ALEXANDER HAMILTON AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN HISTORIANS: A STUDY OF SELECTED INTERPRETATIONS OF HAMILTON

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ABSTRACT

ALEXANDER HAMILTON AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN HISTORIANS: A STUDY OF SELECTED INTERPRETATIONS OF HAMILTON

by Max E. Bramble

Most American historians of the nineteenth-century subscribed, either implicitly or explicitly, to a belief that the United States was somehow an experiment in a better political and economic life for men. They thought democracy, or some variation on a democratic theme, was America's special destiny, divine or otherwise. All historical figures who had any part in the fulfillment of that destiny have been made to stand before the judgement of the historians--Alexander Hamilton probably more than most men. Historians of the nineteenth-century, and the twentieth as well, have not agreed in their judgements of Hamilton.

Out of their efforts to account for the nation's beginnings have emerged a large number of secondary materials which, for all intents and purposes, have become part of the historical record for this period. Now primary sources must be joined with the secondary works for any study of the Early National period and the Founding Fathers.

However, the secondary works have added another dimension to the interested student's task. He must know the historiography as well as the sources, if he is to obtain valid historical insight into this important period.

The intent of this essay is to deal with a small aspect of the historiography of the Early National period: nineteenth-century interpretations of Hamilton. Generally, the effort has been made to portray the substance of the various interpretations set forth by historians. Specifically, this essay will reveal the variety of views that historians have offered for certain aspects of Hamilton's career. For example, their judgements of his financial and economic policies are considered. Their evaluations of his reports, his policies for foreign and domestic affairs, and his motives are examined. Consideration is given to their estimations of Hamilton's contribution to the founding of the nation. In fine, their assessments of Hamilton's statesmanship are a central topic throughout this essay.

A study of these historians and their work necessarily involves some aspects of nineteenth-century American intellectual history, primarily because they subtly reflected themselves in their interpretations. Hence, the philosophies, prejudices, and other factors that influenced them in their day are matters of major concern.

Not everyone who wrote something on Hamilton is included in this paper. Some did not do enough on him to

warrant calling their efforts major interpretations. Others' interpretations were subsumed, for the most part, in better known or more scholarly works. Those excluded doubtlessly have a place in historical investigation, perhaps in a study dealing with the nineteenth-century image of Hamilton.

Those included--Richard Hildreth, Henry S. Randall, Henry Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge, and William Graham Sumner--were chosen because contemporary or subsequent scholars judged their work to be significant or influential Hamiltonian scholarship. Their work represented the major interpretations of Hamilton to emerge in the nineteenth-century.

Though there was general agreement among them that Hamilton was a conservative nationalist, possessed of considerable ability, each of them was attracted by a particular Hamilton. Hildreth portrayed a "utilitarian" Hamilton and Randall, a monarchical one. Adams described a practical statesman who was limited by an inordinate ambition and a deficiency of morals. Lodge saw him as the truly great nationalist leader. Sumner admired him as a necessary counterforce and check to undisciplined democracy, and yet at the same time found much to criticize in his statecraft.

The weight of the nineteenth-century interpretations preponderated on the critical side. At the end of the century, Hamilton remained in the shadows of the great men, still largely an unfathomed and unknown quantity.

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CHAPTER I

HAMILTON IN REVIEW

The literature of American history is replete with studies and interpretations of Alexander Hamilton; and within that historical literature is a diversity of views which indicates that placing Hamilton in a proper political perspective and assessing his impact on American history are complex problems which historians still attend. Much of this diversity comes from Hamilton's having been an active policy-making and precedent-shaping statesman who wrote and said a good deal about government and political philosophy. Hamilton's historical record is filled with much for historians to ponder and argue. When this abundant record is added to those of Jefferson, Washington, Madison, John Adams, and others, the search for historical truth becomes confounded. Unfortunately, this abundance of material reveals no unity, either about the beginnings of the American nation or about the contributions of each of these great men to those beginnings. That historians should disagree about the meanings of those records is natural and healthy, and explains the ample body of literature which exists.

I

The secondary works on Hamilton abound with much that is now accepted as commonplace, even though they are diverse in interpretation. Regardless of the point of view of the writer, Hamilton is counted as one of the Founding Fathers. His part in bringing the call for the Constitutional Convention of 1787, his efforts to create a true union of the states, and his part in giving form to the new federal government are recognized in textbooks and monographs. He was a statesman, for better or for worse, whose role in the Early National period is, simply stated, part and parcel of that period's history.

Hamilton served the nation as the first Secretary of the Treasury in Washington's administration. In this department he successfully plotted the course of federal financial stability and shaped the fiscal policies of the nation during the crucial years after 1789. Probably few students would disagree with Leonard D. White's remark that the Treasury, under Hamilton, was at that time the "dominating organization" of the federal government.[1] This department, more than the other three cabinet divisions, affected the lives of Americans, rich and poor, urban and rural, East and West.[2] Friends

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[1]Leonard D. White, The Federalists (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956), p. 117 and passim.

[2]Ibid., p. 117.

and critics alike judge Hamilton to have possessed extraordinary talent and ability in that post.[3]

Hamilton once remarked that nearly every important measure with which government is concerned involves money.[4] It was an observation that has proved particularly consistent with the way in which present historians write the history of the Early National period. The fiscal programs of Hamilton are regarded as among the central issues of the 1790's, thus placing him at the very center of the political vortex. His efforts to put through his programs made him the logical spokesman and leader of a group of like-minded men in Congress and the states. It was a corollary of this common sentiment that when political parties began to form in the mid-1790's, Hamilton emerged as a party leader among the Federalists, and remained so until his death in a duel with Aaron Burr in 1804.

His prestige and influence among influential circles of the country's powerful people depended upon more than his official position in the government. He was in many respects an extraordinary man. Amiable, charming, gracious, he moved with ease among American social circles. Intellectually he

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[3]Samuel Eliot Morrison, The Growth of the American Republic (5th ed. rev.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), Vol. I, p. 324; White, The Federalists, p. 126; Broadus Mitchell, Alexander Hamilton, The National Adventure, 1788-1804 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1962), p. 26, hereafter cited as Mitchell, Hamilton; representative of the critics: Vernon Parrington, Main Currents of American Thought ("Harvest Book"; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954), Vol. I, p. 308; Claude G. Bowers, Jefferson and Hamilton, The Struggle for Democracy in America (Reprint; Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1946), pp. 24 and 33.

[4]In White, The Federalists, p. 117.

was superior to most Americans of his time, particularly in matters of government and economics. His ability to write persuasively was demonstrated at the crucial meetings of the New York ratifying assembly in June of 1788. During this time, Hamilton wrote the majority of papers, along with Madison and Jay, which became The Federalist Papers, often considered to be the best commentary on the nature of the Constitution as conceived by the Founding Fathers.

There were few men on the national scene in the 1790's who possessed the same ambition to succeed, the same energy to achieve, the same boldness of action, and the same capacity for sustained work or study. Whether as an aide-de-camp to Washington, a concerned citizen, a practicing lawyer in New York City, a Secretary of the Treasury, or a political party leader, Hamilton never failed to impress-positively or negatively--those who were associated with him. It was in his nature to leave a profound impress upon the history of the new nation.

II

The real merit, or demerit, as one may choose, of Hamilton's statesmanship evinces itself in his famous reports, prepared and presented during his incumbency as Secretary. They served as a blueprint for domestic policy for the next several years after 1790 and as a reference point of political "standing" for the next century and more.

Hamilton believed in the destiny of the United States. It was blessed more so than any country in history with abundant natural resources, waiting for development. Fertile land was plentiful to supply the demands of an expanding population. Minerals and other resources were plentiful enough to provide the base for the country's industrial development. Hamilton had written:

> ...this country will, erelong, assume an attitude correspondent with its great destinies--majestic, efficient, and operative of great things. A noble career lies before it.[5]

He expounded more than an optimistic view of the nation's economic destiny. He desired to help establish a government that was honorable and respectable, both at home and abroad. It was important to him that the new government be active and strong so that it could maintain respect and authority, and fashion the national development. In 1783, after peace with England had been obtained, Hamilton viewed the task ahead as "to make solid establishments within, to perpetuate our union, to prevent our being a ball in the hands of European powers, bandied against each other [the states] at their pleasure; in fine to make our independence truly a blessing."[6]

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[5] Ibid., p. 516.

[6] Quoted in Louis M. Hacker, Alexander Hamilton in the American Tradition (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1957), p. 76.

After Hamilton became Secretary of the Treasury, he inaugurated a program that would fulfill the nation's requirements, as he perceived them. Central to his program, and basic to his very liberal view of the destinies of the United States, was financial stability and independence at the federal level. Hamilton wanted the national government to radiate the integrity and resolve of the American people, in order that peace would prevail at home. Social and economic stability, in turn, would encourage foreign and American capital to underwrite the development of the nation. These ends he proposed in his First Report on the Public Credit in January, 1790, and these ends he obtained when Congress passed the Funding and Assumption Acts of the same year.

Specifically, Hamilton asked the nation to honor its war debts. They were, he said, the price of liberty. By funding the debt, he was merely looking to the most expedient way by which the debt could be properly administered and paid. Assumption of the state debts was simply an amplification of the war debt problem. Why should state governments and the federal government compete for the funds to pay what the American people in general owed their creditors, domestic and foreign, who had supported them. It was much better, Hamilton reasoned, that the war debts be massed, and one agency, the federal government, see to the fulfillment of the terms of the contracts of the newly funded debt. National honor required this much; but more than honor was at stake. Hamilton

was not concerned with ethical formalities in his report. As he understood public affairs, a good national credit was a rung in the ladder reaching toward prosperity.

The order that Hamilton brought to the nation's finances enabled the federal govèrnment to borrow money on its credit. However, no machinery yet existed to facilitate the financial transactions of the government, especially the day-by-day business. In December, 1790, Hamilton presented to Congress a second report, The Report on the National Bank.

As an aspect of his larger program, Hamilton conceived of the bank as merely an agency to help maintain and to expedite the use of the benefits accruing from a sound public credit. It was to be a privately owned, profit making, but publicly supervised banking institution. Providing monies on short term loans to the government, it was also expected to expedite foreign-exchange operations; to serve as a depository of public funds; to facilitate private payment of customs duties; to simplify the transfer of public monies from place to place; and to issue currency.

On the surface of things, the Report seemingly dealt with a mundane administrative matter. As events unfolded, the Report unleashed a most significant debate in Congress over the nature of the Constitution. It was immediately challenged by a group, who later became identified as Jeffersonian Republicans, as inimical to the letter of the Constitution. They argued that since the power to incorporate a bank was

not specifically enumerated as a power granted to the federal government, any such measure creating a bank was unconstitutional. Hamilton countered that the power to incorporate a bank was not specifically excluded, and therefore the federal government had the authority to create such an institution. "Does the proposed measure," he wrote, "abridge a pre-existing right of any State or any individual? If it does not, there is a strong presumption in favor of its constitutionality."[7] Hamilton's arguments in behalf of the legality of the bank were based, not only on his reading of the Constitution, but also upon his conviction that the federal government must have latitude in its authority to act. To have this, the document had to be interpreted loosely if it was to cope with the exigencies of the future. Hamilton's arguments were sufficient to muster a majority in Congress and persuade the President, and the bill creating the First National Bank of the United States was enacted.

While the debate over the Bank was agitating Congress, Hamilton presented what was the least controversial of his proposals, the Report on the Establishment of a Mint. Suffice it to say that Hamilton proposed a bimetallic standard for the country's money system. His motive was to insure an adequate circulation of money in the economy; his concern, to

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[7]Quoted in Nathan Schachner, Alexander Hamilton (Special contents edition; New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1957), p. 273.

keep the economy active and expanding. Hamilton's proposal came in January, 1791, and was enacted into law in April, 1792.

By far the most statesmanlike report that Hamilton prepared came in December, 1791, and was titled the Report on Manufactures. It is well summarized by Broadus Mitchell: The Report he said, "is fiscal only incidentally, but strives to fashion prosperity and security for the new nation."[8] The other reports were as preludes to this major work; Hamilton was not here solving an administrative problem of collecting revenues, but was proposing that the federal government actively intervene in the development of the economy. Mitchell, whose insight is penetrating, said that Hamilton was exerting himself "as the earliest American economic planner."[9]

In this report, Hamilton expressed his belief that the United States must look to the establishment of industry within its boundaries. Though agriculture was a natural specialization of the American people, considering the abundance of cheap land and the paucity of factory-hands, agriculture would not secure peace or prosperity for the nation. As long as the country depended upon the European demand for its foodstuffs, prosperity would fluctuate according to that demand. Diversifying the economy, however, establishing manufactures and encouraging commerce as well as agriculture, the nation

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[8]Hamilton, p. 139.

[9]Ibid., 142.

could expect to prosper more or less irrespective of foreign conditions.[10]

National security was likewise closely related to the diversification of the economy. Concisely, Hamilton expressed his point of view:

> Not only the wealth but the independence and security of a country appear to be materially connected with the prosperity of manufactures. Every nation, with a view to these great objects, ought to endeavor to possess within itself all the essentials of national supply. These comprise the means of subsistence, habitation, clothing and defense.[11]

Moreover, the inadequate American navy could not guarantee that the major ports of the world would be accessible to supply the country's needs in case of war.[12]

Hamilton realized that difficulties faced any prospective manufacturer. The country was short of capital, labor, and experience, besides being prejudiced toward agricultural enterprise.[13] He attempted to meet these problems generally by urging in his report that Congress enact legislation which would permit federal intervention in the nation's economic development. The federal government had taken a constructive step forward already by establishing a basis for a sound public credit. But this was not enough. Government should

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[10]Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., The Works of Alexander Hamilton (Federal Edition; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), Vol. IV, p. 134; hereafter cited as Lodge, Works.

[11]Ibid., p. 135.

[12]Ibid., p. 136.

[13]Mitchel, Hamilton, p. 139.

provide funds and legislation to encourage the development of certain new industries, which investors would not undertake unassisted.[14] A positive federal program should promote the development of those industries necessary to the well-being of the country.

The program that Hamilton meant for Congress to enact included the payment of bounties and premiums and the enactment of protective tariffs. None, however, were inviolate gifts to industry. They were expedients, to serve their purposes until American industry was established and in position to compete favorably with the more advanced European manufacturers. His report also mentioned other measures, such as the construction of roads and canals, the exemption of certain essential imports from duties, and government inspection of manufactured goods.[15]

Exponents of an agricultural economy, particularly those from the South, protested that Hamilton's proposals were class and sectional in benefit. Having no industry in their foreseeable future, they would obtain no advantage from supporting such measures. Hamilton tried to persuade them to see that industrial development would bring a vast increase in the demand for agricultural produce.[16] His presentations in

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[14]Lodge, Works, Vol. IV, p. 105.

[15]Schachner, Alexander Hamilton, p. 277.

[16]Ibid., pp. 276-277.

behalf of his report were not sufficient to convince the majority in Congress to enact this bold program. For the moment, Hamilton's greatest report effected no novel course in American domestic policy.

Hamilton's last report, The Second Report on Public Credit, January, 1795, is probably best characterized by Madison's remark about it. "Hamilton," he wrote to Jefferson, "has made a long Valedictory Rep^{t}[sic]."[17] Hamilton, about to leave public office, assumed the role of a prophet to preach about good and bad fiscal policy. He exhorted Congress to maintain the integrity of the public credit and to seek means to retire the existing national debt as quickly as possible. He warned that bad policy resulted from increasing that debt without providing immediately the means for retirement of any newly acquired debt. He then urged specific measures for congressional consideration, such as converting the foreign to a domestic debt, making provisions for the unsubscribed national debt, and enlarging the amount of money allocated to the sinking fund and making it inviolate. Thus Hamilton's last report ended with the same note as his first report had begun--the sanctity of the public credit.

Hamilton's several reports were written with specific domestic needs and problems in mind. The very character of his objectives necessarily involved him in an effort to shape the nation's foreign policy. The war in Europe, beginning in

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[17]Quoted in Mitchell, Hamilton, p. 361.

1793, and the hostile policies of the belligerents, Britain and France, threatened to embroil the United States in a war. The strains of war would have interfered with the successful implementation of his program. For this reason, he was active during the decade of the 'nineties, both in and out of office, working for what was essentially a pro-British foreign policy.

Foremost in his policy was peace. War would destroy prosperity and undermine the nation's strength and development. "If while Europe is exhausting herself in a destructive war," he wrote, "this country can maintain its peace, the issue will open to us a wide field of advantages...."[18] If war must come, wise policy dictated that it be postponed for ten or twelve years until the country was stronger.[19]

Hamilton wanted war least of all with Great Britain. His revenue system prospered in significant amounts from the commercial duties paid the country by British merchants and shipppers. The loss of that revenue would require the imposition of heavy taxes on the people. Altogether a war would cost too much:

> To support public credit and carry on the war would suppose exactions really grievous. To abandon public credit would be to renounce an important means of carrying on the war; besides the sacrifice of the public creditors and the disgrace of national bankruptcy.[20]

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[18]Lodge, Works, Vol. V, p. 86.

[19]Ibid., p. 177.

[20]Ibid., p. 87.

Other factors influenced Hamilton to favor a pro-British policy. For one thing, he thought British capital was essential to the economic development of the country. For another, he feared that the powerful British navy could easily destroy the trade, navigation, and mercantile capital of the United States. Spain and Britain allied could incite a general Indian war that would "desolate the whole extent of the frontier."[21] An indiscretion in foreign affairs might well destroy the gains of the United States since 1783.

Given his assessment of foreign relations, Hamilton was predisposed to advocate and later to support a treaty with Great Britain to avoid hostilities. The vehicle by which he sought to secure his domestic policy from the strains of war was the unpopular Jay's treaty of 1794. He tried to encourage popular support of the treaty, even suffering a rock on the forehead tossed by irate New Yorkers who were opposed to the treaty. But the insult was evidentally tolerable; for after the treaty was ratified by the Senate, he wrote with relief that the country had escaped implication in "the dreadful war" and had preserved its peace for a while to come.[22]

III

Hamilton's public biography to this point would indicate that he was an extraordinary man indeed. The story must

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[21] Ibid., p. 202. [22] Ibid., p. 176.

also reveal that he had feet of clay. Notwithstanding his other talents, Hamilton was deficient as a politician--meaning that he lacked savoir-faire in human relations. He was a leader of leaders, a general of an army, but he was not a man of the people, nor did he care to be. He fancied himself a statesman who should lead the nation to strength and prosperity. The people could not expect him, a man of honor and perception to be their lackey in government. He would construct the political and economic framework within which they could enjoy their liberty and find their happiness.

He was a man of bold action who, after conceiving his broad plan, moved imperiously to carry it out. Amalgamated with his audacity was an ego involvement that inclined him toward a rigidity in thought and action, once his mind was settled. He was quick to understand, but not shallow in his perception of state affairs. Once his conceptions took the shape of plans of state policy, he tended to assume that they were synonomous to the well-being of the nation. An attack on one was an attack on the other, and he would suffer neither with patience or conciliation. Other politicians were caught in the unpleasant predicament of being either with him or against him.

In the Treasury and vested with power, his personal predilections prompted him to act the role of a prime

minister.[23] In that assumed role, he proceeded to influence, or as Jefferson would prefer to say, meddle in, the affairs of all departments and Congress. Jefferson once wrote to Madison, "Without numbers, he [Hamilton] is an host within himself."[24] Though the remark did not pertain to Hamilton's ministerial pretensions, it does illuminate his tendency to be exasperatingly overwhelming in office and out. But as Jefferson knew too well, Hamilton had numbers also.

In Congress were a group of able men who might be described generally as Hamiltonians. In the Senate were men such as Strong, Ellsworth, Johnson, King, Schuyler, Read, Robert Morris, and Charles Carroll. In the House, Ames, Sedgwick, Wadsworth, Laurance, Benson, Boudinot, Clymer, Fitzsimmons, and William L. Smith. Counting on their assistance and receiving it, Hamilton was able to oversee the legislative procedure. As part of the executive branch he nevertheless crossed over the sacred separation of powers to frame bills and secure their passage, to influence the appointment of friendly committees in Congress, to muster support for particular bills, and to plan the strategy for pending legislative battles. There were few areas of federal concern,

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[23]Richard Morris, ed., Alexander Hamilton and the Founding of the Nation (New York: The Dial Press, 1957), viii, hereafter cited as Morris, Hamilton; John Miller, The Federalist Era 1789-1801 (New York: Harper and Brothers), p. 84.

[24]Quoted in Allan Nevins, "Alexander Hamilton," Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. VIII, p. 177.

delegated or implied, in which Hamilton did not try to show Congress what was necessary and proper.[25]

Other executive officials found that Hamilton was eager to shape policy in their respective areas. Hamilton and Jefferson were engaged in a running competition after war broke out in Europe in 1793 to shape American foreign policy. Henry Knox, the Secretary of War under Washington, was on many occasions merely the engine by which Hamilton's plans for that department were fulfilled. Attorney General Randolph found Hamilton more than once influencing the executive's position on Constitutional questions.[26]

After resigning from office in 1795, he continued to exert influence in the cabinet. His successor in the Treasury was his good and loyal friend, Oliver Wolcott. He frequently wrote to Hamilton asking for advice, thereby giving the ex-Secretary an opportunity to keep a hand on federal finances. After 1796, in the administration of John Adams, Hamilton was able to exert influence upon the cabinet through his close association and correspondence with Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State, and James McHenry, Secretary of War, as well as Wolcott, who Adams retained in his cabinet.[27]

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[25]John C. Miller, Alexander Hamilton, Portrait in Paradox (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 323; hereafter cited as Miller, Hamilton.

[26]White, The Federalists, p. 127.

[27]Stephen G. Kurtz, The Presidency of John Adams, The Collapse of Federalism, 1795-1800 ("Perpetua Books"; New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 274-279.

Hamilton's conduct engenders suspicions as to his motives and ethics. One critic was convinced that Hamilton sought power and influence for himself.[28]

Other instances of Hamilton's excessive energy in dealing with affairs of state and politics can be cited. He was continually writing for the newspapers in an effort to encourage favorable public opinion for Federalist policies and to expose the opposition. He interfered in three national elections from 1789 to 1800, concocting schemes to make them come out as he believed right for the country. During the campaign before the election of 1800, Hamilton wrote a vicious pamphlet assailing the character and ability of John Adams. It was an instance of very poor judgement by Hamilton and had the immediate effect of splitting the Federalist party further apart. In the aftermath of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, Hamilton displayed a desire to impose an unnecessarily severe vengence upon the culprits who promoted this frontier protest.

This description of Hamilton is preparation for the observation that in a nation generally fearful of concentrating power in the federal government, and even more so in the hands of an individual, Hamilton's conduct in office and out appears excessively aggressive, and in some instances, sinister. It seems overbearing, overly ambitious, and power-mongering especially when it is compared to the conduct of

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[28]Joseph Charles, The Origins of the American Party System (Williamsburg: The Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1956), p. 36.

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Washington, Jefferson, or Adams. In fairness to Hamilton, it should be said that there appear to be extenuating factors which explain his behavior. At any rate, different constructions can be devised to account for his conduct. Most of the pro-Jefferson historians, Claude Bowers, Vernon Parrington, Joseph Charles, for example, have taken his conduct, in conjunction with his political philosophy, as evidence that Hamilton intended to subvert the American experiment in democracy.

IV

It seems ironical that Hamilton's conduct can be compared, at least generally, to that of the popular folk-hero, Andrew Jackson. Yet Hamilton has never had the stature of Jackson, or Washington, or Jefferson. Probably one thing that helps explain this irony is that Hamilton did not give expression to a political philosophy which was entirely congenial to the dogmas of American democratic faith.[29]

Hamilton was a skeptic and a realist, to a degree, in his views about men's ability to achieve happiness and material well-being. Whereas Jefferson had faith that men could work everything out all right, Hamilton feared that they would just as likely bungle it. His experience and understanding of history showed him that man was inclined toward waywardness.[30] He was no fatalist, but he did believe that men would have to

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[29]Morris, Hamilton, p. 136.

[30]Miller, Hamilton, pp. 197-200.

employ every resource and faculty to achieve their well-being.[31] Unlike Jefferson, he would not trust some intangible quality to give Americans a good government and a prosperous nation. He believed that he, along with others of the right persuasion, would have to see to the success of the American effort toward these objectives. A young Hamilton wrote in 1782:

> Happy America, if those to who thou hast intrusted the guardianship of thy infancy know how to provide for thy future repose, but miserable and undone, if their negligence or ignorance permits the spirit of discord to erect her banner on the ruins of thy tranquillity.[32]

The guardianship, Hamilton believed, ought to be in the hands of America's elite, most likely men of wealth.[33] Hamilton did not advocate that an aristocracy of wealth should govern the country by hereditary right.[34] Leaders should be chosen by their fellow citizens who were qualified to vote.[35] Hamilton's paramount concern was with having capable men serve in government, and he had little faith in the ability of the mass of men to provide stable and durable leadership.[36] Good government required good leaders to work

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[31] Ibid., p. 199.

[32] Morris, Hamilton, p. 73.

[33] Ibid., pp. 136-137.

[34] Ibid., pp. 131-134 and 140.

[35] Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[36] Miller, Hamilton, pp. 196-198.

for the desirable ends of "public strength" and "private security and happiness."[37]

Capable leaders were one element essential to the attainment of these ends, power in the federal government was the other.[38] Though the majority of Americans were concerned with limiting power in government, Hamilton was concerned with the possible absence of it. He believed that power was related to energy in government, and both were necessary to effect the well-being of the people and preserve the federal union. His five reports demonstrate the ways in which he anticipated that federal power could be used effectively.

The chief threat to federal energy, and the union itself, was the states.[39] As a Revolutionary War officer, he had observed first-hand the obstructionism, niggardliness, and apathy of the states when called on to assist the Continental Army. In the 1780's, the so-called "Critical Period", he saw the states' uncooperative attitude toward one another while faced with mutual problems and their unwillingness to support the Confederation government. After 1788, he believed that the states were the centers of anti-federal sentiment. Aware of the sensibility in many quarters of the country about the sanctity of the states, Hamilton spoke of achieving

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[37]Lodge, Works, Vol. IX, p. 534.

[38]Morris, Hamilton, pp. 123 and 140.

[39]Ibid., p. 283; Lodge, Works, Vol. IX, p. 533.

balance between state and federal powers. Each would presumably balance the other and thus preserve the liberties of the people.[40] Potentially, if not in reality, the states, Hamilton thought, held the preponderant weight. Steps ought to be taken by interested parties to maintain the energy of the federal government against the encroachments of the states.[41]

This sketch of his views suggests two cardinal points of Hamilton's political philosophy. He was a nationalist, when the states were as powerful as they have ever been. And he was an advocate of centralization of power when States' rights and the evils of power were popular dogmas.

Hamilton's beliefs led to charges from his critics that he was a monarchist. Most evidence suggests that the charge was unfounded--most likely a "red herring". The evidence is conclusive, however, that Hamilton was no democrat. His lack of faith in the ability of the masses has already been mentioned. His rejection of democracy was mainly theoretical. Unlike most commentators on democracy, Hamilton meant something rather specific when he spoke of it. Democracy was a classical form of government, first given shape by the ancient Greeks. Their experiences with it were a lesson to all men about the deficiencies of such a form of government. Foreign relations had been characterized by war among

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[40] Morris, Hamilton, p. 137.

[41] Ibid., pp. 282-283.

the city-states; domestic relations by unmanageable mobs which ended up supporting one tyrant or another.[42] The Americans would have to find something more stable, more durable than democracy if independence were to be a blessing.

