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PROFESSIONALISM, SOCIAL ATTITUDES, AND CIVIL-MILITARY ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY OFFICER CORPS, 1815-1846

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Professionalism, Social Attitudes, and Civil-Military Accountability in the United States Army Officer Corps, 1815-1846

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Samuel J. Watson

This dissertation explores connections between occupation, class, and state formation, employing comparative and sociological perspectives previously neglected by historians of this topic in order to locate the officer corps more firmly in its social and cultural context. Officers were socialized in responsibility, gentility, and nationalism, closely connected attitudes which encouraged subordination to civilian political control. The ultimate source of this accountability was employment by the nation-state, which provided security in an increasingly unstable society. Officers responded by stressing order and national sovereignty in their peacekeeping duties in the nation's borderlands. Socialization and self-interest also made Jacksonian-era officers much less bellicose than they had been before 1820, which helped to keep the nation out of war with Britain during crises along the Canadian border, while the officer corps dutifully executed policies many of its members disagreed with or found distasteful, like Indian removal or the occupation of Texas. In the process, conflicts with local settlers and authorities reinforced officers' allegiance to the federal government.

Army organization and caste structure were ultimately shaped more by subjective social influences like ideals of gentility and organizational phenomena like bureaucracy and careerism than by the needs of military function per se. This thesis provides a study of officers' mentalité,
worldview, and motivation, particularly the nuances and paradoxes of individualism and gentility manifested in their balancing of ambition and security through organizational careers and conflict. These behaviours can help historians understand the changing occupational and cultural construction of elite status and the reconstitution of personal ambition and community obligation in nineteenth-century America. The army officer corps was the first national managerial class in the United States, and its experiences anticipated the broader trends toward translocal functional organization and specialization in American society and culture after mid-century. This thesis also examines the construction of military expertise in social, cultural, and institutional context, questioning its content and objectives in new ways, and suggests that American military expertise was primarily administrative and logistical rather than tactical or strategic. This bureaucratic expertise reflected a successful adjustment to the problems of scale, scope, and complexity encountered by the nation's largest organization, reinforcing the army's sense of political accountability and preparing it to effectively manage the mass armies of the Civil War. As a whole, this dissertation demonstrates the social construction of military professionalism and the decisive role of the state therein, providing a paradigm of bureaucratization, social and institutional consolidation, and class and state formation in nineteenth-century America.
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For seven years the History Department at Rice has truly been home to me; I will miss both the people and the atmosphere on the 5th floor, especially in the Grad Lounge. For half a decade my fellow graduate students have been my closest friends, and it has been a wonder to watch the evolution of the graduate program, a community that has left me with many of my happiest memories.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. My father's career provided a personal example of military professionalism and responsibility, and my grandmother's house on the edge of the Hudson Highlands provided the most congenial of bases for my research at West Point. Indeed, though not military families, the example of those on both sides of my heritage has always fostered my admiration for the men and women of the American armed forces, both professional and citizen-soldier, past, present, and future. My greatest debt, the one I can never repay, is held by my mom, a consummate professional whose empathy has sustained me through many crises. It is a joy to say that she is my best friend.
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Preface

Professionalism is as socially constructed as any other human phenomenon, and the development of professionalism in the United States Army's commissioned officer corps was a complex and often seemingly paradoxical process very much shaped by its parent society. Examining this process provides us with an excellent opportunity to explore the evolution of an occupation in an organizational context of scale, scope, and complexity unprecedented and unparalleled in early and mid-nineteenth century America. My goal herein is to synthesize a wide range of perspectives in order to understand the officer corps' development as a professional body and its place in nineteenth-century American history and life. The first question most military historians will have in mind as they read this dissertation is whether the U.S. Army officer corps was or became a professional body before the Civil War, but I am not primarily interested in attempting to resolve this question, for I feel certain that the "answer" will always as inconclusive as it is artificial. A great deal of work has been done on this question, but historians of the army have commonly approached it with a tendency to see and seek professionalism wherever it can be found or imagined, usually without pausing to ask deeper questions about the meaning of the terms of analysis they employ and the context that this process is said to have occurred within. Indeed, the answer one chooses to give depends very much on one's definition of military professionalism, which cannot be abstracted from the social context of historical processes. In other words, the study of American military professionalism is not merely a matter of the degree to which the army (or navy) officer corps attained an idealized status we choose to label "professional," but more importantly a question of the form and content of
that professionalism. As scholars we must employ theoretical, comparative, and social history perspectives if we are to evaluate this phenomenon (or professionalism in general) in a rounded historical manner, and by paying explicit attention to these complex issues, this dissertation uncovers the ironies, nuances, and paradoxes of a subject usually envisioned in a linear, teleological, and fundamentally ahistorical fashion. In more practical terms, doing so relocates the study of military professionalism in historical social context as a set of social formations, processes, and relationships, which in turn enables us to reconnect it to the study of history in general.

In particular, the role of the state is an increasingly important topic of study in the sociology of the professions and the historiography of those in Europe, yet even the most recent of historical scholarship on the American professions has little to say on this score. This lacuna reflects a persistent belief in American exceptionalism that cannot be sustained when examining occupations which seek exclusive social prestige and legal monopoly. Indeed, the tendency to seek personal honor and authority through organization under state sponsorship provides the broad social, cultural, and psychological (or motivational) context for my examination of the army officer corps in Jacksonian and antebellum America. Military and national security issues were relatively unimportant or lacking in urgency in nineteenth-century America, so my perspective on military professionalism downplays the army's warfighting function and expertise per se, while emphasizing the societally and organizationally specific balance of internal cohesion and commitment, including the conceptualization of "function" by the historical actors themselves, with the external social relations constructed in inherently political contests over issues of occupational jurisdiction and autonomy and the definition and implementation of socially responsible service and
accountability to democratic civilian control. The dissertation therefore culminates in a focus on the army's practical work towards the elaboration and expansion of nation-state sovereignty along the country's borders, which involved it in conflict and diplomacy with a wide array of domestic constituencies as well as Amerindians and the formal representatives of foreign governments.

After surveying the state of professionalism and civil-military relations in the armies of the major European powers and sketching out the antecedents of the American officer corps before 1815, I begin by exploring the character and inculcation of military expertise, asking how it was socially constructed and what forms it actually took in the officer corps' work. What did officers actually learn at West Point? How valuable was the military knowledge they picked up there, and what did they do to add to it after graduating? How did the army attempt to develop expertise, and what sort of expertise did it stress? What sort actually developed? Was it relevant to the problems the army actually faced? How successful was the army at standardizing this knowledge? How broadly and deeply was it diffused? How was it sustained? Parts Two and Three therefore address basic questions about how expert and capable the officer corps was in comparison to its European counterparts, what factors most influenced the development of and limitations to this expertise and capability, how the officer corps adapted its European occupational inheritance—the "art of war" and linear tactical drill—to specifically American needs and circumstances, and how this adaptation affected the corps' readiness to fight both expeditionary wars (like that against Mexico) and more total conflicts like the Civil War. How, and how effectively, was European knowledge transmitted? Was it appropriate for American circumstances? Did officers think so, and if not did they pose
viable alternatives? How conscious were officers of the interdependence of society, economy, and strategy? How capable was the army, both in abstract terms of preparedness for warfighting and in its actual work policing the nation's borderlands? What does the content of the army's expertise tell us about its officers' sense of their mission, and how socially responsible was the officer corps in its choice of emphasis?

The acquisition, content, and utility of this knowledge was shaped and reshaped by social and organizational influences and the negotiation of individual and group interests. What problems of organizational preparedness and cohesion were posed by the army's dispersal in small units across thousands of miles, and how did the officer corps adjust to them? How did the army react and adjust to the increasing scale, scope, and complexity of life? How did officers react to the growing organization and specialization of the army and careers within it, particularly in regard to the staff bureaus? What was the impact of personal patronage within the army, both as a means of professional development and as a matter of favoritism? How successful were senior officers at identifying and utilizing talented subordinates? What sort of knowledge did these men develop, and what was the impact of their work? Can we take them (or their interests) as characteristic or representative of the officer corps as a whole?

Parts Three and Four gradually move the discussion from the study of institutions and the development and absorption of expertise to my central focus on the application of that knowledge in daily practice (and the consequent development of occupational culture) through an examination of class and social relationships within the army and efforts to improve its capability and readiness for war. Previous historians have sometimes viewed the army officer corps as a socially isolated or alienated group, but doing so
depends on a belief that Jacksonian culture was both unitary and antagonistic to supposedly "military" values. While the latter may be broadly true of liberalism and the general Zeitgeist of life in the Jacksonian era, historians now recognize the existence of a diverse array of ideologies and worldviews in this period, many of which were quite conducive to functional specialization, professionalism, and a quest for hierarchy and order. Recognizing this also forces us to admit that, though usually phrased in non- or even antipartisan language by officers, the values we label "military" were not politically or socially neutral ones in the broader sense of class structure and relations.

If this is so, what social values and criteria did officers brought to their evaluations of one another, particularly during the 1821 reduction in force? How did class values affect officers' motives and their behaviour toward each other, enlisted men, and diverse groups of civilians? In particular, chapter nine examines officers' motives and the origins and balance of cohesion and dissension and the development of organizational and occupational commitment and identity in the officer corps, beginning with the socialization process at West Point and using the 1st Dragoon Regiment as an example of officers' values and behaviour in daily garrison life. How was professional cohesion developed at West Point, and what happened to it in garrison? How specifically or uniquely "military" was this cohesion? How was the need for aggressive leadership reconciled with that for discipline and subordination, and ultimately with that for political accountability? How did officers reconcile their often-frustrated ambitions for fame, glory, and promotion with those for security? What impact did this security have on officers in garrison? How did they reconcile careerism with the sometimes conflicting demands of professional responsibility? What reforms did they
suggest to improve the army’s morale and capability? Why did some of these succeed and others fail? What conflicts did they reflect among officers? Chapters ten examines the often antagonistic relations between officers and enlisted men. What do these tell us about the class values of the officer corps and its responsibility to American social and political ideals? How did class values and relationships within the army affect its functional capability and readiness for war?

Part Five explores the application of military expertise and the values and worldview of the officer corps to the execution of national security policy along the country’s borders and frontiers. What role did officers play in American territorial expansion before 1846? How did they react to the threat of European intervention in the Western Hemisphere during the years immediately after the War of 1812, and to the decline of that threat during the 1820s? How “republican” were their attitudes? Were their values those historians of foreign relations characterize as idealist, realist, isolationist, or internationalist? How active a role did they believe the United States should play in conflicts in Europe and Latin America (and specifically vis-a-vis Greece and Cuba)? How did they react to the fate of European liberalism and revolutions? To the French claims crisis of the mid-1830s?

More generally, how did class values and relationships within the army affect officers’ conception of their missions along the nation’s borders and frontiers? What underlying values did they bring to their understandings of foreign relations and the objectives and constraints of national security policy? How did class shape civil-military relations on the frontiers, or officers’ involvement in politics? Where was the locus of their allegiance, to the settlers they were supposed or protect or to the federal government, of whom they were often the most authoritative (if not the sole)
representatives in frontier areas? How did officers react to the Texas Revolution and the decade of strife that followed? To the Canadian rebellions of 1837 and the filibustering that followed? To the Maine boundary crisis and the prospect of war with Britain? What sort of planning did the army do for war with Britain or Mexico, or for dealing with the Indians it was concentrating in the Oklahoma region? How did officers react to pressure from local settlers on the nation's internal and external frontiers, particularly during Indian removal, to duties like enforcing the removal policy, or to encounters with other ethnoculturally alien groups like Mexicans and African-American maroons? What kept them in the army even when they were dissatisfied or disenchanted, as was often the case during the Second Seminole War? What role did partisan politics and allegiances play in these reactions? How did they express their dissent, and what does this tell us about civil-military relations and the officer corps' accountability to civilian political control?

The removal policy had been implemented with general success by the 1840s, and the nation turned toward expansion beyond its territorial boundaries. How did officers react to the opportunities presented by the ideology of Manifest Destiny and the annexation of Texas? What dilemmas did these developments pose for them? How bellicose was the officer corps toward Mexico and Britain? Did officers react differently to the prospects of war with Britain than they did to those with Mexico, and if so, why? How did their reactions to war with Mexico differ from those to the onset of the Seminole conflict a decade before? How did they reconcile their desire for promotion with distaste for annexation and war? How did officers' ages, ranks, or sectional origins affect their responses to foreign policy questions? How did all these reactions change through three decades? Ultimately, what
Part I

Counterparts and Predecessors: Contemporary European Officer Corps, 1815 to 1854, and the Early National U.S. Army Officer Corps, 1784 to 1815
Chapter I

The Dilemmas of Social Responsibility and Military Reform in Aristocratic Societies: European Armies and Their Officer Corps, 1815-1854

Nineteenth century military professionalism did not develop on its own, nor was it simply a matter of growing expertise in the art of warfare. Government control meant government prodding, a pressure that officers frequently resisted, while their own proposals for reform were always subject to cost-conscious civilian review. The criteria of professionalism were in constant if often tacit dispute between the advocates of socially elite "character" and leadership--inherently ascriptive and subjective--and those of specialized (and implicitly middle-class) education and expertise--achievement at least theoretically measurable by standards applied to all aspirants. Sometimes governments pushed for the primacy of one and sometimes for that of the other, but the mass of officers, especially those serving in regiments, saw character and esprit de corps as the indispensable moral underpinnings of internal cohesion, battlefield effectiveness, and political accountability.

Fears of Bonapartism (in Western European nations) and bourgeois revolution (in Central Europe and Russia) conditioned all debate about the character of military establishments. The Europe-wide consensus among the ruling classes in favor of the sociopolitical status quo meant that systemic wars posing a major threat to national existence or the continental balance of power were unlikely to recur, so questions of military reform ultimately turned on internal considerations of political reliability rather than external ones of military efficiency. Accountability to the standing order, here sustained by the conflation of social and occupational desiderata, was far more
important to social and political elites (including the officers themselves) than mere expertise when the triumph of technical specialists might mean the disestablishment of privileged social classes and perhaps the derangement of the social and cultural order itself. In their own occupationally specific way, nineteenth century officers were gradually forced to deal with the evolving distinction between mind (character) and matter (technique) and the related phenomenon of remote, apparently unwilled causation. How to accept these changes without losing the occupational autonomy and sociopolitical accountability that underlay the authority of command posed as great a dilemma for military officers as for other professional groups, but European officers largely succeeded in ignoring it, ultimately to their cost and that of the empires they ruled and sustained.

This chapter examines the evolution of professional military institutions and criteria of evaluation in the major European armies' commissioned officer corps between Waterloo and the Crimean War, connecting each to its country's sociopolitical and geostrategic environment. My emphasis is on the British and French: they provide significant social and institutional contrasts to one another, and their influence on American army officers was greater than that of the other European forces, because of ethnic and cultural ties and the example of France's Napoleonic victories. The officer corps of the European armies studied here present widely varying pictures of military expertise and cohesion, including the standardization of administrative procedures, but all of them save the French were fundamentally responsible to the political institutions of their social classes, in all but France those of the aristocracy and other social elites. Since this political accountability was substantially undemocratic, and since elite class dominance was a prominent factor leading Europe to systemic war and
catastrophe in 1914–both of which the United States and its army avoided--this sense of responsibility is of as much concern to us as the more specifically military, or "functional," developments in European military institutions and expertise.

The Prussian system of higher military education has long been held up for praise and emulation, and recent historians have emphasized the vitality of military reform movements in France and Britain, but the criteria of European military professionalism remained fundamentally social and subjective throughout the era between Waterloo and the onset of the Crimean War. All officer corps, even the bourgeois French, espoused a heroic or agonistic conception of warfare where "honor," composed of intangibles like courage, chivalry, and gallantry, was the most important value. To these men, professional success or failure seemed immeasurable save by the post facto judgment of combat itself. In the words of historian Edward Spiers, "preserving the esprit de corps of the regimental system was deemed the essence of military efficiency"--discipline and its supporting values of hierarchy, order, and cohesion seemed indispensible given the physical and psychological chaos of the battlefield, the prevailing middle- and upper-class attitudes toward the working classes who provided the bulk of their enlisted men, and the possibility (indeed the probability, outside Britain) that these troops would be deployed to coerce or kill their erstwhile fellows. Despite--or indeed, because of--the experiences of a quarter-century of egalitarian revolutions, middle and upper class European officers did not trust their men's initiative in battle or riot any more than they had during the era of Frederick the Great a half-century before, whatever the incipient individualism of the romantic period. Critical thinking seemed only to lead to uncertainty, and the antidotes to military and political chaos remained
subjective, class-derived character and morale, not matters of independent individual intellect or the quasi-objective efficiency of purely "military" expertise.¹

The conflict between "character" (commonly tied to noble status and political influence) and demonstrated merit was a constant in all the armies of the period. Despite the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, applied military technology remained essentially unchanged between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the onset of the Crimean conflict, and political reliability was a more urgent consideration than specifically military expertise in the era of Chartism, aristocratic reaction, and the July Days (to say nothing of 1848). The otherwise intangible ideal of character seemed an eminently practical qualification, as both the experience or heritage of command shared by gentlemen and an assumed correlate (if not source) of courage and selflessness. This conflict, and its usual resolution in favor of social ascription, permeated questions of initial selection, promotion, and access to privileged positions and opportunities of all sorts: elite regiments, military schools, and branches of service (the cavalry, for instance); furloughs, detached service, and staff posts; choice operational commands or the chance to avoid service on distant or uncomfortable stations.²

Each army's response to this question differed, however. The Prussian army is well-known for the reforms begun during the Napoleonic Wars under the officers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the civilian ministers Stein and Boyen. These included the foundation of the Kriegsakademie for higher strategic studies, which became the training ground for the German General Staff and the first enduring institution of its kind in Europe. But these reforms were largely rolled back during the aristocratic reaction after 1819, and the illustrious work of Carl von Clausewitz cannot by itself assure
us that Prussia's army met such high standards as a whole. Indeed, the
French officer corps appears to have been most successful at combining
elements of morale and expertise through an extensive system of schooling
and constant debates over tactics and military science, which produced what
its most recent English-language historian has called "an occupational
culture." This degree of professional activity seems to have been weak or
absent among the other European armies, save perhaps in Prussia, and
opposition to the ideal of expertise was particularly strong in Russia and
Britain (though the latter at least possessed an active reform movement
within its officer corps).³

The success of the Congress of Vienna and the prevalence of internal
social and constitutional struggles largely accounts for the rather sluggish
growth of professional military education and criteria of selection and
promotion founded on functional expertise. When "reform" stalled the
roadblocks were always fundamentally social and political rather than
specifically military. In most cases, both officer corps and civilian elites felt
secure in their social and institutional arrangements and resisted changes that
might disrupt them, while there were no foreign crises dangerous enough to
spur significant reform prior to the Russian and British disasters in the
Crimea. As one student of the British army has said, the introduction of
more objective criteria of functional expertise was "essentially an enforced
professionalism" made possible only when social, technical, and geopolitical
conditions appeared to require educational attainments equal to those in
civilian life.⁴

This mutual satisfaction was (with the partial exception of France)
based on and reinforced by the close ties between civilian social elites
(including the traditional established professions and the civil service) and
the military throughout Europe. British army historian Gwyn Harries-Jenkins has observed that "the military elite was an undifferentiated part of the political establishment and the social elite. Their sense of moral commitment was [founded on] a broad [though class-based] definition of social responsibility; their norms and values reflected those of the landed interest from which they were drawn." Outside France, the European officer corps did not become predominantly middle class in numbers until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and their tone remained fundamentally aristocratic until the mass expansion and attrition of World War One. Although no nineteenth-century army explicitly excluded commoners, class prejudices and snobbery and the aristocratic values and lifestyle of the officer corps seem to have deterred many from the commercial and industrial classes from seeking commissions, even where their wealth would have sustained them. Members of the landed gentry and the nobility composed the majority of these officer corps, and this was increasingly true as one moved up the chain of command.5

The British army provides the best example of this interpenetration of civil and military elites (which we shall also observe on a smaller scale in the American army), because the existence of an "open elite" in civilian society had proportionately little impact on the composition and still less on the spirit of its officer corps. Even in 1838, almost twelve percent (729 out of 6173) of serving British officers were directly related to peers or baronets; Harries-Jenkins reports that "the aristocracy and the landed gentry continued to provide more than half of all officer recruits, and a much higher percentage of the military elite, until after the Victorian period." (In 1830 seventy percent of the army's generals were actually titled aristocrats, and ninety percent of the senior generals were aristocrats or members of the landed
gentry.) The other major source of British recruitment was the professional class broadly defined: in 1854 nearly three out of eight British colonels gave a socially recognized profession as their fathers' occupation. Nearly two-thirds of these were or had been military officers, completing the circular relationship between landholding, gentility, professionalism, and officership. Whether in landholding, military command, or the civilian professions, occupation and social status were inextricably blended together under the title "gentleman."6

Many of these officers (especially the more aristocratic ones, and those on the semi-retired status of half-pay) simultaneously sat in Parliament or the House of Lords, a circumstance also found in the French Chamber of Deputies and the Prussian Landtag (but virtually never in the United States Congress). Given the deferential politics (especially in the rural districts they tended to represent) and rotten boroughs of the era, these officers rarely had to endure the rough-and-tumble of democratic electoral politics, and they tended toward devout conservatism (or in France to support the status quo whatever the government of the day). Senior British officers were commonly detailed to take up civilian administrative tasks (especially in the colonies, where many served as governors), a situation even more common in Russia's heavily militarized state apparatus but rare in the United States army after the War of 1812. The French officer corps did the same in Algeria, and the French civil engineering profession was a paramilitary corporation (educated at the same institution as its military counterparts) which acted as a link between local interests and the national government.7

The institutional product of this interpenetration was political reliability—defined here simply as accountability to civilian rule, whatever the character thereof—without partisan rancor. The officer corps of Britain,
Prussia, and Russia (where this pattern of recruitment was most prevalent) never felt alienated from their societies, although the Prussian officer corps steadily elaborated on its antiparliamentary ideal of loyalty to monarch and "State" in opposition to the growth of bourgeois power during the War of Liberation and after 1848. Officers of all nations were unhappy with their pay and promotion prospects, but only those in France—the most bourgeois of these officer corps—sought to undermine constitutional government during the period of my study, and their subversive efforts came to a virtual halt once their material conditions improved in the 1830s. In Russia, a small group of reformist officers (themselves a miniscule though socially and institutionally significant fraction of the corps as a whole) led the Decembrist rebellion in 1825 (although poor material conditions also played a part), but military dissent was then repressed and lay dormant until after the Crimean War.

* * *

I. Britain: Military Amateursim, Accountability to Civilian Control, and Limited Stirrings of Reform

Military policy in Britain, like that in the United States, was conditioned by four basic factors: deep-seated ideological fears of large standing armies, the relative geographic isolation and security of an island nation, legislative antipathy to expense, and frequent successes with small armies in colonial wars that seemed to require little more than a series of tactical engagements. The only significant military disaster either army faced between 1815 and 1854 was in far-off Afghanistan, and for Britain the Napoleonic crisis had produced neither internal revolution nor external
invasion (though they were much feared, which encouraged aristocratic
civilians to see the army as as instrument of social control and class power).
All of these conditions encouraged the dispersion of military units across the
country in small posts, without either general staffs for strategic planning or
organization into larger tactical and administrative formations like brigades
and divisions. In both countries an ideal of military amateurism was
sustained by the mythologized victories of the last war, whether those of
linear tactics in the Peninsula and the public school gentleman at Waterloo or
that of the militia that defeated them at New Orleans.

On the other hand, the British army lacked the incentive of
competition with the militia and volunteer movement, which declined after
1815 and remained weak until the 1860s, while the militia ideal remained a
potent political one in the United States even as volunteer organizations
replaced the poorly organized and attended militia. Finally, the Duke of
Wellington, the British commander-in-chief from 1842 to 1852 and by far the
most prestigious military figure in that nation, was an ardent opponent of
civil and military reform. Under these conditions there was little legislative
impetus for improvements in British military education or the selection of
officers, and debates over the standard practice of purchasing commissions
were relatively quiet before the Crimean War. We shall see many similar
patterns in the American case, but American military socialization was much
more the product of a centralized and semi-specialized institute for officer
training—the military academy at West Point, which became the basis for
American military professionalism in the years after 1820—and senior
American officers (very few though they were) seem to have been far more
energetic in promoting professional development than their average British
counterparts.
British officers were probably the most externally oriented (i.e., toward the civilian world rather than the military one of fellow officers, regiment and army) of those we shall study. Mired in relative poverty, the French corps was perhaps the most isolated from its society, and like the Russian one large portions were constantly engaged in colonial and peripheral European combat that focused commanders' attentions on more specifically military concerns. Many Russian and Prussian officers were provincial petty nobility interested in little more than horses and drink, although this fostered a tightly knit social community at the regimental level. While the British army is usually seen as the apotheosis of the regiment as social system (and most British officers also came from rural areas), its officers also had more cosmopolitan alternatives (and wealth) than their average eastern counterparts (many of whom were nobility by title but not income), and their availability diluted the potential for a sense of specifically or exclusively military subculture of interest and association. On the other hand, if a British officer did have strong military loyalties they were usually to his individual regiment (his peer group, in effect) rather than the army (his occupation) as a whole, which defused the formation of a cohesive interest group identity that might have endangered the army's accountability to civilian control. In comparison to aspiring Prussian staff officers and St. Cyr graduates the British officer remained (and intended to remain) an amateur, gifted by charismatic qualities of personal character and leadership but ultimately identifiable more by his social class and the characteristics it supposedly embodied than by any specifically military expertise or vocational commitment to a military career.  

The British army also had fundamentally the least merit-based system of recruitment and selection of the major western powers. Between seventy and eighty percent of its officers simply purchased their first commission,
subject only to availability and informal social considerations discussed above. (The latter often included attendance at one of the so-called public schools, which socialized boys in elite values and behaviour and taught the rudiments of a classical liberal education.) Indeed, in 1848 nearly half of the British officer corps had purchased all of their ranks (up to that of lieutenant colonel, after which promotion was by seniority), a practice known nowhere else in the West. Many of these men had passed through the public schools, but this was an era when their curricula bore little resemblance to the extensive ones taught at French lycées or German gymnasii—their function was elite socialization rather than elite education.9

British officer candidates underwent no formal initial screening until 1849, and they received no formal basic training or instruction in their military functions. Indeed, only about six percent of British subalterns (sometimes also known as ensigns or cornets, and the equivalent of second lieutenants) entered the army (without purchase) through the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, almost as low a proportion as that of officers promoted from the enlisted ranks. (The remaining candidates, usually the impoverished sons of dead officers, also entered without purchase, usually through the official patronage of the Commander-in-Chief.) Sandhurst was legally permitted 400 cadets, yet the maximum attendance it reached during this period was 330, and after 1824 there were no more than 200 in any year of our era. In 1832 Parliament cut off the school's funding, and from 1838 to 1848 an average of only sixty-five fee-paying cadets entered the College each year, of whom thirty-five would successfully enter the army without having to purchase their commissions (the college's intent), and twenty would flunk out but purchase their entry. Although the graduation examination supposedly included questions on fortification theory, the course itself was
basic and in large part remedial; it lacked classes in strategy, tactics, and military history. (One authority states that there was no library.) Nevertheless, there was no urgent need for improvement, since the college was little more than a marginal public school that offered the army only a small proportion of its new officers.10

The purchase system most officers used to enter and advance in the army was too complex and idiosyncratic to explain in detail here. Its primary purpose was to assure a reliable social base of wealthy men who would support Britain's class structure ("the constitution"). Purchase also saved the Treasury on officers' pay and pensions, because only men of means could afford to enter or remain in the service, and individuals could retire by selling their commissions for substantial sums. An officer had to remain in each rank for a short period before he could purchase his next rank, but could reach lieutenant-colonel in six years if posts acceptable to him became open and he had the money. Once at that rank he was promoted by seniority and would no longer be able to sell his commission, and in the 1850s the War Office had to prohibit exchanges onto the half-pay list (a form of extended leave of absence at half pay, in which officers did no service and were promoted on a separate list, thus retaining their investment for future sale) except in cases of medical incapacity or twenty-one years service. Pensions as such were provided only in cases of disability, but the government received a fraction of the value of each commission purchased, which was dedicated toward supporting the half-pay system. Seniority did apply in determining the priority of one's right to purchase a new rank, but commissions were normally sold at prices well over the limit supposedly set by army regulations, and this open market kept many highly experienced officers from competing with their wealthier comrades, a constant though muted source of
complaint from many older officers with substantial time in grade,\textsuperscript{11} who were repeatedly passed over because they could not afford the amounts asked. Commissions were essentially considered private property, and this association was the most direct link between the British officer corps and its parent political and economic systems of capitalism and possessive individualism.\textsuperscript{12}

British officers could also hold multiple ranks, as was the case in most other officer corps (including the American) of the time. Officers in the predominantly aristocratic Guards regiments held an army-wide rank one level higher than their regimental one, and could exchange places with men in ordinary ("line ") units to gain that higher rank within a regiment, through which they could jump ahead of many of their counterparts in the line. (Indeed, one Guards captain became the commanding general in the Crimea in only two years in this way, prompting a much more experienced commander who had begun the war at general rank to return to Britain.) The British army also conferred brevet (honorary) ranks for distinguished service, but these were much less common than in the American service and occasioned much less conflict between individuals. Finally, officers on the half-pay list advanced on a separate promotion ladder by seniority (with thoroughly confusing consequences for both the regiment and the modern historian).\textsuperscript{13}

Half-pay status was clearly one of the more dysfunctional features of the Victorian army. Before 1830 an officer could enter this list at any time, as many of the more dilettantish aristocrats did; thereafter (following a rare reform measure) a minimum of three years service was required first. The list sometimes served as a route to voluntary retirement (since a half-pay officer could do so and receive the difference between the price of his initial
commission and that of his present rank), and the Secretary at War was occasionally able to force some men to retire by ordering them to the active service they sought to avoid, but some officers remained on this list for over thirty years and even after their regiments had been disbanded, and its length often exceeded that of the active roster. (In 1831 9404 officers were on half-pay and other retired statuses, 6768 on active duty, in an army of less than a hundred thousand men.) Nevertheless, politicians and officers alike believed that the system provided the only reliable reserve of officers, and political considerations (especially the cost that would be incurred by providing real pensions and compensating retirees for the loss of their commissions, which were considered their personal private property) precluded a wholesale housecleaning. Until then, half-pay status provided the only institutional mechanism for retirement, however flawed in its operation.14

Officers throughout the army resisted parliamentary proposals for promotion by merit (or "selection") for fear of political or internal favoritism. Internal opposition to purchase was muted by the weight of regimental opinion (since most officers had been commissioned thereby) and remained largely idiosyncratic in origin and expression, while extensive public outcry was mostly a post-Crimean phenomenon. Many if not most officers vociferously opposed the introduction even of noncompetitive examinations for commissioning and promotion to lieutenant and captain, and the examination standards were apparently reduced when they were found too difficult for many public school graduates. Indeed, Gwyn Harries-Jenkins maintains that few officers were actually examined for promotion, and Brian Bond states that 'the education of a gentleman' (meaning passage out of a public school) was often accepted as a substitute if a candidate failed the initial commissioning examination. Promotion by seniority, the practice in most
other armies including the American, was decried because of its sluggishness, which was clearly apparent at the rank of colonel, where more than half of the officers in 1846 had first entered service before 1800. The purchase system does seem to have had some success in promoting men at relatively youthful ages, but it gave no guarantee of their fitness, and their experience was certainly less than that of the men they passed over.15

Systems of selection, promotion, and reward can provide valuable insights into the motivation and value systems of a occupational group. In this case, it seems doubtful that the purchase system was a reliable mechanism for fostering the ascent of an expert or meritorious cadre into higher command, although some officers made this argument in its favor. Historian Hew Strachan maintains that "purchase ensured some degree of dedication" to military service, which was true enough for those officers of middling wealth, but there were no formal institutional obstacles to hinder the rise of ambitious incompetents. Edward Spiers uses the purchase system as evidence that the primary motivation of British officers was not material reward, but the system was certainly not geared to reward professional competency or expertise.16

Harries-Jenkins concludes that "the standard of professional education in the Victorian military establishment was appallingly low": "Extensive professional education was largely ignored within the army. More emphasis was placed on the concepts of social responsibility and a sense of [regimental] community." As in all European armies, "the social life of regimental officers differed little from that enjoyed by their counterparts in civilian society." In peacetime there was little required of them aside from drilling troops and filling out forms, and hunting, drinking, and card-playing were far more common pursuits than any sort of professional study. Indeed, British (and
Russian) company grade officers (captains and lieutenants) relied very heavily on their experienced non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to train the soldiers and carry out day-to-day administrative tasks, so they were probably even more leisured (and less technically competent) than their American, French, or Prussian counterparts.¹⁷

Among the many dysfunctional products of this mentalité was an utter disregard for the abstractions of higher military thought and strategy, and consequently the least prestigious (and aside from the Austrian and Russian the least efficient) staff among the Great Powers. As in many other areas, the army's success in the Peninsular War effectively insulated it from needed reform, and even revisionist historian Hew Strachan has observed that "mid-nineteenth-century British military strategy, such as it was, was little more than an articulation of the problems facing an eighteenth-century army." Wellington had had no chief of staff in the Peninsula, and none was appointed for the army as a whole until 1855, when the abrasive personality of the commanding general in the Crimea necessitated it. Until then, the adjutant and quartermaster generals' departments undertook the administrative and logistical work of a staff (as was also the case in the United States), but there was no provision for a permanent strategic planning organization like the Prussian General Staff. Indeed, British officers prepared few strategic plans in comparison to their French and Prussian counterparts, and certainly fewer than one would expect from a force dispersed across half the globe. The Royal Navy seems to have supplied much of this deficiency, however, and a small planning and logistical cadre seems to have been stationed in Canada, where Britain seemed most likely to become engaged in a major war. Provisions for staff training received little attention at army
headquarters; indeed, one scholar suggests that no books specifically devoted to staff duties were available in English.\textsuperscript{18}

Some of the institutions for the development of a staff were already in place, but they seem to have been ineffective and undermined from within. The "Senior Department" at Sandhurst was intended to train officers for staff positions, but only fifteen of its 216 graduates between 1836 and 1854 were actually assigned to these socially desirable posts. (Staff officers received good stations, extra compensation, and the opportunity to make influential social, political, and military connections.) Parliament cut off funding for the school in 1832 (the same year Russia cut back its staff, and two years after France abolished its Conseil Superieure de la Guerre) and by 1855 there were only fifteen students. Their two-year course (one year between 1820 and 1833) taught little besides mathematics. There actually seemed to be good reason for this inattention given the circumstances of British service, for the army had no permanent units larger than the regiment, while outside the Prussian army only a few French officers seem to have understood the functions and potential of a true general staff. (Of course, one could certainly argue that an army of small dispersed units requires more constant oversight than one concentrated within easy view.)

The amateurish occupational culture of the British officer corps also contributed to this deficiency by discouraging staff service: most officers considered studious men potential deviants (too theoretically minded, and therefore "not steady"), and many commanders suspected (often rightly) that officers who sought appointments to the staff school were trying to avoid overseas service. The attractive posts in army administration ("Horse Guards") were determined largely by social and family connections, and officers in command of field forces preferred to use men personally known to
them for staff posts (which were attractive for networking with military and civilian notables), so there was virtually no purpose or incentive for British officers to attend the staff school, which languished even after post-Crimean reforms in the late 1850s. Indeed, historian Robin Higham has observed that there was no real staff training in the British army until the late 1890s. British staff officers learned by experience rather than training, but they had few opportunities to practice anything beyond small-scale logistical skills in Britain's colonial wars.\textsuperscript{19}

Indeed, Hew Strachan observes that "the tactical problems encountered by colonial generals and their relationship to Peninsular experience were the nub of the dialectic in [British] military thought," which stimulated extensive tactical reform. Strachan's revisionist work has highlighted the wide range of reform proposals presented by British officers during the interwar period, particularly in the realm of professional training and education, and he has asserted that mid-nineteenth century "British military thought was more active and sustained than ever before." Strachan also maintains that the British army was considered a very good one by contemporaries, and he believes that frequent foreign service often deterred dilettantes from seeking commissions. (Harries-Jenkins suggests that it was easy and common for men of wealth to avoid service overseas by judicious exchanges into regiments staying at home, which seems at least superficially plausible given the favoritism and inefficiency of British administration.)\textsuperscript{20}

The logistical and medical disasters of the Crimea came as a great shock to officers and civilians alike; Strachan has set forth to discover the sources of their complacency, and he implies that this self-deception was as much the result of the apparent momentum and success of reform as of the social
considerations stressed by most other authors. Antebellum British officers did make a number of proposals to reform the ungainly structure of rank, promotion, and retirement, including ending brevets and half-pay promotions to reduce favoritism, appointing one-third of general officers by merit and fixing their numbers and setting upper age limits to clear out the top ranks, and making temporary or acting ranks permanent (usually held by poorer men commanding field units while aristocrats lolled about on leave or detached service) after five years service in them. (The Duke of Cumberland even suggested mandatory retirement at age fifty.) The success of this reform movement was limited, however: none of the reforms just mentioned were adopted, but from 1849 onwards officer candidates had to pass examinations (which theoretically included basic fortification science) in order to be commissioned. Half of the candidates between 1852 and 1854 failed this test, and the standards were quickly lowered to accommodate them in the face of protest from social elite patrons.21

Strachan emphasizes that reform began from below: "many officers, operating within the regulations and extending their own interpretations of them, established much of the bedrock of reform." A flourishing military press provided the leading platform for advocates of military reform, a few of whom drew comparisons to the French and Prussian armies and their experiences in the Napoleonic Wars. Two weekly newspapers and a monthly journal were established in 1833 and 1827 respectively, with a total circulation of about 2600 copies per week, while three other periodicals survived for about a year apiece. The United Service Gazette began in opposition to reform, but changed its tack in 1846 under a new editor, leading to the foundation of a new conservative standard-bearer in 1848. In the technical arms, the Professional Papers of the Royal Engineers were published annually
from 1837; the Royal Artillery Institute was founded in 1839 and printed its minutes and papers after 1846. The reform journals and their usually anonymous contributors (often the otherwise-maligned half-pay officers) espoused changes across the board: abolishing purchase, mandating that officer candidates graduate from the Royal Military College, establishing a retirement system, improving staff training and infantry tactics, and creating a central infantry school of practice to prepare regiments going overseas.22

The increasingly successful movement for improved training was inspired by the tradition of Sir John Moore's Shorncliffe Camp at the beginning of the century, the centerpiece of an earlier reform era that had prepared the army for successful large-scale operations in the Spanish Peninsula after a decade of woefully mismanaged expeditions to the Low Countries. Several senior military officials supported the new movement despite civilian antagonism toward troop concentrations and the army's own fear that such visibility would lead Parliament to demand retrenchment. (The successful field commander Sir Charles Napier was the best known example, but his quarrels with civilian superiors limited his institutional influence.) Other senior commanders called for the creation of permanent divisional organizations in the Indian Army (the largest British force then likely to see active operations). Both Lord Arthur Hardinge and the Duke of Cumberland, the commanders-in-chief from 1852 to 1856 and until near the turn of the century respectively, gained a reputation for reform sentiments, but their most ardent practitioner was Lord Frederick Fitz Clarence, who visited France and Prussia and returned with the belief that military education should be primarily professional rather than moral. Using weekly brigade drills, Fitz Clarence fashioned his command at Portsmouth into a center for practical training in handling large bodies of troops and when sent
to India in 1853 he organized camps of exercise of over ten thousand soldiers. A school of musketry was formed and the first division-sized exercises in Britain since the Napoleonic Wars were also held in 1853, and by that year one colonel felt able to proclaim that "now-a-days all Commanding Officers are innovators." By 1855 the foundations were set for the permanent camp of instruction at Aldershot.

The army school system was also substantially (though incompletely) expanded during this era, and an ardent reformer was appointed to the newly created post of "Inspector of Military Schools" in 1846. The concept of regimental schools for enlisted men dated to 1812, and in 1848 Fitz Clarence established a "Garrison School" at his own expense that taught English history, minor tactics, mathematics up to trigonometry, and mechanics. In 1850 he added an officers' class, and the following year the examiners asked questions about Malborough's campaigns and Vauban's fortifications. Suggestions that this system be extended throughout the army and supplemented with leaves of absence for professional study were ignored, however, and proposals for local schools of practice and for training one major from each regiment at the Sandhurst Senior Department in order to instruct his unit's subalterns met a similar fate.

This "brief flurry of reform" (Strachan's own phrase) was insufficient to prevent administrative and logistical debacles in the Crimea, but it did help the British army to fight heavily outnumbered and win, albeit against a sluggish and technologically outmatched opponent. Some British military reformers correctly anticipated future trends in tactics, organization, and administration, but all in all the British army remained a predominantly amateur force unprepared for large-scale European (or American) conflict in the mid-nineteenth century. The new training programs notwithstanding,
there were no official manuals for tactics and supply above the regimental level—indeed, as late as 1860 the library at Aldershot apparently held only a single volume on tactics, and a French one at that. Tactical and administrative standardization understandably proved impossible without uniform procedures of this sort.25

At higher levels of abstraction, British officers wrote little about the principles or theory of strategy and warfare—indeed, one reform advocate asserted that the army's whole approach to the development of expertise was wrong-headed: "no attempt is made to extract [abstract] professional truths from the mass of . . . results," an inductive approach which he termed "the only possible mode of arriving at professional principles." This disorganization did not seem like a terrible flaw at the time, because Britain (like the United States and France) had no serious intention of engaging in conflicts with other major powers. The consequent "small war mentality" stressed pragmatic adaptation to circumstances and gave no encouragement to the theorizing or abstraction necessary to produce standardization—in Strachan's apt phrase, "the army thought small because it fought small."

Indeed, the individual initiative these wars required reinforced the genteel emphasis on socially constituted personal qualities like character rather than calling them into question—the liberal arts ideal of generalism embodied in the gifted amateur was Britain's equivalent of the French belief in "genius," but it contained far stronger overtones of class and hierarchy.26

Historians Strachan and Harries-Jenkins interpret the sources and degree of professionalism and reform in the British officer corps very differently. The latter follows an older tradition in emphasizing genteel amateurism and the close ties between officers and civilian elites: "The Victorian army did not develop, at any time, a self-defined expertise." Its
Professionalism was limited and "pragmatic" in motivation; "it was primarily shaped and molded by the needs of the parent society." "There was . . . an almost total absence of career commitment" in the form of internalized self-identification. Examining different types of documents, Strachan finds a growing sense of professional identity and cohesion, but he believes that it was as much a defensive response to political (especially Whig) attacks as the product of specifically military training and study. Strachan observes a loss of occupational autonomy (as the Commander-in-Chief became associated with the ministry of the day rather than the king alone) and an army-led search for administrative reform (implying increased governmental centralization) that might have stimulated such a reaction, but the evidence that such a reaction actually occurred seems far from clear. Ultimately the army accepted and adapted to the oversight of a more intrusive civil government.27

Strachan believes that British military reform was "largely self-generated": military professionalism was mostly the product of military experience, colonial and Napoleonic. While Harries-Jenkins may underestimate the expertise of the British officer, Strachan probably exaggerates his distance from the government and social elites and the strength of his commitment and identity as an army officer. Given the simultaneous existence of reform pressure from the junior ranks and sympathy from some of the most senior ones, the social and institutional locus and motivation of reform, and thus its implications for civil-military relations, remain unclear. Some officers detested the Whigs, but those who sought reform were probably attracted by the middle-class ethos of efficiency the party supposedly embodied. As a whole, the army retained many links to a political system that was still too aristocratic in values and composition to pose much of a threat to the traditional military values and institutions of
order and hierarchy that most officers still held dear. The officer corps' cohesion and identity remained fundamentally social and non-military in origin, wherever the breeze was starting to shift.28

Harries-Jenkins believes that this mentalité persisted unchanged throughout the century, and that "it was this complacency which ultimately epitomized the ethos of the Victorian army." Strachan acknowledges that the antagonism he sees between soldier and civilian "meant that . . . a cohesive reform program . . . [was] impossible," that the commitment to expertise he draws to the surface was "perhaps a false professionalism" (i.e., an irresponsible or unaccountable one) when meshed with an antagonism toward civilian politics. Harries-Jenkins concludes that "in all these characteristics, the army was the mirror of the parent society . . . military successes and failures were ultimately the responsibility of the civil government and of the public in general": "The Victorian military establishment remained, to its end, a non-professional army," that reflected the "social rather than functional values" of a genteel class.29

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II. France: Nuances of Politicization and "Reform," Paradoxes of Military Effectiveness and Social (Ir)responsibility

Harries-Jenkins observes that this military inefficiency "may be the price which must be paid to strengthen civil control," and in light of the French and Prussian experience this may well have been true. Though many British officers were politically well-connected (and even Members of Parliament themselves) collective manifestations of political feeling by the officer corps as an occupational special interest group have been notably absent from my story of the British officer corps. This was far from the case in
the nations of continental Europe, where constitutional conflict and revolutionary crises were far more threatening to the established order. The least stable of these countries was post-Revolutionary France, and its officer corps reflected this turbulence until the early 1830s, when the army became an instrument (though not the embodiment, as in the Prussian officer corps) of conservative dominance much like its eastern counterparts. The residues of the Napoleonic era were a substantial influence in the armies of all of these nations, but they were naturally strongest in France, where more than fifteen thousand officers were dismissed or put on half-pay status between 1815 and 1817. Many of these men were confirmed Bonapartists who viewed the Bourbons as instruments of the Allied occupiers, but the army's reactions to the Bourbon Restoration were quite mixed, and historian Richard Holroyd has suggested that the army became "truly royalist" by 1830. The army may have looked ripe for revolution in 1820 (when several republican plots were discovered at the same time the Spanish army was overturning another Restoration regime), but in hindsight historian Douglas Porch maintains that "the root causes of unrest . . . were not political, but rather economic and personal . . . political opposition in the army went hand in hand with frustrated ambition" and materia: self-interest during the years of sluggish promotion and political favoritism that followed the excitement and opportunities of the Napoleonic Wars.30

Slow promotion and low pay were the primary sources of complaint in all nineteenth-century officer corps, but the frustration and constraint faced by all organizations with externally (i.e., politically or legislatively) determined numbers of personnel slots were aggravated in France because there were so many young Napoleonic veterans who had not expected to return to civilian life as Prussian Landwehr officers did, but could not remain in an army
reduced from wartime scale (as Russia's was not), and did not have the private resources to live satisfactorily on half-pay like many British officers. Raised in a meritocracy that promised rapid advancement, these men naturally felt a sense of spiritual malaise and decline after the glory years of Empire. The demands of the victorious Allies and the Bourbons' fear of the revolutionary Nation in Arms meant that France's army would be several times smaller than in 1814, and these considerations led the Bourbon ministries to favor individuals from the ranks of their reliable aristocratic supporters (often in elite corps like the staff and the Guards) when making promotions, favoritism which lent a political dimension to the material discontent. Given the inexperience and frequent incompetence of these men, Napoleonic veterans were commonly appointed lieutenant-colonels to supply the deficiencies of royalist colonels, a practice which can hardly have sustained cohesion. Under the circumstances, every regiment was torn by factionalism between officers who had served with and against France during the Revolutionary era, some of whom had met on opposite sides in battle, and duelling was a constant of regimental life.  

The French selection system between 1815 and 1834 was torn between efforts to secure organizational stability through promotion by seniority and the impulses of political and ideological favoritism natural to a regime that often felt itself tottering on the brink of a revolutionary precipice. Indeed, a royal commission graded officers' political loyalties (as demonstrated during the Empire and the Hundred Days)—perhaps the most overt form of political intervention in military structure of this era. Attempting to allay the concerns of liberals and Bonapartists, the Loi de St Cyr of 1818 articulated the obligations, rights, and privileges of the French officer and created minimum time-in-grade requirements for promotion. Noncommissioned officers (a
group particularly susceptible to revolutionary influence, which had been at the heart of the overthrow of the army of the ancien regime in 1789) were guaranteed one-third of the subaltern openings, and two-thirds of promotions up to the rank of lieutenant colonel were to be determined by seniority, the remainder by "selection." On the other hand, the Bourbons sought to insure the army's political reliability by subjecting all colonels (regimental commanders) and generals to promotion by selection—which commonly meant political influence—rather than seniority. There were no examinations; instead the inspector generals (corps and army commanders, plus some itinerants specifically assigned to this duty) met each year after completing their rounds to recommend promotions by selection. As in Britain, Royal Guards officers (usually aristocrats) legally received an extra increment of rank, while a general staff set up in 1827 was disbanded three years later because of its "Bonapartist" criticism of Guards privileges. (The Guards themselves were abolished after the revolution in 1830.) Most senior commanders were still comparatively young, and the mass of younger men below them had a long wait ahead. In the meantime their pay scales were roughly half those in the British and Prussian service; most retired as captains, and they received the lowest military pensions in Europe.32

Though the army was not inherently opposed to the Bourbon regime, the pervasiveness of political agitation throughout Restoration society led to close surveillance by the government, and army chaplains routinely provided political reports on officers that influenced their promotions. Coming in the wake of several radical plots inside the army, the orders to suppress the liberal government in Spain brought these concerns to a head, for the liberals had gained power when Spanish officers refused to serve against the Latin American revolutions and turned on the monarchy in 1820. Despite initial
anxieties about its loyalty, the French army served the king faithfully in 1823, acting (though rarely forced to fight) under an ideologically neutral rubric of "duty" and developing a new measure of internal cohesion during the course of the campaign. Nevertheless, 173 generals were dismissed for their political opinions the following year, presumably because they had appeared dissident or otherwise unreliable during the crisis.33

Douglas Porch suggests that while only minor military reforms were necessary in 1830, internal malaise had set in and the army did little to keep the Bourbons in power. Richard Holroyd maintains that the officer corps had developed a sense of loyalty to the king, but this turned out to be more of a sense of politically neutral "duty" like that demonstrated in Spain. Outnumbered and unprepared for street fighting, the Paris garrison fought bravely for a day but then collapsed, while most units in the countryside waited for orders rather than marching on the capital to support the monarchy. Holroyd therefore suggests that "the attitude of the army toward civil disturbance was one of non-intervention . . . rather than militant repression. Both officers and men appear to have considered themselves [members of] an [autonomous] organization concerned with [external] warfare and not internal politics." Insofar as it indicated a desire to avoid civil war this indecision was socially responsible if not politically accountable, but it contained the seeds of a repressive future, for Holroyd adds that "by 1848 waiting for orders had become the most common solution to the problem of conscience" officers confronted during political upheavals.34

Political chaos exacerbated the breakdown in internal army discipline during and after the revolution of 1830: harking back to the experience of 1789, the noncommissioned officers--who were virtually officers-in-training in the French system--had long looked forward to the turnover that political
change would bring, and they quickly denounced their commanders as Bourbon sympathizers in hopes of gaining promotion. The inspector-generals of the new government encouraged these denunciations in order to purge Bourbon appointees and other political unrebables, and by the end of the year more than two out of three infantry regiments had new colonels. Indeed, some politicians and officers (especially noncommissioned ones) began to call for the election of officers and NCOs by the enlisted men under their command, until the government finally decided to bring the ongoing chaos and indiscipline to a halt. In the meantime, half of the newly open slots were reserved for Napoleonic veterans, whose massive seniority (dated to their first service fifteen or twenty years before) then trumped that of all competitors and effectively clogged the promotion system for at least a decade.35

The next war minister (like his predecessors a serving officer) tried to separate army and politics once and for all, with mixed and ultimately fatal results. Most of the aristocrats in the officer corps had resigned in 1830, but their places were not taken by the upper commercial bourgeoisie that was then coming to dominate French life. Instead, Porch observes that "the officer corps assumed a definite lower middle class character." Soon three-quarters of new officers were promoted from the noncommissioned ranks, by far the highest percentage in any army of the era and one rarely equalled by revolutionary armies in other periods. In 1832 the so-called "Charter of the Army" substantially decreased time-in-grade requirements for promotion, while the proportion of promotions into the rank of major made by seniority was reduced from two-thirds to one-half of the total to further speed the process. These developments satisfied the ambition of the petit-bourgeois class of noncommissioned officers and erstwhile NCOs that had led most of
the subversive activity during the 1820s, while older men pondering retirement could calculate on doubled or tripled pensions from 1834 onward (in effect a massive discharge payment to the Napoleonic grognards).36

The officer corps also secured a substantially greater degree of autonomy from civilian political oversight: the commissar-like post of chaplain was abolished, dismissal on arbitrary or overtly political grounds was banned by statute, and the power to dismiss officers was limited solely to commissions of their peers. These changes reduced inequality within the officer corps at the expense of accountability to civilian political authority by making it difficult to discharge troublemakers popular with their peers, though the minister of war could still suspend them for up to three years without pay or transfer them to the colonies. Professional control over internal discipline and behavioural standards certainly stimulated unit and occupational cohesion, but it ultimately undermined accountability to civilian political authority and isolated the army from changes in civilian social attitudes.37

Porch observes that the reforms of the early 1830s "guaranteed the stability and continuity of the army under any regime," and the expansionist war in Algeria (begun only a month before the Bourbon collapse) reinforced these characteristics by offering new opportunities for promotion and distinction. Isolated coup plots continued to percolate for several years, but "after 1830 the opposition was unable to overcome the army's desire for stability." Revanchist Bonapartist began to retire, and their successors no longer had the same pressing incentive to demand a European war as a route to status and booty. The failure of the "Strasbourg conspiracy" in 1836 "virtually ended military dissent" for over a decade, for "Republican political ideology, in itself, had only limited appeal for the military [officer] and had
served as little more than a rallying point for discontent with the conditions of service." ("Legitimism"—support for the Bourbons—was never a strong current in the officer corps between 1830 and 1870.)  

Nevertheless, this neutrality masked a growing isolation from French society as a whole: the decline of ideological infiltration and the Algerian experience of ruthless colonial repression distant from the pressure of public opinion led to a malleable allegiance to an abstract "Nation" not unlike that of Prussian officers to "the State" or the king—a socially and politically subjective ideal masked in the appearance of transcendant objectivity that permitted officers to determine the course of national affairs and social relations by massacring their fellow citizens while proclaiming their "neutral" devotion to "duty." Indeed, historian Paddy Griffith has observed the development of a "systematic doctrine of counterinsurgency and a new toughness" toward civilians during the 1830s, which was demonstrated in "a considerable amount of study" and repression in 1831, 1834, 1840, and 1841. Though by far the least aristocratic military leadership in Europe (and in many respects less so than that of the United States, whose officers sometimes complained that their French counterparts were not genteel enough), the petit-bourgeois character of the officer corps did not correspond to a potential for radicalism during the crisis of the July Monarchy: the army did not act to bolster Louis-Phillipe's crumbling regime, but it fought without demur to sustain the moderately liberal bourgeois government against the working-class faubourgs during the June Days.

The army was socially responsible in accepting the initial revolutions of 1830 and 1848, but in the latter year it proved ready and willing to crush more radical expressions of the popular will as soon as orders were received to do so. Though only a single senior officer actively supported Louis
Napoleon's plot in 1851, the military coup occurred as soon as a legitimate heir of Napoleon appeared politically viable, which allowed the junior and middling ranks of the army to "equate patriotism with Bonapartism as well as with republicanism" in pursuit of its own institutional and occupational self-interest. (Indeed, a comprehensive pension plan was established soon after the coup.) The ultimate expression of both the army's isolation and its lack of neutrality--or to reconcile these apparent contradictions its subordination to bourgeois social dominance in return for being left alone--came when (with government sanction) it issued campaign medals to units that served in the coup and related operations against civilian opposition. As Griffith observes, "the lessons learned in 1848 led . . . directly to" the repression of 1871. In France, "professional" autonomy and accountability to civil government (in the form of "passive obedience") came at the price of true social responsibility. The officer corps traded the lives of French workers and peasants for personal and occupational security.\textsuperscript{40}

Defeat in the Franco-Prussian War has had the same effect on the historiography of the French army as failures in the Crimean did on the British, but revisionist historian Paddy Griffith has recently argued that the French army was an effective military organization considered the world's best by most contemporaries (including as we shall see most American officers)--cheap, efficient, and (in his view, which I think too narrow in this instance) politically reliable, with extensive experience and a lively internal debate on a wide spectrum of military issues. France provided the great majority of the forces in the Crimea without debacles like that of the Light Brigade. It defeated Spaniards, Dutchmen, and Turks in three "small" wars between 1823 and 1832, and it supplied the military force that finally expelled
Austria from Italy. Indeed, the French army's only significant defeats between 1815 and 1870 were in far-off Mexico.41

Given this success, few French officers felt the need for a Prussian-style mass army of conscripts and reservists. France used both, but on a smaller scale with a growing tendency toward reenlistment by long-service veterans. This attitude was not simply a matter of conservative politics (including those of the bourgeoisie who dominated French society and resisted conscription) or a failure to foresee the future. Napoleon's improvised forces had defeated the Prussians on most occasions even in 1813-15, and the Prussian army was not yet heralded as the paradigm for military organization during this era. Many French officers were also reacting to the tactical and logistical decline of Napoleon's army during the years after 1807, when growing numbers of troops had brought diminishing returns on the battlefield. Their ideal was the Grande Armée of Ulm and Austerlitz (1805)--a flexible, highly mobile and highly motivated force of relatively moderate size that won victories with speed and efficiency rather than ponderous, wasteful mass. These military thinkers (usually Napoleonic veterans themselves) preferred even the armies of the ancien régime--slow to be sure, but professional in the sense of a volunteer force experienced and hardened by long service--to those of 1813 and 1814, when Napoleon had been reduced to conscripting fourteen year-old boys. Applying the lessons of twenty-five years of war, the French expected to create a fusion of the best elements of the armies and tactics of the ancien régime and Napoleon.42

The experience of more than twenty years of war was the primary educator and stimulus for professional thought among French officers, and the French army's professional military literature may well have exceeded that published in Prussia. Professional thought came from several sources.
Culturally, positivism in the form of Fourierism and Saint-Simonianism competed with the romanticism fed by memories of *la gloire*. These influences were respectively but not exclusively associated with the technical and combat arms. (Simonianism and romanticism both found adherents among Algerian veterans, for example.) Institutionally, a number of professional journals urged military reform. The first of these was founded in 1825, and there were five a decade later. Two soon failed, but not before one of them achieved a circulation of nearly 5700. (There were as many as 20,000 officers in the approximately 200,000 man French army, the highest proportion of officers to enlisted men of any major power.) All these journals were reformist until a conservative paper was begun in 1840 in reaction to the criticism of senior officers. Debates over strategy and tactics accounted for about one-sixth of their contents, and roughly a third apiece was devoted to personnel issues like pay and promotion and historical material (commonly in the form of memoirs), which sustained cohesion- and identity-building traditions and gave examples of battlefield problems and solutions. (These narratives were virtually nonexistent in British and American professional journals.) Half-pay officers were especially active contributors to the professional press, whether in implicit criticism of the post-Napoleonic governments or as a means to demonstrate merit and secure readmission to active service.⁴³

Another source of professional education and innovation was the practical experience gained in maneuvers and training exercises. The French held annual divisional camps of exercise throughout the period, with occasional live-fire drills, monthly progress reports, and after 1830 impartial referees on the Prussian model. Reform also came from the center, for after completing their annual rounds the inspectors generals met in branch
committees (the 'Infantry Committee,' for example) to discuss issues raised by their reviews. Besides these routine mechanisms, the most important institutional force for improvements in tactical training was the corps of *Chasseurs a Pied*, a light infantry arm established in 1838. Chasseur tactics emphasized rapid movement and accurate marksmanship, so chasseur officers established a musketry school and wrote a new drill manual that suited their penchant for speed better than that used by the line (or "heavy") infantry. (The line *Ordonnance* inherited from the Revolutionary era remained unchanged between 1791 and 1831, when a new edition with relatively minor revisions appeared.)

