, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (London: F. Westley and A.H. Davis, 1835), 213-214.

However, in response to the Enlightenment and late 18th century Deistic critiques of Total Depravity, Original Sin, and Irresistible Grace, Samuel Hopkins later modified Edwards in order to make Calvinism more compatible with the then popular concept of free agency. Again, to do this he took advantage of Edward's ambiguity on natural and moral inability. Of the two, Edwards himself focused more on the nature and implication of moral inability, leaving the definition of natural inability to simply be: powerlessness to follow one's will "because what is most commonly called nature does not allow of it or because of some impending defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will, either in the faculty of understanding, constitution of body, or external objects."[79] Beyond this Edwards had little to say on the matter and thus left enormous question as to how the Doctrine of Total Depravity affected one's "faculty of understanding." Accordingly, Hopkins saw an opportunity to both clarify Edwards and reconcile his system with 18th century Rationalists. He did this by expanding on the concept of natural inability, suggesting that one's mental faculties, one's reason, was included within natural ability and that it is only one's moral inability and the dictates of their heart, that require supernatural, imperceptible, regeneration:

> The Spirit of God is the only agent and man is the passive subject…The subject of this operation, in which this change and effect is wrought, is the will or the heart; that is, the moral and not the natural powers and faculties…The understanding or intellect, considered as distinct from the will, is a natural faculty, and is not capable of moral depravity…nothing is necessary in order to remove the disorders of the intellect, and all the natural powers of the soul, but the renovation of the heart…[I]n regeneration, the heart being changed and renewed, light and understanding take place; and there is no need of any operation on the understanding…As the moral disorder and depravity of man lies wholly in his heart, the cure and renovation must begin and end there…It is called a creation, and the divine agency in it is as much without any medium [like a revival sermon] as in creating something from

[79] Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will, Which Is Supposed to Be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, 1860), 25-26.

> nothing…[it is] altogether imperceptible by the subject on whom the work is wrought.[80]

Therefore, while Matthew La Rue Perrine began to depart from Hopkins into a more Scottish Common Sense inspired understanding of human perception and Divine Grace, Lansing remained fully committed, affirming in a published sermon on Regeneration that the actual method of the Spirit's operation "is beyond the province of men to determine."[81] Similarly in other areas Lansing was also faithful to Hopkins' system. For instance, in a virtual parroting of the New Englander's distinction between the head and the heart, Lansing acknowledged that during Regeneration "the natural endowments, neither of the mind, nor of the body are changed" but only that of the will, affections, or heart.[82]

This consequently led him into tension with the more orthodox, especially in the arena of revival. As stated before, Lansing was a firm supporter of revivals, leading him to not only support the incendiary means and measures of Charles Finney in 1826, but also the uniquely Hopkinsian emphasis on the Regeneration of the heart and agency of human reason. Unlike Middle-State conservatives like Ashbel Green for example—who saw revival more as a gentle, passive, or temperate movement of the Holy Spirit upon the mind—Lansing insisted that Christian revival flowed more from a stark, premeditated, exposure of guilt and the terrors of one's impending damnation.[83]

---

[80] Samuel Hopkins, Edwards Amasa Park, and Sewall Harding, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Port, R.I. with a Memoir of His Life and Character*, vol. 1 (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1854), 367, 369, 370-372.
[81] Lansing, 111.
[82] Ibid., 29, 114-115, 118-121, 126.
[83] Ashbel Green, *The Life of Ashbel Green*, ed. Joseph Huntington Jones (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1849), 557-562; Ashbel Green, "Lectures on the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines-Adressed to Youth: Lecture 31," *The Christian Advocate*, vol. 5 (November 1827): 482–483; Lansing xii.

As a result, Lansing broke from Hopkins slightly. Although this departure led him into a fair amount of systematic inconsistency, he nevertheless, boldly declared in a sermon on Deuteronomy 6:5 that far from being passive in the conversion process, one is instead fully active as a rational agent because so far as one remains passive, they cannot be blamed for inaction.[84] Indeed Lansing took this concept further, even into the realm of Dr. Perrine's assertions on human influence, when he strayed from the concept of Irresistible Grace and proposed that:

> Without the influences of this mighty agent [the Holy Ghost], not a sinner would be brought to such a conviction of his guilt and ruin as to lead him to accept of the method of deliverance…the work of regeneration can only be accomplished by his agency…[Yet] how often are his influences quenched by the indulgence of improper and base passions and appetites…the sinner often quenches the Spirit by seeking to dissipate his apprehensions of evil and to drive away His conviction of guilt in circles of gayety and mirth…We have reason to believe that many sinners have driven from their minds the most solemn impression of guilt and danger, which the Spirit has wrought in them, by speaking lightly of his influences and in the folly of their hearts laboring to persuade their associates in sin that they care for none of these things."[85]

Therefore in consequence of such statements, Lansing's theological boldness not only encouraged Auburn students in the particulars of frontier Hopkinsianism, but likewise invigorated many New Divinity adherents across the country to go on the offensive in their dealings with conservative Calvinists or "Ultra Evangelicals" as they were sometimes called. In one instance, the confrontation even found its way into the print media of eastern Connecticut, where in 1826 the editor of the *Christian Spectator*, Rev. Leonard Bacon, took it upon himself to not only enumerate the merits of Lansing's *Sermons on Important Subjects*, but also vilify the doctrinal position of traditionalists and their supposed "denial of the very foundations of all

[84] Ibid., 139.
[85] Ibid., 196, 198, 201-202.

moral government."[86] Predictably, this elicited a particularly hostile response from conservative subscribers, leading one reader to even ask "was ever a sinner brought to Christ, to repentance and salvation, by the exercise of his physical ability [alone]?" Interestingly Bacon replied by continuing his taunt of the orthodox and proceeded to press yet farther in his attack by charging it was *exclusively* through physical ability that one is brought to repentance; thus polarizing the issue and making strict Hopkinsians like Lansing appear fully Arminian if not Pelagian by association.[87]

Conclusion

In light of debates such as those illustrated by the *Christian Spectator*, Auburn Seminary and its faculty had a significant role to play in the growing factionalism of the mid to late 1820s. The primary reason for this stems from the simple fact that an established academic institution naturally imbues its members with a sense of confidence and intellectual legitimacy. Accordingly, as the divide between western progressives and Middle-State conservatives intensified, Hopkinsians like Lansing not only continued to aggressively assert human agency, but charged Middle-State conservatives with denying Common Sense and the laws of basic justice.[88] In response to this militancy, conservatives like Ashbel Green maintained a steadfast affirmation of human depravity and accused Hopkinsians of inventing a theology divorced from scripture.[89] Consequently, what were once nuanced theological disagreements between

[86] Leonard Bacon, "Reviews: Sermons on Important Subjects of Christian Doctrine and Duty," *The Christian Spectator* no. 10 (October 1826): 533.
[87] Joshua Leavitt, Leonard Bacon "To the Editor of the Christian Spectator and Reply," *The Christian Spectator* New Series vol. 1, no. 6 (June 1827): 290-291.
[88] Lansing, 23; Perrine, 6, 71-72.
[89] Ashbel Green, "Lectures on the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines-Addressed to Youth: Lecture 18," *The Christian Advocate* vol. 4 (February 1826): 49–52; Anonymous, "On the Atonement: No. 4," ed. Ashbel Green, *The Christian Advocate*, vol. 4 (June 1826): 244–250.

Presbyterian Calvinists in the 1810s and early 20s, finally resulted in the creation of two distinct doctrinal camps—the Old and New School—with Princeton Seminary acting as the capital of Old School Presbyterian orthodoxy, and Auburn Seminary carrying the flag of western Hopkinsian New School progressivism.

In this way the establishment of Auburn was critically important to the development of Union Calvinism in the United States; illustrating that the material forces unleashed by the completion of the Erie Canal were but a segment of a much larger New School institutional foundation. Beginning then with the personal vision of Dirck Cornelius Lansing, the Seminary quickly became a tangible testimony to the ecumenical values of western Presbyterians. This was of course made possible by a number of important factors unrelated to material commerce and transportation.

First and foremost was the General Assembly's utter refusal to support the construction of the Seminary itself. Indeed when the Synod of Geneva modestly petitioned for direction on the matter they were politely rebuffed. Although the reason for this likely had more to due to with a concern for maintaining Princeton's position within the denomination, it allowed for Plan of Union Presbyterians to fashion the institution in their own image, free of any centralizing constants upon its intellectual or social principles. Perhaps if the Middle-State dominated General Assembly knew what would soon result from the construction of the canal, they would have responded differently to the Synod of Geneva and expressly forbade them to construct the seminary. Yet such foresight did not exist even among those who lived directly along the path of the waterway. Moreover, it was never certain that Lansing and his Synod fundraisers would ever be capable of collecting what was needed. Not only was money and land required

to build the physical edifice of the seminary, but an almost equal amount was needed to maintain and supply it.

Nevertheless, through the solidarity of area churches and generosity of merchants like Arthur Tappan, all that was needed at last appeared and the school's commissioners were finally able to appoint those they felt best fit their academic and spiritual ethos. Thus, the individuals eventually elected as faculty members embodied many of the identifying characteristics that made frontier Presbyterianism work: an ecumenical spirit, a sympathy for innovation, and a passion for revival. As such, a hardening of thought occurred as Union Calvinism became formally institutionalized and a new denominational party emerged. This predictably polarized even the most generously minded within the church and served to heighten both theological and sectional tensions. The only question that now remains is how did Auburn Theological Seminary spread its influence beyond the State of New York, into the rest of American Presbyterianism?

Chapter 5: The Triumph and Diffusion of New School Presbyterianism

Introduction

Standing on the shore of Lake Skaneateles, Henry Philip Tappan could not have been happier. He was 23, a recent graduate of Auburn Theological Seminary, and would soon be ordained as a minister of the gospel approximately this time the next day. With the smell of wet sand and pine all around, Tappan looked out across the water and let the lake air fill his lungs. There was no denying that the view was spectacular. It was part of the reason he came here in the first place, for the surrounding hills distinctly gave one the impression that the valley was carefully cradled in the hands of God Himself. Indeed years later another native of the area, William Seward, described the lake as "the most beautiful body of water in the world."[1] Yet no matter what Tappan did to steady himself, he utterly failed to calm the boiling excitement deep within his stomach. Soon everything would be a whirl of festivity as family and friends gathered together. Tomorrow's ordination was not the only cause for celebration. Today was April 17, 1828—the day Henry Tappan would marry Julia Livingston.[2]

No one is entirely sure how the couple met but it is clear from Tappan's later lecture material that their passion for one another was more than simply physical.[3] Regarding the specifics of the nuptials, the only information the couple's descendents have been able to confirm is that Julia grew up on a 100 acre estate along the eastern shore of Lake Skaneateles

---

[1] Paul K. Williams and Charles N. Williams, *Skaneateles Lake*, Postcard History Series (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 59.

[2] Barbara Broome Semans and Letitia Broome Schwarz, *John Broome and Rebecca Lloyd: Their Descendants and Related Families 18th to 21st Centuries*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2009), 220, 222; Charles M. Perry, *Henry Philip Tappan: Philosopher and University President* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933), 43-44; Henry Simmons Frieze, *A Memorial Discourse on the Life and Services of Rev. Henry Philip Tappan* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1882), 15.

[3] Henry P. Tappan, "A Course of Moral Philosophy," Undated, Box 2, 86101 297-A, Henry P. Tappan Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, 12-14.

and that it was precisely there that the wedding took place. As the daughter of John W. Livingston, Julia had lived a fairly privileged life. Theirs was a military and patrician family (as far as American patricians went); her father was a retired Colonel in the U.S. Army. Yet it was not so much war or combat that the family earned their position in the annals of history but rather a tradition of scrupulous real estate transactions. During the Fall of 1787 for example, Livingston had accomplished what those before, including the New York State government, had utterly failed to achieve; he found a way to take virtual possession of the 13 million acres which belonged to the Iroquois Nations of central New York.[4]

For a short time then Livingston was the largest private landowner in the United States but unfortunately for him the deal proved too good to last. In the end it was George Clinton who ruined the agreement as he initiated his campaign against the Iroquois Nations a year later in 1788 and swept the "Long Lease" under the rug of State expansion. Livingston and his backers, however, did manage to salvage at least a tiny fraction of their holdings as they were granted 10 square miles of real estate from the State legislature in 1793.[5] In 1815 Livingston then added to his domain with the purchase of the 100 acre lakeside retreat for about 5,000 dollars. Subsequently, it was this property that the Livingston family finally settled to permanently and it is no wonder then why Tappan and Julia selected this place for their

[4] Alan Taylor, *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 169-171; Technically the deal was illegal from Livingston's perspective because the New York State Constitution banned the private purchase of land from the Native Americans. So to perhaps assuage his conscious, or to justifiably place him on a defensible legal footing for defending the purchase, Livingston had the brilliant idea to instead lease the land for 999 years. In exchange, the Seneca, Cayuga, and Onondaga chiefs would initially get $20,000 up front and annual payments of $2,000 thereafter. Thus, Livingston reasoned, everyone benefited as the chiefs enjoyed the annual "tenant" payments and the idea of being landlords, while Livingston and his supporters had at least arguable legal possession of the territory.

[5] Shaw Livermore, *Early American Land Companies: Their Influence on Corporate Development* (Washington, DC: Beard Books, 2000), 200-203.

wedding ceremony. To this day the beauty of Lake Skaneateles is difficult to surpass and according to family genealogists, one can still see a picturesque view of the water from the existing two-story white home that presently sits upon the property.[6]

For the ceremony itself, guests had come from all over the State but it was a sitting professor of Auburn Seminary that actually officiated the wedding service. Living only nine miles away, Professor Matthew La Rue Perrine had met Tappan during the young man's admittance examination three years earlier. Standing before Drs. Richards, Mills, and Perrine on December 3, 1825, the young man weathered questions from the three faculty members as to the particulars of Christian ministry and Theology. Whatever Tappan's answers may have been, they were apparently sufficient enough to not only earn him admittance into the seminary, but entry as a second year student. From there the young man developed a significant relationship with Professor Perrine, being no doubt influenced and shaped by his senior's benevolent temper, urbane manner, and earnest Hopkinsianism.[7]

Yet as the sun set the night of the wedding, Tappan had little time to relax. The following morning he and Julia would have to travel nearly all day to Pittsfield, Massachusetts—located approximately 200 miles east; a one day trip only made possible by the Erie Canal. Despite the difficulty of what lay ahead, the journey would be worth it, Tappan likely told himself as he warmed his hands by the evening fire. At the time, the young man was but an assistant to the pastor of a Dutch Reformed Church near Schenectady. As such he no doubt had the opportunity to minister but serving under the direction of another was not the same as

[6] Semans and Schwarz, 101-102.
[7] Auburn Seminary Faculty, "Faculty Minutes of the Auburn Theological Seminary" (Auburn, 1890 1821), Series 1:A, Box 34: TX67 Au1 V-M3, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, 1, 15; Semans and Schwarz, 220.

being responsible for your own community of parishioners. The Congregational Church at Pittsfield on the other hand wanted him as their head pastor, their shepherd, and was willing to formally ordain him right away. Thus, Tappan and his wife awoke the following morning and began their trip toward the Hudson River and the New York border. Tappan then began his ministry in Pittsfield later that August, not the least bothered by the sudden change in denomination or church polity.[8]

Indeed, one of the reasons Tappan is so significant to this general narrative is his ability to represent and illustrate not only the values of Auburn Theological Seminary and New School Presbyterianism, but also how those values diffused across the American landscape as he and Auburn graduates like him ventured forth into ministry. Tappan's ecumenical sympathies in particular fit perfectly with Auburn's interdenominational Plan of Union ethos and demonstrate an acute disdain for sectarian boundaries. To say that denominational distinctions mattered little to the minister would be somewhat of an understatement. While Tappan would later pastor a Presbyterian Church in New York City, he never forgot his experience as a Congregational and Reformed minister and did not hesitate to publically declare that:

> The principles of Christianity…are laid down in the gospel in general terms and admit [a] variety [of forms]. Different truths and predilections may, therefore, be consulted as well as the exigencies of particular times and places. Different denominations, thus, come into existence as a natural development of Christian polity. If anyone asks me why I am a Presbyterian? I cannot answer that it is on account of doctrine; for other denominations hold the same system of doctrine. Nor can I say it is on account of polity; for other denominations have polities which appear to accomplish the same ends. I dare not say I am a Presbyterian because I believe my church to be the only true church or even better than others; for I find the most perfect forms of Christian character developed elsewhere."[9]

[8] Perry, 44; Frieze, 15; Semans and Schwarz, 222.
[9] Henry P. Tappan, "Unpublished Sermon on Matthew 13," Undated, Box 3, 86101 297-B, Henry P. Tappan Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, 60-61.

In this way Tappan's connection with the Dutch Reformed Church, Congregationalism, and later Presbyterianism, was more a matter of circumstance as he saw all evangelical streams as perfectly legitimate. Even more important than his ecumenical partiality, however, Tappan likewise proved to be a powerful voice for Hopkinsian Calvinism throughout his career; both during his residency in Massachusetts and later when he migrated to the Presbytery of New York and settled in Manhattan. Whether Tappan developed his affinity for the New School before or during his time at Auburn is uncertain but it is clear that his old friend Dr. Perrine had at least some role to play in the young man's subsequent theology. In his unpublished sermons—and later in his published works—it is clear that Tappan retained significant elements of the professor's intellectual system. For instance, in a sermon most likely from his time at Pittsfield, Tappan writes with all the boldness of an unashamed New School Calvinist and asserts all the major prescriptions and precepts of the newly emerging theological order—the Spirit's regeneration of the heart, as opposed to the mind, and the agency of man:

> We know that the regeneration of the heart is the work of God's Spirit…there is therefore a propriety in the demand of God that we should make unto ourselves a new heart and a new spirit. But in addition to this we are free agents and are active in the work of salvation. There is an agency of God and there is an agency of our own. 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure'…though the Spirit changes the disposition of the heart or whatever else He may do, yet every holy volition, every pure desire, every emotion of love, every devote feeling is the creatures own proper act…Now as in our carnal, ruined, estate all our evil affections were the proper actions of our own minds, so also in our converted state all our sanctified and pure affections are the proper actions of our own minds. The impenitent therefore in contemplating the work of their conversion as a work in which they have a personal agency are assured of this both from the word of God and from the constitution of the human mind; that every affection of heart which the regenerate exercises…will have to exercise as freely as they now exercise evil affections, and that every act of

> service which the regenerate perform they will have to perform as freely as they now perform an act of service to the god of this world.[10]

Similarly later in life, while living near 10th and 2nd Avenue Manhattan, Tappan plainly retained Dr. Perrine's preference for human liberty and Scottish Common Sense Philosophy as he attempted to dismantle none other than Jonathan Edwards' doctrines of the will, natural ability, and moral inability:[11]

> The depravity which is in man does not destroy the power of reason; he can still perceive the force of duty, he can still become deeply and solemnly convinced of truth, he is still capable of weighing the motives of godliness and the world to come against the motives of sin and the present world. It does not destroy the freedom of his will: he can, notwithstanding his depravity, avoid temptation and the occasions of sin, he can place himself within the hearing of the word.[12]

So how then does Tappan's life fit within the larger framework of New School growth, factionalism, and diffusion? If Union Christianity and Hopkinsianism became formally institutionalized within the Presbyterian Church during the early to mid 1820s, in what way did its influence diffuse from the Finger Lakes region into the central sections of the Presbyterian hierarchy? To answer these questions this final chapter attempts to offer not only an analysis of Auburn Seminary's direct intellectual influence, but also give an illustration of how that influence indirectly stretched into the lives of those unaffiliated with the institution. While this overall narrative began with the life and various trials of the Rev. Albert Barnes, it will end with him as well for he and Henry Tappan each share a critical point of commonality; they were both vectors of the New School Canal Calvinism that changed the course of Presbyterian history—

---

[10] Henry P. Tappan, "Unpublished Sermon on Psalm 50:1," Undated, Box 3, 86101 297-B, Henry P. Tappan Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, 16-19.
[11] Henry P. Tappan, *A Review of Edwards's "Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will"* (New York: John S. Taylor, 1839); Henry P. Tappan, *The Doctrine of the Will Applied to Moral Agency and Responsibility* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841); Semans and Schwarz, 223.
[12] Tappan, *The Doctrine of the Will*, 276.

they were both shaped and sustained by it and both actively promoted it in their writings and from the pulpit.

This New School diffusion process then transpired in two ways, as demonstrated by the stories of Tappan and Barnes. First, it happened formally as the graduates of Auburn spread across the American landscape and carried with them the values and theological system of their seminary experience. In this respect those like Henry Tappan are prototypical. The second way the diffusion process advanced was informally, as the evolution of 1810s Union Christianity continued along its initial trajectory, transmitting as usual from person-to-person. Although Plan of Union Hopkinsianism was properly institutionalized in 1821 with the admission of Auburn's first students, it does not mean that New School development and transmission happened exclusively through institutional channels. Indeed, the natural social dynamics and reflective exchanges of Finger Lakes Presbyterians existed independently but in parallel with the training of Auburn's aspiring clergymen. In this second respect the early life of the Rev. Albert Barnes becomes rather illustrative, especially in light of the fact that Barnes both grew up on the canal corridor, converted to Christianity along it, and was initially educated there as a student of Hamilton College.