In a letter to a Federalist friend, Edward Carrington of Virginia, Hamilton declared himself politically:

> As to my own political creed, I give it to you with the upmost sincerity. I am affectionately attached to the republican theory.[43]

He qualified his attachment by saying that he would support republicanism so long as it was "consistent with the order and happiness of society."[44] Whether it would really work in the United States was yet to be proved.[45] Hamilton had the same doubts as Montesquieu about republicanism working in a vast area such as the United States. But he wished it success and worked to provide the "expedients" necessary to its success.[46] In 1801, he expressed his political creed somewhat more concretely; he wanted:

> ...the mild reign of rational liberty, which rests on the basis of an efficient and well-balanced government and through the medium of stable laws shelters and protects the life, the reputation, the civil and religious rights of every member of the community.[47]

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[42] Ibid., p. 136.

[43] Lodge, Works, Vol. IX, p. 533.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 534.

[46] Morris, Hamilton, p. 128.

[47] Ibid., p. 129.

Using the phrase, "government of the people, by the people and for the people" as a kind of yardstick, Hamilton measures well on two of the three. He believed that government "must be fitted to a nation, as much as a coat to the individual."[48] His reports demonstrate that he sought federal policies which would serve the well-being of the people. Whether they were the right policies is another question, but Hamilton believed they were. Government by the people was a concession he would not make, not in the sense that they should participate directly and immediately in the construction and administration of federal policy. Perhaps this is pardonable; but surely his unpardonable aberration was speaking out against democracy in this land.

V

Most American historians of the nineteenth-century subscribed, either implicitly or explicitly, to a belief that the United States was somehow an experiment in a better political and economic life for men. They thought democracy, or some variation on a democratic theme, was America's special destiny, divine or otherwise. All historical figures who had a part in fulfilling that destiny have been made to stand before the judgement of the historians--Hamilton probably more than most men. Historians of the nineteenth-century,

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[48] Ibid., pp. 143-144.

and the twentieth as well, have not agreed in their judgements of Hamilton.

Out of their efforts to account for the nation's beginnings have emerged a large number of secondary materials which, for all intents and purposes, have become part of the historical record for this period. Now primary sources must be joined with the secondary works for any study of the Early National period and the Founding Fathers. However, the secondary works have added another dimension to the interested student's task. He must know the historiography as well as the sources, if he is to obtain valid historical insight into this important period.

The intent of this essay is to deal with a small aspect of the history of the Early National period: Nineteenth-century interpretations of Alexander Hamilton. Generally, the effort has been made to portray the substance of the various interpretations set forth by historians of Hamilton. From them have come the themes which have or have not influenced subsequent investigation of Hamilton's career. That knowledge may provide the basis by which some future study can assess what current scholarship has assimilated from the nineteenth-century historians and what it has contributed new and valid to fixing Hamilton's historical place.

Specifically, this essay will reveal the variety of interpretations that historians have offered of certain aspects of Hamilton's public and private careers. For example,

their judgements of his financial and economic policies are considered. Their judgements of his reports, his policies for foreign and domestic affairs, and his motives are examined. Consideration is given to their estimations of Hamilton's contribution to the founding of the nation. In fine, their judgements of Hamilton's statesmanship are a central topic throughout this essay.

A study of these historians and their work necessarily involves some aspects of nineteenth-century American intellectual history, primarily because they subtly reflected themselves in their interpretations of Hamilton. Hence, the philosophies, prejudices, and other factors that influenced them in their day are matters of major interest.

Not everyone who wrote something on Hamilton is included in this paper. Some did not do enough on Hamilton to warrant calling their efforts major interpretations. Others' interpretations were subsumed, for the most part, in better known or more scholarly works. Those excluded have a place in historical investigation, perhaps in a study dealing with the nineteenth-century image of Hamilton.

Those included were chosen because contemporary or subsequent scholars judged their work to be significant or influential Hamiltonian scholarship, to either their generation or later generations. Their work represented the major interpretations of Hamilton to emerge in the nineteenth-century.

CHAPTER II

RICHARD HILDRETH -- A UTILITARIAN INTERPRETATION

Richard Hildreth wrote one of the first scholarly histories of the United States to be published in the nineteenth-century. His work also proved to be an interesting paradox for subsequent historians to unravel. He was a humanitarian, concerned about the moral and material improvement of society. He was liberal in thought, being intellectually allied with the tenets of Utilitarianism. By some definitions, he could be judged a democrat. Yet he wrote a history which has been labeled Federalist in point of view. The contradiction becomes more intriguing when it is put in the form of the question, Why would an intellectual liberal praise Hamilton and disparage the traditionally accepted symbol of democracy, Thomas Jefferson?

I

Hildreth was born in Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1807, the son of Hosea and Sarah Hildreth. His ancestors were counted among the earliest settlers of Massachusetts, but not among the most illustrious. Hosea broke with the family yeoman tradition when he went to Harvard. After graduation he decided to prepare for the ministry. His plans

were changed when he married and found it necessary to teach to support his family. While the Hildreths were at the Deerfield Academy, Richard was born. Four years later, Hosea accepted an appointment at Philips Exeter in New Hampshire.

The home environment was excellent preparation for Hildreth's subsequent career as a writer, philosopher, and scholar. He "bumped about among books" from an early age.[1] He was also bumped around Federalist political principles from an early age.[2] In 1822, Hildreth entered Harvard, where he demonstrated interests in politics, government, and history among other things. He graduated high in his class in 1826, and soon after began legal studies.

Law, however, did not interest him as a career, and in 1832 he accepted a position with the Whig Boston Daily Atlas. Ill-health in 1834 forced him to sojourn in Florida. What he saw of slavery in the South prompted him to begin work on a novel, Archie Moore, which his biographer says was "the first anti-slavery novel in the United States."[3] During this same interval, he wrote another book, Despotism in America, which was intended to redress the misconceptions Tocqueville had created in his Democracy in America. Not long afterwards, Hildreth identified himself with the cause of abolition.

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[1]Oliver Wendell Holmes quoted in Donald E. Emerson, "Richard Hildreth," The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Vol. LXIV, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), p. 15; hereafter cited as Emerson, "Hildreth".

[2]Ibid., p. 19.

[3]Ibid., p. 73.

His writing during the mid-1830's was prodigious. Besides the books already mentioned, he translated into English Dumont's French version of Bentham's Theory of Legislation and wrote a book on banks and currency.

In 1837 Hildreth resumed his position with the newspaper, and within the year was writing and campaigning as a Whig candidate on a temperance platform. He even founded a temperance newspaper, the Boston Spy.[4] In the meantime he put together a campaign biography for William Henry Harrison.

His health failed him again in 1840, and this time he chose British Guiana for his retreat. He supported himself by newspaper writing. The significance of this retreat, however, was the fruition of his long standing desire to "analyze in scientific terms, the moral, political, economic, and intellectual factors which rule men's lives...."[5] He planned to work up eight major treatises, but actually was able to get only four of them on paper. The works which were penned manifested a rationalistic, utilitarian, reforming character. And though they were progressive in thought, they were not well received at home.

Apparently discouraged by the poor reception of his philosophical works, Hildreth turned his efforts toward the writing of a factual history of the United States. He

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[4]Ibid., p. 66.

[5]Martha M. Pingel, An American Utilitarian; Richard Hildreth as a Philosopher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 5; hereafter cited as Pingel, Hildreth.

believed a history of this nature was necessary, and long overdue, to counter the exaggerated and patriotic history of George Bancroft.[6] The History was not well-received either. Critics claimed that it was devoid of philosophical theme and was too severe in its judgements and descriptions of the colonial fathers.

The 1840' and 1850's were unpleasant years for Hildreth. The nation's critics seemed determined to deny him acclaim. Despite his literary misfortune, he retained his sardonic wit. Perhaps it was sharpened by his critics. Since so little of this side of Hildreth appears in his major works, this comment might well serve as a sample of the man's acumen:

> [He had given up]...the idea of being entitled to express any opinion which might conflict with anybody's religious notions except at the peril of being spit upon or knocked down in the name of the Prince of Peace.[7]

Another delightful example of his wit appeared in an essay entitled, "Native Americanism, Detected and Exposed by a Native American." It was liberal and pungent.

Numerous articles, revisions of previous works, and a travel book on Japan absorbed his time after completing the History. In 1854, Hildreth became associated with the New York Tribune and, two years later, moved to New York City to

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[6]Emerson, "Hildreth," p. 163.

[7]Ibid., p. 121.

serve Horace Greeley as an editor for that paper. Much of his newspaper work now concerned abolition.

A month before the Civil War erupted, Hildreth's health forced him to retire to relatives' homes in Massachusetts to recuperate. Through the efforts of his wife, and the influence of Governor Andrew and Senator Sumner, both of Massachusetts, Hildreth was appointed American consul in Trieste. Abroad, he showed some signs of recovering his health, but only momentarily. Illness forced him to resign his consular position and to live off the charity of friends. In 1865, at the age of fifty-eight, Hildreth died in Florence.

II

The plethora of details that Hildreth made into his History of the United States wears down the hardiest of readers. By his standards, his efforts represented historical writing as it should be: "plain facts in plain English."[8] Nearly everything from the per-centage duty on hair-powder to the events leading to the War of 1812 are recorded in the many volumes. His facts, colorlessly catalogued, lacking, but not devoid, of theme and interpretation, account for Hildreth's want of appeal among students of history.

Overwhelmed, or exasperated, by both his lack of style and theme in the History, the reader is left to his own

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[8]Richard Hildreth, The History of the United States (Rev. ed.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856), Vol. I, p. xi; hereafter cited as Hildreth, History.

tenacity to find some kind of meaningful generalizations to carry away from his reading. More than likely, the one impression any reader surely obtains is the strong anti-Jefferson animus of the History. From this observation, it is only an intellectual reversal of the coin to conclude that Hildreth was a Federalist, who wrote a biased account.

No doubt this apparent characteristic of the History has led earlier historians to label Hildreth. Frederick Jackson Turner mentioned him as the Federalist historian.[9] Vernon Parrington, consistent with his own Jeffersonian bias, described Hildreth as a Federalist who thought God and Federalism were one.[10] In the Dictionary of American Biography, Kenneth B. Murdock remarked about the Federalist bias of the History.[11] Alfred H. Kelly spoke of him as "the complete Federalist."[12] It appears that little doubt exists as to the proper stereotype for Hildreth, although recent historians,

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[9]Frederick Jackson Turner, The United States, 1830-1850 (Norton Library; New York: W.W. Norton Company, Inc., 1965), p. 84.

[10]Parrington, Main Currents of American Thought, Vol. II, p. 430.

[11]Vol. IX, p. 19.

[12]Alfred H. Kelly, "Richard Hildreth," The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography, ed., William T. Hutchinson, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 35.

Merrill Peterson[13] and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.,[14] have questioned it.

Justification for the pro-Federalist label seems sufficient indeed when Hildreth's early life is considered in conjunction with the History. His father was an outspoken critic of the Jeffersonians and their tactics and policies, especially in the years before 1812. His biographer says that Hildreth "was the product of a Federalist upbringing."[15]

That Hildreth was aware of Puritan and Federalist formulas is somewhat evident in these remarks he made at the Harvard commencement exercise in 1826:

> ...change [he said] does not always imply improvement; ...innovation is oftener the resource of folly than of wisdom.... It is the height of absurdity to sacrifice present good to problematical improvement,--...the tendency of human affairs is to grow worse, and...all efforts will hardly avail to check their downward course.[16]

Gloomy and pessimistic, these remarks were spoken by an immature college graduate and not by the historian and philosopher writing in the 1840's and 1850's. They can be ignored, for the most part, because the mature Hildreth became a man

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[13]Merrill D. Peterson, The Jeffersonian Image in the American Mind ("Galaxy Book"; New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 135-139; hereafter cited as Peterson, Jeffersonian Image.

[14]Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The Problem of Richard Hildreth," New England Quarterly, XIII (1940), pp. 223-245.

[15]Emerson, "Hildreth," p. 18.

[16]Quoted in Emerson, "Hildreth," p. 26.

who actively sought material and moral progress for his fellow Americans, including the Negroes. Nevertheless, considering his biography and the bias of his History, the case for Hildreth as "the complete Federalist" is easily understood. And when combined with his Whig party affiliations of the 1830's and '40's, it seems well founded.

III

To label Hildreth as a Federalist historian is superficially accurate; and Federalism is an element in his interpretation of the figures of the Early National period which cannot be ignored, although the degree to which it is present is difficult to determine. But the Federalist label itself is an arbitrary choice of emphasis. It implies and excludes too much. The evidence in the History shows that Hildreth was anti-Jefferson, but not that he was opposed to democratic institutions or that he was pro-Federalist in any narrowly partisan sense. To say that he was a Hamiltonian is acceptable only if qualified by adding that Hildreth favored Hamilton's policies because he saw some utility in them.

Moreover, the matter of labels should be reconsidered in light of his political activities during the 1830's and 1840's, and his writings other than the History. He labored in behalf of reform, advocating temperance and abolition. In his capacity as a reformer, he wrote in favor of democratic institutions and of what he thought was a realistic form

of equality. He was a utilitarian, as nearly every work about him testifies. His biographer wrote, "What especially distinguished his thinking from that of his fellows in the broad humanitarian movement was his preoccupation with Benthamist philosophy."[17] His translation of Jeremy Bentham's Theory of Legislation was rated as a classic by one English authority on Bentham's works, C. K. Ogden. If labels are to be used, fairness requires that Hildreth be called anti-Jefferson, abolitionist, reformer, democrat, and utilitarian, in addition to Federalist. These are a hodge-podge of labels, not easily reconciled to one another. They do demonstrate an essential point about Hildreth: He was a many-faceted philosopher. And although the issue at hand is the bias of the History, Hildreth's sagacity suggests that his historical interpretations are based on more than a mere partisan Federalism.

Hildreth's judgment of Alexander Hamilton is likewise more restrained, from a historical point of view, than a Federalist's interpretation of a Federalist hero. Hamilton and his policies were generally approved by Hildreth because he judged them to be serving the needs of the new nation. Hildreth believed that he knew what the country needed for stability and happiness in 1789 and after. The fulfillment of those needs required the talents of a realistic, practical, intellectual man of character such as Hamilton.

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[17] Ibid., p. 93.

The keystone of Hildreth's social and political system was the principle of utility. Influenced by the Benthamite principles, he had come to accept the idea that the ultimate purpose of collective and individual actions of men was to provide the greatest good for the greatest number. Utility was the scientific basis for good legislation and government and would provide for the happiness and well-being of the American people. From his study of history, Hildreth had concluded that the well-being of men was best served by democratic institutions because they "tend to produce a general spirit of humanity and philanthropy."[18] From its inception, the United States represented a noble experiment in behalf of man:

> an attempt to establish perfect equality of political rights; an essay towards the equal distribution among all members of the community, of freedom, property, knowledge, social advantages, and those other good things which make up the mass of human happiness.[19]

The success of that experiment depended upon the kind of statesmen that would guide the nation through its formative years. Though Hamilton was not a utilitarian, his policies encompassed the material well-being of the people. Hamilton, not Jefferson, was the man who best served the course of democratic development of the United States.

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[18]Richard Hildreth, Theory of Politics (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853), p. 262.

[19]Richard Hildreth, Despotism in America (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1853), p. 7; hereafter cited as Hildreth, Despotism.

Consistent with his own philosophic principles, Hildreth was intellectually constrained to write favorably in his History about the role of Hamilton and the other Federalists. This does not mean, however, that he thought Hamilton a democrat.

IV

Jefferson was the democratic spokesman. Hildreth was cognizant of Jefferson's advocacy of democratic principles and wrote that no man "loved and trusted humanity" more than Jefferson did. Jefferson was, according to Hildreth, a "rarity, indeed, among professed democratical leaders--a sincere and enthusiastic believer in the rights of humanity."[20] But Hildreth also noted an irony in Jefferson's position:

> Who could have anticipated that the apostle of American democracy should himself have been an aristocrat and a despot. Yet so it was. Jefferson is revered, and justly, as the earliest, ablest, and boldest and most far-going of those who become expounders and advocates of the democratical system in America.[21]

Despite the mutual regard between Jefferson and Hildreth concerning the necessity of democracy in America, Hildreth could not accept Jefferson as the architect of it. Jefferson did not rank high as a practical statesman,[22] for reasons which Hildreth made clear.

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[20]Hildreth, History, Vol. VI, p. 141.

[21]Hildreth, Despotism, p. 15.

[22]Hildreth, History, Vol. VI, p. 141.

It may seem an unwarranted diversion to mention some of the anti-Jefferson passages of the History when the concern is Hildreth's interpretation of Hamilton. However, as the nature of Hildreth's criticism of Jefferson becomes evident, it should be born in mind what Jefferson lacked, Hamilton possessed to some extent. Unhappily, Hildreth is not explicit in his History, or other works, about his pro-Hamilton sentiments. One must read between the lines and contemplate the implications of what he wrote about Jefferson as they might apply favorably to Hamilton.

To understand the paradox appearing in the History requires a look at his interpretation of the characteristics of Jefferson and his followers. Hildreth believed that the Jeffersonians were aristocrats who sustained an abominable system of slavery in the South. Even Jefferson himself was a despot because he held black men in slavery. The existence of slavery and the spirit of caste, which slavery promoted in America, were both inimical to the principles of democracy.

The irony of the Jeffersonians' warm espousal of freedom, especially in the role of watchdogs of liberty in Congress, was noted by Hildreth in the History. He found no difficulty in explaining elsewhere how this irony could persist; according to him, even kings and princes have been freedom's advocates:

> Each individual is always the ardent and zealous champion of his own liberty, because the hatred of all

> extraneous control, the desire to be solely governed by the free impulses of his own mind, is a part of the constitution of human nature too essential ever to be wanting.[23]

Thus, out of the narrowest and most selfish of motives, the Jeffersonian aristocrats could easily expound the principles of liberty, but for the wrong reasons. Hildreth goes on to say in this passage that the love of freedom means more than the individual acquisition of it. A true advocate of liberty seeks liberty for all men; it involves "...a wide, expansive feeling, the offspring of benevolence, the height of philanthropy, the extension to others of that which we find best and most desirable for ourselves...."[24]

To this passion for universal liberty, Jefferson, Hildreth believed, dared not appeal because he lacked the courage to take a position contrary to the prevailing attitudes of his aristocratic followers. How then, Hildreth implies, can the Jeffersonians be taken seriously as the party working to establish a form of government conducive to the greatest happiness of the people. How can their position be reconciled with the expansion of democracy in the nation, even though Jefferson uttered the right principles.

Another characteristic of the Jeffersonians which Hildreth found exasperating and condemning was their irresponsible and exaggerated criticism of the Washington administration. Certainly an opposition party had the right to

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[23]Hildreth, Despotism, pp. 16-17. [24]Ibid., p. 17.

criticize an administration, but that criticism, Hildreth believed, ought to contribute constructively to the well-being of the people. Instead, the Jeffersonians stooped to slander and vicious charges to debase the character of the administration. Their disposition of their privy knowledge of Hamilton's adulterous affair with Mrs. Reynolds revealed their lack of scruples and the extent to which they would go to agitate the people. Hildreth spent a disproportionate amount of space in exposing the Jeffersonians' lack of character in this affair.

When their opposition did rise above personal slander to matters of state, their criticism was largely negative and often based on self-interest or mere suspicion. Hildreth believed that no small proportion of the Jeffersonian opposition was based on the Southerners' dissatisfaction at not having dictated federal policies themselves.[25] Even more belittling to the Jeffersonians was their inability to govern any differently than their predecessors; after coming to power in 1800, they could do no better than to retain or copy the Federalist models of government.[26] Their actions in power revealed how little substance existed in their criticisms.

The intellectual fiber of Jefferson was also assailed in the History. Hildreth had no objections to the

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[25]Hildreth, History, Vol. IV, p. 352.

[26]Ibid., Vol. V, p. 418.

philosophical cast of mind, because he was so inclined himself. But for him, the philosopher had to be vigorously logical and rational, one who induced from observed phenomena.[27] He disparaged what he described as the "mists of metaphysical disquisition."[28] Jefferson was, in Hildreth's judgement, susceptible to this kind of thinking, especially when the Virginian became involved in political issues or matters of policy. Jefferson was "fond of hypothesis, inclined to dogmatize" and given "to theoretical ideals of liberty and equality" such as he expressed in the declaration of Independence.[29] He was, despite a good intellect, an extremist, who let his imagination dominate his reason to an extent that he saw things "as he hoped, wished, suspected that they might be."[30]

An example of what might be called Jefferson's muddleheadedness was his charge that a monarchical conspiracy, led by Hamilton, was afoot in the national government with the purpose of subverting the nation's republican institutions. Hildreth doubted the substance of the charge, although he recorded in his History that Hamilton had speculated on the comparative advantages of monarchic and democratic forms of

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[27]Pingel, Hildreth, p. 173.

[28]Quoted in Emerson, "Hildreth," p. 25.

[29]Hildreth, History, Vol. IV, p. 292.

[30]Ibid., pp. 340-341.

government.[31] Jefferson, who persisted in this charge, was stimulated, according to Hildreth, by an "active imagination" and was given to "unnecessary alarm" at unfounded dangers.[32] That charges were never formally brought in Congress by the Jeffersonians led Hildreth to conclude that the conspiracy existed mainly in Jefferson's mind. His chimerical fear was understandable when one took into account his fanatical character and his tendency to suspect "those who did not share in and subscribe to all his dogmas."[33]

It is interesting to speculate that if Richard Hofstadter's book, The Paranoid Style in American Politics had existed then, Hildreth might very well have described Jefferson in those terms. Hofstadter defines the paranoid style by three characteristics: a belief that the national government is infiltrated by disloyal men; that a conspiracy exists; and that a class exists throughout the country with the purpose of subverting American institutions. With little variation Hildreth has said as much of Jefferson:

> Assuming to himself the office at once of spy and censor on his colleagues, he adopted the practice of setting down in a note-book every heretical opinion dropped...anecdotes recorded, not as instances of the speculative errors into which the wisest and the best may fall, but carefully laid up as evidences against political rivals of settled designs hostile to the liberties of their country.[34]

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[31] Ibid., p. 297.

[32] Ibid., p. 337.

[33] Ibid., p. 341.

[34] Ibid., p. 298.

Continuing this same theme, Hildreth wrote in another instance:

> Under this strange hallucination of a monarchical conspiracy for the destruction of the Constitution on the part of those by whom its adoption had been secured, from which the country was only saved by the republican zeal and virtue of himself and his anti-Federal friends and supporters, Jefferson labored to his dying day....[35]

Hildreth found certain aspects of Jefferson's political creed objectionable, not because they were necessarily wrong in principle, but because Jefferson drew faulty conclusions from them. Jefferson concerned himself excessively with the abuses of power which could occur in government. Nothing was wrong with recognizing the danger in giving men power; history testified to that. Unfortunately, Jefferson dwelt upon that concern to an extent which made his political policy negative rather than constructive. Hence Jefferson strove to restrict the exercise of authority in the new government, even to the extent "of depriving government of its ability for good as well as for evil...."[36] Such an attitude was untenable to Hildreth:

> ...it does by no means follow, as some have imagined that governments are unfavorable to happiness in proportion to the power which they exercise.[37]

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[35] Ibid., p. 340.

[36] Ibid., p. 292.

[37] Hildreth, Theory of Politics, p. 232.

During the Early National period, the real problem was not the usurpation of power by the federal authorities, as claimed by Jefferson, but rather "the resistance of the states to federal power," a problem which Hamilton "had the sagacity to perceive."[38] Undoubtedly Hildreth was here influenced by the controversy over slavery among the states in the decades before 1861.

Jefferson's emphasis on natural law and rights and equality were also found untenable by Hildreth.[39] Men acted irrationally and irresponsibly when they appealed to Nature for justification of their principles and policies. Men ought to rely upon their own faculties to provide the authority for their actions; they should apply the principles of utility to determine the desirability of laws for men.[40] Hildreth did not elaborate his reasons for finding natural law and right indefensible, but he was undoubtedly influenced by the views of Bentham. It is not unreasonable to assume that Hildreth's views were those, or close to those, of Bentham.

Bentham wrote that there are two senses of the word, law.[41] In one sense it means that "will or command of a

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[38]Hildreth, History, Vol. IV, p. 297.

[39]Pingel, Hildreth, p. 36.

[40]Ibid., pp. 153-176.

[41]Jeremy Bentham, The Theory of Legislation, C. K. Ogden, ed., (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1950), pp. 82-87.

legislature." The law of Nature, in the other sense, implies the will of Nature, construed as a being. Those general inclinations of men, found common, supposedly, to all men, are thought to be the laws of Nature, or real codes of law, indisputable and complete. In reality, the fiction that men's inclinations are real laws of Nature is dangerous to society, for it leads to interminable dispute and confusion. Appeals to natural law imply the right of all men to annul or overturn the legislative law. The latter is essential, however, to society because it is necessary to restrain those natural inclinations of men which so often impinge upon other men. If natural law inclined all men to pursue the common good, legislative law would be unnecessary.

Bentham had some strong words for the natural rights advocates, and one can imagine Hildreth applying them to Jefferson:

> There is no reasoning with fanatics, armed with natural rights, which each understands as he pleases, and applies as he sees fit; of which nothing can be yielded, nor retrenched; which are consecrated as dogmas, from which it is a crime to vary. Instead of examining laws by their effect, instead of judging them as good or bad, they consider them in relation to those pretended natural rights; that is to say, they substitute for the reasoning of experience the chimeras of their own imaginations.[42]

How much better for society if the partisans of Natural laws and rights appealed to their own reason rather than Nature, to judge good and bad laws.

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[42] Ibid., p. 85.

Concerning equality, Bentham wrote that for all men to enjoy it, legislation would be rendered impossible.[43] Laws establish necessary inequalities. They give rights to some which restrict the freedom of others to act. Hildreth perceived this much. In his Theory of Politics he implied that the object of government was to establish equilibrium among security, freedom, and equality. Both Hildreth and Bentham said that government must have authority to act in ways that might restrict the rights of individuals for the common good of all.[44] Jefferson, armed with his natural rights philosophy, was unable to perceive these subtleties or complexities of man's relation to man under a system of legislative law.

The extent of Hildreth's anti-Jefferson bias in the History is far more detailed than indicated by the preceding discussion; but enough has been said to indicate the nature of his criticism. What must be taken into account is that nowhere does Hildreth denounce democratic principles or institutions, although he does disparge the traditionally accepted champion of democracy in America. Hildreth judges Jefferson severely and finds him deficient in character, in leadership, in realism and in pragmatism. Jefferson and his followers were not the men to provide a viable foundation for the new nation.

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[43] Ibid., p. 99.

[44] Ibid., passim and Hildreth, Theory of Politics, p. 230.

V

The continual disparagement in the History of Jefferson and his followers leads to the facile conclusion that the Federalists were Hildreth's ideal. His lack of critical appraisal of them as men and policy-makers gives credibility to assuming that an element of emotional pro-Federalism exists in the History. Clearly, Washington, Hamilton, Jay, and other Federalists appealed to Hildreth's concept of good statesmen. They were a "trio," he wrote, "not to be approached in our history, if, indeed, in any other."[45] Washington and Hamilton were possessed of enviable qualities of wisdom to judge, ability to act, devotion to country; both were courageous, honest, and sincere. They were imposing leaders. Their rhetoric may not have been the language of the rights of men, but nonetheless they were able to create a viable form of government and lay the foundations for the stability and prosperity of the nation. Under their leadership, the Federalist party pursued certain great objectives:

> to consolidate the Union, to uphold the public credit, to aid and encourage the national commerce, navigation, and manufactures, to prevent paper issues, and to enforce the obligation of contracts....[46]

In the Utilitarian frame of reference, such policies were in the best interests of the American people.

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[45]Hildreth, History, Vol. V, p. 527.

[46]Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 119.