The "young Turks" of the chasseur corps waged a constant struggle for independence from the line, and they saw new tactical systems as their primary tool of ascent. Thus they claimed that their gymnastic methods combined the enthusiasm of the citizen with the expertise of the professional, a political and cultural ploy with great resonance, and the new force became a separate branch of the army in 1853 and was recognized as a platform for bright officers to win rapid promotion. At the same time, the chasseurs took pride in their unorthodoxy, and the force may have provided a needed outlet for innovation and eccentricity alike. As a result, the French army had developed three distinct tactical (and even quasi- or sub-cultural) doctrines by the 1850s: an emphasis on speed, agility, and sharpshooting for the elite chasseurs, the close order precision and "essentially eighteenth-century tactics" of the line, and simplified 'common sense' drill for the mass conscript army that would be needed in a European war.44

Both internal military and external social factors impelled the new emphasis on expertise described by Griffith: the art and science of war seemed to be becoming more complex than ever before, more enlisted men were
literate, aware, and aspiring to commissioned rank, and the parent society was
now dominated by the educated bourgeoisie, who considered competence
rather than noble character or birth the essence of merit. Nevertheless, while
Griffith suggests that "education in all its forms" was a central theme in the
'new military ethos' of the French army, this rhetorical currency was not
matched by practical exercise. The French school system (civil and military)
was much more extensive than that in Britain, but only a wealthy minority of
future officers went to St Cyr (for the infantry and cavalry) or the Ecole
Polytechnique (for artillerymen and engineers) for their introduction to
military life. (Those officers who did not pass through these schools were
required to serve two years as NCOs before commissioning.) St Cyr cadets
were generally expected to have gained a liberal arts education in the civilian
secondary schools (the lycées) before their arrival; St Cyr then offered a two
year course covering a wide range of subjects, "none of them very seriously"
aside from drill and the army regulations. The school's primary goal was to
foster esprit de corps and military bearing among future officers, and Griffith
suggests that its academic standards were "quite low." Coverage was often
superficial, rote learning the norm. (On the other hand, a 'Military Art and
History' class was taught in the second year, and it included selections from
the writings of Franco-Swiss strategist Baron Antoine-Henry Jomini and
allusions to those of Clausewitz.) Less than a third of cavalry and a quarter of
infantry officers entered the corps via St Cyr, although fifty-four percent of the
generals who wrote for the military press were graduates of St Cyr or the Ecole
Polytechnique.45

The Ecole Polytechnique offered a much more intense course of study,
but (much like the United States Military Academy discussed in chapter three,
which was in large part modelled on the French school) the curriculum was
almost entirely limited to mathematics and engineering. Selection was by competitive examination, unlike that for St Cyr (where social and political connections were dominant), but the 'Military Art and Fortification' class was discontinued from 1815 to 1851, and many graduates felt that the curriculum was too theoretical. The engineer and artillery Ecole d'Application at Metz (descended from those founded at Douai and Mezieres in 1679 and 1749) was intended to remedy this and inculcate branch esprit de corps, but the Polytechnique graduates considered it too theoretical as well. (The class in 'Applied Tactics and the Art of War,' for example, concentrated primarily on administration and fortification strategy rather than the subjects of its title.) Officers in these branches finally got their practical experience in the regimental schools, which were excellent in these arms of the service, and men who sought leaves of absence to do technological research were usually granted them.\(^46\)

Upon graduation, infantry officers went directly to their regiments, while cavalrmen spent two further years at their arm's Ecole d'Application (School of Practice) at Saumur. Their instruction there was almost entirely in regimental duties and 'military spirit,' for a course in 'Military Art and History' had been abandoned in 1833. The infantry was the only branch that had no Eccle d'Application, and officer education was usually neglected in its regiments. The vast majority of noncommissioned officers rising from the ranks had little education beyond the primary level or what they received in the regimental schools. As in the Prussian and other armies, each officer was charged by the regulations with learning the duties of the rank immediately above his own, but only one out of three regiments actually had libraries, and the discussion groups officers were ordered to hold after 1844 tended to
devolve into studies of minutiae unless regimental commanders took an active interest in their work.\footnote{47}

Higher military education centered in the Staff School at Paris, founded as a school of application for St Cyr graduates and other subalterns in 1818, which provided a practical two year course in fortification and the military art concentrating on grand tactics (though--following Jomini's example--as often through examples from the Seven Years' War as with Napoleonic ones). Its classes (twenty-five men apiece) entered the Staff Corps, an exclusive branch of the army mostly officered by the social elite. Like their counterparts in the United States and Russia, these men spent little time in the line regiments (save for a brief interval between 1826 and 1833 when they were required to rotate between staff and line duties before each promotion)--indeed none at all after their first four or five years. ("Line" had three meanings in Europe: officers not of the socially elite, and usually aristocratic, Guards; ordinary units and tactics, primary in the infantry, in contrast to "light" units like skirmishers and units theoretically trained or distinguished for their elite aggressiveness and assault roles, like grenadiers; and the combat arms in general, in contrast to staff--administrative, scientific, and logistical--officers. Only the last of these meanings had general currency in the United States, for there were no aristocratic Guards and few specifically "light" units.) Staff promotion was solely from within the corps and exchanges with officers of other branches were not allowed after 1838, so advancement became slow enough that it encouraged inertia and intellectual lethargy "about as well as any [system] that could have been devised." A number of officers suggested that separate schools or civilian university departments be established to teach strategy and grand tactics, whether for the infantry, the cavalry, or the officer corps as a whole, and some even suggested that the art of war be taught
as a distinct academic discipline—the closest any proposal outside Prussia got to the Kriegsakademie of that country. The opposition of the Staff Corps defeated these suggestions, since they seemed like an attack on its privileged status or an entering wedge for wider recruitment efforts, while many line officers joined in the staff's resistance for fear that such reforms would lead to competitive promotion examinations.48

It is unclear today how the French staff actually functioned—historian Brian Bond believes that its officers acted primarily as aides-de-camp or unit adjutants, while Griffith believes that "a generalized view of strategy . . . was the hallmark of the Staff Corps." The corps' efficacy as a strategic planning organization was certainly hampered by bureaucratic competition over jurisdiction and resources with the army's technical branches, particularly the engineers (charged with fortification-building) and the artillery. French military administration certainly became more centralized during this period, and Griffith suggests that the Conseil Superieur de la Guerre organized in 1818 was intended "as much for soldiers to organize themselves in the face of bureaucrats and politicians, as it was a genuine call for military efficiency."
The Conseil trespassed on the jurisdiction of the ministerial (civilian parliamentary) committees of the technical arms and was disbanded in 1830; the 'Central Committee' that might have replaced it came to nothing within four years; and the 'Infantry and Cavalry Committee' that took up some of their functions split in two in 1841. Nevertheless, the Ministry of War had a number of committees and organizations staffed by officers dedicated to strategic planning in some form: the Depot de la Guerre (the center for topographical intelligence, founded in 1688 and effectively the Staff Corps headquarters), 'the committees of the arms,' and especially the ad hoc interarm Committees of Defense that met in 1818, 1836, and 1848. The last of
these committees finally overcame the traditional dominance of the technical \textsuperscript{41} branches and their almost exclusive focus on fortification questions, but political conservatism in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848 forestalled this committee's potential for development into a true general staff for comprehensive strategic planning.\textsuperscript{49}

These institutional struggles were parts of a more general one over the essential character of war as art or science, a question incapable of permanent resolution but fundamental to the balances chosen between social "character" and functional "merit" and individual "genius" and systematic standardization in a military organization. Despite all the attention (sometimes bordering on military positivism) given to inductive military science in the form of tactics and strategy, the collective French "answer," like that in all nineteenth-century armies, was ultimately in favor of the subjective, deductive, and intangible. This mindset meant that personal qualities became professional ones, whether in the decisiveness of a general's personal qualities (his \textit{coup d'oeil}--battlefield vision and intuition--for instance), his authority to choose his own methods in the field instead of adhering to a standard doctrine, or the personal in the sense of the psychological, of a quality originating in a person--the ever-dominant consideration of motivation and morale.\textsuperscript{50}

Most French officers (along with their foreign counterparts) were agreed that disorder was their worst enemy in war or peace, and they formulated the most carefully thought-out vision of military discipline and moral inspiration of any military organization in the nineteenth century. As inheritors of the bourgeois Revolution and the \textit{carriere ouvert aux talents}, French officers hoped to foster internalized self-discipline among their troops (a fair number of whom would eventually become subalterns themselves)
just as they had to alloy their own individual ambition with self-restraint in order to rise without disrupting the cohesion of the regimental community. Besides humane treatment, commanders hoped to encourage a spirit of 'Emulation' and 'Self-Esteem' among their men through regimental esprit de corps and informal peer group pressure. The fledgling regimental schools for enlisted men tried to inculcate a sense of patriotism and comradeship while avoiding excesses of passion, whether in martial elan (leading to overaggressiveness and battlefield disaster) or the 'moral contagion' of liberal politics (leading to indiscipline, "weakness," and flight). Clausewitz's principle of friction was recognized in French military thinking, and tactically this meant that control was everything--officers' fears of unit fragility and panic had to be finely balanced with the psychology of action and adrenaline--fight or flight (which French officers came close to articulating in a nonphysiological way)--and a whole literature was devoted to ascertaining the correct moment for the crucial decision to charge a la baionnette. To French officers pressed by social, political, and battlefield uncertainty, every aspect of the moral and psychological realm seemed to be connected--indeed, the French words for (social and religious) morals and (military and organizational) morale were one and the same.51

These comparatively thorough French efforts at systemization and rationalization were only beginnings, however. Cognitive standardization in the form of unified or holistic doctrinal development remained impossible when every military situation was still considered uniquely subjective. Though its officers debated strategy and tactics more actively than the British, the French army never had a cohesive reform movement (aside from the chasseurs) akin to that in Britain. Griffith maintains that many young French reformers translated "their personal dissatisfaction with their chosen career
into a constructively wide-ranging... analysis... in the hope of winning promotion," but this competitiveness tended to exacerbate existing divisions between the different branches. Similarly, though "one of the strongest movements in the army of the [French] constitutional monarchies [including the Second Empire] was a general multiplication of regulations and an insistence on uniformity," this organizing impulse was met by a strong "local" reaction against the agents of centralization. Regimental commanders criticized the annual inspection visits as intrusions upon their authority, while captains decried their colonels' power to reduce company noncommissioned officers in rank. In each case the forces of centralization had to accept compromises, whether inspections publicized in advance or tribunals including company officers to decide on NCO demotions.52

In a larger sense, administrative standardization was a necessary and broadly successful stage "in the transformation of a small dynastic army into a national, scientific one." Simply put, "it was essential to effective organization and control that one regiment should be more or less the same as another" in composition and internal workings. The French may have been less successful than the Prussians at this, but they were undoubtedly well ahead of the British and Russians. Griffith therefore maintains that the French army was "a rounded whole," "a perfectly forged instrument for the roles it was intended to fulfill." Like professionalism in general, its expertise was that of experience as well as system, practice as well as abstraction. While its eagerness to crush the revolution in 1848 and serve Louis Bonaparte three years later appears unconscionable to us today, the French army of the 1820s, 30s, and 40s was both functionally effective and self-critical in ways that no other army of the era approached.53
III. Russia: Autocracy and Military Inertia

Russia had the largest but least efficient of the major European armies. Historian John Shelton Curtiss has concluded that "under Nicholas I [1825-1855] the Russians were never properly prepared for conflict," despite an army officially reckoned at 859,000 men (with 30,000 commissioned officers) in 1850. The army's Commander-in-Chief "demanded unthinking obedience [from] his subordinates, [and] the whole Russian army was stamped with his system of pedantic, parade-ground training." The tone for this force was set by the tsar's autocracy; Nicholas saw the military as the central repository of national virtue and appointed thirty-two of his fifty-two ministers from its generals and admirals, but the virtues he sought were wholly those of absolutism and the ancien régime—obedience was everything, individual and professional responsibility merely a matter of following orders from above. Merit in any other guise was considered (and in a broad sense rightly) subversive.54

The tsar's fears were natural in light of the absolute character of the system he was trying to preserve. Although its incidence can easily be exaggerated, political dissent among Russian officers was inherently dangerous because it struck at the cardinal principle of Russian government and life. The mere introduction of a spirit of humanist education into the cadet schools in the late eighteenth century had produced a new class of military intelligensia, critically aware of Western culture and liberal political ideas for the first time. Enlightenment ideals of merit and individual responsibility found a precarious foothold in the officer corps, particularly among the socially elite (and thus better educated) Guards. Influenced by the nationalism of the Napoleonic era (particularly as they encountered it in
Germany), the ultimate allegiance of this group began to shift to Russia as a nation rather than the tsar as an individual. In hindsight the military assassination of Paul I in 1800 appears as no more than an isolated incident, but dissent had begun to sprout, and after a hiatus during the Napoleonic Wars it flowered anew, spurred by the army's exposure to Western culture during the long march on and occupation of Paris. Politically liberal secret societies became widespread within the officer corps during the last decade of Alexander I's reign (1815-1825), finally leading to the Decembrist revolt upon his death. After crushing the attempted coup, Nicholas set out to purge the officer corps and tighten his control over it through constant political surveillance.55

Under these circumstances associations of officers that we would otherwise label professional because of their stimulus to expertise or cohesion became centers of underground activity and were held in suspicion by their superiors. A society set up in 1816 to promote military education in the General Staff was actually a front for subversive discussions among Guards officers, and officers' artels (small associations to share meals and expenses, broadly akin to officers' messes in the West) sometimes played similar roles in line regiments. Given the circumstances displays of military cohesion were easily and often rightly taken for acts of political subversion: Grand Duke Nicholas had to realize that his authority was being challenged when twenty officers in a single Guards regiment demanded transfers to a line unit after the future tsar rebuked one of their comrades in 1822, particularly since another regiment's officers had resigned en masse under similar circumstances two years before. There were officers in a revolutionary clique in St. Petersburg as late as 1849, and eight officers were executed that year after
a staff captain serving in the campaign against the Hungarian revolt appealed to his comrades to change sides.

The fear of subversion haunted Nicholas I, but the specter was as "wafer-thin" as the educated elite that gave it support. Despite similar material poverty, the vast majority of Russian officers lacked either the political or professional activism of their French counterparts. Promotion was normally by seniority, and Guards officers received an automatic two rank promotion as compensation if they transferred into line regiments (which were mostly stationed in the provinces or along the borders rather than the centers of social life in the major cities). In either case Russian pay was the lowest of any major European power, although corruption was endemic and one-third pay pensions were available after twenty years of service (full ones after thirty-five). Officers with eight years service and a campaign under their belts could secure indefinite unpaid leave, which for many sons of landowners was far better than remaining in what Curtiss labels "an existence marked by poverty and boredom," where they "almost certainly became accustomed to an idle, coarse life . . . and tended to sink into apathy."

Russian officers were thoroughly shaped by their upbringing in a nation of autocrats and serfs, and the Russian officer corps demonstrated little cohesion or esprit de corps as a profession. (Historian John Keep suggests that the growth of military professionalism was expressed in the form of an occupational identity distinct from that of the civilian state service, but officers' experience in directing coercion was frequently put to use by detailing them to posts in local civilian administration, while a good number of their fellows saw the army primarily as a stepping-stone to civil service preferment.) As in all armies of the period, each commander's personality
counted for far more than regulations administered by a subordinate bureaucracy unwilling or unable to challenge their dominance, and this tendency was exacerbated in a society and state that took the master-serf relationship as its prototype of human interaction. Under these enervating circumstances "the tsar's obsession with outward show, hierarchical subordination, and mechanical compliance with commands came to be emulated by many of his officers," and Curtiss observes that "in Alexander's army the very idea of legality was suspect to the authorities" because it contradicted the fundamental autocratic principle of a superior's unbounded prerogative. In contrast to other armies there seems to have been comparatively little rivalry between different branches (aside from that between Guards and the line), but inertia and personal rivalry suffused the "torpid routine" of regimental life while meager salaries led to exclusiveness and snobbery. (As in other European services, elite cavalry regiments required aspirants to show 'guarantee money' sufficient to cover their probable expenses in order to join.) Nicholas demanded administrative rationalization and the structure of the Ministry of War became more clearly defined, but little changed inside the isolated world of the regiments: junior officers' lives were frequently "boring, dismal, and sometimes even brutish" when subjected to the arbitrary whims of their superiors, who often berated subordinates in front of the enlisted troops they commanded. The Russian officer corps also faced ethnocultural problems on a scale much more substantial than the regional or sectional distinctions between American, British, or French officers, for ethnic Russians were jealous of ethnically German officers (who tended to be better educated, and may have been favored by some commanders on these grounds) and hostile toward Poles.58
Most Russian officers were young nobles who volunteered and served 48 as enlisted men (albeit of a privileged sort whom it was doubtlessly difficult to discipline) while awaiting a commission: eighty percent of infantry officers (and seventy percent of the cavalry) began their careers as 'yunkery,' who were required to serve at least two years in the ranks before being commissioned. This regulation was occasionally flouted, but some noble candidates spent as many as six years awaiting commissions. The second source of officers was the military school system, but it provided only one-sixth of the candidates necessary in 1825, when there were five 'cadet schools' with four hundred instructors and five thousand pupils. By 1855 there were twenty-three schools with fourteen hundred instructors and eighty-three hundred pupils, a halving of the student-teacher ratio, but throughout this period the top half of the graduates always went to the Guards, engineers, and artillery, and these schools supplied less than one-eighth of the officers in the line infantry and one in four of those in the cavalry. (About seven percent of infantry and five percent of cavalry officers were promoted from the enlisted ranks by battlefield commission or after twelve or more years of meritorious and obedient service as noncommissioned officers.)

The Russian officer candidate pool accurately reflected the aristocratic dominance in its parent society: half the aspirants were members of the hereditary nobility, another third were so-called 'personal' nobles (whose status derived solely from their service and was not heritable), and the remaining sixth were commoners, often university students, who in a rare concession to education received their commissions after only six months service as yunkers. (Candidates defined by the state as members of the middle class also received preferential treatment, being commissioned after a mere four months in the ranks.) The presence of these educated commoners was
not necessarily a force for reform, however, for they tended to be even more conservative than noble officers, pursuing a course of class emulation also apparent in the British and Prussian armies (and even that of France near the end of the century).  

The Russian officer corps was the least well educated group of military leaders in any major power during this period. (Indeed, the French noncommissioned officer corps was probably better credentialed, and the American and British ones were almost certainly more literate.) The majority of Russian officers (particularly among the yunkers) were barely literate, which forced many commanders to rely on General Staff officers for routine clerical functions. Even in the 1850s no more than one in ten Russian officers had engaged in any post-secondary education, while thirty percent more were said to have completed secondary schools, primarily the cadet schools. These schools included tactics and military history in their curriculum, but they gave much more emphasis to moral training in autocratic principles of duty and hierarchy. (Russian cadets were subject to flogging, unlike their foreign counterparts.) The institution of commissioning exams between 1840 and 1844 was potentially the most significant reform of the officer corps during the period, but its practical effects seem to have been minimal: the examination included questions on French, German, history, and drill, but Curtiss believes that the requirement was routinely ignored in practice. An effort to create regimental schools for the yunkers was defeated in 1850 by the opposition of those it was meant to aid, and private educational initiatives (which included a military preparatory school founded in 1811 and a short-lived school for officers which one general set up at his own expense in 1819) were far rarer than in Western
Europe. In keeping with the autocratic priorities of Russian society, no effort whatsoever was made to teach enlisted men.  

Its immense size notwithstanding, "professional thought" and "reform" in the French or British senses were rarities in the Russian officer corps, and Russian army thought and training ignored the effects of terrain and firepower, with the disastrous results seen during the Crimean War at Inkerman and the Alma. There was only one short-lived journal dedicated to the study of military history and technology, and the army newspaper published nothing more than official news. Of more immediate concern, unit inspection reviews were held as many as six times a year, but they were as formalistic and formulaic as the massive "maneuvers" held in the vast urban squares and did absolutely nothing to teach commanders realistic tactics. For all intents and purposes, the Russian army had no system of tactics—much less doctrine—only the formal close-order drill taught on the parade ground. These deficiencies were as much the product of conscious decisions as simple negligence, however, for acknowledging the lethality of rifled weapons or the utility of cover would have required battlefield dispersion and a loss of control unacceptable to autocrats imbued with a nationalistic belief in the efficacy of cold steel: training Russian soldiers to operate in dispersed formations would have demanded a degree of education and independent thought impossible to achieve without disrupting the fragile social and political balance needed to sustain the most rigid aristocracy in Europe.  

Higher military thought and strategy were almost equally neglected. "Prussian" possibilities did exist, but they were frustrated by pervasive anti-intellectualism and the army's basic needs for administration and supply. (Simply keeping the huge army alive required extraordinary effort because of
the nation's vastness and the lack of capable personnel produced by tsarist absolutism. Army units commonly survived on produce grown by local serfs, or by the soldiers themselves, but these methods broke down when the army tried to move across the barren vastnesses of southern Russia to break the siege of Sevastopol in the winter of 1854-55.) As in all the other countries discussed here, the Napoleonic Wars stimulated study on the part of a small cadre: an informal group gathered to study military history and publish Russia's first military journal in 1809, and two years later a "military lyceum" was organized during the grand camp and maneuvers at Tsarskoye Selo. Officially, the Military Science Section of the General Staff was assigned responsibility for intelligence collection, strategic planning, and the study of military history, but the Ministry of War placed far greater emphasis on supplying the line regiments with trained administrators, and it appears that little advanced planning or study was done. Most damaging of all, the staff was considered politically unreliable, and a staff school established in 1819 was abolished in 1826 during the new tsar's purges, because all things intellectual were potentially liberal and therefore suspect in Europe's most reactionary regime. Unlike their counterparts in every other army, Russian staff officers received no privileges in rank, pay, or promotion, and their numbers were actually reduced in 1832, when twenty of thirty-seven staff generals were dismissed from the service without replacement.63

Poor pay, sluggish promotion, mundane duties, and dubious status gave aspiring Russian professionals little incentive to undertake the increased responsibilities of a staff post or to become professionally active in any way, as officers did under similar conditions in all the other countries we are considering. Only the Guards General Staff took trips to the field or practiced tactical and strategic map problems, and foreign tours (which
threatened political contamination) were rarely permitted. Handbooks discussing staff work were frowned upon, and the most common function performed by Russian staff officers was planning parade reviews; indeed, a 'Handbook for Officers in the Field' published in 1848 said nothing whatsoever about staff duties. There were specialized branch schools (apparently run as academies of a sort) to train engineer and artillery officers, and a Military Academy was founded in 1832 to train officers for the General Staff, but the school's director considered academic learning 'no more than a button on a uniform' and its president never made a single inspection. The number of students fell from twenty-seven to seven between 1830 and 1851, when their pay was increased. The following year thirty-seven officers attended the academy, but by then the Crimean War was only two years away.\textsuperscript{64}

\* \* \* \*

IV. Prussia: Aristocracy, Social Irresponsibility, and Limits to the Growth of Military Expertise

The contest of "character" versus "merit" and technique was clearly reflected in tactical debates over the role of firepower versus shock (or moral impetus), but it appeared most prominently in the values and systems that structured questions of promotion, where we have seen that "leadership" usually trumped "scholarship." Paddy Griffith's comment on the subject is worth repeating at length because it applies to all the armies that I examine:

The type of subaltern who hoped to rise through his intellectualism would tend to be prominent in the pages of military journals and active in regimental schools, but less well
endowed with leadership qualities and correspondingly less well viewed by inspectors. Frustrated in their hopes for advancement, such intellectual subalterns would only redouble their appeals for promotion to be linked to education and professional knowledge. For colonels and inspectors, however, promotion by examination seemed to promise results which would be too risky because too "unsupervised"—or in other words no longer within their own personal control. Nor could it take account of precisely those qualities of honour, courage, and personal "presence" through which the army was held together.⁶⁵

Given their intangible character and the inadequacy of contemporary military bureaucracies, professional cohesion and responsibility were necessarily structured by subjective personal acquaintance, which meant more to European armies than merit or expertise per se, especially since all of them were operating on the same premises in this regard. The only exception, and only a partial one at that, was in the Prussian service, home to selection and promotion exams, the Kriegsakademie and the first true General Staff for strategic planning.

This institutional progressivism had not always been present in the Prussian army, which had become notoriously rigid and hidebound in its ways during the late eighteenth century. Frederick the Great was more the absolute than the enlightened monarch in his military policies: never a believer in developing his officers' potential, his growing resistance to innovation firmly established itself in the collective mindset of the late eighteenth-century officer corps, which was all too happy to exclude classes and ideas that threatened the nobility's privileged status as the foremost
servants of king and state. As in other armies of the ancien regime, officership was predicated on class; only the engineers and artillery, with their cultural associations with intellect and manual labor rather than aristocratic command, accepted the bourgeoisie, who held no more than one out of ten commissions in 1806. The army's officers reflected this institutional and social fossilization: one out of four regimental commanders was past his sixtieth year when the Napoleonic whirlwind struck Prussia.66

The magnitude of Prussia's defeat led to swift action and extensive reform. The king appointed a commission to reorganize the army in the same month that the peace was signed at Tilsit (July 1807). His charges to the commission broached the possibility of change in the means and sources of officer selection, and the floodgates of reform burst open. A year later 'all advantages [t]hitherto enjoyed' by the nobility in officer selection were abolished, and by 1819 members of the middle classes made up forty-six percent of the regular officer corps. In the reformed army, all candidates for commissioning and promotion were required to pass examinations covering general (and for promotion, military) education, and three Kriegsschulen (War Schools) were established in 1810 to provide candidates with their final preparation before the examination. The reformers then concentrated on creating a truly "national" army through the expansion of a militia reserve, the Landwehr. This force comprised almost half the Prussian strength during the War of Liberation, and it was almost exclusively officered by the bourgeoisie. Historian Michael Geyer has observed that "whatever came after... the Prussian army would never be the same again," and political scientist Samuel P. Huntington has labelled these reforms "the true beginning of military professionalism in the West."67
These changes did not go unchallenged. The king himself qualified his demand for reform with a caution that "the chief requirements of a good officer" would continue to include "proper behaviour," a thinly veiled euphemism for the mores of the nobility. All candidates had to pass a vote by their prospective regiment's officers in order to gain their commission, a putatively democratic reform at the time but later the most frequently used means of excluding socially unacceptable (meaning middle class) aspirants. The reformers' attempts to open the cadet schools to the middle class were partially deflected by the king's decision to limit admission to his personal selections and the sons of officers (especially aristocratic ones) killed in battle. Historians have observed that "the regular army officer corps refused to accept the Landwehr officers as either professional or social equals," and the militia lost its status independent of the army in the reactionary ascendancy of 1819. The end of the Napoleonic Wars permitted aristocratic senior officers to curb the entry of bourgeois candidates, and by the beginning of the next reform era in 1860 only thirty-five percent of the officer corps and fourteen percent of the colonels and generals came from that class, in comparison with half of the Saxon and two-thirds of the Bavarian officer corps.

The initial burst of reform was not entirely without precedent, however, for professional military thought had begun to flower even beneath the pavement of pre-1806 Prussian conservatism. Its foremost gardener, whose work made him the natural candidate to lead Prussia's reformation, was Gerhard von Scharnhorst, a Hanoverian who transferred into the Prussian service in 1801 and promptly organized the Militarische Gesellschaft, a society for the study of higher military science. Scharnhorst had already published three books and edited three professional journals in Hanover (which indicates a remarkable degree of professional thought occurring in
some regions of Germany well before the reform era) and his efforts became the model for enlightened Prussian military intellectuals, above all Carl von Clausewitz. The efforts of other officers led to the reorganization and specialization of the Prussian staff in 1803, when the Quartermaster General's department lost control over functions other than supply. (This occurred at about the same time in Austria, but there the planning staff was given too little rank to compete within a huge military bureaucracy.) New staff officers were required to pass a specialized examination, and after their initial staff tour they would periodically rotate between staff and line duties in order to remain acquainted with the realities and constraints of both. Most significantly, the intellectual categories of staff work were explicitly made distinct for perhaps the first time in history: ongoing study of the fundamental principles of war on the one hand and case-specific analyses of current problems and war plans on the other.69

Scharnhorst reorganized the staff once again in 1808. He refined the definition of its responsibilities and divided it into two major sections, one that undertook long-term strategic planning and abstract study in Berlin (the Great General Staff) and one that gave expert advice to commanders in the field (the Field Forces General Staff). Scharnhorst's crowning achievement was the creation of the Kriegsakademie for General Staff training and higher military study in 1810. Its strict selection standards included five years' prior service, a nomination by the candidate's commander, and passage of an extensive competitive examination. The nine-month curriculum included history, literature, and logic among other liberal subjects, although these were being deemphasized as early as the 1820s. Hindsight and mythmaking to the contrary, the General Staff's preeminence was not immediately clear: General Staff historian Walter Goerlitz relates that the 1820s were a period of
"concentration on military education" and publishing at the academy, but graduation does not seem to have been required for service on the General Staff until later in the century. Historian Steven Clemente has suggested that the officer corps remained indifferent toward the school until the 1850s, and many officers saw attendance primarily as an opportunity to live in Berlin. Aside from the lack of interest this demonstrates, the experience of the General Staff in the 1820s provides us with a nice illustration of the paradox of Prussian military professionalism, for the staff introduced *Kriegsspiellen* (wargames, which habituated officers to examining and weighing alternative courses of action and possible enemy responses) just as it won effective and then institutional autonomy from the parliamentary War Ministry. This freedom from civilian control gave the staff tremendous power to influence Prussia-Germany's military and foreign policy, with ultimately disastrous consequences. In admiring the expertise of the Prussian staff system we should never forget that its autonomy—and thus its ability to shape national policy to suit the needs of military capability—was gained as part of an aristocratic reaction against representative democracy which ultimately led the nation down the road to destruction.70

Prussia did not have a national military academy on the lines of West Point, Sandhurst, or St Cyr. After passing the exam to become candidates, most officers began their training in the ranks, where they spent six months before going to a War or Division School for nine months to a year of final preparation before taking the commissioning examination itself. A recommendation by the regimental commander to his officers after the candidate passed this exam triggered the statutorily mandated vote of confidence in the candidate, who was normally passed since his conduct and demeanor had already been subjected to informal scrutiny through daily
interaction while serving in the unit. The other major source of officers was a system of "Cadet Schools," which as in Russia were the outgrowth of eighteenth-century academies for the sons of the impoverished nobility. Applicants were selected primarily on the basis of their fathers' service to the state, usually as military officers; the schools were the educational equivalent of weak secondary institutions and took in boys as young as ten years of age for periods as long as nine years. Graduation from a cadet school was accounted the equivalent of a successful officer candidacy exam, and in 1835 the schools supplied seventy-five of the 360 officer candidates required that year, a proportion roughly equivalent to that in the Russian army. Specifically military preparation (the equivalent of *Kriegsschule* or later on Division School training) was provided only in the senior course (the *Selektarien*) established in 1812 at the the *Hauptkadettenanstalt* (Senior Cadet Academy) in Berlin. (The senior course also included literature and philosophy until the 1860s.) Its graduates were appointed as lieutenants rather than ensigns when they passed their commissioning exams, and they were the only candidates from any source not subject to approval by regimental vote.

Several scholars have shown how the cadet schools embodied the more general conflict between values of ascription and achieved merit (or in Prussia of *Bildung*, or intellectual culture), an important question for us because of the motivational patterns involved and the potential for later comparisons with those of the administrators, educators, and cadets at the United States Military Academy. In Prussia this conflict was fundamentally a part of the class struggle between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. The growing economic power of the middle classes led to greater interest and influence in the state and its defense, and meritocratic criteria of selection and
reward had to be established to integrate these capable but socially excluded classes into the political nation. Fortunately for the nobility (though not the nation), the Prussian bourgeoisie chose to accept and espouse much of the aristocracy's worldview, but the Cadet Corps still had to attract the sons of the middle class if it was to put their ambition and intellect to use in the service of the state, for if standards were not raised sufficiently, the officer corps would be unable to compete with civilians for social prestige or with its foreign counterparts for victory in war. Doing so successfully meant raising educational standards at the cadet schools to compete with those in the civilian gymnasium without producing graduates ambitious and capable enough to pursue more lucrative and stimulating business and university careers after the required term of military service. The ineluctable tension between these objectives created an institution (and an officer corps) "as schizophrenic as the society that spawned it," but fortunately for the army (if not German society), segments of the middle class increasingly came to emulate the aristocracy during the Wilhelmine era after unification.73

Prussian military education apparently changed little in the decades between 1819 and 1860. The Kriegsschulen were closed in 1820, when their functions were assumed by the Division Schools, a decentralized system with one school per military "division" (region) in the country. The Kriegsakademie course was extended to three years during the 1820s, apparently without much success in attracting more capable students. (Helmuth von Moltke was the outstanding exception.) In 1825 a Royal Commission decried the general level of officer education and recommended increasing the requirements for commissioning, but the commission did not go so far as to demand the Abitur, the highly prized certificate of civilian secondary education, and it still suggested preference for those of noble
lineage. The pressure of rising educational standards in civil society also stimulated an 1836 War Ministry directive instructing all officers to try to improve their knowledge in order to maintain the corps' respected position in society.74

This growing susceptibility to civilian (and thus ultimately middle-class) standards led next to the Royal Ordinance of 1844, which brought the Cadet Corps curriculum closer to that in the civilian secondary schools and increased the standard for candidates entering the army from the civilian schools to possession of a certificate of eligibility for the senior level of the classical gymnasia. (The Inspector General of Military Training and Education had sought a standard equal to fitness for university study.) The number of Division Schools was cut from seventeen to nine in order to reduce the potential for disparities between their locally administered programs. The duties of the General Staff were further systematized, and annual staff rides were introduced in order to familiarize its members with the impact of terrain on military history and policy. There reform came to a rest for nearly twenty years. Clemente observes that "the upheaval of 1848 generated little effect upon officer selection and training," for the revolutionaries' attempt to place officer training entirely in the hands of the civilian universities failed. Clemente concludes that "the overall level of officer education did rise somewhat," between 1820 and 1860, "but aristocrats in positions of power continued to circumvent the regulations that, if closely followed, would have ended the nobility's dominance of the officer corps." They clearly did so with the tacit approval and under the social authority of the king and the military autocracy he represented.75

Historians disagree somewhat over the army educational system's success at recruiting officers of demonstrated intellectual merit. Steven
Clemente believes that the cadet school education was "inferior" to that in civilian schools, and he suggests that the system passed men through rather than weeding them out, since candidates could ultimately take the commissioning exam as many as three times. Scharnhorst's ideals proved evanescent, "professional curricula throughout most of the nineteenth century... were increasingly confined to purely military subjects," and "obedience and conformity rated far above individual initiative and thought." Despite extensive professional activity by junior officers later in the century, Clemente concludes that "a candidate's capacity for dealing with the changing social and technological responsibilities of a modern officer were of secondary importance to character in the Prussian training and selection process": "The average intellectual standard of most line regiments was not high" and the "major requirement for all candidates remained unequivocal loyalty to the crown." Similarly, Michael Geyer reports that by the 1850s the army had "become the dumping ground for the 'dumbest sons'" of the aristocracy. John Moncure presents a more nuanced but essentially similar account; ultimately, "the cadet schools [and the army system as a whole] produced technicians and 'doers,' but not thinkers."76

Consequently, although Prussian officers produced a military literature that one of them estimated at half of Europe's total output in 1859, life in the Prussian officer corps does not appear to have been much more intellectually exalted than that in other European forces. Political influence counted for as much or more than seniority in determining who received the opportunity to take promotion exams, and Frederick William III (the king from 1797 to 1840) often exercised his prerogative to choose regimental commanders. Independent means were essential if an officer was not to live in what he would consider poverty—as late as 1900 Prussian ensigns received one-fifth
the pay of their American counterparts, and many Guards and cavalry
regiments demanded an accounting of a prospective officer's finances before
accepting him into their fraternity of gambling and conspicuous
consumption. The aristocracy continued to see the army as the foundation
of its social prestige, because military service provided a subsidized route to
permanent salaried posts in the personal service of the king, the nobility's
central if not sole claim to preeminence in the Prussian polity. For over a
century they fought a rearguard action to preserve their dominance in army,
state, and nation, manipulating, changing, and ignoring regulations as
deemed necessary in the process. The cadet schools served the king as the
essential source for thoroughly reliable officers whose personal fealty and
social self-interest maintained the monarchy's monopoly on organized
violence and ultimately sustained the throne itself. This system of personal
feudal prerogative encouraged the officer corps' claim to represent the essence
of the state, uncontaminated by the democratic and egalitarian seeds implicit
in the western European idea of "nation."

Personal allegiance to the crown was the foundation of a corporate
identity that stressed self-defined responsibility to the exclusion of all other
professional considerations, including personal self-development (through
the cultivation of expertise) and accountability (which I mean here to be a
potentially more democratic criterion than the vaguer "responsibility") to the
nation as a whole. While constitutional conflict and class competition may
have forced the nobility to modernize the institutions of military education,
their spirit remained essentially aristocratic, so that neither expertise nor
democratic accountability replaced social considerations of class cohesion and
solidarity as the basic criteria of military professionalism. In Prussia, unitary
control (i.e., the absence of effective parliamentary oversight) over the armed
forces was probably far more catastrophic than continued constitutional strife would have been. The Prussian and German officer corps are examples of the worst possible outcome of the fusion of strong group cohesion with an self-defined sense of "responsibility." Their cohesion was fundamentally ideological rather than functional or occupational; defending the nation ultimately meant defending their own social position to the point that the nation began (or in the case of World War Two could begin, with the officer corps' expert functional leadership in Hitler's service) wars that led to its own destruction.  

* * *

V. Composites and Conclusions: Class and Occupational Cohesion at the Expense of Both Military Expertise and Social Responsibility

Can we draw a composite picture of the European military officer in 1840? Perhaps it would be much like Gunther Rothenberg's portrait of the Austrian officer corps:

As a whole, the corps was not studious but rather contemptuous of learning, and ... regimental officers often regarded roughness and even brutality as the marks of a good soldier. They were much devoted to routine, the drill manual, and the letter of the regulations. But on the other hand, the corps was courageous, honest, trustworthy, faithful to its role as an instrument of the state, and above all, utterly devoted to a personal concept of loyalty to the emperor.  

This profile hardly does justice to the military reformers of France, Britain, and Prussia or the egalitarian military educators of France; and feudal
loyalties had little meaning for the British and none for the French officer. The average British officer demonstrated little interest in drill, and the average Russian officer showed no interest in tactics, but reliable service to the state was the forte of every European officer corps, and they routinely crushed popular dissent wherever it appeared. This lack of democratic social responsibility was not primarily or specifically a military fault but a social and political one determined by class structure and officers' class origins. As Michael Geyer notes, "the link between professionalism and elite status, expertise and privilege, is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the case of the military," and it would be highly ahistorical to allow our repugnance for the civilian political regimes of Europe to blind us to the politically reliable service of their armed forces, but this reliability was not the product of a specifically military professionalism founded primarily on function. To recognize this is simply to recognize the contingency of the military function, especially in societies riven by internal divisions--in nineteenth-century Europe the "management of violence" was directed as much at one's neighbors and social subordinates as at the organized forces of other nations.

During the nineteenth century the greatest threat to any European polity's survival was internal revolution rather than external territorial conquest and dismemberment, and this was reflected in the character of military professionalism, especially in the preference shown to the quasi-aristocratic political ideal of "character" over the bourgeois functional ideal of "merit." Though these contrasts are admittedly overdrawn, they cannot be ignored without imposing a rank reductionism on the historical record and absolving actors of their responsibility or events.80

Other commonalities of nineteenth-century officer corps were derived from this regrettable political conditioning. Cohesion, worldview, and
mentalité were based on class origins and values. Institutionalized material incentives for professional development were deemed unnecessary or even dangerous by politicians who feared making mercenaries out of their officers. Organizational and functional military autonomy were therefore bounded by external demands and the officers' class-based receptivity to them. Experimentation in military tactics was limited by the fear that peasant and working class enlisted men would prove unreliable if encouraged to use their own initiative on a dispersed battlefield. Besides all this, purely military technology was still relatively simple, and the rarity of railroads still limited troop concentrations to the speed of foot and hoof. This in turn meant that politicians and generals had plenty of time to decide among their options, a luxury that allowed military organizations to operate without formulating detailed war plans in advance. Expertise, and thus education, were still considered less significant than the ability to command a soldier's obedience in battle, and this class-bound mindset was one of the principal factors that led to the slaughter of World War One and the consequent disdain for military intellect and society that has characterized so much of twentieth-century Western thought and culture.

The European military profession was not completely static during this era, but the most important development may have been one of centralized and socially functional organization (bureaucracy in the Weberian sense) rather than expertise per se. Michael Geyer has explained that "in adapting... Napoleonic practices, the Prussian army established [several] organizational principles, which henceforth were to dictate the future of all modern armies":

First, as opposed to [the] personal authority [of individual autocrats], there was the elaboration of functional authority in
which a complex and interlocking system of institutionally
organized authority developed. . . . Second, . . . Prussia
systematized army units . . . and made them interchangeable.
This more than anything else put an effective end to the . . .
related systems of a regimental economy and the control of a
regiments by specific military families.81

With state-sponsored organizational uniformity (or at least similitude) came
the ideal of standardization, which eventually led to the development of
coherent doctrines and an abstract cognitive base for the application of
military expertise. Ultimately this base served as the means, and centralized
nation-state control the impetus, to define mission and jurisdiction
(Clausewitz's "policy by other means").

Military bureaucracies developed within the context of a changing
social structure. The experiences of the age of democratic revolutions spurred
the ongoing differentiation of political and military elites throughout Europe
(with the significant exception of Russia), though the process was hardly
complete by 1850. Geyer's evaluation of the Prussian situation can stand for
that in Britain, France, and even the United States as well:

[T]he social organization of violence was no longer what it had
been. It was postabsolutist, even if it was [still] aristocratic.
However, it was the fragmentary condition of army reform
rather than the complete remaking of the army, the
simultaneous and [often] incoherent presence of multiple
directions within the army and in the relations between army
and society, that characterizes the condition of the military in the
first half of the nineteenth century. It took nearly half a century
... to put the various elements of partial change together. The outcome of this process was a professional army.  

Geyer's thoughtful assessment uses the criteria of institutional and cognitive autonomy as his primary indices of military professionalism, which he essentially defines as a product of functional specialization within the social division of labor. He recognizes that this was by no means a complete or rapid development, however: "rather than promoting the rise of a military profession, [bureaucracy initially] facilitated an aristocratic restoration. ... 'professionalization' did not lead to a military profession without an additional political push." In Prussia this impetus was provided by the constitutional crises of the 1860s, when the army acquired an external mission to consummate national unification through war. The reacceleration of interstate competition after the creation of Germany then stimulated military professionalism throughout Europe. The American constitutional crisis of the 1860s did not have this effect, but the symbiotic rise of a complex, highly organized society and political centralization during the Progressive era did so.
Chapter I


2 Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, is the best scholarly example of the older trend, based on definitions of professionalism that stressed educated and institutionalized expertise (and his own political science strictures in favor of civilian control via unified lines of authority). Griffith, *Military Thought in the French Army*, and Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, are the standard-bearers of a less critical view that accepts the nineteenth-century emphasis on practical experience and moral considerations along with "subjective" or ideological--i.e., social and cultural rather than solely institutional--civilian control and complex systems of constitutional checks and balances. See Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871* (New York: Dorset Press, 1961) and Dennis E. Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles: Soldiers, Technology, and the Unification of Germany* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoestring Press, 1975) for classic discussions of the impact of the revolutionary technological changes that occurred after this period.


6 Harries-Jenkins, "The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army," pp. 476-77; idem., The Army in Victorian Society (London: Routledge, 1977), ch. 2 and pp. 42-43; Spiers, The Army and Society, p. 8 (Table 1.3); and P.E. Razzell, "Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army, 1758-1962," British Journal of Sociology 14 (September 1963): 253 (Tables 7 and 8). The standard figure presented by sources on the British army is twenty-one percent aristocracy, thirty-two percent landed gentry, and forty-seven percent middle class (which includes those few men promoted from the enlisted ranks). More broadly, see Lawrence and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, An Open Elite?: England, 1540-1880 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), and Arno J. Mayer, The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War (New York: Pantheon, 1981). In Spain, approximately one out of six infantry, one out of nine cavalry, and more than two out of five artillery officers were the sons of officers, though this actually inverts common assumptions about the tendency of aristocrats to seek cavalry posts and the middle class to seek technical ones. (See Manuel Espadas Burgos, "The Spanish Army During the Crisis of the Old Regime," in Armed Forces and Society in Spain, Past and Present, eds. Rafael Banon Martinez and Thomas M. Barker [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], p. 95.)

Strachan, Wellington's Legacy, p. 110, suggests a more middle-class British army when he reports that only 73 of the more than 5000 infantry officers held hereditary titles. In his view, "the characteristics of a gentleman were bestowed by education rather than birth" (p. 111). This is true in a broad sense, but the public schools were hardly distinguished centers of learning—the education they provided was more like gentry class socialization. See Rupert Wilkinson, Gentlemanly Power: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). Alan J. Guy, Economy and Discipline: Officership and Administration in the British Army, 1714-63 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), depicts a mid-eighteenth-century officer corps of mostly middle means, "gentlemen by virtue of a modicum of education" (p. 89) rather than wealth, but under the impact of inflation, diminished entrepreneurial perquisites (brought on by improved central administration) as unit commanders, and more extravagant lifestyles the British army became more socially exclusive in the late eighteenth century than before, in contrast to the experience of other European militaries. Indeed, Razzell, "Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army," Table 7 (p. 253) shows the aristocracy declining as a proportion of the corps by an eighth from 1780 to 1830, but the landed gentry doubling their percentage and the middle class actually declining by nearly a quarter, to a minority of the whole. Even more significantly, while the British officer corps doubled in size during this period, the number of gentry
officers increased by a multiple of five. Guy views the shift towards the gentry as a process of regression or deprofessionalization, "an adverse change in the character of officership," because the new officers often lacked their predecessors' interest in the details of drill and command (p. 166).

My discussion of the British army is limited to the Home Army (which included many units overseas) -- I am not discussing the Indian Army (in this era that of the East Indian Company), which was a separate establishment altogether. (There were far more similarities than differences, of course.) The Indian Army may well have been more "professional" in its expertise, but it was considered a poor relation to the Home Army.

7 The percentage of Lords who were also officers more than tripled between 1837 and 1898, and officers were the largest occupational group represented in the House of Commons between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries (The Army in Victorian Society, ch. 7, pp. 218-20). Officers made up ten to twenty percent of the Chamber of Deputies in France, and thirty to forty percent of the peers were generals (Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, p. 14). See also Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army; Douglas Porch, Army and Revolution: France, 1815-1848 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) (which really only deals with events to 1836 and the effective end of military dissent); John L.H. Keep, Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462-1874 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) (who seems to exaggerate the degree of reformist sentiment in the Russian officer corps).

I. Britain: Military Amateurism, Accountability to Civilian Control, and Limited Stirrings of Reform

8 Harries-Jenkins emphasizes the officer's tie to his regiment rather than the army (The Army in Victorian Society, pp. 3 and 217; "The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army," p. 486). In 1854, sixty-two percent of British colonels came from estates, farms, and villages of fewer than a thousand people, fifteen percent from towns and villages of one to five thousand, and twenty percent from larger towns and cities. The figures for general officers were roughly similar (Spiers, The Army and Society, p. 11, Table 1.4). In "The Education of Sir Henry Clinton," Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 72 (Spring 1990): 131-53, Ira Gruber presents a fairly professional picture of the individual studies undertaken by officers who aspired to high rank in the eighteenth century, but he goes on to demonstrate that there was no uniformity in the conclusions they drew from their studies, which permitted indecisive commanders like Clinton to practice the utmost caution while attempting to evade responsibility for his
inaction. Although the officers Gruber examines read much the same set of works, they did so informally, as individuals without the institutional guidance that might have standardized some of their reactions to what they read. Their knowledge was in no sense doctrinal; their expertise did not sustain responsibility; and Clinton's career was advanced primarily by his social, political, and service connections. (Indeed, Clinton was already a member of Parliament before his appointment in America.) Gruber notes that "above all," Clinton's military notebooks "represent . . . his efforts to justify his conduct in America and to escape sole responsibility for the loss of the colonies" (p. 150).

9 Spiers, The Army and Society, pp. 12-13. Table 1.5 (p. 12) provides a sample of officer recruiting sources from 1849 to 1855, of which I have used the figures from 1849 and 1851-53 for my calculations. (An unusual number of officers were commissioned by purchase in 1850, and 1854 and 1855 were war years.) About 440 new officers entered the army in each of these years, which, as throughout the century, saw some minor military emergencies, the Second Sikh War in 1849 and an invasion scare in 1850-51.


The word "subaltern" was used as a general term to refer to the class of company-grade officers below captain. In the U.S. Army after the War of 1812 this meant first and second lieutenants (including new West Point graduates temporarily brevetted to the latter rank as supernumeraries until congressionally authorized commissions opened up). Before then the American rank structure included ensigns and cornets (their cavalry equivalent) beneath second lieutenants, and in some units during the War of 1812 beneath the additional rank of third lieutenants. In those units ensigns tended to be supernumerary officers. Third lieutenant remained a rank in the Corps of Artillery until 1821, because this force tended to be widely dispersed in small detachments throughout the army. The supernumerary
rank of brevet second lieutenant effectively replaced third lieutenant and ensign as the army's most junior one after the war.

11 "Grade" is used here as a synonym for rank, a common phrasing in military parlance.

12 Spiers, The Army and Society, pp. 14-18; Harries-Jenkins, The Army in Victorian Society, ch. 3. Spiers, p. 16, notes that cavalry commissions often went for double the regulation level, infantry for a third above it. This practice was tacitly condoned by the civil and military authorities for the same reasons that they accepted the system itself. Officers had the theoretical right to demand the regulation price and no more when they sought to purchase a higher rank, but if the salesman refused and no deal was cut they would become obstacles to the promotion of others and would be ostracized. Usually men unable to afford over-regulation payments surrendered their seniority for purchase purposes and were passed over, sometimes several times. The system was a market one, and demand well exceeded supply. Razzell, "Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army," p. 259, notes that there was actually "a recognized auction room for dealing in commissions in Charles Street, London."

13 Spiers, The Army and Society, p. 18; Harries-Jenkins, The Army in Victorian Society, pp. 76-77. The officer who left for Britain was Sir Colin Campbell, a hardy officer in good health whose first experience had been as a teenager in the Peninsula forty years before. See Jay Luvaas, The Education of an Army: British Military Thought, 1815-1940 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 72-73, for a specific example of the damaging impact of the British promotion system, in which the "most distinguished of Wellington's engineers" in the Peninsular War (John Fox Burgoyne, who reentered the army in 1845 as Inspector General of Fortifications and later rose to field marshal) resigned in 1831 because he was superseded by two juniors, doubtless by purchase.

14 Strachan, Wellington's Legacy, pp. 113-15 (statistic); Spiers, The Army and Society, pp. 15-16. Although their salaries were only about half those of their equivalents in the civil service, British officers were less likely than their foreign counterparts to complain about compensation, because under the purchase system they usually had to be wealthy already in order to consider a military career. In determining motivation, however, it is unclear whether the purchase system was valued primarily as a secure form of investment or as a means of rapid promotion. Doubtless the distinction was often a class one: poorer officers, who were forced to wait for promotion without
purchase due to another's death (rare though this was during peacetime), could then realize hefty profits by selling their commissions once this occurred, and many officers actually insured the value of their commissions so that their families would not be bereft should they die suddenly. See ibid., pp. 15 and 20; Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, pp. 85 and 89. See Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, p. 115, for statistics on the "negligible role" of vacancies produced by death. Those dismissed from the service lost their commissions and thus their investments, a rule that was supposed to restrain misbehaviour.

15 Spiers, *The Army and Society*, pp. 15 and 19-21; Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, pp. 86 and 125; Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, p. 119 (statistic); Brian Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College, 1854-1914* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), p. 27. A Royal Commission did criticize the system in 1850, without much immediate impact. The commissioning and promotion exams were not used to determine the outcome of a competition for a limited number of places, but to assure (in theory) that entrants possessed a basic liberal arts education.

In 1850 no general in the British Isles was under the age of 61, and in 1837 only one general in ten was employed (Strachan, pp. 119-20). Seniority and its consequences applied at all grades in the Royal Engineers and Artillery. In 1833, the ten most senior artillery lieutenants had spent twenty-plus years in the service (Strachan, pp. 117-18), and in 1838 the average artillery captain had spent almost twenty years reaching his rank; "first captains" (roughly speaking, majors) had spent thirty, lieutenant colonels thirty-five, and colonels forty-two (Spiers, p. 20). Compare the figures in Harries-Jenkins, Table 13 (p. 126), with those provided on other armies below.


18 Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava: Tactics, Technology, and the British Army, 1815-1854* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 6; idem., *Wellington's Legacy*, pp. 149-50; Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, p. 59. Indeed, Strachan observes that "by the word 'strategy' a British nineteenth-century colonial general understood . . . little more than the organisation of marches" (From Waterloo to Balaclava, p. 2). As in a number of other areas, the Victorian army had let the reforms of the Napoleonic Wars slip away: Strachan remarks (*Wellington's Legacy*, p. 151) that from 1803 to 1815 the Quartermaster General's department had been a virtual general staff,
with its own school and a permanent nucleus of trained officers, while Luvaas, *The Education of an Army*, p. 69, notes an informal 'Society for producing useful Military Information' among engineer officers in the Peninsula. Gat, *The Development of Military Thought*, p. 11, asserts that the British thinkers Sir Charles Napier and John Mitchell, to whom Luvaas devotes a chapter apiece, derived their ideas "totally" from Jomini and the German strategist Georg Heinrich Berenhorst.


19 Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, pp. 158-66; Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, pp. 153; Higham, "The Selection, Education, and Training of British Officers," p. 50. Gordon A. Craig, "Command and Staff Problems in the Austrian Army, 1740-1866," in Michael Howard, *The Theory and Practice of War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 45-67, paints much the same picture of Austrian staff officers--in effect, the Prussian General Staff was head and shoulders above all others and the French was substantially superior to the British, who were not much above their eastern counterparts. The most thorough discussion of nineteenth-century staffs is in Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College* (statistics quoted from pp. 59 and 64). (See pp. 71-74 on the reforms instituted after 1856.) Note that the Senior Department's staff took the opportunity to extend the course to two years after Parliament cut off its funding, which suggests a substantial degree of dedication to the school's mission among these men, for it would surely have been easier to attract officers with the shorter curriculum.


Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, pp. 20-26, 34 (quotation), 127, 133, and 156. See Luvaas, *The Education of an Army*, p. 42, on conflicts between Francophile and Germanophile visions of military expertise (as art or science respectively).


Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, p. 57; Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, pp. 90-96, 135, and 156. The Inspector of Military Schools was the same man appointed to the newly revived position of Chaplain-General that year. This cleric advocated camps of instruction and improved artillery training in an enlarged army (Strachan, p. 87). Libraries were established for enlisted men at major barracks from 1840 onward, and by 1853 there were supposedly 16,000 paying subscribers (p. 93). See Jay Luvaas, *The Education of an Army*, pp. 45-50, for examples of prescience on the part of one leading reform author.

The Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (first founded in 1741) trained all candidates for the artillery and engineers. It took in about 100 cadets per year, and its curriculum included liberal arts subjects from 1840 onward. As in most other military schools of the era, the curriculum focused on mathematics—nineteenth-century military officers must have chanted logarithms in their sleep—and gunnery, although no manual for the cadets seems to have been available before 1853. The postgraduate "Royal Engineer Establishment" was founded at Chatham in 1812 with a one and a half year course in which officers were to prepare their own aide-memoire for future use. Stylized siege operations were held there from 1830 onwards. See Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, pp. 124-25, 132, and 157, and Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, pp. 113-18 and 149-51.


27 Harries-Jenkins, "The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army," pp. 487, 473, and 479; Strachan, *Wellington’s Legacy*, pp. 8, 11, 234, 246, and 254. See also idem., "The Early Victorian Army and the Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government," *English Historical Review* 95 (July 1980): 782-809. The Hanoverian monarchs had far more direct control over promotion in the eighteenth century than the nineteenth-century Parliament ever sought; see Guy, *Oeconomy and Discipline*. Strachan, pp. 131-32, discusses the new military clubs (i.e., gentlemen’s clubs). The United Service Institution was founded in London in 1829, and by 1840 had 4000 members, but until 1845 only its library had any semblance of professional content, and its journal did not begin publication until 1857. The figure Strachan gives for its membership seems a high one in an officer corps of 6,700; many of these men were probably civilians of suitable social rank, perhaps a good number of them in the militia. In any case, membership was probably a claim to occupational identity (and therefore a force, however weak, for cohesion) rather than a practical reality, for few regular officers would have got to London to visit the club routinely.

28 Strachan, *Wellington’s Legacy*, p. 269. It would be tempting to describe Harries-Jenkins’s view as one best applied to the army at home, and Strachan’s as one more applicable to that in the colonies, were these distinctions not so clearly artificial. Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, p. 101, asserts that social conditions were similar in both armies, although the Indian Army was much less exclusive. (See Razzell, "Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army," pp. 252-53.) Byron Farwell, *For Queen and Country* (London: Allen Lane, 1981) portrays a hard-bitten veteran force, but his emphasis is on the mid- to late Victorian army in the African and Indian colonies, whose core was its noncommissioned officers.

Table 7 (p. 253), shows that this was true between 1830 and 1875, when the landed gentry's representation in the officer corps remained at thirty-two percent and the aristocracy's declined a mere one-seventh (from twenty-one to eighteen percent). By 1912 the proportion of aristocrats had been halved, but the gentry's remained unchanged after more than eighty years. "Indeed," writes Harries-Jenkins, "many regiments became more rather than less exclusive" (p. 478). The ideal image of the military gentleman had by then shifted from the Regency buck to the "Christian gentleman," and enlisted men received better treatment, but the prevailing attitude toward professional study seems to have remained disdainful until after the turn of the century, if not beyond, despite the growth of an ethos that put greater emphasis on the experience of troop command in the field. (See Spiers, The Army and Society, pp. 24-29, and Harries-Jenkins, The Army in Victorian Society, chs. 5-7.) W.S. Hamer, The British Army: Civil-Military Relations, 1885-1905 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) and Edward Spiers, The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), provide the best discussions of reform around the turn of the century. Timothy Travers, The Killing Ground: the British Army, the Western Front, and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), maintains that these changes were insufficient—although the British army was a superb force in the defense (as in 1914), its class- and culturally bound concepts of offensive operations had to be thoroughly rethought after disastrous assaults in 1915 and 1916, as did those of all the European armies.

II. France: Nuances of Politicization and "Reform," Paradoxes of Military Effectiveness and Social (Ir)responsibility


32 Holroyd, "The Bourbon Army," p. 529; Porch, Army and Revolution, p. 2 and ch. 2; Huntington, The Soldier and the State, p. 45; Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, pp. 16 and 89.

33 Holroyd, "The Bourbon Army," pp. 534-35. See also P. Savigear, "Carbonism and the French Army, 1815-1824," History 54 (June 1969): 198-211,


36 Porch, *Army and Revolution*, chs. 4-5 and 7-8 (quotation from p. 66); Griffith, *Military Thought in the French Army*, p. 16 (statistic); Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 45. NCOs had "welcomed the prospect of political turmoil" before these developments (Porch, p. 42). Attrition rates between 1831 and 1841 were fifty-five percent in the infantry, fifty percent in the cavalry, and thirty-six percent in the artillery (Porch, p. 85).

37 Porch, *Army and Revolution*, p. 117.

38 Ibid., chs. 7 and 8 (quotations on pp. 117 and 135-38).


42 Ibid., pp. 8-9, 58, and 68.


44 Holroyd, "The Bourbon Army," p. 545; Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, ch. 7 and pp. 61, 74-75, 89, and 115-16 (quotations). Advocates for the line infantry remained "more influential," however. Their ideas were clearly based on the hierarchical values of the ancien regime, while those of the chasseurs were a blend of nineteenth-century romanticism ('elan' in the charge), positivism (in their numerical calculations of speed and attrition), and nationalism and republicanism (as an internalizable form of self-discipline felt especially suitable for citizens and Frenchmen). According to Griffith, "the exciting thing about the Chasseurs was that they were supposed to be experts at everything" (p. 129). Their tactics were the model for the Zouaves and their American volunteer emulators in the 1850s and the Civil War, and their manuals formed the basis for William J. Hardee's "Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics," the standard American tactical manual of that era. See Marcus Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians: the Martial Spirit in America, 1776-1865 (2nd ed., New York: The Free Press, 1973), pp. 241-47; Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson, Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage (University: University of Alabama Press, 1982), pp. 49-56; and Paddy Griffith, Battle Tactics of the Civil War (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 100-115.

Nineteenth-century tactical debates were always strongly tinged with considerations of social status and national culture. This was still possible because automatic weapons and improved artillery had not yet forced units to disperse and take cover on or under the ground in the way familiar to us today. In military terms the debate always centered on the efficacy of firepower versus that of morale. Among the French, for example, some Chasseurs advocated a battle of attrition based on aimed rather than volley fire, but their ideas were rejected because the French army was expected to be smaller than its major European opponents (i.e., Prussia/Germany), and more aggressive action utilizing the soldier's elan was thought more in tune with the 'innate' enthusiasm of the French character. Sniping doubtlessly lacked the glamour of la gloire. The Spanish army was similarly divided between 'Africanists,' provincials, and metropolitans, who each espoused a different paradigm (with cultural and political implications) for excellence and promotion: combat performance, seniority, and administrative skill (Burgos, "The Spanish Army During the Crisis of the Old Regime," p. 128).
Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, pp. 101 (first quotation), 135-40 (short quotations on 137), and 65; Holroyd, "The Bourbon Army," p. 531; Porch, Army and Revolution, p. 85. I will deal with the influence of Jomini when I discuss American military thought in chapters three and five. French military students were more unruly than their British, Prussian, or (post-1825) American counterparts. The usual bullying and hazing was supplemented by an 1843 riot at St Cyr against the introduction of a more difficult grading scale; the syllabus was simplified in its aftermath. The Ecole Polytechnique was considered a hotbed of leftist sentiment because its students were selected by impartial examination, which left no room for considerations of social origin or political reliability, and there were large-scale riots there in 1832 and 1844 (Griffith, pp. 139 and 141).

Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, pp. 80 and 141-44.

Ibid., pp. 72-73, 91, 105, 135, and 147.

Ibid., pp. 144-47 and 165; Bond, The Victorian Army and the Staff College, pp. 42-44; Dallas D. Irvine, "The French and Prussian Staff Systems Before 1870," Journal of the American Military History Foundation 2 (Winter 1933): 200-201 (quotation). Azar Gat, The Development of Military Thought, p. 20, n. 52, maintains that in contemporary French parlance "grand tactics" included strategy and operations as well as the movement and combination of different arms and formations on the battlefield, but I think that accepting this usage at face value indicates that the French had not yet begun to make distinctions between these levels of military thought and action, which is certainly untrue. I will therefore use grand tactics to mean the management of an entire battlefield rather than confusing it with movements within a theater of operations or the plans and objectives of a war as a whole. Sweden supposedly had a school of grand tactics and strategy similar to that sought by French reformers (Griffith, p. 146). The nineteenth-century Staff School was descended from that founded in Grenoble in 1764 and closed during the Revolution. Irvine, p. 197, describes the eighteenth century system, which was "far in advance of the Prussian." Note that French quartermasters were not part of the staff corps or the line. Their status was somewhat akin to that of American paymasters: men appointed directly to the rank of majors but unable to rise any higher except in their own specialty.

Bond, The Victorian Army and the Staff College, p. 42, and Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, ch. 8 (quotation from p. 155). The Dept kept a 'statistical' section on foreign armies after 1827. It did extensive historical research, but limited its work to regimental histories that would
inspire unit esprit (ibid., p. 72). See also Gary P. Cox, *The Halt in the Mud: French Strategic Planning from Waterloo to Sedan* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), which was received too late for me to include its substantial insights herein.

50 Griffith, *Military Thought in the French Army*, pp. 68-73. *Coup d’oeil* was understood as an intangible quality of perspective and insight—diagnosis and inference, in Andrew Abbott’s words—effected concretely through a commander’s vision of the battlefield. It was considered a product of individual genius rather than training, although experience aided one’s development of the quality, if the potential was present.

51 Ibid., pp. 86-87 (first quotation), 97, 105, 116-21, and 146 (second quotation). On the other hand, French officers (presumably those who had not risen from the ranks) seem to have been becoming quite reactionary in their general and specific social attitudes during this period (ibid., p. 41).

52 Ibid., pp. 18 (second quotation), 60 (first quotation), 90, and 98.


III. Russia: Autocracy and Military Inertia


55 Curtiss, *The Russian Army Under Nicholas I*, pp. 231-32, 244, 300, and 342. The assassination of Paul I in 1800 mixed a number of these motives: the officer corps was antagonized equally by the tsar’s Prussophile tendencies in military thought and administration and by his efforts to clearly distinguish between civil and military authority and to clear out the corps by dismissing men whose service was only nominal. John Keep considers it a traditionalist act overlaid by vaguely liberal rhetoric. See Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, pp. 245-

56 Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, pp. 257-58, 264, and 348-50; Curtiss, *The Russian Army Under Nicholas I*, p. 288. Curtiss reports that another captain did change sides and serve with the Hungarians, while a third tried to surrender his unit without a fight but was stopped and later executed (p. 287).

57 Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, pp. 269 (first quoted phrase) and 235; Curtiss, *The Russian Army Under Nicholas I*, pp. 192-195 and ch. 11.


59 Ibid., pp. 176-79 and 186-87. Ray, "The Imperial Russian Army Officer," citing Soviet historian A.V. Fedorov, reports that 14,415 out of 50,567 officers (28%) between 1825 and 1850 were commissioned from "military educational institutions" (p. 580). The enduring transnational ties between European military aristocracies are evident in the title of *Fahnenjunker* given to Prussian officer candidates. 'Yunkers' were of course Prussian landlords, the descendants of the knights who conquered East Prussia from the Slavs.

60 Curtiss, *The Russian Army Under Nicholas I*, p. 177; Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, p. 345. Keep suggests that the traditional 'service nobility' (*dvoryanstvo*) was "losing its taste for military service by the 1830s, when only ten percent of its members were in military service (p. 344). This may have been because the *dvorstany* was growing while other classes were seeking advancement through military service, though. In 1845 the grant of hereditary nobility to military officers, once automatic, was limited by decree to men achieving the rank of colonel. 'Personal' nobility was essentially a psychological device, with few material benefits.

61 Curtiss, *The Russian Army Under Nicholas I*, pp. 177, 181-84, and 188-89; Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, pp. 251 and 259. After the Crimean War, "it was determined that 74 per cent of the officers entering the army had not received a completed education in a suitable institution of military education" (Ray, "The Imperial Russian Army Officer," p. 579). This number was not unusual
among European officer corps, however, if we remember the infrequency (and inadequacy) of a St Cyr education and the rarity of a Sandhurst one.

62 Ibid., pp. 102, 245, 255-56, and ch. 6; Keep, Soldiers of the Tsar, p. 324.


64 Idem., The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, pp. 103-106 and 118. John Keep presents a substantially different view in Soldiers of the Tsar:

On the whole this was a period of marking time—which is not a synonym for immobility, but implies an accumulation of energy in preparation for a new step forward. . . . [A] new generation of experienced and well-educated officers was rising to the surface. . . . they were critical of the arbitrariness and chaos that lay hidden beneath the apparently orderly exterior of military life. They sensed that reforms were essential, if only to ensure the monarchy's survival. Though slighted under Nicholas's heavy hand, these 'cadres' were able to implement much of progress after 1855 (p. 325).

Although the lattermost statement is true, I tend to find Curtiss's pessimistic appraisal more persuasive for the period of my study. Keep's spotlight tends to concentrate on the activities and beliefs of a small "cadre" rather than those of the vast majority of much less "liberal" or "reformist" officers mired in the regimental swamps.