With the formal and informal spread of the New School system already at work, after construction on the canal concluded in 1825, access to the more central sections of the church increased immensely. As a result, the eastern migration of New School innovators like Tappan and Barnes accelerated; facilitating their integration into the denominational hierarchy of the central presbyteries (Figure 7). In other words, just as the canal made it physically and financially easier to escape the hinterland, so too did it expand the individual information

networks of those living in west-central New York, leading to greater ecclesiastical appointments. While this, however, did not translate into prestigious positions for all who migrated east, it did provide a significant number with the opportunity to settle in the semiperipheral presbyteries of the Delaware River Valley.

In consequence, as portions of the East quickly became inundated with Finger Lakes New Yorkers like Henry Tappan and Albert Barnes, Old School theological conservatives suddenly awoke at the end of the 1820s to find that around half the church was either tolerant of the New Divinity or was actively promoting it. Surprisingly, this revelation came relatively late in 1830 after New School ideas had a chance to spread so radically that a canal man like Barnes was able to secure the pulpit of not only the most prominent and powerful congregation in the entire denomination, but also the symbolic capital of Old School Presbyterianism—the First Church of Philadelphia. As such, this narrative concludes with a look at both the formal and informal ways New School diffusion made it possible for such a prominent conservative position to fall into the hands of a western intellectual innovator and spark a controversy that plunged the American Presbyterian Church into civil war.

Auburn Seminary Graduates and the Diffusion of Innovation

One might assume that charting the ministry appointments of Auburn graduates would be an unending, if not impossible, process. There are simply too many subjects, with too few sources. Yet at some point during the 1910s, Auburn Seminary Librarian John Quincy Adams and Assistant Professor William Hinke set out to do just that and composed one of the most important sources of this project—*The General Biographical Catalogue of Auburn Theological Seminary*. With the express aim to compose a brief biography of every Auburn student between

1821 and 1918, Adams and Hinke managed to not only chronicle the professional trajectories of Auburn's clergyman, but have indirectly and unintentionally provided scholars with a near perfect case study of New School diffusion from west-central New York. Therefore while it may not be possible to *comprehensively* catalogue the spread of 19th century New School Calvinism in the United States as a whole, it is feasible to trace its transmission in part through Auburn seminarians.

Returning to the life of Henry Tappan then would perhaps be helpful because just as his life serves to demonstrate the development of New School philosophy and thought, so also does it conveniently overlap with and illustrate general student demographic patterns. For example, similar to approximately 35 percent of Auburn's incoming students, Tappan was a New York native, born in the town of Rhinebeck along the Hudson River.[13] While on the surface this number may appear rather low, it actually happens to be a significant category of student regional affiliation between 1821 and 1830—with Massachusetts and the Eastern Corridor of New York City, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania ranking below Upstate New York at 23 and 17 percent respectively (Table 7). Alternatively, nearly 45 percent of students came from the New England States when counted as a single geographical unit. This indicates that as far as Auburn's collegian were concerned, the school was predictably dominated by Plan of Union Calvinists and New England Congregationalists.

The canal corridor was also conspicuously involved in Tappan's undergraduate formation because the very year that the waterway was completed, the young man graduated

[13] Perry, 10.

with high honors from Union College in Schenectady, New York.[14] This places Tappan within the school's largest demographic category of incoming first year seminaries, with Union, Williams, Hamilton, and Amherst supplying a combined 73 percent of the seminary's population and similarly confirms the Plan of Union/New England association of many New School clergymen for the 1820s (Table 6).

Yet Henry Tappan's ability to represent New School Presbyterianism stretches far beyond his philosophical musings or geographic connections. Extending even into the ministerial placement of Auburn alumni, Tappan also helps to illustrate the scope and nature of Auburn graduate diffusion. For example, like many of his peers Tappan eventually migrated down the Hudson River to the island of Manhattan following his three year tenure at the Congregational Church of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Here the minister was under the shadow of the Presbytery of New York, historically one of the most powerful presbyteries in the denomination, ranking second in the presbytery factor rankings during the 1810s and third for the 1820s (Figures 2 and 3). Having moved to New York City, Tappan fully participated in the New School invasion of conservative Presbyterian territory, for as a resident of Manhattan not only did he briefly serve as the pastor of the Fifth Presbyterian Church, but also as a professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy at the University of New York.[15] Consequently, Tappan matured into a world-class philosopher and theologian, whose lectures were remembered by the *New York Times* as being "models of style, of diction, and profundity of thought."[16] During this period Tappan developed his most sophisticated defense of New School Theology and

[14] Semans and Schwarz, 222.
[15] PCUSA (New School), *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1839* (New York: W. Molineux, 1839), 86; Semans and Schwarz, 223; Perry, 55-87; Frieze, 16-17.
[16] "Obituary: The Rev. Henry P. Tappan," *New York Times*, November 17, 1881.

millennial ecumenical cooperation—finally breaking from orthodox Calvinism with his publication of *A Review of Edward's 'Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will'* in 1839.[17]

By the 1850s, however, the western frontier called to Tappan and he answered, accepting an invitation to serve as President of the University of Michigan in 1852.[18] In this way even the final stages of Tappan's career help illustrate Auburn ministerial trends. For example, when examining the vocational history of Auburn Seminary graduates between 1824 and 1830, it should come as no surprise that well over half (54%) followed Tappan's model and migrated into the Trans-Appalachian West at some point in their lives; a reality made all the more understandable when considering that Auburn was specifically designed by the Synod of Geneva to produce just such a scenario (Table 8).

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, graduate relocation to the Eastern Corridor of New York City, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania was perhaps even more important than westward migration for it was here that the diffusion of New School Christianity had transformational power. In the West the flow of Auburn's seminarians would change little because most frontier presbyteries were already dominated by Hopkinsianism in the 1820s. In the East the situation was different due to the fact that the oldest, most established, presbyteries within the church—those arrayed along the Delaware and south Hudson River Valleys—were strongly opposed to the New Divinity because they had the most to lose if structural or intellectual change occurred. Any form of ecclesiastical divergence then was

[17] Henry P. Tappan, "Plea for Reformation," *The Millennial Harbinger* vol. 6, no. 1, Fifth Series (1863): 13–22; *A Review of Edwards's 'The Doctrine of the Will'*.
[18] Perry, 169.

extremely threatening to the ruling eastern elite because it could only result in a weakening of their institutional position.

As such, New School diffusion into the Eastern Corridor was fragile and required a careful negotiation of two major sociological forces—conservative counter migration into the West, and conservative conformity efforts in the East. Therefore if Auburn graduates were ever going to be successful at integrating into New York City, New Jersey, and Pennsylvanian presbyteries, their aggregate diffusion would have to be gentle enough to avoid rousing Old School watchkeepers, yet large enough to effect intellectual change. Additionally, because a counterflow of Old School movement naturally continued to radiate outward from the East coast, Auburn graduate migration from the Finger Lakes region had to remain relatively low in order to maintain the necessary strength to prevent conservative diffusion from assimilating their support base. In light of this the 80 percent of Auburn students who remained within Upstate New York were extremely critical to the preservation of New School western hegemony. More interestingly though the 20 percent of Auburn's graduates that left the canal corridor and traveled to the denomination's most powerful presbyteries out east represented an important minority that discreetly navigated the necessary prerequisites for institutional revolution (Table 8).

To elaborate further one must look beyond raw migration percentages because on the surface a proportion as low as one-fifth appears rather trivial or insignificant. Indeed, how could such a minor value be equally important to the number of graduates who stayed within New York State or traveled into the West? To better explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to briefly review the work of organizational theorist David Krackhardt and his theory of Optimal

Viscosity because it is here that the balance of migratory flow and counterflow begins to make more sense.

In 1997 Krackhardt published an article for the *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* which essentially interrogates the specific mechanics of social innovation and how institutional structure affects the diffusion process.[19] After experimenting with a variety of computational variables, Krackhardt discovered that "viscosity", or the pace at which migration takes place, was the most important factor in determining the ultimate success of diffusion. Surprisingly, Krackhardt found that his virtual networks were generally insensitive to such things as the rate at which conversion happens or the search parameters of his simulated actors. Instead, it was the network's overall viscosity that had the most dramatic impact. Yet the relationship between viscosity and diffusion was not a linear one (with diffusion increasing proportional to increases in viscosity). This was because in each simulation nonadopters had a distinct advantage—early on they were simply more numerous and could quickly overwhelm adopters if viscosity became too high or too low. Krackhardt explains by suggesting that if viscosity became too rapid, the "mother site" of innovation would be emptied too quickly and the counter migration of nonadopters would overpower the adopter's support base. Conversely, if viscosity became too low, the outflow of innovators would simply be too weak to impact the status quo of nonadopting regions. As such, Krackhardt identified a specific window of viscosity where adopters could successfully spread innovation across the network as a whole, eventually

[19] Krackhardt later updated and republished the essay as a book chapter for Alessandro Lomi and Erik Larsen's *Dynamics of Organizations: Computational Modeling and Organizational Theory*.

leading to the conversion of every member in the system. Interestingly, this window was rather low, resting between a viscosity value of .08 and .16.[20]

Unfortunately for this study it is impossible to know the viscosity of overall New School migration—the historical sources do not allow for a comprehensive analysis of this kind.[21] Nevertheless, if Krackhardt is correct then the level of Auburn resettlement into the Eastern Corridor fell somewhere within the viscosity window seeing that during the second half of the 1820s, Plan of Union Christianity successfully spread from the canal corridor to New York City, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvanian presbyteries. Accordingly, between 1824 and 1830 the diffusion of New School Presbyterianism happened subtly and virtually uncontested—especially in the State of New Jersey. Indeed, the vast majority of Auburn's seminarians experienced little to no conservative resistance as they surreptitiously supplied pulpits and led congregations into more progressive expressions of faith.

Moving beyond the life of Henry Tappan, many other Auburn graduates help illustrate this dynamic perfectly. The Rev. Edwin Holt for instance experienced no upheaval whatsoever during his early residency in New Jersey. A native of New London, Connecticut, Holt eventually migrated to the Presbytery of Elizabethtown after graduating from Auburn in 1826 and served as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Westfield, New Jersey from 1826 to 1830.[22] Similarly Elias Fairchild's tenure as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Hardyston, New Jersey was

[20] Although Krackhardt found that the conversion rate had minimal impact on diffusion, he discovered it was in fact extremely important to the overall size and relative position of the viscosity window, with a lowering of the conversion rate narrowing the window and shifting it closer to zero. David Krackhardt, "Viscosity Models and the Diffusion of Controversial Innovation," in *Dynamics of Organizations: Computational Modeling and Organizational Theories*, ed. Alessandro Lomi and Erik R. Larsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 252, 256-258.
[21] A sampling of viscosity levels, however, maybe possible with a inconsistent annual analysis of ministerial movement via the denominational register which came out every three to four years during this time period.
[22] William K. McKinney, Chase A. Philhower, and Harry A. Kniffin, *Commemorative History of the Presbyterian Church in Westfield, New Jersey, 1728-1928,* (Westfield: Published by Church Committee, 1929), 179.

prototypically peaceful for as a student of Amherst College, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Newark following his graduation from Auburn in 1827. Meanwhile Christopher Cory, also from the class of 1827, was likewise ordained by the Presbytery of Newark the year of his graduation and failed to encounter any problems. Finally, the Presbytery of Newark also welcomed yet another Auburn seminarian during this period, the Rev. George Peirson, who in 1829 was settled over the 1st Presbyterian Church of Orange, New Jersey and enjoyed a quiet tenure there as well.[23]

Yet this relative harmony among the eastern semiperipheral presbyteries does not imply that Auburn's graduates were fully insulated from the conformity measures of Old School orthodoxy and could forever branch out deeper into conservative territory. What it suggests is that the New School was relatively effective and safe as long as its migration remained both within Krackhadt's viscosity window, and was confined to the denomination's semiperipheral presbyteries—the reason being, again, that in the middle-ground region of a social system an equilibrium is maintained between intellectual tolerance and access to institutional resources. However, when this delicate four-part balance is upset, the smooth transmission of controversial ideas immediately begins to breakdown and consequently did for the New School by the 1830s, a process in many ways initiated by the actions of one man—the Rev. Albert Barnes.

The Rev. Albert Barnes and the Apogee of New School Diffusion

Gasping for air and thoroughly agitated, Albert Barnes sprinted down a dimly lit hallway to the safety of his college dorm room. In reality no one was chasing him but the hounding

[23] John Quincy Adams and William John Hinke, *General Biographical Catalogue of Auburn Theological Seminary, 1818-1918* (Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918), 25, 27, 35.

sensation persisted like a whisper over the shoulder or a prick behind the ear. Everything began a few days ago as a great heaviness came over him, tightening his chest and throat. It certainly did not it help matters that his classmates mysteriously appeared whenever he ventured across campus. Nor was President Davis' reaction of any comfort either for the venerable administrator simply looked on, smiling in approval, as each student took their turn inquiring into the state of his "soul." There was no denying it; all the world had gone mad. It was the fall of 1819 and revival fever had swept Hamilton College, New York.[24]

With his knees absorbing momentum, Barnes came to a sudden stop at the entrance to his apartment and gripped the handle with both hands. The young man then burst inside and slammed the door shut in almost one movement. Finally within the comfort and stillness of his dorm room, Barnes fought to collect himself as he learned back against the solid wood of the doorway. It was comforting, like he had somehow managed to barricade himself in the safety of a private world. He took a deep breath, counted to twenty, and opened his eyes. The suite was dark but welcoming and he quickly began to consider his options. Should he leave, return to his parents? He had only just arrived at Hamilton. This was but his first semester of study away from home and already things were falling apart. Perhaps college was not for him.[25]

Thinking back to his days as a school boy, Tanning had seemed the right profession. His father was a Tanner. He could be a Tanner. Tanning did not require a college education. Yet at some point that he could not remember, Barnes let the old schoolmaster fill his head with the glories of Law. So here he was, at college, preparing to become a lawyer, and already some

[24] "A Visit to Albert Barnes: The Great Commentator at Home, Fiftieth Anniversary of His Graduation, His Own Account of His Conversion and Writings," *New York Daily Tribune*, May 26, 1870, 8.
[25] Edward B. Davis, "Albert Barnes, 1798-1870: An Exponent of New School Presbyterianism" (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1961), 34.

invisible force was making life difficult bear. Fortunately he was not terribly far from home. Since Hamilton College was near the village of Clinton, Barnes could literally walk back to his home town of Rome which was only 13 or 14 miles away. His father owned a farm there. His younger brother Ambrose and sister Julia still lived nearby. Perhaps this was his punishment for attempting to live beyond his family station.[26]

Surprisingly his thoughts ground to a halt as someone called out from deep within the depths of the dorm room. Barnes straightened himself as he caught sight of sudden movement in the darkness. His eyes strained to see who it was but in an instant of clarity how could it have been anyone else? His roommate Charles Avery stood before him. There were tears in his eyes and for a moment the two men stared silently at each other; neither moving, neither speaking. In the quiet Barnes struggled to understand what was bothering Avery and shifted uncomfortably as the air grew heavy. Then, without warning, his roommate spoke and he unconsciously found himself on the couch, listening attentively to the young man's story. Once a rationalist skeptic like Barnes himself, for the remainder of the night Avery testified about the goodness of God and how the Holy Spirit had transformed his heart. Over the course of the evening something then began to change within Barnes and slowly—almost imperceptibly—he could feel the heaviness lift or rather break off just as surely as if it were barnacles on a ship's hull. Thus, in the fall of 1819, during his first year of college, Albert Barnes finally surrendered to that invisible force that had been pressing on him for days. That night Albert Barnes accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.[27]

---

[26] Albert Barnes, Daniel March, and Herrick Johnson, *Threescore and Ten: A Memorial of the Late Albert Barnes* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, Undated), vii, 42-44, 111; Davis, 4-5, 9.
[27] *New York Daily Tribune*, 8; Barnes et al., vii-ix; Davis, 34.

Looking back over the course of his life more than 50 years later, Barnes interpreted his early years in central New York as a critical period of intellectual and spiritual formation that directly influenced his destiny for decades to come.[28] Indeed, the fact that Barnes converted to Christianity where and when he did also becomes vitally important to the ultimate conclusion of this narrative as well—demonstrating how the graduates of Auburn Theological Seminary were far from the only means by which Plan of Union Calvinism spread across the Presbyterian Church in the early 19th century. Again, New School diffusion occurred informally just as effectively as if occurred formally. What makes then the life of Albert Barnes so powerful is that not only does he perfectly illustrate this dynamic, but he also was the very person who brought it to an abrupt halt and plunged the American Presbyterian Church into chaos and division.

Although Barnes was not a graduate of Auburn, his education at Hamilton was nevertheless steeped in the Hopkinsian Christianity of the region. In fact Edward B. Davis, the minister's only biographer, takes great pains to reconstruct the academic environment of the school during this period and illustrates just how similar Hamilton was to Auburn in terms of history, personnel, and intellectual composition. Accordingly, while it did not take Barnes long to finish college, his spiritual awakening came at precisely the right time to usher the young man into Plan of Union Presbyterianism and influence his decision to abandon a career in Law for a future devoted to exploring God's grace.[29]

Following his graduation in 1820, however, Barnes found himself in yet another crisis—what to do from here? He had given his life over to the purposes and plans of God, certainly, but it remained uncertain what that specifically entailed for his future. No doubt the young man

[28] Barnes et al., 43-45.
[29] Davis, 16-23, 35.

felt adrift in an intimidating new ocean of promise and possibility, with no immediate way to know if he should return home, leave the State, or even the country. As often is the case, Barnes ultimately decided to reach for the familiar and returned to Rome as he waited earnestly for direction. No longer interested in practicing Law, he prayed God would establish him as a minister and preacher of the Gospel, somewhere, anywhere; he would even go to a foreign land if necessary. Unfortunately, his circumstances indicated that such a career was extremely unlikely. Firstly, he had been a Christian for only a short time and would not find a church to formally join until November of that year. Secondly he was virtually penniless—without the means to continue his education—and while it may have been possible to work as a laborer and save enough to enter a respectable seminary, it was 1820 and no theological school presently existed nearby. Certainly there were rumors that Auburn Seminary would be completed within a year. The problem was that the school's future was far from clear; faculty members had not been appointed, nor had an edifice even been completed. The only reasonable options then were Andover, Yale, and Princeton—the closest of which was over 250 miles away. To make matters worse, even if Auburn was a viable option for Barnes, it would take years before he could ever earn the necessary cash to enroll.[30]

In what appeared a hopeless situation, the hand of God did not tarry for long and Barnes unexpectedly found a surprising answer to his prayers when Eleazer S. Barrows informed him of a scholarship opportunity to Princeton Theological Seminary. At the time

[30] Albert Barnes, "Church Manual for the Use of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia" (Philadelphia, 1841), BX 9211.P49103 F502, Presbyterian Historical Society, 30; Davis, 35-36; James H. Johnston, *The Dead Who Die in the Lord, Blessed: A Sermon Preached in the Centre Church Crawfordsville, Indiana* (Philadelphia: William F. Murphy's Sons, 1874), 4; James H. Hotchkin, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1848), 210.

Barrows was the resident Librarian for Hamilton College and would later become pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Pompey, New York—one of the founding churches of the Middle Association. Barrows was also a graduate of Princeton Seminary, which explains why sometime in 1819 or early 1820, he was requested to write Princeton and ask if there were any available scholarships for Hamilton graduates. The first response Barrows received was "no" but a few months later Dr. Archibald Alexander, then Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology at Princeton, informed him that scholarships were indeed available for any two candidates that Barrows deemed most promising. Why precisely the professor selected Barnes remains a mystery. Was Barrows a mentor to Barnes? Did he teach one of the young man's classes? Or was Barnes simply top of his graduating class? Whatever the reason, Barnes was in fact selected by Barrows and was no doubt overjoyed at the opportunity to enter the premier institution of the American Presbyterian Church. Thus by late 1820, the young man would be the first of many western Hopkinsians who migrated from the Finger Lakes region, into the territory of conservative Presbyterianism.[31]

Concerning the next three years, very little is known of what transpired during the time that Barnes was a student of Princeton Seminary. One of the few sources that are available comes from a funeral sermon by the Rev. James H. Johnston who went to school with Barnes both at Hamilton and Princeton. Preaching on the 26th of February 1871, Johnston recalls how his friend's unique secondary education at Fairfield Academy is likely what allowed him to complete Hamilton in only a year. Interestingly, it was Johnston who was the second name that

[31] Johnston, 4-5; "Untitled," *Hamilton College Record* vol. 14, no. 2 (May, 1915), 40; Princeton Theological Seminary, *General Catalogue of the Theological Seminary: Princeton, New Jersey* (Princeton: Connolly & Madden, 1829), 5; Hotchkin, 316, 49.