Yet, despite these plaudits, Hildreth was not blind to certain deficiencies in the political philosophy of Hamilton. For one thing, Hamilton tended to overemphasize materialism as the basis of human motivation.[47] Hildreth was too astute an observer of human nature to accept this simplistic explanation of man's conduct. Materialism was but a part of the pleasure-pain psychology of the Utilitarians. Moreover, Hamilton showed too little confidence in the ability of the people to conduct their political and economic affairs, especially when he recommended the appointments of a president and senators for life.[48]

In his Theory of Politics, Hildreth had a good deal to say about the implications of Hamilton's position, although the remarks were not expressly directed at Hamilton. According to Hildreth, a democratic form of government offered special advantages to society. Though all forms of government required men to "submit to the pain of obeying," the democratic form also offered all men the opportunity to participate in "the pleasure of commanding."[49] Who better than the people knew what their pleasure commanded.[50] Through the ballot box, they could effect peaceful change of rulers and policies, as their interestes might

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[47] Ibid., pp. 296-297.

[48] Ibid., p. 297.

[49] Hildreth, Theory of Politics, p. 253.

[50] Ibid., p. 260.

require.[51] And though some theorists expressed concern about a tyranny of the majority, Hildreth believed that it was better for a majority to oppress the few, than for the few to tyrannize the many.[52] (It is a Benthamite canon that any government is a choice among evils.)

In addition, a democratic form of government offered the opportunity to all men of talent and merit to rise to positions of influence in their community.[53] Most important of all, it provided a standard, through frequent elections, by which the people could indicate to the contestants for power which of them possessed superiority and therefore the right to rule.[54] Hamilton added nothing to the strength of the federal government by suggesting that it perhaps should be given a more "monarchical and aristocratic cast." Hildreth overlooked Hamilton's political aberration on the grounds that it was a speculative error into which the "wisest and best may fall."[55]

The historian provided little explanation of the reasons for his support of Federalist policies. His philosophy, which makes his pro-Federalist interpretation comprehensible to the student, manifested itself in his Theory of Politics.

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[51] Ibid., p. 255.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., pp. 254-255.

[54] Ibid., p. 259.

[55] Hildreth, History, Vol. IV, p. 298.

Here he wrote that since the Middle Ages, history had divided itself into epochs of some two hundred years each. There had been an age of the clergy, of the nobles, of the kings, and of the burghers; "Is there," he asked, "never to be an Age of the People--of the working classes.?"[56] Answering his own question, he said that their age was a potential, already in the process of becoming. But that coming would be arduous. "The first great necessity," he wrote, "of the human race is the increase of the productiveness of human labor."[57] Poverty and its effects must be overcome. Only then could the people possess a sufficient proportion of, what Hildreth called, the elements of power. When that time came, the people could participate in shaping their own social destinies.[58] Affluence, generally distributed among men, promoted political freedom and equality. Hildreth observed and wrote, "Those who possess the property of a country, have always succeeded in obtaining political power. Revolutions of property have always produced political revolutions."[59] This was no call to violent revolution such as occurred in the French Revolution; it was a call, rather, to men to rationally exploit their ability to produce and distribute wealth, and in this way bring about the desired political evolution.

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[56]Hildreth, Theory of Politics, p. 257.

[57]Ibid., p. 271.

[58]Ibid., pp. 269-272.

[59]Hildreth, Despotism, p. 96.

The progress of civilization depended likewise upon a more generous distribution of the wealth to be produced. Men who must struggle for subsistence are not given to altruistic sentiments toward their fellow-men. Men who enjoy abundance are disposed, or more easily persuaded, toward the sentiment of benevolence, which to Hildreth meant the desire to serve humanity.[60] A student of Hildreth's Utilitarian philosophy has aptly observed: "Hildreth...realized that a good environment, one in which a person's needs could be fulfilled, would do more toward elevating the standard of morality than all the preaching about it ever could."[61] Hildreth judged Federalist policies, materialistic as they may seem, to be serving this ultimate objective of a moral society in America.

Hildreth believed, contrary to certain aspects of the Jeffersonian creed, that "no merely agricultural nation ever attained a high degree of prosperity, or civilization. To attain that result it is necessary that manufacturing and commercial industry should combine with agriculture."[62] Hamiltonian fiscal policies promoted, not only the financial stability of the government, but the larger social objective of expansion in all sectors of the economy. The Funding Act, Hildreth wrote,

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[60]Hildreth, Theory of Politics, p. 156.

[61]Pingel, Hildreth, p. 19.

[62]Hildreth, Despotism, p. 132.

> ...promoted, to a great, and, indeed, unexpected degree, the public prosperity. By furnishing a capital almost or quite as available as cash, of which enterprise knew how to take advantage, and by the new and powerful influence thus given to industry, it went far toward relieving that private pecuniary embarrassment which had constituted one of the greatest evils of the times.[63]

The act re-established confidence in the nation and the economy and stimulated development of commerce and industry.[64] It added value to the land, labor, and capital of the American people in excess of the burden laid upon them in the form of a national debt.

This same standard applied, at least generally, to Hildreth's evaluation of Hamilton's other fiscal policies or proposals, such as the National Bank or the Report on Manufactures. No partisan bias is at work here; Hildreth is interpreting history consistently with his observation that human productivity must be increased.

Hamilton advocated an energetic and positive national power, a principle which Hildreth found compatible with his own philosophical system. In this vein, he wrote,

> ...a very high degree of power is essential; and a government not possessed of the power is almost worse than no government at all, since it excites hopes which it fails to fulfill....[65]

Indeed, power was necessary to perform the three objectives which Hildreth assigned to government. It had

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[63]Hildreth, History, Vol. IV, p. 275.

[64]Ibid., p. 276.

[65]Hildreth, Theory of Politics, p. 233.

to secure the people from foreign attack; to undertake measures for the common good of the nation, which were too general or large in scope for private individuals to accomplish; and to secure and maintain law and order in the country.[66]

The emphasis Hildreth made was on peace and social order, not because he feared for the preservation of the status quo, but because they were requisites for the "development of productive industry." Although violence in behalf of liberty was sometimes necessary, it rarely produced positive social benefits. Real progress could be had only when men learned the complexities of social relations and created the material abundance essential to moral advancement.[67] These remarks are general in nature, applying to the whole of civilization. But to the specific matter at hand, Hamilton and Federalist policies, they are relevant.

The Whiskey Insurrection was an instance of civil disobedience which threatened federal authority, and thereby its ability to act positively in guiding the nation's development. The administration, however, moved with alacrity and quelled this challenge to its power. The success of the administration in this case actually worked

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[66] Ibid., p. 232.

[67] Ibid., p. 272.

to strengthen the government.[68] Federal power had been vindicated by Washington and Hamilton. By Hildreth's standards, to have done otherwise would have involved them in a violation of their public responsibilities.

This same theme of peace is relevant to Hildreth's interpretation of Federalist foreign policy during the troubled 1790's. Though England and France threatened American security and violated American rights, the administration wisely adopted a policy which avoided any confrontation with the belligerents. The Federalists had acted in the best interests of the United States.[69]

VI

Hildreth wrote a history which lacks the warm faith in men that is prevalent in the Jeffersonian legacy. Only in his other writings does he show his concern for the cause of humanity. But it is dry and analytical, written in the language of a man who spoke and felt through his mind. Regardless of that defect, which it is when winning popular acclaim is at stake, his ideas show him to be an advocate of the cause of human happiness.

His History displays the paradox of a democratic philosopher applauding the High Federalists. Perhaps the paradox is not so extraordinary when it is recalled that

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[68]Hildreth, History, Vol. IV, p. 516.

[69]Ibid., p. 415.

one wing of the progressive-reform movement of the early twentieth-century, the New Nationalists, were impressed by the statesmanship of Alexander Hamilton. The recent historian, Merrill Peterson, has described these reformers as New Hamiltonians. He wrote that Herbert Croly, the philosopher of the movement, saw Hamilton as "the true... idol of Progressive Democracy."[70] Hildreth did not go so far in his description of Hamilton, because he did have reservations about Hamilton's political philosophy. The point here, however, is that the similarity in views between Hildreth and the New Nationalists suggests that he was part of an American reforming and intellectual tradition and not an isolated, irrelevant scholar.

Hildreth's History shows that Hamilton did serve the advancement of democracy through his policies, although unwittingly. Jefferson and his followers had no monopoly on that service. The material and social well-being, the basis of morality and thus of happiness, of the American people required a more realistic and effective national policy than Jefferson could provide. Hamilton proved to be the more rational, realistic statesman, though perhaps not the archtype social philosopher, who perceived on the large scale the needs of the American nation in its formative years. In his praise of Hamilton, Hildreth permitted himself one measure of flamboyance:

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[70]Peterson, Jeffersonian Image, p. 40.

> Hamilton possessed the same rare and lofty qualities, the same just balance of soul, with less, indeed, of Washington's severe simplicity and awe-inspiring presence, but with more of warmth, variety, ornament, and grace. If the Doric in architecture be taken as the symbol of Washington's character, Hamilton's belonged to the same grand style as developed in the Corinthian--if less impressive, more winning.[71]

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[71]Hildreth, History, Vol. V, p. 527.

CHAPTER III

HENRY STEPHENS RANDALL -- THE JEFFERSONIAN INTERPRETATION

Hildreth treated the Hamilton-Jefferson conflict as a germinal issue in the history of the Early National period. Even though the main interest of study may have been either of the two statesmen, the nature of the conflict imposed the necessity of coming to terms with both. A recent critic of the Hamilton-Jefferson literature has written: "Hamilton's policies were affected by the reactions of his opponents....What Jefferson did and thought is just as pertinent as what Hamilton did--when clashing head on."[1] The reverse is just as true.

Henry Stephens Randall, the nineteenth-century biographer of Jefferson, came to his own understanding of the relationship between the protagonists, which he explained in his The Life of Thomas Jefferson. Telling the life of St. Thomas[2] required some two-thousand pages, of which Randall

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[1]Stanley D. Rose, "Alexander Hamilton and the Historians," Vanderbilt Law Review, II (1958), p. 854.

[2]Frank J. and Frank W. Klingberg, eds., "The Correspondence Between Henry Stephens Randall and Hugh Blair Grigsby, 1856-1862." Publications in History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), Vol. XLIII, p. 65; hereafter cited as Klingberg, Correspondence.

devoted more than one-third to the period when Hamilton and Jefferson were the partisan antagonists seeking to control federal policy. The historian Merrill Peterson has judged that in Randall's Life, "what led up to 1790 was prologue, what followed 1800 was epilogue."[3] The Hamilton-Jefferson conflict was the core of Randall's biography.

I

By the time Randall published the Life in 1858, Jefferson's reputation had undergone considerable deprecation in the hands of the Federalist historians and biographers.[4] Randall was a dedicated Jeffersonian, a fact in itself sufficient to explain his desire to write the Life. But he was also sensitive to and motivated by the anti-Jefferson bias of many of the then current histories and biographies. That vindication of Jefferson was in his mind is evidenced when he wrote, "The leering, sneering, dodging way of making charges by implication, and by insulting innuendo--which has been so extensively practised by early and late caluminators of Mr. Jefferson--is not to our [his] taste."[5]

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[3]Peterson, Jefferson Image, p. 155.

[4]Ibid., p. 149.

[5]Henry S. Randall, The Life of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858), Vol. I, ix. Hereafter cited as Randall, Life.

The community of interest between Jefferson and Randall existed on several planes. After achieving a distinguished record at Union College, Randall began the study of law, during which time he demonstrated a liking for legal, constitutional, and political theory.[6] By 1835 he was active both in national affairs of the Democracy and in seeking public office in New York, his home state. He became a friend of Martin Van Buren and was associated with the Barnburners and Free Soilers of New York. His political record would label him a democrat, if not a radical by the standards of his day. His main political concerns were the advancement of public education and a union which recognized States' rights.[7] In the years immediately preceding the Civil War, he became decidedly pro-South, though not pro-slavery, in his views.[8] By this time Randall had come to see the Northeast as a section ambitious to make the South its "colonial dependency."[9] Such characteristics as these made Randall a good Jeffersonian.

Other facets of Randall's life revealed an affinity with Jefferson's agrarianism. In addition to being a politician, newspaper editor, lawyer, and school visitor, he

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[6]Klingberg, Correspondence, p. 4.

[7]Ibid., p. 4 and footnote, p. 171.

[8]Merrill Peterson, The Jeffersonian Image, p. 151.

[9]Klingberg, Correspondence, p. 7.

was also a farmer and a serious student of agricultural subjects. He served as a corresponding secretary of the New York State Agricultural Society, presented papers before the Society, and wrote a number of reports and books on agricultural subjects; in 1863 he published a well-received book, The Practical Shepard.[10] His experience as a farmer enabled him to appreciate Jefferson's faith in the values of an agricultural life. Jefferson, he wrote, "never ceased to believe that simple rural life--moderation in living, daily toil, and no greater aggregation of human beings than is to be found in the family on each farm--is more conducive to virtue than any other social state; and probably no one will dispute him in this."[11]

Randall was a suitable man to do the biography of Jefferson, and the success of the Life testified to his ability. His sympathetic study was abetted by the friendly cooperation of Jefferson's family and by the fact that he saw Jefferson's papers before they were scattered about the country. His biography was considered an "authorized" biography and was based upon a nearly complete collection of Jeffersonian manuscripts.[12] Two recent historians surmise that the Life was "well received and immediately had

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[10]Harry James Brown, ed., Letters From a Texas Sheep Ranch (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1959), pp. 20-23.

[11]Randall, Life, Vol. I, p. 429.

[12]Klingberg, Correspondence, p. 15.

a wide circulation."[13] For more than eighty years after its publication in 1858, the Life was the single most important and influential work on Jefferson.[14]

The success of Randall's biography meant that his interpretation of Hamilton and the early party struggles was bound to be influential. The thoroughness and care with which the book had been researched added to the credibility of his views. His use of documents, compared to the way in which many of his contemporaries had used them, was commendable; he neither edited nor suppressed them.[15] He attested to a desire to get below the "middle" of his subject and to know the feelings of Jefferson.[16] The biography he wrote thus became "biography in the truest sense," the first "to add sweet and mellow touches to the Jefferson image."[17] Hamilton had had no Boswell; and what Randall did to him in the biography diminished his reputation and confounded his historical image.

Hamilton's advocates had exaggerated their praise of him. To say that his was the founding spirit of the nation,

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[13] Ibid., p. 11.

[14] Ibid., pp. 14-15; Merrill Peterson, The Jeffersonian Image, p. 112; James Ingersoll Wyer, "Henry Randall," Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XV, p. 348.

[15] Klingberg, Correspondence, p. 3.

[16] Randall to Grigsby, Dec. 4, 1856, Ibid., p. 71.

[17] Merrill Peterson, The Jeffersonian Image, p. 153.

the genius of Washington's administrations, the constructor of American constitutional government obviously claimed too much. Randall rightly perceived that much of their praise was intended to disparage Jefferson and his principles. Randall's partisanship was barely concealed. To his friend, Hugh Blair Grigsby of Virginia, he wrote, "The north wind which sweeps without is not at this moment more fearless and reckless than I, so far as Mr. J.'s political and personal enemies are concerned.--"[18] The purpose and course of Randall's interpretation of Hamilton is easily anticipated from this remark.

Hamilton did deserve recognition, in Randall's judgment, but only as a man of action. He was a good administrator, and thus possessed of a facility for "practical greatness." By his presence, the administration of Washington was invested with energy and "promptness" in execution.[19] These qualities were manifestations of Hamilton's character, for by temperament he was quick to decide, firm in purpose, and energetic in implementing his views. His self-confidence encouraged policy-making and execution within his party and the government. But in his party, he was like a dictator. And in government, "the most

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[18]Randall to Grigsby, Dec. 4, 1856, Klingberg, Correspondence, p. 72.

[19]Randall, Life, Vol. I, p. 643.

efficient political executive is a despot."[20] Randall would not extend praise to Hamilton without qualification.

Randall's agrarianism manifested itself in a social bias in his interpretation of Hamilton. He said that Hamilton belonged to an "ambitious, energetic talented class who push their way upward to high office...."[21] The remark might be thought innocent of prejudice except that previously Randall had spoken disdainfully of the "treasury parvenus."[22] They were money makers, "ostentatious upstarts," who rolled about in their carriages, denouncing the agrarian doctrines of the state governments and the common people.[23] They spoke about national honor and such, but they had been noticeably absent from the hardships and privations of the Revolutionary War. It was such men as these, of whom Hamilton was one, that the Secretary of Treasury had given prominence and power by his fiscal policies during the 1790's.

Little that Randall did in the Life got below the "middle" of Hamilton. His generally recognized accomplishments were passed over. The Federalist Papers, though mentioned, were written off briefly as arguments to "tone up

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[20] Ibid., pp. 635 and 644.

[21] Ibid., p. 645.

[22] Ibid., p. 607.

[23] Ibid.

the public mind to procure adoption..." of the Constitution.[24] The several reports prepared by Hamilton were neither mentioned as such nor put in the context of Hamilton's overall policy; Jefferson and Madison's criticism of them was, however, amply stated.[25]

A generous critic would allow that a biographer did all that could be reasonably asked of him when he presented his subject thoroughly, as Randall did Jefferson. But if the biographer intended to include a history of the political parties, as Randall did,[26] he should know his own bias, the subjects, and their era. "Biography," Randall wrote, "should aim at the truth, or it should be silent."[27]

Randall appears to have not known his own political philosophy too well, at least not consistently. In 1852, he wrote:[28]

> ...history is full of instances where the prosperity of individuals, and...nations, has been crippled, in futile efforts to upbuild this or that branch of industry.... Among the foolish, selfish, and even iniquitous legislation of past ages, there has been none perhaps productive of more real mischief to human industry than the intermeddling enactments of government.

This quotation reads like good Jeffersonian dogma. Its laissez-faire sentiments are particularly opposed to the

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[24]Ibid., p. 577.

[25]Ibid., pp. 604-611 and 630.

[26]Ibid., p. 581.

[27]Ibid., p. 160.

[28]Henry S. Randall, Sheep Husbandry (New York: Bangs, Brother and Co., 1852), p. 10.

recommendations that Hamilton made in his Report on Manufactures. Yet, surprisingly, Randall worked in the 1860's for the passage of the Wool and Woolens Act of 1867, which made the industry "the very citadel of protection."[29]

In a similar vein, Randall, as a public school official concerned with school libraries, addressing himself to the problem, expressed a good Jeffersonian principle. "With that strong reliance on popular virtue and popular understanding," he wrote, "which accords so well with the theory and genius of our institutions, the choice of books has, in the first instance, been left to the immediate agents of the people."[30] He then proceeded to describe the kinds of materials that should be withheld from the libraries, including the works of Shakespeare.[31] No doubt, by the standards of his day, it was thought wise to shelter children from immoral or polemical literature. The curious aspect of his report was the remark that although no coercion would be employed by the state superintendent to enforce the proscribed materials, "all discreet and right-minded men would regard with proper respect the deliberately expressed opinion of the superintendent."[32]

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[29]Harry James Brown, Letters From a Texas Sheep Ranch, p. 24.

[30]Henry S. Randall, "Common School Libraries," in S.S. Randall, Mental and Moral Culture and Popular Education (New York: C.S. Francis and Co., 1844), p. 185.

[31]See Ibid., pp. 187-201.

[32]Ibid., p. 234.

Perhaps these aberrations were the consequence of an unresolved conflict between Randall's upbringing as a Federalist[33] and his conversion to the Democratic party. At any rate, in the 1840's Randall had a more balanced view of the Founding Fathers. He wrote, at this time, that it was unnecessary to enhance one man's reputation by destroying another's.[34] Even more astounding, in light of his interpretation of Hamilton in the Life, was the remark:[35]

> In political measures were they [Jefferson and Hamilton] divided; in patriotism and integrity, between them there was no division.... [T]hat man is un-American, who, because he coincides with one, would disentomb and expose to rude scorn the ashes of the other.

Evidently, the Jeffersoniana jaundiced his eye, for in the Life he showed a most un-American attitude toward Hamilton. Using Hamilton's correspondence with "politicians, bankers, stock-jobbers, speculators of various species, etc.,"[36] Randall found the evidence to support Jefferson's and his own views of Hamilton. The Secretary of the Treasury assumed himself to be "the maker and the dispenser."[37] Yet, to an impartial observer, Randall believed that it was obvious that the Treasury was secondary in

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[33]Merrill Peterson, The Jeffersonian Image, p. 150.

[34]Henry S. Randall, "Common School Libraries," loc. cit., p. 213.

[35]Ibid., pp. 213-214.

[36]Randall, Life, Vol. I, p. 638.

[37]Ibid.

importance to the State Department, especially during the formative years of the new government.[38]

Hamilton, certainly possessed of a good mind, was nonetheless incapable of originating new policies or theories of government or political economy; indeed, he had "never...proposed an original thought or plan."[39] Everything he proposed was an adaptation of English policy and experience to American circumstances. Unlike Jefferson, Hamilton did not look forward to mark the paths of new political development for America, but backward to copy the old. Hamilton could do no better than attempt to establish a monarchy in the United States.

III

The belief that a monarchical conspiracy existed for the purpose of overthrowing republicanism in America colored Randall's interpretation of Hamilton and was the crux of his history of the early political parties. Though in some instances there is confusion whether Randall meant monarchical sentiments rather than conspiracy, in the final analysis it is clear that he meant that after 1789, Hamilton and others conspired to place a king upon an American throne. In his mind there was no distinction between the

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[38] Ibid., p. 600.

[39] Ibid., p. 641.

spirit of British government and its form, a distinction which Hamilton would have made.

Randall's account of the formation of the political parties was imprecise. He suggested that the process began with the division of the colonials into Tories and Whigs at the outbreak of the American Revolution. At that time, the issue was British imperial policy, not the form of British government.[40] It was evident at the time that the Tory was inclined toward "strong government" and the Whig toward "popular government."[41] However, not all Whigs were republicans.[42] In the 1780's the American political scene was a mixture of Tory monarchists, Whig monarchists, Whig republicans, and Thomas Jefferson, the only avowed democrat.[43] Whether they existed as parties, factions, or points of view, Randall was equivocal.

The post-war problems of the 1780's affected the political sentiments of the American republicans. Many of them "relapsed into monarchists"; Shay's Rebellion, in 1786, produced an "anti-republican and anti-democratic influence [that] was profound and almost universal throughout the United States."[44] Some continuity of sentiment emerged

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[40] Ibid., p. 562.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., pp. 562-563.

[43] Ibid., pp. 460-461 and 573-574.

[44] Ibid., p. 564.

during the contests over ratification of the Constitution, when the Federalists and Anti-Federalists made their appearance.[45] Washington, upon assuming office in 1789, stated to Madison that he was aware of the existence of a monarchical party.[46] Somehow--Randall was not precise in specifying how--the vague processes which began in 1776 congealed in 1789 to bring forth a monarchical party with Hamilton at its head.[47]

Having thus postulated the existence of the monarchical party, Randall presented evidence to show that Hamilton did indeed harbor monarchical, or anti-republican (the terms are synonomous with Randall) views. The proofs are well-known statements of Hamilton, for example his speech of June 18, 1788, when he spoke approvingly of the British government as a model; his remark to Governeur Morris in 1802 that the Constitution was "a frail and worthless fabric"; and his belief that "all communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well-born, the other the mass of the people....The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right....[T]o the first class [give] a distinct, permanent share of government." Other quotations from

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[45] Ibid., pp. 536-437.

[46] Ibid., p. 567.

[47] Ibid., p. 574.

Federalists, Fisher Ames, Governeur Morris, John Adams, were used as corroborative evidence that monarchical sentiments did exist as Jefferson said.[48] When Randall concluded this section, it was apparent that Hamilton held views which differed from those of Jefferson, to say the least!

The nature of the monarchical party is difficult to describe on the basis of Randall's account. He said, on one occasion, that it was doubtful that all of Hamilton's "leading associates and apparent confidants" really intended to set up a monarchy.[49] On another occasion, he doubted that it could be determined how many of the "lesser" Federalists preferred the monarchical plans of Hamilton to the aristocratic views of Governeur Morris.[50] Farther on he said that after 1788, the majority of leaders and people were conservative republicans; the monarchists and democrats were mere "handfulls" of men.[51] These remarks should seemingly have caused Randall to suffer second thoughts about the conspiracy. Yet, in a paradoxical fashion, he asserted its existence:[52]

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[48]The subject of monarchical views within the Federalist part is "documented" in Ibid., pp. 578-593.

[49]Ibid., p. 588.

[50]Ibid., p. 583.

[51]Ibid., p. 642.

[52]Ibid., p. 574.

> As Jefferson placed Hamilton at the head of the alleged monarchical party--as all the world placed him there, provided there was such a party--it is incumbent on us to first and most particularly investigate his conduct.

His remark would lead one to expect that Hamilton's conduct would be scrutinized and shown to be conspiratorial. Rather less than this was accomplished. After the opening broadsides, volume two was surprisingly less polemical in tone.

Jay's Treaty affords an example of Randall's moderation in volume two. When first describing the monarchists, he said that they showed "their partialities by a constant and ultra-colonial adulation of England."[53] Knowing the opposition of the Jeffersonians to the treaty, one would anticipate that Randall would cite it as evidence of the Federalists' pro-British predilections. Instead, he believed that the Republicans displayed poor party tactics by pre-judging the character of the treaty and the intentions of President Washington. They put themselves in the predicament of appearing as the war party and thus allowed the Federalist to appeal to the people as advocates of an honorable peace.[54] Even though the treaty was of questionable merit, Britain having conceded little to the interests of the United States, Randall believed that the ensuing peace

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[53] Ibid., p. 583.

[54] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 249.

permitted the United States time to strengthen itself for the showdown in 1812.[55]

Later on, in the first months of John Adams' administration, Hamilton showed himself to good advantage. As relations with France worsened, he counselled moderation to his partisans and endeavored to avoid a break with France.[56]

As tensions between France and the United States intensified, Hamilton's attitude toward France changed. He became the exponent of the "most extensive war preparations," because he believed that war with France was imminent.[57] Civil liberties of the Republicans were threatened, as he approved of the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts and "bitterly complain[ed] that they were not more vigorously executed."[58] By the summer of 1798, Hamilton had become a war monger.[59]

The explanation for Hamilton's change of attitude about policy Randall found in his desire for the United States to seize Spanish possessions in the New World. Hamilton had corresponded with Francisco Miranda and others and had indicated his willingness for the country to

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[55] Ibid., p. 300.

[56] Ibid., p. 342.

[57] Ibid., pp. 391-396.

[58] Ibid., pp. 397 and 480.

[59] Ibid., p. 438.

participate in a war of liberation in Latin America. He envisaged a grand alliance composed of Great Britain, the United States, and Latin American states. American troops led by General Hamilton, aided and supported by the other states, would drive Spain from the New World and perhaps force the French out of the West Indies.[60] (Of all Hamilton's activities or proposals, this one smacks most of conspiracy, though the connection with a monarchical plot is hardly apparent.)

If Hamilton's military policy was suggestive of ulterior motives, Randall found his legislative recommendations for 1799 incriminating.[61] His program contained a number of alarming proposals, all of which aimed at the extension of federal power. Internal improvements--canals and turnpikes--were called for. Increases for the army and navy were insisted upon. Hamilton urged that the states be reduced in size to render them powerless; that a new tax ought to be imposed; and that the Alien and Sedition Laws be more stringently enforced. And lastly, he proposed a large scale increase in the Federal judiciary for the purpose of increasing federal patronage. After thus summarizing

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[60] Ibid., pp. 432-442. The details are only sketched here. I find Randall's account of this episode so similar to that of C. F. Adams' that further detail is unwarranted. Infra., pp. 91-92.

[61] Randall, Life, Vol. II, pp. 458-465.