A similar caveat applies to Carl Van Dyke's work on Russian Imperial Military Doctrine and Education, 1832-1914 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993). His chapter, "Innovation: The Foundation of the Nicholas Academy of the General Staff Under A.H. Jomini and Nicholas I, 1832-1847" (pp. 1-31), shows that some Russian officers thought very deeply about military art and science, going so far as to carry on long-running debates over the role of theory versus that of practice and experience in developing one's comprehension of military art and science. Indeed, Van Dyke labels some of their approaches to the study of military history and science "idealist," "historicist," and "positivist," indicating the complex questions at issue among these officers, who were also familiar with Clausewitz and his criticisms of earlier analysts. On the other hand, "not one of the instructors from the other military schools responded to the [initial] call for academic personnel" (p. 6), which suggests the difficulties facing intellectual military endeavour in the Russian system and the limitations of many of the men charged with directing it. The Russian army's combat performance does not
suggest that these thinkers had much of a practical impact. On post-Crimean reform, see Keep, ch. 15 ("An Age of Reform"); see John Bushnell, "The Tsarist Officer Corps, 1881-1914: Customs, Duties, Inefficiency," American Historical Review 86 (October 1981): 753-80, for a perspective that suggests that the mass of the late nineteenth-century officer corps had advanced very little despite it all.

IV. Prussia: Aristocracy, Social Irresponsibility, and Limits to the Growth of Military Expertise

65 Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, p. 73.


68 Royal decree of 6 August 1808, as quoted in Clemente, For King and Kaiser, p. 6; Clemente, ibid., pp. 7-8 (second quotation from 7); Moncure, Forging the King's Sword, p. 50 (statistic).


70 Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 50-51; Clemente, For King and Kaiser!, pp. 172-73. See also Walter Goerlitz, History of the German General Staff, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Praeger, 1953), ch. 3 (quotation from p. 60), and Hajo Holborn, "The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff," in Paret, ed. Makers of Modern Strategy, pp. 281-95. The Kriegsakademie was derived from the 'Officers Military Institute,' reorganized by Scharnhorst in 1802. In 1804 it became the Academy for Young Officers, and in 1810 began its modern era as the General War School. It was renamed the Kriegsakademie in 1859 to distinguish it from the Kriegsschulen. There is little detailed information on the Kriegsakademie or the General Staff during this era; Irvine, "The French and Prussian Staff Systems Before 1870," pp. 195-96, provides detail that sheds a very positive light on the staff's expertise and criteria of selection and promotion, but (as is quite often the case in the brief surveys which span this period) he does not make it clear whether he is referring to the period before or after 1859.

71 Clemente, For King and Kaiser!, pp. 158-59; Moncure, Forging the King's Sword, p. 235; Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 40-41.

72 Moncure, Forging the King's Sword, pp. 41 and 46; Clemente, For King and Kaiser!, p. 94. By the late nineteenth century there were a number of different statuses for 'officer-aspirants' (as they were officially known), depending on the extent of one's education prior to passage of the entrance exam. Moncure, ch. 2, examines the social origins of the late nineteenth century cadet corps. Half of the cadets' fathers had served as military officers, fifteen percent as civil servants, and twenty-eight percent were landholders who had not served in either capacity (Table 2-2, p. 61). Outside Prussia, the proportion of landholders was greater and those of the others less. Roughly a quarter were from cities, a third from towns, and forty percent from villages (Table 2-3, p. 65).

73 Moncure, Forging the King's Sword, p. 21. See Konrad Jarausch, "The German Professions in History and Theory," in Cocks and Jarausch, eds., German Professions, pp. 9-24, and McClelland, The German Experience of Professionalization, on the German civilian professions, which experienced much the same tension with a resolution far more favorable to the educated middle class. David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), emphasize that the bourgeoisie's
emulation of the aristocracy was a conscious choice believed to be in the self-interest of class and individuals. The implicit contention is that these two classes were allied against the working class or classes out of fear of revolution.

74 Clemente, *For King and Kaiser*, pp. 9, 141, and 175.

75 Ibid., pp. 10-12 and 141; Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, p. 78. The War Schools were reopened in 1859.

76 Clemente, *For King and Kaiser*, pp. xiii, 70, 75, 208, and 211-12; Geyer, "The Past as Future: The German Officer Corps as Profession," p. 189; Moncure, *Forging the King's Sword*, p. 263. Both historians are discussing the late nineteenth century, but it is difficult to believe that conditions were much dissimilar during the earlier aristocratic reaction of 1819 to 1848 (or 1861). Clemente writes that "Prussian officer education actually declined during the imperial period" and that "the officer corps changed little in the half-century prior to World War I" (pp. xiii and 216).

77 Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 48 (estimate, taken from Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Romance and Realities of a Profession* [New York: W.W. Norton, 1937], p. 242, who uses a German periodical of that year); Clemente, *For King and Kaiser*, pp. 160-62; Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, p. 20. Compare these evaluations with that Griffith presents of the French army. The stereotype of Prussian expertise founded on German success in wars later in the century is hard to avoid, but "exceptionalism" in Prussian military history must be held as open to question as its American historiographical counterpart. For example, a General Staff commission made a study of the impact of railroad transportation on mobilization as early as the 1830s, but the French did so in the same decade with a much less formally articulated staff system. The student of Prussian military institutions in the second quarter of the nineteenth century is at a disadvantage because there is no thorough English-language study of the army during this period. My account is culled from studies of the Napoleonic era and the late nineteenth century, general works like Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, and Karl Demeter, *The German Officer Corps in State and Society, 1650-1945* (New York: Praeger, 1965; 1st ed. 1930), and ones which stress civil-military relations over the operations of military institutions themselves, like Craig's. Most general works on the Prussian army treat this period skimpily at best, usually implying that its quality declined somewhat after 1818 and improved after 1858 but providing no details that would permit a detailed comparison with the French and British armies as depicted by
Griffith and Strachan. Presumably the scholarship available in English includes the authors' knowledge of the period derived from German-language sources, but the most detailed works all focus on the era after 1859.

78 The most insightful (though often somewhat abstract) work on the social values and interactions of Prussian officers is still Demeter's The German Officer Corps in State and Society. See among other works Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army; Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany, trans. Heinz Norden (4 vols., Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1969-73, orig. 1954-68), vol. I; Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 98-124; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, The German Empire, 1871-1918, trans. by Kim Traynor (Dover, N.H.: Berg, 1985; first published 1973); and V.R. Berghahn, Germany and the Approach of War in 1914 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973). All this was less true in the other German states, which tended to be less aristocratic in character. Blackbourn and Eley, The Peculiarities of German History, offers a different perspective in which Germany did not remain uniquely or exclusively aristocratic in social and political tenor, but they acknowledge that it remained fundamentally and dysfunctionally class-dominated. Clemente's work is firmly in the earlier tradition, Moncure's somewhat in the latter, demonstrating significant change in the officer corps' class origins while acknowledging that there was no corresponding alteration in its social ethos. Geyer, "The Past as Future: The German Officer Corps as Profession," pp. 187-91, provides a view similar to those of Moncure and Blackbourn and Eley. He considers both reforms and reaction "a process of social modernization," because of their creation and maintenance of a functionally oriented, bureaucratically organized occupation, but he suggests that "the newly gained (reformist) autonomy . . . was the prerequisite for the (restorative) struggle to sustain anti-constitutionalism" (p. 188). "In other words, both the social organization of violence and its articulation in terms of expertise were profoundly bourgeois" (p. 191), but its political outcome was socially reactionary and undemocratic by any standards.

My judgment on the failure of unitary control is directed at Huntington's positive, but in my opinion overly theoretical, view of this principle. I think that constitutional conflict in Prussia/Germany was far more damaging to military professionalism than that in Britain, even if the Prusso-German system supposedly reserved military decision-making and administration exclusively to the monarch, while the British one split control between Parliament (over raising and maintaining the armed forces--basically setting force strengths and paying salary and upkeep) and Crown (which controlled appointments and in theory supreme command). In reality, the late nineteenth century Reichstag exercised substantial control over force
strengths in much the same way that the British Parliament did. The British crown essentially lost its supreme command function to the prime minister, and the army bureaucracy and the Ministry at War (a civil service bureaucracy headed by a partisan leader) took control over appointments, which were rarely influenced by feudalistic processes of royal prerogative. In other words, there was unitary control in Britain (save for some anxious moments during the rather exaggerated Curragh Mutiny crisis in 1914); it simply was parliamentary rather than royal, but this is certainly a more unified form than the congressional influence Huntington distrusted so much. In Prussia/Germany there was, first, less unified control than Huntington portrayed, and second, the unified control that did exist was the product of the middle classes' ultimately fatal compromise during the constitutional crises of the early and mid-1860s. As Huntington recognized, Germany's aristocratic path (leaving aside the more specific question of a Sonderweg, or "special path") led to ruin, but his preference for ideal forms remains unabated. The experience of 1914 clearly proves that unitary control is no guarantee of professional military responsibility broadly conceived. (See Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 35-36.) Huntington did write before Gordon Craig and Fritz Fischer, but these were hardly the first scholars to suggest the irresponsibility of the German officer corps. More significantly, Huntington wrote at the height of the Cold War, and we no longer need to reify national security at the expense of liberal values as he did. See among others Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, intro. Hajo Holborn and James Joll (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967); idem., World Power or Decline: The Controversy over Germany's Aims in the First World War (New York: Norton, 1974); idem., War of Illusions: German Policies from 1911 to 1914 (New York: Norton, 1975); and more specifically L.L. Farrar, The Short-War Illusion: German Policy, Strategic and Domestic Affairs, August-December 1914 (Santa Barbara, Ca.: A.B.C.-Clio, 1973) and Berghahn, Germany and the Approach of War in 1914.

Huntington is quite correct to say that civilian control over the military in Germany was "subjective" (contested by different civilian groups with aims antagonistic to one another, seeking to use the armed forces as an instrument of political power) after 1914, but I think that this was true before then as well--pursuing the archetype of Prussian military excellence and lacking a critical historiography to base his interpretations on, Huntington generally exaggerates the degree to which Prusso-German military professionalism was based on merit rather than social considerations, and he seems to ignore the subjectivity of civilian control between the 1860s and 1890s. This criticism may be a product of hindsight on my part, but the presence of a general consensus on the character and distribution of social and political power does not render that vision any less subjective, nor is unitary
institutional control inherently objective and dual control subjective. Indeed, Gordon Craig's 1955 work (though probably unavailable to Huntington at the time he wrote) demonstrated that occupational autonomy easily leads to social isolation, and thence to alienation from the nation that the military profession is sworn to defend. Ultimately there can be little objectivity in civil-military relations—social control over the use of armed force is too important to be left to an autonomous professional group of any sort. In Prusso-Germany, the "neutrality" of Huntington's "objective civilian control" was not true neutrality at all, but a defense of class interests (if not purely aristocratic, then of the aristocracy and middle classes in illiberal opposition to the working classes) as egregious as can be found. "Objectivity" carries the dangerous connotation, frequently made explicit by Prussian and German officers, that by standing above partisan "self-interest" the putatively objective institution possesses a superior claim to legitimately represent the true interests of the polity. Can a responsible (and here I explicitly mean democratic, an admittedly subjective political flaw in my analysis and categorization) institution hold itself above and even in violent opposition to the actual society it claims to serve?

V. Composites and Conclusions: Class and Occupational Cohesion at the Expense of Both Military Expertise and Social Responsibility


80 Geyer, "The Past as Future: The German Officer Corps as Profession," p. 191. I do not mean that "character" was solely an aristocratic value (or one without functional value), nor that "merit" was (or is) an apolitical or solely bourgeois one, but outside Britain and America character tended to represent an exclusive set of social values shared by the landholding gentry and aristocracy. (In the Anglo-American nations character was a middle class value, but its constituent elements were drawn from the gentry tradition as well as the Protestant or Puritan bourgeois ethic and its evangelical offshoots.) See Richard L. Bushman, The Refinement of America, 1750-1850: Persons, Houses, Cities (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), and Stow Persons, The

81 Geyer, "The Past as Future: The German Officer Corps as Profession," p. 186. Geyer's third principle, organization by territorial region, is not of concern to me here.

82 Ibid., p. 187.

83 Ibid., pp. 188 (quotation)-190. Let us conclude this chapter by surveying the military's relationship with politics and society in each of the countries discussed. Samuel Huntington lays out five general models of civil-military relations in his seminal study The Soldier and the State (pp. 96-97). The first is typified by an "antimilitary [social] ideology, high military political power, and low military professionalism." This set of characteristics is similar to those we have observed in the example of the French officer corps from 1815 to 1854, except that its professional expertise was greater (at least in potential) than the model would suggest. France's cultural architectonic was not inherently antimilitary, either (as evidenced by the widespread veneration for things Napoleonic), but it was more bourgeois than aristocratic, more materialistic than agonistic. The feudalistic Prussian concept of a 'Supreme Warlord' had little resonance in France. The class composition and political behaviour of the French officer corps presents us with the most complex paradoxes of any of those we have studied. Most French officers were promoted from the ranks, but they lived in isolation from their society and represented no particular class interest, even their own (usually that of the petit bourgeoisie or the peasantry). In 1848, they upheld an essentially bourgeois society against the working classes but derived little prestige from their efforts until the limited reassertion of military values during the Second Empire. Their obedient isolation provides us with an excellent example of "objective" civilian control over the military--up to a point, at which the desire for a special place in society seems to have made the French officer corps vulnerable to the appeal of a role as a state within a state, the ultimate arbiter and embodiment of national political life. This is the danger of a civil-military relations founded upon purist notions of military isolation from civil affairs. "Objective" civilian control can cease to be "civilian" or "control" when a military force develops an exclusively military perspective in isolation from the rest of society. Society loses its status as the constituting body when a military (or any other professional) organization comes to see itself as embodying transcendant values forgotten by civilians. Isolation leads too easily to alienation and resentment if the military is not bonded to its
society by an umbilical cord of agreement over fundamental ideological principles. "Do no harm" to the nation should be the first commandment of military professionalism.

This is not to say that purely "subjective" forms of civilian control and military allegiance are innately more desirable: in Prussia and Russia the officer corps remained closely and perhaps decisively allied with the monarchy and the landholding nobility against the middle and working classes, with consequences ultimately far more devastating than the French army’s single direct venture into king-making. Huntington places the Prussian officer corps in his fourth category of civil-military relations: "promilitary ideology, high military political power, and high military professionalism." But was Prussian society as a whole militaristic? If so, would it have remained that way if not for the adamant obstinacy and coercive threat of the officer corps? Secondly, how "professional" was the Prussian officer corps? Expert, perhaps, but responsible? To whom? Certainly not the nation as a whole. Was the basis of its cohesion really functional military expertise, or social class? If expert, how much more so than the French? After all, the Franco-Prussian War followed a second era of Prussian reform just as the War of Liberation had followed a first, while the French army faced democratic political constraints substantially greater than those in Prussia. The Prussian army was a very different institution in 1870 than in 1850. It adjusted to the demands of new technology far better than its French counterpart (or any other army of that era), but the roots that bore this fruit lay dormant for forty years after the end of the first reform era. When they blossomed, the irrigant was a combination of Enlightenment ideals that encouraged education, opportunity in the form of the nationalist sentiment that led to the wars of unification, and the presence of a rather small expert cadre eager to test its abilities. While this cadre was educated at the Kriegssakademie, it is important to remember that Prussian leadership and tactics were often inferior to those of the French, who as Michael Howard points out were much more highly regarded as military professionals because of their proven combat record--theory and abstraction did not carry the weight of practical experience until the Prussians demonstrated their ability in the Six Weeks' War against Austria in 1866, and after that the French army made a responsible, desperate, but ultimately unsuccessful effort to attain the Prussian army's capability in the realms of mobilization and supply.

In Russia, autocracy often wore a military face, but the two were not functionally inseparable. Serfdom and Muscovite expansionism were ultimately dependent on military power, yet under the principle of tsarist absolutism the Russian army was perhaps the most subordinate to civilian power of any military force on the European continent. Promilitary ideology went along with overtly low military political power, but the ideology was
essentially political (i.e., feudal, or autocratic) rather than functional, more a
matter of class and command than expertise. Russian military
professionalism was weak whether we stress expertise, responsibility to the
nation as a whole, or cohesion founded on a functionally military (or
occupational) basis.

This conglomerate of promilitary ideology and low military power and
professionalism is not mentioned in Huntington's typology, but it also
characterized the British experience in this era. True, Britain's national
ideology was as antiarmy as any in institutional terms, but there can be no
doubt that the gentry and aristocracy were profoundly promilitary in outlook.
On the other hand, this militarism was as socially determined as Russia's,
shaped by an emotional affinity for rural and paternalistic values rather than
an appreciation of the military as a functional vocation. The growing reform
movement within the army can be viewed as a rejection of this socially based
mentality in favor of an occupationally based self-definition, and perhaps as
the beginning of alienation from middle class antagonism toward the
military, but neither possibility took root in the British social soil of
cosmopolitan amateurism.
Chapter II

The Early National Army Officer Corps, 1784 to 1815: Organizational Instability and the Search for Civil-Military Accountability

The American army's commissioned officer corps was characterized by constant instability and pervasive amateurism throughout the early national era. The first three decades of the officer corps' were fraught with the turmoil and disorganization produced by a series of rapid expansions and reductions in the army's strength. Indeed, because of the nation's changing political scene and diplomatic situation there were as many as seven distinctly identifiable "officer corps" during this era. Two of these corps were not even a part of the U.S. Army as such: the quasi-national Confederation army, recruited and officered by the states though directed by Congress, and the commissioned cadres of the Provisional and Eventual Armies of the Quasi-War with France, whose purpose was as much Federalist political aggrandizement as national defense. In this ever-fluctuating institutional environment few men were committed to military leadership as a specialized or even full-time occupation, and few remained in the army for more than a couple of years. Hence there was little opportunity or motive for cohesion to grow among officers, and little incentive to develop professional norms of responsible service and to act in accordance with them.

Indeed, it is illusory to speak of specifically military careers during the early national period. Few of the motives and attitudes of the officers of this era were primarily military in any functional or vocational sense, and the army had no enduring institutions or procedures to educate or socialize aspiring commanders--both cognitive and ethical standardization were absent. The officer corps of this era lacked all the constituent elements of
professionalism as a normative system: its members were neither expert nor autonomous in their work; they lacked cohesion as a group; and--most importantly--their sense of responsibility and accountability to the civil government and the nation was half-formed at best, shot through with considerations of personal and partisan advantage and interest. In these characteristics the American officer corps was not too dissimilar from its European counterparts (outside France), save that the latter were more cohesive in the service of the states their aristocratic brethren dominated (i.e., somewhat more accountable, in a narrow sense, to their employers, who coincided with their social class), while less responsible to the people who made up the majority in their nations.

At base, early national American officers simply were not military commanders in a vocational sense--their "profession" was public service, and that largely through the application of individual ego and ability, not the specialized military role of directing the expert application of violence by organized groups. American officers, like European ones, were gentlemen first, and this ascribed status conditioned every facet of their occupational lives and identities. Army historian Edward Coffman has observed that "training for an officer, or any sort of preparation, was almost nonexistent" prior to the foundation of the military academy at West Point in 1802, an institution which had little direct effect on the army until after the War of 1812. Command was understood as a matter of leadership, so there was no distinctive realm of exclusively military expertise apart from the habit of command that all gentlemen were expected to develop as an everyday mechanism of interclass dominance. Officers' motives and identities as gentlemen were more significant to society and the state--and to themselves
psychologically—than their fledgling occupational ones as military commanders.¹

* * *

I. Antecedents and Alternatives: English Origins, Revolutionary Choices, and the Influences of Class and the Frontier to 1789

The origins of the American army and its officer corps lay in the colonial era, and American military structures were naturally based on British institutional experience and precedent, which was itself the product of a decentralized social and political order structured to sustain the autonomy of the local gentry. This decentralization also meant that American units were officered by colonial notables rather than regulars detached from the Royal Army.² By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, regular or at least quasi-regular forces organized by the centralized nation-state had effectively replaced the militia in England and its colonies alike. Drafting men from the militia or mustering the militia as a whole (meaning all men aged between about fifteen and fifty) was economically and socially damaging when wars were fought overseas for years on end, and the pressure of constant overseas service spurred administrative reform in the Royal Army, which developed enduring roots as a functionally specialized institution serving national purposes under centralized national command. Faced with year-long campaigns against French Canada after 1689, the structure of the colonial military forces began to follow a parallel path through the gradual and largely unplanned evolution of "semi-professional" volunteer forces, composed of young, unattached men who made overseas military expeditions their primary occupation for a number of years, thus developing
the expertise, cohesion, and esprit de corps (unit pride) rare in militia units that only mustered once or twice a year to vote in local elections. The new semi-professionals served as the core of the colonies' contribution to the Anglo-American cause in the wars of the eighteenth century.³

The colonial volunteers were recruited within localities by local notables, but these forces also offered the opportunity for social mobility to enterprising men with personal qualities of charismatic leadership and democratic care for and attention to their men. Both methods of officer "selection"—or effectively, of self-selection, though volunteer units often elected their company officers—were then used in the Revolutionary War. The Continental Army was composed of regiments recruited and officered by the states, largely at the local level. Field grade and general officers were appointed by the states and Congress alike, and operations were directed by national officers much in the manner that British commanders had directed the colonial volunteers in the Seven Years War. Continental officers developed a strong sense of camaraderie and cohesion as a result of long years of service together, and they patterned their behaviour after the most senior of their number, particularly George Washington, a Virginia planter (and therefore accustomed to command of men considered inferior) who aspired to the social recognition of genteel status and emulated the manners and style of a British regular.

Using the Royal Army as his model, Washington envisioned the Continental Army as a European-style force, with similar personnel policies, codes of behaviour, and tactical methods. Washington's conception of the military officer represented a shift in the social and cultural characteristics sought in American military leaders, for it was grounded in the hierarchical, essentially aristocratic character of European armies and the gentry society he
lived in as a civilian rather than the semi-equalitarian precedent of the New England semi-professionals. Washington moulded an army that would fight European-style in tight linear formations under the close, often punitive control of officers who would receive a heightened sense of self-esteem and social prestige and authority from their role as the directors of working-class or (in the terms of the historiography on eighteenth-century England) plebeian soldiers. Washington dismissed more egalitarian alternative conceptions of warfare despite his experiences in the French and Indian War. The European military model became the official American ideal under Washington, and has remained so ever since: as historian John Shy observes, the "original nucleus of American professional soldiers cut themselves off from their native roots . . . [and] from the chance to work out a tradition better adapted to the peculiar needs and traditions of American life."\(^4\)

As in the British officer corps and the ranks of the Revolutionary gentry, public fame and reputation was the primary personal motivation among Continental commanders. As in those instances, this ambition led to frequent dissension, and the aristocratic code of honor easily led Continental officers from disputes to duels to protect their reputations. This internal friction was obscured in civilian eyes (or seen as aristocratic immorality, especially among yeomen and committed Christians) by the image of solidarity and exclusiveness that the officer corps presented to civil society and--the officers hoped--to the enlisted men under their command. Indeed, the very attitudes that led to so much acrimony within the officer corps provided it with what seemed like a distinctly military worldview and value system on which to found distinctions from civilian society, but in reality this value system was largely a version of Anglo-American codes of gentility, reputation, and honor exaggerated by the officers' urgent desire to prove
themselves gentlemen. The other value system that Continental officers used to distinguish themselves from their society was another, potentially more distinctly civilian and American worldview, republicanism, which at that time stressed disinterested public service. After several years of financial sacrifice and life-threatening service to the republic many Continental officers began to assert that theirs was the most virtuous role in the struggle for independence. The high political stakes involved in such an assertion spurred immediate and enduring opposition from civilians who saw the claim to superior virtue as both a denigration of their own efforts and a morally unjustifiable pretension to aristocracy and social hierarchy in a new guise. (Unfortunately, both sides were substantially correct.) In turn, this arrogation of moral superiority (whether implicit or overt) has never ceased to be a source of public antagonism against the American officer corps.5

By the end of the war these attitudes had led the officer corps into widespread dissatisfaction, occasional calls for military dictatorship, and two major conflicts with civilian authority, while another was brewing. Disputes over pay (which led to mutinies among enlisted men) led to veiled threats against civilian power by some officers (reportedly including the young colonel Alexander Hamilton, one of Washington's principal aides), culminating in the so-called Newburgh Conspiracy of 1783, when it was widely implied that the army might march against Congress rather than disband. In both cases Washington's support for the principle of civilian supremacy was decisive in persuading his subordinates to back down. Washington's actions and example were thus decisive in determining the fundamentally cordial shape of American civil-military relations. In the words of one authority, "George Washington became . . . the role model for American military professionalism" in his sense of accountability to civil
authority and public opinion (or at least that of the gentry) as well as his affinity for aristocratic European models of tactics and command.⁶

Nationalists and future Federalists like Washington and Hamilton were exemplars of the political attitudes of the Continental officers and their successors, whose efforts to maintain an effectively functioning army that could secure and defend the nation's independence were constantly hampered by their society's preference for individual property rights and decentralized, locally accountable authority, characteristics of an emerging liberal society that would only grow stronger during the nineteenth century. Regardless of their actual social origins, officers' social aspirations to gentility and the authoritarian imperatives and experience of command predisposed them towards hierarchical notions of social and political order and community and obligation, and the wartime civil-military controversies were intimately related to the Continental officers' postwar support for a more centralized political structure with a more energetic executive branch of government. Indeed, the social and moral authority of the inherently authoritarian military profession within republican and eventually democratic America was inextricably--and for officers indispensably--tied to the cause of national independence, which both Revolutionary officers and their successors believed impossible to maintain in the face of European neocolonialism without powerful military forces and an authoritative nation-state to direct them. In officers' minds the two were inseparable, and their support for the Constitution was intimately linked to their desire for a permanent military establishment.

Ideology and parochial self-interest were closely entwined in this affinity for centralization, for many officers saw the army as an indispensable buttress against social disorder like that displayed in Shay's Rebellion, and
most saw a more powerful central government as the most basic means of improving the army's status. A national government would mean a uniform pay and promotion system that promised officers the security and stability of more predictable careers through an end to the disruptive influence of competing state authorities on military rank and appointments—as Colonel Josiah Harmar put it in 1788, "we may then hope for order and regularity." (Similarly, Harmar hoped that the creation of an effective national government would lead to a more aggressive policy against the northwestern Indians, which he felt necessary but which was also in the officer corps' self-interest, for more troops to command would mean more promotions, pay, and prestige.) For the officer corps and the gentry as a whole, personal, class, and occupational independence and authority—or the solution to the question of who should rule at home—was indeed dependent on national independence and the sovereignty of a unified American nation-state constituted to secure it.7

In sum, the regular soldier's claim to an occupational jurisdiction as the principal defender of American national sovereignty quickly fostered a strong personal and institutional interest in increasing the central government's legitimacy and power. The officer corps' ongoing search for personal and organizational security and prestige bred a yearning for order and stability that regular officers soon learned to express in the conservative idiom of legalism and national sovereignty. Their authority challenged by Americans' fondness for the locally controlled militia and its extralegal counterpart, the filibustering expedition, the great majority of American military officers have always responded to rivals by stressing the importance of centralized national control—the practice of nation-state sovereignty, as distinct from the ideal of popular sovereignty embodied in the militia or
volunteers (and filibusters, in an extralegal but ideologically sanctioned fashion akin to the Revolutionary and early republican concept of "the people out of doors")—over the organized use of armed force, and this fundamental assumption has always entangled the army in conflict with localities and their political representatives. (Indeed, one can trace the rapid decline of revolutionary ferment among American elites through their reactions to filibustering as well as to those toward domestic rebellion, for both phenomena were manifestations of a similar independence that elites viewed as disorder and entropy.) The creation of a new national order was equally and unavoidably the construction of a new social one, with new, translocal, sources and hierarchies of power and prestige, and whether officers were asserting superior republican virtue or simply the authority of their offices and functions as representatives of the national community, they have always been subject to popular suspicion as men attempting to hold themselves above the reach of immediately tangible social accountability. In other words, by placing themselves in the forefront of public service and demanding that it be acknowledged, military officers became inherently public, and consequently political, creatures, whose accountability to government and society is as important an issue as any having to do with functional expertise or capability.

The last units of the Continental Army were disbanded in June 1784, and the Confederation's army, like those that would follow it for over a century, was essentially a frontier constabulary. The so-called "First Regiment" was dispersed in small detachments along the Ohio River Valley throughout its existence, for its primary mission was to regulate interaction between Indians and whites, many of whom were squatting on Indian and
government lands north of the Ohio. Congress feared that these settlers would provoke the Indians to a war that the United States was unprepared—meaning in effect that the eastern seaboard was unwilling—to fight, and the regiment was charged with periodically evicting the squatters. The unit had little success, however, and was usually ignored by the bands of Kentucky irregulars who raided Indian villages north of the river. Indeed, historian Richard Kohn labels its record "one of unremitting failure": "For the most part the army had to stick to its small posts for its own protection."8

The First Regiment was allotted thirty-seven officers appointed by the states where the regiment was recruited (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut). Five were surgeons, but since the unit was so small there were no other designated staff posts, and quartermaster, paymaster, inspector, and adjutant (administrative) duties were all performed by line officers on an acting basis. The prominent role of the states was also reflected in the regiment's command arrangements: the Pennsylvania officers took oaths to both Congress and their state, and the commanding officer, Josiah Harmar, reported to both Congress and Pennsylvania's state executive. Military command was a means of social mobility for many of these men: slightly more than half seem to have been members of the elite classes, but the other half was made up of men from middling backgrounds, a high proportion given the small size of the army and the ubiquity of personal and political patronage in early national government appointments. (Of course, from a modern perspective we would say that a group in which only half of the members represented eighty or ninety percent of the people was one statistically dominated by elites, but in the early national social context it was remarkable for a group of government officials in charge of working-class men to be composed of so many persons from the middling sectors of society.)
Josiah Harmar had been the private secretary to the president of Congress, but his most important subordinate, Captain (eventually colonel) John Hamtramck, was the son of a French Canadian barber. Indeed, almost forty percent of the regiment’s officers had begun their military careers as enlisted men, a proportion never again equalled in an American army. The overall military experience of these men was also unrivalled among the cadres of American armies, as they averaged seven years of Revolutionary War service, or virtually the entire war. Indeed, three-quarters had served at least five years prior to 1784, and only two had not done so at all: as army historian William Skelton notes, "military service had been the central experience to that point in their lives."9

Despite this social diversity and prior experience, the experience of the Confederation army also demonstrated the consistent disregard for the welfare of enlisted men that characterized American military leadership before the Civil War, illustrating the power of both their class aspirations (to the gentility of command) and the entropic frontier environment. The First Regiment's food, clothing, and shelter alike were usually inadequate and second-rate, and the army seemed perpetually on the verge of disintegration. (Indeed, one scholar suggests that the force never standardized its basic uniforms.) The army was stationed in small, isolated posts deep in the dense forests of the Old Northwest, and construction work and supplementing its meager rations by farming left little time for military exercises and training of any sort. Under the circumstances discipline was poor and desertion common. Enlisted men and noncommissioned officers frequently threatened officers, who responded ferociously and often extralegally—the officers felt that only corporal punishment could sustain its cohesion, while the enlisted men who remained often did so because they had nowhere else to go.10
The regiment's colonel made a responsible effort to instill discipline, routine, and esprit de corps, but he had little success amidst this entropic environment. Harmar demanded monthly strength returns from his subordinates, but distance and communication problems disrupted his efforts to maintain Continental Army administrative procedures. The regiment's dispersion similarly frustrated Harmar's attempt to stress drill, limiting exercises to little more than the most basic "school of the soldier." Harmar tried to boost morale by praising his troops' "martial appearance" once he began to feel that they held "a just idea of the noble profession of arms," but his judgment proved premature. Given the lamentable conditions of service, the army's soldiers were drawn from among "the most destitute" of men, who had little incentive to view their work as anything but a temporary job to be avoided or escaped as soon as possible. Overall, the unit's principal historian has observed that "the regimental history is [essentially] . . . a succession of courts-martial and punishment"--the most significant events within the unit were disciplinary crises, which demonstrates its failure as an organization and its inefficacy as a fighting force.\[11\]

The regiment's leadership aggravated rather than ameliorated its problems, for as Richard Kohn has noted, "the officers themselves were hardly exemplary." Indeed, Kohn observes that "they drank as heavily as the men," and one midnight in December 1784 they held a muster while intoxicated and nearly assaulted each other. One lieutenant later beat a soldier to death without provocation, and officers were frequently accused of forcing enlisted men to work without additional pay on private enterprises at the expense of their public duties. Kohn concludes that despite the officers' extensive experience, "the quality of leadership in the First Regiment was mediocre. Many of the officers tended to be harsh and dictatorial with their
men, contemptuous of local civilians, and blind in their hatred for the Indians." The chaotic frontier environment and the problems of dual control by the states and Congress surely go far to explain the Confederation army's poor performance in comparison with the Continental service, yet given their experience these ex-Continentials could certainly have been expected to do better than they did.12

Skelton contends that Confederation officers "remained fairly aloof" from partisan politics, although this inactivity may have been due primarily to the isolation of frontier circumstances, the weakness of the central national government (and consequently of organized political parties) to which they would later appeal, and the limited connections of an officer corps more middle-class in social origin than that of the 1790s. Skelton also suggests that that the shared experience of Continental Army service gave the Confederation officers a stronger sense of identification with the army as an institution than their successors. Indeed, he maintains that the Confederation officers held a "quasi-professional" attitude towards civilians, but he explains this outlook in terms of a sense of martyrdom and isolation that indicates a sense of alienation from rather than accountability to the society the officers were charged with serving, and we shall see that virtually all these men resigned during the early to mid-1790s. In other words, their sense of cohesion was not based on the concept of a distinct functional specialization or expertise so much as it was on shared experience and shared complaint; insofar as it was based on a sense of past services gone unrewarded it tended more to grievance than to accountability, and it did not lead Confederation officers to pursue military careers over the long term. Indeed, the Confederation officers' sense of group identity was essentially one of externally directed suspicion or hostility founded on a shared group
experience, yet the norms officers shared were still those of the civilian gentry (who expected public applause for their services whatever specific forms they took), rather than distinctly military values. This cohesion was occupational, in the sense that it was shared by those holding the same sort of jobs, but it was not professional in the sense of a normative image or ideal derived from an internal discourse on function based on and leading to a socially responsible conception of accountable public service.13

Given this chasm between experience and responsibility, William Skelton's judgment that these officers sought commissions primarily as a means of personal economic security becomes damning. Although the regiment copied most of its procedures from Continental practice, its commanders' familiarity with them does not seem to have done much to effectively sustain basic discipline, much less military efficiency. Kohn observes that "there is no evidence that [Secretary of War Henry] Knox or Harmar ever developed regulations for army activities like marching, encampment, tactical deployment," or other fundamental military routines, without which there could be no procedural standardization and little consistent discipline. For all the Continental precedent available to guide it, "the army itself was so flawed internally as to compromise seriously its ability to function." The force did build roads and forts that became valuable in the 1790s, and it guarded surveyors and provided intelligence about British and Indian movements, but "these were routine, almost trivial activities, the kind that could have been performed by any group of men the government wished to employ in the region." The First Regiment had few of the characteristics of and set few useful precedents for a functioning military organization deserving of the term "army."14
Ironically, the middling social origins of the Confederation officers and their extensive military experience suggests the potential for a different pattern of civil-military relations and professionalization than that which developed during the following decade, one which might have been more specifically military and less overtly political in focus and more democratic in composition and spirit, but the Confederation officers shared the social values of the gentry and sought to distance themselves from the enlisted men (from whose ranks many had risen) under their command, often using arbitrary severity to compensate for their lack of genteel manners and authority. (In other words, the coercion ultimately at the base of gentry claims to social dominance had to be manifested by men who aspired to that status without possessing the social and cultural qualities to back up their claims.) The regiment's most enduring legacy to its successors was the harsh treatment meted out to enlisted men, a practice that (on the part of the few officers who actually seem to have been conscious of the regiment's mission) may have represented a responsible effort to create and maintain an effective fighting force, but hardly a heritage responsive to American ideals of republicanism and democracy.

* * *

II. Northwestern Expansion and the Legion of the United States: The Paradoxes of Institutionalization and Instability, 1790-1797

The passage of the Northwest Ordinance and the ratification of the Constitution gave new impetus to the reorganization of the army on a national basis, but its mission remained fundamentally the same, and the only units stationed outside the Ohio frontier were small detachments
guarding artillery stores at the Revolutionary-era post at West Point. The army had essentially only one task, to defend and ultimately extend the northwestern frontier of white settlement against Amerindian opposition and British influence. Wary of the expense and opposition that an Indian war and the forces necessary to fight it would arouse, the Washington administration's policy was a cautious one that gave little support to the demands of western settlers, but a combination of political concerns and the small army's inadequacy left the federal government equally unable to curtail white migration and raids across the Ohio River, and by the early 1790s the government's dual incapacity led to outright war as the Ohio and Indiana tribes mobilized against American encroachment. The army's first significant experiences of Indian warfare in 1790 and 1791 were unmitigated disasters that forced the virtual reconstitution of the army and its officer corps. A number of important procedures were implemented and precedents set during this rebuilding process, but the success of these reforms depended on the personal forcefulness of Anthony Wayne rather than on institutions, and was largely lost after his death in 1796.15

The composition of the officer corps became significantly more national and slightly more specialized as a result of federal control and the demands of active campaigning in 1790 and 1791. The corps' first southern members were commissioned in 1790, and two inspectors and four quartermasters and adjutants (one per battalion of the expanded regiment) were provided for that year, but the battalion staff officers had to be detailed from the line companies and the inspectorates went unfilled.16 The national army's first quartermaster general was appointed in 1791, but the same deficiencies in discipline, training, and supply hampered Harmar's expedition in 1790 and Arthur St. Clair's advance the following year. Indeed, historian
James Ripley Jacobs describes St. Clair's army as "no more than a rabble, conscious only of its own inferiority and unmindful of the future." That October one of its most experienced officers wrote to a friend that "I Pray God . . . the Enemy may not be disposed to give us battle," but the expedition was virtually wiped out a week later, in one of the worst defeats ever inflicted upon an American force.17

Congress responded by authorizing another three regiments, and the army was reorganized into "the Legion of the United States," essentially four combined arms (infantry, artillery, and cavalry) regiments known as "sublegions" totaling 5120 men. The staff was expanded significantly, with an adjutant and inspector replacing the two inspectors authorized in 1790, a deputy quartermaster, and a paymaster, in addition to the quartermaster general authorized in 1791. Each sublegion was given an inspector and a quartermaster; each of the battalions gained a quartermaster and an adjutant; and none of these officers were to be detailed from duties in the line. The Legion's commander, Anthony Wayne, was one of the most successful government appointments of the Federalist period, and once organized and trained, the Legion was the most thoroughly specialized, internally articulated, and effective army in American service between the end of the Revolution and 1814.

A rigid disciplinarian, imaginative tactician, and aggressive commander with distinguished Revolutionary service to his credit, Wayne immediately set out to impose discipline and order so that he could fashion a highly trained offensive force to launch against the Indians. William Skelton notes that "above all, Wayne demanded subordination [accountability and cohesion], attention to military detail [responsibility and expertise], and an undivided commitment to duty," three of the principal characteristics of
responsible military service. After failing to instill these martial virtues in the rowdy environs of Pittsburgh, Wayne moved the Legion into isolation and introduced a system of harsh punishment, constant drilling, and strict routine that eventually produced the discipline on which the Legion's cohesion and esprit de corps was based. Doing so involved both punitive sanctions and positive rewards: death sentences for nearly twenty men, the army's first regular medical organization since the Revolution, and the introduction of such fundamental symbols of group identity as distinct unit flags and badges, combined with an emphasis on appearances and competition between units. This esprit de corps in turn gave the Legion a resilience and elan in combat that enabled it to take the offensive and defeat the northwestern Indians at the battle of Fallen Timbers a year and a half later, and this victory provided the first genuine basis for the development of a respectable corporate tradition and identity in the post-Revolutionary army. Indeed, this demonstration of the army's utility was effective enough that Republicans ceased to question the desirability of some kind of an army to patrol the frontier.\(^{18}\)

Wayne's efforts were directed at his officers as much as their troops. More than 160 new officers were commissioned in 1791 and 1792, but despite President Washington's preference for Revolutionary veterans only sixty-one of the Legion's officers had Continental or Confederation experience, and by September 1792 only sixteen of the Confederation's officers remained in service. The Legion's officers, like their counterparts before and after, were appointed largely on the basis of connections that, if not directly partisan--as those between 1798 and 1815 usually were--were primarily based on community standing and influence rather than functional expertise or ability. On the whole, Wayne considered the officers left from the pre-legionary era
"rather rusty tho' conceited & refractory," in other words lacking in expertise, cohesion, and thus responsibility, and he sought to discipline them as well as his enlisted soldiers. One lieutenant was dismissed after talking on parade, another after demonstrating a lack of emotional restraint and possibly some sympathy for the enlisted men by weeping at an execution, while a captain was suspended for six months for disorderly conduct in keeping a mistress. Few leaves were granted; several resignations were refused (a rarity in this era); and Wayne permitted many of the officers remaining from the First and Second Regiments to resign when they were unable to adapt to his strict regime.¹⁹

Wayne's success notwithstanding, all was not well in the Legion, and malign influences were spreading which he was powerless--and sometimes did not want--to halt. Brigadier General James Wilkinson, the army's second-ranking officer under Wayne and its de facto commander from Wayne's death in 1796 until 1809, proved even more ardent than his commander in purging the Confederation veterans from the officer corps, but his motives were far less responsible, and Wilkinson ultimately had the more lasting--and primarily a damaging--impact on the officer corps of the early national period, driving a factional wedge that was only the most overt manifestation of an irresponsible spirit of contentiousness that came to pervade the corps. Politically well-connected by both marriage and machination, Wilkinson demonstrated contempt for superior authority from the earliest days of his career: briefly secretary of the Board of War during the Revolution, he feuded with and even challenged Horatio Gates to a duel and was implicated in the Conway Cabal to unseat Washington as commander of the Continental Army. Similarly, Wilkinson's interest in military administration was always subject to interruption by personal concerns: as Clothier-General from 1779 to
1781 he initially acted to establish a centralized system of accounting but was quickly diverted from his duties by the lures of Philadelphia society.

After the Revolutionary War Wilkinson became a frontier merchant and land speculator and took the lead in plotting to align Kentucky with Spain or Britain as an independent nation or protectorate. His goals appear to have been much like those of the majority of westerners, who wanted to open the Mississippi to their products whatever the cost, but by the time Wilkinson became commanding general in 1796 he had been in Spanish pay on and off for at least a decade, and he continued to sell strategic advice (however vague or self-evident) to Spain for at least another decade. Not all of Wilkinson's actions were as outrightly treasonous as his intrigues during the 1780s and his receipt of Spanish funds, but most were shadowed by some form of personal ambition or communication outside of authorized channels. Many of his dealings with the Spanish were merely fraudulent efforts to profit from their anxiety, and others actually served American interests in territorial and commercial expansion, but all of them violated the core professional principles of nation-state sovereignty and civilian political supremacy as well as basic ethical norms of honesty and trustworthiness.20

The new general forthrightly proclaimed that his objectives in military life were "Bread [by which he actually meant fine living] & Fame."

Wilkinson was disappointed when he did not immediately receive command of the Legion, and he constantly sought to undermine Wayne's authority by corresponding directly with Secretary of War Knox, questioning orders, and openly criticizing his commander to officers and civilians alike--in one letter to a federal judge (albeit one of his co-conspirators in the intrigues for western independence) Wilkinson labelled his superior "a liar, a drunkard, a Fool, the associate of the lowest order of Society . . . a coward, a Hypocrite, and the
contempt of every man of sense and virtue." Wilkinson soon took advantage of discontent with Wayne's strict methods to fashion his own power base within the officer corps, fostering what one historian has called "a hotbed of intrigue and recrimination" that left factional scars until the War of 1812. Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers made the commanding general invulnerable to direct attack, but Wilkinson turned to a tacit alliance with the Republican party in Congress to further his ambitions, ultimately going so far as to demand a court of inquiry into his superior's conduct, even though this gave the Republicans the opportunity to attack the army he hoped to command. The interminable dispute ended when Wayne died in December 1796, leaving Wilkinson the army's senior and in effect commanding general, a position he held with only two years' interruption until 1812, and with Wayne's death much of the force behind the army's cohesion, esprit, and effectiveness as a fighting unit evaporated.21

William Skelton has succinctly summed up the pervasiveness of discord in the early national armies: "One of the dominant characteristics of the officer corps was internal dissension; indeed, seldom has an army been led by a more refractory and contentious group of men." Wilkinson's disdain for his superiors and the principle of federal sovereignty was indiscriminate to the point of sedition—he wrote to his paymaster the Spanish governor-general about an "incompetent secretary of war . . . [an] ignorant commander-in-chief . . . [and a] contemptible union." The general's fractious and insubordinate behaviour was routinely emulated by junior officers, and Edward Coffman has observed that "controversies swept like whirlwinds through the Legion." These disputes culminated in a wave of dueling among them, totalling fifteen encounters and three deaths in the year ending February 1794. Rank did not matter and formal invitations were not always
necessary—one captain simply assaulted a lieutenant colonel. This volatile mixture of personal vendetta and ritually structured violence was unofficially sanctioned by both practice and example. Both Wayne and Wilkinson openly condoned dueling, though it was explicitly illegal under the Articles of War: Wayne approved the acquittal of a lieutenant who had challenged a major, and chastised the latter for failing to meet his subordinate in personal combat. In another case the Legion's commander refused the demand of a slain officer's brother that he arrest the victor, reporting to the War Department that the combat had been fairly conducted. Fortunately for the army (at least in the long run), Wilkinson preferred deviousness to direct confrontation with his superior, but a decade later he issued several challenges to opponents, including a member of the United States Congress, while serving as commanding general himself.

Far from all this infighting, the government began to take significant but incomplete steps toward building an effective permanent military establishment. Although most scholars have judged the War Department's administrative record under the Federalists unfavorably, Secretary Knox did demand regular reports and strength returns from St. Clair, and in 1792 the War Department established the basis for a formal system of fiscal accountability through the introduction of standardized administrative procedures, which eventually led to more efficient administration. This improvement did not become apparent immediately, however: the functions of most offices were ill-defined, and much of their activity and authority depended on the personalities and reputations of the individuals holding them. This faith in the individual qualities of officeholders to effect reform was also demonstrated when Congress gave the responsibility for purchasing
supplies for the army to the Treasury Department, hoping that Secretary Hamilton's energy would increase efficiency and reduce corruption. Whether it did so or not, the measure certainly diffused accountability once again, contrary to the evolving principle of centralization implicit in the new reporting systems. Skelton concludes that "military administration remained in flux throughout the 1790s, characterized by overlapping jurisdictions, confused lines of responsibility, and bureaucratic infighting."24

The most important question confronting policymakers after Fallen Timbers was what form the force garrisoning the frontiers would take. The Uniform Militia Act of 1792 attempted to set basic parameters for American manpower policy by providing for a militia classed by age, but its provisions were shot through with loopholes and simple weaknesses limiting the federal government's power that some standing force was clearly necessary. Several attempts to cut the Legion back to two regiments were defeated in Congress, and in 1795 the Legion was reauthorized for another three years. (The term "General Staff" was also used officially for the first time in this legislation, but it did not imply a modern general staff for strategic planning and the staff structure was significantly reduced in 1796 and 1797.) The army effectively became permanent in 1796: its size was cut slightly and the legionary name and structure were abolished, but a standing force was retained despite the end of the northwestern Indian war and the resolution of the crises with England and Spain in the Jay and Pinckney treaties. William Skelton observes that "the most important effect of the reduction of 1796 was to end the army's dependence on specific crises for its institutional survival. The size and functions of the military establishment would remain controversial, but few political leaders would . . . seriously question the need for some type of permanent force."25 Though founded on hindsight, Richard
Kohn’s evaluation bears extensive quotation for his summation of the law's enduring effects:

In institutional terms the act of 1796 [created] the foundation of American military policy for the next century, establishing a small, almost skeletal army grouped in small units to man isolated frontier posts, a corps of artillery and engineers to garrison coastal forts and train incoming officers in the mystery of the science of war, and a tiny cavalry for patrol and communications. In outline the army would not change for a hundred years . . . Every war would inspire army expansion or reorganization, but afterwards it invariably returned to its 1796 outline. . . . [The act] marked the true beginning of America’s peacetime army. . . . a functioning organization with [a] defined mission, ordered internal life, and clearly outlined structure.\textsuperscript{26}

Institutional developments notwithstanding, the Federalists failed to create a professional officer corps, a goal they espoused but failed to pursue effectively. Their failure was due in large part to the absence of institutions for socializing officers in the norms of their occupation. Despite repeated efforts, the Federalists were unable to establish a military academy as the basis for a system of military training. Effective cohesion and responsibility were impossible when officers had no mechanisms for confirming their professional identities, whether through ritual, doctrine, or tradition, all of which West Point would impart after the War of 1812. The army's mission, indeed the army itself, frequently seemed precariously temporary to its officers during an era when so much of the American public considered the militia the nation's primary means of defense. Only the self-interest and habit fostered by officers' common employment remained as a basis for
military cohesion, and these are characteristics present in any occupational group, hardly sufficient to meet the criteria of commitment to accountable public service ideally represented by the label "professional."

Professional socialization is difficult when there is little continuity among the personnel of an occupation or organization. William Skelton's research has made it clear that "the most important characteristic of the [early national] army officer corps was the instability of its membership," and as early as 1792 James Wilkinson lamented personnel instability and the quality of officers it produced: "[T]he officers of our late Army, possessing genius, talents, education, or enterprise, have pushed their fortunes and found such Establishments in the world as forbid their retaining the Sword." As we shall see when examining the army after 1815, stability often had similar effects when set in concrete. Three out of every five officers present in 1789 were no longer in service by 1795, including thirteen of the sixteen above the rank of lieutenant. Only thirty-six percent of the officers commissioned in 1791 and 1792 were still present in 1800, and only twelve percent after the reduction two years later. By 1804 only five officers remained from the Confederation army, and only 3.5 percent of the ensigns appointed between 1792 and 1794 were still serving twenty years later during the War of 1812. The officer corps remained unstable during the Jeffersonian era, and by 1816 only nineteen officers on active duty—less than three percent of the total—could claim service in the previous century.²⁷

This instability was a product of personal motives, government policy, and institutional and social structure alike. Frequent fluctuations in the army's authorized strength and organization meant that military careers lacked much of the stability and security that they came to have in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, while Richard Kohn notes that "very few
of the [early national] officers were willing to commit themselves to a lifetime in the service. Many seemed to be adventurers seeking the main chance . . . [and] most had no understanding of conflict of interest." Between Federalist appointments and the resignation of Confederation veterans, the officer corps of 1797 was derived from a much more genteel base than a decade before, and the gentry saw public service as an undifferentiated whole, in which political and military leadership overlapped and offices were virtually interchangeable. A gentleman's primary motivation was public reputation, to which martial courage, fame, and glory all contributed, but there was little psychological incentive to serve if there was no war (or only one against Indians, whose defeat would not be noticed in the eye of one's peers because they were considered "savage" and hence unworthy adversaries) to provide opportunities for securing these bounties. During peacetime the officer stood to gain little besides security for his services, and even this stability was uncertain in an era of frequent force reductions. Unlike an enlisted man's desertion, resignation did not incur any sort of sanction or stigma--a society run by the gentry did not coerce independent gentlemen into occupations they wished to abandon. Individuals therefore sought and received military commissions intermittently, depending on the intersection of their goals with the opportunities presented by the foreign and domestic political situation. Skelton notes that for men with these attitudes and opportunities, "military careers were simply [brief] interruptions of their civilian lives."28

This lack of stability does not mean that no reforms were attempted. Upon Wayne's death Wilkinson embarked on a flurry of reform measures, perhaps largely to prove his superior competence and Wayne's inadequacy as a commander. In 1797 Wilkinson forbade gambling, ordered officers to get rid of their mistresses and expel prostitutes from army posts, required that
officers pay enlisted men at market rates for any personal services rendered, and authorized rations for soldiers' children and nursing mothers. He then set out on an inspection tour of the army's dispersed frontier posts, something that had been impossible even for Wayne because of the press of active campaigning. Although Wilkinson's orders had little lasting effect, his stricture against farming shows the potential for professional ideals of commitment, expertise, and a distinctly military identity present even in an officer of Wilkinson's hypocrisy and duplicity:

The Spirit of cropping which is almost everywhere to be seen, is repugnant to the principles of soldiership, destructive to the Service and disgraceful to those who indulge in it . . . The national bounty is expended not to improve the agricultural arts, but to instruct men in the use of arms; the hoe and the plow must be laid aside, and every moment of professional duty, devoted to form, instruct, and train them in the glorious Science of War. . . . the idea of an officer farming for profit is inadmissible, as it tends to neglect of duty, a relaxation of discipline, and the disgrace of the profession.²⁹

The officers of the 1780s and 90s shared similar patterns of what William Skelton has called "army politics" in their lobbying for pay and promotion, and insofar as their activities were confined to this occupational sphere, Skelton demonstrates that the Confederation officers "set the basic pattern for civil-military relations in the decades that followed." On the other hand, the officer corps became substantially more politically active during the 1790s, and the officers of that decade were more active lobbyists for both individual and collective military interests: besides James Wilkinson's
alliance with congressional Republicans, a number of officers held formal
meetings in 1795 to formulate a petition to Congress asking for a bounty in
land. As in Wilkinson's case, this pattern increasingly coincided with
extensive interest and activity in the realm of civilian politics per se, and
during the Federalist and Jeffersonian eras occupational issues like
promotion became highly susceptible to political action and partisan
allegiance as the size of the army (and thus the number of officers required)
was repeatedly increased and reduced in time with the advent of new
administrations and policies.30

Blame for this state of affairs cannot be laid exclusively at the door of
one side or another, for Skelton points out that "neither civilian leaders nor
regulars consistently defined military leadership as a specialized and
exclusive realm of endeavor, distinct from the political forum"—both
benefitted from this interpenetration and neither really wanted to eliminate
the opportunities that it presented. Indeed, Skelton labels the commissioned
soldiers of the period between 1789 and 1815 "a partisan officer corps," and
active factional ties between senior officers and important political figures did
not become uncommon until the 1830s. Military affairs were not effectively
disconnected from civilian political ones until several prerequisites coalesced:
national independence from European influence was clearly established with
the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the gradual rapprochement with Britain
after 1815, which allowed American politics to focus on internal matters
rather than questions of national and international allegiance; the existence
of standing military forces became a generally undisputed feature of
American national life—a gradual process, but one cemented by the War of
1812 and postwar reforms in military policy and administration; and military
institutions were developed to effectively socialize officers in professional
norms of national service without regard to partisan allegiance—the de facto impact of West Point after the reforms of the late 1810s and early 1820s.\textsuperscript{31}

Spatial limitations preclude a detailed narrative of the army's movement into the Mississippi Territory and the attempts to create new Federalist-dominated armies in 1798 and 1799, which have been adeptly treated by previous scholars. The creation of the "New Army" was a political mistake of disastrous proportions for the Federalist party, but it did provide Alexander Hamilton with the motive and opportunity to devote his redoubtable energies to military matters. Although he failed to establish the standing army he sought, Hamilton worked strenuously to reform America's military institutions, and William Skelton considers his efforts the most ambitious—though an only temporarily successful—attempt to do so before the War of 1812. Skelton observes that "the central theme of Hamilton's administrative policies was the rationalization of military bureaucracy" in pursuit of greater readiness and capability for war. The basic regimental structure of the New Army was overlaid by brigade and division commands for the first time since the Revolutionary War. The staff was expanded and its structure given articulation through a series of laws: the quartermaster and paymaster services were augmented (with line officers once again detached as regimental quartermasters) and a hierarchy of inspecting officers (including a specifically authorized inspector of fortifications, and a similar officer for the artillery) under Hamilton's control was established. The medical department was restructured and expanded with a "physician general" at its head, and new surgeons were to be selected through examination by boards of three or more medical officers, a measure authoritatively termed "the first example of an examining board in the administrative history of the United States" by historian Leonard White.
(This system seems to have evaporated when the post of surgeon general was abolished in 1802. Both position and procedure were later reestablished, in 1812 and 1814 respectively.) In each case the reforms established chains of officers at the brigade and division levels of the army's organization, with departmental heads above them. Had this hierarchy survived the reduction of 1802, it could have provided the army with an effective mechanism for enforcing regulations, thereby standardizing its internal life and increasing its accountability to both senior command and civil authority.\textsuperscript{32}

Reformers also worked to rationalize the army's administration and improve its tactical capability through new procedures and regulations. General Wilkinson, Secretary of War James McHenry, and Colonel John Hamtramck rewrote the Army Regulations (which governed its daily activities from discipline to cleanliness and cooking) in 1797 and 1798, and the following year Hamilton worked to standardize supply allowances, streamline the transmission of unit strength returns, and specify the authority and duties of army staff officers and War Department functionaries. In the fall of 1799 Hamilton conferred with Wilkinson about the redeployment of western garrisons and plans for their operational use; that winter he wrote a tactical manual for the infantry and a plan for a military academy to train junior officers and engineers while four other officers composed regulations for cavalry and artillery tactics and camp and garrison duty. Skelton labels this torrent of activity "the first concerted effort to bring about symmetry and uniformity to the army's central command structure"--a first step toward the standardization of thought and behaviour required to produce efficiency and accountability.\textsuperscript{33}

The New Army itself was never used to coerce American citizens. Its encampments were sited primarily on the basis of logistical considerations,
and Richard Kohn argues convincingly that there was never a formal plan for its use against the Republicans. On the other hand, regular units were part of the forces sent to suppress Fries’ Rebellion in northeastern Pennsylvania, where volunteer officers and soldiers mustered under the authority of the Provisional Army Act assaulted several Republican newspaper editors. Although the officers who beat William Duane and jostled John Randolph (potentially the prelude to a duel) were not members of the pre-1798 establishment, it could hardly escape opprobrium by association. Federalist assumptions about social hierarchy, the sovereignty of the nation-state over localities, and the use of force were clear for all to see, and the idea of a standing army embodied these fundamental Federalist values. In Kohn’s words, “by 1798 the army . . . had emerged as the symbol of a powerful, ordered, stable, nationalistic, patriotic institution unfettered by dissent or by uncertainty . . . A few Federalist leaders had come to believe that the government could not survive unless it possessed a permanent standing army.” Under these circumstances, it is little wonder that the Jefferson administration would try to limit the army’s power.34

Fortunately for its own future, the regular army of 1797 had no direct organizational or legislative association with the additional forces raised during the Quasi-War, and it was therefore exempted from their demobilization, which began as soon as peace with France seemed likely in 1800. Nevertheless, the entire army officer corps to that date had been appointed by Federalist administrations. The officers of 1797 tended to come from more privileged backgrounds than their predecessors a decade before, and many shared the Federalist value system of hierarchy, order, and authority. We must therefore examine their partisan attitudes and activities in order to come to some judgment about their accountability to the changing
society they served—the key issue we must address is how an officer corps appointed by Federalist administrations adapted, successfully but not smoothly, to Republican political and cultural supremacy after 1800. In doing so, we shall continue to explore the corps' responses to the possibility of territorial expansion in the southern and western borderlands, the state of military preparedness in the years leading up to the War of 1812, and the slowly changing character of the officer corps that faced these crises.

* * *

III. Accountability and the Jeffersonian Reformation, 1801-1808

The "Revolution of 1800" deserves that name in large part because national executive power was transferred between two bitterly antagonistic parties without violence, a first in the history of the new nation and one that set an enduring pattern for American civil-military relations. The role, or more precisely the lack of a role, played by the army and its officers in this transition was decisive—no coup occurred or was even suggested, despite the Federalist leanings of much of the officer corps. James Wilkinson (who once called Secretary of War McHenry a "mock minister") was not the only army officer involved in political machinations, but direct military interference in the electoral process was remarkably, indeed surprisingly, rare given the highly charged partisan atmosphere and the overlap between civil and military officeholding and elites. Federal law prohibited troops from appearing in uniform or under arms at polling places; during the early years of the republic local property and residency requirements were strict enough that soldiers and officers alike were often unable to vote; and aside from the effort to create Federalist armies in 1798 the influence or intimidation which
ardent republicans feared from a standing army rarely materialized. One captain was accused of using his unit to pressure voters in a Virginia election in 1793, but the case was never resolved, and two decades later another officer removed his troops to a nearby island on election day to forestall any imputations of misconduct, a responsible practice that may have been more common than the evidence indicates. The best-documented case of military intervention in electoral politics occurred in 1808, when the officers at Raleigh, North Carolina removed their troops from town in order to prevent them from voting for the Federalist candidate, whom this set of officers opposed. The troops willing to vote Republican were then marched back into town by their commanders, but the outcry from local civilians was such that they withdrew, apparently without voting. These three incidents are the only such occasions noted by scholars, however, and they seem quite minimal given the passionate nature of early republican politics. The regular army did not become a significant force in American political development except, thankfully, through its inactivity.35

This does not mean that the early national officer corps was apolitical or antipartisan, though—like many civilian Americans—officers frequently spoke the language of antagonism to faction which would become a military commonplace later in the century. As noted above, the Federalist worldview had many attractions for men who commanded others and considered themselves gentlemen, and Skelton observes that through its first decade of appointments the corps "took on a distinctly Federalist coloration." In a telling phrase, one major labelled the Democratic Republicans the "disorganizing" party, which they doubtlessly appeared to men dependent on a strong central government for their own prestige and authority, and Anthony Wayne himself compared the Democrats to demons. It appears that
most officers kept such views to themselves after the election of Jefferson. In Skelton's opinion, "the result was a partial and temporary dissociation . . . from the political arena, as regulars of the Federalist persuasion tried to assure the government of their reliability" in order to keep their commissions. General Wilkinson set the self-interested example here, quickly shifting with the tides to become the most prominent—though actually the only senior, and certainly not a very reliable—Republican partisan in the army.36

Among less senior officers, Joseph G. Swift, the first graduate of the military academy at West Point in 1802, then an instructor and later the Chief Engineer and (formally) superintendant, stated in his memoirs that the political allegiances of officers at the academy were well-known but not subject to discussion. Officers subscribed to newspapers from both parties, but this was doubtlessly as much a matter of the "army politics" of keeping abreast of military legislation and appointments that affected an officer's career as of partisan allegiance per se. In some cases this quietude reflected an explicitly professional recognition of the danger of strong partisan loyalties among army personnel: Captain Nathaniel Leonard damned Jefferson in the presence of enlisted men and was courts-martialed (though not dismissed) for it per the Articles of War, but Amos Stoddard, a known Federalist, resolved that "as a soldier I have no apparent right to meddle with any concerns out of the line of my profession—and as an officer of the government, I deem it proper to acquiesce in its measures, so long as I remain in service."37

Indeed, Stoddard's Federalist antecedents did not prevent him from exalting Republican military doctrine to the inhabitants of Upper Louisiana several years later: "[I]n all free republics . . . permanent armies of any considerable extent [are] justly deemed hostile to liberty, and therefore the
militia is considered the palladium of their safety." His next sentence, "every soldier is a citizen and every citizen a soldier," expresses the basic dilemma of intimate civil-military ties: if the soldier is a citizen is he not entitled (or even duty-bound) to participate in politics, though it may appear to intimidate some civilians, and if the citizen is a soldier is he not liable to military discipline and compulsion in times of national crisis (presumably the aspect of this equation that appealed to Federalists like Stoddard)? The Jefferson administration tried to resolve the first question by creating an officer corps more representative of America's Republican majority, but the libertarian and localist dimensions of Republican ideology were at least partially subordinated to expediency in answering the second during the crises of national independence between 1807 and 1815.38

Despite Republican fears, Federalist officers did not allow politics to cloud their sense of duty in the crunch. Several expressed their preference for peace with Britain and their doubts about the nation's military policies and capability in private letters, but they enforced the controversial Embargo, and few resigned when war was finally declared in 1812. Although there is no conclusive evidence on this point, the rate of resignations and refusals of new commissions in that year was highest in the Mid-Atlantic and southeastern states, not New England, and personal interest rather than ideology or partisan allegiance appears to have been the principal motive in these actions. Colonel Daniel Bissell's words to fellow New Englander and Federalist Jacob Kingsbury that fall suggest the mindset of authoritarian nationalism and hierarchy that lay behind this sense of accountability: "[Dissent] will not do in times like these, the citizens to a man after the declaration of war, ought to subscribe to the soldiers creed, viz, not to ask why or wherefore they are to fight--it is the will of the Government."39
Bissell and Kingsbury both wanted to fight the French instead, but as the military servants of the central government and the most visible local representatives of its policies they could not safely choose hibernation or the potential disorder of secession. On the other hand, at the local and individual level Bissell also provides us with extreme but telling examples of the early officer corps' frequent involvement in localized civil-military conflict over personal interests and prerogatives, and his words to Kingsbury demonstrate the evolution of a sense of accountability and commitment to the authority of the national government that he had not felt five years before. Bissell was a locally important civil and military official as well as a man who was rumored to drink to excess and let his ambition and passions overwhelm his sense of accountability, and as a captain a decade before he had been charged with (but apparently escaped punishment for) ordering a soldier to blow up the house of a merchant whose wife he seems to have coveted. (No actual violence had ensued.) A customs collector in Illinois in 1803 and 1804 before becoming a justice of the peace in Upper Louisiana, Bissell was implicated in the Aaron Burr conspiracy two years later but survived to be promoted to brigadier general in 1814. First commissioned in 1792, Bissell served until he was discharged during the reduction in force of 1821 (a decision he disputed throughout the 1820s), one of the best examples of career persistence in the early national officer corps.40

The impression of neutrality conveyed by officers like Swift and Stoddard did not allay the suspicions of the incoming administration. The Republicans had good reason to be concerned about continued Federalist influence, for on February 4, 1801 President Adams suddenly nominated eighty-seven men to vacancies in the army's permanent regiments, a number
nearly one-third their total complement, and the Senate accepted these "midnight appointments" without demur. (Under Article Two, Section Two of the Constitution the Senate possesses the authority to veto military appointments and promotions, though it rarely questions them except in already controversial cases.) Forty-four of the new appointees had served in the New Army, and fourteen of the fifteen whose political allegiances are known considered themselves Federalists.41

Although there was no immediate hue and cry over the military appointments like that which occurred over Adams' judicial selections, it seems clear that Jefferson felt uneasy over the partisan complexion of the army's commanders. Nevertheless, Jefferson was a pragmatic statesman whose interest in military affairs has been underestimated by many scholars, and he accepted the need for a regular force to patrol the frontiers, which he expected to move westward in accordance with his vision of an ever-expanding agrarian republic. Balancing these concerns led to the Military Peace Establishment Act of 1802, which reduced the army to two infantry and one artillery regiments, with a single brigadier general--still James Wilkinson--at its head. As historian Theodore Crackel observes, the crises of 1798-1800 convinced the Republicans that they had to shape a Republican army, not disband it altogether.42

Crackel demonstrates that the new administration followed three paths to secure an army accountable to the res publica as a whole: discharging Federalist officers in disproportionate numbers during the reduction of the army in 1802, choosing Republicans for new commissions, and courting moderate Federalists and officers without strong political beliefs in order to redirect their sympathies. According to Crackel, both the foundation of the Military Academy at West Point and the three-fold expansion of the officer
corps in 1808 were at least partially intended to make Republicans the majority within the army. Skelton has questioned this thesis as applied to the reduction of 1802 and the role of West Point, but it seems indisputable that political considerations were prominent in the administration's military appointments policy, though certainly not decisive in every individual case. Although the actual strength of the army as whole was reduced by only three hundred men (to a total of about 3300) in 1802, eighty-eight officers--more than a one-third of the total--were discharged, a clear indication that the Republicans believed that the army was overstaffed with officers. (On the other hand, Adams' lame-duck appointees were not simply discharged en masse, despite the coincidence of numbers involved.)