Barrows intended for recommendation but Johnston was then employed as a teacher and was forced to wait another year before entering the seminary. Nevertheless, at the beginning of 1821 the young man was able to enter Princeton and spent the next two years with Barnes in mutual study and support. With particular affection, Johnston recalls the prayer group he and Barnes attended every Saturday night with a handful of other Hamilton graduates. Similarly, Barnes apparently spent a portion of his Tuesdays and Fridays participating in the school's Theological Society meetings. On Sundays, after morning worship, he would then walk to College Hall and engage in the theological debates that regularly took place between students and professors. Yet with as much as he enjoyed being surrounded by a community of likeminded believers, the young man's time at Princeton soon drew to a close and by 1823 Barnes completed his studies and begin ministering as a licentiate.[32]

Unlike Johnston, who accepted an invitation to pastor a Presbyterian Church in Indiana, Barnes lingered on the Atlantic seaboard and eventually received the pulpit of Dr. James Richard's former church at Morristown in 1825. Perhaps learning from their dispute with Dr. Richards, Morristown offered the preacher a generous salary of 1000 dollars a year—400 dollars more than what either Drs. Mills or Perrine were presently making as professors at Auburn. According to the minutes of the congregation, and the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, the ordination service that formally consecrated Barnes as a clergyman was "full and crowded." The Rev. John McDowell, a conservative who would later side with the Old School in the 1830s, delivered the ceremony's sermon address. Ironically enough, McDowell preached from 1st

[32] Johnston, 3-5; Davis, 68; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1825), 285.

Thessalonians 5:12-13, a passage which admonishes the reader to "respect those who labor among you…[and] be at peace among yourselves" (ESV).[33]

While McDowell's message would of course later be ignored when Barnes moved to Philadelphia, the sermon did have the desired effect as the clergyman's tenure at Morristown proved to be both prosperous and uncontroversial. Indeed, this period of the minister's life was so enjoyable that in a letter to Johnston during the month of November, 1827 he said:

> I am becoming more and more attached to the office of a pastor…I am daily feeling more deeply that there is no office so dignified and there can be no one more happy than the one which I sustain. The three years that I have spent here have been the happiest of my life.[34]

As a result of his newly found prosperity, the preacher began venturing into various side projects, beyond his immediate pastoral duties. For instance, Barnes published numerous articles in the local weekly paper on the subject of temperance and organized four presbytery Bible classes to help offset Sabbath breaking in the area. The minister then turned his eye to public education and began agitating for proper school development; a project which resulted in his first published sermon for mass consumption in 1827. Barnes likewise resolved to do something about the dismal state of American Sunday School education and began writing New Testament commentaries to better equip teachers. Years later the project led to the publication of numerous books that would actually help earn him world-wide recognition for decades to come.[35]

---

[33] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1826* (Philadelphia: Jesper Harding, 1826) 5; John Quincy Adams, *A History of Auburn Theological Seminary, 1818-1918* (Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918), 54; Johnston, 6; Davis, 74-75.
[34] Quoted in Johnston, 7.
[35] Ibid., 7; Davis, 77-78.

Yet even though the minister's career prospered both rapidly and peacefully, it does not mean that he hesitated to advance New School doctrinal perspectives while in Morristown. In fact, Barnes sought to do this very thing from the pulpit, through print media, and his congregation's formal covenant of fellowship. For example in an obvious effort to insert New Divinity principles into the church's Articles of Faith, Barnes required that prospective Morristown church members formally affirm the concept of man's rational free agency and that the human heart is the primary focus of sanctification:

> Article IV. You believe that man is a free agent, responsible to God for all his actions, thought's and plans; that his sin, and indisposition to obey the law of God, are no excuse for transgression; that every man is bound to repent and believe; and that the Gospel is to be preached to all mankind… Article VIII. You believe in the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost; that he renews and sanctifies the heart.[36]

In similar fashion, the preacher's Sunday sermons were also attempts at advancing Plan of Union Calvinism across the Presbytery of Elizabethtown. This can be seen perfectly in his most famous of sermons from the 1820s "The Way of Salvation." Much like Dr. Matthew La Rue Perrine before him, in 1829 Barnes instructed his parishioners in all the essentials of New School Presbyterian doctrine: advocating the Governmental Theory of Christ's Atonement, refuting the doctrine of Original Sin, and suggesting that the moral inability of sinners was confined to the will or affections of one's heart and not their intellect or mind:

> The rejection of the gospel, then, is to be traced to some cause where man will be to blame, not God…This is a matter of common sense. If God requires more of men than *in any sense* they are able to perform, then in the practical judgment of all men, according to the reason He has given them, He is unjust…the Bible ascribes the sinner's inability to *the will*. John 5:40. The effect of conversion is on the will…In all this the sinner chooses freely. The Spirit compels no one: He shuts out no one…[T]his is done by a change in the affections and life of man. This change has

[36] First Presbyterian Church in Morristown N.J., "Mr. Barnes' Manual," *The Record: First Presbyterian Church, Morristown, N.J.* vol. 3, no. 10 (October, 1883), 7.

> been usually called regeneration, or new birth, or conversion. It is a revolution of character…a revolution in his objects and pursuits…[T]his is Calvinism—the scheme so often misrepresented—so little understood—so much hated by impenitent sinners…It neither asserts that God made men to damn them—nor that infants will be damned…nor that God is unwilling to save them—nor that a poor penitent may not be saved; but it claims that God is full of mercy, making ample provision for all that *will* come, and inviting all freely.[37]

This promotion of Union Christianity, however, was not merely limited to nuanced discussions of Moral Theology but extended also to the minister's views on revival, ecumenism, and millennialism. While traces of this can of course be seen during his time in Morristown, his later writings do a much better job illustrating a man fully in keeping with the millennial optimism of western Calvinism.[38] In review of his eschatological interpretations on the Book of Revelation for instance, Barnes predicted an approaching day in which intemperance and slavery will cease, when inventions more wonderful than the steam engine and telegraph will be made, when wars will be unknown and Christians reign over every national government, when the Jewish people will embrace the Messiah, and the fires of revival will enflame the hearts of every individual.[39] Indeed, concerning revival in particular, Barnes was as much a supporter of contemporary revival measures as any frontier revivalist, charging that while a revival is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit, and not the work of man:

> human agency may be employed…The way to propagate and secure just sentiments in a community is to appeal to common sympathies and common feelings. If you wish to spread any opinion and principles, you will not do it by appealing to individual *as such*, you will call to your aid the power of the social organization…I have seen merchants of our cities and towns agitated by a common apprehension

[37] Albert Barnes, "The Way of Salvation: A Sermon Delivered at Morristown, New Jersey February 8, 1829" (Morristown: Jacob Mann, 1830), SCP 6448, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, 14, 18, 22, 27-28.
[38] Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Gospels: Matthew and Mark, Principally Designed for the Use of Sunday School Teachers and Bible Classes* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1832), 231-232, 379; Barnes, "The Way of Salvation," 18; Albert Barnes, *Revival Sermons*, ed. A. Weston (London: William Tegg, 1865), 14-15.
[39] Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1852), 462, 465, 341-342.

> of danger…I ask why there may not be as deep common feeling on the subject of religion?...Let the same zeal and ardor be manifested in religion; let the churches evince the same anxiety for the honor of their Lord and Redeemer, and for His ascendancy in the hearts of men, which political organizations have done…it would be all that we could pray for in a revival of religion.[40]

Consequently, the minister's pragmatic approach to evangelism had a direct impact on the notoriety he would enjoy as a mid-Atlantic preacher and revivalist. In fact the most dramatic event of Barnes' residency in New Jersey was a revival that swept over his congregation in late 1828.

According to a letter written by Barnes in 1829, the excitement began between the beginning of November 1828 and January of 1829. During this time large crowds of people appeared at the door of the Morristown Presbyterian Church; each eagerly waiting to catch a glimpse of the man who was single handedly electrifying the community. Apparently there were so many hoping to gain admittance that the church building itself was filled long before a majority could even step inside. Extra services were demanded to accommodate the numbers. At the height of the frenzy, observers spilled out from the auditorium, through propped open doors, and into surrounding classrooms. For three months this continued, getting more intense by the day. Barnes even wrote to a friend in the midst of it all that he had never before witnessed such a thing; "the whole aspect of the town is changed…religion is the principal topic of conversation and an aspect of seriousness is spread over the town that to me is most delightful."[41]

To verify that these statements were not mere exaggeration, one need only examine the congregation statistical returns from the General Assembly Minutes of the time period.

---

[40] Albert Barnes, *The Theory and Desirableness of Revivals* (London: Robert B. Blackader, 1842), 35, 39-41.
[41] Letter from Albert Barnes to Rev. George Bush, January 29, 1829, quoted in Davis 86.

Here one will find that Barnes was in no way embellishing his success and influence for according to the appendix of the 1829 minutes, it is reported that Morristown had a combined total of around 525 regular members. This, it must be noted, does not include the aggregate amount of persons who attended Sunday service, only those who completed the steps for formal membership. In 1830 that number increased to over 650—the third largest increase of any congregation in all the denomination for that year.[42]

As a result of this profound success, Barnes soon discovered that he suddenly had become one of the most famous and sought after ministers on the eastern seaboard. He was barely thirty years old and already few his age could match his notoriety, be it in print or at the pulpit. Accordingly, Barnes began to receive numerous invitations to leave Morristown, particularly from congregations out West that were in need of a pastor. One offer in particular, however, captured the minister's attention; an invitation from the largest and certainly oldest church in all the denomination—the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.[43]

Established sometime in the late 1690s, the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia originated from a conglomeration of English, Scottish, and Irish Calvinist immigrants. The Rev. Jedediah Andrews, a Congregationalist from New England ironically enough, was the congregation's first minister but due to the influence of Francis Makemie, the father of American Presbyterianism, the congregation and those neighboring it quickly became fully Presbyterian, resulting in the creation of the first presbytery within the colonies sometime between 1706 and 1707. One hundred years later, the church had become a geographic

[42] Davis, 86; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1829* (Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1829), 448; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1830* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes and L.R. Bailey, 1830), 74, 59-141.
[43] Johnston, 8.

landmark and bulwark for the city of Philadelphia and the Presbyterian Church as a whole, with virtually every General Assembly meeting hosted within its walls. [44]

In 1829, however, the situation of First Church hardly fit the eastern denominational norm. This was primarily because its pastor, the Rev. James Patriot Wilson, had over the course of a 20 year career gradually steered the church into a marked tolerance for the New Divinity. Therefore, by the time of his announced retirement that December, the Rev. Albert Barnes was attractive to First Church both for his public notoriety, as well as his intellectual compatibility. To elaborate, Rev. Wilson by and large is possibly best described as a superficial Edwardsian who throughout his career emphasized the Hopkinsian understanding of moral agency and Christian regeneration; stressing the regeneration of the heart, with little to say of a darkened human mind.[45]

In this regard Wilson may certainly be considered Hopkinsian. Why then did he pastor the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and incite so little controversy during his residency of more than 20 years? Perhaps the greatest reason stems from the fact he was first and foremost an easterner from Lewes, Sussex County, Delaware and had all the sophistication and mannerisms of the eastern elite. To begin, Wilson was extremely brilliant, so much so that during his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania the faculty mentioned that their star pupil should begin instructing his own classmates. Consequently, the university immediately

---

[44] Barnes, "Church Manual for the Use of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia," 3-5; Guy S. Klett, *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church In America: 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1976), 1-2.

[45] James P. Wilson, *Moral Agency, or, Natural Ability Consistent with Moral Inability: Being Remarks on "An Essay on the Inability of Sinners" by a Presbyterian* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1819); James P. Wilson, *Sin Destitute of the Apology of Inability; or, Moral Inability No Constituent of Human Nature.* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1820); James P. Wilson, *Common Objections to Christianity: Proposed and Answered in Two Dispassionate Conversations* (Philadelphia: E. Littell and Brother, 1829).

offered him the position of Assistant Professor of Mathematics.[46] Added then to his intellectual power, Wilson's personal charm and magnetism must have been profound as well. The Rev. Samuel Miller of Princeton for example even commented on this fact in 1830. Writing in response to a letter from Barnes about whether or not to accept the pulpit of Rev. Wilson, Dr. Miller—rather courteously—stated his reservations as to whether the New York bred westerner had the style and elegance required for the "wants of a city congregation." To put plainly, Barnes could hardly match his potential predecessor's social sophistication. Wilson then, concluded Miller, "is so truly extraordinary a man, so perfectly unique in his character; that no experience in favor of another, from his habits, can be safely drawn" in determining Barnes' ability to acclimate to eastern urbanity and the First Church of Philadelphia.[47]

Yet despite what Dr. Miller thought, Wilson's upbringing and origins were anything but high-class and debonair. Although he may have been raised on the East Coast, his religious history did not flow from a centralized presbytery of power and influence. Instead, the presbytery to which he was first a minister in and ordained from was extremely peripheral to the central power structures of the church. This made him rather exceptional in that he had actually spent his intellectual and theological formative years within a marginal region of the denomination, the Presbytery of Lewes, which actually ranked at the very bottom of the Factor rankings for the 1810s and the 1820s. This then placed him within a significant, and rather unique, pocket of marginality in the East that was by virtue of its structural position, inherently sympathetic to innovation.

---

[46] William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Presbyterian*, vol. 4 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), 353.
[47] Samuel Miller, *The Life of Samuel Miller: Second Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, New Jersey*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1869), 153-154.

In this respect, Wilson should have been the last man to have been selected as pastor of arguably the most important church in the denomination. Indeed, Wilson had no formal seminary training and spent much of his adult life as a lawyer before becoming ordained by Lewes Presbytery in 1804. Thus, in virtually every way, Wilson is a true anomaly and should not have moved to Philadelphia in the first place, nor should his career have been has peaceful as it was. Nevertheless, the minister had three important things working for him. Firstly, he was good friends with Dr. Benjamin Rush, who almost single handedly secured the pulpit for Wilson in 1806. This was in the wake of the First Presbyterian Church's desperate search to replace their former minister, the Rev. John Blair Linn, who had died unexpectedly in 1804 at the age of 27.[48] Thus, the church may have been particularly impressionable when Dr. Rush suggested Wilson as their minister.[49]

Secondly, Wilson published little during his 20 year residency in Philadelphia and likely appeared relatively inert to conservatives who saw little reason to guard their powerbase. Thirdly, for the majority of Wilson's time as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, western Plan of Union Hopkinsians had not begun migrating en mass into New York City or the Delaware River Valley. Thus, progressive men like Wilson were relatively few and far between in Philadelphia during 1800s. This then gave conservatives little to fear from the preacher who not only self identified as Edwardsian, but who would later go on record to say that Hopkinsianism

[48] Charles Brockden Brown, *The Literary Magazine, and American Register for 1804*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: John Conrad & Company, 1804), 554.
[49] Sprague, 353; Barnes, "Church Manual for the Use of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia," 19-20.

"would require me to change my prayers…invert the whole order of my conceptions…alter my Bible…make me abandon God's justice, and frustrate his grace in Christ."[50]

By 1830, however, this dynamic changed dramatically as the number of western New Schoolers rose considerably in the East as men like Albert Barnes, or Henry Tappan for that matter, migrated into presbyteries within New York City, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania. Thus First Church's invitation to Barnes, from the perspective of the Philadelphia orthodox, represented a significant incursion into their intellectual territory. Yet perhaps equally problematic was the way in which First Church selected and finally secured their next pastor. Rumor was that the selection committee procured a printed copy of The "Way of Salvation" and based their decision to seat Barnes solely on that. Upon hearing this, conservatives were apoplectic and could not understand the reasoning behind the decision, nor the fact that First Church had not even required Barnes to preach a preliminary sermon in Philadelphia before extending their invitation.[51]

The situation was equally tense in northern New Jersey. Upon hearing news of the invitation, Morristown and the Presbytery of Elizabethtown were utterly shocked when they learned that the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia was attempting to poach their pastor. In fact, the congregation steadfastly refused to release Barnes. This then led to a fair amount of friction between Morristown and First Church, with the latter eventually sending a small delegation to Chatham, New Jersey in an attempt to confer with Presbytery representatives. While it is difficult to know precisely what transpired at the meeting, it is likely that there was

[50] Richard W. Dickinson, "Reminiscences of James P. Wilson, D.D., and Rev. Albert Barnes," *The American Presbyterian Review* no. 11, Third Series (July 1871) 385-386.
[51] Davis, 110-111, 121; Johnston, 8-9; Dickinson, 395.

no shortage of tension as the two sides remained deadlocked in argument. As each party made their case, however, the footing of those from Morristown began to weaken—they no doubt sensed their minister's willingness to leave. Certainly Barnes was torn and even said as much in a letter to Johnston. Writing in the summer of 1830 he states: "I have wept and prayed much over this call to leave the place where I have enjoyed so much and to which I have become so strongly attached." Yet despite the conflict, the allure of Philadelphia proved too much for the minister to ignore and on June 8th, 1830, the Presbytery of Elizabethtown eventually conceded, officially dissolving their relationship with Barnes and releasing him to the utter storm that was brewing across the Delaware. In this way then, amid intense scrutiny, Barnes uprooted his family from the peace and comfort of New Jersey for the excitement and prominence of Philadelphia; successfully penetrating the very center of Old School Presbyterianism. Indeed here Hopkinsian Calvinism was finally positioned to supplant the intellectual foundation upon which American Presbyterianism had been built and usher in a new era of eastern Christianity that was both more modern in nature and more ecumenical in outlook.[52]

The Hopkinsian Controversy Reaches a Conclusion

Despite the First Presbyterian Church's excitement over acquiring Albert Barnes, the Rev. Ashbel Green and the patriarchs of the city's presbytery were furious and immediately began initiating steps to have Barnes removed. Summing up the state of things in a letter to a long time friend, Green saw the appointment of Barnes as a call to arms but regretted the way he would have to remove him:

> There never was a more palpable error than the one which has been industriously circulated…Mr. Barnes might have preached twenty Hopkinsian and Pelagian

[52] Ibid.

> sermons instead of one, and published them too, and no member of the presbytery, I am persuaded, would have disturbed the peace if not reduced to the alternative of doing this…No, my dear sir, we did not strike at New Divinity of choice. We were placed in circumstances which compelled us to do it…The Church was fast asleep. The wise virgins were slumbering with the foolish and this act compelled them to awake.[53]

If, as Green surmised, the Old School had truly been sleeping comfortably, with no indication that their traditional hold on the denomination was slipping, he was also correct in classifying the conservative frame of mind regarding Barnes—that his removal was necessary to preserve the church as it was. At the time everything seemed to favor Green and his allies. Again, Green was the former pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, a rival of First Church since its foundation in the 1740s. Green was also the current editor for the principal Old School publication of the day, the *Christian Advocate*. Meanwhile, Green held numerous administrative positions serving as sitting director of Princeton and Western Theological Seminaries,[54] President of the General Assembly Board of Trustees and a trustee of Princeton Seminary, a former president of Princeton College, the first president of the Board of Home Missions, current president of Jefferson Medical College, and a former Moderator and stated clerk of the General Assembly and the Presbytery of Philadelphia. In short, Green was not to be underestimated and would use all of his considerable influence to cleanse the city of the New School infection.[55]

---

[53] Letter from Ashbel Green to Dr. How, February 3, 1834 in Ashbel Green, *The Life of Ashbel Green*, ed. Joseph Huntington Jones (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1849), 585-586.

[54] Western Theological Seminary was a conservative response to the foundation of Auburn Seminary. It was established by the General Assembly near Pittsburgh in 1827. For more information see *Historical and Biographical Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church* (Allegheny: The Seminary, 1885), 6, 12.

[55] Green, 151-152, 329, 338, 340-342; Davis, 122-123.

Yet Green by no means would have an easy fight on his hands. This was due, as stated before, to the unexpected defection of the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely who was presently serving as the pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and editor of a religious magazine similar to Green's entitled the *Philadelphian*.[56] Although back in 1811 Ely published his attack on Hopkinsianism, by the late 1820s Ely's theological affinities had mysteriously changed. Was it because of his historic connections with New England? [57] Was it the result of something that happened within Philadelphia? In either respect it is impossible to know with any certainty as the details of this theological migration remain obscured. Yet regardless of why Ely acted as he did, he nevertheless came to the aid of First Church on April 20, 1830, as the Presbytery of Philadelphia first considered the recent pastoral appointment of its flagship congregation. This, it must be mentioned, was concurrent with the Morristown drama so Barnes was of course physically absent from the proceedings. Dragging on for days, Green and Ely proceeded to exchange blows as Ely defended the decision of First Church, while Green attacked it. Eventually the battle reached a climax and a vote was called. When the final vote was tallied those who decided to support the autonomy of First Church prevailed 21 to 12. Yet Ashbel Green was far from finished and immediately composed a formal protest that was later forwarded to the Synod of Philadelphia, the Presbytery's immediate governing body. Accordingly, this led to the historic meeting in Lancaster on October 27, 1830 where Green had more success and the Presbytery was ordered to revisit the matter the following month.[58]

---

[56] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly...A.D. 1830*, 88; Engles, *A True and Complete Narrative of All the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Presbytery and of the Philadelphia Synod in Relation to the Case of the Rev. Albert Barnes* (Philadelphia: Russell & Martien, 1830), 44.