Hamilton's program, Randall judged "...these provisions, carried out, would have constituted a purely consolidated government, and one nearly as absolute in spirit and more tyrannous in practice, in some particulars, than the administrations of Edward IV. or Henry VIII."[62]

Randall never established the Hamiltonian conspiracy in point of fact. Instead, his efforts reveal and intensify the differences between the policies of Hamilton and those of Jefferson. These were partisan and passionate differences to be sure. But that they involved a monarchical plot is more alleged than proved. Randall does show that after 1798, the Hamiltonian Federalists had exaggerated, if not chimerical, fears about the threat of France and Jacobinism to the safety of the United States. And after 1800, they had exaggerated fears and concern for the stability of the government then in the hands of the Jeffersonians. The Federalists were placemen out of office who believed that no one could govern as well as they had.

IV

A student of the literature about Hamilton and Jefferson has complained that the interpretations of Hamilton made by the Jeffersonian historians are difficult to reconcile with those of the Hamitonian historians. He said that

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[62] Ibid., p. 463.

"this is not an unusual result in political controversy. But it is not supposed to happen in historical writing."[63] In Randall's Life there was no distinction between tract and history; to write the history of Jefferson was at the same time to be the advocate of a political party. Randall's political partisanship was evident in his Life and letters. "I am a thorough going 'Jackson man,'" he wrote in 1858, "believing that he was the great restorer of Jefferson's doctrines."[64] Thus partisanship did influence his historical work.

Bias does not, however, adequately account for his interpretation of Hamilton. As noted before, Randall had at one time thought it unnecessary to enhance Jefferson's reputation by derogating Hamilton's.[65] His emersion in Jeffersoniana imposed an imperative upon him, or at least he chose to accept it as an imperative.

Jefferson's Anas are relevant to understanding the imperative which Randall encountered as Jefferson's biographer. These notes were made by Jefferson during the period, 1791-1809, while he was intimately involved in national affairs. They contained many of Jefferson's views and

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[63]Stanley D. Rose, Vanderbilt Law Review, II (1958), p. 855.

[64]Randall to Grigsby, July 7, 1858, ed. George Green Schackleford, "New Letters Between Hugh Blair Grigsby and Henry Stephens Randall, 1858-1861," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXIV (1956), p. 338.

[65]Supra, p. 66.

"documentations" concerning the persons and principles involved in the partisan controversies of the time. The Jefferson scholar, Merrill Peterson, describes them as a "collection of anecdote, gossip, and miscellaneous reflections on the men and the politics of the Federalist period."[66] The charges that a monarchical conspiracy existed were recorded in the Anas.

Randall was compelled to justify the Anas, not in all details, but in general.[67] By accepting them as legitimate testimony, Randall was obliged to believe that a monarchical conspiracy, with Hamilton at its head, had in fact existed. The imperative forced Randall into verbalizing an unnecessary predicament:[68]

> There can be but three theories on the subject [of a monarchical conspiracy]. Either Mr. Jefferson uttered the truth; or he was a monomaniacal fanatic; or he was...a cold-blooded demagogue attempting to excite popular prejudices against adversaries by deliberate falsehood.

The last two possibilities were in Randall's judgment untenable. And then by a process of pseudo-syllogistic reasoning in which two false propositions leave the first proposition true, Randall concluded in substance that the conspiracy had existed. He said it for Jefferson: "It became, indeed, one of the settled dogmas of his creed that there

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[66]Merrill Peterson, The Jeffersonian Image, p. 33.

[67]Randall, Life, Vol. II, pp. 31-44.

[68]Ibid., Vol. I, p. 565.

was such a party in the United States, and that it was constantly at work, openly or secretly, to overthrow republicanism."[69] It came down to the question--a "naked one"--of Jefferson's veracity.[70] The imperative imposed upon Randall the task of proving that Jefferson's estimation of the nature of the early party struggles was founded in fact.

For Hamilton's historical image, the imperative was unfortunate, indeed. It would seem reasonable to argue that none of the elements of Randall's triology above need be accepted. Jefferson may well have exaggerated his doubts and feelings toward Hamilton. Randall did choose to believe Jefferson's allegations, however; and thus his account of Hamilton with all the trappings of documentation, cast the burden of a monarchical conspiracy upon Hamilton's reputation. Hamilton's record in subsequent histories and biographies has not escaped this burden, or its implications.

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADAMSES -- A MORALISTIC INTERPRETATION

Through four generations, the Adams family of Quincy, Massachusetts, endeavored to follow an independent course in American politics. During their lifetimes, success in politics would seemingly have required that they place themselves either in the camp of idyllic, agrarian democracy with its sentimental offshoots of egalitarianism and homespun virtue, or in the camp of aristocratic Federalist politics with its offshoots of materialism and protectionism. Instead the Adamses chose to serve the nation and not the parties. They wanted to be statesmen who should serve their country by remaining faithful to the principles of truth, duty, and honor.[1]

Amazingly, John Adams and John Quincy Adams became Presidents of the United States. Both had proved inept at

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[1]Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams (The Modern Library; New York: Random House, 1931), pp. 104-105; hereafter cited as Henry Adams, Education; George Hochfield, Henry Adams, An Introduction and Interpretation (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1962), p. 2; hereafter cited as Hochfield, Henry Adams.

using the political powers of public office for personal advantage. In fact, one might say that they obtained office in recognition of their statesmanship and service to the country, rather than their political acumen. John Adams had loyally and doggedly served the cause of independence during the war years, 1775-1783, and after the war he served on the peace commission in Europe. Later he was United States Ambassador to England. John Quincy Adams held several diplomatic posts, including the ambassadorship to Great Britain. He served with the commission that wrote the Peace of Ghent, concluding the War of 1812. He returned to the United States to become Monroe's Secretary of State. Largely through his efforts, the administration negotiated a treaty with Spain which ceded Florida to the United States. Afterwards, he, along with Monroe, formulated the famous guideline of nineteenth-century American diplomacy, the Monroe Doctrine.

The third generation, represented by Charles Francis Adams, likewise achieved distinction in service to the nation as a statesman. During the difficult years of the Civil War, he was the United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Almost singlehandedly, he prevailed upon Great Britain to adopt a policy of neutrality toward the belligerents in America and to cease rendering material aid to the Confederate cause. Historians believe that had Britain recognized and aided the Confederacy, the Civil War

would have ended with a Rebel victory. Besides this signal service, Charles Francis Adams served in Congress as had his father, John Quincy. In 1872 he was a contender for the presidential nomination on the Liberal Republican ticket. Throughout his life, like his grandfather and father, he wrote history.

Indeed the Adamses had served their country with distinction. But at no time were they popular figures among the majority of American people. Neither John nor John Quincy Adams ever willingly played the game of partisan politics or political popularity; in fact neither would admit to the necessity or honor of such a game. And both left office, after serving one term each, with rancor in the nation and bitterness in their hearts. Charles Francis Adams never achieved the Presidency, because he chose to work with third parties in behalf of reform.

Each of the Adamses was, as Martin Duberman has written of Charles Francis, "a man who achieved political eminence while remaining true to himself."[2] Their individual lives are the story of a family which subordinated personal advantage and advancement to an effort to serve their country.

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[2]Martin Duberman, Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), xvi.

[3]Hochfield, Henry Adams, p. 2; Henry Adams, Education, p. 7.

By the latter half of the nineteenth-century, American politics had changed considerably, at least for the Adamses. Dedication to duty and high-minded, disinterested service to the nation were no longer sufficient claims upon the people's attention. National office and recognition were not forthcoming to the Adamses. If political power and money were the measures of a society's values, reward was reserved for men such as Grant, Conkling, Blaine, Jay Gould, and Jim Fiske. Corruption, rather than honor, seemed the key to success.

This Age of the Great Barbecue, as Vernon Parrington called it, was also the age of the fourth generation of Adamses, represented most brilliantly by Henry Adams. As the fourth in the family line, the son of Charles Francis Adams, he had inherited a tradition "of Truth; of Duty and of Freedom."[4] It was an eighteenth-century tradition, as he often called it, which did not prepare him for success in the nineteenth-century.

Nevertheless, Henry Adams wanted to emulate the family tradition. Before 1868, when he decided to act, Adams had already concluded that seeking political office was out of the question.[5] He thought he might "join the press," believing that his ability to write and his political perspective

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[4]Henry Adams, Education, p. 22.

[5]Ibid., p. 243 and passim Chaps. xvi & xvii.

would enable him to exert influence on the nation's political morality. His autobiography suggests that he envisioned himself in the role of a political prophet revealing political truths to the people. Finding no outlet for his intended profound political journalism and disillusioned by the corruption of American politics, he soon gave up his plan and set off for Europe.

In 1870 Adams received an appointment to the Harvard faculty as a Medieval historian, a subject about which he protested he knew nothing.[6] But, since America seemed to have no place for him in his preferred occupations, and given his family's insistent advice, Adams felt obliged to try his hand at teaching history. Although his tenure at Harvard is treated in his autobiography in a chapter entitled "Failure," it was a time, nonetheless, which enabled him to devote considerable attention to history, including that of the United States. Moreover, the appointment carried the additional responsibility of serving as the editor of the North American Review, a New England intellectual journal of sectional and limited distribution. During the 'seventies, Adams wrote a number of articles for the Review and other journals; some of his work dealt with historical subjects. He also compiled a number of documents related to Federalism in New England in a book that was published.

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[6] Ibid., p. 243.

Adams gave up on teaching and resigned from Harvard in 1877. He adopted the life of a gentleman scholar, living off the income of his and his wife's investments, and started writing. In 1879 he published his first major historical book, The Life of Albert Gallatin. By this time he had already started working on his history of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison.

The 1880's were a remarkably productive period for him. He dashed off a biography of John Randolph, an old political enemy of his grantfather, John Quincy, and published two novels, Democracy and Esther, which portended his disillusionment with the democratic political system in America. Meanwhile he continued working on his History; by 1891, it was completed and published in nine volumes!

The next twenty-odd years provided Adams with time to write a variety of books, including his well-known Mont-Saint Michel and Chartres and The Education of Henry Adams. Numbered among his publications were several essays in which he vainly tried to formulate an acceptable philosophy of history.

With the exceptions of considerable political involvement and actual office holding, the career of Henry Adams emulated the family tradition. Particularly is the parallel clear in that all of them wrote history. His grandfathers made history in a sense and wrote it in their correspondence and official papers. Charles Francis Adams did likewise,

and more by compiling the Adamses' papers--John's, Abigail's, and John Quincy's--into multi-volumed editions and publishing them during the mid-nineteenth-century.

Any student of Henry Adams' work must wonder why, with his ancestry, he published no histories of his famous predecessors. The answer surely must be that his father had already written them. Henry Adams' choice of Gallatin, Randolph, Jefferson, and Madison, however, did not remove him so far from the issues raised by the administrations of his grandfathers, not so far as one might assume.

Altogether, the Adamses wrote a number of books involving the Early National period of American history and its prominent figures.

I

In various parts of their histories, Alexander Hamilton is a major subject. Through four generations of Adamses, his presence and what he stood for seem to intrude upon them as some dark force, frustrating the family in its efforts to assert its place and rectitude in American politics. They responded to him in their histories and judged him severely.

The Adamses generally admitted that Hamilton was a man of ability, and one should presume that they meant

ability in government organization and finance.[7] Henry Adams was the more perceptive, and the most generous, of the family in judging Hamilton's ability. He wrote that Hamilton was one of two Americans--Albert Gallatin was the other--who had demonstrated the quality of "practical statesmanship."[8] Hamilton was remarkable for his "breadth of mind" which enabled him to deal with "the machine of government as a whole."[9] He possessed a "practical knowledge of affairs and of politics that enabled him to forsee every movement."[10] The energy which he infused into Washington's first administration produced legislative and administrative results that "were stupendous and can never be repeated"; the successors can only alter and improve the form, but not the substance, of what Hamilton and his party created.[11]

The important theme in Adams' interpretation is the one of practical statesmanship. He believed that the

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[7]John Adams to Dr. Ogden, Dec. 3, 1800, The Works of John Adams, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1856), IX, p. 576; hereafter cited as C. F. Adams, Works. Page Smith, John Adams (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962), Vol. II, p. 760. Charles Francis Adams, The Life of John Adams (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1874), Vol. II, p. 144; hereafter cited as C. F. Adams, Life.

[8]Henry Adams, The Life of Albert Gallatin (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1880), p. 267; hereafter cited as Henry Adams, Gallatin.

[9]Ibid., p. 268.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

practical statesman must necessarily be a financier, for "no organization or reform is likely to succeed that does not begin with and is not guided by the Treasury."[12] What Adams meant, but did not elaborate, was that Hamilton's fiscal program was integral to the formation of the federal government under Washington. Adams believed that the Constitution had initiated a trend toward centralization in American political development.[13] As Adams had written, "...at the moment [of Washington's first administration] it was not unreasonable to suppose that what the country wanted was centralization."[14] Hamilton had the perspicacity to recognize this compelling force and respond to it. His entire fiscal program--the national debt, the national bank, the loose constructionism, the federal aid to the economy, the military arm--tended toward the centralization of political power and energy in the federal government. Adams thus saw that Hamilton, the financier in the Treasury, had effected the organization and character of the newly formed federal government. Since his policy was predicated upon a

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[12] Ibid., p. 267.

[13] Ernest Samuels, Henry Adams, The Middle Years (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 267. Edwin C. Rozwenc, "Henry Adams and the Federalists," ed., H. Stuart Hughes, Teachers of History (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), p. 129; hereafter cited as Rozwenc, "Henry Adams."

[14] Henry Adams, Gallatin, pp. 167-168.

cognizance of the compelling force of centralization, Hamilton's ability manifested the highest order of practical statesmanship. Few Secretaries since the time of Hamilton and Gallatin perceived the importance of the Treasury, and none of them have left great reputations behind.[15]

Though Henry Adams saw Hamilton as an extraordinarily able Secretary, he believed that certain details of Hamilton's policy were impolitic. The national debt, for one thing, was larger than it need have been. Assumption increased the debt by twice the amount which was actually necessary.[16] Despite that, the nation may well have managed Hamilton's debt program, had conditions not changed. They did change, however, in the late 1790's, and the nation was faced with the necessity of building up its military forces. The Treasury was incapable of withstanding the double burden of debt payment and military preparedness.[17] Government expenses threatened to exceed income; and thus make the cost of maintaining Hamilton's sinking fund too expensive. But the government was committed to the sanctity of the fund and could not honorably suspend its operation.[18] Had Hamilton

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[15] Ibid., p. 167.

[16] Ibid., p. 168.

[17] Ibid., p. 169.

[18] Ibid., p. 173.

forseen the course of events, he might have been more conservative in assuming a large national debt.[19]

Hamilton was imprudent in other ways. The Whiskey Excise was an unpopular measure which came out of the administration's efforts to carry out Hamilton's fiscal policy.[20] This impolitic measure was made worse by Hamilton when he showed excessive zeal in hunting down and punishing the Whiskey Rebels in western Pennsylvania. Hamilton displayed a "marked desire to find evidence incriminating Gallatin" in the insurrection.[21] His authority for such an investigation was uncertain, and it would have been better, considering the bitterness surrounding the excise and the rebellion, had he left it in the hands of the proper judicial authorities.[22]

Jay's Treaty, for which Hamilton, along with other Federalists, was an outspoken advocate, was "bad." Little was gained by the country for all the trouble it caused. "It compromised our neutrality and threw us into the hands of England."[23] It exacerbated political sentiments at home. The people divided into two uncompromising and uncompromisable camps, led by Hamilton and Jefferson. Adams wrote:

> Mr. Jefferson meant that the American system would be a democracy, and he would rather have let the

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[19] Ibid., p. 168.

[20] Ibid., p. 87.

[21] Ibid., p. 139.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., p. 159.

> world perish than that his principle...should fail. Mr. Hamilton considered democracy a fatal curse, and meant to stop its progress....[24]

In a letter to George Bancroft, the American historian, Adams said, "As for the Jay affair, I fear we must concede--Mr. Jay and I--that our ancestors gave some unnecessary trouble."[25] He surely would have included the other Federalists as well.

Though all Adamses deplored the spirit of party, Henry Adams observed that Hamilton and Jefferson, in their party roles, had set forth the only two theories of government which offered solutions to the "great problems of American politics."[26] With the exception of Gallatin, no statesmen since their day have added to those original statements.[27]

Even though the theories that came to be associated with Hamilton's name were the views of a small minority of Americans, he and his party, by their ability, energy, and determination, had after all "created the Constitution" and guided the nation under it for ten years.[28] And whatever shortcomings these Federalists may have had, which were many, they were successful. When they surrendered power in

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Harold Dean Cater, ed. Henry Adams and His Friends (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), p. 129.

[26] Henry Adams, Gallatin, p. 492.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., p. 199.

1801 to Thomas Jefferson, they handed him a government in "excellent condition."[29]

Like his party, Hamilton had many defects, at least in the eyes of the Adamses; nevertheless, Henry Adams found him to be a man of first-rate abilities. Adams said that when he was dealing with the subtleties of Jefferson's character, he drew upon Hamilton:

> of all the politicians and writers of that day, none could draw portraits with a sharper outline than Hamilton....[30]

Washington probably represented what was best in the national character and aspirations, Adams thought, but he pointedly said that "Washington depended mainly upon Hamilton."[31] No expression of Henry Adams' reveals better his assessment of Hamilton than these words:

> ...there are, to the present time, in all American history only two examples [Hamilton and Gallatin] of practical statesmanship which can serve as perfect models, not perhaps in all respects for imitation, but for study, to persons who wish to understand what practical statesmanship has been under the American system.[32]

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[29]Ibid., p. 273.

[30]Henry Adams, History of the United States during the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Antiquarian Press, Ltd., Reprint, 1962), Vol. I, p. 277; hereafter cited as Henry Adams, History.

[31]Henry Adams, Gallatin, p. 267.

[32]Ibid.

III

Assessing Hamilton's statesmanship and ability was a matter for the historian, and Adams tried to do it objectively. Despite his approving interpretation of these aspects of Hamilton, Henry Adams disliked him. To Samuel Tilden, Adams wrote that in his eyes Albert Gallatin was the only "fully and perfectly equipped" American statesman; he possessed "ability, integrity, knowledge, unselfishness, social fitness" more than other public men.[33] Others showed themselves to be "soft" and "rough"; they gave way in Adams' hand. But not Gallatin. He made errors, "but even in his blunders he was respectable."[34] The inference is clear that Hamilton was one of those, soft and rough in spots. Up to this point, in Adams' mind, Hamilton and Gallatin had stood together as outstanding statesmen. But, Hamilton in his blunders was not respectable and here the comparison between the two Secretaries ended.

More about Hamilton appeared in a letter Adams wrote to his friend and former student, Henry Cabot Lodge. Lodge had written a book review expressing views of Hamilton that Adams could not fully appreciate, and Adams responded to it by saying that he had his "own kind of aversion" to the man.

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[33]Cater, Henry Adams and His Friends, p. 125.

[34]Ibid.

Hamilton displayed the character of an adventurer.[35] Everything that Hamilton wrote evinced a "Napoleonic kind of adventurdom."[36] Parenthetically it should be added here that Adams' great-grandmother, Abigail, undoubtedly reflecting her husband's animosity toward Hamilton, had written that Hamilton "would become a second Buonaparty" if given the chance.[37]

The analogy had some relevance in Henry Adams' mind, because he made the comparison between Hamilton and Buonaparte on two occasions in his History.[38] He also gave a description of Napoleon, which, with little imagination, could easily be applied to Hamilton. He wrote:

> [Napoleon possessed] Ambition that ground its heel into every obstacle; restlessness that often defied commonsense; selfishness that eat [sic] like a cancer into his reasoning faculties; energy such as had never before been combined with equal genius and resources; ignorance that would have amused a schoolboy; and a moral sense which regarded truth and falsehood as equally useful modes of expression,--an unprovoked war or secret assassination as equally natural forms of activity....[39]

If not exactly in these words, certainly with the same intensity would the Adamses have described Hamilton. One writer

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[35]Worthington Chauncy Ford, ed., Letters of Henry Adams (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), I, pp. 284-285; hereafter cited as Ford, Letters. Samuels, op. cit., p. 56.

[36]Ford, Letters, Vol. I, p. 284.

[37]Quoted in Page Smith, John Adams, Vol. II, p. 972.

[38]Henry Adams, History, Vol. II, pp. 168 and 190.

[39]Ibid., Vol. I, p. 334.

has said that Napoleon "was the real villain in the History."[40] Perhaps Hamilton should be seen as the bete noire of the Adamses' histories. Whether this speculation is right or wrong, the quotation above should serve for the moment to elaborate Henry Adams' remark that he read a "Napoleonic adventurdom" in Hamilton's writings.

Portions of two other letters written by Henry Adams complete this description of his attitude toward Hamilton. To his friend, John Hay, he wrote that "the man is noxious. ...He combined all the elements of a Scotch prig in a nasty form."[41] In his History, on which he was working at the time, he planned, he said, "not to touch him" and to cut all that he could and emasculate the rest.[42] To his brother, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., he wrote asking after the authority for crediting John Adams with the "splendidly vigorous description of Hamilton as 'the bastard brat of a Scotch pedlar'...."[43]

None of these opinions about Hamilton appeared in the published works of Henry Adams, certainly not in the form or severity that they are quoted above. They were portions of letters that Adams wrote to friends and did not become

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[40]William H. Jordy, Henry Adams; Scientific Historian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 64.

[41]Ford, Letters, Vol. I, p. 335.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 565-566.

generally available to historians until they were published in various collections in the twentieth-century. Nevertheless, they are of interest because they reveal clearly what Henry Adams thought of Hamilton's character, and they provide insight to the few remarks about Hamilton which are found in his Gallatin and History. They also show that there is a continuity of judgment about Hamilton from John to Henry Adams.

The dislike of Hamilton was a family passion. Hamilton and the High Federalists, represented by State Street in Boston and the Essex Junto, had caused the Adamses endless difficulty and embarrassment. They had opposed John Adams' election to high office on several occasions; they had involved John Quincy Adams in vehement dispute about the secessionist movement in New England prior to 1812 and after; and they had denounced Charles Francis Adams for his abolitionist politics before 1860. Henry Adams undoubtedly perceived something like an historical conspiracy against the family, and it could be traced back to Hamilton, at least in part. As a boy he had read the proofsheets of his father's texts of John Adams' papers,[44] and as a young professor he had edited some of John Quincy Adams' papers when gathering them for his book, Documents Relating to

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[44]Henry Adams, Education, p. 31.

New England Federalism. He knew his grandfathers' story and was willing to settle accounts with Hamilton.[45]

The family conflict with Hamilton and his forces began first in the stormy politics of the 1790's and continued through the threats of secession in New England prior to the War of 1812. After the death of John Quincy Adams in 1848, the feuds, as Henry Adams said, "were no longer acutely personal," but they never ceased.[46] By this time, the quarrels left the political arena to take place in the pages of the history books. In the early 1850's, Hamilton's son, John C., published the Hamilton papers and later wrote a history of the country based on those papers. Charles Francis Adams took note of Hamilton's papers by remarking "that no leading public man of the country, in any way of rival powers, receives aid to his reputation from the publication that has been made of Mr. Hamilton's writings.[47] Henry Adams noted in his autobiography that "Mr. Hildreth, in his standard history, went so far as to echo with approval the charge that treachery was hereditary in the family."[48] There is more to this particular matter about the

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[45]Concerning Henry Adams' sense of family loyalty, see Samuels, Henry Adams, The Middle Years, pp. 49, 89, 160 and 388; Henry Adams, Education, pp. 7, 22, and 24; and Rozwenc, "Henry Adams," pp. 124-125.

[46]Henry Adams, Education, p. 24.

[47]C. F. Adams, Works, Vol. IX, footnote, p. 288.

[48]Henry Adams, Education, pp. 104-105.

feud in the books than a paper on Hamilton need detail; enough has been said to indicate that four generations of Adamses were highly motivated to write history.

IV

There are three episodes which focus the family anger. One is Hamilton's interference in the elections in which John Adams was a candidate. Another is Hamilton's and the Hamiltonians' efforts to dictate foreign policy to John Adams and the nation in the period, 1797-1800. The third is Hamilton's duel with Aaron Burr in 1804. As the Adamses' account of these episodes unfolds, their derogatory judgment of Hamilton becomes quite evident.

Political relations between John Adams and Hamilton were never really good. The first indication of distrust went back to the days of the Revolutionary War, when Hamilton became suspicious that the Adamses and others in New England were intriguing to undermine the authority of General Washington.[49] The same suspicion motivated Hamilton to interfere in the election of 1788 to make sure that Adams was not a 'popularly' elected Vice-President. Hamilton wanted "to keep a check over the political influence of the second officer" should Adams ever attempt "to embarrass the chief by his opposition."[50] Adams protested the

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[49] C. F. Adams, Life, Vol. II, p. 137.

[50] Ibid., pp. 137-138.

indignity, but the Hamiltonians turned the protest against him as evidence of his ambition and of the need for a check. Knowledge of this campaign against his character came back to Adams and created an element of distrust in the relations between the two men.[51]

This inauspicious beginning shifted to the background in the first years of the new government. Both Adams and Hamilton had in common a strong sense of nationalism, and both saw the need to establish an energetic federal government. Hamilton soon found that he could count on general support from Adams for his fiscal program and other policies.[52] For the moment, Adams and Hamilton enjoyed a mutual confidence in pursuit of common goals, a confidence nurtured by the moderating influences of President Washington.

When Washington retired in 1796, "the last check upon the fury of the parties" was removed.[53] The question of succession was opened and soon became one of power. There was no man who had the stature that Washington had among the people at large. Though it was clear that the opposition wanted Jefferson, it was not so clear who would lead the Federalists. Adams, John Jay, and Hamilton were contenders. Hamilton was the strongest in the party hierarchy, but weakest in the public eye. Jay was popular

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[51] Ibid., p. 139.

[52] Ibid., p. 146.

[53] Ibid., p. 201.

among the Federalist leaders, but his Treaty had aroused considerable rancor in the public. Adams was not the most popular candidate among the Federalist leaders; but he was thought to be the least unpopular of the three to the public, and the nomination devolved upon him.

Hamilton, though forced by circumstances to acquiesce in Adams' nomination, was unwilling to support him. He set in motion a scheme to get electoral votes withheld from Adams in hopes of electing his own dark-horse candidate, Thomas Pinckney of South Carolina and the Federalist Vice-Presidential nominee, to the Presidency. The scheme failed completely, and resulted in placing the opposition candidate, Jefferson, in office as Adams' Vice-President. Altogether, the scheme showed Hamilton's willingness to pervert the spirit of the Constitution.[54]

In 1800 John Adams was up for re-election as the Federalist candidate for the Presidency. Once again Hamilton displayed his "bad faith" by covertly working for the defeat of Adams and the election of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina. By this time, Hamilton and Adams were political enemies, and Hamilton was willing to adopt extreme measures to carry off his scheme. He hoped to divert electoral votes from Adams by convincing the electors that Adams was unfit for office. He wrote a vicious

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[54] Ibid., p. 204.

pamphlet defaming the character of Adams and tried to circulate it secretly among Federalist circles. The opposition got hold of the pamphlet, printed it, and made it general knowledge to the public. This circumstance forced a split in the Federalist party and guaranteed the election of Jefferson. It was a betrayal in the eyes of the Adamses.[55]

Hamilton's conduct in the election of 1800 was motivated by his intense dissatisfaction with John Adams' foreign policy in the preceding years. The years 1797-1800 were years of intense strain in the relations between the two men, and the bitterness generated at the time was undoubtedly one source of the family hostility towards Hamilton.