The administration did not simply cut the officer corps down to an acceptable level, either, but went on to appoint twenty new officers, all at the newly created rank of ensign, the lowest in the commissioned hierarchy. This measure illustrates the competing priorities at issue and demonstrates the moderate nature of the republican military reformation: Jefferson and the Republicans wanted to reorient the officer corps, but not at the cost of their principles themselves by creating an unnecessarily large and expensive establishment that would perpetuate the Federalist precedent of an overtly partisan body by appointing new officers (particularly senior ones) en masse from civilian life. Rapidly gaining in popularity, the Republican regime had no need for such a force, nor did it attempt to secure a loyal command structure by reversing social priorities and structure by promoting large numbers of enlisted men. (Indeed, these larger questions do not seem to have been explicitly discussed in public forums, or at length in the policymakers' private correspondence.) There would be no Republican "New Army" (much less an "Eventual" one of partisan militias), though the
administration later lost some of its patience and the expansion of 1808 bore some of the characteristics of that a decade before.

In other words, the new administration did share the basic ideals of gentility and a certain respect for functional specialization with the Federalists, and its policies preserved gentry class criteria for appointments and the institutional principle of promotion by internal seniority. The fundamental social and institutional characteristics of the officer corps remained the same as those in the Continental and Federalist armies—the relatively elite composition of the officer corps did not change, while the political stability of Republican dominance led to greater potential for extended careers, semi-monopolies of class and organization recognized as key guarantees of occupational prestige and autonomy by officers throughout the nineteenth century. The "Jeffersonian resolution" to the political and social dilemmas of military organization was a moderate one that adhered to basic Republican principles without dismissing the need for some kind of a standing military force.44

Besides discharging officers, the act also eliminated several senior staff posts created in 1798 and held by Federalists, and it was here that the Republican legislation actually damaged the army's ability to perform the missions assigned to it. The quartermaster general, his deputy, and one of the deputy inspectors were dismissed; the other inspector was placed on line duty. Believing itself to lack suitably qualified candidates to replace them, and fearful of alienating the corps as a whole should seniority be ignored—for there was only one Republican field-grade officer to fill all these posts—the administration destroyed the staff instead. The transportation and distribution of supplies became an entirely civilian matter left to frequently unreliable contractors subject neither to military discipline nor financial
bonds for good behaviour: the quartermaster general's duties were divided among the secretary of war and three civilian agents, and the regimental quartermasters were returned to their line assignments and replaced by civilians. (Unit commanders were permitted to make purchases in case of deficiencies, but rarely assumed the personal financial responsibility necessary to do so.) The inspectorate was also abolished, and only the paymaster and adjutant generals were retained, the latter as an adjutant and inspector general (AIG) without deputies who served primarily as an assistant to the secretary of war in Washington. The AIG was then forced to neglect his role as inspector in order to accomplish his daily administrative duties as adjutant. It is clear that the inadequacy of the staff, and especially the lack of quartermaster services, damaged the army severely when it was concentrated in large formations in 1809 and during the War of 1812. Logistical expertise and accountability both suffered without a staff formally committed to public service and subject to sanctions beyond those available through interminable civil court proceedings.45

According to Crackel, the foundation of West Point was the third dimension of Jefferson's move to make the army safe for Republicanism, but Jefferson's motives for creating the Military Academy have never been definitively explained. The academy certainly did not provide training for all the officers the army needed in 1802, and it remained legally and practically the province of the Corps of Engineers, from whom the artillery were separated by the Peace Establishment Act. No systematic body of tactical doctrine or strategic theory was taught at the academy (or at the European military schools of the day, for that matter), for there was little available to teach aside from drill and military history, which was almost universally neglected as a means of systematic military training in the nineteenth-century
United States. Richard Kohn's judgment lends substantial though indirect credence to the idea that Jefferson intended the academy as a school for socially responsible republican officers (though not necessarily Republican partisans):

Jefferson must surely have understood after a decade of debate the larger meaning of a military academy, that the Federalists desired it in part to make a military establishment self-perpetuating, that it could develop an elite officer corps for some future standing army, and that it would add to the permanence of the military by making the army a separate, self-sustaining group, possibly with an ethic of its own.

Jefferson would have been insane to have accepted this departure from republican principles without any higher purpose in mind than a mere artillery school.46

The Jefferson and Madison administrations appointed too few cadets to effectively Republicanize the officer corps, but the academy did provide a regular mechanism for free education that middle-class aspirants could take advantage of to test their merit against gentry competitors. In this way, even if the officer corps was already substantially middle class, the academy would serve as a systemic means to prevent any future attempt at monopoly over military commissions (and thus the operational control of organized force) by the forces of privilege and aristocracy. Indeed, one might speculate that Jefferson, knowing the predominantly aristocratic composition of contemporary European officer corps, hoped to distance the American one from them by associating it with the engineering and artillery branches, which were scorned in Europe because of their associations with manual labor. If American officers received a technical education, perhaps this
socialization would prevent them from idealizing the European concept of the aristocratic officer, and would thereby safeguard the nation from a socially isolated officer corps of the sort that might threaten civilian rule and republican society.47

Following the trend of recent Jeffersonian historiography, perhaps the most likely explanation of the academy's founding by an "antimilitary" administration is that Jefferson, who historians have recognized as a skillful politician who also appreciated specialized expertise, accepted the utility of a military academy once his party was in power, with the expectation that it would pose no danger as long as men of right principles controlled the government. The new president was a pragmatist and a decisive, even high-handed, executive where he felt that national leadership was appropriate (as in foreign policy, for example), and as with so many other tenets of the Republican faith, the party's doctrine on military affairs gradually (but comparatively quickly) thinned from ideology and dogma into perspective and attitude as it attempted to resolve international crises. Once in power Republican officials had to run national affairs and sought national tools to do so, while state leaders confined their interests to the politics of internal improvements and largely ignored the federal government. Barring a major civil-military crisis like that averted by the collapse of the Burr Conspiracy, the great majority of Republicans soon felt little interest in the armed forces as long as their cost remained under control.48

Regardless of its motives, the government paid comparatively little attention to the academy as an institution from 1803 until after the War of 1812, which suggests that its immediate prominence as a means toward any grandiose end quickly dissipated into inertia, and the officer corps remained predominantly Federalist in partisan affiliation and ideological affinity for
several years. Despite Secretary of War Henry Dearborn’s initial hope that twenty or thirty cadets would graduate annually, only eighty-nine cadets did so and were offered commissions in the army before the War of 1812. Republicanizing the officer corps took time, and did not become complete until Jefferson finally adopted Federalist methods by expanding the army in 1808. By Dearborn’s count there were thirty-eight Republican officers and 140 Federalists at the end of 1802, more than three times as many Republicans as a year before but still a distinct minority composed virtually entirely of ensigns. By 1805, however, the number of officers appointed by Jefferson exceeded those commissioned before his inauguration, powerful testimony to the instability of military careers during this era. Altogether, between 1801 and 1808 three-quarters of the 267 officers of the former year died, resigned, or were discharged (nearly half of them in the reduction of 1802). By the end of 1807 three out of every five officers had been commissioned by Jefferson, but there were still few Republicans above the rank of lieutenant. This finally changed when the army was expanded in 1808. As Crackel suggests, there is no way to account for the expansion of that year except by acknowledging that Jefferson and Dearborn paid more attention to military affairs than they have often been given credit for, and there is little reason to believe that the Republicans were less partisan in their appointments than the Federalists before them.49

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IV. Accountability Put to the Test: James Wilkinson, the Southwestern Borderlands, and Further Political Appointments, 1803-1808
The army's primary operational focus during the first decade of the nineteenth century continued to be frontier defense and policing, but the principal scene of activity shifted to the Southwest after the conclusion of the Jay and Pinckney Treaties and the northwestern Indian wars. The army successfully occupied Louisiana in 1803 and West Florida in 1810, but it is difficult to evaluate the army's operational effectiveness in these actions, inasmuch as it was following unopposed on the heels of diplomacy and powerful filibuster movements. The principal tests of the officer corps' professionalism therefore remained its accountability to civilian authority and its preparedness for armed conflict. In both realms the results were mixed at best, as demonstrated by the army's continuing internal divisiveness, its officers' conflicts with civil authorities, their sympathy for and sometimes participation in extralegal filibustering expeditions against Spanish soil, and the human and logistical disaster sustained during a troop concentration near New Orleans in 1809. The army did deter Spanish threats to land claimed by the United States in Louisiana (the so-called "Neutral Ground" east of the Sabine River), provided the force to break up the Burr Conspiracy, and participated in William Henry Harrison's defeat of Tecumseh at Tippecanoe, but it was unable (and among some officers unwilling) to seize East Florida in 1812 or to prevent a series of disasters on the northern border in the opening days of the War of 1812.

The key player in the army of this era remained James Wilkinson, who continued to display a complex mixture of occasional responsibility, willful neglect, and outright treason. During the negotiations over Louisiana in 1803 General Wilkinson reported to the secretary of war on his ability to seize New Orleans, and other senior officers seconded the general's opinion that war would follow if no deal was struck. Indeed, Wilkinson, Mississippi territorial
governor William C.C. Claiborne, and a prominent American merchant from New Orleans had already made plans to seize the city before the French arrived, and Wilkinson asked Secretary of War Dearborn to be consulted "if anything professional is to be done," apparently in the fear that he would be ignored if he did not press his claim to be heard. (As usual, Wilkinson could not forbear from playing both sides, for he almost simultaneously advised the Spanish authorities to halt the Lewis and Clark expedition and to fortify West Florida and the border of Texas against future American threats.) Wilkinson and Claiborne were later appointed as the commissioners in charge of receiving Louisiana from Spain; Claiborne became governor of Lower Louisiana. The exchange of sovereignty occurred without violence, but the commanding general quickly became embroiled in civil-military controversies over his conduct in New Orleans and Upper Louisiana (St. Louis and the area to its northwest). As governor of the latter he intervened in disputes over land claims, and Skelton observes that "territorial politics soon polarized into pro-Wilkinson and anti-Wilkinson factions." The latter included most of the territorial magistrates, one of whom wrote to the secretary of the treasury accusing Wilkinson and his officers of assault and false arrest. Wilkinson finally got around to warning his subordinates against "mingling in the political conflicts of the Territory," but this was less a commendable indication of professional restraint than a belated gesture intended to appease the administration.50

Meanwhile the general sent a small expedition to establish a post at the mouth of the Platte River as part of an effort to demonstrate American authority over the more remote portions of the Louisiana Purchase. (It was on this expedition that the only American regular killed in action during the Jefferson administration was slain by Indians.) The administration had
forbidden such actions on grounds of economy (and probably to restrain any intrigues Wilkinson had going), but the order reached him after he had already been turned back by hostile Indians. Secretary Dearborn then delivered a blistering rebuke and ordered Wilkinson to consider the establishment of new posts in distant borderlands regions the exclusive prerogative of the president, a clear assertion of civilian control over the strong possibility of military adventurism or diplomatic provocation. Wilkinson was soon ordered back to New Orleans, and thence to the Sabine River frontier, where he fulfilled his mission to counter Spanish land claims with much greater sensitivity to his government's policies than he had shown in the past.51

After the Louisiana Purchase, the main source of friction along the western frontier was the American desire to acquire West Florida and the territory immediately to the east of the disputed Sabine River frontier, where American and Spanish officers waged a war of wills throughout the decade. The most serious outbreak of tension in the latter region arose in 1806, just as the Burr Conspiracy was reaching fruition. Although he delayed his departure from Upper Louisiana (in large part because of his wife's terminal illness), Wilkinson restrained Governor Claiborne from moving the militia against Spanish posts and provoking war until the general could bring up regular forces and open talks with the Spanish. This hesitation was not due to any reluctance to press for American expansion, but Wilkinson did not feel that the United States had the forces available to win the decisive victory he believed necessary should war break out. The general had already forwarded plans for an invasion of Texas per War Department request, and he advised that five thousand men--a force larger than the existing army--would be necessary to consummate them with an advance to the Rio Grande.
Otherwise Wilkinson maintained that Louisiana would be lost if a conflict erupted, a good example of the professional military man's responsible but often extreme tendency to fear the worst case and demand decisive action to avert it. Unfortunately, Wilkinson could not restrain himself from relating these concerns in personal communications to an Ohio senator and an old Kentucky friend, to whom he estimated that ten thousand men would enable him to take Monterey, and thirty thousand all of Mexico.\textsuperscript{52}

Wilkinson dismissed the militia after the local Spanish commander removed his posts from the eastern side of the Sabine and the two commanders agreed on a "neutral zone" there, and this informal agreement remained government policy until the ratification of the Adams-Onis Treaty in 1821. Wilkinson was well used to parlaying with Spanish representatives, who considered him untrustworthy but open to practical compromises,\textsuperscript{53} but given his expansionist plans it seems probable that the general's primary motive for negotiating was the need to leave the Sabine to defend the federal government against a more pressing internal threat, the Burr Conspiracy. (Indeed, Wilkinson may have delayed his departure from St. Louis earlier in the year in order to avoid entangling his forces on the Sabine while Burr was threatening New Orleans, or for fear of precipitating a war which Burr could have joined in and assumed leadership over.) This plot was the ultimate instance of filibustering and military irresponsibility in the early republic, a plan to seize Spanish territory as an enticement for secession by the Louisiana and perhaps Mississippi Territories, the whole to form an empire under Burr and his confederates. Skelton has observed that "there can be little doubt that a significant minority of the officer corps" supported or participated in the conspiracy, including--though only in its early, inchoate stage--James Wilkinson. Indeed, some of these officers simultaneously entered into the
so-called "Mexican Association," a separate filibuster plot that apparently intended to finance its operations by seizing the banks at New Orleans, and Captain Daniel Bissell (erstwhile justice of the peace and future brigadier general) provided Burr with a courier, almost certainly at the commanding general's request.54

Later in 1806 Wilkinson wrote to Senator Samuel Smith that his officers were "universally disgusted with the service" of the United States, but he professed to believe that most would remain loyal. Wilkinson himself had got cold feet and informed Jefferson of the plot, hoping to salvage and even enhance his reputation by acting as the nation's saviour, but not before Secretary Dearborn felt compelled to order all commanders to halt active or pending troop movements lest they be used as cover for aid to Burr. (Wilkinson was then writing to Samuel Smith that he would be "crowned Emperor of Mexico in place of Burr," though this statement may simply have expressed the general's hope that he would soon be leading the invasion he had planned and advocated from St. Louis and the Sabine.) Wilkinson then declared martial law in New Orleans, arrested a number of civilians suspected of ties with Burr, warned the Spanish, and cooperated with them in preparing defensive measures. The conspiracy collapsed, and overall things turned out well for both the general, who escaped without formal inquiry or sanction, and his subordinates, who demonstrated dexterity (or shiftiness) worthy of their commander in rapidly changing sides and explaining away their indiscretions.55

It should certainly be noted that Wilkinson said and did a number of things indicating a sincere commitment to military service and the interests of the United States, but the general's potential professional energies were constantly being diffused in politics and unsanctioned personal diplomacy,
and both sorts of activity bred distrust among his civilian superiors. Indirect communication was in fact the norm in the troubled relationship between Wilkinson and the executive branch, and for several months during the Burr crisis communications effectively ceased altogether while the administration waited on a demonstration of their chief general's loyalty. After a decade of near daily correspondence from the secretary of war, Wilkinson received only four perfunctory letters from Dearborn between June 10 and November 7, 1806, and none from Jefferson. Their correspondence resumed once a letter from the general had revived his superiors' confidence in his loyalty, but the following April Wilkinson (who had been upset by their silence) ordered the new AIG to join him in St. Louis, which deprived the administration of another channel of communications and mechanism of control over the army.56

The Jefferson administration had already been suspicious of the general for several years before the Burr conspiracy reached a head. An assessment of the tacit internal struggle waged between the commanding general and his civilian superiors for control of the army is as important to an analysis of the early national officer corps' low level of professional accountability as the story of Jefferson's policies to remake the military establishment in a more republican image. Both took concrete form in the administration's personnel policies, for it appears that Jefferson and Dearborn gave extensive thought to fostering a faction of officers who would not be dependent on or allied with the commanding general. This effort was constantly hobbled by the question of seniority versus merit, for disputes over seniority had bedevilled the army since its inception, because among officers of equal rank the one appointed earliest (not the one with the longest time in that particular grade) received command and held something of a
presumptive right to the next promotion. Consequently, a regulation promulgated by the War Department in 1801 and formally enacted into law in 1812 set the basic policy for the nineteenth century, that promotion up to the rank of captain would occur by seniority from among the pool of officers in each particular regiment, while that to colonel would occur by seniority from among all those within a branch.\textsuperscript{57}

This practice made it difficult to pack the senior ranks of existing regiments, and the seniority principle therefore became an important stabilizing factor in the army's internal structure as long as no major expansions occurred. Jefferson's immediate political purposes were better served by a new set of Articles of War enacted in 1806, which strengthened the ineffectual prohibition against political slander by providing for sanctions against officers who spoke disrespectfully of federal or state officials (and not simply "the authority of the United States in Congress assembled" as before). But the president's control over the army seemed tenuous as long as its officers remained undivided by more than personal quarrels, and the administration's solution was to drive a factional wedge into the officer corps akin to that which Wilkinson had spurred in the mid-1790s.\textsuperscript{58}

The dispute that followed between Wilkinson and Colonel Thomas Butler led to an important advance in the mechanisms for ensuring civil control through a provision in the 1806 Articles of War giving the president the sole authority to call courts of inquiry, but Butler's death left the military opposition to Wilkinson headless. The administration forbade Wilkinson to promote a replacement without presidential sanction and then decided to nominate a civilian directly to the lieutenant colonelcy of Butler's regiment after the officer in that slot was promoted to command the unit. (Replacing Butler directly was deemed too blatant a violation of the seniority principle.)
Jefferson's first choice for this post was Samuel Hammond, erstwhile United States congressman, who had already quarrelled with Wilkinson while serving under him as commandant of the St. Louis District in Upper Louisiana. The Senate rejected this move in 1806, to the widespread applause of officers who feared the threat to the seniority principle. Lieutenant William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition was the subject of a second unsuccessful nomination the following year, after which Jefferson accepted the status quo and appointed the next officer in line of seniority, Major Richard Sparks, a fifteen-year veteran who was courts-martialed four years later for excessive zeal in aiding filibusters on the borders of West Florida.  

Jefferson continued to worry over the allegiance of his officers and their commander throughout his presidency. The president got his best chance in 1808, when the army's authorized strength was increased to almost ten thousand men by an "Additional Military Force" of eight regiments enlisted for five years to meet the threat posed by British violations of American neutral rights. The number of officers was increased proportionately, from around two hundred to nearly three times that figure. There were nowhere nearly enough officers to fill the new regiments by seniority alone, so the new units were staffed en masse by men commissioned directly from civilian life, and the administration made political affiliation a decisive criterion for appointment. Dearborn wrote widely to Republican congressmen asking for their recommendations and kept up a correspondence on the topic to ensure their accuracy. Consequently, the new officers were fairly representative of middle-class and genteel American society: the geographical origins of the appointees closely paralleled the distribution of the free population, and Skelton concludes that "on the whole . . . the process reflected the localism of the American social
order." Whether because of politics, official discouragement, or because they feared that they would be discharged when the authorization for the additional forces expired, only three officers from the existing army sought transfers into the new regiments. As a result these units were officered by new men and Republican partisans at all ranks, effectively creating a new army. By 1809 only nine of the army's thirty-six field officers were veterans of the army of 1802, and Republicans had become the majority in all grades of the army hierarchy, including general, where Jefferson had finally found a man, Brigadier General Wade Hampton (appointed colonel in 1808 and promoted in 1809), to act as the rallying point for anti-Wilkinson sentiment. Indeed, only about fifty of the 140 suspected Federalists of 1802 remained in the army in 1809, and nearly nine out of ten officers were considered Republicans.  

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V. The Limits of Expertise and Responsibility: Preparations for War and Operations in the Southern Borderlands, 1808-1812

Jefferson's success in reforming the army politically had some parallels in the development of specifically military expertise, but not many, and they, like the new partisan coloration of the army, were externally derived rather than internally generated. The American army remained a largely homogeneous force of infantry units with little tactical specialization. (In 1812 a senior artillery officer asserted that his branch was artillery "only in name.") It was widely dispersed, and thus unable to practice the sort of large-scale maneuvers and operations it would conduct in war with European powers. Experienced senior officers understood that this was a liability, but
the army's constabulary mission, latent civilian fears of military threats to liberty, and the small staff organization that these conditions permitted and fostered prevented concentration. Whether the army's officers were "administrators, policemen, [or] conspirators" (in Skelton's concise description), there appeared to be little point to promoting functional military expertise among them. On the other hand, this left the army with a number of officers "utterly destitute of education, manner, and intelligence," as General Wilkinson labelled two of his subordinates during the occupation of Louisiana, when he judged the men incapable of independent command. More generally, a leading authority on the artillery suggests that "the mass of its officers knew little or nothing of the higher duties of the profession."61

Secretary Dearborn's principal reform interest was in the sphere of technology rather than tactics or doctrine, where he succeeded in adopting various minor improvements in the army's weaponry. Theodore Crackle gives Dearborn great credit for his initiatives in areas like the development of the first American horse artillery, but the company created in 1808 was disbanded the following year by Dearborn's successor, whereupon its captain resigned. The 1808 establishment included a regiment apiece of light artillery (which included the company of horse artillery), dragoons (light cavalry who usually dismount to fight), and riflemen, and William Duane, America's first military theorist and an extensive reader in the growing European literature of war, proposed that these forces should eventually form the backbone of a new-style American system of defense relying on speed, maneuver, and the individual initiative of republican soldiers. The Republican demand for fiscal economy precluded this transformation, however.62

Duane's multi-volume *American Military Library* was far too large and diffuse to serve as the practical drill manual he and Secretary Dearborn were
seeking to replace von Steuben's Revolutionary-era "Blue Book," and despite various proposals the army continued to rely on several tactical systems until after the War of 1812. Indeed, one regiment actually used the British manual of drill, while General Winfield Scott chose erstwhile inspector general Alexander Smyth's compilation of the French regulations for his division's camp of instruction in 1814. Ironically, the very paucity of available artillery manuals may have eased the standardization of practice in that arm, insofar as uniformity was necessary for the small units (usually no more than batteries of two to six guns) deployed by American forces on the battlefield, for the only drill manual widely available during the War of 1812 was one quickly put together by Major Amos Stoddard just before the war began, which encompassed only the school of the piece (individual cannon) and battery movements. The infantry fought on a larger scale, and it was fortunate for the army that most of the battles involved no more than a couple of thousand men, who could be effectively controlled and maneuvered by capable individuals without recourse to extensive doctrinal foundations or thorough standardization.63

The army's leaders sometimes pondered strategy and what today would be called operations (essentially the execution of strategy by forces within a geographical theater, for example the Canadian or Floridian borderlands), but in keeping with the generalism of the era they did not act to codify these thoughts in any systematic way.64 Speaking in more practical terms, effective strategic planning required the creation of a logistical infrastructure that could support operations. Henry Knox and Anthony Wayne had made detailed plans for operations and their supply in the northwestern campaigns of 1791, 1793, and 1794, but the army was not physically concentrated to the same degree for another fifteen years, and the
unsettled supply system that survived the act of 1802 seemed adequate for the small-scale expeditions (usually no more than several hundred men) of the years between 1802 and 1806. Regimental quartermaster officers and two brigade inspectors and quartermasters detached from the line were provided for in the expansion of 1808, but the main responsibility for logistical support remained in the hands of civilian contractors, whose driving motive was profit, commonly secured by the false economy of skimping on the army's needs with inadequate or deficient supplies. (Republican congressional parsimony led to limited appropriations, low contract prices, and narrow profit margins, which contractors tried to expand by cutting corners.) These contractors were not subject to military discipline, nor were they required to submit monetary bonds for good performance like civilian officials holding financially responsible posts. Logistical and operational capability are intimately related, and under the circumstances it was fortunate that the army conducted few large-scale movements during this period. When it finally did so the result was a disaster directly traceable to General Wilkinson's irresponsibility and the systemic inadequacies of army logistics.65

The collapse of army supply at Terre aux Boeufs in 1809 clearly prefigured the army's inability to mount concerted offensive operations three years later. In both cases the most elemental cause of failure was the absence of experienced officers, in part the natural consequence of rapid force expansions but also the product of an inadequate staff structure. This structure had been decimated in 1802, and without sufficient inspecting officers the army had no way to check the provision of shoddy goods and rotten food. Indeed, delinquencies usually went unprosecuted and unpunished even when discovered, and the same duplicitous contractors were often rehired again and again, in large part because there were so few
frontier businessmen with the connections and credit needed to handle the large-scale requirements of forces of several hundred men at once. What is more, the army and its political superintendents (Congress and the War Department) did nothing to remedy these institutional flaws until the war became imminent. Aside from the appointment of two paymasters (at the subordinate officers' behest), the tragedy at Terre aux Boeufs produced no changes in the staff and supply structures. Even a system staffed by officers under military discipline might not have sufficed to ensure accountability, however, when the army's most senior officer, the single man most accountable for its overall tone and daily well-being, was receiving kickbacks from the contractors.66

The inner life of the army and its officer corps was in as much turmoil as its institutions and doctrine. Historian Russell Weigley has characterized the regulars of this period as "an unhappy Army, continually on the verge of demoralization." Its officers had little sense of a shared identity, and their behaviour was replete with cases of irresponsibility. The officer corps' lack of cohesion was a prominent source of dysfunctional behaviour. To begin with, many officers simply were not present for duty: in 1799, for example, with the Franco-American crisis still unresolved, eighteen of thirty captains and forty-four of sixty-nine lieutenants were absent from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Infantry Regiments (all units of the army prior to the Federalist expansion) alone--sixty percent of their company officers. The colonel of the 3rd had been absent from duty for its entire seven years of service; its major had been on leave for three. Besides these delinquencies, eleven of the lieutenants' commissions in those regiments were simply vacant. This indiscipline extended beyond the lonely, dangerous frontier: in 1801 Lieutenant Colonel Henry Burbeck of the
artillery had to write to Lieutenant Colonel Louis Tousard at West Point in an effort to force officers there to "to improve themselves in their duty" by attending classes.67

The pay and subsistence allowances allotted to officers did not vary from post to post in accordance with the cost of living or other conditions, so they often resigned rather than changing stations to a less desirable spot. This was usually done to avoid the unhealthy southern posts: Major Decius Wadsworth, the commanding officer at West Point, resigned in 1805 (for a second time, the first being in 1796) when he was ordered to New Orleans for the summer after being "buried alive in snow all winter," and Major Daniel Jackson resigned after he was ordered to accept a transfer to Natchez. A move was made to address these delinquencies in 1809, when all officers on furlough or otherwise absent from their units and not on official assignment were ordered to report to the adjutant and inspector general to explain themselves. This procedure soon became a monthly requirement but does not seem to have met with much success.68

Many officers became dissatisfied with their pay and compensation, which though substantial by the standards of ordinary Americans was insufficient to meet the expectations of men who considered themselves (or wanted to be considered) genteel. Wadsworth was upset that "I find myself to be wasting the best of my days" while gaining "nothing but a bare livelihood," and in 1805 Colonel Thomas Hunt led fourteen officers who sent a memorial to Congress seeking higher pay scales. Three years later Edmund P. Gaines, one of only five generals in the army between 1821 and 1841, began to make preparations to resign in order to secure a more lucrative civil post (more so, that is, than the ones he was filling already), but events combined to keep him in the army until the War of 1812 set him on the road to prominence.
The same was true of Captain Winfield Scott (the commanding general between 1841 and 1861), who resigned in June 1809 after a year in service (and a month at Terre aux Boeufs) but withdrew his resignation before it was acted on when the chances of war and public distinction seemed to improve. The political imperative of fiscal economy proved damaging to the cohesion and morale of the officer corps in more complex ways as well, because the army had no retirement system: as a result resignation was often financially impossible for older men without civilian career prospects, which eventually led to the clogged promotion ladder, frustrated ambitions, and endemic personal quarrelling that we shall see in the army of the Jacksonian era.69

The army attempted to adjudicate these disputes through a court-martial system intended to serve two distinct but connected disciplinary purposes: allowing individuals to conduct their personal quarrels without resort to the private ritual of the duel at the same time that formal official and informal cultural standards of social propriety and accountability were preserved. The military courts were not especially successful in doing either, however: Skelton has examined the surviving orderly books of the commanding generals between 1792 and 1808 and found that nearly two-thirds of military court proceedings resulted in some finding of guilt, but punishments were often lenient, suggesting a significant degree of tolerance for deviance within the officer corps. Indeed, Skelton observes that "in contrast to duels, courts tended to perpetuate rather than resolve personal disputes; officers under arrest often brought countercharges against their accusers, resulting in complex webs of litigation that tied up entire commands." Official tolerance therefore had both positive and negative dimensions: it helped the army to retain experienced officers and to build cohesion because most officers could expect to retain their commissions
without permanent black marks on their records, but often did so at the cost of allowing disruptive and socially irresponsible behaviour to go unpunished. Inasmuch as officers' values tended to sanction the code of honor and its ritualized expression on the dueling grounds—which was thought to resolve whatever issues had drawn the combatants together—private combat may indeed have been a more effective means of dispute resolution than the military court system. On the other hand, dueling carried far greater potential for all sorts of disruption and was rapidly becoming anathema in the northern states and among southern evangelicals, so the army's inability to place limits on such tumultuous behaviour appeared to indicate a passionate personal irresponsibility and a lack of institutional and group accountability that damaged the army's public image and made it difficult for the officer corps to carve out an autonomous professional jurisdiction.70

These problems notwithstanding, dueling remained the most common restraint on the officer corps' "Litigious spirit," demonstrating the power of social and cultural norms to transcend and undermine official dictates and institutional practice. We have already noted the appalling frequency of duels in the Legion, and Edward Coffman observes that by 1800 dueling "seemed to be an accepted characteristic of the officer class." Indeed, the unofficial seal of approval for this private violence was set by the example of the army's highest officers, whose challenges indicated that formal institutional rank was ultimately secondary to the cultural status and authority of gentility in their calculations of social reputation and honor: Wilkinson challenged Representative John Randolph in 1807, while Brigadier General Wade Hampton later challenged his direct civilian superior in the executive branch, Secretary of War William Eustis, who (unlike
Randolph) actually accepted, although no duel took place. In 1806 General Wilkinson gave even more direct sanction to the practice when he advised a subordinate that "private combat" was "the best mode of adjustment" if a dispute seemed irresolvable, and after being court-martialed in 1810 Winfield Scott fought his chief accuser (a surgeon) and was grazed on the scalp. The paradoxes involved in the army's mixture of formal and informal means of adjudicating disputes were exemplified later that year in a court-martial that charged a lieutenant with both giving a challenge—an offense under the Articles of War—in one case and refusing one in another, which was interpreted as "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." (Both of the lieutenant's possible opponents were captains. He was found innocent on both counts but was dismissed the following year for other reasons.) Even West Point was not immune to this sort of officially sanctioned internecine violence: cadet Henry Burchstead was expelled for assaulting an officer there, but Secretary of War Eustis allowed him to remain in service and commissioned him in 1811. (Burchstead was wounded at Tippecanoe and killed in action fighting the Red Stick Creeks in 1813.)

Egregious as many of these disputes were, they were at least individual cases of deviance (if phenomena so common can be labelled deviant) from normative standards of responsible professional behaviour. The most damaging controversies continued to center, like so much of the army's dysfunction, around its senior (and until 1808 the commanding) general, James Wilkinson. Wilkinson continued to act as a veritable lightning rod for controversy within the army, the source and subject of repeated accusations and courts-martials. Several officers joined Colonel Thomas Butler in threatening to resign rather than cut their hair on the general's order, and Major James Bruff, civil commandant of the St. Louis district under the
Wilkinson, was suspended for a year without pay as a consequence of his own feud with the general. These run-ins were not simply matters of personal friction, although it is difficult to separate personal disputes from political ones. Bruff, for instance, had been concerned that the army was insufficiently republican in sentiment and should be further "regenerated," and one of the reasons he gave for his resignation in 1807 was the "persecution" he had endured at the hands of officers who did not share his opinions. Even if Bruff was just using a claim of political allegiance as a way to get back at his enemies, the incident still demonstrates the politicization of the officer corps from within and its vulnerability to, if not eagerness for, intervention from without.72

The pervasiveness of dissension was also evident in the number of senior officers, both contemporary and future, who were involved in disputes, duels, or courts-martial at some point before the war. Two of these men later became brigadier generals and the most important factional leaders in the postwar army. Both shared suspicion or disdain for Wilkinson before 1812, which strongly suggests the malign influence that prewar junior officers' first experiences of command relationships and professional cohesion had on their conduct in higher posts in the postwar establishment. Early in 1809 Captain Edmund Gaines bypassed the entire chain of command and wrote directly to President Jefferson with his suspicions of the general's conduct towards the Spanish, and the following year Captain Winfield Scott was tried by courts-martial after he denounced Wilkinson as a traitor, liar, and scoundrel. Indeed, one specification read that Scott had stated (doubtlessly while in his cups) "that if he went into action under the command of General Wilkinson he would carry two pistols, one for his enemy and one for his General." Scott was convicted by courts-martial of
contempt for a superior and of withholding pay from some of his troops for more than a year (although this was apparently unintentional), and he was suspended without pay for a year.73

By 1810 the factional dimensions of such disputes had again come to the fore, because the Republicans had finally succeeded in finding a new foil against Wilkinson’s dominance of the officer corps. The expansion of 1808 increased the army’s senior rank structure to include two more brigadier generals, one of whom, Wade Hampton, had enough ego to make him the natural counterweight to Wilkinson that the Jefferson administration had long been seeking. (The other brigadier died of old age in 1812.) In 1812 the junior general put Colonel Thomas Cushing (a Wilkinson man) on trial for disobeying his orders and opening his correspondence (both essentially trumped-up charges). (The judge advocate prosecuting was Winfield Scott, now returned from his year's suspension.) Cushing was merely censured, and he became adjutant general of the army later that year. Amazingly, Wilkinson and Hampton were expected to cooperate on the northern frontier in 1813; not surprisingly, they failed.74

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VI. The Wartime Test

Historian Harry L. Coles has estimated that by 1811 "the military capability of the country had fallen to its lowest point since the founding of the Republic." Even though the military establishment was stronger than it had been under the Confederation, the gap between the instruments and objectives of American foreign policy had grown dramatically. In January 1812 Congress authorized an increase in the regular establishment of 25,000
men, and by July a total of twenty-one additional regiments had been authorized, but on the eve of war there were still only 6744 officers and men on the rolls. Worst of all, these military resources were not deployed to secure the nation’s primary strategic objectives with the speed necessary to take advantage of British unpreparedness. Indeed, the success of Jefferson’s divisive appointments policy in 1808 and the proliferation of generals in 1812 exacerbated the problems faced by the secretary of war, because the army no longer had a single head to act as the locus of the military chain of command, advice, and accountability. Instead, each of the commanders of the geographical divisions and departments created in 1808 reported directly to the secretary, who was forced to act as commanding general, legislative liaison, and chief administrator all at once, without the benefit of a chief of staff in the modern sense. (Remember that between 1802 and 1812 the secretary of war also had to act as the de facto commissary general [or chief purchasing officer], quartermaster general, and chief of ordnance.) Eustis was never able to secure accurate returns from commanders in the field, and a month before the start of the war inspector general Alexander Macomb was unable to forward an accurate estimate of the army’s strength to Congress, which made it difficult for the national legislature to make informed choices on wartime policy.75

These administrative failings cannot excuse the nation’s strategic unpreparedness, however. Neither civil nor military officials configured American deployments in accordance with President Madison’s stated desire to coerce Britain via the conquest of Canada—despite a year of hawkish dominance in American political councils and the utter transparency of American strategy in the event of war the army was still scattered throughout the country in June 1812, and its largest force (about 1200 men) was still
concentrated near New Orleans for defensive purposes. This concentration could easily have been directed against Mobile, but in East Florida, where Madison expected to help filibusters to conquer the province once war was declared, the army had no more than two hundred troops facing St. Augustine, and few reinforcements were sent that fall. This dispersal of force was ultimately the responsibility of the civilian command structure, but it does not appear that senior army officers like Wilkinson put the same energy into plans for the invasion of Canada that they had for the conquest of New Spain, towards which he had been focused for twenty years. It may be that the army's defensive posture was the result of its tacit role as a constabulary that would be expanded during wartime, but this wait-and-see posture was totally unsuited to what would clearly be an offensive war along the land frontiers. Thus, while the British did not make any damaging raids against major American ports, they were able to reinforce Canada before the weight of American numbers could be brought to bear in that decisive theater. The final blow to American military efficiency came late in 1812 when the administration detached most of the full-strength companies from their regiments in order to muster a force for the invasion of Canada, leaving their officers behind to recruit new troops. The consequent tumult made it impossible for officers to complete the organization of their units. Historian J.C.A. Stagg has observed that "the very structure of many of the regiments was almost completely shattered," which produced widespread dissatisfaction within the officer corps (especially those left behind without troops to command or battles to fight), and he concludes that "at the end of 1812 there was no army to speak of, only the remnants of one."76

Wartime expansion increased the number of officers from 574 in 1808 to 1657 at the end of 1812 and 3495 in January 1815. The new forces were
officered much as those of 1798 and 1808 had been, by the War Department's solicitation of applications and recommendations from congressmen and localities throughout the country, and sectionalism was not a significant influence on or consequence of the appointment process. These officers' occupational and social origins were much less representative of American society as a whole, however. About one in five came from the middling classes, the remainder from elites (about a third of them from "high"--regional or national--elites), and only a single man can be identified as a member of the propertyless classes (laborers, servants, and tenant farmers). In sum, though more "urban" than the country as a whole, the army's senior wartime leadership clearly reflected the class distribution of power and influence in early national American society. It therefore comes as no surprise that aside from the broad effort to represent all geographic sections of the nation, these officers' backgrounds also reflected the centrality of partisan politics and local connections in the appointment process. Indeed, where full counts were possible Skelton found that more than forty percent of the direct regimental commissions went to state senators or representatives.

The vast majority of these men had no regular military experience before their appointment. New officers had to be appointed directly to senior levels because the permanent army's corps was too small and its membership had been too unstable for many of its officers to remain long enough to rise to senior ranks--of the 149 officers commissioned between 1803 and 1807, only seventy were still serving in 1812. (Only twenty-seven, eighteen percent of the original cadre, remained in 1816 after the postwar reduction.) Nearly two out of three officers appointed directly to field or general rank during the period 1808-1815 served out the war, while about four out of five of the old army officers (including those in service in 1802) and the
company-grade appointees of 1808-1815 did so. The persistence of the two
latter groups indicates that there was both a committed cadre of "old army"
officers who had chosen the army as a career and that the greater likelihood of
promotion and fame in wartime provided the needed incentive for officers
who would not otherwise have joined the army or made it their career to stay
in for the duration. All in all, more than seventy percent of the 341 men who
served as field or general officers during the era 1808-1815 were still in
uniform at the end of the war, and the need for drastic removals was never
widely debated, for the War Department ultimately succeeded in its
responsibility to promote talented men to command.81

A similar process of selection and improvement occurred in the all-
important staff, which was finally expanded to something approaching
adequacy in 1812. The following year legislation explicitly provided for a
"General Staff" with a paymaster general, surgeon general, and an ordnance
department, all with a hierarchy of numerous subordinates to provide staff
services to each of the several military districts and in effect to the theaters of
war. One of the brigadier generals was to act as "Adjutant and Inspector
general and Chief of the Staff " for "the principal army of the U.S.," the first
time that this designation (indicating a central coordinator of staff functions)
was used in American legislation. The Corps of Engineers was expanded in
the same act that put the military academy on a permanent footing, and a
group of topographical engineers was created as part of the general staff.
Military surgeons were forbidden to engage in private practice, and a system
of selection by examination was established. Most important of all, the army
was allowed to assume more responsibility for its own supply through a
commissioned quartermaster general, foragemasters, barracksmasters, and
wagonmasters, and specially designated commissaries of purchases and
subsistence. In 1813 each of the seven field armies was given its own quartermaster general, and the number of assistant deputy quartermaster generals was set at thirty-two, a commitment to logistical support unprecedented since the Revolutionary War. In 1814 the specialization of function was carried a step further when legislation forbade taking quartermaster officers from the line. Staff officers ultimately came to make up nearly one-fifth of the wartime officer corps, and these posts were often used as a means of raising officers of superior quality to stations where their talents could best be utilized.82

Skelton observes that "the most important factor in the changing complexion of the officer corps was the gradual rise to high regimental rank, mainly through seniority, of a cadre of seasoned young officers who had learned their trade by practice . . . At the core of this group were holdovers from the junior grades of the old army and appointees to company rank in the new force of 1808." These men were more experienced than the wartime appointees, but younger by a decade and presumably more energetic. They were complemented by men of similar experience or aggressiveness from other sources: among the men commissioned as field and general officers in the new forces, nearly forty percent had served as company grade officers before being promoted to higher rank. In 1813 and 1814 regimental field officers were sometimes given the autonomy to select their own company officers, and eighteen percent of the men nominated for commissions in early 1814 were sergeants at the time. Their elevation provides an illustration of the opportunities for military specialization (and through it social mobility) opened up as the war dragged on and amateurish enthusiasm for military service waned among the elite.83
This process was essential to the development of Jacob Brown's "Left Division," the United States' most professional and operationally successful military force since the Legion of the 1790s. Brown's army, rigorously trained under Winfield Scott, fought the Niagara campaign of 1814, blocking a powerful British offensive by an aggressive advance and tenacious combat in three of the most hotly contested battles of the war, Chippewa, Lundy's Lane, and the defense of Fort Erie. Although none were clear-cut victories for the United States, they all showed American officers capable of expert tactical decisionmaking and the American soldier capable of standing his ground outnumbered against the most determined of British assaults and then counterpunching with deadly effect. These were memorable lessons in the summer of 1814, since they were shortly followed by the ignominious American rout at Bladensburg and the burning of Washington. The latter disasters were products of militia disorganization and vacillating operational leadership by President Madison and Secretary of War John Armstrong (Eustis' successor), while the Niagara campaign demonstrated the aggressiveness of the new regular generals and amply justified the confidence they had in themselves and their men.

Although the precise effect of this campaign on postwar military policy and appropriations is still not clear to scholars, none doubt that it provided the regular army with a new sense of efficacy that would sustain its self-confidence as an occupation through three decades of general peace and civilian attack. Twenty of the thirty-two field and general grade officers in Brown's force had entered the army as company officers in 1808 or 1812, and the average age of the whole group was only thirty-two, with a mean of four years service in the regular army. (Thirteen had served since 1808 or before.) Indeed, five of the seven regimental commanders at Chippewa and Lundy's
Lane were actually majors, ranging in age from twenty-five to thirty-one. Brown, the oldest general, was only thirty-nine; Scott, his most important subordinate, was just twenty-eight, his artillery commander twenty-five. The senior commanders in the Left Division and the northern army (including many of their subordinates, such as Thomas Sidney Jesup, distinguished regimental commander under Scott and quartermaster general for over forty years after the war) went on to dominate the postwar army as both factional leaders (often debating each others' roles in the decisions of the campaign) and career professionals in command and staff.84

The eventual success of the system of officer selection did not mean that the corps became a harmonious band of brothers. Rank and promotion, which had not been major sources of discontent in the antebellum army, became the subject of frantic competition during the war. Promotion was quite rapid during the war, but the mere availability of higher posts and honors (including brevet ranks, first authorized in 1812) seems to have engendered extensive controversies. This was particularly true when the administration tried to ignore the seniority rule in filling newly created posts in regiments already formed. In 1813 Congress authorized an additional major for each regiment and a "third lieutenant" for each company, and the appointment of civilians and promotion of junior captains to these posts aroused a storm of petitions from officers to Congress favoring the seniority principle and threatening resignation if it was not adhered to. (Many officers also believed that slots opened in existing units by death, resignation, and dismissal were being filled in violation of the seniority rule for political reasons.) Being thus superseded was "killingly mortifying" "to the soldier & man of honor," Captain Henry Atkinson wrote to a congressional friend when he felt passed over.85
This competition for rank aggravated the quarrels of an officer corps already obsessed with personal honor and reputation. Errors and defeats in combat could mean aspersions on one's courage as well as being ignored in the scramble for promotion. Wartime commanders acted just as self-interestedly and irresponsibly as their predecessors in writing to politicians and the press in pursuit of their vendettas, several of which continued well into the postwar era. They pressed charges and countercharges in a rash of courts of inquiry, most of which came to naught for lack of real offenses to condemn, and yet dueling was probably even more frequent than in the prewar army. Atkinson, wounded in a duel with one of General Izard's aides-de-camp, successfully asked the secretary of war to overlook his violation of the Articles of War since the practice was known to be widely sanctioned by senior officers. Indeed, the power of the custom was such that he and his opponent both refused to testify—and were not sanctioned for doing so—about their dispute when called upon to do so by a court of inquiry, and in 1815 thirty-seven officers subscribed to a published memorial denouncing one of their fellows, who had "disgraced himself as . . . guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" by attempting to evade a challenge from a surgeon he had slighted.86

The gradual rise of a cadre of capable, experienced senior commanders and staff officers and the persistence of dissension among them were the most prominent characteristics of the American regular army in the War of 1812. The paradox of these phenomena represents one of the principal problems in judging the character and degree of American military professionalism from the founding of the republic until the end of the nineteenth century. American military thought was in no way codified during the Second War of
Independence, but its experiences prompted several of these men, particularly Winfield Scott and Thomas Sidney Jesup, to seek ongoing reform in the army's tactical and administrative systems during the decades following the conflict. Most of these men survived the army's postwar reduction and went on to serve for far longer periods than their antebellum predecessors had. In their self-identification as military officers (whether field commanders or staff administrators), their persistence in that career, and their pursuit of professional knowledge and structural reform these men fulfilled many of the normative requirements scholars seek in identifying professionalism. Above all, these characteristics indicate a sense of commitment and responsibility, obligation (or duty, in the officers' words) and service.

Public service often seemed to demand personal sacrifice, however. The army remained a hierarchically structured force strictly limited in size by government legislation, and the disinterested sacrifice required by professionally responsible subordination to military and civil authority exacerbated and complicated otherwise routine tensions within the officer corps. The officer corps remained humanly self-interested enough that its members often resisted the constraints of hierarchy and responsibility, bringing subordinates into conflict with each other and their superiors and their occupation into conflict with its civilian masters over issues of both material compensation and authority over mission and execution. The corps' commitment and cohesion as an occupational group were constantly subject to strain from private disputes and factionalism among individuals struggling for security, influence, and reward in what for the army was always an era of limits. William Skelton's judgment therefore applies to the early national period as well as the Jacksonian and antebellum eras: "Controlling factionalism was one of the most serious problems facing military
administrators." Professional responsibility required reconciling this pervasive individual and group dissension with the cohesion necessary for the army officer corps to function effectively. Responsible service could not occur without a minimum foundation of internal harmony, yet--in a second paradox--too much cohesion might permit the evolution of occupational monopoly, isolation, and alienation from nation and state--the standing army of republican nightmares. This chapter now concludes with an assessment of the army officer corps' accountability to civilian government and social values in the years from 1801 to 1815 from wider comparative and structural perspectives.87

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VII. Accountability in the Jeffersonian Era, 1801-1815: A Summation

The basic elements needed to assure professional accountability were in place at a very early date. The Articles of War (first approved by Congress in 1776) provided a basic legal and ethical code for the government of the army and the conduct of its officers, but the Articles remained vague or open to self-supporting interpretations in many areas, so compendiums of "Army Regulations" covering discipline and (though very sketchily) standard operating procedures for daily activities were issued in 1797, 1808, and 1813, supplemented by Alexander Macomb's treatise on military law and courts-martials in 1809. Paymasters and other officers who disbursed government funds were required to post bonds for their security from the Revolutionary War onwards, and supporting evidence was required when their accounts were submitted for examination.88
The potential of this body of professional norms was not matched by officers' performance in the field. This delinquency (a general failure of accountability) was principally the result of poor enforcement by civil and military hierarchies alike. The army was largely free from outside supervision in its day-to-day operations, but this autonomy did not encourage the development of professional accountability or expertise. Indeed, recent historians have noted that the army's "greatest administrative shortcoming was the absence of any systematic way of keeping the commanding general informed, so that he could oversee the efficiency" and conduct of the army. Inadequate supervision was hardly intentional, of course—geographic dispersion, premodern communications technology, and an insufficient number of inspecting officers made it virtually impossible for the central administration to keep tabs on the daily lives of most officers, and within isolated post communities the officer's most immediate incentive was to remain silent about the misconduct of his fellows in order not to alienate them. Skelton notes that "generals and regimental commanders rarely conducted tours of inspection, and the few officers designated as inspectors served principally as stationary staff assistants to the commanding general or secretary of war." The staff legislation of 1813 made a new beginning, however, for although there was no single central bureau charged with inspection (as then became the case with other staff functions), the various inspector generals were given a specifically defined role as mediators between policy and practice: "[The] preparation of regulations ... rested with the War Department staff, while training was the responsibility of line commanders. Inspectors were to monitor adherence to the former and the efficiency of the latter, free of vested interest in either."
Administrative historian Leonard White concludes that from 1802 to 1812 American military administration was deficient in unity, responsibility, and energy, and labels it "utterly inadequate for even the most modest military operations." Inadequate structure and indecisive senior administrators who refused to delegate authority fostered wretched management throughout the era, and this in turn crippled the nation's ability to execute the strategies chosen by the president. The secretary of war was overburdened with supervising Indian affairs, courts-martial appeals, the allocation of land warrants and pensions to veterans from as far back as the Revolutionary War, and answering congressional inquiries. His only expert relief from these burdens came with the creation of the general staff in 1812, and neither Eustis nor Armstrong had the temperament, skills, or experience to use this staff effectively. Indeed, structural and regulatory reforms notwithstanding, Skelton concludes that "the influence of the army's central bureaucracy was minimal" throughout the Jeffersonian era, and it remained so until the 1820s, when a generation of professionalizing officers (largely from among men commissioned in 1808) drew on their experiences in the War of 1812 as a basis for reform.90

The weaknesses of the army bureaucracy are hardly surprising when one considers the nature of contemporary American society and technology. Leonard White observes that "the Republicans brought no revolution in administration" because their social origins and assumptions were fundamentally not all that different from those of the Federalists, especially at the top of the social hierarchy. The early American nation was a web of small communities, comparatively little different from one another in broad terms, but only loosely connected. The networks of organization familiar to us today were nonexistent; translocal ties were almost entirely dependent on the
interaction of individuals who had met face-to-face or been introduced or referred by mutual friends, and a knowledge of personal reputation was essential to doing business of any sort, public or private. Whatever the form of interaction, whatever the form and degree desired, contemporary communications technology restricted it to this limited range, and with independence rather than interdependence the chief social and cultural value, expertise of all sorts remained relatively unspecialized; there was no science of management or literature on administration to guide the fledgling military bureaucracy.

The transition from "personalism" to "bureaucracy" in government administration was a complex and highly nuanced process in which it is often difficult to distinguish clearly between chicken and egg, for sudden transformations of worldview, mentalité, and behaviour were impossible given ingrained personal habits and commitments to existing social norms and the administrative procedures which reflected them. The legitimacy and authority of bureaucratic "office" was still closely linked to the good character of the officeholder, and without adequate institutional mechanisms for enforcement some concept of personal integrity akin to character or reputation was essential to supply norms of responsible behaviour. In other words, it was both natural and inevitable that the first institutions to confront the problems of continual operations of large scope and scale made extensive use of personal ties, because they embodied concepts that were socially shaped, and thus deemed socially accountable.91

Personal acquaintance between the gentry served the nation well in the central administrative departments (where anonymity was impossible), but the growing scale, scope, and complexity of social action revealed that individual claims to personal character were too vague and subjective a
measuring stick to guarantee probity and efficiency in government service. The army encountered this problem most urgently in the failure of the system of contracting for supplies with civilian businessmen, a practice and problem dating back to the Revolution. Republican administrators were as honest and talented as their Federalist predecessors, but the effort of superintending a multi-front war overwhelmed them, just as the preparation for one had done to the architects of the New Army in 1798, and these structural problems were exacerbated by Republican ideology. A Republican Congress obsessed with fiscal economy gave them few material resources to support their efforts, and Old Republicans in the House of Representatives demanded that purchasing and distribution be placed under separate heads in order to check fraud, but the legislation they passed to regulate the supply services was too inconsistent to attain this objective, leading to disorganization and a correspondent lack of accountability. The duties of the quartermaster general (transportation and distribution) and the commissary general (purchasing) were poorly defined, and the two offices effectively duplicated one another. Private businessmen continued to act as the army's primary supply distributors, and unit commanders were authorized to deviate from this system to purchase supplies on their own initiative only if it became clear that they would not receive the contracted goods.92

Recognizing these problems, thoughtful officers generally believed that regular officers should control the army's logistics at all stages from purchasing to distribution. Sounding much like Nathaniel Greene and other Continental Army quartermasters thirty-five years before, Thomas Sidney Jesup, who had served as a brigade quartermaster at Terre aux Boeufs in 1809 and would be appointed quartermaster general four years later, complained that under the contracting system, "should the Army be sacrificed by their
neglect, the Nation can have no redress... It is madness in the extreme to attempt to carry out war with such a system." Similarly, Winfield Scott wrote that "the interests of the contractor are in precise opposition to those of the troops," and Edmund Gaines denounced the tendency to subcontract (which created a chain of middlemen, each in search of a profit). Indeed, Gaines asserted--and this may well have been true--that more men had been lost to "the badness of the provisions, than by the fire of the enemy." The general's reasoning was fully professional, embodying commitment, accountability, and a degree of implied self-regulation:

Commissioned officers only should be employed in this duty; men who stand most solemnly pledged to serve the United States honestly and faithfully, and to obey orders; men who may be cashiered or capitally punished by military law, for neglect of duty, or for fraudulent practices.\(^9\)

Despite the politicization of appointments, American leaders had a fairly standard and thoroughly unexceptionable conception of what they sought in an officer, civil or military, and Leonard White has found that the gentry elite adhered rather consistently to their standards, subjective though they were. Indeed, judged by larger comparative standards, the United States army officer corps was significantly more responsible to its society as a whole than those of most European armies, for American officers served the government of an increasingly egalitarian democracy without demur, and they did not act repressively to restrain their society's movement in those directions. Ethnic and cultural "others" like African-Americans and Indians aside, the army's mistreatment of the working or plebeian classes was limited to those individuals who came under its officers' immediate sway as enlisted
men, for the regular army did not serve as a means of social class control or dominance like those in Europe until after the Civil War, and the exceptions (the Federalist armies of 1798) were political creations superimposed upon the frontier constabulary. Indeed, the social and political responsibility of the American army reflected an acceptance of the fundamental norms of American society and culture, which however flawed (especially in relation to ethnicities considered beyond the boundaries of citizenship in the American polity) were still substantially more democratic and libertarian than those of Europe. In more down-to-earth terms, nepotism, common in all the European armed forces and civil services, was extremely rare under both the Federalist and Republican administrations; the level of financial probity was usually high (in contrast to endemic corruption in the Russian and Austrian armies); and commissions and offices were never sold with official sanction as they were in Britain, Austria, and Russia. These elements of responsibility demonstrated and underlay the potential for standardized performance in a normatively cohesive and accountable manner. This fledgling structure lacked adequate institutional articulation and procedural expression (especially in terms of enforcement mechanisms) in the prewar army, but it provided a fundamentally solid foundation that Secretary of War John C. Calhoun and his senior officers used to build on after the war.94

These advances notwithstanding, the army officer corps was still far from attaining a reasonable degree of professionalism in January 1815, whether judged by normative functionalist standards or simply as an occupation aggrandizing its social position. The corps remained highly politicized and lacking in cohesion. There was no formally articulated or underlying cognitive basis besides the self-evident desirability of experience
for jurisdictional monopoly and exclusion, whether against incompetent practitioners or competitors from outside the regular officer corps and national control. The army had no control over the selection of its new officers and only an advisory capacity in their promotion. Indeed, most officers preferred that seniority remain the primary criterion of promotion, because "merit" was a concept too open to interpretation and thus one too easily used to justify favoritism—the same argument used against merit by British officers in support of the purchase system. There was in other words no monopoly over military office by the army as an organization or by the officers already in commission as an occupational group, much less one founded on superior knowledge of a distinct sphere of specialized expertise. Indeed, the forces these men were called on to lead were often composed in whole or in part of state militias, whose officering, administration, and discipline were even more politicized than those of the regular army.

These limitations were fundamentally derived from the social context in which the early national officer corps was formed, for military leadership was not recognized as a specialized sphere of competence in the early American republic, and the officer corps was neither isolated nor alienated from its society. Military service was one of the most reputable forms of leadership, which made it an attractive option for members of the gentry and middle-class emulators seeking to demonstrate their personal virtu and gain glory and fame, but military command was only one dimension of gentry social leadership, which also encompassed politics, culture, and economic affairs. Consequently, the ordinary gentleman had no need or desire to endure long years of subordination in a bureaucratic hierarchy, so military service was rarely more than a temporary avocation to be pursued in time of
national or personal crisis when the opportunities for gaining or securing fame and reputation were greatest or most urgent.

As scholars from Talcott Parsons to Magali Larson and Andrew Abbott have pointed out, occupational monopoly and professionalization depend first and foremost on the growth of a specialized, and thus a restricted, place in the cognitive division of labor—military leadership had to be recognized as something that required study extensive enough to exclude those who did not commit themselves to it on an essentially full-time basis over a lengthy period. This exclusiveness—or in economic terms the creation of scarcity—would make monopoly possible. Making it desirable to the individuals involved depended on the intersection between individual motivation and the benefits, material and psychological, offered by professional military command. Finally, should motivation and reward coincide for a sizeable group of individuals, these men had to develop an occupational identity—an exclusive sense of themselves as army officers. To assure social and political accountability, this identity could not be restricted or determined by social class, because the corps might then be tempted from an accountable and efficient performance of its duties to the nation as a whole by particularistic and undemocratic (or as the Republicans put it, "unrepublican") considerations of class power (the danger of a purely partisan army, especially of Federalist origin or coloration). Practically, an authoritative occupational identity would have to be constructed in large part by the long-term operation of day to day experience—the sequential development of routine, habit, custom, and ultimately tradition—while cognitively it would be need to be defined and reinforced by doctrine, a cohesive body of rules and regulations to standardize the performance of duty toward comrades and enemies during
peace and war (the Army Regulations and tactical manuals like von Steuben's Blue Book).

Returning again to a higher plane of comparative and inherently politicized analysis, we must acknowledge that when viewed in social context, without the urge to seek out, privilege, or reify professionalism as an ideal type, it seems quite possible that deviations from the normative characteristics prescribed by the functionalist model of professionalism actually served to enhance the officer corps' accountability and to ease its acceptance by society during the early national period. In other words, "objective" civil-military relations founded on the specialized allocation of social function and responsibility may have been impossible to achieve and unnecessary or even counterproductive during this era, and recognizing this forces us to go a step further and ask (with Larson) the meaning of "objectivity" as applied to the "modern" professionalism that developed in the late nineteenth century. Certainly it would have been asking a great deal to expect a newly independent, economically homogeneous society composed predominantly of small rural communities to develop a specialized profession of any sort, and the republican fear of centralized power that flourished in these conditions made it all the more unlikely that men paid by the national government to devote themselves to directing war--i.e., highly organized physical coercion--would be accepted and given any sort of exclusive responsibility for such a powerful social role. The gentry origins and intermittent service of most officers may have made the potentially dangerous monopoly of military command a less threatening proposition because no "new class" of dependent officeholders or placemen was being created, and without permanent commitment to their work or a distinct
occupational identity, internecine struggles in the officer corps did not seem much more dangerous than those among other segments of gentry society.