[57] Ely in fact studied under Timothy Dwight at Yale and was born in Connecticut in 1786.

[58] Presbytery of Philadelphia, "Records of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Volume 3" (Philadelphia, 1826), VAULT MI45 P5, Presbyterian Historical Society, 129-142; Engles, 16.

With this then the story at long last comes full circle, as the very presbytery trial that began our drama finally gives way to the acquittal of Barnes in the Presbyterian General Assembly and the ultimate triumph of Union Calvinism in the American Presbyterian Church. As refresher, when the third meeting in the Barnes case commenced, Ely began by declaring the gathering out of order, arguing that only a formal heresy trial could remove a congregation's minister. To his disappointment, however, Green was perfectly prepared for this and had managed to assemble a presbytery majority large enough to eventually vote Ely down. As such, the Presbytery then moved forward to consider procedurally ambiguous charges against Barnes, resolving to create a committee that would personally interview the minister on the particulars of his theology in a more private setting. Barnes though did not cooperate and politely refused to deal with the inspection committee that later arrived to inspect him. Consequently, the entire issue was subsequently thrust into the General Assembly the following summer of 1831.[59]

* * *

In the end, Old School conservatives discovered that they could neither contend with the number of western delegates at the 1831 General Assembly, nor the Plan of Union ministers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Additionally, with the defection of eastern elites like Ely, the prosecution of Barnes was going to be extremely difficult to achieve. This is particularly true in light of the fact that when the 1831 Assembly meeting finally took place, almost immediately the New School managed to elect their man for Moderator—the Rev. Nathan Sidney Smith Beman of Troy, New York.

[59] Davis, 130-136.

Beman himself was a firm Plan of Union Calvinist who not only supported an Hopkinsian understanding of conversion but was—much like Auburn's Dirck Lansing—a faithful supporter of revival and the work of Charles G. Finney. Unlike Lansing though, Beman apparently had little stomach for partisan bickering and resolved to diplomatically appoint Dr. Samuel Miller of Princeton Seminary to chair a committee that would settle the Barnes question once and for all. Why Beman selected Miller is unclear. By reputation the professor was known for his orthodoxy, certainly, but he was also considered a man of great personal moderation and discretion, having no interest in seeing the church divided. In fact Miller stated as much in a letter to Green a year earlier:

> [I]f I were a member of the presbytery [Philadelphia], and if a call for Mr. Barnes were laid before that body, I should utterly oppose a motion to refuse to allow it to be prosecuted. My reasons are these…the situation of the Washington Square Church [First Church] is deplorable and perplexing in the extreme. I have reason to think that there is the utmost danger of their being torn in pieces and scattered unless they make some tolerable choice soon…as sure as you refuse to allow the people to prosecute their call…they will with highly excited and revolted feelings break off from the Presbyterian Church, declare themselves independent, call their man in spite of you, bring him to Philadelphia with a spirit which will render him tenfold more hostile, active, and mischievous than if he came in the usual way. Thus all the evils which you fear will be immensely multiplied and extended.[60]

Thus, Miller had deep apprehensions about creating a situation that could result in schism of any kind. Furthermore, according to Miller's autobiography, most of the other members of the committee were in favor of keeping Barnes right where he was. This is supported by the fact that five of the eleven men were from either the Trans-Appalachian West, Plan of Union territory, or New England itself: Dirck Lansing of New York, John Matthews of Madison, Indiana; Ezra Fisk of Goshen, New York; Leonard Bacon, a Congregationalist from

[60] Miller, 151, 191-193.

the General Association of Connecticut; and Fredrick Ross from Kingsport, Tennessee. Therefore, Miller entered into negotiations with his fellow committeemen fully devoted to reaching an agreeable compromise and on Monday the 30th of May, 1831—at a little after 4 o'clock—the committee responsible for deciding the fate of Albert Barnes emerged from their chambers, ready to deliver a verdict.[61]

Consistent with his position as chair, Dr. Miller happened to be the one responsible for presenting the committee's final decision on the Barnes case. In point of fact, however, the seminary professor was utterly exhausted and it may have been better if the responsibility was passed to another. Miller had stayed for all eleven days—and for every hour—of the proceedings and although he was stumbling to the finish line, he likely felt at least some sense of satisfaction that the Barnes debacle might well be over.[62] Therefore marshaling the strength to speak, the 62 year old Miller read from his prepared script; his hands shaking, his voice weak. He was not only tired but probably nervous as well. The committee had slipped out of his control at last minute and was now unequivocally in favor of New School Presbyterianism, a severe blow to the orthodox:

> [W]hile it [the General Assembly] appreciates the conscientious zeal for the purity of the Church by which the Presbytery of Philadelphia is believed to have been actuated in its proceedings; and while it judges that the sermon by Mr. Barnes, entitled, "The Way of Salvation," contains a number of unguarded and objectionable passages; yet it is of the opinion that…the Presbytery ought to have suffered the whole to pass without further notice. Resolved, that in the judgment of this Assembly, the Presbytery of Philadelphia ought to suspend all further proceedings in the case of Mr. Barnes. Resolved, that it will be expedient, as soon as

[61] Miller, 193; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1831* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1831), 156, 158, 173, 176; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1828* (Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1828), 332, 352, 350.
[62] Miller, 191.

> the regular steps can be taken, to divide the Presbytery in such a way as will be best calculated to promote the peace.[63]

It is hard to know what precisely the atmosphere was like after Miller read his verdict; was there a collective gasp? Did someone object or cry out? Were the New Schoolers a frenzy of celebration or excitement? While meeting minutes are notoriously bad at preserving the true sentiment of an event, often purposely excluding difficult exchanges, the Assembly minutes for that day record that the delegates actually joined together in a special prayer of thanks to God that a harmonious decision had at last been reached.[64] Yet despite the benediction, Ashbel Green and his supporters no doubt left that day feeling defeated and perhaps even a little betrayed; betrayed by Miller, by the members of the committee, and by the denomination at large. With the issue then formally settled, the Old School retreated home utterly spent, with nothing remaining in their arsenal as the committee decision was unappealable and final. Conversely Albert Barnes departed a practical celebrity as his position at First Church was now not only secure, but his theological system firmly entrenched and virtually sanctioned by the Assembly as a whole. Yet the victory itself would prove perhaps a bit more bittersweet than he had initially expected as the consequences of his ascendency—from frontier bumpkin to intellectual pacesetter—left collateral damage far beyond the confines of the city itself.

Epilogue

For the next five years Dr. Ashbel Green fruitlessly made every effort to reverse a trend that was literally 30 years in the making. Sometimes this involved direct attacks on other New School ministers within the denomination—as it did with George Duffield in 1832 and Lyman

[63] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church…A.D. 1831,* 180.
[64] Ibid., 181.

Beecher in 1835—other times it involved a more indirect approach; as it did when the print media was utilized. For example, writing from his editorial stump directly after the Barnes fiasco in July of 1831, Green publically issued his distress call to any remaining Westminster conservatives:

> We speak what we firmly believe when we say that unless in the passing year there is a general waking up of the Old School Presbyterians, to a sense of their danger and their duty, their influence in the General Assembly will forever afterward be subordinate and under control.[65]

Yet from Green's perspective, what made the situation so dire, so personal, was not only the marginalization of orthodox opinion in the General Assembly, nor the fact that the 1831 verdict exonerated a heretic, but that his very home had been ripped to pieces. In fact perhaps the most unusual result of the 1831 General Assembly decision was the formal division of the Presbytery of Philadelphia down factional lines with Barnes, Ely, and company composing the newly assembled Presbytery of Philadelphia Second, while Green and his allies remained in the Presbytery of Philadelphia proper.[66] This the 1831 Assembly committee enacted because it was clear to Professor Miller that some means of institutional separation was necessary to prevent the issue from developing into a nationwide controversy. The rationale essentially was that by sacrificing the structural unity of Philadelphia, by keeping the matter local and contained, the denomination as a whole would be more or less saved. As a result, the Old School was in many respects boxed in, with each and every subsequent attempt on their part to purge the New School ending in failure; as it did in 1834 when Green's party attempted to nullify the Barnes verdict of 1831 and restore the unity of the Presbytery. This of course would

[65] Ashbel Green, *The Christian Advocate*, vol. 9 (Philadelphia: A. Finley, 1831), 366.
[66] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1832* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1832), 400.

have placed Barnes once again under the parliamentary jurisdiction of conservatives but the action ultimately proved unsuccessful.[67] Amazingly, the Old School would then attempt to place Barnes on trial a second time and actually managed to shortly suspend him through a Synod action in 1835. Afterward, however, the suspension amounted to nothing as the harmonizers at Princeton and the western New School men quickly overturned the Synod action during the summer of 1836.[68]

In the long run, the Old School not only failed to unseat Barnes but virtually every other clergyman they targeted. Suddenly it became clear that a change of tactics was in order and instead of attempting to silence and excommunicate individuals, they eventually concluded that the real root of their problem must be addressed—the western Plan of Union presbyteries (Geneva, Cayuga, Oneida etc.) that were fueling the New School takeover. But how could they eliminate whole presbyteries and synods from the denomination if they could not even handle a handful of ministers? Realizing then that for this final assault to work they would have to try something radically different, a week before the 1837 General Assembly the Old School organized a private convention of their own, a convention that not only better mobilized conservatives before the Assembly meeting took place, but at times even conferred *during* the Assembly deliberations to clarify any strategic confusion or questions. In all there were over 100 in attendance as numerous resolutions were passed, the most important of which officially called for "every Church, Presbytery, or Synod now in nominal connection with this Assembly,

[67] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1834* (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1836), 16-17.
[68] George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1970), 61-62.

but which is not organized on Presbyterian principles, [to] be immediately brought into order, dissolved, or disconnected."[69]

By virtue of this impressive and unprecedented act of parliamentary organization, the Old School was fully ready to enact its final solution when the General Assembly met May 18th. Fully arrayed and prepared for combat, the Old School infantry commenced a lightning quick assault on their unsuspecting opponents, catching the New School on their heels, wholly unprepared and disorganized. Their first goal was to claim a numerical majority by freezing out select opposing delegates, denying as many as possible the ability to vote. For this to work everything had to happen early on as numerous New School men lived out West and were often delayed due to travel conditions. Conversely most of the Old School men lived much closer to where the meeting was hosted and could easily assert themselves on the first few days of deliberations. To this the conservatives were successful. Therefore taking advantage of this brief window of opportunity, and moving before additional New School men could take their seats as delegates, the conservatives finally unveiled their great secret weapon—their nuclear option—by introducing an overture that would actually abrogate the Plan of Union between the Assembly and the churches of Connecticut—retroactively annulling 30 years of cooperative evangelism and growth. This was unceremoniously shoved through the body and managed to pass 143 to 110. Immediately conservatives then further pressed their advantage and passed yet another resolution declaring the abrogation retroactive, thereby exscinding

[69] Isaac V. Brown, *A Historical Vindication of the Abrogation of the Plan of Union* (Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1855), 216-226.

those presbyteries, and synods that were organized as such—the canal presbyteries of New York and the presbyteries of Northern Ohio.[70]

Ultimately, as the dust settled in the hot and humid summer air, the New School delegates stood speechless, wholly shocked and demoralized. They could hardly believe what had happened for without warning, in the blink of an eye, nearly 20 percent of the entire denomination had been formally removed from fellowship; a reality that conveniently reduced the voting strength of the New School by close to 50 percent. Indeed according to the minutes there was enough of a disturbance from public observers in response to the action, that the Old School resolved to force the spectators from the building and lock the doors of the Assembly, concluding the remaining proceedings in secret.[71]

With the General Assembly now privately concluding its business the second week of June, little remained for the New School men; they had been caught off guard no doubt feeling ambushed, with little idea of what to do next. Apparently some simply wished to surrender and beg the forgiveness of Green and his foot soldiers. Others thought it best to organize as the Old School had done. To further complicate the situation, the Congregational Churches of New York State that had not joined with the Presbyterian Church during the 1810s and 20s, promptly invited the exscinded presbyteries to join them. In an ironic turnaround of ecumenical affairs, some of the New School congregations did in fact accept the proposal. Most, however,

[70] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1837* (Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1837), 419-426, 444, 446; Marsden, 62-63.
[71] Ibid.

remained as they were and quickly a strong resolve developed among them to properly organize.[72]

Predictably Auburn, New York was where this happened and on the 17th of August, 1837, delegates from the Plan of Union presbyteries met, totaling 169 in all. Under the leadership of none other than Professor James Richards, they issued a statement entitled the "Auburn Declaration" which refuted the charges of heresy made by the Old School and declared the abrogation of the Plan of Union unconstitutional. The convention, though, also made another announcement by stubbornly declaring their intention to send commissioners to the next General Assembly as usual, as if nothing had happened. To be expected, when the exscinded presbytery delegates arrived at the 1838 General Assembly to take their seats, chaos immediately ensued and any decorum or semblance of formality was dropped as confusion and hostility swept the floor of the Seventh Presbyterian Church where the event was hosted. At this point nothing could be done; men shouted across the aisles at one another, while others stood upon the pews in defiance, spitting as they threatened retaliation. Eventually the New School, in a pitiful attempt to take legal control of the meeting, quickly ran through all the necessary formalities to adjourn the convention, declaring that it would reconvene at First Church as soon as possible. In this way then, the schism of American Presbyterianism effectively began that Thursday afternoon, May 17th, 1838, as the New School proudly made their exit of the Assembly hall and retreated to the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia; the very

[72] Adams, 107-109.

building and home of the one who initiated the controversy in the first place—a Plan of Union canal man from the West named Albert Barnes.[73]

[73] PCUSA (New School), *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1838* (New York: Scatcherd & Adams, 1838), 635-646; Marsden, 65.

Conclusion

The following 30 years would prove to be a difficult and turbulent period in American Presbyterian life as hostility and alienation became the experiential norm between the Old and New School. Moreover this situation would only get worse before it actually improved for with the capture of Fort Sumter in Spring of 1861, the two churches split yet again as both the Old and New School branches divided over the issue of slavery and increasing Federal authority. Fortunately, however, by the end of the war healing and reconciliation would at last begin and by 1869 the four branches—Old and New, North and South—eventually reunited.[1]

Yet unlike the schism that divided Presbyterians over slavery, the rupture of the 1830s was not so much a question of political concerns regarding the composition of Labor or the proper role of State power, but more an issue of sociological innovation and structural diffusion. In examining then the overall shape and trajectory of this diffusion narrative, it may be appropriate to finally conclude with a few general implications related to what this story means for understanding the American Reformed tradition as a whole, as well as what the lasting legacy of Union Calvinism could be.

Given the intellectual dynamic illustrated in the preceding chapters, and the profoundly geographic nature of the Old and New School divide, perhaps the most obvious insight one can draw from Canal or Union Christianity as a whole is that above all—space matters, that the development of many American institutions was intimately tied to frontier economics and commercial infrastructure. Put another way, the polarization and factional formation within Presbyterianism resulted first and foremost from the transmission of intellectual particularities

[1] George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1970), 212-229.

in the West, facilitated by the unprecedented ease of commercial and passenger transit. At the heart of this narrative then—and possibly even the development of Reformed Calvinism in the United States more broadly—are the implications of environment and the consequences of terrestrial movement.

Writing in the early 1960s, Sidney Mead certainly understood this fundamental aspect of American Intellectual History and argued that "the story of America is the story of…emigrant and immigrant people, ever moving rapidly onward through space…this American, this 'new man,' felt new and was new in part because of the plain possibility of escape."[2] As Professor of Religion and History at the University of Iowa, Mead perfectly understood the concept of space and is perhaps why he saw the simple vastness of the North American continent as the final explanation for why theological and religious diversity flourished in the antebellum U.S. During this period the cultural and intellectual byword was 'freedom' simply because the binding pressures of custom, tradition, and conformity were broken or nullified at the prospect of newly acquired land and the unfailing possibility of resettlement elsewhere. Such was certainly the case for many religious groups throughout history, be it 19th century Mormonism and the exodus led by Brigham Young, or even much earlier with Roger Williams and his band of New England Anabaptist dissenters. In this way then, the "subtle magic of space" quickly eroded the most carefully constructed bonds of authority and Old World antecedents as single men and women, or whole families and communities, saw the possibility of western land as an answer to all their material or spiritual problems.[3]

[2] Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973 [1963]), 14, 6.
[3] Ibid., 14.

Viewed accordingly, the founders of New School Presbyterianism within the Finger Lakes region had little choice but to depart from the confines of British Westminster Calvinism, for its Scholastic Logic appeared all but ridiculous in the open air of a limitless environment that not only allowed for extreme liberty and independence, but was also fraught with danger, isolation, privation, and peril. Before 1825, American presbyteries west of the Appalachian Mountains, were not only relatively small in size, but were also radically isolated from one another. In comparison to their eastern brethren, the amount of space between presbyteries, and even individual congregations, was daunting to say the least.

Conversely, and with the exception of all but a small handful, the majority of presbyteries in the East were comfortably nestled within the same, relatively narrow, 200 by 70 mile long eastern strip of land that stretched from Philadelphia to Albany. Additionally, this strip of land not only exerted a steady gravity upon its western brethren, but more importantly, constituted the relational and structural center of denominational power before the 1820s. This eastern corridor of power therefore amounted to approximately 14,000 square miles of territory and consequently provided little escape to intellectual or ecclesiastical innovators bent on social or theological change.

While at first glance this area may appear vast, in comparison with the infinite West nothing could be further from the truth. For those judicatories of the frontier—stretching from the Presbytery of Oneida in the north, to South Carolina in the south, and West Tennessee toward the setting sun, more than half a million square miles of land lay available to anyone looking for a place to hide. Moreover, the 14,000 square miles of territory in the Eastern Corridor was the most developed and most navigable land in all of North America, with stage-

coach routes and turnpikes linking every major city and settlement. On the frontier nothing comparable existed. Yes there were often walking trails through the woods from one village to the next, but overall the Presbyterian congregations across these lonely 600,000 square miles were truly islands of white Dutch, German, Scot-Irish or Anglo Calvinism unto themselves.

This relative seclusion made them strange and unique, a virtual Neo-Israel because within such a marginal and peripheral environment, one could truly do as one wished; theologically or otherwise. In consequence the traditional, inherited, doctrines of human inability and passivity began to appear more and more absurd. What did make sense in this insular context, however, were the offspring of the 18th century Rationalist controversy and the New England precepts of Samuel Hopkins. Here the idea of man's agency and liberty worked well with the freedom of the frontier. As Reform Theology then moved deeper into the forest, the swamp, the plains, and mountains, it became more free, more experiential, more "American"—leaving behind that which tied it to the past. There were exceptions to this pattern of course—most notably Bostonian Unitarianism—but more broadly the development of Union Calvinism as a whole was perhaps even inevitable. This was because the East could hardly expect to shape the mind of a western people who refused to bind themselves to the formulas and categories of stilted antiquated models, especially when those models failed to reconcile with material circumstances that were without precedent.[4] Yet in at least one respect

[4] A close reading of William Channing's "Likeness to God" will show that portions of Boston Unitarianism had much in common with the western bias toward human agency and freedom despite being thoroughly eastern. Channing for example argued in 1828 that "[t]o a man who is growing in the likeness of God, faith begins even here to change into vision. He carries within himself a proof of a Deity, which can only be understood by experience…[the responsibility then of the minister] is to act on free beings, who, after all, must determine themselves; who have power to withstand all foreign agency; who are to be saved not by mere preaching, but by their own prayers and toil." (William Ellery Channing, "Likeness to God: Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. F.A. Farley, Providence, R.I., 1828," in *The Works of William E. Channing* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1896), 292, 301).

the great *paradox* of this whole situation was that amid the break with the East, with tradition, Union Christianity did remain within its inherited cultural convention; a habit of radical protest reaching back into the 17th century—the Puritan errand into the wilderness.