John Adams had known of President Washington's difficulty in finding first-rate men to fill the Cabinet posts as they were vacated by the original incumbents. Washington was forced by circumstances to appoint expedients: Timothy Pickering in the State Department, Oliver Wolcott in the Treasury, and James McHenry in the War Department. Adams, after becoming President, felt compelled by his own circumstances to retain these Secretaries.[56] He had no popular mandate from the people; his plurality was a mere three electoral votes. He knew already how difficult it was to find qualified men willing to serve. The existing Cabinet

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[55] Ibid., p. 335.

[56] Ibid., p. 226.

had the advantage of some experience, and it had the aura of Washington's eminence, for he had chosen it. What Adams did not know was that each of these Secretaries looked to Hamilton for advice and counsel and espoused his policies as their own at Cabinet meetings. Moreover, they covertly informed Hamilton of the proceedings of Cabinet meetings and felt no obligation to appraise Adams of the situation. "In this way, Alexander Hamilton...was become all-powerful in guiding the movements of the government."[57]

Such was the situation in March, 1797, when diplomatic relations with the French collapsed as a result of their rejection of the American minister, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. Adams wanted to renew relations with France at the first opportunity. In May, a commission of three Americans sailed for France in hopes of settling differences. The outcome of their efforts was a rebuff, infamous in the United States as the XYZ Affair. When the Senate caused to be published the papers exposing this rebuff, public opinion, regardless of party, was aroused by the insult. In the late spring of 1798, war with France was a distinct possibility.

Up to this time, Hamilton had been content to act as a power behind-the-scenes, exercising his influence over the Secretaries in Adams' Cabinet and over the councils of the Federalist party. Evidently, the likelihood of war with

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[57] Ibid., p. 226.

France aroused in him some desires to step forward and openly devise national policy and see to its implementation. "He began to see a crisis worthy to call forth all his latent powers."[58] (Italics mine.)

Hamilton's position was strong. He influenced the Cabinet and the Party. He enjoyed the support of the "younger and more active members of the federal party of the north and the east."[59] Much of this "chain of influence" had been linked while he was in the Treasury, at which time he exerted "considerable influence" over the mind of Washington.[60]

The Federalists in Congress, influenced by the intent of Hamilton's policy, enacted a program abrogating American treaties with France and authorizing warlike measures. The navy was strengthened by an increase in personnel and ships and the Department of Navy was established. The army was increased and a list of officers, suitable to a much larger force, was drawn. The Alien and Sedition Acts were passed, though without the hearty endorsement of President Adams. The program was short of what Hamilton wanted. President Adams was concerned with proper defensive measures and thought to make the navy the first line

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[58] Ibid., p. 243.

[59] Ibid., p. 242.

[60] Ibid., p. 243.

of defense, while the army should serve as a deterrent to any plans of invasion by the French. Hamilton wanted a large army because he envisioned an offensive war.[61]

Hamilton, in the previous years, had become privy to a "grand project of revolution in South America."[62] A large army, which he dreamed of leading, was necessary for the offensive war inherent in this project.

The project was the brainchild of a Venezuelan adventurer, Francisco de Miranda, who was in 1798 already in London trying to persuade the British to supply ships, money, and men to the project.[63] The Americans were supposed to supply an army to fight the Spanish. In reward for the service, the United States was to obtain all of the Spanish territory east of the Mississippi River, including New Orleans. Besides the glory which Hamilton anticipated coming to him from the venture, he also saw it as a means to ally the United States with Britain against the French.[64] His plan meant the abandonment of Washington's principle of neutrality.[65]

Hamilton had other reasons for wanting a warlike policy towards France and the army which had come out of it. He had never been sympathetic to the "popular ideas"

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[61] Ibid., p. 245.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., p. 250.

[65] Ibid.

that prevailed in the country. "Theoretical democracy" was a political anathema to him. His efforts in behalf of the Constitution and the new federal government were predicated on the fear that something worse would evolve in its stead.[66] By the end of the 1790's he feared that despite his efforts, America was threatened with a civil commotion; "a grave crisis was portending."[67] (Italics mine.) Federalist control of an army would allow them to strike a blow for good government and order.

While the nation girded itself for the possible war with France, Hamilton schemed with his friends to obtain for himself the position of second in command of the provisional army. "His great ambition was for military lead."[68] Through subtle pressures he prevailed upon Washington--already designated commander--to name his staff officers. Hamilton, Knox, and Pinckney were duly named. President Adams, however, had wanted to appoint some military men from the opposition to positions of command. Adams also knew that Generals Knox and Pinckney had dates of rank which game them precedence over Hamilton.

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[66] Ibid. C. F. Adams emphasized this aspect of Hamilton's outlook. It is stressed in other places; see C. F. Adams, Works, Vol. I, pp. 445 and 526. Henry Adams distrusted Hamilton because "he was equally ready to support a system he utterly disbelieved in as one that he liked." See Ford, Letters, Vol. I, p. 284.

[67] C. F. Adams, Life, Vol. II, p. 25.

[68] Ibid., p. 252.

Hamilton, aware of the President's reticence to accede to his desires, urged the Secretaries to pressure Washington to act. Their efforts aroused the old General to write to Adams, demanding the prerogative of naming his staff. Adams deferred to Washington's demand, and Washington named Hamilton Inspector-General, second in command. Knox resigned his commission and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney acquiesced. For all intents and purposes, Hamilton had his army command, for General Washington would assume command only in the event of actual war.[69] It was a Pyrrhic victory though, because "from this time may be dated the beginnings of [Adams'] distrust of his ministers and of his determination to resist their control."[70]

In the fall of 1798, John Adams learned through reliable sources that France was willing to re-establish relations with the United States. The President posed the problems of resuming relations for his Cabinet to consider. It was a subject which "burst like a clap of thunder" upon them. Peace was intolerable; "to their system, war was an essential part."[71] They and Hamilton did everything they could to deter Adams from effecting a reconciliation with

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[69] Ibid., pp. 252-255.

[70] Ibid., p. 256.

[71] Ibid., p. 261.

France. But the President remained firm in his determination to avoid war if it were honorable and possible to do so. In February, 1799, President Adams announced his desire to nominate William Van Murray as minister to France.[72]

The Hamiltonians turned to Congress in an effort to check the President's plans for resumption of relations with France. A caucus of Federalists was called and the question of a declaration of war was put. The moderate Federalists--the Adams' supporters--combined to vote it down.[73] At this moment, the influence of Hamilton and his forces began to diminish rapidly. Their frustration soon vented itself in vilification of the President.[74]

War, it was clear, was the settled policy of the Federalists who supported Hamilton, some of them even willing to support a policy of aggressive war.[75] There were two

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[72]Henry Adams wrote: "The nomination [of Van Murray] fell like a thunder-bolt between the conflicting forces. At first its full consequences were not understood; only by slow degrees did it become clear that it meant the expulsion from power of the Hamiltonian Wing of the party and the end of their whole system of politics. Their war with France, their army, their navy, their repressive legislation [the Alien and Sedition Acts], all fell together. The immediate dangers, which has threatened civil war, disappeared." Gallatin, p. 22.

[73]Henry Adams viewed this whole episode much like his father did. He wrote: "The Hamiltonian Federalists were ardent for war, for an army, and for coercive measures against domestic opposition; the moderate Federalists, probably a large majority of the party with the President at their head, would have been glad to recede." Gallatin, p. 215.

[74]C. F. Adams, Life, Vol. II, pp. 268-269.

[75]Ibid., p. 270.

reasons which account for their policy. First, they wanted to capitalize on the anti-French sentiment for party advantage; and second, they wanted control of a large military force.[76] Military power would enable the Hamiltonians to make "modifications in the laws, and even in the Constitution itself."[77] No other construction can be placed on Hamilton's actions.[78] He had written that the Constitution needed more "ramparts" and "buttresses"; it was a "fabric which can hardly be stationary, and which will retrograde, if it cannot be made to advance."[79]

John Adams' conciliatory policy prevailed, and in the fall of 1800, a Convention between the two nations was signed. To Adams, it was his greatest contribution to the nation.[80]

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Henry Adams interpreted Hamilton's actions somewhat like this. He wrote: "They [the Republicans] believed, not without ground, that the Federalists aimed at a war with France and an alliance with England for the purpose of creating an army and navy to be used to check the spread of democracy in America." (Italics mine.) Gallatin, p. 211.

[79] Quoted in C. F. Adams, Life, Vol. II, pp. 270-271.

[80] Ibid., p. 297.

To Hamilton, peace meant the end of his policy and his schemes of conquest and glory. He determined to prevent the re-election of John Adams in 1800.[81]

The foregoing account is a summary of Charles Francis Adams' history of the relations between the two men. It contains no information which is startling or new; the story is a standard account, except for the emphasis that Adams' placed on Hamilton's character and his motivations. Adams tried to be just and temperate in his account; but the defects in Hamilton's character were explicit in his conduct and his policy and could not be ignored. Adams interpreted Hamilton, "faithful" to the facts.

The major outline of Charles Francis Adams' account was quite similar to that of his father's, found in the "Reply to the Appeal of the Massachusetts Federalists."[82] Missing from the more detailed account of Charles Francis Adams was an effort to explain Hamilton's motivation for meeting Aaron Burr in the duel in 1804. John Quincy Adams dealt with it as a key to Hamilton's character and purposes.

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[81]Henry Adams spoke of the matter sarcastically: "The struggle for control between Hamilton and the conspirators, lasted to the eve of the election,--secret, stifled, mysterious; the intrigue of men afraid to avow their aims, and seeming rather driven by their own passions than guided by the lofty and unselfish motives which ought to inspire those whom George Cabot emphatically called the best!" History, Vol. II, p. 184.

[82]In Henry Adams, ed., Documents Relating to New England Federalism, 1800-1815 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1877), pp. 107-329; hereafter cited as Henry Adams, Documents. The reference above refers specifically to pp. 147-154.

Hamilton had many honorable reasons for refusing to accept Burr's challenge; he had set them forth in a final "testament," published by his executors after his death. He had written that conscience, survival, family, and justice to his creditors militated against his meeting Burr. John Quincy Adams agreed, and wondered what more powerful impulses than these could "operate upon the human heart." His answer, "Ambition, the marshal's truncheon, the 'All hail hereafter!'"[83]

Adams reasoned that after the debacle of 1797-1800 and the inauguration of Jefferson's administration, the political future of the Hamiltonian Federalists was bleak indeed. The administration of Jefferson had earned the respect of the nation by bringing peace, prosperity, and general tranquillity. The covert talk of secessionism among New England Federalists was the only portent of the revival of Hamilton's influence and prestige. But in 1804, Hamilton counselled against secession; nevertheless, he was aware that such dissatisfaction might lead to crises in the future that would require his assumption of military command.[84]

Adams saw the connection between anticipated crises and Hamilton's last words. In the final paragraph of Hamilton's paper explaining his reasons for meeting Burr appeared these words:

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[83] Ibid., p. 166.

[84] Ibid., p. 169.

> The ability to be in future useful, whether in resisting mischief or effecting good, in those crises of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular....[85]

The phrases "resisting mischief or effecting good" and "crises in public affairs" were not references to war, but to civil commotions.[86] If he failed to meet Burr, military men would think him a coward and refuse to offer him a command in the future. "He must meet his foe, or surrender forever the prospect of commanding armies."[87] Hamilton's acceptance of the challenge was grounded in his ambition.[88]

Henry Adams thought that Hamilton accepted Burr's challenge for more concrete reasons than a compelling ambition. He saw it as the culmination of a struggle between a political power and an aspirant to power: "the leadership

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[85]Quoted in Ibid., p. 168. Henry Adams commented to Lodge upon the significance of these lines: "From the very first to the last words he wrote, I read always the same kind of Napoleonic adventurdom, nor do I know any more curious and startling illustration of this than the conclusion of that strange paper explaining his motives for accepting Burr's challenge." He then quoted the lines given above and went on to say, "What should you or I say if our great-grandfathers had left us those words as a deathbed legacy? I think we should not have so high a moral standard as I thank those gentlemen for leaving us. And I confess I think those words alone justify all John Adams' distrust of Hamilton." Ford, Letters, Vol. I, pp. 284-285.

[86]Henry Adams, Documents, p. 169.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid.

of Hamilton would not tolerate rivalry from Burr."[89] Hamilton had to fight to maintain his political influence, otherwise Burr, and others, would have usurped it.

John Adams did not leave any histories as such of the stormy relations he had had with Hamilton, a deficiency which his son and grandsons supplied. His published papers, however, provide ample evidence of his dislike of Hamilton. On one occasion he said that Hamilton was "the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not the world...."[90] On another occasion he wrote that Hamilton's "principle rule of right and wrong, of wisdom and error, was his own ambition and indelicate pleasures...."[91] These themes were amply developed by his family.

John Adams made one comment about Hamilton which had a profound effect upon the later generations of Adamses. He said that "Mr. Hamilton's imagination was always haunted by that hideous monster or phantom, so often called a crisis, and which so often produces imprudent measures."[92] John Quincy Adams dealt with the theme of crisis in his analysis of the motives of the duel, saying in effect that Hamilton

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[89]Henry Adams, History, Vol. II, pp. 176 and 187.

[90]C. F. Adams, Works, Vol. X, p. 124.

[91]Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 300.

[92]Ibid., pp. 289-290.

anticipated a civil crisis at some time in the future.[93] Charles Francis Adams mentioned the theme several times.[94] He also wrote, nearly in the words of his grandfather: "The expectation of a great crisis haunted his mind during several of his last years."[95] With Henry Adams the theme took the form of an exclamation: "Always the crisis!"[96] To his friend, Henry Cabot Lodge, he wrote the words that gave meaning to the phrase: "Future political crises all through Hamilton's life was always in his mind about to make him commander-in-chief, and his first and last written words show the same innate theory of life."[97] Nothing shows the similarity in the Adamses' interpretations of Hamilton more than does their handling of this theme of crisis. To them, Hamilton was something like a Napoleon, ambitious and unprincipled; a military adventurer who sought to exploit crises for his own glory and power.

V

It was convenient indeed for the Adamses that Hamilton should have so sinister a character as their reading of the facts suggested. His lack of political virtue at once

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[93]Henry Adams, Documents, p. 169.

[94]Supra, pp. 101 and 103.

[95]C. F. Adams, Works, Vol. I, p. 526.

[96]Henry Adams, History, Vol. II, p. 187.

[97]Ford, Letters, Vol. I, p. 285.

highlighted their own political virtue and explained their political failure. Against such an adversary, virtuous men have only truth and honor with which to do battle, and they do not always carry the field. Hamilton, and his symbolic successors, had effectively hindered four generations of Adamses in their efforts to exercise political power and influence. As moral men, they had to trust to Providence to make final retribution upon Hamilton.

In the meantime, the Adamses presented their histories for their contemporaries to judge. And though all the Adamses effectively deprecated Hamilton's character and purposes, none of them had more influence upon the general public than Henry Adams. He was instrumental in fixing a sinister, perhaps immoral, reputation upon Hamilton.[98] One can hardly read Adams without suspecting Hamilton of ulterior purposes, destructive to American democracy.

One page in Adams' History should serve to substantiate the point. He was in the habit of collecting anecdotes about eminent men as keys to their private character.[99] One especially destructive anecdote about Hamilton appeared in the History and became part of the historical record. In 1803 Hamilton was reported to have been speaking

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[98]Henry Commager, "Henry Adams," Essays in American Historiography, p. 195; Clinton Rossiter, Alexander Hamilton and the Constitution (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), p. 228.

[99]Samuels, Henry Adams, The Middle Years, p. 402.

at a dinner in New York. Someone expressed a democratic sentiment which aroused Hamilton to reply sharply. He supposedly struck his hand on the table and said, "Your people, sir--your people is a great beast."[100] Whether Adams included the anecdote in his History as fact or symbol, it soon became associated in the popular mind with Hamilton.[101] His reputation has fared ill with such burdens.[102]

The Adamses' interpretation of Hamilton has something of the character of a literary vendetta. Nonetheless, they have raised some of the most difficult questions with which the students of Hamilton and the Early National period have had to cope. Everyone, including the Adamses, could admit that Hamilton was a very able financier, administrator, general, statesman, etc.; but was he a moral man? Until his character, and his motivations and actions stemming from that character, are conclusively understood, Hamilton's place among the Founding Fathers must remain a controversial issue among historians.

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[100]Henry Adams, History, Vol. I, p. 85.

[101]Clinton Rossiter, Alexander Hamilton and the Constitution, p. 162.

[102]Ibid., pp. 4, 162, and 226-236.

CHAPTER V

HENRY CABOT LODGE--A FEDERALIST INTERPRETATION

Hamilton needed a masterful biographer who could explain to democratic America his aristocratic concepts of government and society and his concept of the relationship between an energetic federal government and the founding of the nation. He had nearly the right biographer in the person of Henry Cabot Lodge, whose Alexander Hamilton was both sympathetic to the subject and well-received by the reading public. Paradoxically, Lodge's ability to present the Hamiltonian point of view was at once the strength and defect of the biography.

It is implied that Lodge was too partial in his presentation of Hamilton, that his biography was thereby distorted and, thus, poor history. There is truth in that statement, but it can be qualified to a certain extent by saying that the value of Lodge's Hamilton lies in its thoroughly Hamiltonian character. Lodge was candid in expressing his admiration of Federalist and Hamiltonian principles and policies. His point of view was unencumbered by any sentimental attachments to democracy, a loyalty which makes

one's appreciation of Hamilton a rather difficult, if not impossible, task. More than the majority of historians who have dealt with this period, Lodge was attuned to the Federalist side of the political and intellectual milieu of the latter eighteenth-century. For Lodge, there was no need to explain Hamilton's deviations from democratic theory or practice.

I

Lodge's understanding of Federalism was, figuratively speaking, bred into him by ancestry and environment. His paternal relatives were successful Boston merchants and shippers, who moved among Massachusetts' wealthy circles. On the maternal side, he was linked to the former Federalist Senator from Massachusetts and the friend and confidant of Washington and Hamilton, George Cabot. Throughout his life, Lodge lived and moved among the wealthy and intellectual society of Beacon Hill and Back Bay. His recent biographer succinctly described the influential and intelligent class from which Lodge sprang: "From their ranks," he wrote, "in numbers far out of proportion to their relatively small population, had come leaders in every branch of American life."[1] In the sense that Lodge emerged from a circle of affluent, intellectual, and able people, it is proper to label his background aristocratic.

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[1]John A. Garraty, Henry Cabot Lodge, A Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), pp. 14-15; hereafter cited as Garraty, Lodge.

To say that his background was Federalist through and through is doubtlessly an exaggeration. But surely there is an element of truth in the statement of another of Lodge's biographers that the sons and grandsons of Massachusetts' Federalists would never let the Federalist creed die.[2] In Lodge's case, his historical works are proof of his efforts to keep the memory of Federalism alive.

Indeed his background and social environment were influences which should account in part for his partiality to Federalism. But he also had considerable respect for his ancestors which, according to one historian, is an "excellent barometer of conservatism."[3] Lodge readily acknowledged the influence of his family and the past in shaping his views; "...my own family," he said, "were friends and followers in successive generations of Hamilton and Webster and Sumner. I was brought up in the doctrines and beliefs of the great Federalist, the great Whig, and the Great Republican."[4] Men such as these formed an aristocracy of leaders,

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[2]Karl Schriftgiesser, The Gentleman from Massachusetts: Henry Cabot Lodge (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1944), p. 11; hereafter cited as Schriftgiesser, Lodge.

[3]Garraty, Lodge, p. 59; see also Schriftgiesser, Lodge, p. 4; and Richard E. Welch, Jr., "Opponents and Colleagues: George Frisbie Hoar and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1898-1904," New England Quarterly, XXXIX (1966), p. 183.

[4]Henry Cabot Lodge, The Democracy of the Constitution and Other Addresses and Essays (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 160; hereafter cited as Lodge, Democracy of the Constitution.

for whom Lodge's historical works manifested considerable respect.[5]

Lodge's concern with political power and statesmanship was reflected in both his life as a powerful Senator from Massachusetts and his historical works. The major histories that he wrote in the nineteenth-century were political biographies of the Early National leaders, George Cabot, Hamilton, Washington, and Webster. (His effort in the 1870's to revive the reputation of George Cabot aroused his scholarly interest in Hamilton.)[6] His approach to Hamilton in the biography revealed a rather unqualified tendency to treat events and achievements as the consequence of the actions of a few great men; for example, he could write that Washington and Hamilton created the American nation. But more explicit are his remarks that:

> ...it is safe to say that it is to Washington aided first by Hamilton and then by Madison, that we owe the development of public opinion and the foundation of the party which devised and carried the Constitution. Events of course worked with them, but they used events, and did not suffer the golden opportunities, which without them would have been lost, to slip by.[7]

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[5]See Henry Cabot Lodge, A Short History of the English Colonies in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1881), pp. 442-443, hereafter cited as Lodge, A Short History; and Lodge, Life and Letters of George Cabot (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1878), p. 577, hereafter cited as Lodge, George Cabot.

[6]Garraty, Lodge, p. 58.

[7]Henry Cabot Lodge, George Washington (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898), Vol. II, p. 29; hereafter cited as Lodge, Washington.

Whether Lodge was projecting his self-image as a potential statesman into the historical record, or his study of the Federalist imbued him with a concept of elitest leadership is a moot question. Probably Lodge was affected by the interactions of his own ambitions, his background, and his study of the past. In any case, Lodge had lofty notions about the destiny of the United States and gave the impression that he envisioned himself in the role of a great national leader, perhaps on the order of a Hamilton.[8]

There are other examples of interesting parallels between Lodge's career and his historical writings. Lodge claimed that his favorable attitudes toward protectionism and bimetallism were the result of his study of Hamilton.[9] According to his biographer, Lodge "set an exacting standard of intelligence and responsibility in his public utterances. Nearly all his speeches were logical arguments sticking closely to the points at issue, and free of oratorical bombast, appeals to prejudice, and personalities."[10] Lodge's biography of Hamilton is fulsome with praise of Hamilton for just these qualities of mind and presentation.[11] This

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[8]Lodge, A Short History, p. 519; Garraty, Lodge, p. 146; Schriftgiesser, Lodge, p. 122; Welch, New England Quarterly, XXXIX (1966), p. 192.

[9]Garraty, Lodge, pp. 111-113.

[10]Ibid., p. 125.

[11]Henry Cabot Lodge, Alexander Hamilton (13th ed.; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), pp. 6, 7, and 24-25; hereafter cited as Lodge, Hamilton.

suggests that Lodge did perhaps identify with Hamilton, the independent, resourceful, and masterful leader.

Other parallels can be pointed out. Lodge was vitally interested in foreign affairs,[12] as both his career in Congress and his histories would indicate. His interest in the Navy can be traced through his biography of George Cabot, his marriage to a Navy "Brat," his friendship with Captain Mahan and the "Big Navy" advocates.[13] His nationalism is evident throughout his writings, and shows itself to have been a fundamental point in his concept of American foreign policy. The similarities between what Lodge wrote about Hamilton and the Federalists and his own career as a statesman are remarkable. His histories are like a preview, or portent, of his own future policies.

To describe Lodge as a Federalist is also to say that he was a conservative. His recent biographer has described his attitude as that of "intelligent conservatism," a phrase which describes Hamilton as well.[14] Much evidence can be adduced to reveal Lodge's political conservatism, as for example his opposition to certain progressive reforms and his close association with Republican party regulars throughout most of his Congressional career. Some might argue that

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[12]Schriftgiesser, Lodge, p. 154.

[13]Ibid., pp. 110-114.

[14]Garraty, Lodge, p. 225.

his opposition to Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations was not only conservatism, but reaction.

For purposes of understanding his interpretation of Hamilton, however, nothing is so useful to know as his attitude about the nature of progress. It reveals the influence upon him of the once popular race and "germ" theories; but more importantly it reveals the essentially conservative character of his thought. Lodge was not only respectful of his ancestors, but also of their achievements. "We, like our contemporaries everywhere," he wrote, "are heirs of the ages, and we must study the past, and learn from it, and advance from what has been already tried and found good."[15] Though the remark has the tone of universality about it, Lodge had in mind the particular accomplishments of the English race as constituting the meaningful past. He spoke of their "marvelous political and material success," of their unique display of extraordinary political talent, and attributed it all to their "slow mind and ingrained conservatism."[16] Conservatism was their one signal virtue,

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[15]Henry Cabot Lodge, Studies in History (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), p. 364.

[16]Ibid., p. 333; Lodge, "Limited Sovereignty in the United States," Atlantic Monthly, XLIII (1879), p. 187. In Lodge, George Cabot, p. 414, the theme is repeated: "We of the English race--whose creed is that governments and great political systems grow and develop slowly, are the results of climate, soil, race, tradition, and the exigencies of time and place, who wholly disavow the theory that perfect governments spring in a night from the heated brains of Spaniards and Frenchmen--can best appreciate the task with which our ancestors grappled."

and it explained their distaste for speculative, theoretical political systems which had no foundation in the experience or history of their people.[17]

Lodge's generalizations about the English race were not as carefully qualified by him as they should have been. The majority of Americans in 1787, being of English and Scotch descent, were, he wrote, "deeply imbued with all those principles of law which were the bulwarks of English liberty."[18] When their chosen delegates met at Philadelphia to draw up the Constitution, they devised a Constitution, according to Lodge, especially designed to protect the rights of minorities and individuals.[19] The Anglo-Saxons had always sought to protect the individual by limiting the sovereign power, whether that power resided in a monarch, an aristocracy, or the people.[20] Yet in Lodge's account of the events of the post-Revolutionary years, it was a majority of these descendants of Englishmen who rushed headlong toward a democratic system. At this point it becomes clear that the admirable traits of the English race were the particular possession of those men who became the

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[17]Lodge, A Short History, p. 519.

[18]Lodge, Democracy of the Constitution, p. 51.

[19]Ibid., p. 57; Lodge, Atlantic Monthly, XLIII (1879), p. 192.

[20]Lodge, Atlantic Monthly, XLIII (1879), p. 187.

Federalists.[21] In the 1780's and 1790's the compelling necessity before the country--if it was to be a nation--was to impose restraints upon democracy, and the Federalists met that challenge. Their great leader was Alexander Hamilton.[22]

Writing a biography of Hamilton was probably a less arduous task for Lodge than for many other writers, considering his disposition toward Federalism and his attitude about research. When asked by a reporter about his method of writing history, he replied that his method was to "go to the original sources of information...get thoroughly saturated with the subject, and then sit down and write."[23] His remarks seem especially acceptable if the emphasis is placed on saturation rather than information. Lodge understood Federalism, its leaders and purposes, quite well, but he bothered little with the historical record to corroborate his interpretation of Hamilton. From an historian's point of view, his failure to ground his interpretation in carefully marshalled facts constitutes a serious defect of the Hamilton biography.

The want of serious scholarship did not detract from the biography's popularity. By 1907, twenty-five years

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[21]Lodge, Studies in History, pp. 144-145.

[22]Lodge, George Cabot, p. 303.

[23]Quoted in Garraty, Lodge, p. 58.

after it was first published, Lodge boasted that it had sold more than 35,000 copies and "was still in demand."[24] Its success would have been proof enough to Lodge that the book's deficiencies were unimportant. He was hardly attracted by the scientific historians quest for facts, because, as he said, "men will...fall asleep over the reasoned catalogue."[25] By his standards, the biography of Hamilton should have been written as good literature, and not as a scholarly monograph.[26] To his friend, Theodore Roosevelt, he remarked that style "is after all the salt that keeps alive the savor of the thoughts we would not willingly have die."[27]

II

Considering that Lodge not only wrote a biography of Hamilton, but also edited Hamilton's papers in their first major collection, it is evident that he did not intend the memory of Federalism to languish. In many respects for him, the papers of the Federalists constituted a secular bible, of which the book of Hamilton was a major part. The Federalists, he said, "When they dealt with elemental questions and fundamental principles, the same yesterday, today, and forever in human history, I follow them because

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[24] Ibid., p. 56.