While too freely indulged in for comfort, this very dissension made it unlikely that a unified military class would arise to threaten the fledgling nation, and perhaps it was wise of Jefferson to seek an internal factional balance against his commanding general, despite the damage wrought to military efficiency—as Richard Kohn writes of the Newburgh Conspiracy and the threat of military rule a quarter-century before, "no such possibility existed . . . because the generals as a group were rent by jealousy and suspicion." As Kohn remarks of the Revolutionary era (and as in the equally unruly French officer corps of the 1820s and 30s), it is significant that "the only time the generals acted together [politically] was over the issues of their own personal pay" and status. Perhaps this lack of professional cohesion was beneficial for the young nation: its presence may well have given Americans some assurance—much-needed by both army (in order to gain acceptance) and nation—that a permanent army was not necessarily the standing one of their fears.95

Historian Lawrence Delbert Cress has observed that republican diatribes against standing armies did "not represent a fundamentally antimilitaristic strain in American culture." Americans accepted the regular army, though largely on the principle that out of sight means out of mind. Local communities complained about individual officers, but sought the aid of the army as an institution. At the national level, securing American independence from Britain (and Europe generally) was found to require the employment of a semi-permanent force: "The army was necessary because military professionalism was necessary for the survival of the American republic," and this was acceptable to the nation because the officer corps
remained fundamentally accountable to the nation. In turn, although appointments were usually politicized promotion (and thus command) was not dependent on an officer's willingness to obey the dictates of party, and army officers were never subjected to purely arbitrary removal on partisan or ideological grounds as in the French Revolution. While "middle-class" seems an anachronistic term for its members, the early national army officer corps was ultimately representative of republican society and mores, including the essential ones of military neutrality in civilian political affairs and respect for the supremacy of civilian government over the military in the realms of discipline and policy. As Theodore Crackel emphasizes, that social representativeness made the army fundamentally responsible to its democratically elected civilian superiors. Army officers were not disinterested (though they valued the ideal of selflessness and disinterestedness, and some made unquestionably severe sacrifices once war came), but many of them were on their way to achieving professional detachment and responsibility in the acknowledgment of their chosen obligations and the performance of their duties. The army of 1815 was hardly a professional one, but it certainly had the potential to be so, for good and ill.96
Chapter II


I. Antecedents and Alternatives: English Origins, Revolutionary Choices, and the Influences of Class and the Frontier Until 1789


The term "regulars" was commonly applied to regular (i.e., non-militia or volunteer) army officers at the time, and I shall frequently do so as well. For the sake of brevity and clarity, I will normally give only officers' permanent lineal (rather than brevet or staff) ranks herein, except where they had given up their ranks in the line for exclusively staff positions.

a large number of dissertations on the colonial militia); and more generally Shy, "Armed Force in Colonial North America: New Spain, New France, and Anglo-America," in Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History from Colonial Times to the Present, eds. Kenneth J. Hagan and William R. Roberts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 3-20; Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, For the Common Defense: Military History of the United States of America (New York: Free Press, 1984), ch. 2; and Weigley, History of the United States Army, ch. 2. Kohn supplies an excellent general bibliography for the period 1783-1800. Note that Anderson shows that the Massachusetts volunteers usually served for only a campaign or two, and Titus notes that the Virginian authorities had great difficulty in recruiting during the Seven Years War, but the larger point is that troops were recruited who were willing and able to serve on season-long campaigns far from home (at Cartagena in 1743, for example, or against Louisbourg), a far cry from the very locally oriented militias of the seventeenth century.


organization of discharged officers whose exclusivity and rituals appeared to many civilians as an extension of the army's wartime claims to superior virtue and recognition (and therefore political influence and office), if not to outright aristocracy. Once again, Washington's statements and example were crucial to determining the future shape and intentions of the officer corps, and the Cincinnati became a patriotic order of ex-comrades rather than a lobbying group seeking exclusive titles and rewards smacking of artificial privilege.

7 See Carp, To Starve the Army at Leisure, especially ch. 8; Kohn, Eagle and Sword, ch. 3 (Harmar letter to Henry Knox, June 14, 1788, quoted on p. 70); Martin and Lender, A Respectable Army, pp. 186-209; and Royster, A Revolutionary People at War, especially chs. 7-8. (See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 72, for a junior officer's attitude toward the northwestern Indians that reads much like Harmar's.) See also Edwin G. Burrows, "Military Experience and the Origins of Federalism and Anti-Federalism," in Jacob Judd and Irwin H. Polishook, eds. Aspects of Early New York Society and Politics (Tarrytown, N.Y.: Sleepy Hollow, 1974), pp. 83-92; William A. Benton, "Pennsylvania Revolutionary Officers and the Federal Constitution," Pennsylvania History 31 (October 1964): 419-35; and Sidney Kaplan, "Veteran Officers and Politics in Massachusetts, 1783-1787," WMQ 9 (January 1952): 29-57. See Andrew R.L. Cayton, "The Contours of Power in a Frontier Town: Marietta, Ohio, 1788-1803," Journal of the Early Republic (hereafter cited as JER) 6 (Summer 1986): 103-126, for an examination of a "self-described gentry" who "were attempting to establish social and economic order in a fluid, frontier society" through the use of government patronage. "Above all," Cayton observes, the founders of Marietta "sought the sanction of the national government as a guarantee of their individual social status." Indeed, Cayton strongly suggests that among certain groups, "frontier conditions" . . . strengthened rather than weakened allegiance to the national government: "The establishment of the local hegemony of the Ohio Company . . . was profoundly dependent upon the establishment of the national hegemony of the United States government." Cayton also observes that the authority of the national government in the Northwest territory was, to a significant degree, dependent upon the local influence of the Ohio Company," completing the picture of connected individual, group, organizational, and national aggrandizement. The founders of Marietta were "men whose first allegiance was not to a town, a state, or popular opinion, but to the government of the United States." Many of these men had been officers in the Continental Army, and Cayton's portrait of class and state formation through the elaboration of national sovereignty along the frontiers is one we shall see repeatedly throughout this work.

Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, p. 63; Skelton, "Social Roots of the American Military Profession: The Officer Corps of America's First Peacetime Army, 1784-1789," *The Journal of Military History* (hereafter cited as *JMH*) 54 (October 1990): 435 (quotation) and 440-444 (Tables II and III); and idem., *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 14-16. Five of the officers were college graduates, and four of their fathers had been army officers (both disproportionately large numbers, but of limited statistical significance given the small sample size), but only two were the sons of magistrates. Nearly

10 Guthman, *March to Massacre*, p. 26; Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 16. I am providing a brief glimpse of the army enlisted man here because I will not do so again until chapter 10, while the basic characteristics of the average soldier changed relatively little over the period of my study (and well beyond it). He was usually from the manual working classes and his primary motivation for joining the army was security. Illiteracy was common, in part because of the high proportion of soldiers who were recent immigrants. The Irish were especially common, followed in numbers by Germans. Indeed, official St. Patrick's Day celebrations were customary in the First Regiment and the Legion of the United States, and Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, p. 136, reports that punishments were limited for offenses committed between Irishmen in the Legion during these festivities, a telling indicator of both the officers' inability to maintain discipline and their disdain and negligence toward the men under their charge. Coffman's study of the available enlistment papers dated between 1799 and 1819 yields an average of about forty percent illiterates and seventeen percent immigrants (p. 17). By the 1830s an average of roughly two in five Regular Army soldiers were foreign-born, a proportion that seems to have remained relatively constant throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. For more detail on the soldiers of the Confederation army, see William B. Skelton, "The Confederation's Regulars: A Social Profile of Enlisted Service in America's First Standing Army," *WMQ* 46 (October 1989): 770-85; on enlisted life in general, see Norman W. Caldwell, "The Enlisted Soldier at the Frontier Post, 1790-1814," *Mid-America* 37 (October 1955): 195-204.

The Revolutionary-era Articles of War prescribed standards and procedures for discipline and punishment, but they were generally loose enough for commanders to act as they wished, and these men had learned their concepts of discipline in the Continental Army, which patterned its practices on British precedent rather than republican idealism. (Whippings were routine in all three armies, and "running the gauntlet" was not at all unknown in the American services.) In the winter of 1786 Major John Wyllys executed three deserters without trial, but was exonerated by Congress at the recommendation of the secretary of war, who accepted Wyllys's argument that indiscipline had progressed to the point of mutiny and
anarchy. Harmar then proposed cropping the ears of deserters, an idea Secretary of War Henry Knox rejected because of its associations with British practices and slavery. The rudiments of a structure of military justice were established later that year, with a two-tiered system of garrison courts-martial for enlisted men accused of non-capital offenses, whose sentences required only the (usually perfunctory) approval of the army's commander, and general courts-martial for capital offenses and those alleged against officers, whose sentences required the approval of Congress and the War Department.

The system remained flexible to the point of unpredictability, however, especially in its assignment of punishments, which were not fixed by statute or regulation. In frontier conditions, with little immediate supervision by superior officers or federal civil authorities, this flexibility could easily lead to arbitrary brutality—in 1795 the officers at Fort Defiance in Ohio offered and paid Indians a bounty for a deserter's scalp. Indeed, the actual bounty was ten dollars for the man as a captive and twenty for his scalp, giving a clear idea of the officers' priorities and their low regard for disorderly soldiers. Indeed, they publically complimented the warrior who brought in the scalp—one wonders how such men could ever express surprise at their countrymen's antagonism. See Coffman, The Old Army, pp. 11-15 and 23-24; Kohn, Eagle and Sword, pp. 63-64 and 70-71; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 41; and Richard C. Knopf, "Crime and Punishment in the American Legion, 1792-1793," Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio 14 (July 1956): 232-38. See Stuart L. Bernath, "George Washington and the Genesis of American Military Discipline," Mid-America 49 (April 1967): 83-100; Robert H. Berlin, "The Administration of Justice in the Continental Army During the American Revolution, 1775-1783" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1976); and Royster, A Revolutionary People at War, pp. 77-79, for discussions of Continental Army disciplinary practices and brutality by officers towards enlisted men (a phenomenon we shall see again in the nineteenth-century army). "Running the gauntlet" meant running between two lines of men whose task was to beat the offender as he passed. It was considered one of the harshest corporal punishments, although it was probably easy enough for enlisted men to restrain, fake, or intentionally miss their blows.

11 Guthman, March to Massacre, pp. 6-13 (Harmar cited on 11, quotation from 13), 22 ("the most destitute"), and 55.

12 Kohn, Eagle and Sword, pp. 64 and 70. Drunkenness was of course a virtual norm in much of American society during the early national period, and William Henry Harrison later estimated that eighty percent of his fellow officers who died in the 1790s did so of the effects of drink (Coffman, The Old
Army, p. 21). See William J. Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) and James Kirby Martin and Mark E. Lender, Drinking in America: A History (New York: The Free Press, 1987). Brutality and casual sexual promiscuity were also common in the society of that era; see Coffman, The Old Army, pp. 25-26; Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, pp. 129, 140, 196-97, and 355; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 42; and Norman W. Caldwell, "The Frontier Army Officer, 1794-1814," Mid-America 37 (April 1955): 111-12, for examples of the latter among officers during the 1790s, often involving competition with enlisted men that could only have damaged the officer corps' authority.

13 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 68-70.

14 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 15-16; Kohn, Eagle and Sword, pp. 70-71. Military discipline is one area in which effective service and accountability to social norms have rarely been reconciled. I will judge officers by both standards, however, because effective service should not have to come at the expense of a society's values. This distinction is also an important one because it will help us to assess the distance between army officers and the society that they lived in and served; in other words, how isolated, or even alienated, they were from its fundamental values. This question is an essential one to me because of my doubts that any occupational group can be entirely independent of its social environment, or that there is or can be such a thing as the pure form of "objective" civil-military relations exalted by Samuel Huntington. In terms of the sociological schools, this is where culture influences function (or the execution of function)--not a question of monopoly or power per se (which are indices of concrete social relations), but of the professional group's value system, which then influences its willingness to subordinate itself to society as a whole.

II. Northwestern Expansion and the Legion of the United States: The Paradoxes of Institutionalization and Instability, 1790-1797

15 See Alan S. Brown, "The Role of the Army in Western Settlement: Josiah Harmar's Command, 1785-1790," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 93 (April 1969): 161-78, and Peter S. Onuf, Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). Washington and Knox knew that white aggression was the principal cause of the war, but it seems doubtful that the federal government--or any other force existing at the time--could have restrained white settlement,


In military parlance, "policing" refers to cleaning up an area; thus, "the police was most efficient" means that a unit kept its area clean and orderly, indicating good discipline.

19 Leonard D. White, The Federalists: A Study in Administrative History, 1789-1801 (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 259 and 261; Coffman, The Old Army, p. 7; Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, pp. 139-41. Seventeen infantry officers from the Confederation forces were still in service in 1792, but seven resigned in that and the following year, and another was dismissed (Kohn, Eagle and the Sword, n. 49 to p. 70).

pp. 47-48, 196-97, and 214-15, suggests that Wilkinson was using the possibility of secession as a lure to get the Spanish to open the Mississippi and cease their support for Indian attacks, but implies that Wilkinson had no serious intentions of establishing a separate nation or placing the West under European protection. See ch. 3 therein (Wilkinson's communications with the British noted on pp. 55-56), and Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier, 1783-1795: The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), chs. 7, 8, and 13, regarding the "Spanish Intrigue" of the 1780s and 90s. President Washington hoped to bring this dangerous adventurer under control by offering him prestigious appointments to "soothe his vanity" (Washington to Hamilton, quoted in Abernethy, *The South in the New Nation*, p. 68), and Wilkinson was commissioned as a lieutenant colonel in 1791 and promoted to brigadier the following spring with support from eastern Federalists as well as frontiersmen. Wilkinson and his confederates ended their intrigues for an independent West after Pinckney's Treaty satisfied western demands in 1796. Wilkinson's initial support for Aaron Burr in 1806 was probably connected to his desire to seize Texas and Mexico rather than another effort to create an independent nation.

21 Wilkinson quoted in Abernethy, *The South in the New Nation*, p. 68; Wilkinson to Harry Innes, December 1794, quoted in Nelson, *Anthony Wayne*, pp. 275 (see also chs. 12-13 passim); Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, p. 51 ("a hotbed . . . "). Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, p. 154, suggests that the officers appointed before 1791 formed the core of Wilkinson's faction, but this seems unlikely given what we know about their high resignation rate and Wilkinson's negative opinions of them. By early 1794 Wilkinson had begun a concerted effort to force Wayne from command, writing anonymously to newspapers and privately to friendly congressmen and the War Department with a wide array of charges against Wayne's probity and competence. Wayne, who considered Wilkinson a friend owing to their Revolutionary service together, did not learn of his subordinate's antagonism until early 1795, when the War Department was forced to inform him that a formal inquiry would be necessary to placate Wilkinson's congressional allies. Though outraged, Wayne remained calm and helped the administration to deflect Wilkinson's attacks. No court of inquiry was ever held, but the controversy provided a steady stream of ammunition, valid or not, for Republican attacks on the administration's military policies and the military establishment. See also Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, pp. 190-91; idem., *Tarnished Warrior*, chs. 5-6; Kohn, pp. 178-82 and 187; and idem., "General Wilkinson's Vendetta with General Wayne: Politics and Command in the American Army, 1791-1796" *Filson Club Historical
Quarterly 45 (October 1971): 361-72. It should be kept in mind that the position of "commanding general" had no official standing at this time; see Skelton, "The Commanding General and the Problem of Command in the United States Army, 1821-1841," Military Affairs (hereafter cited as MA) 34 (December 1970): 117-22, for a discussion of the position's evolution into an office that endured for the rest of the nineteenth century.


23 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 55-56, n. 69 on pp. 375-76, and p. 95; Coffman, The Old Army, pp. 31-32; Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 86-87 and 164-66; William Cabell Bruce, John Randolph of Roanoke, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), I: 313-15. Wilkinson's challenge to Randolph violated the 1806 Articles of War, which forbade duelling and the use of "disrespectful words" against political officials. The general further violated the army's fundamental law when he had handbills put up around Washington condemning Randolph as a "prevaricating, base, calumniating scoundrel, poltroon, and coward."

24 White, The Federalists, p. 147 and ch. 12; Kohn, Eagle and Sword, p. 292; Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, p. 82; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 6.

25 Kohn, Eagle and Sword, chs. 7-9 (quotation from p. 129); Cress, Citizens in Arms, ch. 7; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 6-7; Weigley, Towards an American Army, ch. 2; idem., The American Way of War, ch. 3. Thirty-four officers were discharged in 1796, including the last of the thirteen first appointed in 1784, although they all received six months' severance pay and rations (Coffman, The Old Army, p. 7). See Weigley, History of the United States Army, ch. 6, for more general information on the period 1794-1812. The Legion did not participate in the suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794. See Robert W. Coakley, The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders, 1798-1878 (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1988), chs. 2-3; Cress, Citizens in Arms, chs. 5-6; Kohn, Eagle and Sword, pp. 157-70; Elkins and McKitrick, The Age of Federalism, pp. 461-88; Miller, The Federalist Era, ch. 10; and Thomas P. Slaughter, The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). John K. Mahon, The American Militia: Decade of Decision, 1789-1800 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1960) provides the most thorough discussion of the Uniform Militia Act.
26 Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, pp. 186 and 189. Kohn emphasizes policy and structure; he sees the Federalist period as a beginning (thus his subtitle, *The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802*) and looks back to see what precedents it set, while most students of the officer corps and the army in the field stress the instability, contentiousness, and irresponsibility of its officer corps. Like Cress, Kohn sees an early acceptance of standing military forces that I think was more true of officeholders and policymakers than of the people as a whole, for antiarmy slogans and arguments were common in congressional speeches and political campaigns until the Mexican War, which suggests that politicians thought that there was an audience for them.

27 Wilkinson to a Mr. Wadsworth, September 18, 1792, quoted in Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 7. As one would expect, the field and general officers were a much more stable group. In 1797 their median career length was eighteen years, including Revolutionary service. Indeed, sixty-three percent of officers above the rank of lieutenant in 1797 had served in the Revolution (over ninety percent of them as officers). The following decade and a half brought the Revolutionary generation to death or retirement from the army, and by 1812 only a few politically appointed generals, mostly superannuated and inert, remained from that large pool of officer-veterans, whose first-hand experience had sustained a sense of commitment lacking in their junior brethren. See Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 20 and 34-35 (quotation), and idem., "Social Roots of the American Military Profession," pp. 446 and 451-52. A compendium of "army lists" (of officers in their units and by rank and seniority hierarchies) is available in Thomas H.S. Hamersly, comp., *Complete Regular Army Register of the United States, for One Hundred Years (1779 to 1879)* (Washington, D.C.: T.H.S. Hamersly, 1880), including those for 1779-80, 1782, 1784-85, 1789, 1797, 1802, 1805-1806, 1809, and 1812-1815. Later registers are in William A. Gordon, *A Compilation of Registers of the Army of the United States, from 1815 to 1837* (Washington, D.C.: James C. Dunn, 1837).

It is notable that only thirty percent of the field and general officers of 1797 had twenty or more years service—thus some twenty percent had nineteen—presumably six in the Revolution and thirteen more since 1784. This statistic is something of an artifact because the actual number of men involved was so small, but it does demonstrate the experience and continuity of personnel of the army's higher ranks, ineffective though these were in assuring internal cohesion and external accountability. Skelton notes that the median career length for company officers was nine years, and for the ensigns among them only six, but this to me is simply evidence that these were
younger men who had not been in service long enough to be promoted to field rank. Nine years in 1797 would still mean that many of these men had seen Revolutionary service (if they were among the majority of officers who had not been on the rolls in 1789), while six could indicate a group that was appointed in the expansion of 1791-92. These were hardly lengthy times in grade by later standards, but later officers complained constantly about the sluggishness of promotion, so there was something of a trade-off between officers' experience and their satisfaction. Combat losses and the resignations spurred by Wayne's discipline meant that officers commissioned in 1791-92 were promoted to captain in an average of only 4.4 years, a remarkably short period by comparison with the nineteenth century officer corps, whose members would have been envious (An American Profession of Arms, p. 47).

28 Kohn, Eagle and Sword, p. 294; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 29. The instability of military careers in the early republic is obvious when we examine the circumstances in which officers on the 1797 army list ended their service. Thirty-four percent were discharged during the reductions of 1802, 1815, and 1821; thirty-eight percent resigned; and twenty-four percent died while still in the service (though none as a result of combat). In comparison, forty-seven percent (twice the earlier proportion) of the officers on the 1830 army register died in service, while only twelve percent (one-third the early figure) retired (mostly in 1861). Only a single officer out of 594 on the 1830 list was actually discharged in a "reduction," and he regained his post several years later. See ibid., pp. 59-67 and 213 (Table 11.4). In comparison, fifty-eight percent of the Confederation's officers resigned; fourteen percent were discharged (in 1796, 1802, and 1815); and twenty-six percent died in service (half in the Indian wars and half of natural causes including disease). (The higher resignation rate demonstrates both the poor conditions of Confederation service and the impact of Wayne and Wilkinson's disciplinary purges during the legionary period.) Of the twenty-four Confederation officers whose post-service occupations are known, seven (twenty-nine percent) became farmers of some sort, five (twenty-one percent) became merchants; and the remaining half entered civilian government service or the professions of law and medicine. See idem., "Social Roots of the American Military Profession," pp. 446 and 449 (Table IV). The post-service careers of the officers of 1797 are also indicative of the status accorded to military officers, as well as their class origins, associations, and aspirations, for federal officeholding and farming were the leading post-service occupations among the officers on that year's list. These choices illustrate the value of military experience in command and management, the access officers gained to civil officials while in the army, and the opportunities for land speculation available to officers (who were paid in rare specie) in frontier
areas. A total of ninety-eight officers were killed in action or died of wounds between 1784 and 1815: twenty-one in the northwestern Indian wars of 1790-1794, seventy-six during the War of 1812, and one at Tippecanoe in 1811.

The officers of 1797 tended to come from more privileged backgrounds than their predecessors a decade before. Only fourteen percent of the officers on the 1797 army list had previously served as enlisted men, in comparison with nearly forty percent of those on the 1786 list, and in 1797 (even before the creation of the overtly political Federalist armies of the following year) twenty-three percent of the army's officers were related to high civil or military officials, while one out of six of the officers' fathers (that is, of those whose occupations can be traced) were or had been government officials, mostly federal and half of them army officers. A third of the fathers whose occupations are known were involved in commerce, manufacturing of some sort, or the professions (one in ten). In contrast, fewer than ten percent of the general populace was engaged in non-agricultural pursuits at the time. In a notable parallel to the early republican naval officer corps, about one in three officers on the 1797 list were fatherless at the time of their appointment. This characteristic may indicate difficult economic circumstances in these officers' families at the time they were appointed, but it does not mean that they came from the masses. See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 20-22 and 62.

The careers of three officers who reached the rank of major during the War of 1812 illustrate the extremes of instability possible. Benjamin Wallace was commissioned as a first lieutenant in the New Army in 1799, discharged the following year, reappointed in the old 1st Infantry in 1801 (among Adams's last commissions of that February) but reduced to a second lieutenant, discharged in 1802, reappointed in 1808, and discharged a third and final time in 1815. Uriah Blue followed a similar path except that he was reinstated after his third discharge in 1815 and finally resigned in 1816. Robert Gray was appointed and discharged a total of four times, in virtually every expansion and contraction of the army during the era between 1799 and 1821. In the penultimate example of the politics and instability of early national military careers--and the sometimes stultifying stability of antebellum ones--Hugh Brady was commissioned as an ensign in 1792, discharged in 1796, reappointed as a captain in 1799, discharged the following year and reappointed again in 1812, this time as a full colonel. Retained after the War of 1812 because of his meritorious performance at the battle of Chippewa, Brady served as a regimental commander without promotion until he died in 1851.

Biographical details throughout this dissertation were found in George W. Cullum, Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., from March 16, 1802, to January 1, 1850.
(New York: J.F. Trow, 1850); idem., Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy (2 vols., New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1868); idem., Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., from its Establishment, in 1802, to 1890 (3 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1891); Gardner, A Dictionary of the Officers of the Army; Gordon, A Compilation of Registers of the Army of the United States; Hamersly, Complete Regular Army Register; and Francis B. Heitman, compiler, Historical Registry and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 29, 1789 to March 2, 1903, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903). I will not cite these in the footnotes, but the reader is advised to consult them whenever confirmation of biographical detail is desired. They often offer slightly varying accounts of officers' careers, however, in this case of those of Blue and Wallace.

"Reduction" was the term commonly used to refer to the decreases in the army's authorized strength, as in "the reduction of 1821," or "do you think there will be a reduction this year?" The army's strength was also reduced in 1787, 1796, and 1800, but these had little effect on the officer corps because the forces being reduced were supplementary ones (the regiments authorized in 1786, essentially for Shay's Rebellion; the Legion; and the various Federalist armies of the Quasi-War period). None of these forces had reached their full strength in officers or men, and there were enough unfilled positions available in the regular army to absorb those among these officers who did not want to return to civilian life.


30 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 72.

31 Ibid., pp. 68 and 72; Kohn, Eagle and Sword, p. 295.

32 Ibid., pp. 248-49; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 96-97; White, The Federalists, p. 254; idem., The Jeffersonians, p. 362. See Young, "The United States Army in the South," for the most thorough narrative of the occupation of the Mississippi territory ceded by Spain under Pinckney's
Treaty, and Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, for a well-balanced analysis of the military dimensions of the Crisis of 1798 to which I can add little.


III. Accountability and the Jeffersonian Reformation, 1801-1808


36 Major Jonathan Cass to Alexander Hamilton, November 11, 1799, and Wayne to his son Isaac, September 10, 1794, cited in Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, p. 73. Edward Coffman has written that "officers generally stayed out of the political arena," but he limits his analysis of their activity to overt intervention in the process through intimidation at the polls, which seems to have been quite rare (Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 34).


40 Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, p. 148; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 85. One officer, Lt. John Wyndham, an erstwhile British officer and 1806 graduate of West Point, was dismissed early in 1812.

III. The Limits of Expertise and Responsibility: Preparations for War and Operations in the Southern Borderlands, 1808-1812

41 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 24-25.

42 Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, p. 13. Contrary to that of many earlier scholars who saw Jefferson as an invertebrate antimilitarist, Crackel suggests that "the Military Peace Establishment Act of 1802 was not [primarily] intended to reduce the army; rather, it provided the administration with a means to accomplish a political catharsis of the military establishment" (pp. 46-47). The controversy over Adams' "midnight appointments" and the Judiciary Act of 1801 is discussed in Richard E. Ellis, The Jeffersonian Crisis: Courts and Politics in the Young Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). There are surprisingly few general surveys of the Jeffersonian period (and none so up-to-date as those we now have for the Federalist and Jacksonian eras); see primarily Marshall Smelser, The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815 (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) and Malone's volumes. Steven J. Watts, The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal Culture, 1790-1820 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), and Jean V. Matthews, Toward A New Society: American Thought and Culture, 1800-1830 (Boston: Twayne, 1991) are more thematic. Harry L. Coles, "From Peaceable Coercion to Balanced Forces, 1807-1815," in Against All Enemies, eds. Hagan and Roberts, pp. 71-90, surveys military policy and affairs.


All commentators agree that Jefferson's primary criterion of selection and retention was merit. In 1801 the War Department compiled a list of all 256 serving officers, on which Jefferson's private secretary, Capt. Meriwether Lewis, noted the perceived political allegiances and military ability of 230. Fourteen of the forty-eight officers listed as confirmed Federalists were discharged, but six of those dismissed had also been rated unworthy in terms of military proficiency, and two men "opposed to the Administration most violently . . . and still active in its vilification" were actually promoted. The most senior Republican officer, a major, was first rejected for a staff post and then dismissed because he was considered "unworthy" in ability, the only one of eleven confirmed Republicans to be so rated. Over all, thirty-five of the forty-one men (eighty-five percent) deemed "unworthy of the commissions they bear" (the lowest ranking of ability) were discharged. (Another resigned, but one—who was not a Republican—was promoted to lieutenant colonel.) Only seven of the fifty-eight officers rated "First Class" were dismissed, while
one-third of those rated "second class" (of intermediate ability) were discharged. These ratings and proportions suggest that the officer corps of 1801 was both less extremely partisan than Jefferson feared and less capable than he desired. See Coffman, *The Old Army*, pp. 9-10; Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, pp. 49-50 and Table 2.1; and Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, p. 61. The figures presented by Coffman and Crackel differ in minor respects; I have used Crackel's as they are more complete. Of the 230 officers Lewis rated, fifty-five were New Englanders, fifty-four southerners, and ten westerners. Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and Massachusetts led the states as sources of officers, with forty-six, thirty-six, thirty-one, and thirty respectively.

Skelton acknowledges that political considerations were involved in Jefferson's appointment policies, but dates this awareness from the expansion of 1808 (p. 27). Although Skelton is currently researching this period and may be accumulating evidence to the contrary, the balance of evidence and logic seems to rest with Crackel's portrait of a politicized—though not politically dominated—appointments policy throughout the Jefferson administration. Crackel's suggestion that the administration sought to convert political moderates through persuasion seems to rest primarily on the memoirs of Joseph G. Swift, then a captain (Mr. Jefferson's Army, p. 51), but it certainly fits the ideal of "all republicans, all federalists" Jefferson articulated in the First Inaugural Address and there is little reason to suspect that Jefferson and Dearborn would not have used such methods, though perhaps with less personal attention to individual officers than Swift's example would suggest. Crackel maintains that 'officers considered 'unworthy' [i.e., incapable] were forced out with little reference to other measures, but, among those who were dismissed despite being found militarily qualified, political affiliation was clearly an important factor." Although the sample size available is too small to say this with positive certainty, the tendency towards politicization does seem clear, and given the strictures of Republican rhetoric and ideology and the recent experience of the Quasi-War crisis there is little reason to suspect that it would be otherwise. Statistically, the proportion of Federalist and neutral or apathetic officers dismissed was virtually equal, while that of Republican partisans was significantly lower (though based on much smaller absolute numbers). The largest proportion of officers discharged was from among those whose politics were not identified, but this was usually because they were lieutenants with little time in grade and no established political reputation. These inexperienced junior officers comprised three-fifths of Lewis' total list and nearly three-quarters of those deemed professionally unworthy. See Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, pp. 49-51 and Table 2.1.

46 Kohn, Eagle and Sword, p. 303. Most scholars have emphasized the school's general social utility as a training center for civil engineers; some have suggested that Jefferson saw it as the core of a national scientific university, or perhaps as a means of diffusing military expertise to the militia. Most recently, Skelton has asserted that the president saw West Point as little more than a vocational school for artillerymen. (Crackel also notes that "Jefferson usually referred to West Point simply as a school of instruction for the artillery.") Each of these views has a good deal of validity, but none is conclusively sustained by the documentary evidence these authors present, and rather than artificially attempting to select a single dominant motive, I would suggest that the president expected a range of benefits from the academy. Jefferson did want a national university and a source for trained civil engineers, although it is not clear that he specifically intended West Point to provide them, but the administration certainly did not challenge Congress to provide sufficient funds to achieve its objectives—the initial appropriation for books and instruments was halved in 1804 and again in 1805. See Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 14 and 61 (quotation); Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 99; and George S. Pappas, To the Point: The United States Military Academy, 1802-1902 (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993), p. 45.

Skelton writes that "to the extent that Jefferson thought at all about West Point, he probably viewed it in the context of his military policy of passive defense—a means to train engineering and artillery officers to build and man the coastal fortifications," but goes to to suggest a much more political dimension to the president's calculations: Jefferson "had long favored military instruction as part of a general university curriculum; almost certainly, his earlier resistance to a military academy had stemmed less from an ideological rejection of formal military education than from the proposed school's association with Hamilton and the hated Federalist military program of the Quasi-war" (p. 99). Surely Jefferson did not simply cease to think of the political significance of the academy as soon as he was elected. Indeed, Jefferson paid close attention to the initial provisions for the academy—in 1802 he annotated a lengthy list of books the superintendent
proposed to purchase from Europe, and it seems quite unlikely that one of the
most economy-minded administrations in American history would
stimulate the foundation of a costly new military institution whose very
existence seemed to contradict long-standing and recently exacerbated
Republican fears of a standing army merely to provide artillerymen with a
drill-ground. The connection between Jefferson's admiration for science and
efficiency and his desire for a politically reliable officer corps is evident in the
section of the Military Peace Establishment Act that permitted the president to
commission and promote officers of the Corps of Engineers according to
merit alone, without regard for seniority. As we have seen when examining
the concept of merit in European officer corps, this provision could easily
serve as an opening with which to foster a group of officers directly
dependent on civilian patronage. On the other hand, Jefferson retained
Major Jonathan Williams, one of Adams's midnight appointments and an
ardent Federalist, as Chief Engineer and superintendent of the military
academy while promoting him to lieutenant colonel and colonel. See Pappas,
To the Point, p. 33, and Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, p. 65.

Nearly three-quarters of its cadets before the War of 1812 were from
New York and New England, hardly the Republican strongholds where
Jefferson and Dearborn would ordinarily have gone to find their partisans,
but this geographical disparity is somewhat illusory: twenty-three (twenty-six
percent) of the academy's eighty-nine graduates between 1802 and 1812 were
from heavily Republican Vermont. Only ten (eleven percent) of the
graduates were from states south of Pennsylvania, but Skelton observes that
"this pattern did not distort the overall geographic distribution of the officer
corps, as the Republicans strongly preferred westerners and southerners [who
were more likely to be Republican partisans] for direct appointments into the
infantry regiments" (p. 26). Comparing this figure to the high concentration
of Marylanders and Virginians found by Christopher McKee in the
contemporary naval officer corps, the implication of these statistics is that the
academy drew applicants primarily from nearby regions (although one would
still expect more Pennsylvanians than were selected). This tendency
demonstrates the decisiveness of geographical proximity to personal
motivation in a decentralized, personalistic society, whether that proximity
was to Washington and the Navy Department or to West Point and the
military academy. See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 26, and
McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creation of the U.S.
Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815 (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991),
pp. 59-63. Marylanders clearly held a disproportionately large share of army
commissions as well as navy ones, however—thirty-one of 230 in 1802 (13.5%).

Crackel and Skelton do agree in emphasizing the "military" rather
than scientific or technical dimension of the academy, but its instruction was
primarily scientific or technical (however poorly executed or informal) rather than tactical or strategic. As Crackel notes, the academy's early atmosphere seems to have been more martial than scientific (in contrast to the overwhelming emphasis on mathematics and engineering during Sylvanus Thayer's tenure from 1817 to 1833) because of a stress on drill and the need to establish basic discipline, but the curriculum (such as it was) was heavily weighted toward technical subjects, and the military training the academy provided did not extend beyond drill and some fairly informal lectures. The "Military Philosophical Society" led by the academy's commandant was primarily a scientific group, although it conducted a number of ordnance experiments. See Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, pp. 59-61, and Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 99 and 103-104. See also Sidney Forman, "The United States Military Philosophical Society, 1802-1813," *WMQ* 2 (July 1945): 273-85, and Arthur P. Wade, "A Military Offspring of the American Philosophical Society," *MA* 38 (October 1974): 103-107.


Note that "branch," "arm," and "corps" were largely interchangeable terms for the major specializations around which the army was organized. "Arm" usually referred to one of the "combat arms" (infantry, artillery, or cavalry). "Corps" could be used to refer to these, to the staff bureaus, or to an officer's regiment. It was essentially an affective term indicating corporate feeling, or identification with an organization-based group. ("Esprit de corps" means pride of corps, or group pride.)
Crackel demonstrates that Jefferson and Dearborn overtly sought Republicans as cadets, but notes that "Jefferson knew from the beginning that it would be easier to create vacancies in the army than to fill them with qualified men of Republican persuasion." Class and income normally determined educational opportunity, and "to break the upper-class monopoly of office and opportunity something had to be done to break the upper-class monopoly of education" and cultural capital (or in early republican terms, "gentility"). (Doing so meant teaching the middle classes genteel values and behaviour, however, not changing the criteria of social distinction.) Skelton's analysis of the Confederation officer corps shows that the gentry were represented in the officer corps in numbers quite disproportionate to their actual presence in American society, but that on the other hand the corps also provided an opportunity for social status and mobility for members of the middling classes. This continued to be the case among the officers Skelton analyzed on the 1830 and 1860 army lists, though the trend toward a middle-class officer corps became somewhat more pronounced. If so, Crackel may be correct about the effect, if not the specific intent, of Jefferson's military academy, although the fruition of any such policy (whether overt or implicit) had to wait until the academy came to be the primary route to an army commission after the War of 1812. See Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 71-73. See Bushman, The Refinement of America, on middle-class emulation of genteel values and behaviour, and Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984, orig. pub. 1979), especially Part I, on the concept of cultural capital and its connections to educational and economic capital.

See Cress, Citizens in Arms, chs. 9-10. My interpretation of the trend of American politics is taken primarily from Wiebe, The Opening of America, ch. 10 ("The Era of State Power") and pp. 168-170 and 179. See also Malone, Jefferson the President, especially chs. 6, 21, and 23, and Mr. Madison's War.

Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 26; Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 1, 61, and 173. It is notable that the Republican Congress supported such a dramatic expansion at the same time that it was persistently voting down plans to establish a larger navy, even though navies were considered less dangerous to public liberty than armies in the republican tradition. This suggests the acceptance of an army to deal with conflicts brought on by frontier expansion and to serve as the base for wartime mobilization, but not navies that would be sent overseas where they might involve the United States in diplomatic incidents far from its geographical center of gravity and strength.
Note that officers used "an increase" or "expansion" colloquially just as they did "reduction": "Will there be an increase?" "Can we hope for expansion?" Territorial and organizational expansion were obviously linked in these calculations.

IV. Accountability Put to the Test: James Wilkinson, the Southwestern Borderlands, and Further Political Appointments, 1803-1808

50 Wilkinson to Dearborn, July 24, 1803, quoted in Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, p. 102; Daniel Clark (the merchant, who had been nominated but rejected for a Mississippi territorial judgeship in 1798, was appointed territorial delegate from Louisiana in 1804, and aided Aaron Burr in 1806) to James Madison, March 8, 1803, cited in Abernethy, The South in the New Nation, pp. 249 and 261; Wilkinson's General Order of January 25, 1806, quoted in Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 78; Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, ch. 5. More generally see Young, The United States Army in the South, ch. 2. Jacob Kingsbury and Richard Sparks are also cited by Crackel as officers who expected war if Louisiana was not sold. Claiborne's career on the frontier, nearly as extensive as Wilkinson's, is treated in Joseph T. Hatfield, William Claiborne: Jeffersonian Centurion in the American Southwest (Lafayette: University of Southwest Louisiana Press, 1976). For assessments of Jefferson's foreign policy, see Lawrence S. Kaplan, "Entangling Alliances With None": American Foreign Policy in the Age of Jefferson (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1987), which is largely devoted to relations with France; Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) (especially pt. III, "The Diplomacy of Expansion"); Malone, Jefferson the President: First Term, chs. 14-19; Walter LaFeber, "Jefferson and an American Foreign Policy," in Jeffersonian Legacies, ed. Peter S. Onuf, with a foreword by Daniel P. Jordan and afterword by Merrill D. Peterson (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), pp. 370-91. The Louisiana Purchase is covered in Alexander DeConde, This Affair of Louisiana (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976) and Smelser, The Democratic Republic, ch. 5; see also Clifford L. Egan, Neither Peace nor War: Franco-American Relations, 1803-1812 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), and E. Wilson Lyon, Louisiana in French Diplomacy, 1759-1804 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), which is primarily concerned with the years 1800-1804. General military policy concerning the frontier is examined in Mary P. Adams, "Jefferson's Military Policy With Special Reference to the Frontier, 1805-1809," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1958).
51 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 76-79; Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 95 and 112.

52 Ibid., pp. 102, 111, 114, and 124-31 (first quotation from 130), including Wilkinson to Major Jacob Kingsbury, February 27, 1803, to Secretary Dearborn, September 8, 1805 (with invasion strategy), to John Smith, September 26, 1806, and to John Adair, September 28, 1806.

53 Wilkinson's restraint on the Sabine was not duplicated in his private correspondence regarding his superior, Secretary Dearborn, who the commanding general of the army wrote to Senator Samuel Smith to denounce as "utterly unqualified for his place"—which was essentially Wilkinson's opinion of all the secretaries of war he served under—and in need of removal (Wilkinson to Samuel Smith, October 5, 1806, quoted in Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, p. 131). See also Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, pp. 95-96. In 1797 Wilkinson had refused overtures from a Spanish agent but reassured the man that he would prevent British incursions into Spanish territory from the north (through American territory) in case the relations between those countries reached a crisis point. In 1800 he worked out an arrangement with the Spanish governor of Louisiana to permit the transit of American military provisions up the Mississippi without the payment of duties in tacit return for preventing Creek incursions into Florida. Wilkinson promised the latter in hopes of countering British influence in the region, for William Augustus Bowles, an erstwhile British officer and Director-General of the State of Muskogee, a British protectorate formed by Creeks in 1799 under Loyalist leadership, was planning to seize Florida to forestall a possible French occupation. Bowles was seized by Indians acting under American authority in 1803 and turned over to the Spanish, in whose custody he died shortly thereafter; Muskogee then collapsed. These informal negotiations were somewhat excusable as the actions of the senior American official on the spot, but Wilkinson continued to receive Spanish subsidies at least as late as 1804, when he was paid $12,000 for his "Reflections" on the strategic situation of the Spanish borderlands. Although the policies he recommended were clearly impossible to implement, the senior American general actually promised to communicate the secret instructions of his commander-in-chief to the Spanish governor of Florida. This treasonous pledge was probably made for bargaining purposes only, but like so many of his other actions it places Wilkinson in the worst possible light, and the impression they created was one reason why Wilkinson was refused the position of United States Surveyor-General in 1802. See Young, "The United States Army in the South," pp. 11 and 16; Isaac J. Cox, The West Florida Controversy, 1790-1813: A Study in American

54 Abernethy, The South in the New Nation, pp. 276 and 280; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 80

55 Wilkinson to Smith, November 14 and December 10, 1806, quoted in Crackle, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 137 and 150; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 80-81; Crackle, pp. 145 and 217 (n. 53); Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, pp. 337-39 and 345; idem., Tarnished Warrior, ch. 9; and Cox, The West Florida Controversy, ch. 6, particularly pp. 188-98. The Spanish refused to pay the $110,000 Wilkinson solicited as a reward for his aid, but the United States government reimbursed him $1500 for various expenses. See also Milton Lomask, Aaron Burr: The Years of Conspiracy and Exile, 1805-1830 (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1982); Thomas P. Abernethy, The Burr Conspiracy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954); Dumas Malone, Jefferson the President: Second Term, 1805-1809 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), chs. 13-20; Abernethy, The South in the New Nation, ch. 11; and Smelser, The Democratic Republic, ch. 6. Crackle, chs. 5-6 (especially pp. 133-34), has attempted to absolve Wilkinson of what has hitherto been perceived as a intimate role in the Burr conspiracy. He successfully shows that Wilkinson backed out of his association with Burr at an earlier date than has been thought, but the commanding general was almost certainly involved in the early stages of Burr's plot, and he remains responsible for a damning appearance of impropriety, the perhaps inevitable product of at least twenty years of irresponsible scheming along the frontiers. Whatever the precise degree of Wilkinson's culpability, his actions continuously clouded the army's image by threatening to involve it in conflicts unsanctioned by and perhaps in rebellion against the sovereign power he took an oath ("professed") to serve. It is a sad commentary on the image Wilkinson projected that President Jefferson felt compelled to reassure Senator William Plummer of the general's loyalty (Young, "The United States Army in the South," p. 187).

56 Crackle, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 141, 122, and 216 (n. 51 and 52).
57 Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 31; Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 25 and 48. Josiah Harmar had turned over one quarrel to a board of officers for resolution, but allowing them to do so obviously threatened a conflict of interest of the sort most destructive to discipline. Anthony Wayne went about solving a similar case with characteristic directness by forcing the men involved to draw lots to determine their relative seniority. This of course was far too arbitrary a means to sustain legitimate authority, particularly without the presence of Wayne to give it force.

58 Jefferson and Dearborn placed their hopes—and note how frequently this rather tenuous word is used in relation to projects for the early national army—on Colonel Thomas Butler, commander of the 2nd Infantry Regiment and a long-time foe of the commanding general, to whom he was second in seniority. In 1802 the administration refused Butler's request for a discharge, and Wilkinson then subjected the colonel to a series of courts-martial proceedings because of his stubborn refusal to cut his hair in conformity with a general order issued the preceding year (which was supposedly intended to give the army a more "republican" appearance than the powdered "queues" worn until that date). Butler enlisted the aid of his friend Andrew Jackson, who got up a memorial to the Senate by prominent Tennesseans in the colonel's support. Butler was nevertheless found guilty of willful disobedience and mutinous conduct by a court packed with Wilkinson's supporters. (Military courts-martial were initiated by the charges of officers and subject to civilian control only by the president's authority to reject a verdict, which would often occasion outrage in the officer corps.) Butler died early in 1805 before he could be suspended from duty. See Crackle, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, pp. 86-87, 92, and 116-19; Donald R. Hickey, "Andrew Jackson and the Army Haircut: Individual Rights Vs. Military Discipline," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1976): 365-75; and idem., "The United States Army Versus Long Hair: The Trials of Colonel Thomas Butler, 1801-1805," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 101 (October 1977): 462-74.

59 Crackle, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, pp. 85 and 120-22. Sparks was not dismissed in 1811; he was disbanded in 1815 and died later that year.

and Smelser, *The Democratic Republic*, chs. 7, 8, and 10, regarding Jefferson's foreign policy from 1807 to the end of his presidency; see Harry L. Coles, "From Peaceable Coercion to Balanced Forces, 1807-1815," in Hagan and Roberts, eds., *Against All Enemies*, pp. 71-90, for a general survey of American military policy during the second crisis with Britain.

V. The Limits of Expertise and Responsibility: Preparations for War and Operations in the Southern Borderlands, 1808-1812


62 Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, pp. 276-78; Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, pp. 78-84; Birkhimer, *Historical Sketch of the Organization, Administration, Material and Tactics of the Artillery*, pp. 34-38; Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, pp. 274-76. Duane was appointed as a lieutenant colonel in the rifle regiment authorized in 1808 but never served with his regiment, remaining in Philadelphia to edit the Republican newspaper *Aurora* and work on his *Library*. Duane's commission was essentially a temporary subsidy to allow him to complete this project, and he resigned in 1810 when his finances improved. See also Cress, *Citizens in Arms*, pp. 160-66, although his focus is on proposals for militia reform, where Duane appears less of an advocate of change. During this era most infantrymen carried inaccurate smoothbore muskets because rifles were expensive, easily fouled, and took several times as long to reload. Riflemen were usually organized as companies within regular infantry regiments, or were distributed to those units if organized separately, but they normally fought as skirmishers or individuals out of the main line of battle. Horse artillery means light cannons and carriages with their crews mounted individually rather than riding on the ammunition caissons, trained to move and set up quickly in order to provide highly mobile firepower for close range support, and thus frequently known as "flying artillery."

Cognitive standardization takes two primary forms in military science: the development of standard operating procedures in supply, administration, and everyday military life, and that of tactical, operational, and strategic doctrine for the employment of forces in intimidation or actual combat. The American army made some progress in both spheres before 1812, but these
advances proved insufficient when first subjected to the stresses of war. As in Europe, the cognitive hierarchy of operational scale (from grand or national strategy down to minor tactics) had not yet been articulated or understood as an integrated whole, so the first order of business undertaken in the purely military realm was tactical reform. The Indian-fighting of the 1790s had been done in European-style close order, and no regulars seem to have given any thought to a system of dispersed formations and tactics more suitable to the nature of American woodland terrain. The United States army had never officially adopted a manual of drill, but Baron von Steuben's Revolutionary War Blue Book, based on a much-simplified version of the Prussian tactics of Frederick the Great, remained the standard work in use until 1812. French victories (using skirmishers, columns, speed, and flexibility), especially that over Prussia in 1806, had brought rigid linear tactics of this sort into disrepute, and American authors and policymakers sought a replacement, usually along French lines. See Crackle, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, pp. 81-82 and 92, and Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, p. 273.

As in so many other ways, the army's attempts at diffusing expertise before the War of 1812 were hampered by its lack of structure and internal discipline, the product of reliance on the abilities of a few individuals unsustained by formal procedures. Learning about the art and science of war was a personal endeavour, more self-study than anything else, a failing that was partially redeemed by the talents and energy of the army's leading "experts" and the rather limited range of knowledge that it was necessary to master. In other words, Jonathan Williams of the Corps of Engineers (the first superintendent of the Military Academy and the organizer of the Military Philosophical Society there), was the army's only prominent "thinker" of the era, a regrettable indice of limited professional expertise and responsibility but perhaps an understandable one given the highly technical character of most military writing during the period. Many officers joined Williams in advocating military preparedness, but very few had the opportunity to observe events in Europe firsthand, so their vague knowledge of the momentous changes in military thought and practice there was attenuated by distance and more immediate concerns, to the army's detriment.

Duane's work, like Hamilton's of 1799-1800, was never adopted for use by the army, although it joined a growing number of manuals that individual officers used on their own initiative. In 1808 General Wilkinson compiled a "modern system of movements . . . for infantry, cavalry, and artillery" from French translations, but even the work of the army's commanding general went unpublished. The problem appeared to have been resolved in 1812, when an abridged version of the French Reglement of 1791 (the standard by which all contemporary tactics were measured) compiled by Brigadier General
Alexander Smyth (the new inspector general and Duane's commander as colonel of the rifle regiment from 1808 to 1812) was adopted. Duane had prepared his own version, however, and the secretary of war ordered its adoption in place of Smyth's less than a year later, when Duane was appointed adjutant general. In one veteran's postwar recollection, "the effect of the resolution was . . . to throw back the tactical instruction of the army . . . into all the confusion that existed . . . at the commencement of hostilities."


This neglect of standardization was not limited solely to tactical doctrine, for the army lacked even the most basic visual aspects of cohesion and consistency—early in 1812 Capt. John De Barth Walbach reported to the adjutant general that several different uniform patterns were in use simultaneously. Walbach (who had served as aide-de-camp [sometimes cited as ADC hereafter] to Hamilton in 1799 and Wilkinson in 1801, as well as regimental adjutant and assistant adjutant general [sometimes cited as AAG hereafter] to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney in the New Army) proposed additional officers for each regiment and the staff. The stimulus behind Walbach's fifteen page "Memorandum" is unknown, but his proposals seem to have struck a responsive chord. Eustis finally appointed a board of officers to report on the army's organization in the late spring of 1812, albeit too late to contribute to the debates that led to the acts of March to May of that year creating the quartermaster and ordnance departments and adding district paymasters and brigade subinspectors. (Walbach himself was appointed an assistant deputy quartermaster at the time, and later became an assistant adjutant general and adjutant general in the northern army. He continued to serve after the war until his death in 1857, totalling seventy-five years of
military service, fifty-eight in the armies of the United States.) Civilian contracting still remained essential to the army's supply, however, with predictably inefficient results during the war. See Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, pp. 143 and 168, and *A Memoir on the Principles and Means of Organizing the General Staff of the United States Military Power* (n.p., 1812), which was probably prepared with Macomb's assistance.

64 After the Chesapeake incident in 1807 Wilkinson promptly advised the administration to adopt a plan remarkably similar to that eventually undertaken, including defensive preparations, the expulsion of British ships from American territorial waters, and an embargo against exports to Britain. (All of these were either common sense ideas or ones well-grounded in American experience, of course.) Unfortunately, the army's senior general expressed these ideas to his civilian superiors through his personal friend Senator Samuel Smith, to whom Jefferson responded, rather than to the War Department directly per the legal chain of authority. See Wilkinson to Smith, July 18, 1807, as cited in Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, p. 161.

65 See Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, p. 111. Late in 1808 Secretary Dearborn ordered a concentration of three of the army's eleven regiments, plus portions of four more, all newly recruited, near New Orleans to deter a possible British attack (or quite probably to threaten West Florida). By mid-April 1809 more than 1700 soldiers were encamped together there, of whom nearly a third were sick with dysentery, diarrhea, or malaria. Wilkinson delayed moving the force, and when he did it was to an even worse location in the middle of a swamp. The new camp at Terre aux Boeufs was nearly surrounded by water and soon flooded, providing fertile breeding grounds for malarial mosquitoes. The primitive encampment quickly degenerated into an unsanitary nightmare, which was then exacerbated by an ineffective supply system. Vegetables, clothing, and soap were only a few of the necessities in short supply, while the food was either spoiled or soon became rotten in the humidity. The army was well-supplied with only two things: whiskey--which the troops desperately exchanged for fresh vegetables--and incompetent leadership, from which they could not escape. The regiments were new and their officers utterly inexperienced, not even knowledgeable enough to order their men to boil the river water they used. (Remember that only three officers had transferred from existing regiments into the new ones created in 1808.) See Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, pp. 344-54, and idem., *Tarnished Warrior*, ch. 10.

Secretary of War William Eustis ordered Wilkinson to move his force to higher ground near Natchez as early as the end of April 1809, but this command came too late to forestall the general's move to Terre aux Boeufs.
In late June Eustis ordered Wilkinson "immediately to embark" his men for Natchez, but the commanding general did not do so for eleven weeks—seven of them after he had received the order. Even a formal memorial (essentially a petition of protest) from some of his subordinates was insufficient to induce the general to act, and on September 10 Eustis relieved Wilkinson of command and ordered him to Washington to face a court of inquiry. He was court-martialed two years later on charges stemming from this incident and the Burr Conspiracy, but was found innocent due to the ambiguity of the orders and evidence involved. See idem., The Beginning of the U.S. Army, pp. 344-54; Charles Winslow Elliott, Winfield Scott: The Soldier and the Man (New York: Macmillan, 1937), pp. 28-29; Young, "The United States Army in the South," p. 211.

The Terre aux Boeufs disaster had several causes, both proximate ones due to individuals and fundamental ones of structure. Wilkinson's poor choice of location and his procrastination when ordered, not once but twice, to move, are obvious, but the general's true irresponsibility lay in his motives—Wilkinson let personal financial interests outweigh his duty as an officer. The general wanted to remain near New Orleans in order to take advantage of business opportunities there, and the contractor charged with supplying the camp made it clear to Wilkinson that his profits depended on the general, who he intimated would receive compensation later. Indeed, the contractor thought so little of Wilkinson's probity that he asked the general to forgo inspecting the flour being supplied to the troops, and Wilkinson seems to have agreed. Wilkinson and Eustis were concentrating on the acquisition of West Florida during these months, and the other levels of the chain of command and accountability failed to supply the commanding general's deficiencies—Wilkinson's inexperienced subordinates have been judged as "ignorant and often indifferent" to their men's plight, and they failed to direct simple sanitary measures like the excavation of latrines. Secretary Eustis had already set an example for strict economy that discouraged the purchase of quality supplies, and he disallowed several purchases along with Wilkinson's laudable proposal for the acquisition of mosquito netting. Amidst all this economizing and profiteering by their commanders, the soldiers themselves were not even paid between June 1809 and March 1810. Ultimately nearly nine hundred soldiers died out of a total force of 2036. Another 166 saved themselves by desertion; approximately forty officers are reported to have died or resigned. See Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, pp. 348 and 352-53; Prucha, Sword of the Republic, p. 97 ("ignorant . . . "); White, The Jeffersonians, p. 215; Young, "The United States Army in the South," p. 219.
The failings of the army officer corps were not ameliorated by the civilian chain of command. Madison and his first secretary of war (William Eustis, who lost the post in January 1813) took little interest in military reform, which proceeded at a leisurely though not entirely glacial pace. This reversion from the previous administration's attentiveness to military affairs seems to have stemmed from poor executive leadership and the ideological rigidity of Old Republicans in Congress—a combination of Secretary Eustis's mania for minutiae and his need to concentrate on the intense congressional debates over broader questions of the nation's grand strategy (and thus its fiscal and manpower policies, above all over the jealously guarded status of the militia) in the anticipated war against Britain. The Terre aux Boeufs disaster did lead to an order that no force was to move without the presence of a medical officer, but it was not until the reorganization of the army staff in 1813 that a surgeon general and hospital system were provided for. Eustis did call for a separate Quartermaster Department in 1810, but he was rebuffed by Congress. Tactically, the army's capability actually declined slightly as the new administration cut costs by disbanding the horse artillery. In 1810 Eustis suggested to Congress that the militia adopt French tactics, but nothing came of the idea, and the secretary did nothing else to promote the standardization of tactical doctrine. Indeed, his inaction positively discouraged the initiative of army officers like those in the artillery, where a board of officers formed in 1811 unsuccessfully pressed for the creation of a uniform tactical system, an inspector, and a standing board of officers to oversee the branch's improvement. See Caldwell, "The Frontier Army Officer," p. 120; White, The Jeffersonians, p. 217; Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, p. 136; Stagg, Mr. Madison's War, p. 143; and Birkhimer, Historical Sketch of the Artillery, p. 167. The War Department did become more active in its oversight the year after Terre aux Boeufs, however: the secretary ordered a move north early in the year, authorized the inclusion of vegetables in the soldiers' rations, and suggested precautions to avoid the transmission of disease from veterans to unseasoned recruits. See Young, "The United States Army in the South," pp. 220-21 and 228.

Weigley, History of the United States Army, p. 114; Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, pp. 228-29 and 264; Burbeck cited in Pappas, To the Point, p. 20.

Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 46; Wadsworth quoted in Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, p. 28; Dearborn to Jackson, April 19, 1803, quoted in Crackle, Mr. Jefferson's Army, p. 88; Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, p. 89. See also Denton, "The
Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," p. 38, regarding Jackson, who resigned. Wadsworth was discharged in the reduction of 1821.

69 Wadsworth to Williams, August 12, 1803, Miscellaneous Mss., USMA; Caldwell, "The Frontier Army Officer," p. 105; Coffman, The Old Army, p. 30; Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, pp. 21-22; Elliott, Winfield Scott, p. 30. Aside from neglect of duty, historian James Ripley Jacobs notes a number of cases of blatant personal misconduct that led to courts-martial or other sanctions. Major William MacRea was arraigned for official oppression after requiring a soldier on duty to act in public as his personal porter and a footman for his daughter, but he went on to serve until his death in 1832, thirty-nine years in all. Lt. Col. Henry Gaither, a Revolutionary veteran, was forced out of the army during the reduction of 1802 because he had defrauded the government by drawing unauthorized rations for an infant. Major William Barron was forced to resign in 1808 after his frequent resort to local prostitutes became impossible to ignore and a court found him guilty of keeping them on post at West Point during Jonathan Williams' absence in 1804 and 1805. A fourth, more junior, officer was charged with misuse of government property when he ran aground in a government boat while escorting a party of prostitutes around Charleston harbor. Jacint Laval, commander on the East Florida border in early 1812, was accused by his subordinates of sharing the sexual favors of a private's wife with a sergeant and failing to investigate a civilian complaint of pedophilia by a soldier. Although the latter three cases were instigated for political purposes or by fellow officers, none of these incidents improved the image of the army or its officers in the eyes of those who feared the morally corrosive impact of standing armies. See Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, pp. 353-55; Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," p. 54; Pappas, To the Point, p. 51; and Rembert W. Patrick, Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), p. 77.

70 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 58-59. Thirteen of the seventy-four officers whose courts-martial are recorded were dismissed; one was allowed to resign; three more were suspended for more than three months.

71 Wilkinson to Major Moses Porter, April 19, 1806, quoted in Coffman, The Old Army, pp. 33-34; Elliott, Winfield Scott, p. 34; Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, pp. 164 and 166; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 56-57; Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, p. 365. Burchstead (or Burchsted) was wounded at Tippecanoe and killed by the Red Stick Creeks in 1813.


VI. The Wartime Test


76 Young, "The United States Army in the South," p. 240; Patrick, *Florida Fiasco*, pp. 68, 111, and 211; Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, pp. 138, 147, 164, and 175-76 (quotations). From the junior officer ranks Capt. Thomas Sidney Jesup displayed exceptional if not unique initiative in submitting a "confidential memoir" to Eustis proposing a campaign against the British naval complex at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in order to cripple the expected blockade and unite the Federalist states of New England around a lucrative policy of privateering. Such a campaign was probably well beyond American logistical capabilities, however. See Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, Ca.: Presidio Press, 1979), p. 44. Stagg has demonstrated that Madison intended the conquest of Canada to invigorate the administration's policy of economic coercion by shutting off the flow of Canadian foodstuffs to the West Indies and closing the avenues of smuggling from New England. See Norman K. Risjord, *The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatism in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), ch. 5, concerning opposition to the military build-up.

77 Skelton has studied the composition of the middle and upper echelons of the wartime officer corps extensively, coming to conclusions that comport with the patterns he found in the corps throughout the early national and Jacksonian eras. Most significantly, the corps was a national one, despite opposition to the conflict in New England. The field and general grade line officers appointed between 1808 and 1815 were geographically representative.
of the distribution of the nation's population, although the South and the
West received more than their share of officers in comparison to their free
populations (but less in the South than its share of congressmen). If any
region was slighted it was the Republican Mid-Atlantic rather than Federalist
New England. See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 27, and
idem., "High Army Leadership," p. 258, Table II. Skelton's sample is the
regular field and general officers (majors and above) of 1808-1815.

Skelton has found these backgrounds to be similar to those he discovered
among the officers on the 1786, 1797, and 1830 army registers: a nearly equal
division between agriculturalists (27.8%, of whom 46% were "planters"),
businessmen (30.5%, of whom 63% were merchants and only 5%
manufacturers), and professionals (28.9%, of whom fully 83% were lawyers).
Another 12.8% were drawn from government service outside the existing
army, in roughly equal numbers from the federal and lower levels. Forty-five
of 341 rose from or within the pre-1808 army; another six had seen significant
service therein but were not in the army in 1808. Four were naval or marine
corps officers at the time of their appointments. Only twelve (6.4% of those
commissioned from civilian life whose occupations therein are known) came
from non-farm "working" or lower middling class occupational backgrounds:
four clerks and eight artisans. (Twenty-eight gave their occupation as
"farmer.") Fifty of the 341 were college graduates (only three from West
Point), a far higher proportion than in the general public, though well below
that in the higher civil service. See ibid., pp. 258-64 and Tables III and IV.
Notably, ninety-seven of 190 U.S. Representatives who reported their prior
occupations in 1822 had been lawyers; only fifty-nine had been farmers
(White, The Jeffersonians, p. 381).

President Madison and Secretary Eustis continued Jefferson and
Dearborn's practice from 1808 of sending lists of prospective nominees to each
state's Republican congressional delegation for advice and alteration.
(Madison and Eustis initially attempted to include Federalists, but local
Republican antagonism soon forced an end to this effort at encouraging
national unity through patronage.) Knowing this procedure, candidates
commonly sought the support of their influential friends and congressmen,
and many of those appointed to the higher ranks had been political officials
themselves: "Of the seventeen men appointed directly to general's rank,
seven had served in Congress, four others as state or territorial governors,
and one as speaker of his state's senate; two had held high positions in the
War Department's bureaucracy" (including Henry Dearborn, the erstwhile
secretary). Seven of the men appointed directly to regimental field grade
posts had been congressmen, and at least thirty-nine others state legislators.
The rough pattern of class origin mirrored the availability of Republicans among the elites of different regions. Few southern or western officers came from the middling classes, while few New Englanders came from high elites; men from the Mid-Atlantic states were distributed most evenly among middling men and high and local elites. See Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, pp. 165-67; Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 50 and 76; and idem., "High Army Leadership," pp. 255 and 260 (quotation) -262, Table IV.

80 Besides those noted above, twenty-five men appointed to field or general rank between 1808 and 1815 had served during the Revolution and twenty-two had had some army experience since 1783. One, John Boyd, was commissioned colonel of the 4th Infantry Regiment in 1808 after serving as a soldier of fortune for twenty years in India, while John De Barth Walbach had been an officer in German units of the French army from 1782 to 1793, and in the forces of a German principality from then until he entered the American service in 1798. Otherwise, occasional duty in the volunteers and militia was the only military background many of the new commanders could claim. See ibid., pp. 263-64, and Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, p. 384.

81 Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, p. 35; idem., "High Army Leadership," pp. 265-66. Although I will not discuss the reduction of 1815 here, it is important to note the manner in which officers who did not persist throughout the war were separated from service. Ninety-five of the 341 field and general grade officers (almost twenty-eight percent of the total) who served during the period from 1808 to 1815 were no longer in the army when the war ended. Thirty-two died (ten in action or of wounds suffered therein); eight were discharged, eight dismissed. Forty-seven resigned and did not reenter the army before the war's conclusion. Almost three quarters of the men who resigned had been appointed directly from civilian life; many had seen little actual service. Their departures were usually the result of family and health considerations that prevented them from taking up assignments in areas distant from their homes. See ibid., pp. 270-71 and Table V.