Much like their descendents in Upstate New York, the 17th century English Separatists aboard the passenger ship *Arbella* believed it was their divine mission to find something in the wilderness of North America. They reasoned that by retreating to the New World they would discover what had been missing from Christianity all along; that God would make His church anew and complete the Reformation of Christendom with a working model of His Kingdom on the utter edge of society. From the wilderness of America therefore, the light of this perfected and purified people would cleanse the East of its corruptions and usher in the millennium. Yet for the Puritan errand to work, the community itself had to work together and mobilize. Things would not be easy. On the one hand the wilderness was indeed perfect for rebuilding human society, but on the other it was a place of great danger, scarcity, and insecurity. There could be no tolerance for extreme individualism here; everyone must work together or die alone. Certainly all of the ship's passengers were aware by now of Roanoke Colony; how approximately 100 colonists departed from Devon, England in 1585 never to be seen or heard from again. Such stories must have featured prominently in the private nightmares and whispered conversations of the brave setters aboard the Puritan vessel. Centuries later this very same dynamic still existed for to avoid a similar tragedy to that of Roanoke, western Presbyterians on the periphery also had to depend on one another for survival. Indeed this is the great irony of American Calvinism (and perhaps even the Western Mind in general), this is

the great tension, for while the space and vastness of the land creates autonomy, it likewise demands community, cooperation, and covenant.[5]

Ultimately it is through this lens that New York Presbyterianism must be viewed—the paradox of simultaneous freedom and covenant. The West required both, and it is both that the churches of the 1801 Plan of Union aspired to—a middle way. Such was the broader legacy of the Union ethos. Looking past the obvious fact that Canal Christianity produced a division within eastern Calvinism, the great project of men like Barnes, Tappan, Lansing and company was in part to restore what 18th century European individualism had taken, a sense of community and mutual covenant:

> [T]here are large numbers in the Christian churches who have only the feeblest conviction, if they have any, of the obligation to make direct personal efforts to promote the common cause…every professing Christian, with whatever denomination he may be connected, bears a portion of the honor and the responsibility of religion in the world. He is a part of the total church…he left the community of the world, and united himself with the fraternity of Christians…an army is made up of individual solders, [the] milky way in the heavens is made up of individual starts…[but] the real importance of the individual is to be estimated by the greatness of the results of all in combination.[6]

In the same breath, however, Union Christianity refused to completely forget its frontier prerogative and asserted the singular importance of the free agent:

> "Salvation is an individual work and destruction is an individual work. Satan plies his powers not on a community as an abstract thing, but on the individual…Christ died for individuals. And each one who is brought to heaven is to be renewed, sanctified, guided, defended, as if he were alone.[7]

[5] Perry G. Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 11; Cotton Mather, *A Midnight Cry* (Boston: John Allen, 1692), 63.
[6] Albert Barnes, A. Weston ed., *Revival Sermons*, (London: William Tegg, 1865), 12, 14-15, 5.
[7] Ibid., 18-19.

Taken together then, a delicate balancing act had to be maintained, one that preserved two mutually exclusive impulses: interdependency and individual autonomy. Making it work would be tricky business but western Calvinists had help to guide them on this middle road within a vast open space—the revival—a mechanism that concurrently emphasized personal agency and corporate brotherhood. Indeed in revival and only in revival could both an increased "tenderness of attachment" within the community, and a revolution of the individual's heart and character be achieved simultaneously.[8] It was only through revival then that this middle course was possible and it is for this reason that it initially flourished on the outskirts of American society and not in the East. Therefore, in the freedom and danger of the expansive wilderness, the middle course developed because it was in the West that the need was greatest.

Accordingly, this tension of freedom and communal covenant can perhaps not only help explain the development of New School, Union, Calvinism in the United States, but also an important side project of the New Divinity cultural program—the anomaly of western middle-class social reform during the mid 19th century. By the 1840s American society was awash with religious reform movements—Joseph Smiths' Restorationism, John Humphrey Noyes' communal utopianism—along with the more secular crusades of Temperance, Women's Rights, and Abolitionism.[9] As with the New Divinity, the flashpoint of this social change was the Finger Lakes region and canal country. Here a responsibility to the greater community mixed with the impulse to experiment, to innovate, and to cultivate freedom of thought.

---

[8] Ibid., 68, 59.

[9] Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History from the Colonial Period to the Outbreak of the Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 86-107, 206-211, 187-195, 332-327, 452-462, 491-501; Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), 138-150, 333-340, 211-237.

In this respect antebellum social reform could possibly be viewed more as a natural structural challenge where incongruent segments of a network attempt to find equilibrium—the periphery confronting the center—than the result of commercial stability or the catharsis of social anxiety produced by industrialism (as suggested by many of the scholars covered in the Introduction like Johnson, Cross, Tyler, or Ryan).[10] Put another way, what if 19th century movements like Antislavery were more the result of structural discrepancies within American society, or imbalances in institutional power, than the exclusive consequence of material dynamics? This perspective then brings everything back to the primary conclusion of the overall project—how sociological forces shape the unfolding of Intellectual History. Viewed through this lens, the margins of any social system, be it the Presbyterian General Assembly or the American Congress, will attempt to undermine the status quo for while individuals may act erratically and independently, collective action is anything but autonomous and is subject to understandable social principles.

One such principle is the general impotency of the hinterland and its affinity for heterodoxy. In promoting this heterodoxy, however, the periphery is almost always guaranteed to fail as it typically lacks the legitimacy and power to affect large-scale change. Nevertheless in the case of the Finger Lakes region, something unusual happened as what was once a geographic and commercial hinterland suddenly became a driving engine of development not only for itself, but also the nation as a whole. This was not only true commercially—or very specifically in the case of Union Calvinism—but more broadly as well as Upstate New York

[10] Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); Cross, *The Burned-Over District*; Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment*; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

became a great national incubator of things like Antislavery, Christian Socialism, gender equality, Millennialism, Sunday Schools, and Sabbatarianism; projects that all stretched far beyond the confines of New York State, impacting nearly every region of the country.

Yet in the end it is important to note that amid this great mix of further questions, analytical themes, and additional avenues of study, one must remember that this project is not so much an exploration of geography itself; or the intellectual and social particularities of the western intellectual paradox; nor the nuances that made the western revival ethos so unique; or, finally, the relationship between 19th century social reform and Canal Calvinism. Instead, this dissertation is more narrowly conceptualized as a story of movement, but more importantly *interaction*; what happens when the paradox *spreads*; what happens if the West *mingles* with the East—the saga of the wilderness confronting the city. To finally conclude and summarize the entire project then, perhaps it is best to end with an historical metaphor and return to where the interaction officially began: the city of Philadelphia, May 17th, 1810.

* * *

At the meeting of the 1810 Presbyterian General Assembly something never seen before drew the attention of everyone in attendance. As the opening ceremony drew to a close, and the roll call of elected presbytery commissioners began, an anomaly sat in the middle of the room like an enormous pink elephant. Indeed if one looked hard enough one could almost see it smile back for there on the attendance dossier, nestled among a long litany of names (the "Presbytery of Albany," the "Presbytery of New York," "Jersey," "New Brunswick,"

"Hudson," and "Long Island"), was a rather conspicuous one—"Middle Association."[11] A herald of things to come, the Middle Association was the embodiment of the structural challenge, the margin's ever persistent push for equilibrium. Yet beyond this the Middle Association also served as a prophetic statement, a testimony to the fact that not only was the newly adopted Congregational body situated physically in the middle of New York State—the present incarnation of Union Christianity—but so too would its congregations and members rise from obscurity to a middling position of power and authority within the denomination as a whole. More importantly, New York's Middle Association also represented the great paradox of the American western mind as it balanced human agency and inability with individual freedom and communal dependence through its softened version of Hopkinsian theology.

Originating perhaps from the confluence of a vast open air and frontier dangers, the Middle Association could only accept a doctrine of balance and equilibrium; the very kind produced by the crisis of the Reformed tradition years before. Surrounded and disparaged by 18th century Rationalists who had no patience for the superstition of Predestination, human depravity, or virgin births, New England Congregationalism rose to defend the banner of faith as Connecticut theologians mobilized against the likes of Paine, Allen, and perhaps even Franklin. The battle was for America's soul yet to achieve victory, Christian soldiers like Timothy Dwight, Joseph Bellamy, and Samuel Hopkins had to sacrifice something, possibly more than they intended—a strict adherence to the very fundamentals of the Calvinism they had inherited. As a result, the value system that they had fought so passionately for changed, ever

[11] PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 433-434.

so slightly. While the change may not have been perfectly suited for the stability of the East, it was appropriate for a West that eschewed convention, yet needed community.

Thus, the flames of revival facilitated this ethos and ignited the wilderness as the individual and the neighborhood, autonomy and dependence, fired the western American imagination to the possibility that the nation's time had come; that a new and better age was dawning. Accordingly, ecumenical cooperation was the byword on everyone's lips. Indeed it appeared as though the church would finally achieve what it had long since lost more than a thousand years before—unity. The Middle Association then was also a symbol of harmony, the marriage, blending, and cooperation of two parallel institutions; New England Congregationalism and Middle-State Presbyterianism. Yet the optimism and cooperation only extended so far. Arminian Methodists and Anabaptists for instance were not eligible for this utopian, millennial, dream of the future. Nor was the cooperation complete institutionally or geographically as it was confined only to the margins, the hinterland, those sections of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism where change would have no substantial affect on the status quo of the East.

Here the insularity of the frontier prevented change from taking place as central Presbyteries like Philadelphia (Figures 2, 3, and 7) dominated the national denominational stage, reinforcing institutional stratification. Although the church was one great body, its internal dynamics were such that structural variation propagated intellectual deviation. West of the Appalachian the vastness of the frontier encouraged social and intellectual experimentation. This is inherent to the peripheral sections of any social network as the pull of conformity is typically weakest there and the marginal members of these hinterland bodies

have the most to gain if institutional change occurs. While social marginalism need not always translate into geographical distance from a structural center, in the case of the 19th century Presbyterian Church, the two very nearly overlapped with the majority of western presbyteries falling into the lowest, and largest, third of presbytery denominational power and influence. There innovations to Reformed theology proliferated. In this way, the western men who initiated the creation of Union Christianity in 1801 had everything to gain and nothing to lose if the church was remade along this paradoxically blended, middle, path.

Conversely, throughout the Eastern Corridor from Philadelphia to Albany, orthodox Westminster Calvinism was strongest. Here the oldest and most established presbyteries sought stability and consistency, hoping to maintain their place administratively within the denomination. Those from Philadelphia, New York, and New Jersey then could affirm, or pay lip-service to, the vision and optimism of the Middle Association's middle path, dreaming in the abstract but not in the material. Ultimately though, they had little reason to make concrete changes as too much of their lives depended on the church remaining as it was.

Yet an unexpected development occurred that served to disrupt the contest between the periphery and center—the Erie Canal—thereby elevating the Middle Association above its peers. Whereas before 1825 Union Calvinism was more or less quarantined to half a million square miles of frontier hills and forest, along the slender line from Albany to Buffalo a unique opportunity presented itself. Although virtually the entire West was still institutionally and geographically isolated from the center of the church, the Middle Association and the Finger Lakes region more generally now had direct access to the resources of the East. This empowered them to develop western notions of liberality and community, as well as fashion a

way to infiltrate even the most central and conservative of presbyteries within the church (the 1830 pastoral appointment of Albert Barnes being a prime example). It should come as no surprise then that according to a statistical average of Factor Rankings for the 1810s, 20s, and 30s, an unbroken line of semiperipheral power stretches from Rochester to Albany, New York and down to Princeton (Figure 7). As such, the union of western Presbyterianism and Congregationalism continued to gather momentum as additional Congregational associations and local churches joined the Middle Association's intellectual and social experiment; treading a middle course that integrated freedom and accountability; choice and covenant; agency and dependence; Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

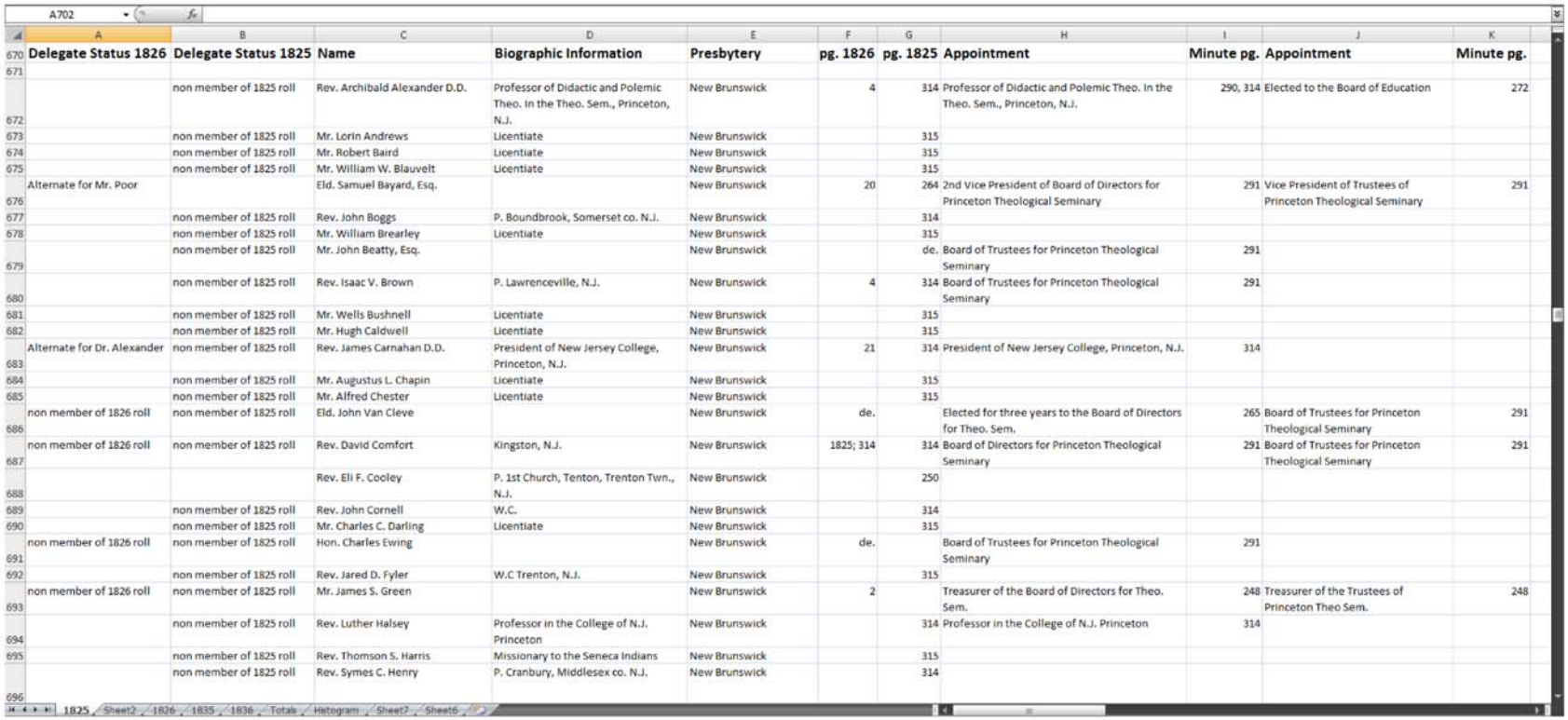
Understood in this light, a revolution was in the making. Yet it was not merely a revolt of ideas and values, but also one of technology as Yankee enterprise managed to both physically and commercially connect the revolution with New York City and the Atlantic Seaboard. In consequence, while the western Union Presbyteries of northern Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan (presbyteries like Grand River, Erie, Portage, and Lancaster) remained at the margins—unable to spread the insurrection further—those presbyteries specifically arrayed along the Erie Canal grew in size, wealth, and overall denominational influence. By the late 1820s then Canal Christianity infiltrated the very centers of eastern convention and power, becoming firmly semiperipheral in the process (Figure 3). This middle position structurally afforded a unique advantage to the development of Union Calvinism as it allowed its practitioners to be far enough from the pull of centralizing conformity, but close enough to access denominational resources.

As a result of this profoundly sudden growth and accessibility, the Union presbyteries of New York State now had an opportunity that none of its more western brethren had; the capacity to influence the nation as a whole. Moreover with the prosperity that the canal delivered, the western middle way became formally institutionalized and fortified with the establishment of Auburn Theological Seminary. Whether by the informal transmission of ministers like Albert Barnes or the formal migration of Auburn graduates like Henry Tappan, Plan of Union Christianity accordingly broke from its regionalized moorings and moved, diffused, and spread—becoming nationalized, becoming "New School." Indeed, this all is what the Middle Association represented and pointed to that warm day in May of 1810.

In the end, however, the movement and diffusion of the western middle way ironically produced a final inconsistency for instead of nurturing balance and moderation throughout the East, it engendered division, schism, and polarization. Ultimately then what really is the lasting legacy of the Middle Association and Union Christianity? Is it one of tragedy and heterodoxy as many Old School authors profess? Is it one of idealism, optimism, and cooperation as New School partisans assert? Or is it about something else entirely: the implications of social structure on Intellectual History; the importance of economics in Religious History; is it the lens through which to properly view 19th century social reform; or the consequences of geography upon cultural values and ideology?

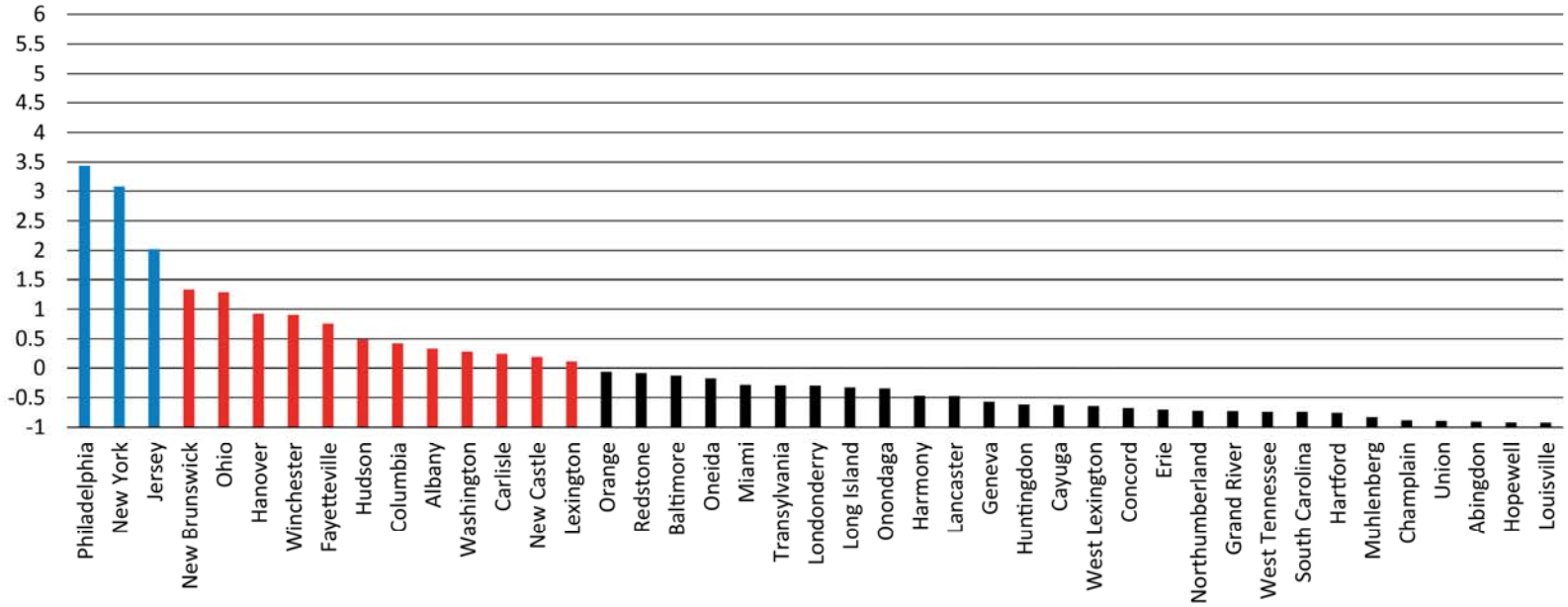
APPENDIX

Figure 1 Appointment Spreadsheet



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
670	Delegate Status 1826	Delegate Status 1825	Name	Biographic Information	Presbytery	pg. 1826	pg. 1825	Appointment	Minute pg.	Appointment	Minute pg.
671											
672		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. Archibald Alexander D.D.	Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theo. In the Theo. Sem., Princeton, N.J.	New Brunswick	4	314	Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theo. In the Theo. Sem., Princeton, N.J.	290, 314	Elected to the Board of Education	272
673		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. Lorin Andrews	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
674		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. Robert Baird	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
675		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. William W. Blauvelt	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
676	Alternate for Mr. Poor		Eld. Samuel Bayard, Esq.		New Brunswick	20	264	2nd Vice President of Board of Directors for Princeton Theological Seminary	291	Vice President of Trustees of Princeton Theological Seminary	291
677		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. John Boggs	P. Boundbrook, Somerset co. N.J.	New Brunswick		314				
678		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. William Brearley	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
679		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. John Beatty, Esq.		New Brunswick		de.	Board of Trustees for Princeton Theological Seminary	291		
680		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. Isaac V. Brown	P. Lawrenceville, N.J.	New Brunswick	4	314	Board of Trustees for Princeton Theological Seminary	291		
681		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. Wells Bushnell	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
682		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. Hugh Caldwell	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
683	Alternate for Dr. Alexander	non member of 1825 roll	Rev. James Carnahan D.D.	President of New Jersey College, Princeton, N.J.	New Brunswick	21	314	President of New Jersey College, Princeton, N.J.	314		
684		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. Augustus L. Chapin	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
685		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. Alfred Chester	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
686	non member of 1826 roll	non member of 1825 roll	Eld. John Van Cleve		New Brunswick	de.		Elected for three years to the Board of Directors for Theo. Sem.	265	Board of Trustees for Princeton Theological Seminary	291
687	non member of 1826 roll	non member of 1825 roll	Rev. David Comfort	Kingston, N.J.	New Brunswick	1825; 314	314	Board of Directors for Princeton Theological Seminary	291	Board of Trustees for Princeton Theological Seminary	291
688			Rev. Eli F. Cooley	P. 1st Church, Tenton, Trenton Twn., N.J.	New Brunswick		250				
689		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. John Cornell	W.C.	New Brunswick		314				
690		non member of 1825 roll	Mr. Charles C. Darling	Licentiate	New Brunswick		315				
691	non member of 1826 roll	non member of 1825 roll	Hon. Charles Ewing		New Brunswick	de.		Board of Trustees for Princeton Theological Seminary	291		
692		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. Jared D. Fyler	W.C Trenton, N.J.	New Brunswick		315				
693	non member of 1826 roll	non member of 1825 roll	Mr. James S. Green		New Brunswick	2		Treasurer of the Board of Directors for Theo. Sem.	248	Treasurer of the Trustees of Princeton Theo Sem.	248
694		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. Luther Halsey	Professor in the College of N.J. Princeton	New Brunswick		314	Professor in the College of N.J. Princeton	314		
695		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. Thomson S. Harris	Missionary to the Seneca Indians	New Brunswick		315				
696		non member of 1825 roll	Rev. Symes C. Henry	P. Cranbury, Middlesex co. N.J.	New Brunswick		314				