[25] Henry Cabot Lodge, A Frontier Town and Other Essays (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 92.

[26] See Ibid., pp. 87-91, for Lodge's ideas of good history.

[27] Quoted in Garraty, Lodge, p. 57.

they proved their wisdom by their success."[28] Hamilton was the incarnation of Federalism.[29]

Though Lodge's fulsome praise of the Federalists tends to lessen one's appreciation of him as an historian, he nonetheless had a very clear idea of what the Federalists were about. If one can read Lodge with a degree of tolerance, that is to say without a Jeffersonian animus, his argument that the Federalists were "the National and American party, from 1789 to 1801,"[30] has many elements of plausibility to it.

In his eyes the Revolutionary War had disturbed established political and social patterns, which would have to be replaced with patterns congenial to American needs and tastes. Moreover, the attainment of independence confronted the American people with the momentous question of what direction the future. Would they remain a confederation of "thirteen jarring states," or would they create a nation? In view of the dismal record under the Confederation government,[31] the choice for nationhood was inevitable,

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[28]Lodge, Democracy of the Constitution, p. 86.

[29]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 194.

[30]Lodge, Washington, Vol. II, p. 273; Lodge, Historical and Political Essays (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892), pp. 62-63.

[31]In George Cabot, p. 415, Lodge described the Confederation period as a time when "Independence became turbulence; liberty, license; and freedom, anarchy." In Hamilton, p. 39, Lodge wrote that finance was the rock upon which the Confederation floundered.

that is, if the American people were to enjoy security, peace, and prosperity. Speaking to this point, Lodge said, "The very existence of the colonies as a respectable state demanded union, and brought about the adoption of the Constitution. With this beginning, a national sentiment had to be created, and a nation built up."[32]

In face of bitter opposition,[33] in a country dominated by the feeling of separatism,[34] a minority of Americans, "led by the greatest men in American history,"[35] set about the task of contriving a constitution and devising a more perfect union. These Federalists, who strived for the noblest and best ends ever sought by a party or statesmen, had a threefold object: 1) To build up a nation and national sentiment; 2) to create a strong government; and 3) to devise policies for that government.[36] Together these ends did promote the founding of the nation, and to a very large extent they were the work of Hamilton's genius.[37]

Hamilton's greatness derived not only from his commanding position within the brilliant Federalist party, but

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[32]Lodge, A Short History, p. 520.

[33]Lodge, George Cabot, p. 30.

[34]Lodge, A Short History, p. 520.

[35]Lodge, George Cabot, p. 264.

[36]Ibid., p. 414.

[37]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 199.

also from his policies which gave life and form to the paper system created in the Constitution.[38] Lodge was particularly impressed with the First Report on Public Credit and the Report on Manufactures, judging them both to be among the most important State papers ever written in the United States.[39] They engendered policies which strengthened America materially[40] and improved the nation's standing among the other states of the world.[41] Lodge summarized the results of the reports thusly:

> From these reports came the funding system, the revenue system, the sinking fund, national banking, the currency, and the first enunciation of the protective policy. They carried with them the great doctrine of the implied powers of the constitution, and opened up the important question of internal improvements. So far as public policy could do it, they laid the foundation of the material prosperity of the United States.[42]

These reports alone showed Hamilton's genius for finance and, what was probably even more important to Lodge, Hamilton's concern for the well-being of the nation.

When the details of these brilliant reports are set aside, the great national objects of the Federalists are seen in bold relief. Though the reports aimed at introducing specific measures, Hamilton's major interest was the

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[38] Ibid., pp. 134-135; Lodge, Works, Vol. II, p. 289.

[39] Lodge, Works, Vol. II, p. 289 and Vol. III, p. 198.

[40] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 109.

[41] Ibid., p. 155; Lodge, Works, Vol. II, p. 289.

[42] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 115.

general need to establish a successful, strong, and energetic government which could maintain the union of the states and give the American people a national life.[43] The American people had committed themselves to an experiment in nation-building, and Hamilton intended that that experiment should have every opportunity to succeed. Material development and prosperity along with federal strength were the "pole-stars" of Hamilton's domestic policies. They were objectives which Lodge saw as bold, masterly strokes of statesmanship, thoroughly American and national in purpose.

III

Fortunately for the country, the same spirit of nationality permeated Federalist foreign policy. In the 1790's the majority of Americans remained subject to what Lodge called colonial modes of thought.[44] The Federalist leaders, however, discerned the nation's true interests aside from and in spite of the din and confusion of events in Europe.

The colonists' close ties to Europe were formally abrogated by the Treaty of Paris in 1783, but the ties were severed only in the sense that the colonies now had political

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[43] Ibid., pp. 91, 106, 115, and 121-122; see also Lodge, Works, Vol. II, pp. 289-290.

[44] Lodge, Studies in History, p. 333.

and economic freedom. In thought, the Americans still responded as colonials, by which Lodge meant that they "still felt that our fortunes were inextricably interwoven with those of Europe."[45] Most influenced by European affairs were the Francophile Jeffersonians, who first involved American politics in foreign events; but after 1800, and their fall from power, the Federalists became Anglophiles.[46] The Americans required twenty-five years, until the end of the War of 1812, to liberate their politics from foreign influences.[47] Until 1800, however, the Federalist party, and particularly Hamilton, had been national in outlook.[48] During this nationalist period, they alone pursued policies which sought to eliminate the foreign influence in domestic and foreign affairs.

When war broke out in 1793 between Republican France and the European monarchies, the United States was threatened by an unwanted entanglement in the hostilites. Hamilton, undistracted by other considerations, defined American

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[45] Ibid., p. 337.

[46] Lodge, George Cabot, p. 62; Lodge, Studies in History, p. 341.

[47] Lodge, Studies in History, p. 343; Lodge, Washington, Vol. II, p. 37.

[48] Lodge, Studies in History, pp. 339 and 341.

interests as "continental supremacy" and "complete independence in business, politics, and industry."[49]

These national interests were advanced when Washington, with the support of the Federalists, promulgated the Proclamation of Neutrality. In Lodge's judgment, neutrality was the "true foreign policy" of the United States.[50] It was "the central point of the whole policy of Washington and Hamilton, and was one of the great landmarks established by the Federalists for the guidance of the republic."[51] In effect, Washington's administration had struck a blow at the colonial mode of thinking in the United States and also told Europe that the United States intended to look after its own interests apart from the balance of power or monarchial issues. The government was committed to attending the needs of the people and to mastering a continent.[52] These objectives were the cornerstone of Federalist policy, but the majority of American people were slow to perceive the validity of the Federalist position.

For more than a quarter-century, foreign policy vacillated as the people groped their way toward true independence

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[49]Ibid., p. 339.

[50]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 153; Lodge, Studies in History, p. 338.

[51]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 163.

[52]Lodge, Washington, Vol. II, pp. 147-148. On page 7 of this work, Lodge wrote about Washington that "No man of that time, with the exception of Hamilton, ever grasped and realized as he did the imperial future which stretched before the United States."

from Europe.[53] The Jeffersonians' stubborn "Colonial" attachment to France blinded them to the national interests. When they came to power after 1800, they abandoned neutrality for a policy favoring France. With "marvelous inconsistency," Lodge said, Jefferson wanted no connections with foreign powers, yet at the same time he sought "to aid France and injure England to the utmost extent."[54] The Jeffersonians had failed to realize that the Federalists, before 1800, were not Anglophiles, and that they would maintain neutrality, with force if necessary, against either nation that might infringe upon it.[55]

Moreover, the Jeffersonians failed to comprehend that a strong navy was essential to maintain American neutrality.[56] When Jefferson inaugurated his policy of frugality, the navy, as the pillar supporting strong neutrality, was disastrously reduced to ineffectiveness. In due course, Jefferson's policies "led to the wretched and degraded condition of our country and our politics during the first years of the..." nineteenth-century.[57]

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[53] Ibid., p. 148.

[54] Lodge, George Cabot, p. 460.

[55] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 163. Lodge is too generous to Hamilton here; see Supra, pp. 13-14.

[56] Lodge, George Cabot, pp. 41, 316-317, and 428.

[57] Ibid., p. 65.

In time, the American people found their way to the definition of true national policy, which they announced in the famous Monroe Doctrine. Lodge claimed that "long before the nominal author had thought of it, Hamilton had formulated the Monroe Doctrine."[58] This was Lodge's way of saying that Hamilton had left his mark upon the future course of American foreign policy.[59]

IV

Setting forth Lodge's interpretation of Hamilton's nationalistic policies deals with but one aspect of the biography. Lodge was fully aware that Hamilton and his policies were controversial in the 1790's and after. In his description of the major outlines of Hamilton's statesmanship, Lodge interspersed vindications of the policies which Hamilton pursued.

Whether or not one is willing to accept Lodge's vindications depends upon one's own interpretation of the Revolutionary and Confederation periods, and one's judgment about the extent to which the United States was obliged to aid and support France in her war with the monarchies. If one takes a Jeffersonian tack, then Lodge's interpretation will prove unacceptable.

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[58]Lodge, Studies in History, p. 176.

[59]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 163.

To Lodge, the effect of the Revolutionary War was quite clear. It had nearly destroyed one of the "balance-wheels of society," the wealthy and conservative class. As a consequence of the imbalance, "the new democracy was moving along its destined path, but it had no checks...."[60] There existed an historic necessity during the Confederation period for a conservative class to advance and assume the responsibility of preserving the gains of independence.[61]

The role of conservators was assumed, of course, by the men who became the Federalists. Following Hamilton's leadership, these able men sought to establish an effective national government through a constitution. They wanted to build a nation, strong and secure, which was dedicated to preserving individual liberty and property.

Hamilton had little to do with the actual writing of the Constitution, but his services in bringing the Convention together at Philadelphia were commendable. Commendable, too, were his efforts in behalf of the adoption of the Constitution in the New York state ratifying convention. The Federalist Papers, the product of Hamilton's nationalistic mind, were a masterpiece of American political

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[60]Lodge, Studies in History, pp. 144-145.

[61]Lodge described the Articles of Confederation as being wrong in conception and principle and thus doomed to failure. Frontier Town, p. 155.

literature.[62] Referring to Hamilton's "great" speech of June 18, 1787, at the Constitutional Convention, a speech which had been criticized as a plea for monarchial forms of government, Lodge remarked that Hamilton's proposals differed in only two aspects from the plan which was finally adopted.[63]

Evidently Lodge stressed Hamilton's contributions to the making of the Constitution because of Hamilton's well-known remark to Governeur Morris that the Constitution was a frail and worthless fabric. Addressing himself to the known fact that Hamilton was not satisfied with the Constitution, Lodge said that had Hamilton been anything other than a patriotic man, he would have reviled the document. But Hamilton was a patriot and a man of practical mind, who realized that the Constitution was the best instrument obtainable and that it must be upheld.[64] Elsewhere Lodge pointed out that the Massachusetts Federalists, King, Ames, Parsons, Cabot, and others, held views similar to those of Hamilton about the deficiencies of the Constitution. Moreover, they believed that if it failed of adoption,

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[62]Lodge, Studies in History, p. 344; Hamilton, p. 70; and Democracy of the Constitution, pp. 41-42.

[63]Lodge, Studies in History, p. 142. Lodge wrote here that Hamilton's proposals for "a Senate and President during good behavior, and the appointment of state governors by the central government" were not incorporated into the finished document.

[64]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 64; see footnote 7, supra, p. 117.

the country would face disintegration and ruin.[65] It was an act of statesmanship by Hamilton to accept the document as it was and to utilize the possibilities inherent in it.[66]

By exercising the powers granted in the Constitution, as he did in his financial policy, Hamilton revealed the hidden powers in its "dry clauses, and gave vitality to the lifeless instrument. He drew out the resources of the country, ...he gave courage to the people, he laid the foundations of national government...."[67]

According to Jeffersonian standards, Hamilton's policies were too energetic, too centralizing, and therefore too dangerous to American freedom. Lodge could not admit the validity of these charges.[68] For he, like Hamilton, believed that the problem confronting the nation in the 1780's and 1790's was too much democracy, a condition promoting disunity, disorder, and national weakness. Like Hamilton, he surely believed that the country needed a "more conservative establishment" to check the democratic tendencies of the people.[69] When Lodge discussed Hamilton's political beliefs he could do so with enthusiasm and accord.

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[65]Lodge, George Cabot, p. 29.

[66]Lodge, Hamilton, pp. 64 and 174.

[67]Ibid., p. 135.

[68]Lodge, George Cabot, p. 59.

[69]Ibid., p. 25.

It was true, as many of Hamilton's critics alleged, that he had spoken at the Constitutional Convention in favor of the English form of government. Lodge asserted, however, that all the plans of government brought forth at Philadelphia were similarly based upon the English system, including the plan that became the Constitution. To say in 1787 that the English system was the best model in existence, as Hamilton did, was merely to express a truism.[70] Hamilton was not unique in his attachment to the English model.

Moreover, to say that Hamilton was the head of a monarchical faction, as Jefferson claimed, was chimerical.[71] To be sure, Hamilton was a monarchist in theory; but in practice, he was a republican.[72] He believed that a republic was the only form of government acceptable to the American people.[73] Lodge admitted that Hamilton wanted a republic that was aristocratic, rather than democratic, in character.[74] But Hamilton was no lone wolf, "crying in the wilderness," for many men wanted the same thing.[75] Lodge

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[70]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 60.

[71]Lodge, George Cabot, p. 59.

[72]Lodge, Studies in History, p. 175.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 61; on page 282, Lodge elaborated the features of Hamilton's preferred form of republic; "He believed in class influence and representation, in a strong government, and in what, for a want of a better phrase, may be called an aristocratic republic."

[75]Ibid., p. 130.

disarmed this admission of Hamilton's aristocratic preference by saying that the great Federalist's main concern, however, was less with the form of government and more with the necessity that it should be strong and provide order.[76] "That he ever," Lodge wrote, "seriously believed it desirable or possible to establish a monarchy, and one 'bottomed on corruption,' in the United States, it is preposterous to suppose."[77]

V

The charge that Hamilton was a monarchist easily lent itself to implicating him in a foreign policy which aimed to ally the United States with England. It was not only the Jeffersonians who accused him of Anglophilia, but the Adams wing of the Federalist party as well. Lodge believed the charges to be "absurd" and "baseless."

With heavy-handed irony, Lodge wrote that the very men who called the great Federalist, "British Hamilton," were the men most anxious to ally the country with France.[78] He was referring to the Jeffersonians, who he said were misguided by "colonial ignorance which could not understand the real purpose of neutrality."[79] They could not understand

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[76]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 90 and Studies in History, p. 173.

[77]Lodge, Studies in History, p. 173.

[78]Ibid., p. 339.

[79]Ibid., p. 340.

that Hamilton meant to pursue a policy of neutrality toward all nations.[80] They inculpated Hamilton for "simply and stupidly endeavoring to force us toward England as against France."[81]

Actually Hamilton's purposes during the eventful decade of the 1790's were strictly national. His effort to rid the country of the French treaties was quite consistent with those purposes. The French treaties were a relic of "colonialism" (as Lodge used the word) which ought to be abrogated. By freeing the country from those "entangling bonds" with France, Hamilton sought to provide the country with a position in foreign affairs that was "wholly free and thoroughly national...."[82] Hamilton's support of the unpopular Jay's Treaty was based upon the practical consideration that the choice was one between war with England and subsequent destruction of the union or acceptance of a treaty with obvious defects which might be negotiated later.[83]

The labyrinth of events during the administration of John Adams, when relations with France verged on war, proved a test of Lodge as a pro-Hamilton historian. Probably no

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[80] Ibid., p. 176.

[81] Ibid., p. 340; see supra, pp. 13-14 and infra, p. 139-140.

[82] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 166.

[83] Ibid., p. 180; Lodge, George Cabot, p. 71.

historian found his way through this maze to vindicate Hamilton so well as did Lodge. This should not imply, however, that Lodge was uncritical, even though his interpretation was Federalist ex parte.

Other indictments of Hamilton came from the Adamses, who believed that Hamilton was motivated by ambition and a desire for glory and power and that his ambition induced him to favor a pro-British and hostile policy toward France. Hamilton's opposition to John Adams, his efforts in his own behalf to obtain a command in the provisional army, his interest in Miranda and the Latin American adventure, and his part in bringing ruin to the Federalist party were offered by them as evidence of his self-seeking and ambitious policies. The general substance of their charges was parried by Lodge, and done so in a reasonable manner.

As to Hamilton's efforts to oppose John Adams' candidacy for the Presidency, Lodge contended that in 1796, Hamilton was right to insist that all of the electoral votes the Federalists could muster should be cast alike for Adams and Pinckney. Had his demands been met, Jefferson would not have been elected Vice-President. Hamilton erred, however, when he let it be known that he would be as pleased with Pinckney's election to the Presidency as with Adams'; as an important party leader, Hamilton should have supported Adams, the party choice.[84] Hamilton erred again in 1800

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[84]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 197.

when he wrote his pamphlet defaming the character of President Adams, who was up for re-election. His act was "a piece of passionate folly" which unnecessarily created divisions within the party on the eve of an election. "It was," Lodge wrote, "the work of a man crazed with passion, and bent on revenge."[85] Lodge, who placed a priority on party loyalty [86] must have viewed Hamilton's behavior in this instance with chagrin, although he did not blame Hamilton solely for the disruption of the Federalist party.

In Hamilton's unique and influential relationship with members of Adams' cabinet, Lodge saw no evidence of bad faith to the President or disservice to the nation. Both Adams and Hamilton were impolitic in their behavior with one another because they avoided open and frank consultation. On the other hand, that the secretaries sought Hamilton's advice and acted upon it, was "their affair, not his."[87]

Of more interest than Hamilton's opposition to Adams was his foreign policy after 1797. Here lay much of the grist for the Jefferson and Adams mills.

Hamilton was frank about his dislike of the principles and the course of the French Revolution. By temperament a conservative, Hamilton could only respond to it in a

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[85] Ibid., p. 233.

[86] Schriftgiesser, Lodge, p. 95.

[87] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 234.

way consistent with his nature. He believed that the French were waging war on everything he held dear, which Lodge described as "constitutional liberty, law, order, and society."[88] Despite his personal opposition to French doctrines, he believed that the United States should avoid war with France if possible and that England and France should be treated alike insofar as was possible.[89] Lodge made the point clearly that even though Hamilton felt strongly about France and the Revolution, he was nonetheless guided by the interests of the United States in formulating his policy.

After Adams released the XYZ dispatches in 1798, and the temper of the nation became hostile to France, the Federalist leaders advocated military preparations in the expectation of war. One of their measures called for the creation of a provisional army, which they anticipated would be commanded by Washington assisted by Hamilton. The intrigue which appeared to surround Hamilton's appointment to a command position and which included bringing Adams to acquiesce in Hamilton's appointment, seemed invidious. Hamilton, in the eyes of his critics, appeared in this instance as something like a war lord.

Lodge contended that "whatever his talents for war may have been,... [Hamilton's] ruling passion was that of a

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[88] Ibid., p. 202.

[89] Ibid.

statesman...."[90] Believing this, Lodge could place a most friendly interpretation on Hamilton's connection with Miranda and the Latin American adventure.

Interest in control of adjacent Spanish Terrirory and eviction of the Spanish from their New World possessions was a matter of long-standing concern in Hamilton's mind. It was, Lodge said, "part of that conception of nationality and of national greatness which was the predominating influence in Hamilton's public career."[91] Hamilton realized that should war come, actual contact with the French forces was unlikely. Under these circumstances, he reasoned that the United States could strike France only by striking her ally, Spain. Hamilton, therefore, made plans to seize Florida and the Louisiana territory from Spain, and thereby secure control of the Mississippi Valley.[92] That Hamilton's interest in the Mississippi Valley was a valid national objective was vindicated when Jefferson acquired the Louisiana Territory in 1803.[93]

It was natural for a man of Hamilton's imperial views to be interested in Miranda's scheme, if for no other reason than to be abreast of matters which were of vital interest to the United States.[94] Hamilton had no plans for an

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[90] Ibid., pp. 26 and 138-139.

[91] Ibid., p. 212.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., p. 213.

[94] Ibid., p. 218.

alliance with England except in the event of war with France, in which case an alliance would serve American interests very well.[95] Even though dreams of glory may have been before his mind, his motivations were based on nothing but what would redound to the advantage of the United States. "The theory that his mind teemed with visions of empire and of military power in the Napoleonic fashion...." Lodge wrote, "is due to the heated and hostile mind of Mr. [John] Adams."[96]

In view of Lodge's close friendship with the Adams family, his description of John Adams' treatment of Hamilton was independent and rather severe. Much of Hamilton's censure of Adams in the famous pamphlet, Lodge thought, was indeed justified, although untimely.[97] More interesting were Lodge's sensitivities to Adams' slights of the great Federalist. Lodge's remarks read like a portent of his own sensitivities to the slights of Woodrow Wilson in 1918-1919. Lodge wrote:

> Hamilton was the most powerful leader of the Federalists; he was the most conspicuous and brilliant statesman in the country, and yet the President, the head of the Federalist party, first undertook to ignore him, then slighted his advice and derided him.... Decency, prudence, and self-interest to take no higher motives, dictated an opposite course.[98]

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[95] Ibid., p. 218.

[96] Ibid., pp. 213-214 and Studies in History, p. 177.

[97] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 233.

[98] Ibid., p. 231.

Lodge believed that Hamilton was reasonable and manageable. "All that was required," he wrote, "was tact, full and frank consultation, and the deference to which [Hamilton's] opinions were on every ground entitled."[99]

Lodge could speak against Adams' ability to lead the party and retain harmony, but he could not speak against Adams' policy of peace with France.[100] That policy was in keeping with the true national guidelines laid down during Washington's administrations. He could not condone in all respects the actions of the Federalist party and of Hamilton after 1798. He was forced to offer palliations in their behalf.

Through nothing but ability, Lodge believed, the Federalists as a minority had been able to carry their nationalistic measures in Congress. Their electoral success in 1798 was heady recognition. While a minority, they had been prudent and disciplined. Success now made them "more masterful and overbearing."[101] They jammed through Congress a number of military bills in the summer of 1798, and the Alien and Sedition Laws. These latter bills as first drafted were so severe that Hamilton urged modification.[102] When modified, as they had been by the time of their enactment, Hamilton gave them his support. Lodge made it clear

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[99] Ibid., p. 200. [100] Lodge, George Cabot, p. 196.

[101] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 222. [102] Ibid., pp. 222-223.

that Hamilton's support of them was not unique or sinister. Everyone connected with them--Federalist Congressmen and Senators, the President, the state leaders, and most of the Federalist party of the North--supported them also.[103]

The "one dark blot" in Hamilton's career occurred during the desperate events of 1800. After the election of 1800 in New York, when Burr obtained the votes for the Democrats, Hamilton proposed in vain to Governor John Jay that the presidential electors be chosen by the districts instead of by the incoming Democratic legislature. Lodge called it an attempt at fraud for which Hamilton was culpable. Lodge palliated Hamilton's conduct by saying that it was the consequence of an exaggerated reaction to the French Revolution: Hamilton believed that the party of Jefferson existed for the purpose of destroying the federal government of the United States.[104]

This particular explanation, that Hamilton expected a civil war, Lodge used to explain the great Federalist's behavior until his death in 1804. As the nation settled down to the presidential administration of the democrats, Hamilton became depressed and discouraged by public affairs. By 1802, he had become an alarmist.[105] He expected that at

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[103] Ibid., p. 223.

[104] Ibid., pp. 227-228.

[105] Ibid., pp. 264-265 and 267.

any moment the French principles in the hands of their American advocates would force a show-down with the principles of law and order, and constitutional liberty. The impending "crisis" would perhaps impel the good citizens of America to call him forth as a "saviour of society."[106] After 1800, Hamilton's attitudes, actions, and even his death, were the result of his exaggerated reaction to what Lodge said was the impossible triumph of French principles.[107]

The collapse of the Federalist party paralleled the downfall of Hamilton in one respect. If any one word described the problem of Hamilton or the Federalists, it was excess. The Federalists, after 1798, had too many leaders who were too "unbending and dogmatic."[108] Their "strong and uncurbed wills," their errors and passions brought their premature downfall.[109] Lodge succinctly described the inevitable course of events:

> Ultimately Jeffersonianism must have prevailed, but at the time of its actual triumph it came too soon, and Jefferson's early victory was secured solely by the errors of his opponents.[110]

VI

Lodge made other observations about Hamilton which fell outside the main themes as they were developed in the

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[106] Ibid., p. 270.

[107] Ibid., pp. 270-271.

[108] Lodge, George Cabot, pp. 193-194.

[109] Ibid., p. 264.

[110] Lodge, Studies in History, p. 167.

preceding sections. Though they are fragments, they are relevant and remarkable.

Throughout the biography, Lodge showed respect for Hamilton's intellect and courage. He admitted that Hamilton sometimes acted the part of an American prime minister; but any consideration of the responsibilities of Congress heaped upon him, as Secretary of the Treasury, would help explain the tendency.[111] The tendency to act the prime minister was also natural to Hamilton's temperament. He was not a good manager of men and frequently became imperious and impatient with them. In respect to the ability to manage and manipulate men successfully, Hamilton had to bow to Jefferson as the superior party manager.[112]

Hamilton's strengths and defects sprang from his passions.[113] He was a passionate nationalist, but his intense feeling obscured his understanding of the strong tradition of state loyalty among the American people. His passion against democracy enhanced his leadership among the Federalist party leaders, but made him an ineffective leader of the people. His passions led him to write the untimely pamphlet attacking Adams' character, to ask Governor Jay to participate in an election fraud, and to form his alliance

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[111] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 158.

[112] Ibid., pp. 82 and 278; see also Garraty, Lodge, p. 59.

[113] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 275 and also p. 124.

of passion with Mrs. Reynolds. Lodge said that Hamilton's "moral strength was not always strong enough to rise over and restrain the passions...."[114] Yet, the strength of his passions was the source of his courage, his convictions, and his statesmanship, and his service to the country.

As one would expect of Lodge when comparing Hamilton to Jefferson, Hamilton appeared much the better. "Hamilton," Lodge wrote, "was consistent, strong, masculine, and logical. Jefferson was inconsistent, supple, feminine, and illogical to the last degree."[115] Nevertheless, Lodge conceded that eventually Jefferson and the principles of democracy must triumph in the United States. Hamilton's work was done by 1800, and he had done it well.[116]

VII

It was suggested before that the distinctive feature of Lodge's Alexander Hamilton was its thorough-going Federalism. For nearly three-hundred pages, Lodge fulsomely praised Hamilton and the Federalists. No one but an author thoroughly convinced of the rectitude of his subject could do it without weakness or qualifications undermining his line of interpretation.

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[114]Lodge, Studies in History, p. 180; this is a remark which perhaps reflects the influence of the Adamses.

[115]Ibid., p. 148.

[116]Lodge, Hamilton, p. 280.

This is not to say that Lodge was necessarily correct in his interpretation. He was obviously too Federalist in his views to properly understand and appreciate Jefferson's role during the Early National period. Moreover, Lodge showed little indication of having studied the period independently of the views and roles of the Federalist party. He could not present, what historians profess to admire, a balanced-view of the period.

However, it is tempting to conclude that a balanced-view of Hamilton's part in the history of the period would be poor history, if not impossible history to write. Probably consensus among historians about the conflict between Hamilton and Jefferson is unobtainable. Probably no synthesis of the period can be produced to lead to the balanced-view. Probably each student of the period must be a partisan of one or the other protagonists. The so-called objective facts of the period possess little meaning of relevancy until the student evaluates them, and puts them in a context, as did Hamilton and Jefferson. What historian can state with objectivity the meaning of those facts, whose interpretation of them, Hamilton's or Jefferson's, is right and whose is wrong?