The generally high persistence rate of the crisis appointees is partially explainable by the short duration of their service. The army expanded from three regiments in 1807 to eleven in 1808, thirty-two in 1812, fifty-one in 1813, and fifty-seven in 1814, meaning that most of these men served no more than two and a half years. Age was also a factor, as the mass of regimental officers resigned proportionately less often than their generals. Age and duration of service had different effects on different cadres of appointees, however: attrition among the men directly appointed to field and general grade rank in 1808 exceeded seventy percent by 1815, more than twice the rate of the 1808-1815 cohort as a whole. Skelton suggests that the high rate of persistence
among this cohort reflected inadequate disciplinary mechanisms and led to military failure, asserting that "the leading cause of the high persistence rate was the lack of means at the government's disposal to rid the army of deadwood," implying that the turnover after 1812 might have been much higher had this not been the case. These incompetent but politically influential generals were usually able to avoid courts of inquiry or escape serious consequences from them, and the president and secretary of war refused to remove them without the cloak of an investigation to provide political cover. As a result, aside from Hull a grand total of only seven field officers were dismissed for incompetence or misconduct between 1808 and 1815. Unfortunately, this number cannot be mistaken for evidence of an effective or responsible officer corps. Whether the incidence of inadequate senior leadership was actually so great or so decisive is open to question, however: inexperience and the inadequacy of the army staff structure were surely more to blame for American failure than outright incompetence, aside from instances of utter vacillation like that displayed by William Hull at Detroit. Even if the government's ability to remove ineffective commanders had been greater, their replacements would probably have been men of similar political clout and military inexperience, given the politicized appointments process of a democracy. See ibid., pp. 254 and 266.

Such a failure to remove incompetent commanders would normally qualify as a major lapse in responsibility on the part of the civil government, but the situation was a complex one and this policy was not solely due to Madison's indecisiveness as a politician and executive leader. The war was not popular, and the administration saw military appointments as one of the principal means of conciliating elite opinion. As in 1798 and 1808 the new officers were charged with recruiting for their units; commissioning the members of local elites gave the army an effective mechanism for doing so that it would otherwise have had to supply with officers already on duty, or even through civilians (very probably the same ones who were actually given appointments). As Skelton notes, this process was actually a faithful reflection of the decentralized American social order, one hardly amenable to the disruption of bureaucratic reconstruction in the midst of a war. Militarily lamentable, some of the wartime army's personnel policies may have had meritorious social origins and consequences that deserve recognition in judging their overall efficacy.

The form and consequences of a removals policy also had to be carefully calculated from the standpoint of accountability and functional efficacy. If the government had possessed a more summary power to remove officers, this threat to officers' security would have made politics even more important in the daily life and operations of the army, thus hindering the development of the occupational cohesion necessary to foster professional
commitment. Such a power to pass judgment on the operational decisions of a field commander would certainly have undermined the incentive for officers to seek professional expertise, since the content of that knowledge would still have been judged by people unfamiliar with it. The same arbitrary motives and impatience would have come into play had officers possessed stronger powers to remove subordinates, in which case occupational autonomy would have damaged organizational cohesion and professional commitment. Though apparently inefficient, external legislative and internal bureaucratic checks and balances also served as occupational ones that may have led to greater professional accountability and organizational effectiveness in the long term.

John Armstrong, who replaced Eustis early in 1813, has been rated both "the first strong secretary of war" and an indecisive manager like his predecessor. The latter qualities became evident during the defense of Washington, but in 1813 the new secretary "promptly began a reorganization of the high command that swept out the elderly Revolutionary War generals and brought new men to the front." To gain the latitude for this Armstrong at first had to use covert and informal means to shunt aside, neutralize, or remove incapable generals. As in the prewar army, some of the men who resigned undoubtedly did so under pressure, which would have been less formally expressed and so less easily discernable in the case of such senior men, but the most significant of these measures was the simple bureaucratic trick of assigning men to inactive posts where they could do little harm. Commanders had to be appointed to oversee the defenses of quiet coastal districts, and local notables could serve this purpose as federal officers without offending local opinion or giving over authority entirely to the local militia. Recruiting was likely to be more productive and to cause less of a stir among local farmers and businessmen losing a part of their labor pool when it was conducted by reputable men of their acquaintance, who understood their needs and could mediate between them and the demands of the central government. Meanwhile, younger, more energetic men could assume battlefield command. See White, The Jeffersonians, p. 218, and Skelton, "High Army Leadership," pp. 266-67 and 270.

The simple passage of time allowed the War Department to appoint men with more proven experience in 1813 and 1814 than it had in 1808 and 1812. Only two of the twelve generals appointed in February 1813 lacked some recent military experience, and one of those was a former chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, a politic choice and one who had significant experience in military policy-making (and by association in administration). Jacob Brown, a successful militia commander on the Canadian frontier, was appointed brigadier general in the Regular Army later that year; he commanded the victorious Left Division on the Niagara in 1814
and then the army itself from 1821 until his death in 1828. Of the eight
generals newly promoted or appointed in 1814, six were regulars (including
four veterans of the pre-1808 army), the others Daniel Parker (former chief
clerk of the War Department, appointed to the post of adjutant and inspector
general, which he held throughout the period of John C. Calhoun's postwar
reforms) and Andrew Jackson, already the victor in the Creek War in
Alabama. Jacob Brown was promoted to major general, as was George Izard, a
graduate of the French engineer and artillery school at Metz and another
brigadier of 1813. (Brown and Izard were both from politically prominent
families, in New York and South Carolina respectively. The two quarrelled
and Izard was disbanded in 1815 and became the second territorial governor
of Arkansas in 1825, following another ex-officer in that post.) They replaced
James Wilkinson and Wade Hampton, major generals and operational
failures of 1813. (Hampton resigned, Wilkinson went off to face yet another
court of inquiry. He was finally discharged in the reduction of 1815.) The
new brigadiers of 1814 included Winfield Scott (battlefield victor at Chippewa
and Lundy's Lane that summer), Edmund Gaines, Alexander Macomb,
Eleazer Wheelock Ripley, and Daniel Bissell--four of the postwar army's
general officers before 1821 (as were Brown, Jackson, and Parker), three of the
five generals of the period from 1821 to 1841, and both of the army's
commanding generals from 1828 to 1861 (Macomb and Scott). Gaines and
Macomb had fifteen years of service apiece; Bissell had twenty-three. They
had begun their careers early, however, and as a result of these appointments
the median age of the army's generals was only forty-two by the end of the
war, down from fifty-seven in 1812. See ibid., pp. 267-68, and Stagg, Mr.
Madison's War, p. 400.

82 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 9. For the specific structure
of the staff, see the "Abstract of All the Acts of Congress," in Gardner, A
legislation regarding surgeons, and see Gillett, The Army Medical
Department, ch. 7. Many wartime staff officers already had several years of
military experience by 1812, and a number were graduates of West Point,
including seven quartermaster officers and the chief engineers of most of the
armies that fought along the Canadian border. Indeed, many of the postwar
army's senior commanders served as staff officers during the conflict:
Alexander Macomb as the acting inspector general at its outset, captains
Winfield Scott and Edmund Gaines as adjutants general before promotion to
brigadier, and Capt. Henry Atkinson (who would later command the Ninth
Military Department and the expeditions up the Missouri and Yellowstone
Rivers from 1819 to 1826, and was asked to become adjutant general of the
army in 1821) as one of the eight inspector generals authorized in 1813. (The
latter officers actually ranked and were paid as colonels; there was an adjutant and inspector general above them but they did not report to him.) Decius Wadsworth, whom we last saw resigning from the command of West Point when ordered to New Orleans, was reappointed as commissary general of ordnance in 1812 and served efficiently as that department's chief officer until 1821, when he was discharged for the last time in the general reduction of the army. Three of the West Pointers who served as chief engineers in field armies later became the army's Chief Engineers from 1815 to 1818 and 1828 to 1864. Two ordnance officers became the superintendent of West Point between 1817 and 1833 (Sylvanus Thayer, who was also a chief engineer in one of the field armies of 1812, while only a first lieutenant) and the chief of ordnance between 1832 and 1848; two of the chief engineers superintended the military academy from 1816 to 1817 and 1833 to 1838. One of the deputy quartermaster generals was Christopher Van deVanter, who served as the chief clerk of the War Department between 1817 and 1827. Four West Point graduates served as assistant inspector generals; one then became an inspector general and later commandant and instructor of infantry tactics at West Point from 1819 to 1820.

83 Skelton, "High Army Leadership," pp. 256 (n. 11), 257, and 269-70; idem., An American Profession of Arms, pp. 29-32 and 370 (n. 46).

84 Idem., "High Army Leadership," p. 270. The literature on the Niagara campaign has grown dramatically in recent years. See Elting, Amateurs, to Arms!, ch. 11; Graves, The Battle of Lundy's Lane; Joseph Whitehorne, While Washington Burned: The Battle for Fort Erie, 1814 (Baltimore: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1992); and especially John C. Fredriksen, Niagara, 1814: The United States Army's Quest for Tactical Parity in the War of 1812 and its Legacy" (Ph.D. dissertation, Providence College, 1993), who articulates this argument most directly. Fredriksen lists a dozen officers from the Left Division who went on to eminence in the postwar army--Brown, Scott, Ripley (a brigade commander), Gaines (who distinguished himself at Fort Erie and replaced Ripley after the latter's quarrel with Brown), Jesup, and the following (many of whom we shall meet in my later chapters):

Capt. Roger Jones (commissioned 1812, staff major and assistant adjutant general in 1814, brevetted twice for Chippewa and the sortie from Fort Erie), who served as the army's adjutant general from 1825 until his death in 1852 at the rank of brevet major general

Lt. William Worth (commissioned 1813, Scott's aide-de-camp, brevetted twice for Chippewa and Lundy's Lane), colonel and brevet major
general, theater commander in the Second Seminole War, divisional
commander under Taylor and Scott in Mexico, died 1849
Colonel Hugh Brady (appointed at that rank 1812, regimental
commander at Lundy's Lane), brevet major general, died 1851
Major George Mercer Brooke (comm. 1808, brevetted twice for the
defense of and sortie from Fort Erie), colonel and brevet major general, died
1851

Major Henry Leavenworth (comm. 1812, regimental commander at
Chippewa, brevetted there and at Lundy's Lane), colonel and brevet brigadier
general, died 1834
Major John McNeil (same as Leavenworth but resigned in 1830 to
become federal surveyor of the Port of Boston)
Capt. Nathan Towson (comm. 1812, Scott's artillery commander,
brevetted for Chippewa), paymaster general of the army from 1819 until his
death in 1854 as brevet major general

We can also add Alexander Macomb, Henry Atkinson, and Joseph
Totten, who served in the Lake Champlain theater. Brown, Scott, Ripley, and
Gaines were four of the five men on the officer retention board of 1815.
(Andrew Jackson was the other, but he and Gaines were not actually present
for its proceedings.)

85 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 47 and 50; idem., "High
Army Leadership," pp. 268-69 and n. 40; Atkinson to Rep. Bartlett Yancy,
March 10, 1814, quoted in Nichols, General Henry Atkinson, p. 40. Promotion
in the "old army" (three regiments) of 1802 was also quite rapid. The average
time served before promotion to captain was only 6.3 years for those
commissioned between 1803 and 1807, half again that of those appointed in
1791-92 but less than half the 13.2 year average of those commissioned
between 1821 and 1824. For other examples of officers dissatisfied with the
speed of their promotions, see K. Jack Bauer, Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter,
Statesman of the Old Southwest (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University
almost resigned to seek military service in Latin America. Brevet rank,
which became a major source of controversy and dispute in the postwar
army, seems to have been disbursed liberally enough during the war itself
that there was little jealousy or resentment over its allocation (in contrast to
the situation during the Mexican War). This was probably also because brevet
rank was new, its possibilities as a means for personal aggrandizement as yet
untested.

86 Idem., An American Profession of Arms, pp. 52-57 and 76; Nichols,
General Henry Atkinson, pp. 41-43.

VII. Accountability in the Jeffersonian Era, 1801-1815: A Summation

88 White, The Jeffersonians, pp. 162-63; Carp, To Starve the Army at Leisure, p. 42; Macomb, A Treatise on Martial Law and Courts-Martial as Practiced in the United States of America (Charleston, S.C.: Hoff, 1809). The Articles of War were revised in 1786 and 1806; the latter version survived with few modifications until the 1890s, and was not wholly rewritten until 1916. (See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 38-39 for elaboration.) The entire structure was constantly being expanded and annotated by "General Orders" issued from the War Department and the various commanding generals. The latter were particularly important in giving immediate force to the Articles' often overlooked prohibitions against a range of illicit behaviours including gambling, dueling, drunkenness on duty, and extramarital sexual activity.


90 White, The Jeffersonians, pp. 213, 215, and 235-39; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 39. The wartime regulations were mostly crafted by the adjutant and inspector general, Daniel Parker.

91 Leonard White describes the American business tradition of the era as one "which cultivated the virtues of individual enterprise and personal responsibility in the management of small undertakings rather than the skills of large affairs." See White, The Federalists, pp. 473 (quotation)-78, and idem., The Jeffersonians, pp. 356 and 556. See Wiebe, The Opening of America, chs. 7-8 (which include superb discussions of the social, economic, and cultural form and meaning of credit in the early republic), on the factors which underlay early American social interaction, and more generally idem., The Segmented Society: An Introduction to the Meaning of America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), ch. 2.
Republican ideology damaged the national cause by demanding such economy in public expenditures that senior officials like the secretary of war were unable to afford assistant secretaries to ameliorate the burdens of administration, and delegating authority was difficult because congressmen of the Old Republican school saw subordinate officials as a species of placemen, the portents of executive tyranny, and refused to legislate for their salaries. See Risch, ch. 5, regarding supply procedures during the War of 1812, and Carp, To Starve the Army at Leisure, concerning those in the Revolutionary War. Though under closer public superintendence after 1812, military logistics still remained vulnerable to the evils of a divided command, and in January 1813 the secretary of war moved to recentralize supply operations by making the commissary general of purchases responsible for the storage of supplies and the issuance of orders for their transportation by the Quartermaster Department. The quartermaster general objected to being held personally financially accountable for his subordinates' actions without the opportunity to choose them, so Congress lowered the threshold and locus of accountability by requiring quartermaster officers to post financial bonds for their good conduct while repealing conflict-of-interest legislation directed at the quartermaster general. The deputy commissaries (purchasing agents) authorized in the act of March 1812 were not subjected to military law, so a year later Congress created a civilian "Superintendent General of Military Supplies" directly under the secretary of war's supervision, who would keep, audit, and settle all supply accounts. This man's function was primarily to ensure fiscal accountability and uncover fraud rather than to facilitate troop supply itself. Indeed, fraud remained common enough that it was actually felt necessary to order officers to limit the amount of supplies issued to the actual strength of their units.

Jesp to an unidentified colonel, September 8, 1814, quoted in Kieffer, Maligned General, p. 40; Scott and Gaines to Monroe, December 1814, quoted in White, The Jeffersonians, pp. 229 and 231. Secretary of War James Monroe had asked Scott and Gaines their opinions of the system and of means to remedy it in response to a congressional inquiry. The new system established in 1815 placed distribution entirely in the hands of the Quartermaster General, who first received the supplies at established depots. This method removed the risks of transportation from the profit calculations of contractors.

White, The Federalists, pp. 268, 278-84, and 512-14. Judgment, decisiveness, enterprise and perseverance, scrupulous and industrious attention to duty
and detail, and control over one's passions were the gentry ideals for
officeholders; among army officers, bravery and disciplinary abilities were
also frequently mentioned by superiors recommending their subordinates for
promotion. White lists several other Federalist administrative achievements
that bear notation here:

a) the creation of a national administrative system independent of the
states--a prerequisite for the army's evolution as a national force

b) the effective separation of legislative and executive power, or in
this case at least formal centralization--the army was not run on a day to day
basis by the representatives of local interests in Congress

c) the evolution of stable and orderly relationships between officials,
based on a system of functional offices and law--in effect, the structural
foundations of a bureaucracy in the Weberian sense


96 Cress, Citizens in Arms, pp. xii and 146; Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army, p.
182.
Part II

Expertise and Learning in the United States
Army Officer Corps, 1815-1846: The Creation of a Cadre and the Diffusion of Competence
In 1839 Inspector General John Wool proclaimed to Congress that "a profound knowledge of the science of war, united with talents and experience rather than numbers, generally decides the issue of military operations."
Virtually without exception, contemporary American military authors believed that the army's principal purpose was "to preserve that knowledge in peace, and give it the greatest extension in war." These beliefs were asserted by junior officers in professional journals as well as by senior ones in official reports: "If we rightly understand the design of this nation in . . . sustaining a military establishment . . . it is for the creation and preservation amongst us, of military science; the development and exaltation of MIND."
Given the relative security of the United States and its wartime dependence on the militia, General Wool, like most officers who spoke on the subject, believed that the army "is not intended so much for immediate defence as [for] instruction. It is supported in anticipation of the future, by which officers may learn the art of war."

Army officers were certain that the lessons of the past demonstrated the need for a specialized professional cadre to direct the nation's armed forces. Experience was the promethean argument for military preparedness, indeed for the existence and necessity of military expertise itself, for without "the lessons of experience" there would have been no demonstrable need for an army or an officer corps--the necessity of "improv[ing] and preserv[ing] that practical knowledge . . . which can be acquired with precision only in actual service" was the primary rationale behind the cadre (or expansible army) concept, the corps' standard argument for professional monopoly and autonomy. Regular officers were certain that this core of experts could not be provided by part-time militiamen or volunteers, and officers derided critics "who, in opposition to the facts of history and the convictions of experience,"
deny the necessity of previous instruction, and of practical military knowledge, to the military commander." Expertise was not simply a matter of exercising natural talent, nor could it be reduced solely to the product of experience (which could be acquired in a relatively short period given the limited technology available at the time)--army officers felt sure that "skill can be attained only by theory and practise" together. It certainly seemed obvious that warfare was becoming more complex, for with "the gradual advance of knowledge [and] the progress of the arts and sciences, new modes of attack were found necessary to overcome the improved means of defence; and thus . . . have the inventions of war been multiplied, and resulted in our present system." Regular officers believed that this cycle of innovation made military command an increasingly complex affair requiring continual exertion from committed practitioners: Lieutenant Henry Hunt, later the artillery commander of the Army of the Potomac, maintained that "the military profession is one that requires as much study, as much thought, and as much extensive reading as any other."³

Did the repeated expression of sentiments like these mean that the American army was a bastion of martial scholarship and expertise? Its officers certainly agreed on the "necessity of professional knowledge and experience," but scholars must ask a number of questions in order to discern the practical meaning of these terms. How precise was their language? Did expertise mean book learning or experience? A second question is that of representativeness and intensity of commitment--how often did officers use such phrases, and in what circumstances? What effect did the belief in expertise have on officers' allocations of time and resources, official and private? A third dimension is that of organization--what institutions (formal and informal) were available to develop military ability? What did these
institutions teach? We can then draw these three areas of inquiry together to ask how the officer corps evaluate its level of expertise. How was criticism expressed and received? In other words, what constituted expertise? Were there effective systems for its transmission? Did officers believe that there was a distinctively American art of war particularly suited to American society and its institutions, or did they apply a static model of the military function derived from Europe to their conception and cultivation of military expertise? What did all this mean as an indicator of the officer corps' attitudes toward its prospective missions—was the corps socially responsible in its cultivation of professional expertise? How well did it prepare for the tasks it was charged with performing? Indeed, how well did officers foresee the tasks they would actually be called upon to perform?

Answering these questions is complicated by the difficulty of evaluating the actual character of military knowledge, both as a general phenomenon and in the specific context of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Military expertise and the institutions which give it practical expression are socially constructed: the complexity of warfare at any given historical point is a relative and comparative question, dependant on the commander’s ability to make use of the resources and constraints created by a particular social, political, and technological context and the specific policy choices available therein. The commander’s ability to use these resources depends almost entirely on the institutional structure at his service, which in turn depends heavily on the social and cultural values that shape a nation’s political context and the interactions of officers within its military institutions. In other words, abstract theories of “the art of war” and strategy must often take a back seat to the social factors which shape them, and these factors shape the use of technology as much as the technological possibilities
shape social values and policy options. In 1846 the Industrial Revolution had not yet transformed these resources and institutions, nor had the limited political commitment of American society to peacetime military capability been sufficient to do so. Extensive experiments were made with rifled weapons during this period, but technological change did not transform the nature of the battlefield between the end of the War of 1812 and the beginning of the war against Mexico—we must always remember that the army of 1830 or 1840 was not preparing to fight the Civil War. The railroad and telegraph appeared but were not yet applied to military operations on a substantial scale, leaving the scale, scope, and tempo of operations and strategy essentially unchanged until the Civil War. The era was a fruitful one for theoretical military writing in Europe, but of the two most significant military thinkers the Prussian Carl von Clausewitz was unpublished and virtually unknown in America, while the influence of French strategist Antoine-Henry Jomini, once thought pervasive by scholars of the Civil War, has been widely and wisely questioned in recent years.

Despite the officer corps’ assertions, the army’s ultimate function as a national defense force against European aggression did not dictate its everyday tasks and the expertise required to perform them. All of the army’s combat during this era was against Indians: as in the period before 1812, the interwar army was largely a frontier constabulary charged with policing relations between whites and Indians, and this role accelerated during the nation’s postwar expansion into Florida and the Upper Midwest and under the Indian removal policy of the 1830s, which led to the Second Seminole War. Officers also acted as explorers, surveyors, and civil engineers, but these tasks involved no more than a quarter of the officer corps, most of whose members were primarily concerned with administering and sustaining a
functioning organization rather than planning or practicing its employment. For most officers specifically military expertise really meant little more than experience and drill, which was usually limited to the company or at best the regimental level by the army's small size and geographic dispersion. American officers were primarily leaders and administrators, not scholars or theoreticians. Because the class biases of their European tactical inheritance dictated that enlisted men fight in rigid lines where they could be closely supervised by superiors, troop training and instruction meant close order drill, which was really a form of discipline, cognitive as well as physical. Command and leadership were intuitive arts, matters of psychology and style that could be improved through experience and practice but were ultimately rooted in social mores and class relations rather than theorizing or inductive study.

We must therefore ask yet another question, which sums up many of the earlier ones: who were the real "experts" in the United States army, and what were they expert at? The answer appears to be that most of the army's specialists were technicians (artillerymen and engineers) or staff officers (quartermasters and the like), scientists and bureaucrats whose experience and skill lay in administrative and support duties rather than planning or directing military operations and maneuvers. It will therefore behoove us to consider the content of military expertise in this period not primarily as a question of tactical and strategic thought, for there was relatively little of either in the United States army, but as one of combat leadership and managerial ability, in effect, as one of command and bureaucracy, two distinct forms of cognitive discipline that sustained claims to a specialized (and thus exclusive) jurisdiction while ultimately bolstering accountability to civilian authority.
The army's leaders did not expect the officer's professional education to conclude with his graduation from the Military Academy, and they hoped to supplement the limited practical military instruction at West Point by rotating junior officers through specialized "schools of application" to learn the tactical details of their branches of the service. This practice touched many, and during the late 1820s perhaps most, company-grade officers, but the results were as limited as the schools' objectives and funding, and they did very little to stimulate more theoretical strategic or professional thought. The army's leadership also tried to nurture planners of campaigns and authors of tactical doctrine by encouraging individual study through professional patronage (hereafter defined as patronage that enabled an officer to enhance his specifically military expertise and to contribute to the army's capabilities, either officially and intentionally as was usually the case or unofficially and incidentally, as an individual officer bettering his own capacity) in the form of select assignments. This practice successfully contributed to the army's technological and doctrinal development and demonstrated the perspicacity of the army's senior leaders, but it involved very few officers, while the professional development of senior officers depended to an even greater degree on personal initiative, whether as unit commanders considering the problems encountered in daily professional practice or as members of ad hoc boards of officers addressing specific policy issues. Chapter four analyzes the ways in which officers created, transmitted, and understood professional knowledge by examining the expertise and responsibility embodied by their individual and collective but uninstitutionalized activities and their exchange (and very occasionally debate) of professional ideas. Chapter five then assesses efforts to standardize this knowledge through the halting development of tactical doctrine (usually
via temporary boards of selected officers) and the state of higher military thought (primarily in the works of the only contemporary American military authors of note, Henry Halleck and Dennis Hart Mahan). These chapters also devote extensive attention to the influence of European ideas and practices on the form and substance of expertise in the American officer corps, an influence that must be considered when judging the officer corps' responsibility in adapting its interests and abilities to American realities.
Chapter III

Initial Training at the United States Military Academy: Shaping Military Technicians and Administrators

The army officer corps was forced to wage a constant but ultimately successful struggle to convince the public that military leadership was a specialized realm of human knowledge and endeavour. In 1838 one of its officers wrote that "people are beginning to acknowledge the two undeniable propositions:--First, that our country must have an army. Second, that the officers of this army must receive a regular military education." Indeed, this soldier felt certain that "a very little reflection will convince any one that a fitness for performing the duties of an officer must be acquired somewhere, and at the public expense. There are no means within the reach of the citizen which can afford it." This officer signed himself "No Graduate" of the Military Academy, but his words demonstrate the pervasiveness of the ideal of specialized military expertise, for he was defending the institution that served as the first introduction to military life for most officer candidates after 1815. This section examines the evolution of the academy in order to trace its impact on the expertise of the officer corps. The academy's role as a mechanism for occupational socialization and the formation of professional identity and cohesion was largely informal, yet probably more important and certainly more successful. This role is explored in greater depth in chapter nine. (Struggles over control of the academy within the army and between officers and civilians over the academy's use as a tool for the initial selection of officers have been described in a number of monographs and will simply provide the backdrop for my analysis.)\(^5\)
Most army officers (including many senior commanders too old to have attended West Point) took the academy's existence and value for granted unless these things were challenged by civilians. This was often the case, however, and officers repeatedly felt compelled to assert the value of a preparatory education. "No Graduate" proclaimed that "the only question . . . seems to be, shall this fitness be acquired after the officer has assumed the responsibilities . . . or before?" "What other source," soldiers asked, was available "from whence to supply our Army with educated officers;--men, endued . . . with those professional attainments necessary to an honorable fulfillment of their functions?" "There is no law or regulation . . . which excludes other citizens than graduates," one officer noted (somewhat disingenuously); "it has merely become a question of expediency . . . whether individuals, specially educated by the government for a particular profession, have not a better claim to it than others" without that preparation. These assumptions formed the basis for the operations of the army's central facility for initial selection and introductory training. We must therefore begin our analysis of the content and degree of officer expertise with an examination of the history and curricula of West Point.6

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I. Origins and Early Trials, 1776-1817: Disorganization, Disorder, and Command Irresponsibility

The origins of systematic American military education go back to 1776, when John Adams and Henry Knox proposed the creation of an academy to teach "the whole theory of the art of war." Instead, Congress authorized a Corps of Invalids to teach "young gentlemen" at inactive posts. The corps was organized in 1777, moved to West Point (then a fortress guarding the
Hudson River) in 1781, and disbanded in 1783 without ever performing its intended function, while during the winter of 1778-79 Knox ran his own academy with lectures on gunnery and tactics. At the end of the war Washington, Knox, and Steuben all pressed for the establishment of an extensive military school system, but a Congress that was powerless to tax a debt-ridden nation fearful of standing armies was in no position to approve the necessary funding. The next spur to American military education was the need for loyal native officers to superintend the construction of coastal fortifications during the Federalist build-up of the 1790s, and a 1794 law established the Corps of Artillersists and Engineers and directed the provision of all "necessary books, instruments, and apparatus." Two "cadets" (officer candidates) were to be attached to each company of artillery, but in practice they were usually concentrated at West Point, where infantry drill and instruction in the school of the piece (moving, aiming, and firing individual cannon, including mortars and coastal defense guns), began in 1795 for officers, noncommissioned officers, and selected privates (two per company stationed there). The "instructions for field pieces and seacoast carriages"--the closest thing to artillery doctrine that the army had at the time--were kept at the post adjutant's office for officers to copy, and lectures on the theory of fortification began the following February using a 1794 edition of a standard British text. Unfortunately, the post library burned in 1796 and few of its volumes were replaced until 1802.

The entire experiment quickly collapsed under the weight of personal friction between the officers involved, especially commandant Stephen Rochefontaine and his principal subordinates, Major Louis Tousard and Captain Decius Wadsworth. According to ex-secretary of war Timothy Pickering "application and discipline were not enforced, and careless, idle
habits" flourished—indeed, another source suggests that the fire which destroyed the library was set by some of the officers. Attendance languished and Rochefontaine sought a transfer within a year, although sporadic instruction apparently continued. In 1798 Pickering wrote to Henry Knox that "the officers have made very little improvement" in either artillery or engineering. A new move for reform began that year when Major Louis Tousard sent a plan to the secretary of war, and four instructors were authorized by Congress, but none of them were appointed until 1801. In 1799 Alexander Hamilton proposed a two-tiered system with a "fundamental school" at West Point (presumably to provide a common liberal arts preparation and basic instruction in military customs and discipline) and three schools of practice for its graduates in the infantry and cavalry, the artillery and engineers, and the navy. (Officer candidates would spend two years in each of the two tiers.) Congress refused to provide for such a sizeable scheme, but momentum had begun to build, and in July 1800 President Adams asked the secretary of war to "form a regular school" which would train officers. A civilian mathematics instructor with previous experience at the British Royal Military Academy was appointed; the secretary of war ordered all cadets (except General Wilkinson's son Joseph) and engineer officers to West Point; and classes resumed once again near the end of 1801 under Tousard's direction. By this time the army's de facto chief of artillery, (Colonel Henry Burbeck, who had urged Henry Knox to establish a school of practice in 1782) was using the facility as a center for training new artillery officers, though the connections between his actions and the president's orders are unclear.

As before, discipline quickly became a problem at the institution—some of the officers ordered to West Point refused to attend classes there, and in
February 1802 the sole instructor was dismissed on charges that grew out of a shouting match with one of the cadets, future Chief Engineer Joseph G. Swift. Until that year the establishment served as little more than a very elementary school of practice, for many officers a mere casual station between assignments, where novitiates read Steuben's Blue Book, heard occasional lectures, and practiced some infantry and artillery drills (principally company drill and the school of the piece). Secretary of War Dearborn, fully occupied by plans for reorganizing the army, gave little attention to the institution, and its results were negligible--four of Burbeck's fourteen known cadets were commissioned in 1801, while seven more graduated over the next few years. Given the rapid turnover in personnel during the following decade, it is doubtful that the officers trained at West Point before 1802 had much of an effect on the army.11

The United States Military Academy was legally established by the Military Peace Establishment Act of March 1802. The academy has never had a single statutorily mandated purpose or mission beyond the preparation of candidates for commissions, and its character during the period of this study was very much dependent on the objectives of its superintendents. The act of 1802 separated the Corps of Engineers from the artillery and vested operational control over the academy in the engineers. Indeed, the Corps of Engineers and the Military Academy were initially almost synonymous, in large part because both were directly commanded by the same man. The new superintendent (and the first American citizen to hold this office), was Major Jonathan Williams, soldier, scientist, jurist and businessman, whose career has been said (without pejorative intent) to "[epitomize] the amateurism of military leadership in the early national period." Williams was also an
exemplar of the American military type Samuel Huntington calls "technicist"—his military interests were principally outgrowths of scientific ones, a tendency that would largely determine the curriculum at West Point for the rest of the century. For Williams the academy was not principally an institution for the initial selection and military training of line officers, or for the cultivation of gentlemen through the liberal arts, or even for producing practical engineers, but one for the creation of an elite cadre of scientists who also served as officers, centered in a Corps of Engineers patterned on the French Corps du Genie, with a similar social prestige and prominence in affairs of state. Williams' tenure set the tone for a century of engineer dominance over both the structure and content of academy life, a state of affairs that caused endemic conflict between officers of the engineers and the combat arms.¹²

Unfortunately for Williams, his material was ill-suited to his goals and the institution had no uniform or standardized procedures or regulations to structure their training, problems that plagued the academy for the next decade and a half. There were no admission and graduation requirements and no standard mechanisms for choosing the cadets, who ranged in age from ten to thirty-seven. Like other American college students of the time, many of the new cadets were teenagers with little academic preparation, so much of the actual teaching had to be remedial. There was no set curriculum, and the academy's content tended towards "an odd mixture of scientific dabbling and very elementary education, in a military setting." Unlike civilian colleges, there was no instruction in moral philosophy or the classics—these and similar subjects were left to the chaplain, when one was available, while more advanced students read Williams' translations of Vauban on fortifications and another French treatise on artillery.¹³
Indiscipline and distraction continued to handicap if not cripple the institution, and an unclear command structure exacerbated confusion throughout the academy's daily life and administration. Williams was frequently absent inspecting coastal fortifications or supervising their construction in New York harbor, leaving about half a dozen different officers in charge at various points before 1812, while Secretary Dearborn appointed cadets throughout the entire year, which caused constant interruptions to the course of study and made it impossible to teach the cadets in a uniform setting or manner. The cadets were quartered in the same barracks as the enlisted soldiers, and tensions generated by divisions of age and social class simmered between them. This confusion and lack of procedure extended to the mechanisms for regulating the discipline and departure of academically deficient cadets, who were customarily permitted to leave West Point without a commission rather than being dismissed (the opprobrium of which might have provided an incentive to exertion in their studies). The membership and attendance of the staff and student body were highly unstable, and cadets took anywhere from one to five or more years to finish their course, often with substantial intermissions along the way. Indeed, there were not even prescribed uniforms until 1805, and for several years instruction ceased altogether during the winter months when Williams went to Philadelphia to supervise his civilian business, and Williams' subordinates welcomed this irresponsible practice because it was so difficult to heat the academy's buildings with the limited funds Congress made available.14

Indeed, Williams himself resigned in 1803 when the War Department rejected the engineers' claims to hold troop commands. A breakdown in discipline at the academy led him to return (at the secretary of war's initiative rather than his own) two years later, and Williams then restructured the
academy and temporarily restored morale, but the officers of the Corps of Engineers did not become paragons of responsible self-discipline. Williams again grew tired of the mundane routine of providing elementary education for adolescents and placed his roles as de facto Inspector of Fortifications and chief of the Military Philosophical Society ahead of his duty as superintendent, leaving the academy without forceful leadership in order to oversee the construction of new coastal defenses between 1809 and his final resignation in 1812 (when the government refused him command of the New York harbor forts). Williams sent Captain Joseph Swift to the academy to improve discipline in his absence, with orders to require "a strict observance" at classes and "a gentlemanlike deportment" by officers and cadets toward professors—this despite Swift's own clash with a professor while a cadet himself.15

Williams was primarily a propagandist for his branch and a practitioner of its craft rather than an active superintendent of military education, and his lobbying for an expanded academy were unsuccessful. Indeed, Williams was more actively involved in proposing a move to Washington than in actual reforms at the existing institution. With all these problems, only fifty-one cadets graduated between 1802 and Jefferson's departure from the presidency in 1809—on a yearly basis roughly one-fourth to one-sixth of the average number who would graduate during the 1820s, 30s, and 40s. Motivated by an extreme sense of republican parsimony as well as a more responsible eagerness to place officers in the field, Secretary of War William Eustis virtually gutted the fledgling academy during the first Madison administration, and as in so many other aspects of American military preparedness, it was only congressional pressure in the last year leading up to the war that brought about the academy's statutory
rejuvenation. Indeed, Eustis reduced the budget for civilian faculty salaries by a third in 1809, and two of the three men affected resigned. (The other was already on a leave of absence.) Most of the cadets soon resigned and went to civilian colleges, and by 1810 there were only fifteen cadets and two instructors remaining. No cadets graduated that year.16

This malaise was not the fault of Congress, for in 1808 it increased the authorized size of the corps to 156 cadets, and it authorized places for two hundred and six cadets between 1810 and 1812, but only two were actually appointed by the secretary and neither arrived at the academy. Indeed, throughout his entire four-year tenure Eustis is said to have appointed only six cadets, and he ordered many of the cadets already present to duty with the War Department or in the field without having graduated. (Of course, "graduation" was not clearly defined, since there was no standard curriculum and no graduation exam.) Indeed, Eustis almost ordered the cadets to the field as enlisted probationers in 1810, but Williams dissuaded him from doing so. Eighteen cadets were commissioned without examination the following March, leaving either two or six students (depending on the account) without any instructors. (Indeed, none of the eighteen "graduates" were actually at West Point at the time they were commissioned.) A year later there was but a single instructor on the faculty, and at the start of the war the academy had no personnel engaged in either teaching or learning. Eighteen cadets "graduated" in 1812, but only one was not already in the field when he was commissioned, and there was only one graduate the following year before the effects of the 1812 reorganization bill began to be felt.17

Efforts at reform began almost coterminously with the academy's foundation. In 1802 Williams unsuccessfully sought to mandate a four-year
course of study, and he repeated this suggestion in his report for 1808, which proposed the creation of a "National University" with two hundred cadets civil, military, and naval, limited to ages 14-18 at entry and tested before entrance and commissioning, under the curricular oversight of a specifically designated "Academic Board." Williams also hoped that the enlarged institution would be moved to Washington or New York City in order to enhance attention and patronage from the government, and he pressed for an increase in the number of engineer officers and the creation of a unit of combat engineers ("sappers and miners") for them to command. Once again Williams overreached himself in pushing the claims (and expenses) of the Corps of Engineers, and a bill embodying his plan died in Congress.18

A similar but less sweeping plan for reform came later in 1808 from acting superintendent Swift. Swift envisioned the academy as a semi-autonomous branch of the Corps of Engineers which would provide general education under military discipline. To achieve this end he urged the adoption of a new curriculum (including instruction in genteel manners and decorum) organized in a semester system with a minimum course of three years and upper and lower age limits for entrants, and he proposed hiring a professor of history and geography. Swift repeated these proposals in 1813 and 1814 and they recurred in varying forms throughout the period of this study. Indeed, all the officers who acted as superintendent during this era seem to have come to similar conclusions about the academy's basic problems and needs—in 1809 Lieutenant Alden Partridge recommended age limits, uniform starting dates, a four-year limit to a cadet's stay, and the division of the cadets into four yearly classes. The War Department responded later that year by issuing regulations setting the basic qualifications for entry and providing for a single cadet uniform and certificates of graduation, but the
civilian authorities failed to implement their officers' recommendations for reform. The following year (1810) Williams, Captain Charles Gratiot, and Lieutenant Sylvanus Thayer prepared a new set of regulations, including graduation requirements, which mandated standard class hours but permitted cadets to graduate whenever they finished the classes, a plan that would have done little to assure uniformity or regularity. Like all the other proposals these remained little more than good ideas in the absence of active War Department support and cadets to practice them.19

Nevertheless, many of these ideas were incorporated into the law of April 1812, which gave the academy a new level of official standing and organization and provided the statutory basis for its successful reorganization after the war. Four civilian professors were authorized for the academy (which remained a part of the Corps of Engineers), in engineering, mathematics, natural and experimental philosophy (general science), and French and drawing. (These men constituted the "Academic Board" and were prohibited military command.) The number of cadets was limited to 250, appointed directly to the academy rather than as cadets in the Corps of Engineers or individual regiments, and new cadets were restricted to ages 14 to 21 and required to be "well versed in reading, writing, and arithmetic." They engaged to serve five years (though this commitment was dated from their entrance into the academy and consequently tended towards a single year of active service), and they were to receive practical military training during an encampment of three months each summer.20

This legislation provided the underpinnings for West Point's success later in the century, but that evolution would not begin to take place until after the War of 1812, when the Monroe administration subjected the academy and its superintending personnel to renewed scrutiny. Before 1812
the institution was little more than a feeble basis for bureaucratic aggrandizement by the Corps of Engineers, which itself served as no more than "a tiny pocket of nascent professionalism" at best. Indeed, Williams realized this himself, lamenting that "I totally despair of any alteration in the system that will raise the Academy to that state which the honour of the nation and the advantage of the Army indispensably require." Consequently, the most significant role that the academy played in its first decade was simply as the institution around which the Corps of Engineers coalesced. All of the officers of the Corps of Engineers during the War of 1812 were graduates, and two-thirds (eight out of twelve) of those commissioned during Jefferson's administration and still in service served as chief engineers to American armies in that conflict. Of the men appointed to the corps in 1802, one (Alexander Macomb, who attended West Point in 1801 and served as a staff officer and general on the Vermont frontier during the war) would later become commanding general and six would serve as Chief Engineer (head of the Corps of Engineers) at some point. In combination with Charles Gratiot (WP '06) these officers led the Corps of Engineers from 1802 until 1864, while George Bomford ('05) served as the chief of ordnance from 1821 to 1848 and John J. Abert, who resigned the day he graduated in 1811, rejoined the army in 1814 and became the second chief of the topographical engineers in 1838. In addition, all of the American army officers associated with the Board of Fortifications formed in 1816 were graduates from this period: Joseph Swift, James Totten (the board's principal American member, and the corps' leader in fortification strategy and design), and William McRee ('05), who toured Europe with Sylvanus Thayer ('08) in 1815. Graduates Swift, Thayer, Alden Partridge ('06), and Rene DeRussey ('12) superintended the academy until 1838.21
These men provided much of the leadership for the small cadre of officers who gave thought and articulation to the development of military expertise in the army during the first half of the nineteenth century, but because of its disorganization, the antebellum Military Academy was a success only insofar as it promoted their interest and aptitude for their work. The effectiveness of the curriculum itself was certainly questionable: one postwar report from the Board of Fortifications asserted that "if any have been so fortunate as to render themselves serviceable, either in the artillery or engineers, the cause must be sought for in their own industry, and not in the education received by them at West Point." Nevertheless, while the degree to which the academy served as a means of specific factual learning may be questioned, its very existence prompted men with an affinity for military science to attempt to advance their knowledge and their claims to its efficacy, and for men as capable and motivated as Totten and Thayer reading Vauban and listening to sporadic lectures was probably sufficient to spur their interest in professional self-improvement. For their successors after the War of 1812, when the academy was entrusted with the education of the vast majority of new officers rather than a few individuals, this informality, confusion, and lack of standardization would not suffice. New systems had to be established by the cadre educated before the war, and their successes and failures shaped the army officer corps throughout the nineteenth century.

Ironically, the most "military" of the early West Point cadre is usually perceived as the man principally responsible for the academy's disordered state during the years just after the war. The institution grew exponentially under the impetus of the 1812 legislation, and by the end of 1814 there were 160 cadets present (out of 243 appointed). The course of study remained short
and irregular because of the demand for officers in the field, but only a single graduate was commissioned during the second half of 1812, followed by one more in 1813. Thirty cadets (the largest annual increment to that point) "graduated" in 1814, but they were not examined as required by regulations and none had spent more than a year at the academy. At least nineteen of these men later resigned or were disbanded, fourteen of them by 1822. Captain Alden Partridge was the de facto superintendent throughout the period from 1813 to 1817. "An excellent drillmaster" "well-versed in the science and practice of artillery [and] passionately fond of the field exercise of the infantry," Partridge took seriously the 1810 regulations that the cadets should understand the "evolutions of infantry and artillery perfectly," and he often discussed Napoleonic campaigns with the cadets. Indeed, the academy often resembled a small camp of instruction as Partridge conducted battalion drills in order to simulate battles—a combination of tactical training with what we would today call a "staff ride" that does not seem to have been emulated in any other American setting during the interwar period. Partridge also committed the first specific graduation requirements to paper, but they were spottily enforced throughout his tenure. His efforts seem to have laid the foundations for a first-class school of practice to introduce novice officers to their tactical duties, but when professor Claudius Crozet (an erstwhile French officer) arrived at the academy in 1815 he felt that none of the cadets were mathematically capable of understanding fortification engineering.

The years just after the war were ones of halting though ultimately successful reform at the academy. Early in 1815 Madison separated the posts of chief engineer and superintendent in order to enhance the efficiency of both; Partridge became superintendent while Swift became inspector of the academy, a vague liaison and advisory position between the superintendent
and the secretary of war that was created largely to check Partridge's power and mollify Swift. Swift and the faculty both hoped to add courses in the classics and humanities, but this would have led to a curriculum even more diffuse and less military than the old one, and Partridge rejected it. In keeping with his informal, highly personalized approach to management and instruction, Partridge tacitly accepted the principle of separating cadets into distinct grades but continued to insist that they should be allowed to study at their own pace. An examination to rank the cadets in classes was held in December 1815 before the first Board of Visitors (including Jacob Brown and Oliver Wolcott), but of the 150 present none graduated. In March 1816 new regulations restricted the admission of cadets to September and required a four year course of study with general exams for all cadets every July and December. History, geography, and ethics were to be taught in the fourth year, and graduates would be assigned to the different branches according to their performances as ranked by the Academic Board. A "Board of Visitors" composed of "five gentlemen versed in military and other science" appointed by the president would henceforth observe the examinations and report on the academy to the secretary of war. On the other hand, the superintendent's powers were purposefully left unclear in order to constrain Partridge, whom Secretary of War William Crawford distrusted.

Several proposals for more general change failed during this period. The civilian academic staff continued to envision West Point as a national scientific university, with its military functions shrugged onto the shoulders of supplementary academies. Though unsuccessful, the faculty continued to oppose the introduction of military studies into the curriculum throughout the century, and Partridge lacked the persuasiveness, vision, and social status that Jonathan Williams had brought to articulating the academy's mission.
The captain was essentially a drill sergeant, with all the virtues and
deficiencies thereof, and understanding basic tactical evolutions was the limit
of the military knowledge he demanded of graduates. He did impose a much
stricter discipline on the cadets, prohibiting dances at the academy, requiring
written explanations for absences, and attempting to foster individual
responsibility by employing the cadets as officers of the day and requiring
adherence to an honor code. (Indeed, all academy records had to be signed
with a certification of their veracity "on [the] honor" of the writer.) On the
other hand, the encampments mandated in the law of 1812 were not held for
the required duration, and the cadets resisted Parridge's discipline by
questioning his actions in letters to their influential fathers and sponsors.
These violations of the chain of command may have been justified in some
cases, but the principal effect was to convince future officers that
insubordination could be an effective tool of personal aggrandizement.29

Reforms notwithstanding, Parridge's regime embodied neither
uniform standards nor bureaucratic rationality. The superintendent was
temperamentally unable to delegate authority, and he attempted to supervise
even the most minute details.30 As a result Parridge's decisions often
appeared arbitrary or capricious: winter breaks remained damagingly long;
there was still no record of the cadets' ages nor a complete written set of
academy regulations; and most of the reform measures adopted in 1815 and
1816 were haphazardly enforced. Partridge employed several of his relatives
and fellow Vermonters in key positions, and Captain Samuel Perkins, the
West Point quartermaster, circulated a petition among the cadets accusing
Partridge of nepotism and financial irregularities. The superintendent's most
ardent opponents were the civilian faculty, who attacked him for permitting
cadets to enter the academy without passing the entrance examination
required by law, interfering with their instruction, using cadets as assistant professors and promoting them to higher classes without input from the professors, and allowing them to be commissioned without taking the graduation exam, and more generally stressing military training over scientific and literary acquirements.31

Partridge's problems were exacerbated and his inadequacies were given free rein by indecisive, indeed negligent, leadership from Washington. Swift visited twice a month during the war, demonstrated great interest in various curricular reforms, and even kept the academy afloat by personally obtaining a commercial loan, but he continued to support Partridge long after the superintendent had become ungovernable, and the secretaries of war allowed Partridge to remain because no one else wanted the job. The result was a precarious balancing act which left the lines of authority unclear and satisfied no one. In 1815 Partridge drafted regulations that would have affirmed and enhanced his tenuous authority and received the secretary's approval for them without consulting Swift, who immediately suspended Partridge. President Madison suggested that he be relieved of command altogether, but Swift had no desire to go to West Point himself and no other engineer officers were willing to take command, so Partridge remained in place. The Military Academy was caught in a crisis of leadership with no one willing or able to step forward and clarify the location and responsibilities of its command.32 Resolution began in June 1817, when Monroe visited West Point in person, ordered Partridge to be court-martialed for disobedience of orders and regulations, and appointed Thayer superintendent. The faculty submitted a written report to Monroe discussing the academy's problems, but even then Swift criticized the allegations against Partridge, suggested that another court of inquiry be held in lieu of a court-martial, and delayed issuing the order
implementing his departure. Upon Thayer's arrival Partridge left the academy, but he returned a month later and with cadet support forced the superintendent to turn over the command. This open mutiny was quickly quashed; Partridge was court-martialed and sentenced to dismissal by a board including Winfield Scott and Quartermaster General Jesup.33

Partridge's troubles stemmed from an unclear command structure and a conflict of professional visions as well as his own inconsistency. Neither the president nor the secretary of war had time to micromanage West Point, and Swift was enmeshed in his own struggle to retain control over the engineers' strategic role against the French general hired to serve on the Board of Fortifications. The academic staff stressed science, while Partridge possessed a more purely military conception of the academy's role than his predecessor and successors. "I presume cadets are sent to the Academy for the purpose of acquiring a military education," he wrote, "and I would be neglecting my duty if I did not by every reasonable means endeavor to impress upon their minds in the strongest manner possible that their first duties as soldiers are obedience, regularity of conduct, and strict attention to duty."34 Despite this apparent dedication to military values Partridge repeatedly encouraged cadet indiscipline by seeking or accepting the support of his charges against other officers, thus implying that the views of subordinates (and indeed, men without commissions) bore some weight against their superiors. Indeed, one petition written by corps adjutant Thomas Ragland and signed by 109 cadets actually labelled Partridge's opponents "enemies to virtue . . . whose minds are too contracted to possess a principle of honor." The circular explicitly proclaimed the cadets' contempt for these men and lauded Partridge for encouraging "that independence of spirit which every American soldier should possess," and Partridge actually
deployed this insubordinate document as evidence in his favor during the court of inquiry held in 1816. This independence of spirit, already strongly present in American youth in general, was manifested in numerous petitions from the cadets, some questioning Partridge's choice of cadet officers. The army's small group of military intellectuals felt that Partridge had failed at his self-proclaimed purpose, for the chaos at West Point led one to lament "the Ignorance of the Cadets . . . of everything relating to the profession of Arms," while General Simon Bernard and Major William McRee of the Board of Fortifications considered the academy under Partridge "altogether inadequate to the objects for which it was established." Partridge's combination of rigidity and partiality had disrupted the academy to the point that he had to be replaced.35

Partridge was not solely to blame for the academy's difficulties, for the government had allowed West Point to drift until its problems became impossible to ignore--for all intents and purposes, the government let Partridge alone to hang himself. Under Partridge's successors the academy provided the nation with valuable skills and won civilian respect for the quality of the engineers it produced, but these benefits were not specifically military ones. Insofar as its curriculum went, West Point after 1817 was fundamentally a center for state-subsidized engineer training and only secondarily one for military education. Partridge provided the nation with a model that stressed the military aspects of an officer's education, but the nation's immediate military needs were too limited to sustain an institution primarily devoted to developing tacticians and drill-masters, and Partridge had too many personal flaws and made too many enemies to foster the sort of discipline and "regularity" that would be necessary to create a cohesive officer corps accountable to civilian political authority. In contrast, his successor was
a thorough systemizer, though the system Thayer emplaced was arguably insufficiently military in content. The new system also foreclosed alternatives that would have integrated West Point more closely into the fabric of American life through association with the militia (and thus the states), which could have precluded much of the vehemence with which the academy and its professional products were later attacked.36

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II. System, Order, and "Regularity" in the Thayer Era: Reform, Discipline, and Accountability

Regardless of the institution's "true" character, the new superintendent's reforms were consciously intended to give the academy the order and discipline it needed to function effectively and produce military officers, an organizing process that led to extensive conflict within the academy and caused criticism from civilians outside. Several months after arriving, Thayer wrote to a civilian friend that he had "commenced a system of reformation," vowing that he would "persevere until I produce that state of Military Discipline which is as indispensable in an institution of this sort as in a regular Army." The new superintendent immediately asked the professors to develop a standardized curriculum based on the assumption that uniform procedures would be observed across the board: "I rely with pleasure on the experience & judgment of the learned professors." This request signalled a move away from Partridge's intrusion into day-to-day instruction and a new respect for the specialized expertise of the faculty that reflected Thayer's underlying sense of the importance of specialization and bureaucracy within an increasingly complex social division of labor, in contrast to the generalism Partridge shared with the majority of civilian
Americans. Allied with values of system and order, specialization and organization would become hallmarks of the officer corps and its arguments for an exclusive occupational jurisdiction over the direction of military force, values and objectives that led to constant civil-military conflict but encouraged officers to respond to the concept and demands of civilian political supremacy with laudable professional accountability. In other words, while officers were not necessarily responsive to the democratic individualism which suffused American society, they usually reacted accountably to the elected civilian officials who represented that society in the public sphere.37

Thayer's institution-building encouraged self-making and discipline in the interests of occupational and class formation, and we must examine the conflicts this produced in order to understand the difficulties involved in fashioning a bureaucratic mindset in the midst of a highly individualistic society. (Chapter nine will elaborate on the values and the cohesion this system instilled, in order to understand the bases of officers relations with enlisted men, civilians, and foreign nationals discussed in chapters ten to fifteen.) Thayer's first task was to stabilize the membership of the corps of cadets and to insure the cadets' presence at the academy. He introduced standardized application forms and rigidly enforced the requirement that all candidates be examined before admission and sought, with eventual success, to limit entrants to a minimum age of sixteen. Indeed, Thayer's language exemplifies the penchant for system and order--in a word, "regularity"--that would become a hallmark of both the academy and the officer corps by the end of the 1820s: "The arrangement of the cadets into regular classes as prescribed by the regulations must be rigidly observed for otherwise there can be no good system of instruction--& no cadet must be received [matriculate]
hereafter except during the regular period of admission." Incoming cadets were required to arrive before June 25 in order to participate in the annual summer encampment, which provided an introduction to military life and discipline. Cadets on furlough at the time of Thayer's arrival were ordered to report to the academy or face discharge. Six weeks after this order Thayer met with the faculty and divided the cadets into four classes. He recommended that those cadets making no progress towards graduation be dismissed, and nearly forty cadets were discharged for academic deficiency during the remainder of 1817. Daily hours of study--"not less than nine, nor more than ten"--and the times of the year when cadets would be examined were firmly set.\footnote{38}

Pedagogically, the superintendent devised a mathematical ranking scheme and divided each class into small sections according to their academic performance. Daily recitations and the end of semester exams provided the basis for the rankings, which were posted weekly. Failure in the latter resulted in dismissal, while the "First Five" cadets in each class were rewarded by being listed in the annual army register, and a cadet's rank at graduation determined whether he would be commissioned into the socially prestigious Corps of Engineers or the artillery rather than the infantry, whose stations were usually along the frontier where there was little chance to make valuable social connections. In this way cadets were encouraged to compete without being forced to proceed at a pace beyond their potential, allowing good students to move ahead without creating the disruption that Partridge's highly individualized approach had wrought. The system provided a strong incentive for the top quarter of cadets who felt some hope of entering the more prestigious branches, though the remaining cadets had nothing more
than their pride at stake once they felt assured of graduation (usually sometime after the end of their second year).

Thayer was engaged in one of the most systematic efforts at individual transformation in early nineteenth-century America (a process broadly analogous to the disciplines pursued in the prisons and insane asylums of that era). He immediately tightened discipline and created an isolated and rigidly spartan atmosphere with the fewest distractions possible. Winter vacation was abolished in 1817, and in April 1818 the superintendent abolished leaves altogether--cadets were authorized to leave the isolated academy only once during their four year stay, for a summer furlough after the second year. They were prohibited from bringing money to West Point or receiving it from their parents, making them dependent (to the degree that they obeyed) on their salaries alone, which were held by the post treasurer, who made deductions according to the cadets' authorized expenses--all purchases required permission, and other debts were forbidden. External influences were limited by forbidding cadets to subscribe to more than a single newspaper, and that only upon the superintendent's permission, while internal communications and leisure were subjected to virtually totalitarian controls, as cadets were forbidden "to sign any certificate or statement relative to personal altercations between officers and cadets, or to any transactions of a private or personal nature, without permission from the superintendent."

Hazing, challenges, and duels were prohibited (a reinforcement of the often-disregarded regulation in the Articles of War), as were "combinations" and writing for public consumption. (The latter prohibition also extended to the faculty.) Cadets could only form organizations with a license from the superintendent and only for the purposes announced therein. Communications to the War Department had to go through the
superintendent, who was authorized to append "such remarks as he may think proper." Thayer's power to punish infractions was equally severe, for virtually all violations of the regulations carried the potential penalty of expulsion.  

The regulations demanded sober morality as well as rigid hierarchy in order to inculcate a mindset conducive to institutional order and professional cohesion among rambunctious American youths inspired by ideals and habits of personal independence. They prohibited drinking, cursing, gambling, using tobacco, playing cards or chess, throwing snowballs, and "all scuffling, at any time or place." Wearing civilian clothes was forbidden; uniforms were to be worn "in a soldier-like manner" and equipment was to be kept "in perfect order." These rules were also intended to teach gentility to men who would soon be invited to associate with social elites, men whose education and claim to public service would indeed place them among the elite of many communities. Thayer's desire for order extended to the practice of religion, where he appointed an Episcopal minister as chaplain and sought a stable middle ground between rationalism and piety by discouraging enthusiasm but requiring attendance at weekly services for cadets and officers alike. At West Point religion was a tool for teaching genteel deportment, less an example of Old Testament-style subordination or moralism in itself than a paradigm for calm moderation and a naturally existing social order that helped give future officers psychological assurance. Whether because of this gentility or because of the cadets' wearisome schedules (which led many to consider church a place for sleeping or studying), there was only a single significant revival at West Point during the 1820s, in sharp contrast to American civilian society. His distaste for religious "enthusiasm" notwithstanding, Thayer felt that proprieties--order and system--had to be
observed and an example set, so three officers who complained that their constitutional rights were violated by the attendance mandate were transferred to the frontier.\textsuperscript{40}

The capstone to Thayer's discipline was a rigid system of demerits established in 1825 for infractions of every sort, from the most significant to the most mundane. Demerits were counted in calculating cadet rankings (at one-fourth the total, in combination with performance on drill), and in 1831 two hundred demerits in a single year was set as the number after which a cadet would automatically be dismissed. Each cadet's demerits and punishments were reported to the War Department monthly. The hierarchy of cadet officers was expanded and given greater system in order to help enforce the regulations, and in so doing to train future officers in personal responsibility and accountability via the operation of a chain of command. The result of these reforms was to increase the average number of cadets who dropped out during Thayer's superintendancy by at least a quarter over the Partridge era (double in the first three years), while the number dismissed grew sixfold after 1820, when military law and discipline were first held to apply to the cadets.\textsuperscript{41}

The cadets chafed under this total discipline and student unrest was as common at West Point as at civilian colleges of the time, where incidents of violence against professors were nearly annual events, and riots sometimes verging on armed rebellions occurred about once a decade in prominent schools like Harvard, Yale, and the University of Virginia. At first the outbreaks at West Point were substantially attributable to the influence of cadets left over from Partridge's superintendancy, who were irritated by Thayer's distant manner and demanded a less formal atmosphere. (Despite the regulations, Partridge also continued to communicate with them,
doubtlessly inspiring unrest.) The first serious outbreak occurred in 1818, when Captain John Bliss (the senior tactical instructor) publically cursed and struck a cadet disobeying orders on parade. The cadets elected a committee--including Thomas Ragland, adjutant under Partridge and an organizer of cadet demonstrations in favor of that officer when he returned to seize command from Thayer--to bring their grievances before Thayer, and 180 signed the petition. Thayer twice refused to hear them and then ordered the committee to leave the post and its environs. They promptly published their account in a pamphlet in New York City, and Thayer requested a court of inquiry. The court, seconded by a congressional investigation, upheld Thayer, and in 1820 the attorney general issued an opinion that cadets were subject to military law and hierarchy. A court-martial board refused to try the ringleaders, however, and (like Partridge before them) they were reinstated by President Monroe but resigned anyway. By the time the controversy ended Bliss had been relieved of his post, but additional "tactical officers" were appointed and the superintendent's position was legally and practically strengthened.42

Ultimately, 103 of the 213 cadets enrolled when Thayer arrived in 1817 later resigned (usually under pressure) or were dismissed from the academy, and a total of 179 left without commissions. Eleven of the graduates of 1820 had spent six years at the academy, and eight others had taken five, but by then only three of the cadets admitted before Partridge's departure remained. Once the holdovers from the Partridge era graduated or were discharged (sixty-one of the latter in 1818 alone) the number of graduates increased from an average of twenty-seven in the years 1818 to 1821 (and only twenty between 1815 and 1817) to thirty-eight through the remainder of the 1820s--a near-reversal of the ratio to those cadets who withdrew voluntarily
averaging forty-six and thirty during the respective time frames), a neat illustration of the dual efficacy of the new discipline. West Point became a more efficient institution, and this increase in the number of graduates allowed the War Department to fill the army's need for new officers almost exclusively with West Pointers during the 1820s, producing an officer corps socialized in habits of order, discipline, system, and regularity, which contributed to the growth of army bureaucracy and institutional and civil-military accountability. Indeed, between 1821 and 1831 only seven officers out of several hundred were commissioned without graduating from the academy, and the percentage of graduates in the officer corps rose rapidly from 14.8 in 1817 to 39.7 in 1823 (two years after the reduction in force, which removed a disproportionate number of nongraduates), climbed steadily to 63.8 in 1830, and then continued to grow at a more leisurely pace to 75.8 in 1860. William Skelton has astutely observed that this common education meant that the officer corps "was surely one of the world's best-educated elites and, in terms of training at least, the most homogeneous professional group in American society."43

American youths brought a culture of individual rights and personal honor and independence to the academy which when tempered by mutual hardship fostered a perverse cohesion in opposition to Thayer's austere discipline. The new regime did not set in without violent opposition, and unrest continued well after the departure of the cadets who had matriculated under Partridge. The Christmas holiday season was an especially tense period, as cadets faced the prospect of exams without the relief of vacation for those who passed. An order published in December 1820 lamented that "it is with the bitterest regret and mortification that the Com[m]and[ing] Off[ice]r states, that the Corps of Cadets exhibits . . . a scene of riot and insubordination
bordering on mutiny," and two tactical officers (drill instructors also responsible for cadet discipline) were thereafter quartered in the cadet barracks to provide more immediate supervision and authority. The following December a mob of cadets tried to storm the guardhouse and the enlisted artillerymen's barracks after hearing a rumor that the soldiers had seized a cadet. Two days afterwards the latrine was set afire and a loaded cannon was found aimed at Thayer's residence, after which nine cadets were dismissed or forced to resign.44

Legally permitted to the cadets only on Independence Day and Christmas, alcohol was another prominent source of friction and unrest at West Point—as in the army and American society generally—during these years. The cadets took prohibition as a challenge and sought out liquor at nearby taverns, so Thayer purchased the closest one and closed it in 1824. The superintendent ended the holiday exceptions and made drinking an offense meriting expulsion after Fourth of July celebrations became overly raucous in 1825, but the growing tension caused by Thayer's strict regime led dissident cadets to drink as an expression of rebellion. Cadet violence culminated when surreptitious parties in the cadet barracks on Christmas Eve 1826 escalated into a full-fledged riot in which cadets threw furniture at tactical officers and prepared loaded muskets to oppose the rumored intervention of the post's resident artillery company. Lieutenant Ethan Allen Hitchcock, an assistant instructor of tactics later promoted to commandant, was threatened with a sword; at least one cadet attempted to shoot the lieutenant, but his pistol misfired. (Academy regulations prohibited the private possession of arms, a restriction virtually unique in the early republic, which points to the state-centered mindset of the professionalizing officer corps and its desire to curb the excesses of aggressive individualism in the interests of an
organizational order. Needless to say, cadets drawn from a gentry class that reified values of personal honor did not easily accede to this constraint, particularly those from the quasi-frontier regions of the south and west.) Calm was restored by morning, but nineteen cadets were dismissed as a result of this incident, the last major outbreak of violent unrest at the academy.  