Figure 2 Presbytery Factor Rankings 1810s



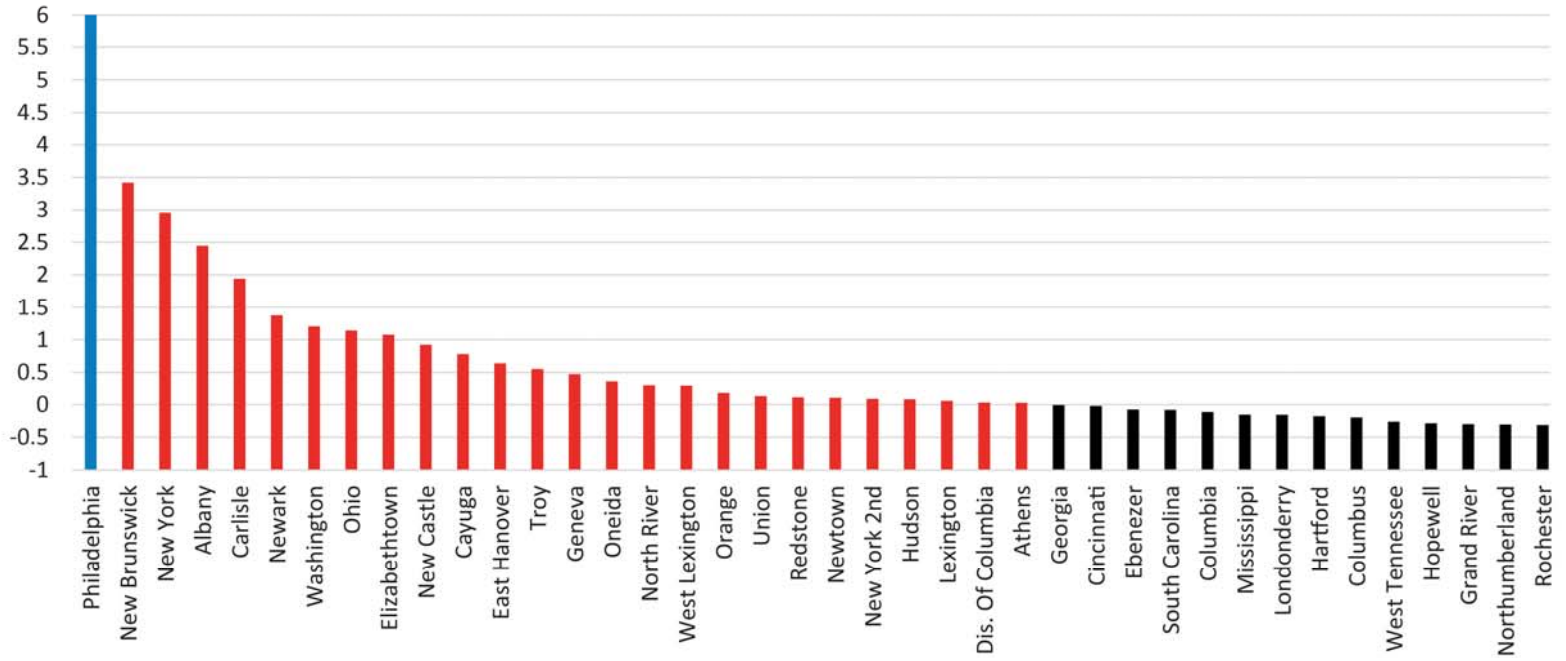
Axis Key: Y Standard Deviations X Presbytery

Color Key

Blue	Core
Red	Semiperipheral
Black	Peripheral

Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855).

Figure 3 Presbytery Factor Rankings 1820s



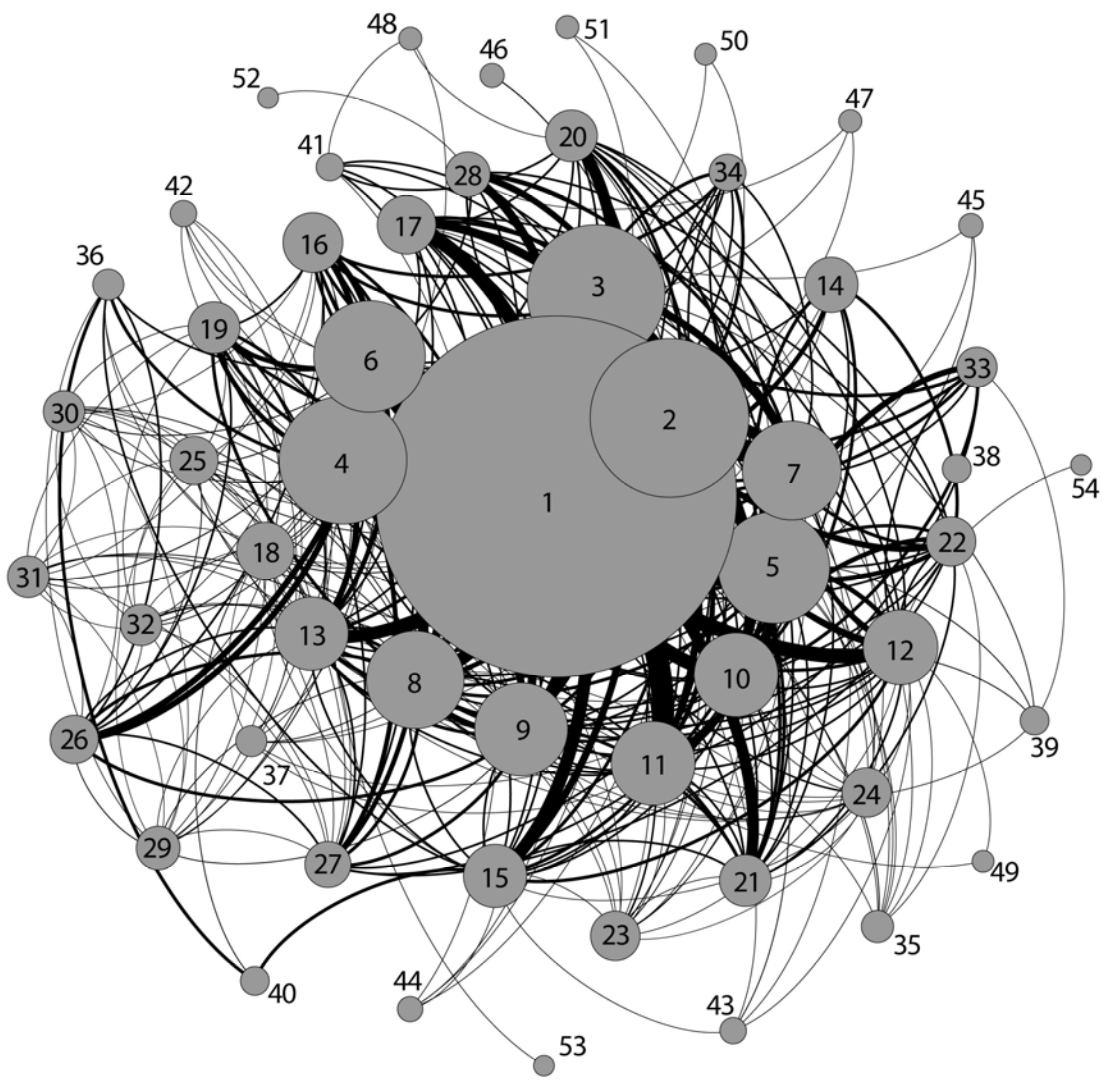
Axis Key: Y Standard Deviations X Presbytery

Color Key

Blue	Core
Red	Semiperipheral
Black	Peripheral

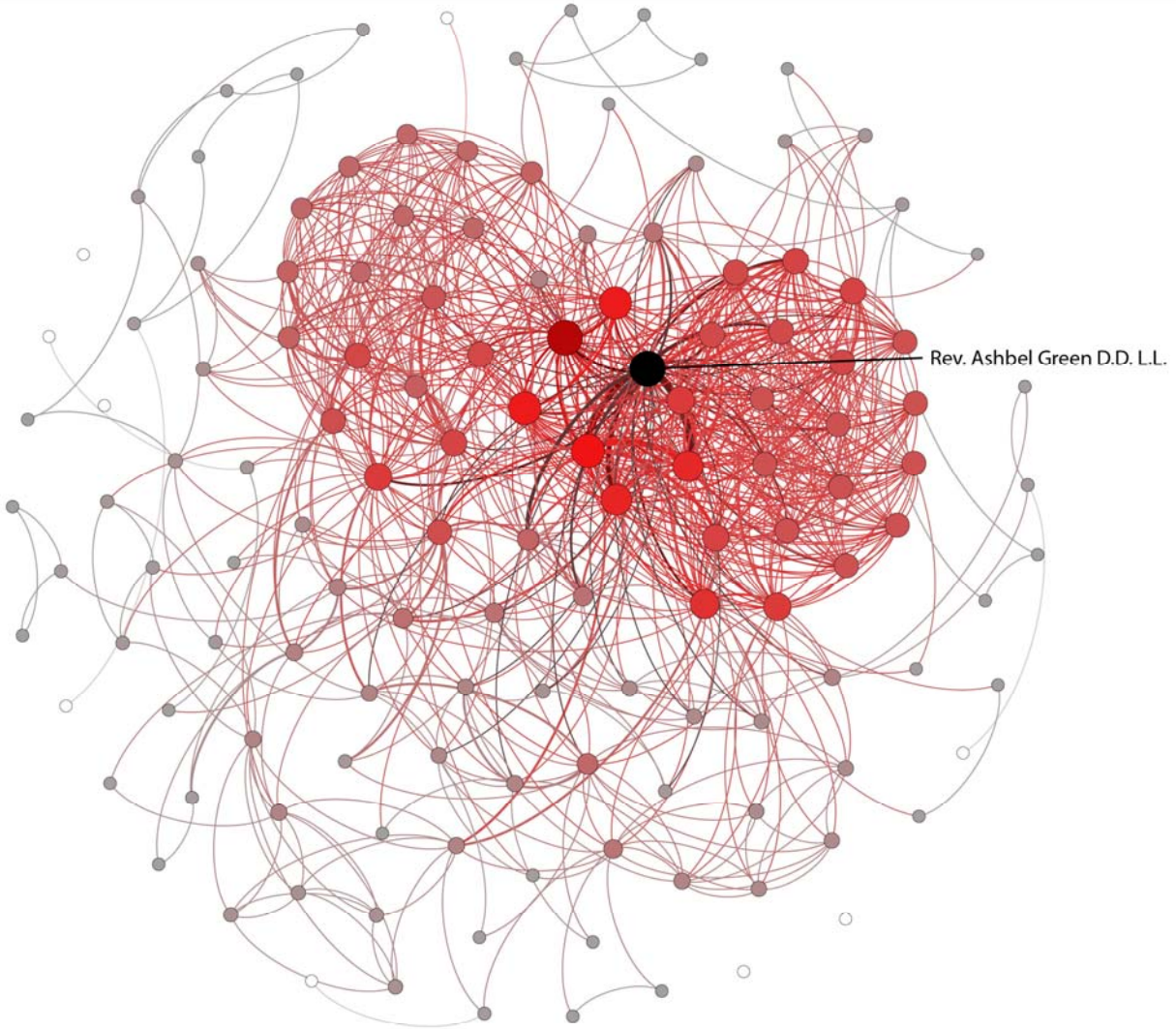
Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855).

Figure 4 Presbyterian Elite Committee Network 1820s: Presbytery



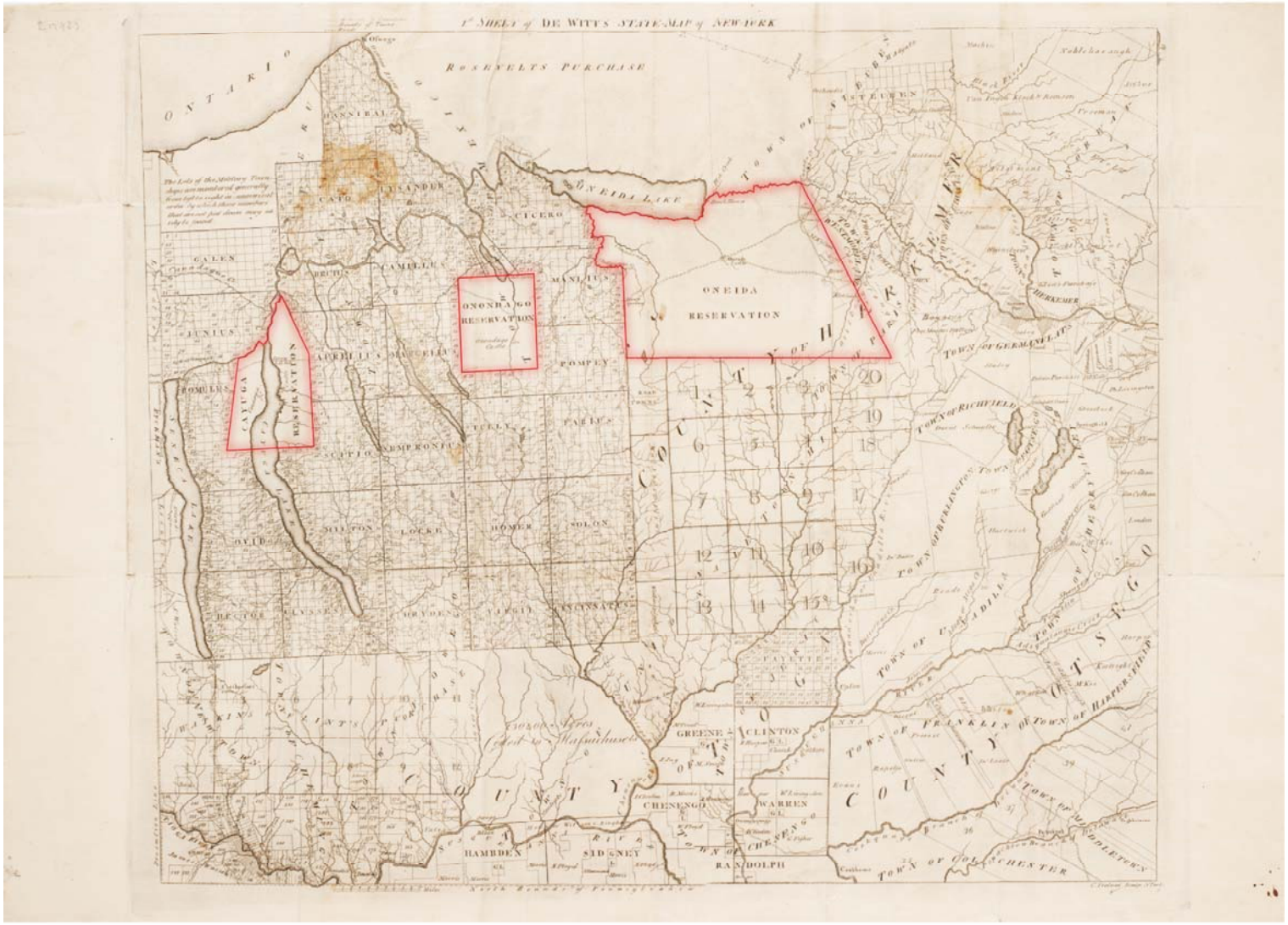
Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); *PCUSA, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825-1837* (Philadelphia: Assorted Publishers); PCUSA, *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: A.D. 1810-1819* (Philadelphia: Assorted Publishers)

Figure 5 Presbyterian Elite Committee Network 1820s: Individuals



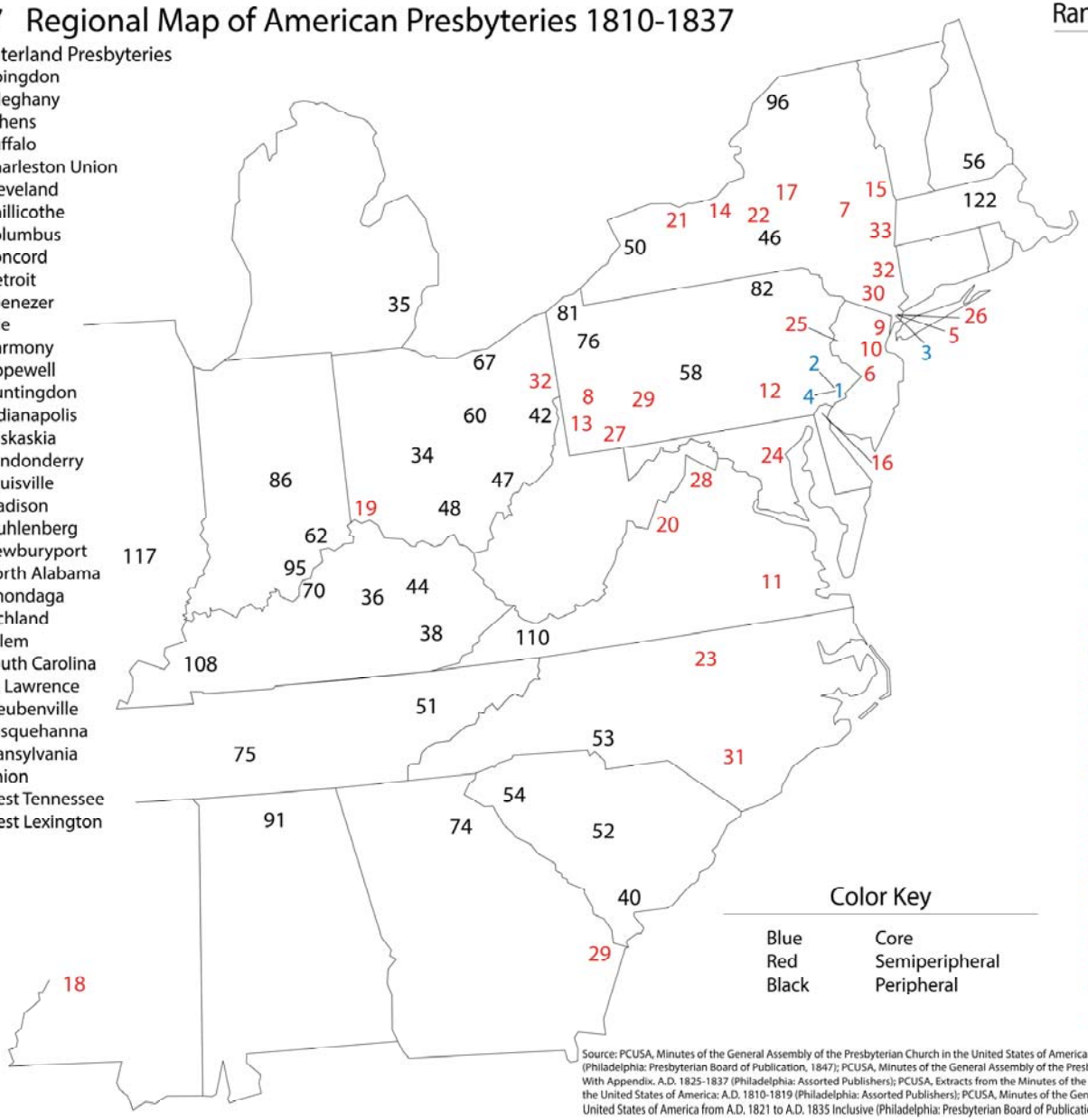
Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); *PCUSA, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825-1837* (Philadelphia: Assorted Publishers); PCUSA, *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: A.D. 1810-1819* (Philadelphia: Assorted Publishers)