Still, for the historian who likes a show of impartiality in the author or who has a predilection for Jefferson's point of view, Lodge's Hamilton would be unsatisfactory. Assuming that the majority of American historians are

probably Jeffersonian in view, the conclusion follows that Lodge's biography can not be thought a definitive work on Hamilton. In this sense, Lodge was not the masterful biographer which Hamilton's historical reputation so badly needed.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER--A MATERIALISTIC INTERPRETATION

Strongly influenced by the work of Hildreth and Lodge on Hamilton and the Early National period, William Graham Sumner wrote a biography of Alexander Hamilton. At the time he wrote, near the end of the nineteenth-century, Darwinian-Spencerian evolutionism had become a popular and compelling mode of thought in American intellectual and business circles. The new doctrine, in combination with his conservative temperament, caused him to write a biography that praised and criticized Hamilton. Like Hildreth's before him, Sumner's work presented a paradox for the interested student to resolve.

Like chemical elements, Sumner, Darwinism, and Spencerism joined together to form a compound of social thought that at once flowed out of American economic conditions and was expressive of American aspirations and values. Historians -- for example, Henry Steele Commager, Richard Hofstadter, Stow Persons, and Robert Green McCloskey--have demonstrated that Social Darwinism, as advocated by Sumner, was a grand attempt to provide intellectual and moral

justifications for the materialistic sacred cows of American capitalism.

Sumner wrote a large number of political-economic tracts that revealed clearly enough the themes and character of his social thought. Essays such as "The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over," "The Challenge of Facts," and What Social Classes Owe to Each Other, as well as many others, were not abstract explorations into the nature of man's social existence, but were polemics in behalf of the status quo. Historians searched neither far nor deep to learn that Sumner was a cautious, conservative advocate of profit, capital, and competition, and that he opposed reform of the economy, especially by state intervention.

Since any two of his essays, or a dozen of them, tended to reproduce the same fundamental themes, historians generally have felt little compulsion to find how his prejudices were interwoven into the historical record. Furthermore Sumner was more important to them as an historical figure than as an historian.

Though little attention has been given to him as an historian, Sumner wrote a number of histories. They dealt with finance, money, and banking in the United States and three statesmen:[1] Alexander Hamilton, Andrew Jackson, and

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[1]For an extensive bibliography of Sumner's works, see Albert Galloway Keller, ed., The Forgotten Man and Other Essays (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), pp. 499-518; hereafter cited as Sumner, The Forgotten Man.

Robert Morris. These did not represent his most famous works.

Sumner's main interests were current politics, economics, and sociology, as demonstrated by the majority of his essays and his most famous book, Folkways. Sumner conceived of his efforts as the spade work for an eventual opus, the science of society. He was empirical by temperament, suspicious of a priori and speculative approaches to the study of man in society. His understanding of the evolutionary nature of man's social institutions combined with his empiricism led him to view history as a vast reservoir of material essential to the sociologist.[2] Looking back upon his student days at Oxford, he remembered coming to an understanding "that social science must be an induction from history."[3] His essays show that his approach to social issues of his day were frequently historical in character or grounded on historical facts.

His interest in history, particularly in economic and financial subjects, made his choice of Alexander Hamilton for a biography a natural one. Though Sumner's biographer said that the Alexander Hamilton had many defects of

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[2]Albert Galloway Keller, Ed., The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914), p. 411; hereafter cited as Sumner, The Challenge of Facts.

[3]Albert Galloway Keller and Maurice R. Davie, eds., Essays of William Graham Sumner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914), Vol. II, p. 8; hereafter cited as Sumner, Essays.

style, which suggest that perhaps Sumner was writing for the market rather than the critics, the book was judged in the early 1920's by one historian, Samuel E. Morison, to be "the best life of Hamilton that has ever been published ...."[4] At least in certain academic circles, Sumner's Hamilton was an important work.

II

Sumner was very much a man of his day; perhaps not a typical man, but a man whose achievements and success represented the fulfillment of the kind of dreams a majority of Americans held in the latter nineteenth-century. From an obscure beginning as the son of an English immigrant worker, Sumner rose by hard work, determination, and some good fortune to become a nationally known professor at Yale. His life had many of the elements of an Horatio Alger success story.

His ancestors on both sides were Englishmen. The Sumners were either farmers or textile workers, who lived in a small village situated near the Darwin River in Lancashire. In 1836, Thomas Sumner, an ambitious young man eager to better his lot in life, immigrated to Patterson, New Jersey, where in 1840, his son, William Graham, was born. It is an interesting coincidence that Sumner's life

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[4]Harris Elwood Starr, William Graham Sumner (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925), p. 307; hereafter cited as Starr, Sumner.

should be entwined with two place names that were so relevant to his intellectual convictions.

Thomas Sumner evidently exerted considerable influence in the molding of his son's life-long convictions and attitudes.[5] It appears that the boy absorbed from the father a system of values that emphasized hard work, thrift, and self-denial. The father's struggle to make a living apparently impressed the boy with inchoate ideas that life was severe and niggard. His simple, honest, uncomplaining, unaided effort to provide for his family furnished the boy, in later life, with a model of the kind of qualities necessary to a man just to survive. From this source it appears that Sumner obtained the rudiments of his practical, utilitarian, materialistic philosophy.

Other influences had acted upon the young man's mind. He reminisced that Harriet Martineau's "Illustrations of Political Economy" had done much to shape his "conceptions of capital, labor, money, and trade."[6] He meant that Martineau's works were one source of his laissez-faire, hard-money, anti-union, and free trade convictions.

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[5]Starr, Sumner, pp. 16-18; Stow Persons, ed., Social Darwinism, Selected Essays of William Graham Sumner (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 1; Robert Green McCloskey, American Conservatism in The Age of Enterprise, 1865-1910 ("Harper Torchbook"; New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 32-33; Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought ("Beacon Book"; Boston: The Beacon Press, Inc., 1955), p. 52.

[6]Sumner, The Challenge of Facts, p. 5; Persons, p. 1.

But it is also evident that these ideas were part of Thomas Sumner's economic lexicon,[7] and it would seem that Sumner's reading at this stage of his life merely reinforced what he had already learned from his unschooled father.

The home-learned lessons served young Sumner well. His determination to learn, combined with his father's financial sacrifice and his pastor's encouragement, enabled him to attend Yale College, in preparation for the ministry, and to graduate in 1863 with high honors. At Yale, he displayed a single-minded determination to learn, at the exclusion of amusement and sociability. His friendship with a fellow Yale student, William C. Whitney, proved a piece of good luck. When Sumner decided to study theology abroad, Whitney persuaded his brother, Henry C. Whitney, to lend Sumner money to pay his expenses while he studied first at Geneva, then Göttingen, and finally Oxford. The Whitneys also provided the money to buy him a substitute when he was drafted to serve in the Union armies.

In 1867, the Yale College faculty elected Sumner to serve as a tutor. When he joined the staff, he began his long association with Yale which lasted until 1909. His tenure there was interrupted only by a ministry in Episcopal Churches in New York and New Jersey from 1869 to 1872. When he returned to Yale as Professor of Political and

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[7]Starr, Sumner, pp. 17 and 22; Hofstadter, pp. 52-53.

Social Science, the change represented a reconciliation of his profession with his life-long interests in the secular world.

That professorship provided him with the time, the resources, and the environment to study and write. Increasingly through the years, his major concern became one of developing a science of society.[8]

It had to be a science, rather than a philosophy, of society because he believed that only science widened "our knowledge of the earth" and thereby increased "our power to interpose in the play of forces of nature and modify it to suit our purposes and preferences."[9] A bit of his point of view was manifested in his belief that all the sciences were related because each investigated a particular aspect of the struggle for existence. The purpose of scientific investigation was to determine the laws which governed the world and by which men were limited in their efforts to make a better world.[10]

Influenced by his own background and by the gigantic economic strides of the latter nineteenth-century, Sumner emphasized economic laws, or forces, as the "more primitive,

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[8]Starr, Sumner, p. 287.

[9]Sumner, Essays, Vol. I, p. 175.

[10]Maurice R. Davie, William Graham Sumner (New York: Thomas R. Crowell, 1963), p. 23.

original, and universal."[11] His economic determinism was well demonstrated by his conviction that the industrial organization--the particular system which men developed to extract their living from nature--exerted a pervasive influence upon society. He wrote:

> It controls us all, because we are all in it. It creates the conditions of our existence, sets the limits of our social activity, regulates the bonds of our social relations, determines our conceptions of good and evil, suggests our life-philosophy, molds our inherited political institutions, and reforms the oldest and toughest customs....[12]

His study of economics led him to postulate a truth or two about the way in which men could best harmonize with the deterministic forces and aid themselves as well.[13] Civilization was an advance of man's ability to wrest a living from nature. The best index by which to measure this advance was the capital accumulated by a particular society. A view such as this made it easy for him to say that the industrious, prudent, and temperate "savings bank depositor is a hero of civilization."[14] Capital accumulation was also an engine of progress because it enabled man to gain a step in the struggle with nature.[15] Capital, to be effective however, had to be in the hands of the few, who

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[11]Sumner, The Challenge of Facts, p. 30.

[12]Sumner, Essays, Vol. I, p. 93.

[13]McCloskey, p. 48; Davie, pp. 16-17.

[14]Sumner, Essays, Vol. II, p. 22.

[15]Ibid., p. 18.

accumulated it through a process of natural selection.[16] Moreover, capital had to be protected as property, for "if capital were not property it would not do its work in industry."[17] Continuing the theme, Sumner wrote, "If we negative or destroy property we arrest the whole life of civilized society and put men back on the level of beasts."[18]

Deterministic as his convictions were, they were qualified by his belief in the evolutionary character of life and institutions. He believed that the system had changed before and would change again.[19] But men could do little themselves to alter the organization; they must adapt themselves to the emerging conditions.

These notions about what men could and could not do were the basis of his particular definition of laissez-faire. The term usually connotes a "let alone" philosophy which justifies men's competition and struggle with one another and nature. It enjoins them to seek their fortunes without tender regard for moral or social scruples. His definition of the term gave it a unique turn, without altering its traditional meaning. He defined it to mean:

> Do not meddle; wait and observe. Do not regulate; study. Do not give orders; be teachable. Do not enter upon any rash experiments; be patient until you see how it will work out.[20]

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[16] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[17] Ibid., p. 129.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., p. 124.

[20] Ibid., p. 472.

The term as he would use it was a warning, not an injunction. The appeal to laissez-faire was his way of insisting that "reforms must be historical, not speculative" and that reforms "must be founded in the genius and history of the country."[21]

In matters of social or political action requiring judgment, he used a materialistic criterion. His biographer caricatured this aspect of his thought by saying, "It was characteristic of Sumner...always to see the relation of an object or condition to the practical interests of the individual, however remote and forgotten, and generally to the pocketbook of the individual."[22]

The term, materialism, as it is applied here to Sumner and his thought, is meant to imply more than a mere concern with the pocketbook. It is meant to be an encompassing term that includes 1) Sumner's preoccupation with economic forces as the mainsprings of society, institutions, thought, and values; 2) his preference for the facts of science as opposed to the speculative or idealistic systems of thought; 3) his preoccupation with the world and society as it was, rather than as it ought to be; and 4) his resignation to the limits imposed on man by the hard realities of nature and life itself. The world was a tough, old place

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[21]Sumner, The Forgotten Man, p. 364.

[22]Starr, Sumner, p. 525.

of bread and butter matters. It required that men learn to discipline themselves in order to survive.

III

Sumner was too much the advocate of his own convictions to treat history objectively. His moralizing approach to it was revealed in his words that "one of the chief results of our historical studies is to show the repeated and accumulated faults and errors of men in the past."[23] Historians have noted that Sumner's materialism was the basis of a secular ethics for him, and by this system men, ideas, and institutions were judged, with an almost religious-like intensity.[24]

This critical approach to history was characteristic of his Alexander Hamilton. The opening remarks in the biography disclose that his foremost concern was to "show how and in what sense, Alexander Hamilton was one of the makers of this American State."[25] As Sumner's analysis materializes, it becomes clear that Hamilton is being measured against the principles of a materialistic conception of society and that the judgments of his statecraft go for or against him according to the degree to which he conformed to those principles.

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[23]Sumner, Essays, Vol. II, p. 358.

[24]Hofstadter, pp. 52-54; McCloskey, pp. 36-37.

[25]William Graham Sumner, Alexander Hamilton (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1890), p. iii; hereafter cited as Sumner, Hamilton.

IV

The first part of the Hamilton portrayed and discussed American society before 1789. It is necessary to describe Sumner's account of this period, because it was the stage on which Hamilton entered to play his role as a statesman.

The American Revolution erupted out of the incongruities inherent in the relationship between England and the colonies. North America offered abundant lands for development and exploitation; but the colonies did not have the freedom to develop them because of the plunderous and restrictive imperial policy of mercantilism.[26] As soon as independence was feasible for the colonists, it was necessary that they should have it.[27] The revolutionary ferment, though right in ultimate purpose, brought about a social condition bordering on anarchy. All the old ideas, restraints, and traditions were thrown aside for the moment; society became confused and disorderly as mob rule and violence overwhelmed legal and political institutions. Property was destroyed. Tories were senselessly harassed, and their civil rights flagrantly ignored. Courts were suspended, and "debtors found license." "It was a welcome experience to a great many people," Sumner wrote, "that one could refuse to pay debts, and thereby win popularity and a

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[26]Sumner, The Challenge of Facts, p. 324.

[27]Ibid.; Sumner, Hamilton, pp. 21-22 and 29.

reputation for patriotism."[28] Events in these pre-war years were conducive to a spirit of "lawlessness and recklessness" within the population, and given American conditions, this spirit needed no encouragement.[29]

The war itself expanded these "sordid" aspects of social disorganization, and pointed up other shortcomings in public administration. Government under the Continental Congress was "unbusinesslike, wasteful, and inefficient." As an example of its defiencies, he described the Continental Army's want of materials and necessities, while goods bought and paid for by Continental agents in Europe lay unuseable in foreign warehouses.[30] At the same time, the colonies had abundant resources useful to the war effort which went untapped because the Congress would not impose any war taxes.[31] He described public affairs during the war as being characterized by "indolence, negligence, lack of administrative energy and capacity, dislike of any methodical business-like systems, and carelessness as to money responsibility and credit."[32]

The same characteristics and the problems they created continued into the post-war years to plague the Confederation government. In the course of the decade of the

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[28] Ibid., p. 40.

[29] Ibid., p. 51.

[30] Ibid., p. 91.

[31] Ibid., pp. 87-88.

[32] Ibid., p. 101.

'eighties, the anarchical inclinations of the people took on the more concrete form of a party, composed of northern and southern debtors, and others who were advocates of what Sumner called anarchistic liberty. This party, which appeared in 1788 as the anti-Federalists, was opposed to any effective national government, especially to one that should levy taxes, enforce discipline and responsibility among the people, especially in regards to contracts and debt payments, and that should balance rights with obligations.[33]

Facing these problems, Sumner used the words of a prophet who has the advantage of hindsight to anticipate the role of Hamilton:

> Every great social movement inevitably presents a mixture of noble and sordid elements. Its methods are very often impure, and its watchwords are very sure to be half-truths. When the crisis is over, however, and the days of orderly growth come again, the sordid element must be eliminated, the methods of agitation must be laid aside, the rhetoric and declamation must be toned down, and the half-truths must be dissolved.[34]

The party of orderly growth became the Federalist party, made up of men of "wider information and superior training."

The Federalists were conservatives in the sense that tradition and experience guided their course in public affairs. It followed that they should be the ones to take the English political heritage of America, modify it and

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[33]Sumner, The Forgotten Man, pp. 286-287.

[34]Sumner, Hamilton, p. 11.

adapt it to American needs. Their major concern was to establish civil liberty in the country--liberty under law--in the place of the anarchistic liberty of the anti-Federalists.[35] Clearly he set forth the Federalists as a counter-revolutionary force.[36]

The foregoing discussion provides the context for the key elements in Sumner's analysis of Hamilton. First, he believed that "the Union was from the start at war with the turbulent, anarchist elements which the Revolution set loose"; second, he said that "the contest with anarchy and repudiation was the great work which went to the making of this nation at the end of the last century, and Alexander Hamilton was one of the leading heroes of it."[37] According to Sumner, the new nation needed specifically "energy in the administration, discipline in the army, cohesion...[in] the Union, [and] punctuality...[in] the finances."[38]

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[35]Sumner, The Forgotten Man, p. 228; see page 26 of this work for Sumner's definition of civil liberty.

[36]Justification for this statement is found in Sumner, Essays, Vol. II, pp. 349-350, where he wrote: "The Constitution-makers were under an especial dread of democracy, which they identified with the anarchism of the period 1783-1787. They therefore established by the Constitution a set of institutions which are restrictions of democracy....Now the whole genius of this country has been democratic....Down through our history, therefore, the democratic temper of the people has been at war with the Constitutional institutions."

[37]Sumner, Hamilton, p. 13.

[38]Ibid., p. 102.

In the main, he credited Hamilton with meeting these needs and checking the anarchistic tendencies of the people. Public credit was established, and a fiscal system was devised. Vigor was infused into the federal government's administration of public affairs. The Union was sustained and federal power was effectively maintained against the states. And perhaps just as important in his estimation, Hamilton was an effective agent for awhile in contesting the democratic fictions of majoritarianism and equalitarianism. Throughout his public career, Hamilton displayed continually an "indefatigable energy" and accepted responsibility for his actions and opinions.[39]

V

Sumner said that Hamilton was a good statesman, but not so good as a financier.[40] At first reading, the remark does not seem perplexing or paradoxical, but as the analysis develops, one of the puzzling aspects becomes his criticisms of the Secretary of Treasury's fiscal principles and policies and the statesman's statecraft. If Hamilton's fiscal and economic reports were wrong in many respects, as Sumner said they were, and if his political methods undid all of his great measures, as Sumner said they did,

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[39]This paragraph is a collation of Sumner's views of Hamilton found mainly in Hamilton, pp. 104, 114, 133, 213, 227, and 228.

[40]Ibid., pp. iv and 150; Sumner, Essays, Vol. I, p. xiii.

Hamilton's contributions to the founding of the nation were of a peculiar order. Yet this is the dilemma that Sumner's biography creates.

Most historians would not make any distinction between Hamilton's statesmanship and his reports. In fact they believe that Hamilton's reputation, for better or for worse, is based upon the policies which he expounded in the reports and then implemented in public life. Sumner, however, did make the distinction.

His treatment of Hamilton's scheme for the National Bank is illustrative of this ambivalence in his analysis. The Bank, he said, was a "paper-money machine," founded on "financial fallacies" which Hamilton never overcame.[41] Undoubtedly the country needed banking facilities, but the people were taking care of their needs, Sumner thought. Hamilton's Bank "was not essential to the work of the Federal government" and the justification for it was based upon the conveniences anticipated from its services, which was an unsound reason for legislation.[42] Moreover, the way in which the federal government subscribed for Bank stock by giving its note established a precedent in the public's mind that private banks could be founded by private citizens in the same manner. Hamilton's procedure in this instance

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[41] Sumner, Hamilton, p. 114.

[42] Ibid., pp. 162-163.

"planted the seeds of wild-cat banking" which "cursed" the nation for years and gave rise to the Bank War during Jackson's administration.[43] In creating the Bank, Hamilton deliberately intended to interweave "the interests of wealthy men with those of government."[44] Elsewhere Sumner said that Hamilton outgrew this policy of marrying wealth to the government.[45] But in the plans for the Bank, Hamilton's concern for the wealthy and their support came near to creating a plutocracy,[46] which was to Sumner "the most sordid and debasing form of political energy known to us."[47] Despite these strictures, he said the statesmanship of Hamilton's Bank was grand.[48]

Hamilton's policy for restoring public credit was handled less severely by Sumner, although the same ambivalence obtained. The federal government was obliged to restore the nation's credit; the public interest required it.[49] He thought Hamilton's provisions for the funding of the national and foreign debts were sufficient to the purpose.

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[43] Ibid., pp. 163-164.

[44] Ibid., p. 163.

[45] Ibid., p. 110.

[46] Sumner, The Forgotten Man, p. 296.

[47] Sumner, Essays, Vol. II, p. 225.

[48] Sumner, Hamilton, p. 114.

[49] Ibid., pp. 13 and 40.

Assumption of the state debts, however, was not a matter of "financial rectitude," but of "political expediency" and a doubtful one at that. Assumption kindled unnecessary political turmoil and division. The state debts could just as well have been left in the hands of the states.[50]

Scattered throughout the funding and assumption plans were some of Hamilton's fallacious notions about capital. Hamilton had offered as one justification for his fiscal policy the idea that the new government bonds would serve as capital, actually new capital, which was badly needed to develop the American economy. Sumner argued knowledgeably that the bonds were not capital,[51] but instead represented merely a transfer of money from the tax payers to the bondholders. Despite his approval of Hamilton's efforts to restore national honor and credit, his criticisms raise doubts about the Secretary of Treasury's financial wizardry.

Sumner reviewed the remaining reports and found them based upon fallacious principles as were the others. The Report on Manufactures set forth a series of general proposals which met no needs or problems of the federal government; in fact, Hamilton was proposing policy in an area which was not government's proper concern.[52] Sumner objected

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[50] Ibid., p. 154, also p. 157.

[51] Ibid., pp. 153-154.

[52] Ibid., p. 154.

to the proposal that government intervention in the economy was necessary to build-up American industry. Intervention worked against the economic law that an economy should develop freely and naturally. Elsewhere, Sumner said that non-interference was the highest political wisdom.[53] He would not approve the principles laid down in the Report on Manufactures because they were mercantilistic, and they disavowed free-trade and invoked protectionism.[54]

Sumner likewise rejected the bimetallism proposed in Hamilton's Report on the Mint.[55] He thought the measure would undermine the stability of the currency that only a gold standard could bring about. Even the excise tax, which led to the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania, he thought a doubtful measure, although he approved of the federal government's display of force to put down the uprising.[56]

Sumner's criticisms of the principles or measures contained in Hamilton's reports undermined Hamilton's reputation as an exceptional Secretary of the Treasury and a financial genius. He avoided stating the conclusions to which the logic of his criticisms seemingly lead. Probably

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[53]William Graham Sumner, Andrew Jackson (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1910), p. 55.

[54]Sumner, Hamilton, pp. 173-181.

[55]Ibid., p. 171.

[56]Ibid., pp. 198-199.

Hamilton escaped censure because he valued Hamilton less as a financier, or even as a statesman, but more as a counterforce to democracy.

Of course, one can accept the distinction as Sumner made it and believe that Hamilton was a statesman, not a financier. That would be a satisfactory solution to the dilemma that he created. However, he also criticized Hamilton's statecraft.

The context in which Sumner's criticisms have meaning is provided in his concept of the evolution of American culture. According to him, the abundance of land and the few people there to exploit it--the man-land ratio--was a deterministic factor making democracy inevitable.

> In a new country [he wrote] ...with unlimited land, the substantial equality of the people in property, culture, and social position is inevitable. Political equality follows naturally. Democracy is given in the circumstances of the case....[57]

He also said that "we are not free and equal because Jefferson put it into the Declaration of Independence...but... because the economic relations existing in America made the members of society to all intents and purposes free and equal."[58] Democracy was one of the mores which evolved from the material conditions in America.

Though some features of democracy, notably majoritarianism and equalitarianism, were bad, democracy, Sumner

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[57]Sumner, The Forgotten Man, pp. 291-292.

[58]Sumner, Essays, Vol. I, pp. 458-459.

said, "has sometimes been good."[59] He had in mind that democracy was beneficial because it gave rise to loose and simple institutions, which in turn gave free-play to social competition.[60] Democracy in America, he said, showed:

> ...what the power of personal liberty is--what self-reliance, energy, enterprise, hard sense men can develop when they have room and liberty and when they are emancipated from the burdens of traditions and faiths which are nothing but the accumulated follies of and blunders of a hundred generations of statesmen.[61]

In a qualified way, he believed in certain features of Jeffersonian democracy, as the quotation above suggests.[62] He admired the Democracy most when it advocated a platform of hard-money, free-trade, the non-interference theory of government, and no special legislation.[63]

But if certain features of democracy were satisfactory to Sumner, others were not. To most men, he argued, equality, more often than not, meant equality of material things, money and goods.[64] Personal liberty meant the opposite of equality, because it allowed men to develop their qualities to the best of their abilities, and this meant

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[59] Ibid., p. 351.

[60] Sumner, The Challenge of Facts, p. 274.

[61] Sumner, Essays, Vol. II, p. 141.

[62] Persons, p. 8, also observed this tendency in Sumner's thought; however, McCloskey, p. 169, argues against it.

[63] Sumner, Andrew Jackson, p. 438.

[64] Sumner, Essays, Vol. II, pp. 422-423.

that inequalities in wealth would exist.[65] By its very nature, equalitarianism threatened personal liberty because of its appeal to large numbers of men. Equality, through the device of majoritarianism, could become the ruling principle of the state: majoritarianism could create a government as absolutistic as that of any king of old.[66]

The proper check to such dogmas as equality and popular sovereignty was a republican form of government.[67] It was founded on the principle that civil liberty, that is, liberty under law, and not equality, was the first objective. A republic permitted self-government through regular participation in public life. Most important of all, it protected the individual because it prevented the state from becoming the tool of numerical majorities. Sumner touted a republic because, as he said, it gave "guarantees of law that a man shall not be interfered with while using his own powers for his own welfare."[68]

It is clear that he wanted a democratic-republic, which is to say an amalgam of the two systems. He wanted democracy because it afforded opportunities for certain of his convictions to have free-play as operating principles. At the same time pure democracy represented a threat to his

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[65] Ibid., pp. 124-125.

[66] Starr, Sumner, p. 252.

[67] Sumner, The Challenge of Facts, pp. 226-227.

[68] Ibid., p. 26.

particular definition of democracy, and therefore made a republican form of government as a balance or check to democracy, imperative. So much "democracy," as defined by Sumner, was inevitable in American government, because it was inherent in American conditions.[69] Any statecraft would fail which did not take this fact into account.

As shown in Section III above, Sumner believed that democracy was raging through the country and threatening to undermine civil liberty. Hamilton and the Federalists endeavored to discipline democracy and to provide the country with peace, order, and stability--the proper context for civil liberty.

Unfortunately for Federalist policies, Hamilton "provoked antagonism of every kind, sectional, personal, and factional."[70] He never understood that government in the United States should assume a democratic-republican form.[71] He pushed his policies too hard, too fast, and too much against the genius and temper of the people.[72] He should have acknowledged public opinion and maintained "sympathy with the invincible forces which predominated in

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[69] Ibid., pp. 244 and 273.

[70] Sumner, Hamilton, p. 184.

[71] Ibid., p. 244.

[72] Sumner made this point time and time again; see Ibid., pp. 123, 178, 190, 229-230, 232-233, 239, 241, and 245.

it, so that he could cooperate with them."[73] Because he did not, the policies for which he labored suffered "shipwreck."[74] Sumner described the nature of Hamilton's failure in these dramatic words:

> ...the men, the parties, the theories which oppose themselves to this [democratic] tendency are swept down like seeds before the flood. It is idle to ask whether it is a good tendency. It is a fact--a fact whose causes arise from the deepest and broadest social and economic circumstances of the country.[75]

Hamilton's failure in statecraft was marked by the triumph of Jefferson in 1800.

Jefferson's election also marked the triumph of the democratic tendencies of the country, a triumph which went unchecked throughout the nineteenth century.[76] Sumner explained the success of the Jeffersonian party as the result of their conforming "to the genius of the country and ...[bearing it] along the true destinies...."[77] They came to power and held it because they carried on their program "in phrases," he said, "borrowed from the old pet doctrines

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[73]Ibid., p. 241 and The Challenge of Facts, p. 392.