The concept of personal honor, in the form of integrity, was one of the principal ones Thayer sought to inculcate, and the cadets' behaviour during this era demonstrates his growing success despite these incidents. In 1824 the Corps offered to sign an abstinence pledge in order to prevent the dismissal of one of its members, one of the very few manifestations of collective sentiment that Thayer agreed to accept. The tumult of 1825 and 1826 demonstrates that this pledge was soon violated, but during the court-martials that followed the Christmas riot every cadet answered every question put to him, a remarkable show of obedience to institutional norms. Nevertheless, discipline declined again after 1828 as cadets energized by the euphoria of Jacksonian democracy and partisanship took advantage of the new president's belief that Thayer's consistent rigidity (so unlike his own gentry capriciousness, though Thayer's "objective" system could be quite arbitrary in operation) was unnatural and unrepulican. Thayer's first confrontation with Jackson came in 1829 when Cadet H. Ariel Norris set up a hickory pole, the symbol of Jacksonian sympathies, on the parade ground and was assessed demerits. Thayer sent commandant Ethan Allen Hitchcock to explain his belief in the undesirability of military activism in politics to the president, but in this case partisanship (or more specifically a belief in the rights of individual citizens to engage in demonstrations of their political faith) outweighed nationalism (or the neutrality desirable in men
dedicated to national service in public institutions) in the eyes of the
president, who was irritated and only temporarily mollified by the appeal.

Thayer then tried to restore discipline by continuously court-martialed
cadets for liquor consumption during the fall of 1830, but cadets antagonized
by this crackdown set several fires in the fall of 1831, and beginning in the
latter year the president reinstated nearly half of the cadets sentenced to
dismissal for misconduct, particularly the sons of friends and political
adherents. Indeed, cadet Thomas W. Gibson, Edgar Allen Poe's roommate,
was court-martialed, dismissed, and reinstated up to six times in an eighteen-
month period, twice for arson--including disabling the water pumps to
preclude firefighting efforts--and once for desertion, an almost unheard of
offence among cadets and officers, for which he was finally removed.
Another cadet received a reprieve after being convicted of arson but was then
dismissed by a second court. Ariel Norris was ultimately dismissed for firing
a homemade gun at a tactical instructor. This indiscipline spread beyond a
couple of hardcore malcontents, however, for eight cadets refused to testify
against Gibson and his confederates, as did the accused. Thayer court-
martialed them and they were dismissed per regulations, but Jackson set this
verdict aside. Under the circumstances Thayer eventually gave up on
holding courts-martial and began sending cases directly to the secretary of war
for disposition, a practice then codified by the War Department's decision to
appropriate the superintendent's authority to order courts-martial at the
academy. Indeed, Thayer set the annual limit of two hundred demerits
(which if exceeded would cause automatic dismissal) largely in order to avoid
the need to resort to formal legal court-martial proceedings against habitual
troublemakers, but in 1832 the secretary took another step in superseding the
superintendent by granting extended leaves of absence to three cadets without
informing Thayer. This final blow to his authority prompted Thayer to seek a board of inquiry, and when refused, a transfer.47

Backed by President Jackson, Thayer’s successor, Major Rene DeRussey, softened the disciplinary regimen and attempted to create a less spartan atmosphere, indicating an implicit concern that too much rigidity and austerity would form automatons or martinetis unfit for future association with civilian elites. The well-intentioned new superintendent invited cadets to his quarters for tea and mingled with them at a formal ball he allowed at the end of summer encampments; regulations were less strictly enforced and wine was allowed on the Fourth of July. The cadets liked DeRussey but took this opening as a sign of weakness, and in 1834 the First (senior) Class demonstrated its cohesion in antagonism to academy authority by petitioning the secretary of war that Professor Dennis Hart Mahan be dismissed because of his supposed hostility toward them. Mahan was cleared by a court of inquiry, but the mere fact that one was undertaken indicates continuing tension in the relationship between cadets and the academy administration, along with a growing assertiveness on the part of the former. Individual cadets began writing home for money, some going so far as to mention Benny Haven’s nearby tavern in their letters.48

Routine administration languished under the supervision of the indecisive superintendent and a new commandant, who had no prior acquaintance with the academy and no special experience to recommend him for his position. Under pressure from the cadet indiscipline this laxity encouraged, the faculty began to turn in their weekly and monthly reports late, so DeRussey’s monthly reports to the Chief Engineer and the War Department also fell behind or were incomplete. The junior tactical officers, recent graduates themselves and therefore in the best position to realize how
far (judging by the standards they learned under Thayer) laxity and
indiscipline had spread, gradually reasserted the earlier standards, and in 1835
Jackson responded to the failure of his hopes for a more lenient system of
administration by ordering a return to Thayer's discipline and confirming all
standing courts-martial verdicts. Once again the cadets protested, celebrating
New Year's Day 1837 by firing a cannon placed between two barracks, causing
their windows to shatter. The cannon was then disassembled, moved to the
fourth floor of North Barracks, remounted and aimed at South Barracks,
though one of the less inebriated cadets prevented its firing. The following
year Major Richard H. Delafield replaced DeRussey as superintendent and
restored the essentials of the Thayer regime, though the institution's
atmosphere and discipline never again matched the harrowing isolation and
rigidity that characterized it in the late 1820s. The corps of cadets seems finally
to have settled down once this compromise of military (or functional) and
civilian (or American cultural) values was arrived at, and the academy
encountered few significant disciplinary problems during Delafield's tenure,
which lasted until the verge of the war with Mexico.49

* * *

III. The Thayer Era: The Academy's Mission and Training Contested

Despite this ongoing war of wills, West Point rapidly acquired a sterling
reputation best illustrated by the growing competition for places in the corps
of cadets. By 1823 more than a thousand applications were being received for
the approximately one hundred places available each year. During the Thayer
era as a whole (1817-1833) only thirty-five percent of the entrants graduated,
and nearly one in four were dismissed for academic or disciplinary failings.
(The others withdrew voluntarily, though frequently under pressure from the superintendent.) Of the graduates during Thayer’s tenure, fifty-one eventually taught in institutes of higher education, and fifteen became college presidents. Nevertheless, although the quality of the education at West Point was rarely disputed, its character and objectives often came into question. Even Partridge had believed that mathematics were "the basis of a land and naval officer's Education," and the West Point curriculum became substantially more technical under Thayer, who withdrew from hands-on military instruction and asserted that "a knowledge of General history, ethics etc can be equally well acquired after leaving." These subjects were deemphasized but continued to be taught by the chaplain as a full professor. In 1818 Thayer responded to critics by proposing a professorship of languages, oratory, and letters, but this was never done before the Civil War.

The focus of Thayer's curriculum was manifested in the system for cadet rankings, in which their scores in classroom exercises were multiplied by the following proportions: one-fifth each for engineering, mathematics, natural and experimental philosophy (roughly speaking, general science), and military exercises and conduct; one-tenth each for French (which Thayer considered "the sole repository of military science") and drawing (which was needed for map-making, though this was not formally taught). New regulations were crafted in 1824 in response to criticism of the academy's scientism, with one-tenth of a cadet’s rank based on the humanities and one-twentieth each for French and drawing, but in 1833 and 1854 alike fifty-five percent of a cadet’s overall grade and seventy percent of his class time was devoted to engineering, mathematics, and science, while only fourteen percent of his time was spent on military instruction of all types (which also accounted for a seventh of his grade).
Military training beyond drill was the province of the professor of engineering, whose course included the study of field and permanent fortifications, artillery, and grand tactics (those of fighting a battle through the coordination of different units and arms), with practical lectures on the organization of armies, the preparation of orders, and the conduct of marches. Drill itself became the province of the instructor of tactics, a post first created in 1818 at Thayer's behest. This officer, who was detached from a line regiment, was also responsible for routine cadet discipline, from 1825 onward in the official capacity of commandant of cadets. From 1818 to 1825 he had an average of one or two assistants, and from then until the Mexican War either three and four. Another line officer served as the artillery instructor, occasionally with an assistant during the 1830s and 1840s. (Two were present between December 1841 and June 1843, but none between September 1844 and December 1845.)53

Thayer originally suggested that these men teach the "theory" of their arms, but it is unclear what he meant by this or the degree to which it was ever implemented. (Indeed, officers and civilian Americans used this word very loosely, to suit and serve in a wide variety of circumstances and connotations.) The quality and realism of the academy's military instruction was repeatedly debated among senior officers and academy officials (along with occasional private commentary and anonymous letters to the professional journals from cadets and recent graduates) throughout the interwar era. No one thought of West Point as a school for strategists or generals, but the frequency of drill led many cadets to believe that training tacticians was "one of the avowed objects of the institution." Indeed, the vast majority of the military training consisted of parade-ground drill, the physical mechanics of nineteenth-century closed-order tactics, with 204 hours devoted
to artillery and 540 to infantry over the four years. This practice began with
the individual "school of the soldier" and extended up through the battery
and brigade levels, the largest tactical formations employed by the army
between 1815 and 1845, though the corps of cadets was actually too small to
execute full brigade evolutions. Classroom instruction in tactics and tactical
problems occurred only in the fourth year and the summer encampment
preceding it, with a total of thirty-two hours spent in artillery recitations
(largely on technical questions rather than actual maneuvers and tactical
employment) and fifteen in infantry.54

This regimen effectively taught cadets the practical knowledge they
would need as junior officers, and it sometimes went beyond mechanics to
grand tactics (the conduct of battles, also known as "evolutions of the line"),
which required a thorough familiarity with different formations and their
combination and application against similar but similarly variable enemy
formations in a variety of terrain. The military members of the Board of
Visitors for 1825 (Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Eustis, the commander of the
army's artillery school, and Major John DeBarth Walbach, an artillerist who
Chief Engineer Macomb was considering for appointment as superintendent)
praised the corps for its "perfect knowledge of the manual" of arms and
maintained that this precision was present at all levels of tactical practice:

[T]he manoeuvres of the battalion [at that time essentially the same as
the regiment] . . . are performed with a promptness, elegance, and
accuracy, not surpassed by the efforts of veteran troops. . . . the first or
graduating class afforded unequivocal testimony of an extensive
knowledge of the evolutions of the line, by demonstrating a series of
the most complete manoeuvres on the blackboard . . . which were
explained with great facility and copiousness of illustration.55
Nevertheless, no formal Department of Tactics was created until 1858, and many other expert observers considered the tactical instruction insufficient, impractical, or unrealistic. The Board of Visitors for 1819 (which included the now-retired Joseph Swift, future chief engineer Joseph Totten, future inspector general Samuel B. Archer, and artillery lieutenant colonel John Fenwick, a member of the army's 1815 board on infantry drill) recommended teaching "the practical as well as the scientific [mathematical and engineering] part of [the officer's] profession," and Inspector General Wool later concluded that while the cadets excelled in drill the academy was essentially "a school of mathematical science." Three years later Chief Engineer Macomb lamented a "grave neglect" of tactics; the year after that (1823) commanding general Jacob Brown maintained that the military instruction was "almost purely of a theoretical nature" (meaning either excessively scientific and technological--too much engineering--or simply vague and impractical, though it is unclear which Brown had in mind), and twenty years later a board of officers headed by commanding general Winfield Scott found that the effects of terrain and enemy action were still not taken into account in the tactical instruction. The 1843 board--convened in part because a hostile Congress had refused to make appropriations for a Board of Visitors that year--questioned the academy's stress on mathematics and pressed for the explicit study of military history and the art of war, more light infantry drill, and more exercises in siege and bridging operations. Indeed, the distance between training and reality was materially evident in the equipment provided to the cadets, who did not receive percussion cap muskets until 1845, four years after their introduction into the army. (On the other hand, they were given rifles in 1853, two years ahead of the field forces, and were used to test new chasseur drills copied from the French in 1854.)
As we would expect, academy officials did not share these views: commandant Ethan Allen Hitchcock wrote in 1833 that no change was necessary in the practical instruction on infantry tactics, though he very tentatively suggested that "some principles of Strategy and Grand Tactics might, perhaps, be taught with advantage" (words repeated almost verbatim in the Board of Visitors' report a month later). The problem as Hitchcock saw it was simply that no adequate text was available, although this was only true if one discounted the wide range of French works which could have been translated. In any case, Hitchcock's analysis may stand as a summation of the method of higher military study that was impressed on the cadets by Dennis Hart Mahan: "These subjects have therefore been left for the investigations of the young men when they shall arrive at maturity of intellect and when they shall have time." If anything further was to be done it would consist of lectures to provide definitions and general principles, "regarded merely as a requisite preparation for an advantageous reading of military history." Unfortunately, army officers rarely took the initiative to pursue such a course of independent study after graduating from the academy.57

Artillery instruction was also limited because of logistical constraints imposed by limited appropriations. There was no designated artillery instructor at the academy between mid-1821 and the end of 1823, and in 1822 Chief Engineer Macomb reported to the superintendent that the Board of Visitors (which then included Swift, Totten, Simon Bernard, and Pennsylvania militia general Thomas Cadwalader) believed that "the Artillery exercises are totally neglected." Macomb warned Thayer to remember that "the character of the institution is Military and not Philosophical" (a term then used to indicate science). Horses were not made available for maneuvering the artillery until 1838, forcing the cadets to drag
the cannon about by hand, and the Board of Visitors for 1825 therefore advised that artillery practice be limited to the school of the piece (essentially practice firing, not tactics), with "theoretical instruction" (meaning in this case that on the tactical employment of the guns) "at the discretion of the superintendent." On the other hand, the board for 1833, which included future secretary of war Joel Poinsett and artillery colonels James Bankhead and John Fenwick (who had by this time been brevetted to brigadier general and served as commandant of the Artillery School and member of an 1824 board on infantry drill), lauded the precision of the cannon fire, "rarely equalled, and not surpassed in any school of practice in Europe," an evaluation which seems likely to have been characteristic of the skill with which cadets learned to fire cannon.58

Even the academy’s engineering training was criticized as excessively abstract, because it emphasized the theory and mathematics of permanent fortification in the classic eighteenth-century French mode of Vauban rather than the actual construction and employment of fortifications in the field. Similarly, the drawing course tended toward formal portraiture rather than military applications like topography and drafting (needed for laying out fortifications and roads). The 1833 Board of Visitors urged the introduction of the latter topics, and from 1839 to 1841 Chief Engineer Joseph Totten led a successful drive to begin practical exercises in the construction, attack, and defense of field fortifications with a specially designated instructor (Lieutenant Alexander J. Swift, Joseph G. Swift’s son, who had just completed a year at the French military engineering school at Metz with this purpose in mind) and a sapper company of enlisted men under engineer command. In laying out his objectives for this course, Totten warned Mahan against a narrowly formalistic technicism: he was "less solicitous about details of the
fortification than about the application of the fundamental principles of the art to the ground & to circumstances" (meaning the strength and composition of the opposing forces). Building on the lessons of the Second Seminole War and western frontier service, this course also provided the army's first formal training in bridging and other pioneer (field and combat engineering) functions. Indeed, it was probably the most significant innovation in the tactical instruction at West Point before the Civil War (and a highly useful one for the officers thereof), but as late as 1860 some engineer officers thought that it was inadequate, while Mahan continued to resist its expansion. 59

Cavalry training was as neglected at West Point as in American military thought and the army in general, a problem which became increasingly urgent as the army moved westward onto the Great Plains. In 1822 Chief Engineer Macomb unsuccessfully pressed for the introduction of cavalry and horse (or "light") artillery instruction and requested that an officer be detailed to write tactical manuals for them. Inspector General Wool repeated this advice (along with a suggestion for a five year course to accommodate such an expansion) in 1831, and Boards of Visitors added their support in 1833 and 1838, but until 1849 little seems to have been done beyond the institution of riding exercises. Indeed, the army provided no formal training in cavalry tactics outside of the dragoon regiments themselves until 1838 (six years after the reformation of the American cavalry arm), and even then the training (at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania) was primarily intended to provide individual and company riding drill for enlisted recruits. 60

All in all the content of the tactical training at West Point did not change much between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, but this was not as disadvantageous as it appears, because little fundamental change took place in the technology of land warfare during an era of relative peace between the
Western powers. The primary—and ultimately a necessary—value of West Point tactical training (and a necessity at some point in an officer's career) was simply to familiarize junior officers with the basic drill they would help teach enlisted men, and to give officers a personal sense of what could and could not be accomplished under its constraints. Several scholars have suggested that "the weaknesses of the West Point curriculum . . . had little effect on the Army as a whole," but this was because of the essential simplicity of its tactical and administrative systems and the presence of experienced noncommissioned officers and enlisted men rather than a desirable condition in itself. The training provided by the army and its academy did lag behind the needs of the nation in very important ways, circumscribed externally by fiscal limitations and internally by a narrow conception of military expertise and the officer corps' preference for "civilized" European-style warfare over that with "savage" Indians along the nation's western frontier.61

Recognizing this, a commentator in the Army and Navy Chronicle and Scientific Repository asserted that "the object of the military academy is to furnish the whole army with good brevet second lieutenants, not miniature generals or planners of paper campaigns," and higher education in military theory and strategy was almost totally lacking at West Point. In 1817 Thayer and the faculty resolved "that the 1st . . . class be wholly employed upon engineering & those branches which are immediately connected with the military art," but their concept of the military art usually seemed limited to engineering, and even that to fortification design. Until 1823 this instruction came solely from engineering professor Claudius Crozet, a French artillery officer under Napoleon who at least gave informal lectures on the military art and illustrated them with examples from the emperor's wars, but David Bates Douglass, the professor of engineering from 1823 to 1831, appears to
have provided no strategic instruction at all. In fact, the 1829 Board of Visitors found that more civil than military engineering was being taught, but it turned what students of military professionalism would normally consider a problem into a public relations advantage by stressing the army's social and economic utility in the construction of canals and railroads. The military engineering text from 1820 until 1832 was a French work used at the Ecole Polytechnique (their engineering school) and translated in 1817 by Captain John Michael O'Connor, who added a hundred pages on principles of strategy and operations drawn mostly from the works of the Franco-Swiss strategist Antoine-Henry Jomini, which were not otherwise published in the United States until 1854. (An English officer published a poorly translated extract in 1825, but it does not seem to have been widely circulated, especially in the United States.) Given Douglass's disinterest in military science cadets probably had to study this work individually if they did so at all; it is virtually invisible in primary and secondary accounts of the period and Dennis Hart Mahan abandoned its use when he was formally appointed professor of engineering in 1832.62

From 1832 on Mahan lectured on the "Science of War" for nine class hours during the spring semester of a cadet's fourth year, which was still the only time devoted to military studies beyond engineering, tactics, and drill. Mahan himself labelled this "the most defective" section of his course: in 1839 an officer wrote to the Army and Navy Chronicle that "Practical strategy is totally neglected at West Point," and five years later Mahan unsuccessfully proposed expanding the class to fifteen lessons, a move that seems to have been blocked by Chief Engineer Totten. These classes were taught mostly in the form of historical examples, usually drawn from French experiences in the Napoleonic Wars, and as a text Mahan used his own works, which were
based largely on his notes taken at the French engineering school at Metz between 1826 and 1830. Unfortunately, the class does not seem to have provided much of a grounding in either grand strategy or what was then labelled the "art of war" (which we today would categorize as an amalgam of general or strategic principles and their application within a geographic theater of operations—in effect the "operational art" of modern parlance). Mahan was a fervent admirer of Napoleon but the art and science of war class was as much about fortifications as operations: his notes focused primarily on fortifications (both permanent and temporary) and relatively peripheral subjects like outposts, reconnaissance, and detached service, and these notes later became the basis for his two books, which focused largely on those topics. In other words, while historians of the Civil War once supposed that Mahan inculcated the "principles of war" espoused by Jomini, Jomini's works were not actually used as a text at the academy until 1860, and the most recent scholarship has concluded that ex-cadets "almost never" mentioned Jomini in their writings, which is certainly true of their letters from the academy while cadets. Cadets and graduates alike recalled Mahan primarily as a teacher of engineering, not of war, and they sometimes seemed to conflate the two. Indeed, a petition complaining about Mahan's course labelled engineering "the most useful of all sciences, and that on which the art of War is based," and the petitioners wanted more efficient (and as they put it, more up-to-date, meaning more British works and fewer French ones) instruction in engineering, not more time to study the art of war. Later in the century another graduate asserted that as late as the Civil War there was "no instruction in strategy or grand tactics, in military history, or in what is called the Art of War"; and though not precisely true, his memory does serve as an adequate summation of the limitations of Thayer and Mahan's military
curriculum and the limited impact which it had on the graduates themselves.\textsuperscript{64}

Even had Mahan truly flooded the cadets with Jomini (and he had doubtlessly read the theorist in both French and English versions, and incorporated much of what he read into his writing and teaching), that theorist was primarily—but sometimes quite awkwardly—a synthesizer and a codifier of well-known Napoleonic (and somewhat outdated Frederickian) experience. Indeed, even scholars who believe in Jomini's influence agree that his "principal ideas . . . could be summarized on the back of a postcard": "Jominian" "principles" like guarding one's base, concentrating one's forces, and striking at an enemy's flanks are little more than the common sense which one sees demonstrated in children's games, and their significance lay mostly in terms of relative emphasis, which Mahan wisely appears to have laid on a flexible adaptation to circumstances. The most damning critiques of the military instruction at West Point are that Mahan was willing and able to make so few changes in the use of time in his course to include more military instruction, while Indian warfare, the sole combat experience of American army officers between 1815 and 1846, received only a brief mention without practical study in drill or recitation. Some scholars have suggested that Mahan's \textit{Complete Treatise on Field Fortifications}, published in 1836, was a highly original work which questioned European tactical doctrine and placed the conduct of war in an American social context, but aside from short glimmers interspersed throughout the book, this "originality" primarily meant criticism—rather unrealistic in the American context—of volunteer and militia forces and an assertion of the cadre principle commonly held by American regular officers, and more recent scholars have questioned the clarity of Mahan's emphasis on field fortification as a distinct tactical system.
In any case, Field Fortifications certainly did not question the army’s system of close order linear tactics. On the other hand, Mahan’s teachings about outposts, reconnaissance, and detachments would certainly have been of some general value, and the army usually fought Indians in some form of its standard linear drill anyway, so West Point training probably did not exacerbate the army’s tactical deficiencies on the frontier or in Florida.65

The scientific focus of Thayer’s curriculum also received criticism because it did little to fit the mostly middle-class cadets for interaction with the political and intellectual elites they would deal with, and or to provide the broad knowledge of the world necessary for men who might one day be policy-makers themselves. In 1819 Inspector General Wool advised that only two years of mathematics be required in order that more attention could be devoted to geography, history, ethics, and foreign languages, and this goal was accomplished by shuffling some math back to the second year to make room for a course in the humanities in the fourth. At about the same time Alden Partridge was publically criticizing the academy’s lack of attention to government, constitutional law, political economy, and the foreign policies and national objectives of other countries, and the following year (1820) the Board of Visitors (including Swift and Quartermaster General Thomas Sidney Jesup) endorsed the necessity of "Belles Lettres, National Law, and Eloquen" as "essential to the accomplishment of a scholar and a gentleman," and pressed for two distinct liberal arts courses to be taught by separate professors (on ethics, letters, and oratory and history, geography, and natural law respectively).

This expansion seemed impossible within the time constraints imposed by other priorities, and the 1826 board found that the liberal arts
were still "superficially taught." It therefore recommended cutting the
academy's losses and concentrating on its strengths by ending the classes in
history, geography, English grammar, rhetoric, law, and political economy.
While logical, this idea was too radical a departure from American social and
cultural norms and the need for officers accountable to them to be acceptable,
and a decade later the 1838 board resumed the call for more time to be
devoted to the humanities. The lack of action to remedy this shortfall
suggests that the government and the army's leaders assumed that these
qualities could easily be acquired through the avenues available to civilian
gentlemen, much as they expected that most specifically military knowledge
to be gained by hands-on experience after a cadet had graduated.66

Thayer and his successors continued to stress mathematics above all
else, although they recognized the existence of deficiencies and sought to
remedy them without diminishing the academy's scientific focus. The most
broad-ranging proposal for improvement was simply to increase the amount
of time available by adding an extra year to the course of studies. In 1832
Thayer sent the Chief Engineer a "Bill for the better organization of the
Military Academy" that would have legislated a five year course as a means to
permit more extensive study of history, geography, and moral and political
philosophy, a reform which was endorsed by the Board of Visitors the
following year. The 1843 board headed by Winfield Scott repeated this
recommendation, albeit in favor of more military studies; the following year
Chief Engineer Totten noted that the Academic Board was "confident that no
measure can be adopted so well calculated to increase [the academy's]
usefulness to the army" and asked Superintendent Delafield to seek the
faculty's advice on a five-year curriculum. Congress rejected these plans on
the basis of their expense until the 1850s, when the classes of 1859-1861 (cadets entering the academy between 1854 and 1856) underwent a five year course. The program was then ended due to the urgent need for officers in the Civil War, cutting short the stay of the cadets who were admitted in 1857.67

Day-to-day jurisdiction over the West Point curriculum remained firmly in the hands of the academic staff, which soon came to be dominated by so-called "Thayer men" like Mahan, who stubbornly resisted changes that would have diminished the academy's technical focus and its emphasis on depth rather than breadth of knowledge. (Indeed, Thayer warned one of his successors against an "ominous" change in the latter direction.) Thayer initially had difficulties with the independently minded faculty left from the Partridge years, particularly Jared Mansfield (known to Thayer as "the Old Grumbler"), who constantly complained to Secretary of War Calhoun and other influential friends about being subject to military authority. Thayer did court-martial engineering professor Claudius Crozet--who as a Frenchman lacked Mansfield's connections and standing--when Crozet wrote directly (bypassing Thayer in the chain of command and authority) to Chief Engineer Armistead in 1819, but normally the superintendent refrained from the direct confrontations his predecessor had indulged in and instead sought graduates socialized in his ways for all new appointments to the faculty. Mansfield finally retired in 1828, and by the time of Thayer's departure almost all of the army's junior officers (and thus the future faculty) were graduates socialized in Thayer's curriculum, rendering the question of curricular jurisdiction substantially moot within the academy.68

Thayer ultimately filled every major teaching post with graduates, some of whom remained at West Point for the rest of their lives (Mahan until he apparently committed suicide when forced to retire in 1871) and
came to exert decisive influence over the curriculum. These men found the academy highly congenial, and few ever saw field service. Their tenure never became an issue, and the legacy of this policy was a set of professors committed to the academy's mission as construed by Thayer—in other words to the development of a scientific cadre of civil and military engineers—but not necessarily to the army's other missions or the interests and capability of the organization as a whole. After Thayer the superintendents left academic affairs to the permanent faculty, which became the most important group shaping West Point between 1833 and 1861, and in 1843 Chief Engineer Totten demonstrated his support for the faculty's ideas when he responded to the commanding general's report advocating increased military training by cautioning the secretary of war that "the academical duties . . . are the most important." Cemented by the political influence of the Corps of Engineers and the internal dominance of the Academic Board, the academy's scientific focus did not diminish until after World War Two.69

This technicism (political scientist Samuel Huntington's apt word) or scientism did habituate aspiring officers to precision, order, and regularity, but critics of the academy and its curriculum had at least one valid point, for the technical emphasis in the curriculum could easily confuse cadets as to their true profession and its mission. One scholar has suggested that the science of war was "easily the most popular" subject at West Point and that "the cadets always complained because Mahan did not spend more time on the art of war" in his lectures. This may have been the case after the Mexican War, but in 1839 "Sam Jones" complained in the Army and Navy Chronicle that "a dead calm . . . is too apt to pervade the corps [of cadets], with reference to military matters," while cadet William Dutton wrote to his cousin several years later that "the whole object of our education" was "officers who are
capable of performing any scientific task." West Pointers were highly in
demand for work on the nation's burgeoning transport system, and by 1837
231 of the 940 graduates had worked as civil engineers outside the army. As
another example, ten of the forty-five graduates of the last class under Thayer
(1832) later resigned to become civil engineers, and only eleven--less than a
quarter--made their careers in the combat arms. Most cadets served in the
infantry or artillery, but these statistics illustrate the divided professional
identity embodied in the academy's curriculum--there was little beyond static
drill to encourage a cadet in his aspirations as a military leader, while
engineering (or, within the army, staff work) offered intellectual stimulation,
material benefits and prestige.\textsuperscript{70}

The examples set by several professors of engineering--perhaps the
most respected men on campus after the superintendent and the
commandant--reflect a similar lack of commitment to the military profession.
Visiting France during the 1820s, Mahan's first preference among the French
engineering schools was that for roads and bridges rather than that for
military applications, and when the academy's military staff (including his
assistants, who retained their regimental ranks) were threatened with transfer
to their regiments in 1833 Mahan informed Thayer that he would begin
looking for a "means of getting out of a situation that promises me neither
pleasure, profit, nor a fair fame." His predecessor, David B. Douglass, who
acted as a civil works consultant to the state of Pennsylvania during the
summers, sought to leave the academy's most prestigious course to his
assistants for a year in order to work for a New Jersey canal company.
Douglass resigned after he was repeatedly denied permission (despite
Thayer's support) to make a trip to Europe to examine civil engineering
projects there. He then became professor of civil engineering at New York
University, and later served as president of Kenyon College. (Claudius Crozet became chief engineer for the state of Virginia, though he also helped to found Virginia Military Institute, which was first superintended by a young academy graduate.)

A substantial number of cadets took a similarly self-interested approach to their studies, and many entered the academy primarily in search of a free education which they could repay with a couple of years of easy service before honorably resigning and transferring their skills to the more profitable sphere of civil life, especially in engineering. In 1831 Cadet David B. Harris wrote home to his sister that "civil engineering will be of more use to me than anything [else] I have learned here," even though it was "of course very theoretical." Nearing graduation in 1833 he wrote to his father that he might resign if not given a furlough to work for the James River and Kanawha Canal Company. He served as an assistant to Mahan for a year and resigned to join the company in 1835. George Meade of Gettysburg fame followed a very similar path, graduating in 1835 with an artillery commission and serving for a year, mostly on detached duties, before resigning to become a civilian surveyor. After he discovered that the highly politicized nature of civil engineering appointments made employment a fickle matter, Meade's influential family gained him reappointment in 1842 and he won a brevet in the Mexican War, but returning to the army and staying in it after the war as Meade did was a rarity among men who resigned during the mid-1830s. Men like these saw themselves first and foremost as engineers, to the point that in 1838 Congress mandated a minimum of four years of postgraduate service to staunch the flow of resignations.

The motives and status of the assistant professors and tactical instructors, who were selected from among the top graduates, reflected this
divided professional identity and became a prominent source of controversy between the academy and the army in the field. Thayer and his successors repeatedly pressed for increases in the instructors' pay and emoluments (standardized supplementary allowances intended to cover officers expenses for things like rations, servants, forage for horses, and official travel) in order "to prevent frequent changes in the corps of instructors and thus to render it permanent and efficient," believing that the instructors' lack of experience was "the grand obstacle to the progress of the institution." These men averaged only eighteen months per tour at West Point, and few served more than once in this capacity, but a fair proportion of the more scholarly minded academic instructors stayed on for several years and moved from post to post within the academy before advancing to the security of the professoriate. Thayer initially sought out officers with experience in the line for these posts, but he soon found it more desirable to hoard experienced instructors eager to stay at the academy, which kept some of the army's most capable officers from line duty. (Indeed, Thayer ultimately hoped to persuade the assistant professors to resign their commissions in order to avoid their return to the line.) His sense of the importance of his institution was embodied by his proposition that cadet company commanders (who were cadets themselves) should receive the additional allowance granted to commanders of regular army companies.73

As we shall see in chapter seven, unit commanders complained constantly about the detachment of their brightest officers from field duty, and in 1833 General Order 48 required that graduates serve with their regiments for three years before returning to the academy, where their tours (like those of other staff officers, who were the real targets of the order) were to be limited to two years. Dennis Hart Mahan feared that the policy would
have "the worst of consequences" for the academy, because of "the unfortunate obstinacy on one side [the instructors], and the want of management on the other [the Adjutant General and line commanders]," and he gave some short-lived consideration to resigning from the academy himself. The regulation actually allowed for substantial leeway depending "upon the professional character and services of the applicants," and it remained unenforced in at least a dozen cases related to the academy. The tension between academic instruction and field practice reached its height during the Seminole War, when Quartermaster General Thomas Jesup publicly denounced the practice but was caustically rebutted in several letters to the Army and Navy Chronicle. An academic cadre had clearly developed at West Point, but its relationship with the line of the army was tenuous if not antagonistic.74

Administrative historian Leonard White has observed that West Point "laid the foundation for the first organized professional body in the public service" of the United States, an assessment that might easily be reformulated as "the first professional bureaucracy" in the nation (or indeed in the postcolonial Americas to that date). Thayer's regime, which was the single most powerful influence on the worldview of the army officer corps as a corporate body, was founded on discipline and order, both academic and military, expressed through obedience and a rigid code of honor and honesty--individual responsibility within a hierarchy, or accountability to higher authority. Thayer believed that his role was "to regulate & harmonize the whole machine of instruction," and when discussing the possibility of conflict with a new commandant he expressed the hope that "the machine shall move on with regularity & if possible without friction." Thayer's use of this
metaphor was not accidental, and it crops up again and again in the words of other officers throughout this era. Indeed, these officers were called "regulars" long before the army received that appellation, a practice which indicates both their constant employment over increasingly long periods of time, with the correspondent experience and commitment, and their occupational mentalité of precision, order, and predictability. Thayer synthesized many of the practices already in place under Partridge along with the French example and the ideas of the faculty, an amalgam given coherence and strength by Thayer's desire for system. The superintendant set an example of personal involvement and meticulous attention to duty that was not compromised by personal favoritism or burdened by unnecessary meddling in the duties properly delegated to subordinates. Rigid though its methods were, one historian suggests that the academy and its practice of teaching a few chosen subjects in great depth (in conscious contrast to the generalism standard among American institutions of higher education during this era) "probably came closer to producing the aristocracy of talent espoused by Jefferson and John Adams than any other educational institution in the antebellum United States." Merit was determined by competition under conditions of formally equal opportunity, an ethos and milieu which enabled the academy to rebut charges of favoritism on its attackers' own terms and to sustain the army's existence and autonomy as an institution.75

Thayer's policies also delineated clear lines of jurisdiction--of authority over expertise and practice--on the basis of specialization, a practice that both reflected the development of bureaucracy in the army as a whole and habituated new officers to the values of individual and institutional accountability, both fiscal and ultimately political, which this bureaucracy represented. While the academy provided no training in administrative
methods or staff duties per se, the mental habits and values inculcated there were highly congenial to the systematic thinking and meticulous recordkeeping—the "regularity"—required by the emerging army bureaucracy. Through this process of cognitive socialization, Thayer was one of the foremost contributors to the army's move away from undifferentiated generalism towards functional and organizational specialization, while simultaneously fostering a sense of group uniformity, and thus accountability, founded on standardized procedures and impartial treatment. Indeed, the academy became a miniature of Jacksonian bureaucracy as described by recent historians like Matthew Crenson, who has observed the paradoxical evolution by which authority became depersonalized in order to assure its accountability to public opinion in a democratic society. Thayer demanded literal obedience and honesty, two basic (though in the former instance not indisputable) elements of accountability, as key constituents of personal honor, thus melding the particularistic values of the early gentry republic—elite individualism—with the procedures of a society growing in scale, scope, and complexity—the need for individual accountability to the collectivity within a bureaucratic hierarchy. The army as a whole would reflect this mixture, with all the tensions that accompanied it.76

The Military Academy successfully trained a generation of officers who were more often called on to supervise civilian construction projects than to direct battles. For all the attention West Point devoted to drill, these men were first and foremost bureaucrats and administrative technicians rather than tacticians, much less strategists. Indeed, the actual content of the academy's curriculum and training may have been less important than its form, and for all the famous ordnance and engineer officers trained at the academy, the habits—taught by the academy's ethos and atmosphere rather
than the curriculum itself—that made good supply officers were probably a
good deal more important to the army’s success in both peace and war.
Similarly, a number of scholars have suggested that the rigid atmosphere and
the lack of general or liberal education at West Point failed to prepare
graduates with the mental flexibility necessary to conduct the high-tempo
operations of the Civil War. On the other hand, the corollary of Thayer’s
rigidity was regularity, a mindset which made the academy’s graduates good
drill instructors and—more importantly—highly responsible and accountable
administrators capable of managing and coordinating complex large-scale
enterprises over vast distances, essentially non-military skills that have
proven more decisive in modern warfare than purely technical, tactical, or
operational expertise. West Point graduates made fine administrators and
logisticians, and the habits of mental discipline inculcated at the Military
Academy certainly eased the flow of supplies to a dispersed army, which
would not experience another logistical disaster like that at Terre aux Boeufs
until the disorganization brought on by the hectic mass mobilization of the
Civil War.

Superior administration also provided the army with the ability to
mount large-scale expeditions over long distances, first in the dragoon
expeditions across the Great Plains in the 1830s and 40s and then decisively so
during the invasion of central Mexico in 1847, therefore enabling it to act as
the sharp edge of American territorial expansionism. Indeed, this offensive
capability allowed American military policymakers to think in truly strategic
terms rather than simply regional or reactive ones for the first time. Even
more broadly speaking, modern commentators have often noted that
administrative expertise is more characteristic of the American armed forces
than purely tactical or technical military competence, and that this more
politically sensitive and responsible propensity has proven strategically and
societally more effective in the world conflicts (hot and cold) of the twentieth
century, enabling American military leaders to supply and coordinate
superior numbers and resources to defeat tactically and sometimes
technologically superior adversaries in defense of democratic values.
Citation Key

The following abbreviations are used extensively in the footnotes:

USMA  United States Military Academy Library, West Point
LC    Library of Congress, Manuscript Division
USAMHI United States Army Military History Institute, Manuscript Collections, Carlisle, Pennsylvania
NA    National Archives, Washington, D.C.
RG    Record Group therein
SW:LR-Reg. Secretary of War, Letters Received, Registered Series, RG107, NA
SW:LR-Unreg. Secretary of War, Letters Received, Unregistered Series, RG107, NA
SW:LS  Secretary of War, Letters Sent, RG107, NA
HQA:LR Headquarters of the Army, Letters Received, RG108, NA
HQA:LS Headquarters of the Army, Letters Sent, RG108, NA
AGO:LR Adjutant General's Office, Letters Received, RG94, NA
AGO:LS Adjutant General's Office, Letters Sent, RG94, NA
IRs (if cited without further attribution) Inspection Reports, 1814-1842, Office of the Inspector General, RG159, NA (If cited in text this is simply an abbreviation for inspection report[s] in general.)
(The IRs from Sylvester Churchill in the 1840s are from HQA:LR.)

Note that I do not refer to the addressees of letters to the secretary of war, the commanding general, or the adjutant general unless that individual was someone other than the official in question, and when citing letters from these three offices I have usually left the author unnamed unless it was someone other than that official.

ANC    Army and Navy Chronicle (1835-1842)
ANC&SR Army and Navy Chronicle and Scientific Repository (1842-1844)
MNM    Military and Naval Magazine of the United States (1833-1836)

Contributors to these journals normally wrote anonymously, so I will not indicate this again. I will note the rare instances where an officer used his real name (usually letters from senior officers reprinted from other newspapers or official documents), and I will often apply their pseudonyms in the text for the sake of interest and variety. Many of the letters were sent first to fellow officers and civilian friends (often ex-officers themselves), or reprinted from local newspapers or the national party papers like the National Intelligencer and Washington Globe, but I will only indicate this if the circumstances or newspaper were of particular note.
Part II


2 Gaines, July 27, 1820, file G-144, SW:LR-Reg. This document was Gaines' commentary on the proposed reduction of the army.


4 I am indebted to Ronald Spiller for his clear formulation of these factors in "From Hero to Leader: The Development of Nineteenth Century American Military Leadership" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas A&M University, 1993), p. 8, although Spiller does not articulate the role of social mores and context in shaping institutional development.

5 "Sam Jones," "United States Military Academy," ANC 8 (January 24, 1838): 50; "No Graduate, "West Point," MNM 3 (March 1834): 70; Skelton, "Professionalization in the U.S. Army Officer Corps in the Age of Jackson," p. 455.

6 "Military Academy," ANC 2 (February 18, 1836): 99 (reprinted from the Portland Jeffersonian); "To the Hon. Mr. Hawes, M.C.," ANC 2 (June 16, 1836): 373.

I. Origins and Early Trials, 1776-1817: Disorganization, Disorder, and Command Irresponsibility

7 Knox to his brother, September 23, 1776, quoted in Jacobs, The Beginning of the American Army, p. 285; Thomas E. Shaughnessy, "Beginnings of National Military Professional Education in America, 1775-1825" (E.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1956), pp. 48, 54, and 59-96 passim; Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, pp. 8-9; Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, p. 36. Shaughnessy states (p. 54) that Knox's artillery school was actually a school of instruction for enlisted men, probably teaching the school of the piece (the individual cannon) and the battery. He also reports (pp. 39-43) that there was a very small ordnance school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, during the winter of 1778-79 and that in 1779 Colonel Duportail, the Continental Army's
chief engineer, planned to give lectures to his officers on the construction, reconnaissance, and attack and defense of fortifications. This instruction was casual and intermittent at best (pp. 57-58). See also Wright, The Continental Army, pp. 136-37.

8 Pappas, To the Point, pp. 18-21 and 33; Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, pp. 10-12; Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, p. 37; Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 16-18; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 93-95. The official schedules or curricula of the Rochefontaine school are found in the Orderly Book of the Corps of Artillerists and Engineers, USMA Archives, vol. I, pp. 35 and 42 and vol. II, pp. 57, 65, and 71. At one point officers may have been assessed a day's pay each month to support the library. Two cadets were authorized for every infantry and dragoon company in the Eventual Army of 1799, but it is doubtful that they were ever appointed, much less sent to West Point. This was certainly just as well, because such numbers were clearly beyond the struggling institution's ability to handle. The early years of West Point are shrouded in uncertainty because of poor record-keeping and a fire in 1838 that destroyed most of the archives kept in the adjutant's office. Some sources state that classes began in 1794, some in 1796. Some suggest a set curriculum, others a set of basic lectures and some drill. Denton's account is generally the most thorough on the period to 1833. Pappas provides the most up to date account, but only his original manuscript and a copy at West Point are footnoted.

9 Pickering to Knox, August 1, 1798, Timothy Pickering Papers, vol. 9, p. 137, Massachusetts Historical Society; Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, p. 12. Similar quarrelling left the newly organized Corps of Artillerists and Engineers in what one historian has characterized as "a state of near chaos" during the first two years of its existence. Capt. Decius Wadsworth brought charges against its commander, Lt. Col. Stephen Rochefontaine, and when he was found innocent the captain challenged his commander to a duel. Rochefontaine had already fought a subordinate once (without injury to either combatant), but he now refused, so Wadsworth resigned and publically damned his adversary in the civilian press. See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 95.

Tousard was the Inspector of Artillery, Burbeck the Lt. Col. Commandant of the regiment prior to the act of 1802 and colonel (of the artillery alone) thereafter. Pappas has discovered documents showing Burbeck's active role and gives him substantial credit for the origins of the academy.

11 Ibid., pp. 124-25.

12 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 99-100. Within the confines of his vision the new superintendent was well-qualified for his post. Harvard-educated, he had translated French treatises on fortification and artillery for the War Department during the Quasi-War (while still a civilian) and served as inspector of fortifications from his appointment until that post was abolished in 1802. This experience suited and refined Williams' concept of his primary role as an entrepreneur of genteel military science. While Jefferson may have viewed the academy as a tool to introduce men of middling circumstances to higher education, Williams took his model from France, where military engineers received great prestige because of their extensive theoretical training. He expected science to have military benefits, but they were not always in the forefront of his thinking: "We must always have it in view that our Officers are to be men of Science, and such as will by their acquirements be entitled to the notice of learned Societies. Could we arrive at such a state before the present peace is disturbed, we may defy foreign Invaders." The superintendent clearly saw himself as the foremost of these men, and he expected the academy to become a national scientific university along the lines of the French Ecole Polytechnique (established in 1795). See ibid., p. 100; Williams to Major Decius Wadsworth, May 13, 1802, quoted in ibid., p. 101; and Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 241-42.

The academy's engineering focus was present even in the first decade of its official existence, a tendency which manifested itself in the distribution of its graduates among the army's branches: although only fourteen out of fifty-one graduates were offered engineer commissions during Jefferson's administrations, this number was still about twenty-eight percent of the total, a far higher percentage than after the War of 1812, when only about five percent of the graduates received commissions in that branch. The balance between engineers and artillerymen among the graduates changed as war loomed on the horizon, as the growing need for combat arms officers (and possibly Secretary Eustis' suspicion of the academy, which appears to have partaken of a certain amount of anti-intellectualism) led to a proportion of one engineer (Chief Engineer Williams' son Alexander, killed in action at the storming of Fort Erie, Canada, in 1814), nine infantrymen, and twenty-three
artillerymen among the graduates commissioned during Madison's first administration. See Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, p. 60.

13. Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 254 and 256; Dupuy, *Where They Have Trod*, p. 34; Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, p. 26; Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army*, pp. 298-300; Pappas, *To the Point*, pp. 29 and 32; Forman, *West Point*, p. 22; Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 100 and 102. It is uncertain whether the artillery text was French or British: Jacobs cites the author as Scheib; all the other authors cite de Scheel's *A Treatise on Artillery* (1799), a French work translated by Williams. The first graduation examinations were held in September 1802 using these works as texts. Several scholars have suggested that these tests were difficult and that other exams were held every year to test students' progress, but the paucity of records makes such evaluations difficult to verify with any degree of certainty. In 1804 and 1805 the scheduled weekly subject hours were as follows (Pappas, p. 45):

18 hours mathematics
12 hours fortification theory, surveying, and artillery drill (which took probably about half of those hours)
6 hours infantry drill
6 hours drawing
6 hours French
12 hours for individual study


15 Pappas, *To the Point*, p. 53. Major Decius Wadsworth, Williams' de facto successor as chief engineer, is said to have stressed military training, though we do not know its actual content; he tried to apply stricter discipline to the cadets and failed, spurring a successful appeal from the engineer officers to Jefferson to reinstate Williams. Indeed, Wadsworth knowingly damaged his own prospects for promotion when he supported Williams' reappointment, but he may already have been planning to resign, as he did later that year. During Williams' absence future Chief Engineer and commanding general Alexander Macomb, then a junior lieutenant, wrote to him that "everything is going to ruin—morals & knowledge thrive little, & courts-martial & flogging prevail. The Military Academy, instead of being the seat of knowledge & the place of application, is fast turning into that of ignorance &
idleness" (Macomb to Williams, October 8, 1804, Jonathan Williams Papers, Indiana University).

Personal imbroglios continued to burden the academy with public embarrassment: Major William Barron, the mathematics instructor, was forced to resign in 1808 after Lt. Charles Gratiot (a future chief engineer) brought courts-martial charges against him for neglect of duty and unofficerlike conduct in maintaining prostitutes on post during Williams' absence. Throughout all this turmoil the contested status of the Corps of Engineers continued to plague the academy: Williams resigned for a final time in 1812 when Congress repealed the engineers' exclusive control over the superintendency and he was denied the command of fortifications in New York harbor (in great part due to the resistance of artillery officers). See Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 254 and 259; Shaughnessy, "Beginnings of National Military Professional Education in America," pp. 147-48; Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 54, 76, and 83.

16 Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," p. 72; Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," p. 336; Jacobs, The Beginning of the U.S. Army, p. 365. Eustis remained suspicious of the academy long after the war—as a congressman he sponsored bills for its abolition during the 1820s.


21 Forman, West Point, pp. 36-37; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 105; Williams, quoted in Pappas, To the Point, p. 23.
Quotation from letter from Brigadier General Simon Bernard and Major William McRee to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, communicated to the House of Representatives, January 29, 1819, ASP:MA 1: 835; Sidney Forman, "The United States Military Philosophical Society," p. 284. See also Charles E. Walker, "Engineers in the War of 1812" (typescript at the Historical Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Belvoir, Virginia). Two of the prewar graduates resigned before the war began, though one reentered the army as a captain of infantry in 1813. The chief engineers during the War of 1812 were Williams, Wadsworth (also the army's chief ordnance officer from 1812 to 1821), and Macomb from the previous Corps of Artillerists and Engineers, Swift (the first graduate) from the cadets, and Walker K. Armistead and Joseph G. Totten (who resigned in 1806 to join his uncle Jared Mansfield, the academy's science professor, in the west after the latter had been appointed Surveyor General for Ohio and the Northwest Territory) as cadets that year. (Totten reentered the army in 1808.)

The best evidence of this cadre's motivation is the leading role it played in the operations of the United States Military Philosophical Society, a formal voluntary association for the promotion of military science founded by Jonathan Williams in 1802. It was the only organization of this sort in the American military before the Civil War, in stark contrast to the proliferation of voluntary associations in all other arenas of American life. (Similar organizations were also rare in the European services, though several appeared in the British army around 1840.) The new association was patterned after the American Philosophical Society, in which Williams had been an officer and contributor, and it emulated the latter institution's fusion of social gentility and scientific research. There was only one criterion for membership, that the candidate be a "Gentleman." The Military Philosophical Society included all engineer officers and academy cadets, who formed its core, but Williams went outside the army as much as possible to seek members who would lend prestige to his ultimate project, enhancing the status of the Corps of Engineers. Indeed, at its height in 1809 only forty percent of the society's members were regular military officers. See Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 272-85; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 103; Forman, "The United States Military Philosophical Society," p. 274; Wade, "A Military Offspring of the American Philosophical Society," p. 105.

Williams intended the society to collect American military and scientific expertise "into one focus" and hoped that doing so would garner Republican support for West Point, but Jefferson wisely blocked Williams' proposal that all congressmen be granted automatic membership. The president did accept Williams' offer himself, as did Madison, Monroe, and
both John and John Quincy Adams. Civilian government officials made up about fifteen percent of the membership, including DeWitt Clinton, William Claiborne, and Chief Justice John Marshall. The scientific character of the association was signalled by the presence of Robert Fulton, Eli Whitney, and Benjamin Latrobe. Several college presidents and professors supplied an academic contingent, while Joel Barlow and David Ramsey were relied upon for literary luster. Other prominent civilians were Josiah Quincy and erstwhile general and Federalist presidential candidate Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. There were also nine marine and twenty-eight naval officers, including Edward Preble, Stephen Decatur, Isaac Hull, William Bainbridge, and John Rodgers (head of the Board of Naval Commissioners from 1816 to 1837). See Williams, "Report of the Superintendant of the U.S. Military Academy, 1810," quoted in Wade, "A Military Offspring of the American Philosophical Society," p. 104; ibid., p. 105; Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," p. 47.

The society always remained centered at West Point, however, and it functioned principally as the scientific and political arm of the Corps of Engineers, with Williams as president, Wadsworth as vice-president, and Swift, Bomford, and West Point science professor Jared Mansfield (who returned from surveying in the west in 1812) among its other officers. There were roughly forty active members from the army as a whole—about seven percent of the army's officers. Thirteen were engineers, leaving the line sorely underrepresented. In effect, Williams succeeded in drawing a diverse membership of important men but failed to interest the rank and file of the army who would actually direct combat operations in wartime. As an embryonic professional association, the Military Philosophical Society was too broadly inclusive to act as a unified force unless effective control was concentrated in a core professional group, but doing so excluded the most politically prominent members (civilians, and to a substantial extent the senior officers of the army) from exerting significant influence in its operations. The society failed as a lobbying organization, and its effect was principally to reinforce the engineers' knowledge and their sense of themselves as an expert cadre superior to the line of the army. See ibid.; Forman, "The United States Military Philosophical Society," p. 283.

The practical activities of the Military Philosophical Society were largely determined by the Corps of Engineers. Indeed, one scholar has observed that "West Point and the Military Philosophical Society were almost indistinguishable in their operational and educational objectives," the society giving extracurricular vigor to the often sporadic lecturing. The engineers and cadets conducted a variety of experiments in artillery technology and technique at West Point, and Capt. Alden Partridge submitted the results to the secretary of war as evidence of the cadets' proficiency. As a result of one
test they recommended that the army adopt a breech-loading musket (which did not occur until after the Civil War). Members also presented papers concerning coastal fortification and defense, which were then committed to the society's library, which has been described as "the richest collection of technical books in the United States" at the time, "practically the official archive of the Corps of Engineers." Williams gave forty books and pamphlets to the library, while another officer contributed a set of Anthony Wayne's orderbooks from the Indian wars. James Wilkinson and Joseph G. Swift both sold some of their own military books to the academy, and John Armstrong, American minister to France and later secretary of war, sent copies of Jomini's _Traité du Grand Tactique_ and forwarded maps of the battle of Eylau and the siege of Danzig (one of the few Napoleonic sieges outside of the Spanish peninsula) from Marshal Berthier, Napoleon's chief of staff. Other works in the library included the _Reveries_ of Marshal Saxe of France, and other endeavours included publication of Williams' translation of Tadeusz Kosciusko's volume on horse artillery and a paper published in the _National Intelligencer_ by Alexander Macomb entitled "The Military Constitution of Nations." (Macomb also published an adaptation of a British work on courts-martial that became standard in the army.) Williams used his reports to the society to advocate preparedness for war, insisting upon the "greater economy" of "a scientific skeleton of an army" whose core would be the cadre of engineers. See Forman, _West Point_, pp. 30-33; idem., "The United States Military Philosophical Society," pp. 279-83; Wade, "A Military Offspring of the American Philosophical Society," pp. 105-106; Jacobs, _The Beginnings of the American Army_, p. 298; Williams to Albert Gallatin, September 19, 1807, quoted in Skelton, _An American Profession of Arms_, p. 104. The society also published Robert Fulton's groundbreaking _Torpedo War and Submarine Explosions_ (Pappas, _To the Point_, p. 48). I will discuss the West point library and its use by officers and cadets in the next chapter.

Historians have long recognized that these activities "transformed West Point into a national center of scientific study." Seeking to formalize this status with official sanction, Williams sought government funding but was rebuffed by Jefferson, whose sympathy for the society's goals was insufficient to overcome his constitutional scruples. (Williams' outside business ventures became an asset at this point, because he was able to contribute some of his personal income from fire insurance company stock to the society's upkeep.) Despite the active membership of several talented individuals, the success of the United States Military Philosophical Society, like that of the academy itself, was largely dependant on the energy of Jonathan Williams. When he left West Point in 1803 it languished until his return, and his second protracted absence proved fatal. Capt. Alden Partridge tried to lead the society after Williams departed West Point to oversee the
construction of coastal defenses in 1810, but it met only once during
Partridge's own absence in 1811 and 1812 and finally collapsed after a single
meeting in 1813. By this time Joseph Swift had become the chief engineer, but
he was headquartered in Washington advising the administration. This
physical separation of the corps' command and training diluted the close
integration of political and scientific leadership that had been Williams' principal virtue. Meanwhile the society had usurped the role of the academy
as the focal point of American military education (and indeed of West Point
itself), probably retarding the latter's development because of the energy
dverted away from it. See Forman, West Point, p. 29; Molloy, "Technical
Education and the Young Republic," pp. 299-301.

24 Pappas, To the Point, p. 72. Shaughnessy, "Beginnings of National Military
Professional Education in America," pp. 161-62, provides several varying
figures for the number of cadets present in 1814. The average attendance
lengths are in Thayer to Macomb, April 15, 1822, cited in Shaughnessy, p. 178.
Whether these are averages for cadets who entered the academy that year or
for those present at some (or any) point during the year is unclear. One of the
nineteen graduates who left the army was actually dropped from the rolls.

25 Forman, West Point, p. 39 (short quotations); Ambrose, Duty, Honor,
Country, pp. 42 and 48-49; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 58 and 105. Two of
Crozet's first assistants were cadets Ethan Allen Hitchcock, later commandant
of cadets and one of the more prominent men in this story, and Richard H.
Delafield, later superintendent.

26 Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, pp. 43-44 and 55-56; Swift to Partridge,
March 15, 1815, quoted in Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States
Military Academy," pp. 108; ibid., pp. 119-21 and 156; Molloy, "Technical
Education and the Young Republic," pp. 357-59; Pappas, To the Point, p. 90.
See also Partridge to Secretary of State Monroe, December 21, 1815, file P-38,
SW:LR-Reg. In March 1815 Swift directed the professors to "furnish a
statement of a course of studies," although this was not done immediately,
and in October Professor Jared Mansfield took advantage of Partridge's
temporary absence to coax Lt. David Bates Douglass into ordering the
instructors to draw up a curriculum and regulations for faculty governance
more favorable to them than Partridge's. Unfortunately, doing so occasioned
yet another interruption in the already chaotic course of instruction.

27 Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," p. 360; Pappas, To
the Point, pp. 83 and 127; Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, pp. 55-56;

28 Professor Andrew Ellicott to Secretary of War Monroe, May 25, 1815, quoted in Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 113-114; Partridge to Monroe, December 21, 1815, file P-38, SW:LR-Reg.

29 Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 45-52; Pappas, To the Point, p. 51.

30 These characteristics became apparent as early as 1810, when Partridge demanded full control over the academy and its regulations, despite orders limiting him to control over routine academic affairs during the presence of Capt. Charles Gratiot. When Williams refused and denied Partridge's consequent request for leave, the then-lieutenant obtained a doctor's certificate stating that he was "rendered . . . unfit for duty" by a "febrile disease." Williams reluctantly approved the leave and, in a preview of events seven years later, sent Lt. Sylvanus Thayer to temporarily assist Gratiot in Partridge's stead. See Pappas, To the Point, p. 57.

31 Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 110 and 155; Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, pp. 53-54; Pappas, To the Point, p. 84; Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, pp. 114, 117, and 123; Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 353-54; Shaughnessy, "Beginnings of National Military Professional Education in America," pp. 187-90; Mansfield Papers, USMA, passim. Pappas (p. 89) has discovered that Mansfield's animosity toward Partridge did not really begin until early 1817, after the superintendent took charge of several of Mansfield's classes.

32 Ellery, ed., The Memoirs of General Joseph Gardner Swift, pp. 137 and 141. Partridge's power was then circumscribed by Swift's demand that diplomas be signed by all the professors before becoming effective, but irregularities continued. Finally the superintendent was ordered to face a court of inquiry into his financial and disciplinary practices. He was censured for laxity but found formally innocent, and the court remarked that "Discontents have been Encouraged, and even Opposition to Legal Authority invited, to gratify personal animosities." This outcome did nothing to clear the air, so in January 1817 the secretary of war urged Partridge's removal and sent Swift to take command. Swift was busy defending engineer prerogatives in Washington and promptly returned there, where he appealed to Madison and was permitted to remain. Indeed, as late as May 1817 Swift was
expressing his confidence in Partridge to Capt. Sylvanus Thayer, Monroe's choice as superintendent, and Thayer responded by advising Swift to delay sending him to the academy in hopes that the President would revoke his order. In the meantime Major William McRear, Thayer's companion during his European tour and a member of the Board of Fortifications, refused the appointment. See Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 357 and 361-63; Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 105-107, 123, 137-39, and 144-45; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 68, 85 (quotation from courts-martial findings), 90, and 222. During the war Swift sent to Harvard for advice and received the college's academic regulations, its library list, and a summary of teaching methods employed there (Pappas, p. 67). In 1854 Thayer wrote to Swift that he had "felt a strong disinclination to be stationed at West Point" in 1817 (February 17, 1854, quoted in Denton, p. 160).

33 Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, pp. 124-30; Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 363-64; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 91-94; Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," p. 170; Capt. John M. O'Connor, September 31, 1817, file O-21, SW:LR-Reg. Partridge told his story to the New York Columbian even before his court-martial, and later became a constant propagandist against the academy, denouncing what he and many other critics saw as overscientific education and aristocratic pretension. See "Americanus" (Partridge), "The Military Academy at West Point Unmasked: or, Corruption and Military Despotism Exposed" (addressed "To the Members of Congress") (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1830). See also Lester A. Webb, Captain Alden Partridge and the United States Military Academy, 1806-1833 (Northport, AL: American Southern, 1965) and Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians, pp. 257-60 ("The Case for Partridge"), who provide more balanced views than are present in the standard interpretation, which has been created by authors (often West Pointers, themselves the products of the "Thayer system" several generations removed) highly favorable to Thayer, sometimes to the point of orthodoxy.

34 Partridge's testimony to court of inquiry, April 9, 1816, quoted in Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, p. 51.

35 Memorial of the "Majority of the Corps of Cadets" to Colonel Henry Atkinson (the senior member of the court of inquiry), April 7, 1816, quoted in ibid., p. 55; Pappas, To the Point, p. 81; Capt. John O'Connor, May 2, 1817, file O-2, SW:LR-Reg.; Bernard and McRear to Secretary of War Calhoun, communicated to the House of Representatives January 29, 1819, ASP:MA 1: 834-36. Partridge's complaints about the "secret agent" (quartermaster
Perkins) "endeavouring to create discontent among the Cadets" are highly ironic in this light, but Thayer's suspicion that Partridge-trained cadets were at the bottom of the petition against Capt. John Bliss in 1818 shows that Partridge was not alone in fearing devious combinations against the superintendent's authority. (See Partridge, January 25 and February 23, 1816, file P-30, SW:LR-Reg.)

36 Williams, Swift, and even Mansfield strongly praised Partridge on several occasions, even decades later in Swift's case. See Williams to Mansfield, October 30, 1808 and March 20, 1809, cited in Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 65 and 74; Mansfield to President Monroe, February 3, 1815, SW:LR-Unreg.; and Ellery, ed., The Memoirs of General Joseph Gardner Swift, p. 170. Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 365-67, is the strongest advocate of the view that Partridge failed because he refused to recognize that West Point was destined to be a civil engineering school. See also Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, p. 45. Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians, pp. 260-63 ("The Case Against Thayer"), gives a damning critique that I have found highly persuasive.

II. System, Order, and "Regularity" in the Thayer Era: Reform, Discipline, and Accountability

37 Thayer to Josiah Moulton, October 17, 1817, and circular from Thayer to the Academic Board, August 1, 1817, Thayer Papers, USMA; Pappas, To the Point, p. 188.

38 Thayer, August 29, 1817, enclosure to file T-119, SW:LR-Reg; Thayer to Swift, September 28, 1817, file T-140, SW:LR-Reg; Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, pp. 120, 139, and 141; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 100-101 and 107; "Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Military Academy at West Point," ASP:MA 2: 77-79 (1820) and "Regulations of the United States' Military Academy at West Point," ASP:MA 2: 648-57 (1824). See also Thayer to Graham, August 4, 1817, to Secretary of War Calhoun, January 31, 1818, and to Swift, May 3 and October 26, 1818, Thayer Papers, USMA. See also U.S. Military Academy, Regulations for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, 20 vols (Washington, D.C.: Governemnt Printing Office, 1920-1932).

J. Harper, 1832). See Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) for the general concept of "disciplines," which can be both mental--and therefore present among elites as well as non-elite or disfranchised groups--and physical, as were many of the constraints on West Pointers. See David J. Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), and Michael Ignatieff, A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850 (New York: Pantheon, 1978) on contemporary civilian "disciplines." Officers were not being disciplined for committing crimes, but the discipline itself--"solitude and severity," to quote one graduate--was not very dissimilar in method or intent (quotation from "Highlands and Highlanders," ANC 1 [November 19, 1835]: 373.)


41 "Rules and Regulations," ASP:MA 2: 77-79; "Regulations," ASP:MA 2: 648-57; register of cadets, March 1, 1837, ASP:MA 7: 50-51. The statistical relationships provided by the recapitulation at the end of this document (pp. 50-51) are uncertain because graduates are listed in the year they graduated, while cadets "withdrawn" or dismissed are listed by the year that they entered the academy. "Withdrawn" probably means discharged for academic deficiency, whether voluntary or involuntary resignations are included is unclear. Nevertheless, the drift and meaning of the statistics is obvious.

42 Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, pp. 77-79; Fleming, West Point, pp. 41-44; Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, pp. 146-52; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 116 and 123-26. See also An Expose of Facts, Relating to Recent Transactions, Relating to the Corps of Cadets of the United States Military Academy (Newburgh, N.Y.: n.p., 1819). During Partridge's administration Ragland had thrown a chair at the post surgeon and gone unpunished (Dupuy, p. 110).

43 Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, p. 176; Pappas, To the Point, p. 129; register of cadets, March 1, 1837, ASP:MA 7: 50-51; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 139. From 1830 to 1833 (when Thayer left the academy) an average of forty-one cadets graduated each year.

44 Pappas, To the Point, pp. 139 and 170; Dupuy, Where They Have Trod, pp. 152 and 181; Lt. Alfred Mordecai to his sister Ellen Mordecai, December 26, 1821, Mordecai Papers, LC; Fleming, West Point, p. 49.