Figure 6 State Survery of Central New York (1792)



Source: Simeon DeWitt, *First Sheet, State-Map of New York [Finger Lakes Region] ca. 1792*, (Boston: Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, Boston Public Library), http://maps.bpl.org/id/n50882

Figure 7 Regional Map of American Presbyteries 1810-1837



Assorted Hinterland Presbyteries

110	Abingdon
76	Alleghany
47	Athens
50	Buffalo
40	Charleston Union
67	Cleveland
48	Chillicothe
34	Columbus
53	Concord
35	Detroit
44	Ebenezer
81	Erie
52	Harmony
74	Hopewell
58	Huntingdon
86	Indianapolis
117	Kaskaskia
56	Londonderry
70	Louisville
62	Madison
108	Muhlenberg
122	Newburyport
91	North Alabama
46	Onondaga
60	Richland
95	Salem
54	South Carolina
96	St. Lawrence
42	Steubenville
82	Susquehanna
38	Transylvania
51	Union
75	West Tennessee
36	West Lexington

Color Key

Blue	Core
Red	Semiperipheral
Black	Peripheral

Rank	Presbytery
1	Philadelphia
2	Philadelphia 2nd
3	New York
4	Philadelphia 2nd (synd.)
5	New York 3rd
6	New Brunswick
7	Albany
8	Ohio
9	Newark/Jersey
10	Elizabethtown
11	Hanover/East Hanover
12	Carlisle
13	Washington
14	Geneva
15	Troy
16	New Castle
17	Oneida
18	Mississippi
19	Cincinnati
20	Lexington
21	Rochester
22	Cayuga
23	Orange
24	Baltimore
25	Newton
26	New York 2nd
27	Redstone
28	Winchester
29	Blairsville
30	Hudson
31	Fayetteville
32	North River
33	Columbia

Source: PCUSA, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825-1837 (Philadelphia: Assorted Publishers); PCUSA, Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: A.D. 1810-1819 (Philadelphia: Assorted Publishers); PCUSA, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855

Table 1 Selected Presbytery Membership Levels 1815 and 1825

Presbytery	1815	1825	Percentage Increase
Redstone	831	3429	312.64
Cayuga	624	2552	308.97
Londonderry	513	1797	250.29
Albany	1424	4875	242.35
Oneida	878	2755	213.78
Philadelphia	1911	5806	203.82
New York	1627	4340	166.75
Geneva	1002	2476	147.11
South Carolina	760	1863	145.13
Onondaga	1280	3125	144.14
Lancaster	503	1051	108.95
Erie	518	1037	100.19
Washington	1238	2260	82.55
New Castle	1917	3491	82.11
Northumberland	750	1331	77.47
Baltimore	432	710	64.35
Fayetteville	1636	2653	62.16
Winchester	592	942	59.12
West Lexington	319	497	55.80
Huntingdon	1385	2155	55.60
Transylvania	540	785	45.37
Jersey*	4303	6187	43.78
Columbia	690	932	35.07
Carlisle	2501	3242	29.63
New Brunswick	1902	2224	16.93
Hudson	1744	1923	10.26
Concord	1114	1213	8.89
Harmony	547	527	-3.66
Miami	680	651	-4.26
Long Island	860	804	-6.51
Orange	1109	1010	-8.93
Ohio	3020	2211	-26.79

Note: *In 1824 the Presbytery of Jersey was divided into the the Presbyteries of Newark and Elizabethtown.

Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 603; PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1825), 374.

Table 2 Selected Presbytery Charitable Giving Levels 1810s and 1820s Avg.

Presbytery		1810s		1820s	Percentage Increase
Cayuga	$	55.58	$	727.63	1209.16
Geneva	$	63.23	$	624.89	888.28
Northumberland	$	35.93	$	292.18	713.19
Oneida	$	143.34	$	983.43	586.08
Concord	$	37.35	$	208.71	458.80
Erie	$	41.03	$	218.07	431.49
West Lexington	$	50.89	$	240.80	373.18
Baltimore	$	153.27	$	705.38	360.22
Harmony	$	84.92	$	376.08	342.86
Transylvania	$	122.69	$	511.61	316.99
Orange	$	166.31	$	673.86	305.18
Redstone	$	158.69	$	609.97	284.38
Albany	$	236.74	$	823.85	248.00
South Carolina	$	32.84	$	112.85	243.64
New Castle	$	207.65	$	621.21	199.16
Washington	$	235.79	$	671.10	184.62
Lancaster	$	87.49	$	239.38	173.61
Huntingdon	$	56.01	$	151.21	169.97
Philadelphia	$	832.49	$	1954.81	134.81
Miami	$	123.33	$	289.59	134.81
Jersey*	$	558.87	$	1067.34	90.98
Carlisle	$	219.17	$	383.97	75.19
Winchester	$	363.85	$	616.91	69.55
Ohio	$	426.66	$	636.81	49.25
New York	$	780.04	$	1141.68	46.36
Columbia	$	257.94	$	355.79	37.94
Onondaga	$	110.13	$	134.48	22.11
Londonderry	$	121.82	$	135.81	11.48
New Brunswick	$	414.46	$	379.90	-8.34
Long Island	$	114.81	$	105.09	-8.47
Fayetteville	$	328.31	$	219.50	-33.14
Hudson	$	270.04	$	120.69	-55.31

Note: *In 1824 the Presbytery of Jersey was divided into the Presbyteries of Newark and Elizabethtown.
Source: PCUSA, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855).

Table 3 Selected Ranked Presbytery Factor Scores (Decline)

Presbytery	1810s Ranking	1820s Ranking
Harmony	25	74
Fayetteville	8	52
Winchester	7	48
Muhlenberg	38	75
Abingdon	41	71
Baltimore	18	43
Columbia	10	31
Transylvania	21	42
Hudson	9	23
Concord	31	45
Lexington	15	24
Grand River	34	38
Ohio	5	8
Redstone	17	20
Orange	16	18
New York	2	3
West Tennessee	35	36

Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855).

Table 4 Selected Ranked Presbytery Factor Scores (Incline)

Presbytery	1810s Ranking	1820s Ranking
Union	40	19
Cayuga	29	11
Geneva	27	14
West Lexington	30	17
Carlisle	13	5
Albany	11	4
Washington	12	7
Oneida	19	15
New Brunswick	4	2
Philadelphia	1	1
Rochester	40 (20s)	18 (30s)
Buffalo	69 (20s)	35 (30s)

Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855).

Table 5 Selected Ranked Presbytery Tripartite Scores

Presbytery	1810s Ranking	1820s Ranking
Cayuga	32	12
Oneida	20	9
Geneva	23	15
Albany	8	3
New York	3	2 (1st 30s)
Philadelphia	1	1
Redstone	17	17
Carlisle	6	6
New Brunswick	4	5
Orange	18	22
Baltimore	22	29
West Tennessee	40	47
Ohio	5	14
Concord	14	24
West Lexington	31	41
Muhlenberg	49	65
Grand River	42	59
Fayetteville	10	37
Abingdon	43	75
Harmony	27	63

Source: PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847); PCUSA, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855).

Table 6 Undergraduate Affiliation of Admitted Auburn Students (1821-1830)

College	Location	Percentage
Union	Schenectady, NY	0.21301775
Williams	Williamstown, MA	0.21301775
Hamilton	Clinton, NY	0.18343195
Amherst	Amherst, MA	0.13609467
Yale	New Haven, CT	0.09467456
Middlebury	Middlebury, VT	0.04733728
Princeton	Princeton, NJ	0.04142012
Centre College	Danville, KY	0.01183432
Dartmouth	Hanover, NH	0.01183432
Ohio	Athens, OH	0.01183432
Andover	Andover, MA	0.00591716
Brown	Providence, RH	0.00591716
Cincinnati	Cincinnati, OH	0.00591716
Columbia	New York, NY	0.00591716
South Carolina College	Columbia, SC	0.00591716
Washington and Jefferson	Washington, PA	0.00591716

Source: Auburn Seminary Faculty, "Faculty Minutes of the Auburn Theological Seminary" (New York, 1821-1890), Series 1:A, Box 34: TX67 Au1 V-M3, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, 1-32; John Q. Adams and William J. Hinke, *General Biographical Catalogue of Auburn Theological Seminary* (Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918).

Table 7 Regional Affiliation of Admitted Auburn Students

Location		Percentage
New England		0.44549763
Upstate New York		0.3507109
Massachusetts		0.22748815
Eastern Corridor	(Eastern Penn, NJ, and NYC)	0.16587678
Connecticut		0.12796209
Vermont		0.07109005
Trans-Appalachian West		0.02843602
New Hampshire		0.01895735
Foreign Nation		0.00473934
South		0.00473934

Source: Auburn Seminary Faculty, "Faculty Minutes of the Auburn Theological Seminary" (New York, 1821-1890), Series 1:A, Box 34: TX67 Au1 V-M3, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, 1-32; John Q. Adams and William J. Hinke, *General Biographical Catalogue of Auburn Theological Seminary* (Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918).

Table 8 Regional Placement of Auburn Alumni Ministry (1824-1830)

Location		Percentage
Upstate New York		0.811
Trans-Appalachian West		0.538
Eastern Corridor	(Eastern Penn, NJ, and NYC)	0.198
New England		0.17
South and Southwest		0.142

Source: Auburn Seminary Faculty, "Faculty Minutes of the Auburn Theological Seminary" (New York, 1821-1890), Series 1:A, Box 34: TX67 Au1 V-M3, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, 1-32; John Q. Adams and William J. Hinke, *General Biographical Catalogue of Auburn Theological Seminary* (Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Manuscripts

Auburn Seminary Faculty. "Faculty Minutes of the Auburn Theological Seminary." Auburn, 1890 1821. Series 1:A, Box 34: TX67 Au1 V-M3. Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary.

Barnes, Albert. "Church Manual for the Use of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia." Philadelphia, 1841. BX 9211 .P49103 F502. Presbyterian Historical Society.

"Matthew La Rue Perrine to James Richards, 14 March 1821." Auburn, n.d. Series 1:A, Box 15: TX67 Au1 H-M62q. Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary.

N.J., First Presbyterian Church in Morristown. "Mr. Barnes' Manual." *The Record: First Presbyterian Church, Morristown, N.J.* 3, no. 10 (October 1883). BX 9211 .N5796 F503r Presbyterian Historical Society.

PCUSA. "Manuscript Minutes of the Presbytery of Cayuga, Vol. 1." Auburn, 1811, 1822. VAULT BX 8958.C28 A3. Presbyterian Historical Society.

Perrine, Matthew La Rue. "Heaven Shut by Human Influence." Auburn, 1821. Box 1. Matthew La Rue Perrine Manuscript Collection. Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

Presbytery of Philadelphia. "Records of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Volume 3." Philadelphia, 1826. VAULT MI45 P5. Presbyterian Historical Society.

Tappan, Henry P. "A Course of Moral Philosophy," Undated. Box 2, 86101 297-A. Henry P. Tappan Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

———. "Unpublished Sermon on Matthew 13," Undated. Box 3, 86101 297-B. Henry P. Tappan Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

———. "Unpublished Sermon on Psalm 50:1," Undated. Box 3, 86101 297-B. Henry P. Tappan Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Published Primary Sources

Anonymous. "On the Atonement: No. 4." Edited by Ashbel Green. *The Christian Advocate* vol. 4

(June 1826): 244–50.

Abbott, Jacob. *Marco Paul's Travels and Adventures in the Pursuit of Knowledge: On the Erie Canal*. Boston: T. Harrington Carter & Company, 1843.

Adams, John Quincy. *A History of Auburn Theological Seminary, 1818-1918*. Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918.

Adams, John Quincy, and William John Hinke. *General Biographical Catalogue of Auburn Theological Seminary, 1818-1918*. Auburn: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918.

Alexander, Archibald. "The Present Condition and Prospects of the Presbyterian Church-Article 2." *The Biblical Repertory and Theological Review* 4 (1832): 28–47.

Allen, Ethan. *Reason: The Only Oracle of Man, or a Compendious System of Natural Religion*. Boston: J.P. Mendum, Cornhill, 1854.

Anderson, George B. *Landmarks of Rensselaer County New York*. Syracuse: D. Mason & Company, 1897.

"A Visit to Albert Barnes: The Great Commentator at Home, Fiftieth Anniversary of His Graduation, His Own Account of His Conversion and Writings." *New York Daily Tribune*. May 26, 1870.

Bacon, Leonard. "Reviews: Sermons on Important Subjects of Christian Doctrine and Duty." *The Christian Spectator*, no. 10 (October 1826): 531–40.

Backus, Oswald P. "Rome, Romans and the Canals." In *Memorial of Centennial Celebration of the Turning of the First Shovelful of Earth in the Construction of the Erie Canal Held at Rome, N.Y. July 4th, 1917*. Rome: Rome Chamber of Commerce, 1917.

Badger, Joseph. *A Memoir of Rev. Joseph Badger: Containing an Autobiography, and Selections from His Private Journal and Correspondence*. Hudson: Sawyer, Ingersoll and Company, 1851.

Barnes, Albert. *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1852.

———. *Notes on the Gospels: Matthew and Mark, Principally Designed for the Use of Sunday School Teachers and Bible Classes*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1832.

———. *Revival Sermons*. Edited by A. Weston. London: William Tegg, 1865.

———. *The Theory and Desirableness of Revivals*. London: Robert B. Blackader, 1842.

———. “The Way of Salvation: A Sermon Delivered at Morristown, New Jersey February 8, 1829.” Morristown: Jacob Mann, 1830. SCP 6448. Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

Barnes, Albert, Daniel March, and Herrick Johnson. *Threescore and Ten: A Memorial of the Late Albert Barnes*. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, Undated.

Beecher, Lyman. *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D. D. Ed.* Edited by Charles Beecher. Vol. 1. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864.

———. *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D. D. Ed.* Edited by Charles Beecher. Vol. 2. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865.

Bird, William A. “Early Transportation, New York State.” In *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, 2:17–32. Buffalo: Bigelow Brothers, 1880.

Blatchford, Samuel, and Eliphalet W. Blatchford. *Blatchford Memorial II: A Genealogical Record of the Family of Rev. Samuel Blatchford, D.D., with Some Mention of Allied Families, Also Autobiographical Sketch of Rev. Dr. Blatchford from “The Blatchford Memorial.”* Chicago: Privately Printed, 1912.

Brown, Charles Brockden. *The Literary Magazine, and American Register for 1804*. Vol. 2. Philadelphia: John Conrad & Company, 1804.

Brown, Isaac V. *A Historical Vindication of the Abrogation of the Plan of Union*. Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1855.

Channing, William Ellery. “Likeness to God: Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. F.A. Farley, Providence, R.I., 1828.” In *The Works of William E. Channing*. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1896.

———. “The Moral Argument Against Calvinism.” In *The Works of William E. Channing*, Vol. 1. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1872.

Church, Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian. *Historical and Biographical Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church*. Allegheny: The Seminary, 1885.

Clinton, De Witt. *The Canal Policy of the State of New York: Delineated in a Letter to Robert Troup, Esq*. Albany: E. & E. Hosford, 1821.

Clinton, De Witt, and William W. Campbell. “His Private Canal Journal-1810.” In *The Life and Writings of De Witt Clinton*, 27–204. New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849.

Cornelius, E., and B.B. Edwards, eds. *Quarterly Register and Journal of the American Education Society*. Vol. 2. Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1830.

Davidson, William B. *A Report of the Debates in the Presbytery of Philadelphia: At a Special Meeting Held in the City of Philadelphia on the 30th of November*. Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1831.

DeBow, J.D.B., ed. *Statistical View of the United States: Embracing Its Territory, Population-White, Free Colored, and Slave-Moral and Social Condition, Industry, Property, and Revenue*. Washington, DC: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854.

Dickinson, Richard W. "Reminiscences of James P. Wilson, D.D., and Rev. Albert Barnes." *The American Presbyterian Review*, no. 11 (July 1871).

Dwight, Timothy. *Discourse on the Genuineness and Authenticity of the New Testament: Delivered at New Haven September 10th, 1793 at the Annual Lecture Appointed by the General Association of Connecticut*. New York: George Bunce and Company, 1794.

———. *Sermons*. Vol. 1. Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1828.

———. *Theology Explained and Defended in a Series of Sermons by Timothy Dwight, S.T.D. LL. D*. Vol. 1. New Haven: T. Dwight & Son, 1839.

———. *Travels in New England and New York*. Vol. 4. London: William Baynes & Son, 1823.

Eddy, Thomas. "Canals." In *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix, Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life*, 375–78. New York: J. Seymour, 1829.

Edwards, Jonathan. *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth*. Boston: D. Henchman, 1747.

———. *Freedom of the Will, Which Is Supposed to Be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame*. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, 1860.

Edwards, Jonathan, Sereno Edwards Dwight, and Edward Hickman. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. London: F. Westley and A.H. Davis, 1835.

Edwards, Jonathan, and American Tract Society. *A History of the Work of Redemption: Comprising an Outline of Church History*. New York: American Tract Society, 1840.

Edwards, Tryon. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, D.D., Late President of Union College: With a*

Memoir of His Life and Character. Vol. 1. Boston: John P. Jewett & Co, 1854.

Ely, Ezra Stiles. *A Contrast between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism*. New York: S. Whiting & Co., 1811.

Engles, William M. *A True and Complete Narrative of All the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Presbytery and of the Philadelphia Synod in Relation to the Case of the Rev. Albert Barnes*. Philadelphia: Russell & Martien, 1830.

Finney, Charles G. *The Original Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*. Edited by Garth M. Rosell and Richard A.G. Dupis. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.

Finney, Charles Grandison. *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. 2nd ed. New York: Leavitt, Lord & Company, 1835.

Forman, Joshua. "Letter from Joshua Forman to David Hosack, Franklin N.J. October 13, 1828." In *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix, Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life*, 343–55. New York: J. Seymour, 1829.

Frieze, Henry Simmons. *A Memorial Discourse on the Life and Services of Rev. Henry Philip Tappan*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1882.

"From the Utica N.Y. Gazette." *The Nashville Whig and Tennessee Advertiser*. September 29, 1817.

General Association of Connecticut. *Acts and Proceedings of the General Association of Connecticut: 1801*. Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1801.

Great Barrington. *Manual of the First Congregational Church in Great Barrington, Mass*. Cambridge: Printed at the Riverside Press, 1873.

Green, Ashbel. "Lectures on the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines-Addressed to Youth: Lecture 18." *The Christian Advocate* 4 (February 1826): 49–52.

———. "Lectures on the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines-Adressed to Youth: Lecture 31." *The Christian Advocate* 5 (November 1827): 481–84.

———. "Remarks by the Editor." *The Christian Advocate* 5 (October 1827): 441–43.

———. *The Christian Advocate*. Vol. 9. Philadelphia: A. Finley, 1831.

———. *The Life of Ashbel Green*. Edited by Joseph Huntington Jones. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1849.

Hardenbergh, John L., and Charles Hawley. *Collections of the Cayuga County Historical Society: The Journal of Lieut. John L. Hardenbergh of the 2nd New York Continental Regiment*. Auburn: Cayuga County Historical Society, 1879.

Hawley, Jesse. "Introductory Essay." In *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life*, 306–9. New York: J. Seymour, 1829.

———. "Letter from Jesse Hawley to David Hosack: Rochester, 24th July, 1838." In *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life*, 301–5. New York: J. Seymour, 1829.

———. "Observations on Canals: No 1." In *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life*, 310–11. New York: J. Seymour, 1829.

Higgins, David. "Religious Intelligence: To the Editors of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine." *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 3, no. 11 (1803): 438–39.

Hopkins, Samuel M. *In Memoriam: Dirck C. Lansing, D.D.* Auburn: Knapp, Peck & Thomson, 1883.

Hopkins, Samuel, Edwards Amasa Park, and Sewall Harding. *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Port, R.I. with a Memoir of His Life and Character*. Vol. 3. Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1852.

———. *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Port, R.I. with a Memoir of His Life and Character*. Vol. 1. Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1852.

———. *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Port, R.I. with a Memoir of His Life and Character*. Vol. 2. Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1854.

Hosack, David, and De Witt Clinton. *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix, Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life*. New York: J. Seymour, 1829.

Hotchkin, James H. *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section*. New York: M.W. Dodd, 1848.

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: And Selections from a Treatise of*

Human Nature, with Hume's Autobiography and a Letter from Adam Smith. Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1912.