[74]Sumner, Hamilton, p. 102 and The Challenge of Facts, pp. 244, 256, and 396-397.

[75]Sumner, The Forgotten Man, pp. 364-365. That Sumner thought Hamilton had failed is evidenced by his remark that Hamilton had brought catastrophe upon his own political theories and enterprises; see Hamilton, p. 178.

[76]Sumner, The Forgotten Man, p. 300.

[77]Sumner, Essays, Vol. II, p. 142.

of relaxation and undiscipline."[78] Even though he approved of the Jeffersonians conforming to the democratic destiny of the nation, he could not accept Jefferson or his successors as statemen or leaders.

Jefferson, he thought, was a theoretical philosopher, and Jackson was undisciplined and unreflective.[79] Both men paid too much regard to the dogmas of popular sovereignty and equality. For this reason, there was a need in the early decades of the republic for a conservative party which could uphold constitutional government against democracy. The Whigs had an opportunity to prevent the careless development of the country's political institutions, but they failed for the same reasons that Hamilton and the Federalists failed. The Whigs also isolated themselves from the democratic tendencies of the country.[80]

In 1880, in an address before the Kent Club of the Yale Law School, Sumner asserted that "the path of reform lies in the direction of stronger constitutional guarantees and greater reverence for law as law." This statement suggests that he would have democracy "disciplined." Moreover, that a conservative party should exist for that purpose was suggested by these remarks in the same address:

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[78] Ibid., p. 344.

[79] Sumner, The Forgotten Man, p. 298 and Jackson, pp. 324-325.

[80] Sumner, The Forgotten Man, p. 357.

> Any conservative party which fulfills its function in this country will have to take its stand on that platform [as quoted above]. Its reforms must be historical, not speculative.[81]

Weighing the meaning of Sumner's criticism of Hamilton's statecraft, and that of the Federalists as well, it is evident that Hamilton failed to make the necessary reforms prevail. And the work which the Federalists first set out to do, remained to be done by some later conservative party. Again, if Hamilton's statesmanship amounted to failure in imposing the needed reforms, his contributions as a statesmen were of a peculiar order.

VI

The area in which the efforts of the Federalists showed greater success was foreign policy. Sumner believed that it "commands far more unqualified praise than their domestic policy."[82] To Hamilton, he gave full credit for devising and advocating the policies of national independence and neutrality; they were the "purest commonplaces of national policies."[83] His praise, however, was confined to the years before 1798. From 1798 and after, the Federalists lost sight of the country's best interests as they sought their own party ends.

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[81] Ibid., p. 364.

[82] Sumner, Hamilton, p. 223.

[83] Ibid.

During the administrations of President Washington, the relations of the United States with the European states had been most difficult and troubled. Independence had not solved America's problems and probably had intensified them; it was unfortunate that foreign affairs predominated and interfered with domestic affairs, particularly since they gave rise to internal party divisions.[84] Difficult as were those times, the true course of the nation was patently clear: It had "to maintain neutrality, defend its rights, preserve peace, and grow in strength."[85] In general these objectives were obtained by Jay's Treaty and Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality.

Hamilton's contributions to these achievements in foreign policy were considerable, Sumner thought.[86] Hamilton argued and worked against the identification of American interests with the course of the French and their revolution; and he did so at a time when the "anarchistic elements" of the country were gaining strength and renewed enthusiasm for France.[87] Moreover, he sought to educate his countrymen to the fallacies of gratitude as the basis for American policy toward France.[88]

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[84] Ibid., p. 208.

[85] Ibid., p. 223.

[86] Ibid., pp. 211 and 223.

[87] Ibid., p. 208.

[88] Ibid., pp. 211-213.

When Hamilton pressed for "peace and trade with all nations" as a justification for ratifying Jay's treaty, Sumner agreed whole-heartedly; he thought so mainly because commercial warfare, as advocated by the Jeffersonians, would work to the nation's disadvantage.[89] The Camillus Letters, written by Hamilton to urge approval of the treaty, were judged by Sumner to be "the best which...[Hamilton] ever wrote...."[90]

Throughout this troubled time, Hamilton proceeded to meet each problem and to guide foreign policy. Sumner was impressed:

> [Hamilton, he wrote,] sought a device to meet the exigency, and having seized upon the cardinal idea of what he thought would meet the purpose, he filled it out in its details, and proceeded to prepare the auxiliary measures, which would present themselves in carrying it to a successful result.[91]

Indeed, Hamilton's conduct exemplified energy and vigor in government.

The treaty with Britain did not improve America's relations with France. Before long the two countries were near to undeclared war with one another. Ill-will in the United States toward France brought extreme reactions on the part of the Federalists; party spirit soon overwhelmed them and the Jeffersonians. In consequence of these tense

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[89] Ibid., pp. 4, 62-69, and 216.

[90] Ibid., p. 216.

[91] Ibid., p. 214.

circumstances, Hamilton's statecraft changed character. For the Federalists, the chain of events beginning in 1798 ended in catastrophe in 1800 with the election of Jefferson and the disintegration of their party. Hamilton's part in the Federalist debacle was rather vaguely dealt with by Sumner; but he did make clear that the Federalists took advantage of the turmoil to push "high spirited measures." They became "stubborn" and "pertinacious," isolated from public opinion, and removed from the "ruling forces of American life."[92] Decline for the Federalists was inevitable under the circumstances.

Sumner's interpretation of Hamilton's conduct during the years after 1798 was free from any suspicious or sinister implications. He believed the charge that Hamilton intended to use the provisional army for domestic purposes lacked proof.[93] He thought that Hamilton's administration of military affairs had produced many needed reforms; for example, his plans of organization, recruitment, and finances, and his plan to prevent desertion. His energy in this capacity was "indefatigable." As a kind of emphatic afterthought, Sumner said that Hamilton's talents were desperately needed during the War of 1812.[94] The Miranda project,

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[92] Ibid., p. 233.

[93] Ibid., p. 226.

[94] Ibid., p. 229.

which seemed so sinister in the eyes of other historians, was handled rather matter-of-factly by Sumner. When discussing Hamilton's interest in Spanish territory in the old southwest, he said that he "had the interests of the United States in that quarter distinctly before his mind."[95]

By 1800, Hamilton had become closely identified with the program of the war Federalists led by Timothy Pickering, Fisher Ames, and others. His opposition to John Adams and his obstructionist efforts to delay the peace mission to France were impolitic. Peace, was, Sumner believed, in the best interests of the country.[96] By his untimely attacks on Adams in the election year, 1800, Hamilton precipitated the crisis in the Federalist party which brought its ruin and destroyed his base of leadership and influence in national affairs.[97]

VII

Sumner's biography of Hamilton is paradoxical in character because Hamilton proved difficult for Sumner to handle. Sumner was an anti-Hamiltonian in terms of most of his convictions. Since he had studied and written numerous economic works, his views were rather well-defined. He was opposed to protectionism and special legislation, distrustful of central power, and favorable to hard money. Besides

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[95] Ibid., pp. 225-226.

[96] Ibid., p. 237.

[97] Ibid., p. 238.

these convictions, he had formulated rather definite concepts of the nature of social evolution. Lasting effect upon social development, he believed, required statesmen who could reconcile their aims and measures to the forces, or laws, of life. Moreover, his concept of statecraft under evolutionary conditions required a sensitivity to and knowledge of the compelling forces, both qualities which Hamilton did not have.

In these two respects, Hamilton rated low by Sumner's standards. Hamilton advocated economic policies which Sumner could not countenance; and his statesmanship did not respond to the deterministic forces operative in the social development of America. In these two respects, Sumner's biography ought to be considered anti-Hamiltonian.

In a third respect, however, Sumner was sympathetic to Hamilton. Sumner was himself a conservative, socially and politically. To him, Hamilton and the Federalists represented government by the best people. They represented a counter-balance, a desirable check, to the undisciplined democratic tendencies of the people, albeit an ultimately ineffective check. They were symbols of discipline, responsibility, and realism in politics. In his eyes, the Federalists had done battle with the anarchy of the post-Revolutionary era and had endeavored to deal with the real exigencies of the new nation.

It is fair to say that the biography is too critical to be thought pro-Hamilton. Any Jeffersonian or Hamiltonian can find considerable material by which to discredit Hamilton's statesmanship, and thus his claim upon America's gratitude. Yet, Sumner was temperamentally pro-Hamilton. Insofar as he is concerned, the paradox can be resolved by saving that Sumner wanted certain Jeffersonian ends by what ought to have been Hamiltonian means.

Though Sumner's ambivalence may be resolved, the solution does not improve Hamilton's historical reputation. With friends like Sumner, Hamilton needed no enemies. For in the final analysis, Sumner's biography must lead to the conclusion that Hamilton's fiscal measures were ill-predicated, and his statesmanship, a failure. Little is left, except personal qualities, with which to found Hamilton's reputation.

CHAPTER VII

HAMILTON AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY

The interpretations presented in this paper represent the major developments in Hamiltonian scholarship of the last half of the nineteenth-century. It was not until this period that historians began to apply serious efforts to Hamilton as a subject for their books.[1] When they did make the effort, they began what has proved to be a continuing diversity of views among historians about Hamilton, his statecraft, and his place in the history of the Early National period.

Some students of history say that the great man as a symbol often gets in the way of understanding the man himself. In the case of the historians in this paper, it is only at the level of symbols that any consensus among them about Hamilton takes place. At the general level, Hamilton emerges from their pages as a symbol of nationalism, of conservatism, of consolidation, and of energy in government. These symbols represent the nineteenth-century's legacy to the twentieth. They have become so

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[1]For an interesting account of the factors which kept Hamilton from his place in American historical literature until mid-century, see Lynn Hudson Parsons, "The Hamiltonian Tradition in the United States, 1804-1912," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, The Johns Hopkins University, 1967), pp. 1-129.

much a part of the traditional view of Hamilton, that they are treated as indisputable facts in the textbooks, although some twenieth-century historians are trying to qualify them.[2]

In many respects, these symbols reflected the latter half of the nineteenth-century, the era in which these historians lived and wrote. The fact that the nation had first been threatened, then saved from division by civil war, encouraged a new emphasis in historical writing. If the first half of the nineteenth-century had belonged to the democratic Jefferson, the latter half belonged to the nationalistic Hamilton. He had been vindicated by the course of events, and the historians manifested their sense of relief and gratitude by praising and portraying him as the great nationalist. However, students of American history know that the nation celebrated not only the salvation of the Union, but also the amazing, bewildering, and extraordinary economic development which took place after the Civil War. Hamilton's concern for industry and commerce, for property and contracts, for bankers and investors, and law and order appealed to the conservative and capitalistic-minded Lodge and Sumner, and surely to vast numbers of their fellow Americans.

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[2]I have in mind the efforts of Clinton Rossiter, Broadus Mitchell, and Louis Hacker, all pro-Hamilton historians.

Closer scrutiny of the pages of the nineteenth-century historians reveals that the general accord suggested by the symbols is largely illusory. They wrote about "many Hamiltons," to use Clinton Rossiter's appropriate phrase,[3] instead of one that could be subsumed under these few general symbols. There was a different Hamilton which attracted each of them.

Richard Hildreth's interpretation should have been a major step forward in Hamiltonian scholarship, because his effort to interpret Hamilton by a Utilitarian standard, rather than the Manicheanistic standard characteristic of many views, introduced a new set of categories by which he could be judged. Unfortunately, Hildreth's interpretation was only a potential, for he did not incorporate his Utilitarian philosophy in his History. Few students were likely to go to his other works to find the Utilitarian key which he had applied to Hamilton in his own mind. It is evident to one who takes the time to read Hildreth's philosophical and related works, that the Hamilton which appealed to him was the one who devised policies to encourage American eonomic development and prosperity. An affluent environment was the basis of the moral advance Hildreth dreamed of for America. Thus it was the practical and

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[3]Clinton Rossiter, Alexander Hamilton and the Constitution, pp. 3-33.

realistic-minded statesman who attended the first and real needs of the American people. By stretching a term somewhat, it can be said that Hildreth admired a "utilitarian" Hamilton

It is evident that Henry S. Randall did not appreciate Hildreth's "utilitarian" statesman, or even know that such a Hamilton existed. One can correctly assume that Randall was familiar with Hildreth's History,[4] for he was determined to redeem Jefferson's reputation from the detractors. Randall responded vigorously to Hamilton, as Hildreth had to Jefferson. In his Life of Thomas Jefferson he portrayed Hamilton in the dark and somber tones of a monarchist, a man far removed in spirit from the true democratic destinies of America. With the publication of Randall's Life by the end of the 'fifties, two Hamilton's emerged from the books, a "utilitarian" and a "monarchist".

In the pages of the Adamses there existed a Hamilton which shared the attitudes of both Hildreth's and Randall's Hamilton. The Adamses saw him as a remarkably capable man, who brought energy and purpose to the administration of public affairs, yet despite his considerable ability, was inferior in morals. His motivations sprang from the depths of an inordinate ambition. What he could do for the country was always circumscribed by the evil and danger

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[4]Klingberg, Correspondence, p. 90.

inherent in his ambition. The Adamses saw Hamilton as a man of two careers. One, while he served in Washington's administration, demonstrated extraordinary practical statesmanship. The second, out of office and unrestrained by the moderating influences of President Washington, was a militarist, seeking glory and fame. By sheer bulk of their literary outputs, but also by their own reputations as participants in America's political history and as historians, they focused attention upon this Hamilton of lesser morals.

Friend of the Adamses, student of Henry Adams, an instructor at Harvard who used Hildreth's History as his text,[5] Henry Cabot Lodge brought an unmitigated respect and admiration of Federalism, Federalist leaders and their achievements, the Constitution and the nation, to his interpretation of Hamilton. The man Lodge found in the historical record was a truly American statesman who put country and honor above all other considerations. Hamilton, as the symbol of nationalism, conservatism, of centralization and energy in government, emerged most clearly from his pages. Staying within the confines of the Hamilton-Jefferson conflict, Lodge interpreted Hamilton's career as a consistent effort, from the beginning of the Revolution to the end in 1804, to found a nation, and secure it in its

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[5]Schriftgiesser, Lodge, p. 39.

freedom and prosperity. Lodge, unscholarly in several respects and partial in view, did more than any of the other historians to reveal Hamilton as a man, possessed of passions, excesses, and shortcomings, but for all that, a man of character and ability.

Sumner was the one author whose approach to Hamilton showed a remarkable similarity to that of a predecessor, in this case Lodge's Hamilton.[6] Yet, despite the similarities which manifest themselves in similar tone, approach, and judgements, Sumner did not find the same Hamilton to admire that Lodge had found. He praised Hamilton as a statesman, but found much to criticize in Hamilton's fiscal policies and statecraft. The Hamilton that appealed to Sumner was more like the one portrayed by Hildreth.[7] It was Hamilton's empirical, pragmatic approach to concrete problems of government that Sumner approved; but more than anything else, he admired the Hamilton who stood firm for law and order

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[6]Sumner's bibliography includes references to Lodge's biography of Hamilton and life of George Cabot. It is evident in Sumner's footnote citations that he did his own research. Lodge did not provide a bibliography or any footnotes in his Hamilton.

[7]There is no bibliographic reference to Hildreth. However, the conclusion of Sumner's biography of Hamilton ended with the remark that of all previous historians, Hildreth's interpretation resembled most closely his own. Sumner, Hamilton, pp. 259-260.

and property rights at a time when democracy supposedly threatened them all. Paradoxically, Sumner admired the anti-democractic Hamilton, while it was the Hamilton who improved the material base on which democracy could thrive that Hildreth respected.

Henry Adams' and Henry S. Randall's works both have had a long-standing reputation as a standard or classic among later historians. Both of them portrayed Hamilton as a man with a seamy side. And it is apparent that most historians since their time have been suspicious and unfriendly toward Hamilton. The work of Hildreth, Lodge, and certainly Sumner, can hardly be thought to have redeemed the "whole" Hamilton from the disparagement he has received in the hands of a majority of historians. Hildreth's Hamilton, as he stands in the History unadorned by a Utilitarian mantle, appears as merely a Federalist. Lodge's Hamilton was done in such a way that most serious readers would be suspicious of Lodge as an historian, and would therefore be inclined to discount the Hamilton that he portrayed. Sumner's criticisms disallowed Hamilton as a financier or a successful statesman. In effect the weight of nineteenth-century interpretations of Hamilton preponderated on his seamy side.

The legacy to historians of today has been a Hamilton that desired to turn America from its true democratic course and fix instead an aristocratic form of government

in democracy's place. He was described as an ambitious man, eager to have a controlling hand in the determination of government policy and American development. His policies, outlined in full mainly in his several reports, were judged by these historians as good and bad. It is difficult to generalize about their judgements because there was no consensus among them about his statecraft. The only area, in which general accord obtained, concerned his policy after 1797. After this time, they judged his conduct and motivations critically, finding him extreme and misguided in his actions. Since his public career ended on a negative tone, it has been natural to read his career backwards and to suspect the honesty and good intentions of his earlier actions.

The discord among the interpretations has been emphazised as their major characteristic. Lest the small areas of accord be obscured by this emphasis, notice should be given to the common views they had of Hamilton. From his most severe critic, Randall, to his most ardent advocate, Lodge, Hamilton was thought to have been a man of energy and action in government. He gave a drive and determination to Washington's first administration which it might not have had otherwise. Hamilton was also an extraordinary administrator, partly because of his energy and partly because of his ability to attend the host of details involved in the day-to-day affairs of the federal government.

Even Randall admitted that he had a facility for practical greatness.

Such recognition would hardly suffice to give Hamilton a place in the front ranks of America's great. By the end of the nineteenth-century, Hamilton was in the shadows of the great men, still largely an unfathomed and unknown quantity.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Two books proved especially valuable not only as introductions to the subject of Hamilton and nineteenth-century historians, but also as useful references on many occasions: Merill D. Peterson, The Jeffersonian Image in the American Mind ("Galaxy Book," New York, 1962), has much information about the historians who in dealing with Jefferson, had to come to terms with Hamilton. Clinton Rossiter, Alexander Hamilton and the Constitution (New York, 1964), especially chapters one and seven, deals effectively with the way in which Hamilton has been treated by historians up to the present. His observations on Hamilton and the historians are useful and suggestive. Another work that should be consulted is Lynn Hudson Parsons, "The Hamiltonian Tradition in the United States, 1804-1912," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, The Johns Hopkins University, 1967), a work fashioned after Peterson's approach. Parsons gives the best idea of Hamilton's image in the work of nineteenth-century historians.

Several works ought to be read for general information and background to nineteenth-century historians and historiography. They are: William T. Hutchinson, ed., The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography

(Chicago, 1937); Harvey Wish, The American Historian (New York, 1960); David Van Tassel, Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America, 1607-1884 (Chicago, 1960); Michael Kraus, The Writing of American History (Norman, 1953); and for biographical information on historians the Dictionary of American Biography is useful.

Hamilton in Review

A very judicious survey of the Early National period is available in John C. Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801 (New York, 1960).

By far the most interesting, suggestive, and pro-Hamilton is Rossiter's book cited before. He discusses much more than the title indicates. Hamilton, he believes, has been misjudged and mistreated by the historians. He succeeds in presenting a most favorable construction of Hamilton's statesmanship and suggesting the debt which subsequent generations of Americans owe Hamilton.

The most intensive and carefully documented biography of Hamilton has been done by Broadus Mitchell, Alexander Hamilton (2 vols.; New York, 1957 & 1962); he provides insight into Hamilton's economic policies and political program which is indespensable. Another biography is that of Nathan Schachner, Alexander Hamilton (Special contents edition; New York, 1957). A more discriminating

account is found in John C. Miller, Alexander Hamilton, Portrait in Paradox (New York, 1959). Miller portrays a Hamilton so intent upon having his national program adopted, that he undoes much of what he strived to achieve. The paradox, as a literary device and a framework of interpretation, is appropriate to Hamilton, but many of the paradoxes are left unresolved. A brief summary of Hamilton's career is found in Allan Nevins, "Alexander Hamilton," Dictionary of American Biography, vol. VIII.

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and Hamilton, the Struggle for Democracy in America (Boston and New York, 1925). Bowers is not unfriendly to Hamilton, but his presentation represents Hamilton as the aristocractic, anti-republican protagonist of Jefferson. Vernon L. Parrington, "Alexander Hamilton and the Leviathan State," Main Currents in American Thought (3 vols.; New York, 1927), vol. I, 297-312, portrays a Hamilton who tried to rout the forces of Jefferson's democratic-agrarian party. The most severe, and exaggerated, depreciation of Hamilton was done by Joseph Charles, The Origins of the American Party System (Williamsburg, 1956). Charles described Hamilton as a self-seeking, ambitious anti-democrat, who used a simple-minded Washington to advance his policies.

Richard Hildreth

The biography of Hildreth is that by Donald E. Emerson, "Richard Hildreth," vol. LXIV, The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore, 1946). Since Emerson provides little analysis of Hildreth's thought, his biography should be supplemented by Martha M. Pingel, An American Utilitarian, Richard Hildreth as a Philosopher (New York, 1948), which includes several essays and letters by Hildreth that are valuable samples of the man's writing and thought. Additional biographical information is found in Kenneth B. Murdock, "Richard Hildreth," vol. IX, Dictionary of American Biography. Both Hutchinson and Wish already cited, should also be consulted.

The most suggestive article dealing with the paradox of Hildreth's democratic philosophy and his "Federalist" History is provided in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The Problem of Richard Hildreth," New England Quarterly, IX (1940), 223-245. Schlesinger did not resolve the paradox, nor did he probe the problem intensively, though he did observe that Hildreth approved of Federalist policy without accepting Federalist social philosophy.

Invaluable for an understanding of Hildreth's philosophy is his Theory of Politics (New York, 1853), and to a lesser degree his Despotism in America (Boston, 1854). In these two books, his values and his application of the Utilitarian tenets to political and economic affairs are revealed. It is also wise to read these two works in conjunction with Jeremy Bentham, The Theory of Legislation, available in several English editions. Crane Brinton's article on Utilitarianism in the Encyclopedia of Social Science is helpful.

To find Hildreth's interpretation of Hamilton, his History of the United States (6 vols.; rev. ed.; New York, 1856) must be read carefully. They are distractingly dull volumes to read and become of interest only when one applies the Utilitarian key, as the philosophical framework of the History.

Henry Stephens Randall

Information about Randall is not abundant and must be gathered in bits from a few available sources. James Ingersoll Wyer, "Henry Stephens Randall," vol. XV, Dictionary of American Biography provides a biographical sketch.

Invaluable in comprehending Randall and his work on Jefferson is Frank J. and Frank W. Klingberg, eds., The Correspondence Between Henry Stephens Randall and Hugh Blair Grigsby, 1856-1861, vol. XLVIII, University of California Publications in History (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952). Their introduction provides as much relevant information as has been published. The letters pertain mainly to Randall's work on the Life, but are worth reading, if only for the few remarks about Jefferson's detractors. Also consult George Green Schackelford, ed., "New Letters Between Hugh Blair Grigsby and Henry Stephens Randall, 1858-1861," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXIV (1956), 324-357. Peterson's Jeffersonian Image is useful for what he says not only about Randall but also about Randall's interpretation of Jefferson and Hamilton. For an interesting account of Randall's effort to secure tariff protection for the sheep and wool industry, see Harry James Brown, "The Fleece and the Loom; Wool Growers and Wool Manufactures during the Civil War Decade," Business History Review, XXIX (1955), 1-27, and also his introduction to Letters From a Texas Sheep Ranch (Urbana, 1959).

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of the Massachusetts Federalists," in Henry Adams, ed., Documents Relating to New England Federalism, 1800-1815 (Boston, 1877), 170-329. The life of Charles Francis Adams, Sr., has been done in Martin Duberman, Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886 (Boston, 1961).

Henry Adams is best understood by beginning with the brief introductory study, George Hochfield, Henry Adams, An Introduction and Interpretation (New York, 1962). From here one can take his choice of turning to Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams (Modern Library; New York, 1931), which provides useful biographical information and insight into the man and his mind; or one may prefer more background and interpretation before reading the Education. In that case, read Ernest Samuels, Henry Adams, The Middle Years (Cambridge, 1965), an account of the years most relevant to Adams as the historian. For analysis of Adams as a historian and his histories, see William H. Jordy, Henry Adams: Scientific Historian (New Haven, 1952).

The Adamses' views of Hamilton are found interspersed through the following works: Charles Francis Adams, ed., The Works of John Adams (10 vols.; Boston, 1850-1856); Henry Adams, ed., Documents Relating to New England Federalism and his History of the United States During the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson (Reprint; New York, 1962), Vols. I and II; also see his The Life of Albert Gallatin (Philadelphia, 1880). Though few references to

Hamilton exist in Henry Adams' letters, those available are valuable; see Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., Letters of Henry Adams (2 vols.; Boston and New York, 1930) and Harold Dean Cater, ed., Henry Adams and His Friends (Boston, 1947).

For an interesting presentation that Henry Adams wrote his famous History as an Adams Federalist rather than a Jeffersonian, see Edwin C. Rozwenc, "Henry Adams and the Federalist," ed., H. Stuart Hughes, Teachers of History (Ithaca, 1954).

Henry Cabot Lodge

The references to Henry Adams, cited above, have scattered references to Henry Cabot Lodge. After seeing them it is easy to conclude that Lodge was indeed an aristocrat and a conservative. Of course, these points are made clearly in two biographies: John A. Garraty, Henry Cabot Lodge, A Biography (New York, 1953) and Karl Schriftgiesser, The Gentleman from Massachusetts: Henry Cabot Lodge (Boston, 1944). The first cited is the superior biography. Schriftgiesser, if not grinding a left-handed axe, is at least sharpening it on Lodge. Henry Cabot Lodge, Early Memories (New York, 1913) provides a view of the aristocratic and traditional influences that made up Lodge's youthful experiences.

Much about Lodge, his political attitudes and beliefs, his values, and his nationalism can be learned from reading in the several collections of his essays and speeches. Moreover, these essays reveal his preoccupation with the early Federalists as fit subjects for historical treatment and commemoration. See Lodge, The Democracy of the Constitution and Other Addresses and Essays (New York, 1915); A Frontier Town and Other Essays (New York, 1906); Historical and Political Essays (New York, 1892); and especially valuable is his Studies in History (Boston, 1884). In this last work is one essay on "colonialism" in American thought, and is a key to understanding his favorable interpretation of Federalist foreign policy, and another essay on Alexander Hamilton, which should be compared to the biography of Hamilton to see the change in Lodge's interpretation of the great Federalist. Something of Lodge's aristocratic and anti-democratic leanings can be gleaned from reading his article, "Limited Sovereignty in the United States," Atlantic Monthly, XLIII (1879), 184-192.

For Lodge's interpretation of the Federalists and Hamilton, one should see first his summaries of colonial politics in his A Short History of the English Colonies (New York, 1881). The Life and Letters of George Cabot (Boston, 1878) is especially good for his view of the Federalists and their party and it has some material on Hamilton.

His George Washington (2 vols.; Boston and New York, 1898) adds further insight and information about his appreciation of the two great Federalist leaders. The collection of Hamilton's papers which Lodge edited contains an introduction to Hamilton and throughout the twelve volumes a few scattered footnotes which reveal, sometimes at length, his views of Hamilton's measures. His Alexander Hamilton (Boston, 1882) represents the high point of his Hamiltonian and Federalist interpretation of the Early National period.

William Graham Sumner

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1951); also Harry Elmer Barnes, "Two Representative Contributions of Sociology to Political Theory: The Doctrines of William Gramham Sumner and Lester Frank Ward," American Journal of Sociology, XIV (1919), 1-23.

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