Jefferson, Thomas. "Sixth Annual Message of Thomas Jefferson, December 2, 1806." In *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Containing His Autobiography, Notes on Virginia, Parliamentary Manual, Official Papers, Messages and Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private*, edited by Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh. Washington, DC: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903.

Jervis, John B. *The Reminiscences of John B. Jervis: Engineer of the Old Croton*. Edited by Neal Fitzsimons. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971.

Johnston, James H. *The Dead Who Die in the Lord, Blessed: A Sermon Preached in the Centre Church Crawfordsville, Indiana*. Philadelphia: William F. Murphy's Sons, 1874.

Kennedy, William S. *The Plan of Union: Or a History of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches of the Western Reserve*. Hudson: Pentagon Steam Press, 1856.

Klett, Guy S. *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church In America: 1706-1788*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1976.

Lansing, Dirck Cornelius. *A Sermon Preached March 6, 1817 at the Dedication of the New Presbyterian Church in the Village of Auburn*. Auburn: H. C. Southwick, 1817.

———. *Sermons, on Important Subjects of Doctrine and Duty*. Auburn: Richard Oliphant, 1825.

Leavitt, Joshua. Leonard Bacon. "To the Editor of the Christian Spectator." *The Christian Spectator* New Series 1, no. 6 (June 1827): 288–93.

"Letter from a Respectable Physician in Connecticut, to His Sister in a Defiant State." In *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine: From July 1801 to June 1802*, 2:183–86. Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1801.

Linn, William. *Discourses on the Signs of the Times*. New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1794.

"Literary Notices." *The Knickerbocker* vol. 9, no. 3 (1837).

Locke, John. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Kenneth P. Winkler. Hackett Publishing, 1996.

Mather, Cotton. *A Midnight Cry: An Essay for Our Awakening Out of That Sinful Sleep, to Which We Are at This Time Too Much Disposed; and for Our Discovering of What Peculiar Things There Are in This Time, That Are for Our Awakening. In a Discourse Given on a Day of Prayer, Kept by the North-Church in Boston. 1692*. Boston: John Allen, 1692.

Miller, Samuel. *The Life of Samuel Miller: Second Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, New Jersey*. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1869.

———. *The Life of Samuel Miller: Second Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, New Jersey*. Vol. 2. Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1869.

Morris, Gouverneur, Stephen Van Rensselaer, William North, and De Witt Clinton. *Report of the Commissioners Appointed by Joint Resolutions of the Honourable Senate and Assembly of the State of New York, of the 13th and 15th of March, 1810; to Explore the Route of an Inland Navigation, from Hudson's River to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie*. New York: Prior and Dunning, 1811.

Munsell, Joel. *The Annals of Albany*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Albany: Joel Munsell, 1869.

New York State Legislature. "An Act Further to Provide for the Improvement of the Internal Navigation of This State: June 19, 1812." In *Laws of the State of New York, Passed at the Thirty-Fifth Session of the Legislature, Begun and Held at the City of Albany*, 461–63. Albany: S. Southwick, 1812.

———. "An Act to Incorporate the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Established by the Synod of Geneva, at Auburn, in the County of Cayuga: April 14, 1820." In *Laws of the State of New York, Passed at the Forty-Second, Forty-Third, and Forty-Fourth Sessions of the Legislature. From January 1819 to April 1821*, Vol. V. Albany: William Gould & Company, 1821.

———. "An Act to Provide for the Improvement of the Internal Navigation of This State." In *Laws of the State of New York, Passed at the Thirty-Ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-First Sessions of the Legislature*, 295–96. Albany: Websters and Skinners, 1818.

Nott, Eliphalet, C. Van Santvoord, and Tayler Lewis. *The Memoirs of Eliphalet Nott D.D. LL.D., President of Union College*. New York: Sheldon & Company, 1876.

"Obituary: The Rev. Henry P. Tappan." *New York Times*, November 17, 1881.

Paine, Thomas. *The Age of Reason*. New York: G.N. Devries, 1827.

PCUSA. *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 1798*. Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1803.

———. *Charter and Plan of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America-Princeton, New Jersey: With General Acts of the State of New Jersey*

Affecting the Seminary and by-Laws of the Board of Trustees. Princeton Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, 1953.

———. *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: A.D. 1814*. Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1814.

———. *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: A.D. 1818*. Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1818.

———. *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: A.D. 1819*. Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1819.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835 Inclusive*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1821*. Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1821.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1822*. Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1822.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1825*. Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1825.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1826*. Philadelphia: Jesper Harding, 1826.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1828*. Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1828.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1829*. Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1829.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1830*. Philadelphia: William F. Geddes and L.R. Bailey, 1830.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1831*. Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1831.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1832*. Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1832.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1834*. Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1836.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1835*. Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, 1836.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1836*. Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1836.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1837*. Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1837.

———. *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod: 1706-1788, Together with an Index*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School, 1904.

———. *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as Ratified by the General Assembly, at Their Session in May, 1821 and Amended in 1833*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1839.

PCUSA (New School). *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1838*. New York: Scatcherd & Adams, 1838.

———. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: With Appendix. A.D. 1839*. New York: W. Molineux, 1839.

Perrine, Matthew La Rue. *Letters Concerning the Plan of Salvation as Deduced from the Scriptures: Addressed to the Members of the Presbyterian Church, Spring Street, New York*. New York: Dodge & Sayre, 1816.

Platt, Jonas. “Letter from Jonas Platt, Esq. to David Hosack: New York, May 3, 1828.” In *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix Containing Numerous Documents, Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life*, 380–88. New York: J. Seymour, 1829.

Presbytery of Oneida. *A Narrative of the Revival of Religion, in the County of Oneida, Particularly in the Bounds of the Presbytery of Oneida, in the Year 1826*. Utica: Hastings and Tracy, 1826.

Reid, Thomas, and Dugald Stewart. *The Works of Thomas Reid: With an Account of His Life and Writings*. Vol. 1. Charleston: Samuel Etheridge, Jr., 1813.

"Review of Perrine's Letters Concerning Salvation." *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* vol. 13, no. 5 (May 1817): 223–26.

Richards, James, and Samuel H. Gridley. *Lectures on Mental Philosophy and Theology: With a Sketch of His Life*. New York: M. W. Dodd, 1846.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *A Discourse on Inequality*. Translated by Maurice Cranston. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984.

Schuyler, Philip. "The Inland Lock Navigation Company: First Report of the Directors." In *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, 2:157–66. Buffalo: Bigelow Brothers, 1880.

Sherwood, Samuel. *Into the Wilderness: An Address on the Times, Containing Some Very Interesting and Important Observations on Scripture Prophecies*. New York: S. Loudon, 1776.

Smith, David. "Missionary Intelligence." *The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine* 2, no. 6 (1804).

Sprague, William B, ed. *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Presbyterian*. Vol. 3. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858.

———. *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Presbyterian*. Vol. 4. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858.

———. *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations: Trinitarian Congregational*. Vol. 2. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1857.

Squier, Miles P. *The Miscellaneous Writings of Miles P. Squier, D.D., Late Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Beloit College, Wisconsin*. Edited by James R. Boyd. Geneva: R.L. Adams & Son, 1867.

Stansbury, Phillip. *A Pedestrian Tour of Two Thousand Three Hundred Miles in North America: To the Lakes, the Canadas, and the New England States*. New York: J.D. Myers & W. Smith, 1822.

Storke, Elliot G, and James H. Smith. *History of Cayuga County, New York: With Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers*. Syracuse: D. Mason & Company, 1879.

"Summary of Religious Intelligence." *The Religious Monitor or Evangelical Repository* vol. 3, no. 10 (1827).

Tappan, Henry P. *A Review of Edwards's "Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will."* New York: John S. Taylor, 1839.

———. "Plea for Reformation." *The Millennial Harbinger* 6, no. 1 (1863): 13–22.

———. *The Doctrine of the Will Applied to Moral Agency and Responsibility*. New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841.

Tappan, Lewis. *The Life of Arthur Tappan*. New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1870.

The Cambridge and Saybrook Platforms of Church Discipline, with the Confession of Faith of the New England Churches, Adopted in 1680. Boston: T.A. Marvin, 1829.

The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine. Vol. 6. Hartford: Peter B. Gleason and Company, 1813.

The Constitution of the Missionary Society of Connecticut: With an Address from the Board of Trustees, to the People of the State, and Narrative on the Subject of Missions. Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1800.

Treadwell, John, and Seth Williston. "A Narrative on the Subject of Missions and a Statement of the Funds of the Missionary Society of Connecticut for the Year 1809." *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* vol. 3, no. 2 (1810).

"Untitled." *Hamilton College Record* 14, no. 2 (May 1915).

Washington, George. *The Life of General Washington, First President of the United States, Written by Himself, Comprising His Memoirs and Correspondence*. Edited by Charles W. Upham. Vol. 2. London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851.

Watson, Elkanah. *History of the Rise, Progress, and Existing Condition of the Western Canals in the State of New-York, from September 1788 to Completion of the Middle Section of the Grand Canal in 1819*. Albany: D. Steele, 1820.

———. *Men and Times of the Revolution; or Memoirs of Elkanah Watson, Including Journals of Travels in Europe and America, from 1777 to 1842*. Edited by Winslow C. Watson. New York: Dana and Company, 1856.

Whitford, Noble E. *History of the Canal System of the State of New York: Supplement to the Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York*. Vol. 1. Albany: Brandow Printing, 1906.

———. *History of the Canal System of the State of New York: Supplement to the Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York*. Vol. 2. Albany: Brandow Printing, 1906.

Wilson, James P. *Common Objections to Christianity: Proposed and Answered in Two Dispassionate Conversations*. Philadelphia: E. Littell and Brother, 1829.

———. *Moral Agency, Or, Natural Ability Consistent with Moral Inability: Being Remarks on "An Essay on the Inability of Sinners" by a Presbyterian*. Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1819.

———. *Sin Destitute of the Apology of Inability; Or, Moral Inability No Constituent of Human Nature.* Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1820.

Winslow, Edward, ed. *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England Manifested by Three Letters under the Hand of That Famous Instrument of the Lord, Mr. John Eliot, and Another from Mr. Thomas Mayhew...: Together with an Appendix to the Foregoing Letters, Holding Forth Conjectures, Observations, and Applications, by I.D.* London: Hannah Allen in Popes-Head-Alley, 1649. http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A66681.0001.001.

Secondary Sources:

Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

———. "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology." *Church History* 24, no. 3 (1955): 257–72.

Anderson, John J., and Alexander C. Flick. *A Short History of the State of New York*. New York: Maynard, Merrill & Company, 1902.

ARPC. *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1803-1903*. Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell Company, 1905.

Barabási, Albert-László, and Réka Albert. "Emergence of Scaling in Random Networks." *Science* 286, no. 5439 (October 15, 1999): 509–12.

Barrett, Walter. *The Old Merchants of New York City*. New York: Carleton, 1863.

Bates, Fredrick L., and Walter G. Peacock. "Conceptualizing Social Structure: The Misuse of Classification in Structural Modeling." *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 4 (1989): 565–77.

Benson, Lee. *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Bernstein, Peter L. *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

Bogue, Allan G. *The Earnest Men: Republicans of the Civil War Senate*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Bonvillain, Nancy. *The Mohawk*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005.

Chaney, Charles L. *The Birth of Missions in America*. South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976.

Chernow, Ron. *Alexander Hamilton*. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.

Conforti, Joseph A. *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England between the Great Awakenings*. Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1981.

Cookinham, Henry J. *History of Oneida County New York: From 1700 to the Present Time*. Vol. 1. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912.

Cross, Whitney R. *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950.

Davis, Edward B. "Albert Barnes, 1798-1870: An Exponent of New School Presbyterianism." Princeton Theological Seminary, 1961.

Deep, Ronald. *Probability and Statistics with Integrated Software Routines*. Burlington: Academic Press, 2006.

Dexter, Franklin B. *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History: June, 1792 to September, 1805*. Vol. 5. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1911.

Dill, James H. *Congregationalism in Western New York; Its Rise, Decline, and Revival*. Rochester: Benton & Andrews, 1859.

DiMaggio, Paul J., and Walter W. Powell. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (1983): 147–60.

Dunning, Albert E. *Congregationalists in America: A Popular History of Their Origin, Belief,*

Polity, Growth, and Work. Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1894.

Durant, Samuel W. *History of Oneida County, New York: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers*. Philadelphia: Everts & Fariss, 1878.

Fischer, David Hackett. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Formisano, Ronald P. *The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Fowler, Henry. *History of the Church of Christ in Auburn, a Discourse Preached at the First Presbyterian Church, Thanksgiving Day, November 28th, 1867, Containing a Review of the Planting and Growth of All the Denominations in the City and of the Theological Seminary*. New York: Charles Scribner & Company, n.d.

Fowler, P.H. *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York*. Utica: Curtiss & Childs, 1877.

Freeman, Linton. *The Development of Social Network Analysis: A Study in the Sociology of Science*. Vancouver: Empirical Press, 2004.

Gienapp, William E. *The Origins of the Republican Party: 1852-1856*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Gillett, E.H. *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*. Vol. 2. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1864.

———. *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1864.

Goen, C.C. *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War.* Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985.

Gordon, Thomas F. *Gazetteer of the State of New York: Comprehending Its Colonial History, General Geography, Geology, and Internal Improvements*. Philadelphia: T. K. & P.G. Collins, 1836.

Gould, Roger V. *Insurgent Identities : Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Graber, Jennifer. *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons & Religion in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Granovetter, Mark S. “The Strength of Weak Ties.” *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360–80.

Hall, Henry. *The History of Auburn*. Auburn: Dennis Bros. & Company, 1869.

Hammond, Luna M., and Mrs. Luna M. Hammond Whitney. *History of Madison County, State of New York*. Syracuse: Truair, Smith & Company, 1872.

Hardman, Keith J. *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.

Hawley, Charles. *The History of the First Presbyterian Church, Auburn, N.Y.* Auburn: Dennis Brothers & Company, 1869.

Hirrel, Leo P. *Children of Wrath: New School Calvinism and Antebellum Reform*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

Holbrook, Stewart H. *The Yankee Exodus: An Account of Migration from New England*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950.

Holmes, Timothy. *Saratoga Springs, New York: A Brief History*. Charleston: The History Press, 2008.

Howell, George, ed. *Bicentennial History of Albany: History of the County of Albany, N.Y., from 1606-1886*. Vol. 2. New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1886.

Hughes, Samuel. “Memoir of James Brindley.” In *Quarterly Papers on Engineering*, edited by John Weale, 1:1–49. London: George Woodfall and Son, 1844.

Ibbotson, Joseph Darling, and Simon Newton Dexter North. *Documentary History of Hamilton College*. Clinton: Hamilton College Press, 1922.

Johnson, Paul E. *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.

Jones, Electa Fidelia. *Stockbridge: Past and Present; Or, Records of Old Mission Station*. Springfield: S. Bowels & Co., 1854.

Kim, Jae-On. *Factor Analysis: Statistical Methods and Practical Issues*. Newbury Park: SAGE, 1978.

Krackhardt, David. “Viscosity Models and the Diffusion of Controversial Innovation.” In *Dynamics of Organizations: Computational Modeling and Organizational Theories*, edited by Alessandro Lomi and Erik R. Larsen. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001.

Livermore, Shaw. *Early American Land Companies: Their Influence on Corporate Development*. Washington, DC: Beard Books, 2000.

MacPherson, John. *The Westminster Confession of Faith: With Introduction and Notes*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1881.

Marsden, George M. *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1970.

McBride, Ian. *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

McKinney, William K., Chase A. Philhower, and Harry A. Kniffin. *Commemorative History of the Presbyterian Church in Westfield, New Jersey, 1728-1928,*. Westfield: Published by Church Committee, 1929.

McPherson, James M. *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Mead, Sidney. *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

Miller, Perry G. *Errand Into the Wilderness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956.

Moreno, Jacob L. *Who Shall Survive?: A New Approach to the Problem of Human Interrelations*. Washington, DC: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1934.

Moreno, Jacob L., and Helen H. Jennings. "Statistics of Social Configurations." *Sociometry* 1 (1938): 342–74.

Nichols, Robert H. "The Plan of Union in New York." *Church History* 5, no. 1 (March 1936): 29–51.

Padgett, John F., and Christopher K. Ansell. "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434." *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (May 1, 1993): 1259–1319.

Padgett, John F., and Walter W. Powell. *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Peck, Roxy, Chris Olsen, and Jay Devore. *Introduction to Statistics and Data Analysis*. Boston: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning, 2012.

Perry, Charles M. *Henry Philip Tappan: Philosopher and University President*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933.

Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Punchard, George. *History of Congregationalism from about A.D. 250 to the Present Time: Congregationalism in America*. Vol. 5(2). Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1881.

Rasli, Amran. *Data Analysis and Interpretation: A Handbook for Postgraduate Social Scientists*. Skudai: Penerbit UTM, 2006.

Raymond, Andrew Van Vranken. *Union University: Its History, Influence, Characteristics, and Equipment : With the Lives and Works of Its Founders, Benefactors, Officers, Regents, Faculty, and the Achievements of Its Alumni*. Vol. 1. New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1907.

Richards, Eric. "Scotland and the Atlantic Empire." In *Strangers within the Realm : Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D Morgan. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Rogers, Everett M. "Categorizing the Adopters of Agricultural Practices." *Rural Sociology* 23, no. 4 (1958): 346–54.

———. *Diffusion of Innovations, 5th Ed.* New York: Free Press, 2005.

Rothman, David J. *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*. Boston: Little Brown, 1971.

Rovai, Alfred P., Jason D. Baker, and Michael K. Ponton. *Social Science Research Design and Statistics: A Practitioner's Guide to Research Methods and IBM SPSS*. Chesapeake: Watertree Press LLC, 2013.

Ryan, Mary P. *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Sawyer, John. *History of Cherry Valley from 1740 to 1898*. Cherry Valley: Gazette Print, 1898.

Scharf, John Thomas, and Thompson Westcott. *History of Philadelphia: 1609-1884*. Vol. 2. Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Company, 1884.

Schein, Richard H. "Framing the Frontier: The New Military Tract Survey in Central New York." *New York History* 74, no. 1 (1993): 4–28.

Semans, Barbara Broome, and Letitia Broome Schwarz. *John Broome and Rebecca Lloyd: Their Descendants and Related Families 18th to 21st Centuries*. Vol. 1. Bloomington: Xlibris, 2009.

Seminary, Princeton Theological. *General Catalogue of the Theological Seminary: Princeton, New Jersey*. Princeton: Connolly & Madden, 1829.

Severance, Frank H., ed. *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*. Vol. 9. Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1906.

Seymour, Jeffrey, Michael Welch, Karen M. Gregg, and Jessica Collett. "Generating Trust in Congregations: Engagement, Exchange, and Social Networks." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53, no. 1 (March 2014): 130–44.

Sharp, James R. *The Jacksonians Versus the Banks*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Shaw, Ronald E. *Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal, 1792-1854*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1966.

Sheriff, Carol. *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1996.

Snow, Benjamin B., Charles F. Rattigan, and Willis J. Beecher, eds. *History of Cayuga County New York*. Auburn: Cayuga County Historical Society, 1908.

Sobh, Tarek M. *Advances in Computer and Information Sciences and Engineering*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.

Stevens, John A. "Christopher Colles, the First Projector of Inland Navigation in America." *The Magazine of American History: With Notes and Queries* 2 (1878): 340–48.

Sweet, William W. *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1850: The Congregationalists*. Vol. 3. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964.

———. *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1850: The Presbyterians*. Vol. 2. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936.

Taylor, Alan. *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, 2006.

Thompson, Ernest Trice. *Presbyterians in the South, Vol. 1 1607-1861.* Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1963.

Tilly, Charles. *The Vendee: A Sociological Analysis of the Counter-Revolution of 1793*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Travers, Jeffrey, and Stanley Milgram. "An Experimental Study of the Small World Problem." *Sociometry* 32, no. 4 (1969): 425–43.

Trinterud, Leonard J. *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949.

Tyler, Alice Felt. *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History from the Colonial Period to the Outbreak of the Civil War*. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

UCLA. "Annotated SPSS Output," January 31, 2014. http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/output/factor1.htm.

Walker, Williston. *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States*. New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1894.

Watts, Duncan J., and Steven H. Strogatz. "Collective Dynamics of 'Small World' Networks." *Nature* 393, no. 6684 (1998): 440–42.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society : An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Vol. 2.* Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Translated by Ephraim Fischoff, et al. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

White, Harrison C. *An Anatomy of Kinship: Mathematical Models for Structures of Cumulated Roles*. Englewodd Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963.

———. "Can Mathematics Be Social? Flexible Representations for Interaction Process and Its Sociocultural Constructions." *Sociological Forum* 12, no. 1 (1997): 53–71.

Williams, Paul K., and Charles N. Williams. *Skaneateles Lake*. Postcard History Series. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery*. Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969.

Wyld, Lionel D. *Low Bridge!: Folklore and the Erie Canal*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962.