46 Pappas, *To the Point*, pp. 159 and 174.

47 Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 251-53; Fleming, *West Point*, pp. 70 and 75-80; Dupuy, *Where They Have Trod*, p. 210-11 and 217; Pappas, *To the Point*, pp. 197-202 and 207; Thayer to Chief Engineer Gratiot, July 29, 1832, and to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, November 26, 1832, Thayer Papers, USMA. See Thayer to Swift, February 29, 1832, Thayer Papers, USMA, for a sample of Thayer's frustration. Actually, Pappas notes that "Secretaries Calhoun and Barbour made reinstatement an almost routine matter" (p. 197), doing so thirty-one times between 1822 and 1828, or in about one-tenth of the cases in which cadets were dismissed or forced to withdraw (and at the same rate of about five cadets per year as under Jackson), but Jackson did so in cases of dismissal for misconduct as well as those for academic deficiency, which made the difference to Thayer. Arson seems to have been the favorite weapon of protest and resistance by incorrigible cadets at this particular moment in time; four were charged with the offence in 1831 (Gibson twice) and three were dismissed. Thayer had submitted his resignation as early as 1818, when he was frustrated by the lack of funding and felt that his initial mission had been accomplished (Pappas, p. 112). Even in 1832 Thayer had not given up on improving the academy, however, for he sent Gratiot a "Bill for the better organization of the Military Academy" that January, proposing a five-year course in order to teach history and moral and political philosophy (Thayer to Gratiot, January 31, 1832, Thayer Papers). See also Lt. Alfred Mordecai to Thayer, "Private," April 21, 1829, Thayer Papers, whose words suggested the problems to come as well as the career professional's neutrality. Mordecai, who was then Gratiot's assistant, recommended to his boss that Thayer draw up a bill like that the superintendent sent three years later. Despite all the friction the Jackson administration secured increased financial support for the academy, and Thayer received his choice of the best engineer assignments available at his rank (Pappas, p. 208).

48 Fleming, *West Point*, pp. 91-92; Pappas, *To the Point*, pp. 223-26; petition to Secretary of War Cass, 1834, James Duncan Papers, USMA; Alexander Macomb, "Opinion of the Court of Inquiry" (re Mahan), 1834, Macomb Papers, USMA.
III. The Thayer Era: The Academy's Mission and Training Contested


Partridge to Secretary of State Monroe, December 21, 1815, file P-38, SW:LR-Reg.; Thayer, August 28 and 29, 1817, files T-119 and 122, SW:LR-Reg; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 109.

Thayer to Claudius Berard (the French instructor), August 1817, Thayer Papers, USMA; Forman, West Point, p. 45; "Regulations," ASP:MA 2: 651; Regulations of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (New York: J. and J. Harper, 1832), p. 20, Table A; Regulations of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York (New York: John F. Trow, 1853), p. 21, Table A. By "technical" I normally mean scientific or technological, in this context usually a reference to the primacy of engineering over strategy, tactics, and drill, and of mathematics and the theory of fortifications over practical military engineering.

Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, p. 98.


Report of the Board of Visitors, June 22, 1825, in the annual report of the secretary of war, ASP:MA 3: 148-49. See also the "Programma of Infantry


57 Hitchcock, unaddressed draft letter, June 12, 1833, Hitchcock Papers, LC; Report of the Board of Visitors for 1833, reprinted in MNM 1 (July 1833): 311.


59 Pappas, To the Point, p. 131; Report of the Board of Visitors for 1833, reprinted in MNM 1 (July 1833): 310; Totten to Mahan, January 26, 1839, July 5, 1841, and January 18, 1843 (quotation), Letters and Reports of Colonel Totten (hereafter cited as LRCT), RG77, NA; report to Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett, November 29, 1839, in ANC 10 (February 6, 1840): 88; to Poinsett April 18, 1840, Totten Papers, USMA; to Secretary of War James M. Porter, July 15, 1843, Richard H. Delafield Papers, USMA; "An Officer of the U.S. Army," "Notes on Foreign Military Schools and Army Organizations, in the
Year 1840," ANC&SR 2 (October 19, 1843): 506; Winton, "Antebellum Military Instruction," pp. 77-78. See Appendix C for a list of officers who travelled or were sent overseas for official purposes. The sapper company was not officially authorized until 1846, but the artillery company quartered at West Point for garrison and fatigue duties was employed for that purpose.

Macomb, December 20, 1822, file E-60, SW:LR-Reg., and Macomb, report on "the condition of the military academy," February 21, 1824, ASP:MA 2: 633; Wool, IR, October 24, 1831; Report of the Board of Visitors for 1833, reprinted in MNM 1 (July 1833): 311; Pappas, To the Point, p. 236. See also the reports of the Committee on the Course of Military Affairs and Discipline, June 1834 and 1836, in Boards of Visitors Reports, vol. I, 1819-1845, USMA Archives. Discrepancies in the grading system are due to different sources and dates, but the point remains the same.

Macomb was thinking of instituting cavalry training (of an unspecified character) in 1825, but Morrison reports that cavalry training (i.e., unit maneuvers) was not introduced until 1849 (Macomb to Major John De Barth Walbach, September 30, 1825, Macomb Papers, USMA). See however, Totten's report to Poinsett, ANC 10 (February 6, 1840): 88; Superintendent Delafield to Rep. Gouverneur Kemble, November 20, 1840, Kemble Papers, USMA; and Cadet William T. Dutton to his uncle J.W. Matthews, October 19, 1842, Dutton Papers, USMA, for indications that cavalry and horse artillery drill were underway before 1849. The Centennial of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), vol. 2, p. 95, reports that an instructor in cavalry tactics was appointed in 1837, but no such individual is contained on the lists of instructors in Cullum's 1850 Register (pp. 33-45). A riding master was appointed in 1839 and Lt. William Grier of the First Dragoon Regiment was detailed to the academy as "assistant instructor of cavalry" from 1840 to 1841. He was not replaced until 1849, however. It is probable that horse artillery drills were integrated into the artillery instruction after they were developed within the regiments in the late 1830s, but cavalry instruction was probably limited to riding lessons (which were quite popular) since no instructor was available after Grier left. There were too few horses and instructors available to expand the instruction beyond basic horsemanship, and the army doubtlessly felt that additional training could be acquired on the job.

Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 266. Winton, "Antebellum Military Instruction," generally follows this line of interpretation as well, though he goes further to maintain that academy training made most junior officers proficient drillmasters and small-unit tacticians.

Morrison, "Best School in the World," pp. 94-97; "Sam Jones," "United States Military Academy," ANC 8 (January 24, 1839): 50 and (February 21, 1839): 123; Mahan to a "Capt. Thomas, Secretary of Comm.," (presumably John Addison Thomas, then commandant of cadets, the committee being an internal academy one), December 14, 1844, USMA:LR, 1840-1890. Mahan's best known work, An Elementary Treatise on Advanced Guard, Outpost, and Detachment Service of Troops (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1847) (commonly known as Outpost) was not published until 1846, but its contents were already laid out in his lectures and the lithographed notes he distributed to students.

Jomini as a military thinker and his place in the evolution of strategic thought.

65 Quotation from Gat, The Development of Military Thought, p. 6, n. 8. See Skelton, "The United States Army," p. 335-36, following Edward H. Hagerman, "The Evolution of Trench Warfare in the American Civil War" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1965), pp. 1-28, for arguments for the originality of Field Fortifications. While it is true that Mahan went farther toward a system of doctrine than the army's tactical drill regulations, Field Fortifications is too diffuse to truly merit the appellation of "doctrine," and his occasional suggestions that a citizen-soldier army might use fortifications as a base to counterattack from after an enemy had been weakened are simply not characteristic of American practice (aside from some isolated instances on the tactical level in individual battles) until Sherman's Atlanta campaign in 1864, which was only a single campaign, however important at the time and as an example for the future. Hagerman is primarily concerned with demonstrating that the American Civil War was the first modern war, and that American generals realized the power of rifles and entrenchments and reacted appropriately, but his thesis is strongly influenced by hindsight, and I simply do not see this "Mahanian system" (my quotation marks in operation with any degree of consistency--it remained an influence and a potential rather than an established doctrine or practical reality. As I will suggest in chapter 5, the decision to remain on the defensive during the Civil War, at whatever level of strategy, operations, or tactics, was primarily a matter of politics and the balance of forces involved, not military theory or doctrine.

See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 255-56, 318-25, and 346-47, and Coffman, The Old Army, p. 77, regarding the officer corps' general lack of interest in (if not disdain for) Indian-fighting. One of Mahan's letters mentions models of blockhouses used on the frontier, but it is unclear whether these models were for training in their design or their defense; see Mahan to Welcker, August 6, 1842, Mahan Papers, USMA. See also Mahan to Thomas, December 14, 1844, and idem., undated memorandum, "Time Employed by the Engineer Department Before 1850," USMA:LR, 1840-1890; idem., lithographed note on "The Composition of Armies," pp. 33-36, George L. Welcker Miscellany, USMA; idem., A Complete Treatise on Field Fortifications, with the General Principles Regulating the Arrangement, the Attack, and the Defence of Permanent Works (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1836); Thomas E. Griess, "Dennis Hart Mahan: West Point Professor and Advocate of Military Professionalism, 1830-1871" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1968); and Winton, "Antebellum Military Instruction," ch. 1.
Wool to Calhoun, spring 1819, cited in Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," pp. 50-51; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 127 and 130; Shaughnessy, "Beginnings of National Military Professional Education in America," p. 166; report of the Board of Visitors for 1820, typescript in Boards of Visitors Papers, USMA; report of the Board of Visitors for 1826, Senate Document 1, 19th Congress (hereafter cited as Cong.), 2d session (hereafter cited as sess.), p. 259; "superficially taught" in Thayer to Peter Force, December 28, 1826, Thayer Papers, USMA. These deficiencies sometimes led the more intellectually inclined cadets to find the academy's thorough scientific curriculum too narrow. Before going on to a distinguished career as a military thinker Henry Wager Halleck (WP39, who went to the academy after two years at Dartmouth) wrote in 1836 that "I think it doubtful that I shall remain . . . Rhetoric, Political economy &ct are not sufficiently attended here." Isaac Ingalls Stevens (first in Halleck's class) felt that the curriculum was deficient in history, political economy, literature, and composition. See Halleck to Theodore Miller, July 1, 1836, Halleck Papers, USMA; Stevens cited in Pappas, To the Point, p. 225.


Thayer to Delafield, October 1, 1838, Delafield Papers, USMA; Mansfield to Connecticut governor Oliver Wolcott, August 4, 1820, and Major Henry Stanton to Thayer, January 26, 1822, quoted in Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," pp. 205-206; ibid., pp. 227-28; Mansfield Papers, USMA, passim; Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," p. 399; Thayer, August 1, 1817, file T-96, SW:LR-Reg.

Morrison, "Best School in the World," pp. 39 and 59; Totten to Secretary of War Porter, July 15, 1843, Delafield Papers, USMA.


Mahan to Thayer, November 3, 1832, Thayer Papers, USMA; Winton, "Antebellum Military Instruction," p. 22; Douglass to Thayer, January 12,
1826, copy in Thayer Papers, USMA, to Secretary of War James Barbour, March 1, 1827, to Secretary of War John Eaton, September 17, 1829, and to Chief Engineer Charles Gratiot, October 2, 1829, Douglass Papers, USMA; Denton, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy," p. 231; Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, p. 99.

72 David Bullock Harris to Eliza Harris, April 17, 1831, and to his father, July 31, 1832 and April 11, 1833, Harris Papers, Duke University. The resignation crisis of 1835-1837 is discussed in chapter 7 below. Meade did serve briefly in Florida in 1836, which may have spurred but did not create his desire to resign. Economic depression made the army a more attractive option in 1842, and Meade was able to secure a commission in the topographical engineers, with all the benefits and interesting duties thereof, rather than the artillery appointment he had left in 1836. Edward Coffman notes that eight of the officers given topographical commissions in 1838 had resigned during 1836 and 1837 (The Old Army, p. 56).

Similarly, U.S. Grant wrote in his Memoirs that he "had not the faintest idea of staying in the army even if I should be graduated,"and he saw a bill for abolishing the academy as "an honorable way to obtain a discharge." A year later Grant had become more committed, because he wanted to graduate, serve as an instructor of mathematics, and resign to take a college teaching position. Even Winfield Scott's visit, which led Grant to the oft-quoted encomium that the general was "the finest specimen of manhood my eyes had ever beheld," Grant still "had not the slightest intention . . . of remaining in the army. See the Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant (hereafter cited as Memoirs), 2 vols. (New York: C.L. Webster, 1885), 1: 38-41. Grant devoted only five pages of a thirteen page chapter to his experiences at the academy, and half of that to his furloughs and his sense of his future prospects in and out of the army: one page is given to his studies; one to opinions of Scott, the commandant (Capt. Charles F. Smith, whom Grant admired), and President Van Buren (who suffered by comparison); and half a page to his short-lived experiences as a cadet officer and on drill. In other words, Grant devotes only a third of the space on West Point to his training and overt indications of socialization there—a fifth of a single chapter in a work of two lengthy volumes. In contrast, he spends several pages on his appointment and trip to the academy, and another on the oft-cited incident with the urchin who sneered at his uniform.

73 Thayer to Gratiot, November 18, 1829, ASP:MA 4: 677-78; Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," pp. 400-401 and 409-411; Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country, p. 104; Thayer, August 1, 1817, file T-96,
SW:LR-Reg. See also Totten to Poinsett, November 26, 1839, Totten Papers, USMA.

74 General Order No. 48, May 18, 1833, Orders File, AGO (note that general orders were numbered in annual series); Mahan to Thayer, November 3, 1832, Thayer Papers, USMA; Pappas, To the Point, p. 206. For earlier indications of the cadre's alienation from line service see Colonel J.L. Smith, May 5, 1819, file S-298, SW:LR-Reg.; Adjutant General Roger Jones, March 29, 1827, file J-129, SW:LR-Reg., enclosing (with disapproval) a memorial by artillery officers posted at West Point (requesting that their regiments rotate stations periodically); and Lt. Z[ebina] J. D. Kinsley to Lt. Robert Anderson, July 10, 1835, Anderson Papers, L.C.


76 Matthew A. Crenson, The Federal Machine: The Beginnings of Bureaucracy in Jacksonian America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975). See "Sam Jones," "United States Military Academy," ANC 8 (January 24, 1838): 51, for a proposal that the academy teach "all the duties of . . . all the corps," including the staff bureaus. This was far too much work to cram into four years, of course. For more on Thayer, see James W. Kershner, "Sylvanus Thayer: A Biography," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of West Virginia, 1976) and Cindy Adams, The West Point Thayer Papers, 1808-1872 (West Point: Association of Graduates, 1965).

77 See e.g. Morrison, "Best School in the World," pp. 152-53.
"Our intelligent little army": Individual Activities, European Influences, and the Development and Diffusion of Expertise

The officer corps' professional expertise was certainly not fostered or expressed through institutions alone. This chapter explores other, more individual, means officers used to enhance their abilities and the capability of the army as a whole, a crucially important aspect of measuring the officer corps' responsibility in preparing to fulfill its assigned missions. The activities discussed in this chapter were more likely to be the product of individual initiative than those examined in the chapters preceding and following it, so they may provide us with greater insight into the actual substance of professional thought in the army--including its influence on the conduct of operations in the Civil War--unclouded by surface appearances about what the professional schools were officially supposed to do or teach. While all efforts to develop expertise can be considered efforts to increase the army's ability to carry out its missions, individual ones--or their rarity--provide especially clear evidence of professional responsibility in action, or its absence. Indeed, the activities of the cadre were representative not of the reality but of the potential and motives for professional study in the army as a whole; their more immediate contributions to military capability and policy are explored in chapters five, eight, and twelve.

The initiatives discussed in this chapter form part of a continuum of activities. Though most of the endeavors assessed in this chapter were at least quasi-official, the key distinctions are that they were neither institutionalized nor did they involve many men. The chapter therefore
concentrates on the work of a small cadre of a few exceptional individuals whose professional activity was unusually intense, in significant contrast to the general lack of professional activity in the officer corps as a whole. This chapter attempts many things, and it is more varied and complex than the last. In addition to professional activities themselves, it probes the content and construction of American military expertise by examining the influence of European military thought and institutions and the paradoxical role of patronage (which was often an obstacle to internal cohesion and sometimes to political accountability, as discussed in chapters seven to nine) as a means of encouraging the development of expertise and the capability of the army.

Two wider themes are suggested here: the officer corps' nuanced application of European models to American circumstances and their contestation within the corps—a pattern I return to in chapter five regarding tactical doctrine and chapter thirteen concerning debates over coastal defense policy—and the continuing importance of personal connections and abilities in the army's inner life and professional development, a significant dimension of the persistence of individualism in what may otherwise come to appear as a comparatively advanced bureaucracy with an organizational and occupational culture of impersonal system and rationality. This chapter therefore contains frequent references to disputes among officers, because the complex consequences of army patronage cannot simply be divided between matters of expertise and cohesion, both of which must be examined in order assess the army's capability and the officer corps' collective level of professional responsibility. Although the focus of this chapter is overwhelmingly on matters of expertise, it would be highly artificial, and a disservice to the construction of an historically and analytically nuanced account, to attempt to wrench apart these overlapping dimensions of human
interaction and professional development. Together, the twin themes of European influence (an external, though specifically military, factor) and professional patronage (an internal, though personal or institutional, influence) highlight the complex and historically specific character of the army's professional development: American officers normally attempted to emulate European precedent at the level of general principles, but when it came to specific instances they usually adapted foreign models to suit particular American circumstances rather than vice-versa, a pattern we see repeated in the Civil War. Though socially responsible in itself, officers' choice to do so, and the manner in which they did it, was conditioned as much by their particularistic "bureaucratic" interests as members of a certain suborganization or faction within the army as by abstract "professional" considerations of expertise and utility.

*     *     *

I. Patronage and the Development and Application of Individual Expertise

The members of the army's small cadre of experts participated in a wide variety of individual endeavours, formal and informal, official and unofficial, at their own initiative or under the direction, more or less immediate, of a senior officer or commander. Presumably these activities began at the individual posts, but there is very little documentary evidence of study groups or other informal mechanisms for postgraduate officer education within their immediate commands, and it appears that the initiative for professional study usually came from individual officers or from outside their units. Indeed, it is this very pattern of personal initiative and patronage that leads me to speak of an informal, self-selected "cadre"
rather than a systematic program of officer education within units. As an example, Captain Roger Jones (who later became the adjutant general of the army) guided two lieutenants in a leisurely examination of the wartime fieldworks at Buffalo while on a tour of inspection as General Brown's aide-de-camp (sometimes referred to as ADC hereafter) in 1818, but there is no evidence of staff rides or wargames conducted within units, and officers' papers provide little evidence of visits to American battlefields. Those of Europe were another matter, which indicates the reverence many officers felt for the European art of warfare, but one is left to wonder why they did not visit the battlefields of their native land more often, or why they said so little about them.²

Patronage began at West Point. Service there was a common means of professional self-improvement for well-connected officers and members of the cadre, while Lieutenant Zebina D. Kinsley, the artillery instructor between 1823 and 1835, chose a more autonomous but less accountable professional lifestyle—albeit "with the [retrospective] approbation of the Secretary of War"—when he opened a preparatory school for aspiring cadets in 1839. Kinsley was forced to do so because he had resigned in 1835 and was refused reappointment in the expanding Ordnance Corps three years later. Lieutenant Robert Anderson, who had gone to the academy with Kinsley's encouragement as his assistant and replaced him after his resignation, lamented Kinsley's resignation, "as my object in coming here, was to derive instruction from him." Indeed, acting as an instructor at the academy was virtually a defining characteristic of the cadre.³

Nevertheless, aside from experience as tactical instructors the academy provided little opportunity for specifically military postgraduate study until the very end of the interwar period, and very few officers were involved even
then. Perhaps the most institutionalized of the training mechanisms at West Point was Dennis Hart Mahan's tutorial for his assistants, begun officially at the chief engineer's order in 1842. By 1845 this initially informal series of discussions had become a two-year course with standardized readings (including Jomini, the premier eighteenth-century French theorist Jacques-Antoine Guibert, and Napoleon's Austrian adversary the Archduke Charles) and biweekly meetings to discuss strategic questions and present solutions to problems of the attack and defense of fortifications, but like the other cadre activities this class was an opportunity that was available to only a miniscule fraction of the officer corps, for Mahan never had more than three assistants in a single year before the Mexican War. (The "Napoleon Club" was not organized until 1848; it involved a larger number of men, but still a very small percentage of an expanding army.) Moreover, these men were not in senior positions during the Mexican War, in which President Polk and the generals made the strategic plans without planning staffs or significant input from junior officers. Serving at West Point or on company and battalion posts, Mahan's proteges never had the opportunity to practice their strategic ideas before 1861. As result they had little impact on the strategy of the war with Mexico and had difficulty relating ideas to practice during the Civil War.4

Though hardly common, the informal exchange of ideas and proposals between officers was another form of professional self-development. This pattern, along with the patronage that often accompanied it, is perhaps best illustrated in the career and correspondence of Sylvanus Thayer after he had left the Military Academy. The chief engineers (Gratiot and Totten) and the chair of the House Military Affairs Committee (Gouverneur Kemble, who lived across the Hudson from West Point and had been a frequent host and
guest of Thayer's) continued to seek his advice on a wide variety of issues, while Thayer took the initiative to recommend candidates for teaching posts at the academy. The ex-superintendent had vowed public silence on subjects relating to the academy, but he confidentially endorsed Major Richard Delafield for that post in 1838 and gave Delafield advice when asked to do so. (Kemble and Totten had moved to reinstate Thayer as superintendent in 1838 after Totten was refused the post the previous year, but Thayer's appointment was blocked by Gratiot, who disapproved of Thayer's rigid disciplinary regime while superintendent and his attempts to exclude the Chief Engineer from the chain of authority over West Point.) Delafield in turn procured professional books for Thayer using official funds. Two years later Totten asked Thayer's advice on regulations and ordered him to Washington to consult with the secretary of war on the annual reports to Congress. Thayer was also a frequent member of boards of officers sent to inspect fortifications and other frontier defenses, and Totten and the War Department ultimately gave him an extended leave of absence to go on a quasi-official tour of Europe during 1844 and 1845.5

Similarly, specialized activities directed at the development of "higher" (strategic or abstract) professional expertise were primarily matters for individual action, encouraged and given varying degrees of formality and institutionalization by senior officers and the War Department. Indeed, it is the patronage network created by these endeavours that best enables us to identify the small cadre of professional experts in the U.S. army before the Mexican War. This network had two loci: the staff departments (particularly the engineers and the ordnance) and West Point (among the assistant professors and tactical instructors). (The work of the staff bureaus is primarily examined in chapter eight.) These men were carefully selected for their
interest in and aptitude for military science and instruction. Those assigned to West Point usually served only a year or so before being sent elsewhere, but some (especially the artillery instructors, like Kinsley, Anderson, and Lieutenant Minor Knowlton) stayed for much longer periods, and like the staff officers they were often assigned to serve on the official boards of officers that tested new tactics and technology. Officers sent to Europe on official tours of inspection were almost always selected from among these two groups, and most of the army's official manuals were either written or translated by such men. Appendices B-E list a number of them along with their assignments; the paragraphs below and in the next two chapters provide testimony to their extensive activities and accomplishments.

The sense of inequality fostered by patronage damaged the officer corps' cohesion, but the patronage process was highly successful at identifying and promoting capable, well-qualified, and (usually) well-motivated officers to responsible posts where they could enhance the army's capability to perform its missions. Patronage was essential to the army's professional development among officers in the field as well as those in the staff or at West Point, and we can identify a number of officers whose tactical skills were proven in Mexico by following them in select assignments before the war. (Doing so also illustrates the nuances of army careers and personal relationships.) Commanders had substantial discretion in the choice of subordinates to carry out assignments, though they were limited by the seniority system and the rigidly fixed number of officers above lieutenant, especially when troop command was required: commanding general Macomb urged Colonel (brevet brigadier general) Henry Atkinson to hand-pick the officers of the 1829 Santa Fe escort "for their prudence and skill," and Colonel William Worth did much the same in 1841 when he asked Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock, his
"old comrade" (the principal tactical instructor and his successor as commandant) from West Point in the 20s, to supervise "a thorough overhauling" of their regiment's training in place of its lieutenant colonel. (Hitchcock tried to avoid doing so, however, because he preferred duty with the War Department or the Indian Bureau, which led to a feud with Worth and Winfield Scott discussed in chapter seven.)

Four years later Lieutenant Colonel John Garland, commander of Hitchcock's brigade in Texas, also delegated the drill of his unit to Hitchcock, now a lieutenant colonel himself. Indeed, Garland's career demonstrates the range of assignments (including patronage) and the diversity of expertise that characterized the best officers: an infantryman by branch, he had served as a quartermaster officer and aide at the War Department for a decade prior to the Second Seminole War, in which he distinguished himself; he was severely wounded and won brevets to colonel and brigadier general for his battlefield leadership in Mexico. Though they were personal enemies, Hitchcock's intellect, bureaucratic ability, and tactical expertise was recognized by Winfield Scott, who appointed him acting inspector general during the invasion of Mexico, in which Hitchcock won brevets to colonel and brigadier general for gallantry at Contreras, Churubusco (where Garland won his second brevet), and Molino del Rey. (Hitchcock was on an extended leave for ill-health--during which he read Spinoza--when Garland won his first brevet at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma in South Texas.)

A similar process of selection by merit was applied on a more general level in the choice of the horse ("light") artillery commanders, as when Captain Charles F. Smith was induced (after some reluctance on his part) to return to his regiment from the highly responsible post of commandant at West Point by the promise of such a company. This sort of patronage did not
take place in isolation from the impact of internal controversy and self-interested organizational considerations, for part of the reason for Smith's transfer was the opportunity to resolve a dispute between the Corps of Engineers and the line over seniority and command at West Point. (See Appendix J, "The Smiths of the Army," for a listing and statistical summary of the careers of the officers surnamed Smith between 1815 and 1847, which is in many respects representative of the patterns of officers' careers in general.) All army personnel decisions were made within the disciplinary framework of military hierarchy, and professional patronage sometimes took the more restrictive form of a refusal to accommodate important officers who felt that they had done enough and sought less stressful positions—both Thayer and Delafield were refused transfers from West Point on several occasions.⁷

Patronage sometimes (and critics said far too often) took the form of advancing a subordinate over the head of his seniors, whether officially in the army reductions of 1815 and 1821 and the creation of new branches and regiments or unofficially through assignments too important to be left to less competent men. The career of William Worth, perhaps the army's foremost field tactician between 1815 and 1848, is probably the best example of an officer's elevation over his seniors on the basis of merit, while it also illustrates the crucial role of personal acquaintance in army patronage. Worth was commissioned a lieutenant in 1813 and immediately chosen as aide-de-camp to two generals, the second of whom was future commanding general Winfield Scott. Brevetted twice for gallantry and distinguished conduct at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, Worth became a close friend of this leading professionalizer. The captain served as infantry instructor and commandant at West Point from 1820 to 1828; despite holding an infantry commission he was then assigned as the director of the Artillery School.
(Similarly, Charles F. Smith was an artillerymen assigned to the senior infantry post at the Military Academy.)

In 1832 Worth was promoted major in the newly reestablished Ordnance Corps over the head of a more experienced man, who had served in the ordnance since the War of 1812 and resigned when passed over. That summer Worth served as Scott’s inspector general on the Black Hawk expedition, and after commanding several arsenals (with some difficulties in his handling of artillery tests) he was chosen by Scott as his principal aide and de facto commander along the New York frontier during the Patriot troubles in 1838 and 1839. His success there combined with Scott’s favor to secure Worth the colonelcy of the 8th Infantry Regiment when it was reestablished to guard that border in the summer of 1838. Two years later the regiment was sent to Florida, where Worth became the de facto field commander under Colonel (brevet brigadier general) Walker Armistead. The following year (1841) Worth replaced Armistead, and in 1842 he brought the war to an ambiguous but broadly successful conclusion, earning a brevet to brigadier general. Worth’s finest hour came in the Mexican War, where he commanded divisions in both Taylor and Scott’s armies, earning a brevet to major general by distinguishing himself at Monterey and the battles before Mexico City. Unfortunately, even the most brilliant tacticians could not escape the internal friction endemic to the officer corps, and Worth proved himself as aggressive and energetic a controversialist as a combatant: he quarrelled with both his erstwhile friends Hitchcock and Scott (who unsuccessfully preferred court-martial charges against Worth in 1848), and his leading part in a dispute over the authority of brevet rank drew him, threatening resignation, from the Army of Occupation on the Rio Grande to headquarters in Washington a month before the initial battles, which he
consequently missed. (These disputes sometimes lasted for decades: the officer with whom Worth quarrelled, and almost duelled, over brevet rank was Colonel Daniel Twiggs of the 2nd Dragoons, who had sought to avoid service under Worth's command in Florida because of a dispute between them. Worth's disputes with Hitchcock and Twiggs are examined in chapters seven and fifteen.)

As Worth's case demonstrates, officers seeking patronage and professional self-development could confidently look to the army's commanding generals for material support and examples to emulate. Although administrative questions occupied most of their time once they attained the army's highest position, all of the commanding generals were professionally active as both individuals and patrons. Although originally a product of the militia rather than the regular army, Jacob Brown (commanding general from 1821 to 1828) actively supported the schools of practice, while the ardent professionalizer Winfield Scott (1841-1861) felt and acted on a personal devotion to doctrinal standardization and reform (discussed along with its complications in chapter five) unsurpassed anywhere in the world. A letter from Alexander Macomb (1828-1841) provides an example of professional patronage that illustrates his numerous professional interests along with many of the themes discussed in this section and chapter. In 1822 Macomb wrote to Secretary of War Calhoun requesting that Lieutenant Theobald Wolfe Tone be attached to his office to assist in scrutinizing "the plans of the several military schools of Europe with a view of discovering wherein they are superior to our own" and rectifying the deficiencies, planning a school of application for the technical branches, developing "a uniform system of tactics for the Cavalry & L.I. Artillery to correspond with the regulations adopted for the Infantry, for the use of the
Military Academy," and "to assist me generally in translation." Given Tone's 1819 Essay on the Necessity of Improving Our National Forces, his recent tours of British and French military installations, and his facility in French, Macomb felt "convinced that his talents could nowhere be employed to more advantage to the publick." In an army where promotion and ambition were frustrated by the sluggish operation of a rigid system of seniority, patronage enabled the army's commanders to select the most qualified officers for advancement, which contributed to the army's military capability. Patronage was therefore an act of responsibility even though it often disrupted cohesion and circumvented formal structures of accountability. Unfortunately, Tone's career tells another story as well, for frustration with his professional prospects under the constraints of the army's seniority system led to his resignation four years later.9

* * *

II. Missions Overseas

Historians have long recognized that the U.S. Army patterned many of its practices on European models. During this period the European influence on American military thought was largely a product of generally available knowledge about Napoleon's campaigns, while American military culture was largely derived from the way things were done in the British army. American tactical regulations were mostly copies of French ones, while the Army Regulations and the Articles of War were strongly influenced by—indeed at first virtual copies of—their British predecessors.10 This pervasive institutional impact was reinforced and the expertise of a small cadre was enhanced by a number—fairly substantial relative to the small size of the officer corps—of official and unofficial military missions and tours overseas.
Nothing of this sort had been officially attempted before the War of 1812, although Winfield Scott had unsuccessfully sought leave for such a visit as a lieutenant in 1809. These voyages of discovery and interpretation began immediately after the end of the War of 1812, when Sylvanus Thayer and fellow engineer major William McRee were sent to France to study the victorious Allied armies and military developments in France after the fall of Napoleon. They remained until 1817 viewing fortifications and military schools and purchasing books for West Point and the War Department. Winfield Scott and an aide visited France during the same years "to take an interior view of some of the principal armies" and "the military institutions of Austria, Prussia and Russia." They do not seem to have gone beyond London and Paris, where they met with many leading officers in the French and Allied armies and engaged in some tense repartee with the British. In 1820 Captain John Michael O'Connor (translator of the West Point text on military engineering and the art of war several years previously) requested funds and permission to continue a European visit for a year or two longer so that he could attend the French military engineering school at Metz. Here (as in the case of Theobald Wolfe Tone) incipient professionalization met a check: while it is unclear whether O'Connor succeeded in gaining this permission, a year later he was disbanded during the reduction of the army, a surprising development given his professional zeal and accomplishments.\textsuperscript{11}

After a hiatus of several years in the early 1820s caused by budget cuts and consequent economizing, officers continued to go to Europe officially and unofficially throughout the remainder of the interwar period. Beginning in 1826 promising officers were occasionally sent to France to study at that army's well-established schools of application, branch schools much superior to those at Fortress Monroe and Jefferson Barracks. The first such officer—and
an excellent example of professionalism and the acute judgment of his superiors—was Dennis Hart Mahan, who had been serving as assistant professor of engineering at West Point since his graduation in 1824 and wanted a leave of absence to relieve himself of the stress incurred in an ardent pursuit of his profession. After contracting a severe fever, Mahan wrote to Chief Engineer Macomb that "I found that in order to do justice which my own improvement, and that of those who were entrusted to my charge required, the same and indeed more study was requisite than what I found to be necessary during my course as a Cadet." Mahan noted that there had been "a late abuse" of similar leaves, but appealed "to my past conduct, and . . . my future prospects, as guarantees." His leave was granted and Mahan went to France with the intention of entering the School of Application for Engineers and Artillerists at Metz, "the first military and scientific School in the world."\(^{12}\)

Mahan reported that he was "received with the most marked attention" and "a hospitality truly American." He considered France highly congenial, and being "solicitous to make my trip . . . of permanent benefit" he successfully applied (with Thayer's support) for extensions of his furlough from 1827 until 1830. In 1827 and 1828 Mahan inspected public works and transportation projects and sent Macomb information on the new French artillery doctrine. (While doing so this junior lieutenant met "the most distinguished people" and visited Britain and Italy with letters of introduction from the Marquis de Lafayette, a good example of the regard in which military officers were held in genteel society.) In 1828 Mahan attended the French school of roads and bridges (his first choice among their engineering schools) and urged that another officer be sent to attend the school of mines, but it does not appear that he was able to garner the
necessary influence (or the motivation to cut short his stay) to bypass French regulations against the attendance of foreigners at the school of military engineering until 1829, whereupon he copied its curriculum as completely as possible for later use in his courses at West Point. Lieutenant Daniel Tyler (adjutant of the Artillery School from 1826 to 1828) was able to undertake a similar tour between 1828 and 1830, visiting the British Royal Military Academy (for artillerists and engineers) at Woolwich, a French camp of instruction for cavalry, and the French bridging school while attending the artillery courses at Metz to examine and translate their system of artillery material and doctrine.\textsuperscript{13}

Both officers returned to the United States in 1830, and nearly a decade passed before the next significant official mission overseas. (Inspector General Wool went to Britain in 1832 to acquire material for the Ordnance Board but returned empty-handed, though he was allowed to inspect Woolwich Arsenal and other facilities.) This was not because officers showed no interest in making the trip. A number did so on personal leaves of absence, and in 1828 Mahan urged that one or more officers from each branch should be sent overseas every year. Nothing of the sort was done, and his proposal was repeated by a correspondent to the Army and Navy Chronicle a decade later, who feared that "the few officers of experience and distinction, brought forward by the last war, are gradually dropping off," "rendering us liable at any moment to . . . degrading submission" at European hands. Congressional economizing and latent fears of foreign entanglements precluded the possibility of institutionalizing any arrangement of this sort, but these arguments found a receptive audience in Secretary of War Joel Poinsett, who set in motion a series of one-time missions during 1839 and 1840.\textsuperscript{14} Poinsett's successors followed his example in encouraging similar
trips, albeit on a more individual scale, and the early 1840s marked the high point in army travels overseas before the 1850s. (Indeed, there were more officers on official missions during the former decade than the latter, though the Crimean Commission of Richard Delafield, Alfred Mordecai, and George McClellan remains the best-known and most important of the antebellum army's missions overseas.) In addition to the major missions described below, the War Department sent Captain Augustus Canfield and Lieutenant Robert McLane of the topographical engineers book-buying in Europe in 1841, and Henry Halleck toured public works in Europe in 1845, shortly before he published his *Elements of Military Art and Science*.

Officers' missions to Europe, like their expertise in general, tended to focus on the technical arms (ordnance, engineering, and artillery). Indeed, no officers were sent overseas to study infantry tactics, and only one mission was charged with studying cavalry, when six dragoon lieutenants were sent to the French Cavalry School at Saumur in 1839 and 1840. Lieutenant William Eustis (son of the commander of the army's artillery school and its 1839 camp of exercise at Trenton, New Jersey) reported reciting tactics with French officers there and observing a camp of instruction of 12,000 men. His comrade Henry S. Turner, one of the most professionally knowledgeable officers of the 1st Dragoons, left Saumur feeling that the French tactics were superior to the American, as were the accuracy and promptness of their maneuvers, and he closed one letter to his friend and fellow lieutenant Abraham Robinson Johnston with a vain appeal for the study of morale (a major concern for the French, but not in the American army) and against that of material and technical minutiae: "to render our Mission productive of the most advantageous results it becomes necessary to give our attention to the French method of teaching and treating men, rather than that of horses."
After his return Turner took a leading role in the development of new dragoon tactics published in 1841, but the U.S. Army never gave enlisted morale the explicit attention Turner had suggested.16

Engineer lieutenant Alexander Swift's letters to his father from France in 1840 illustrate the professional activities and the alternating admiration and disdain for foreign societies and their cultures of an officer sent overseas for practical instruction in technical matters. Initially Swift declared that he was "not much excited" by the prospect of the trip, but he knew that "it behooves me to make the most of this opportunity" and he looked forward to commanding the company of sappers and miners at West Point on his return. His interest growing as he worked with the French officers at Metz, Swift found that "it requires but a slight effort of the imagination . . . to fancy that I am present at one of those great sieges that have given the French corps of engineers so great a reputation." Despite this enthusiasm Swift proceeded at a leisurely pace much like that of officers at home (spending perhaps five hours a day on his studies), and his time was as focused as that of any officer in New York or St. Louis on socializing and making useful acquaintances: "next to the valuable information which I am acquiring . . . I consider the cultivation of my social relations with the French officers as of the greatest importance." Indeed, Swift's letters to his father--the chief engineer of twenty years before, who could be expected to be an attentive reader of technical observations--are primarily narratives of tourism filled with his opinions about French society. The young officer considered his French counterparts lacking in gentility, and he soon became quite disenchanted with French life, to the point that he sometimes wished that he might "let sapping and mining go to the devil" in order to go home. Fortunately, at least thirteen other officers or future officers were visiting France at the time and he encountered
or received visits from several, including his uncle, Captain William Henry Swift of the topographical engineers, and the dragoon officers at Saumur. The younger Swift filed monthly reports to the chief engineer through his father and returned to the United States in 1841 after a quick tour of Italy and the French harbor fortifications in the Mediterranean, apparently as much confirmed in his nationalism as in his military expertise.  

Alfred Mordecai's letters to his wife Sara from the third major overseas mission in 1840 provide insights into the laudable zeal of professionals and the dangerous blindness of military romantics, a coupling that suggests some very human limitations to the social responsibility of the army's expert technical cadre (and certainly to that of nineteenth-century military officers in general). Mordecai's group of three officers and a civilian cannon-maker (also an ex-ordnance officer, and in fact the one displaced by William Worth in 1832) met with British officers and toured ordnance and engineer installations at Woolwich, Chatham, and Waltham. These were certainly dedicated officers--when Mordecai was disabled by rheumatism Captain Benjamin Huger used their leisure time "reading to him all the books I could find on the novel subject of Cannon." Mordecai wrote little to Sara about military affairs until he got to Stockholm, where he met a Russian inspector general of artillery, made drawings of cannon, and observed a military hospital, cannon foundries, artillery drill and gunnery practice, and "a very pretty camp of instruction."  

The highlight of Mordecai's journey came in St. Petersburg, where the Americans were presented to Tsar Nicholas and saw as many as 50,000 troops maneuvering at the camp at Krasnoe Selo. Mordecai was seduced by this martial splendor into writing that "you can imagine nothing more sublime": "The following three days will perhaps always be distinguished in our
[military] lives, as having exhibited such a spectacle as it may not happen to us to see again," a sentiment he probably regretted two decades later. In Prussia Mordecai thought of Frederick the Great and visited the battlefields of Leipzig, but found it "quite detrimental to the romance of fighting to see the monument of Poniatowski [a romantic Polish nobleman and one of Napoleon's marshals] standing by the side of a dirty looking ditch...in which he was drowned" escaping the field. The officers continued their trip with quick visits to Prussian fortifications, the arsenal and fortifications of Antwerp, and the armory and foundry of Liege, where they met "a Turkish General of Artillery, Emir Pasha, on the same errand as ourselves." After a total of six months the group rounded out its mission in France, where Mordecai spent four days at the arsenal and foundry of Douai and visited the central bureau of artillery in Paris.19

The years 1840 and 1841 were the high point of American military observation overseas before the Mexican War. The last major overseas mission of that era was, like the first after the War of 1812, the work of Sylvanus Thayer. The aging engineer visited the Paris fortifications in April 1844 and Belgian "military ports" and Dutch fortifications at Breda (including a "Military Academy" there) and Bergen-op-Zoom in May and June before going on to Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and the Rhineland. The Prussians were less receptive, but Thayer had no trouble inspecting installations in the Austrian Empire, including its possessions in Italy and the Tyrol. Rome, Naples, Piedmont, and Genoa completed the continental leg of Thayer's journey in June 1845, and he inspected Woolwich Arsenal, Chatham (the British engineering school of practice), Portsmouth, and the Plymouth dockyards before returning to the United States.20
Genteel officers’ personal connections to political elites provided another route abroad, for at least three young lieutenants accompanied American diplomats overseas as private secretaries: Robert Anderson in Colombia during 1825 and 1826 (from which he wrote to his brother, the charge de affaires there in 1823-24, on the fortifications at Cartagena), John Barry (son of the then-postmaster general) to Russia with James Buchanan in 1832 and 1833, and James Prentiss (who became one of Anderson’s counterparts as assistant adjutant general [sometimes referred to as AAG hereafter] shortly after his return) with Lewis Cass (who had just stepped down as secretary of war) in France from 1836 to 1838. Captain Benjamin Bonneville undertook similar duties as secretary to the Marquis de Lafayette on his trip back to France in 1825. Although these were not official military missions, they did enable American officers to talk to their European counterparts and observe their forces on parade.21

Officers with sufficient wealth also went abroad for personal reasons, particularly their health. Captain Alexander Fanning was in Paris privately in 1815, and John Michael O’Connor was there in 1819. Lieutenant Charles Dimmock went to Europe on leave in 1823 and 1824, while we have seen that one of Mahan’s arguments for seeking leave in 1826 was overwork at West Point. Lieutenant Stephen Van Rensselaer Ryan (whose middle name indicates his connections and probable wealth) wrote to Sylvanus Thayer from Paris that year (his first after graduating from the academy) describing his tour of the fortifications and battlefields of Normandy during what may have been sick leave. (Ryan had also been provided with money by the academy, which he spent on an engraving of the battle of Austerlitz.) Ryan later went on to Switzerland and Italy. In 1829 Winfield Scott visited England, Belgium, Germany, and France while on leave decompressing after
his defeated effort to gain command of the army, and Colonel John Fenwick, erstwhile commandant of the Artillery School and member of a number of boards developing infantry and artillery doctrine throughout this era, died in Marseilles in 1842.22

A number of the genteel officers granted leave to visit Europe were also important members of the army's expert cadre, which helps to illustrate the intimate connections between genteel status, official patronage, and the opportunity to acquire professional knowledge in an age of limited funding. Alfred Mordecai toured Europe privately in 1833 and 1834, the first of three trips he eventually made there, and William Eustis also visited Europe privately (on sick leave in 1836 and 1837) before he did so officially. Thayer initially sought his European leave in 1844 and 1845 to recover his health, while Minor Knowlton served with the French in Algeria during the latter year on a trip ostensibly for the same purpose, and ordnance lieutenant Josiah Gorgas--later the Confederate ordnance chief--went to Europe on leave with a friend. The number of officers travelling overseas peaked during the late 1850s, when Secretary of War John Floyd approved nearly half of the furloughs known to have been granted for this purpose. All in all one scholar has concluded that "at least 105 U.S. Army officers visited Europe between 1815 and 1861, accounting for 113 trips" (including thirty-five "official" army missions), an estimate that William Skelton labels "conservative," though all the official trips appear to have been accounted for above.23

The most intriguing but least well-known type of overseas tour and on-the-job training was that undertaken by officers who were able to attach themselves to foreign or naval expeditionary forces. Only a few examples have been found, and all were the product of personal connections rather
than established government policy. Captain Samuel B. Archer, a close friend of Winfield Scott and later an inspector general, and his artillery company joined the naval squadron sent against Algiers in 1815, and Archer travelled to Paris after the dey had been forced to cease his harassment of American shipping. Captain Ichabod Crane, an erstwhile marine lieutenant termed "one of the best artillery officers in the service" by his commander, also sought the assignment, "as the duties of a soldier on a peace establishment [are] principally confined to garrison duty; and to be actively employed would be more congenial to my feelings and wishes." Crane's application was supported by Commodore William Bainbridge, commander of the expedition, but it is unclear whether he was successful. Crane went on to serve until his death in 1857 and rose to colonel before becoming head of the Military Asylum for disabled soldiers.24

Army leaders were prepared to support regular detachments of this sort if they did not interfere with other duties: when Congress debated absorbing the Marine Corps into the army in 1829 Macomb declared that "this arrangement [stationing army officers aboard navy vessels] will give an opportunity to our young officers to visit foreign countries, which will improve them professionally, and at the same time make them more satisfied with their stations on shore" in the United States--pretty much the effect a European tour had on Alexander Swift a decade later. In 1840 Lieutenant Phil Kearny of the 1st Dragoons (officially at the French cavalry school) wangled a spot with the French forces in Algeria where he saw extensive combat on a scale unknown to the interwar army, and five years later Minor Knowlton served as an aide-de-camp to Marshal Bugeaud, the commander of the French army in Algeria, while on leave for health reasons. (Knowlton also went to Bermuda twice in the 1840s as a spy, though it is
unclear whether or how he evaded British observation.) Rare though they were, these opportunities exposed a few American officers to the operations of other services in the field and to combat against forces that (though tactically similar) were not Amerindians, the army's only combat opponents between 1815 and 1846. Although Kearny quickly published his experiences, it is highly doubtful that these experiences were disseminated to other officers outside of personal letters and conversation.25

Despite the tendency to select socially and politically well-connected officers, these trips were not mere junkets given to personal favorites with the right social connections, and unlike many aspects of patronage they did not arouse any overt resentment within the army. Indeed, the qualifications of the officers selected for missions overseas provide strong evidence of the success of the army's patronage practices by demonstrating the professional responsibility of junior and senior officers alike, both in the acute judgment of the army's senior commanders and the responsiveness and initiative of junior officers themselves. On the other hand, junior officers certainly recognized that these trips could be highly beneficial to their future careers. In 1817 John O'Connor fused professional service to personal advancement in his appeal for permission to go to Europe "for the purpose of further qualifying myself to be of service to my Country & Government, & of acquiring that extent & accuracy of knowledge so important to the success of our Arms in the field, & to the saving of Treasure or Expenditure in Peace or War." (O'Connor wanted to be appointed to the corps of engineers if it were expanded, but as mentioned above he was discharged in the general reduction of 1821.) This utility was also obvious to Alexander Swift, since he was sent with the understanding that he would be appointed instructor of practical military engineering at West Point upon his return, and he reported to his
sister that a civilian, Bayard Clark, was at the French cavalry school "on the strength of a promise given by Mr. Poinsett that after going through the course there he should receive a Lieutenants commission in one of our regiments of Dragoons," which indeed occurred when Clark was appointed to an infantry regiment and transferred into the dragoons the following year.26

The origins of Minor Knowlton's trip to Africa combined all the categories of motivation and intent noted above and say a great deal about the intimate connections of the army's expert cadre and the assumptions that informed their pursuit of military expertise. Robert Anderson, a captain, wrote privately to commanding general Winfield Scott (whom Anderson had served as an aide-de-camp and AAG from 1838 to 1841 after leaving West Point, where Knowlton was his replacement as artillery instructor) in 1842, warning the general of Knowlton's ill health and proposing that he be sent to Europe, "where very many improvements have been made in the science of Artillery . . . which are not to be learned by book." Anderson's letter provides succinct testimony to a powerful sense of professional responsibility which encouraged cohesion within this limited group:

Lieut. Knowlton is, I think, peculiarly fitted, by his intimate knowledge of the science, theoretically, and, as far as we go in this country, practically, his zeal and persistence, & by his acquaintance with the French language, to obtain and render useful, by his position as Instructor of Arty . . . that information, which is now . . . in a sealed book, and which would, in the event of a foreign war, be taught us by dire reverses.

"Knowing your determination to do all in your power to elevate the character of our little army, and to adopt every measure which will render that army most efficient and useful," Anderson felt confident in going outside the chain
of command to address his superior, and his expectations were born out by the order for Knowlton's furlough. 27

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III. The European Influence: Manuals, Treatises, and Contestation

The cadre's work on material and tactics and its visits to Europe were complemented by the frequent transmission of foreign military treatises, whose importance was magnified by the extreme rarity of detailed American military writing. (Indeed, Henry Halleck's Elements of Military Art and Science of 1846 was the only original book-length work by an American officer during the period that was not primarily intended as a drill or field manual.) Foreign works were often discovered while officers were touring Europe, and procuring them was usually part of the mission on such trips. Winfield Scott made one of the earliest proposals to go to France for this purpose while still a lieutenant in 1809, though he was unable to do so until after the War of 1812, when the process of transmission began in earnest. In 1816 Chief Engineer Swift requested extra funds for Sylvanus Thayer, who was in France and wanted to have Jean Baptiste de Gribeauval's eighteenth-century works on artillery (still considered the state of the art in 1815, though soon to come under attack in Europe and America alike) translated there. The following year Major Charles Gratiot received several French volumes on fortification for translation, and two years after that Captain John O'Connor, who had translated Guy de Vernon's treatise for the Military Academy in 1817, sent a prospectus of some of Jomini's new work from Paris. Thayer meanwhile proposed (unsuccessfully, as usual because of the demand for fiscal economy) distributing half of the 1200 copies of O'Connor's work to
graduating cadets in order to disperse military knowledge throughout the officer corps. In 1819 Brigadier General Simon Bernard of the Fortification Board sent the curriculum of the French Ecole Polytechnique (for civil engineering) and the military Engineering School of Application to the War Department, "as they may be of some service to the [congressional] Military Committee in deciding the questions now before them relative our own military schools." In 1822 Winfield Scott advised the War Department that he had received a book of extracts from the orders of the dukes of Malborough, Cumberland, and Wellington which he thought would aid him in revising the Army Regulations.²⁸

There was something of a hiatus in this process during the early and mid-1820s after the budget cuts at the beginning of the decade, but the flow of information resumed with Tyler and Mahan’s missions to France from 1826 to 1830. Indeed, such was the potential volume of official book-buying in Europe that in 1827 West Point engineering professor David B. Douglass suggested that he go there for fifteen to eighteen months as the academy’s official purchasing agent, citing Thayer’s example and support. Normal considerations of expense and military hierarchy still applied, however, often to the detriment of such expansive ideas: Douglass’s proposal was rebuffed, just as he, Commandant Worth, and academy chaplain Charles McIlvaine had been rebuked the year before for an unauthorized visit to Washington to lobby for a European mission "for the purposes of gaining additional professional knowledge."²⁹

The process of assimilating European knowledge continued steadily throughout the interwar era, though normally at the initiative of individual officers rather than the military hierarchy. Sometime around 1830, for example, Robert Anderson copied a French pamphlet of "Counsels to a
Young Cavalry Officer," though nothing more came of it. In 1833 Lieutenant George W. Cullum was "very much engaged in preparing some notes on Engineering for the Military Academy" while at Fort Adams in Rhode Island, while Alfred Mordecai ordered "a considerable addition to the War Office Library" per the secretary's order while on private leave in Britain. Colonel Stephen W. Kearny of the newly formed 1st Dragoons was apparently one of the beneficiaries of Mordecai's mission, as he asked Ethan Allen Hitchcock to bring the books he had ordered from England with him should Hitchcock be appointed to the new force.30

The European works sought after during the late 1830s and early 1840s tended increasingly towards the technical branches, particularly the artillery because its material and tactics were being overhauled at the time. In 1839 Colonel (brevet brigadier general) Abraham Eustis reported to Robert Anderson that he had ordered a box of French treatises, including "complete instructions for mountain-siege-garrison and seacoast Artillery" and "Exercise and Maneuvers of Cavalry," and the following year Mordecai wrote to his wife from London and Paris that he had "been rummaging bookstores for Mil. Books" while on the Ordnance Board's official tour. (All three men were members of the boards then working on ordnance standardization and artillery doctrine.) Two years after that (in 1842), when new artillery regulations were being considered, Major John Symington sent General Scott a French translation of a Prussian treatise from 1834, while Minor Knowlton sent Anderson an extract of a British manual and horse artillery captain Samuel Ringgold advised fellow light company commander James Duncan to write to Britain for a personal copy of the full edition. Lieutenant Henry Hunt (artillery chief for the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War) displayed similar professional zeal when he closed a letter to Duncan in 1843
with a page-long translation "of practical utility respecting [the role of] siege artillery" at the siege of Antwerp in 1830. (Hunt's "practical" but self-interested goal was to provide evidence of the need for more officers to supervise such operations.)

The engineers also reassessed their knowledge periodically in light of European standards, usually as measured by the curricula of the French professional schools, which were generally considered the best in Europe for the technical branches. In 1840 Lieutenant Alexander J. Swift promised "to send Colonel Totten a full account of the organization and regulations of the [French] Corps of Engineers" at Metz, and he obtained the textbooks there for use in the new course in practical engineering he would teach at West Point. Five years later Totten wrote to Sylvanus Thayer in France requesting books suggested by the Board of Engineers for the War Department library, the Engineer Office, and "the general advantage of the service." The chief engineer also wrote to Dennis Mahan concerning the revised edition of his 1836 work on fortifications, advising "a careful perusal of the new aide memoire [quite possibly the Professional Papers of the Royal Engineers, published annually from 1837 on] which some British Engineer officers are now publishing." Official directives like these never superseded the initiative of individual officers searching for European texts, who often sought works less purely technical than those demanded for official purposes: Lieutenant George Welcker asked Thayer for three books on fortification and the naval history of the Napoleonic Wars after he returned from Europe, while the American consul in Berlin sent Thayer several works on Russian military administration the following spring.
The number and productivity of these missions overseas provides convincing testimony of the admiration American officers felt for their European counterparts. This was a respect born of both experience and necessity. The European powers had just fought wars of an unprecedented scale for a quarter of a century. Indeed, where else could American officers, embedded as they were in a European cultural framework, turn for inspiration? To most officers, their primary opponents, the Amerindians, seemed savages, wily and cunning but innocent of organized tactics and military theory. In contrast, thoughtful officers recognized that post-Napoleonic Europe had "teemed, beyond all former example, with works throwing light upon every branch of the military profession": "Every army in Europe . . . has felt the spirit of enlightened discussion," leading to intensive doctrinal development that these officers felt the United States army had to keep up with in order to perform its self-proclaimed professional mission as the organized "repository of the military science of the country, and . . . the nucleus of future [military] organization" in America. As a result of these developments European models were accepted as an indispensable starting point among those officers who actively considered professional questions, the principal issue only whether Britain or France should be the primary model for emulation. (Prussian military achievements were virtually unknown in the United States, doubtless because so few Americans knew the language, which was not considered worthy of study at West Point.) The answer from most officers who considered the question was decidedly in favor of France—in Sylvanus Thayer's opinion "the sole repository of military science." In consequence, official American tactical manuals were virtually translations of French ones, and French was taught at West Point (with mixed success) throughout the period.33
This admiration was most pronounced among officers of the technical branches: when Daniel Tyler applied for permission to go to France in 1827, he wrote that he had "been constantly indulging the hope of visiting that Country whose Artillery has been the admiration of Europe." An 1834 article in the Military and Naval Magazine repeated this encomium, adding that "its artillery is composed of the best organized material in the world, and of officers, full of spirit and intelligence, who thoroughly understand its construction and use." In comparison, the author felt that the American artillery was "very defective both in its material and personnel," and a similar contrast had been presented by Inspector General Wool in his report to Macomb after returning from Europe the year before. Dennis Hart Mahan's admiration for all things French has already been mentioned, and his reasoning was hard to argue with. France had lost the Napoleonic Wars only after the Allies learned the lessons of French revolutionary warfare, and American officers rightly recognized the French army as the most professionally active in the world during the 1820s and 30s:

The present moment in France is a most important one, every arm of service is actively engaged in bringing to perfection those ideas, which experience had developed . . . At a later period, we shall have the results of their labours, but not what is perhaps more essential to us, the various changes, experiments, etc. of each day . . . our own service and that of England are the only two who are not at this moment reaping the advantages of the labours, of the most scientific and intelligent corps in the world, the French Corps of Engineering and Artillery.34

The authority of European military experience was not simply a matter of "objective" functional expertise. American officers appealed to European
example whenever the trump card of expert authority seemed useful, but
they did so as much in support of self-interest and convenience as in
promulgating the most efficient military policy or doctrine. Indeed, these
appeals appeared in every major controversy within the officer corps. In 1825
the captains stationed at Fortress Monroe petitioned Congress to raise the pay
of their grade, citing "the relative value of a Captain's and a Lieutenant's
Commission, in Britain and in France, whence we have derived our best
military regulations and most of our instruction in tactics," and two years
later a memorial from the officers of the 3rd and 4th Artillery Regiments
(including Abraham Eustis) observed that "it is the practice of every
government of Europe to make a periodical exchange of stations" between
units, which they sought in order to escape service on the southern seaboard.
When Quartermaster General Jesup publically criticized the detachment of
line officers as instructors at West Point during the Seminole War, "One of
the Schoolmasters" responded in the Army and Navy Chronicle that "in the
military schools of other countries, similar duties are performed by officers
who are carefully selected for them, and to be so chosen, is considered a mark
of distinction; here, at least, is the respectable authority of the customs of
other services for what obtains in our own." Six years later, when Jesup
submitted a report urging changes in the Quartermaster Department, a critical
junior quartermaster warned that "all European services, from which we
have so frequently borrowed, have their staff entirely on a different footing
from our own."35

Patriots as well as cosmopolitans, officers appealed to American
national pride and competitiveness as well as putatively objective or
universalistic criteria of martial expertise. This use of the cultural and
intellectual authority of European precedents was usually tied to the
preservation and expansion of institutions for the inculcation of military knowledge, which came under constant attack from an economizing Congress and Democrats suspicious of specialized—and thus inherently exclusive—claims to expertise. Dennis Hart Mahan wrote to Secretary of War John Spencer in 1841 to protest attempts "to break down every barrier against general ignorance on military science" by attacking the Military Academy, while "everything is doing in Europe to carry to the highest state of scientific culture their military schools, as one of the most efficient means of placing their military establishments on the most serviceable footing." Mahan contended that West Point had reached "a pitch with that of the best schools in Europe," and lamented that "the aspect, in which we should be placed . . . in the eyes of foreign states [if the academy were disbanded], is one that no citizen, who feels any solicitude for an honorable position for his country . . . can contemplate without . . . calling forth a blush of shame." Another professionalizer warned that all the European powers "keep alive the spirit of improvement, . . . provide the means, and offer inducements to both theoretical and practical excellence and distinction," while in Prussia "the officer . . . is compelled to study, practice, and improvement" by the system of promotion by examination which he sought for the United States. European examples also set standards for comparison and goals for professional emulation, and for many officers pride was as much if not more of a motive as concern for national security: out in the field, newly commissioned Lieutenant George McClellan wrote in 1846 that his unit had "made a bridge in the same time that the French pontooners do . . . and the French Corps of Pontooners is considered the best in the world . . . We will beat them before we have done!"36
Army officers sometimes approached slavishness in their desire to copy French practices, but upon closer inspection the land of Napoleon did not always live up to its reputation, especially as the passage of time produced American officers with a wider range of experience and expertise. This changing pattern of response also followed (and tacitly acknowledged) the growth of British military reform in the 1830s and 40s, for despite all the praise heaped on French engineering by men like Thayer and Mahan, Alexander Swift considered the school of application at Metz "by no means a perfect model," and he remarked that French engineer officers seemed "to look upon [their work] as a trade [rather than a profession] . . . [for] I observed very little of the real love of science." (From another, less experienced perspective, cadet David Harris loftily informed his father that France was "not to be compared to England in point of her civil engineering.") France usually provided the standard of measurement for military excellence, but the preference of many artillery officers for some version of the British system has already been alluded to, and officers studying infantry drill and tactics gave serious consideration to those of the British, whose 1833 manual Minor Knowlton believed superior to the French in some instances.37

National pride and skepticism meant that European example was not always regarded as gospel, particularly by more experienced senior officers with ideas and practices of their own and personal and institutional interests to protect. Consequently, Quartermaster General Jesup dismissed the British supply procedures advocated by a rival, "like most of those borrowed from foreign service, without regard to the difference of circumstances," as "entirely inapplicable" to American conditions. More fundamentally, Edmund Gaines of the frontier army (an innovative thinker himself, as we shall see in chapter twelve) used France as a metaphor for the bookishness he
affected to despise, denouncing officers "who have never seen the flash of an
Enemy's Cannon--who have acquired distinction only in the mazes of French
Books, with only that imperfect knowledge of the French Language which is
better adapted to the Quackery of Charlatans, than the common-sense science
of war"--a shot that was obviously aimed at the supporters and emulators of
his opponent Winfield Scott. Though potentially anti-intellectual in less
dedicated hands, this sort of disdain was quite valuable in other respects
because it reflected a socially responsible awareness of American conditions
and their difference from European ones. Nevertheless, such skepticism
towards foreign experience was rare, and it was usually the product of
personal idiosyncracy (like Gaines') or polemical need to justify and control
one's own functional and organizational jurisdiction (like Jesup's).
Alexander Swift, who had at one point confessed to being "heartily tired" of
France, ultimately did not regret a "short prolongation of my absence, as I feel
that I am doing the state some service, more than I could on the other side of
the Atlantic," and in 1839 Gaines appealed to British experience when he
wanted to have the geographic boundaries of the military departments
reorganized in his favor.38

* * *

IV. Professional Reading, Writing, and Discussion: The Limits of the Cadre

The average American officer seems to have read very little on his
profession, particularly after leaving West Point. This was not for lack of
material, though the available literature was sometimes outdated. The West
Point library offered a rich array of resources for engineers and strategists
alike: by 1850 the library was ranked sixth largest in the nation, behind only Harvard and Yale among institutions of higher education, and it was undoubtedly foremost in the nation in its collection of military literature. This accumulation was the product of close attention by the academy's leading figures. The first major accession after the War of 1812 came at the initiative of Joseph Swift, who charged Thayer with finding and ordering books for the academy while on his European tour in 1815, and Thayer himself kept close tabs on accessions, including a final order to his primary contact in Britain just before he left the academy. The administration of Superintendent DeRussey was less attentive, and in 1838 Mahan was forced to ask Superintendent Delafield to procure "all recent works, in any way connected with civil and military engineering, architecture, and the science of war, together with the periodicals devoted to the same subjects, whether published with us, or in Europe" as soon as possible, since "we are now nearly five years in arrears in my Dept. with such works."39

The professional expertise and identity embodied in the library was as bifurcated as that in the curriculum: in 1822 123 of the 943 books dealt with engineering and 320 covered military subjects, but under the influence of Thayer and Mahan the library became increasingly engineering-oriented over the years. More significantly, seventy-five to ninety percent of the books loaned were taken out by professors and instructors, and even the most professional of the non-technical instructors had little time--and apparently little inclination--for specifically military reading: between late 1824 and his departure in 1828 Commandant Worth checked out Saxe's Reveries on the Art of War, a volume of William Lloyd's works on strategy, the "Adolphus Memoirs" (presumably dealing with Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden), a biography of Malborough, and a translation of the Roman historian Polybius
--a total of seven specifically professional volumes (half of which were biographies or narratives) over four years, out of thirty-two he took from the library in that time. More generally, instructors at West Point were too busy tending to the cadets to take advantage of the academy's library for their own edification, a response which limited the academy's utility as a mechanism for shaping a military cadre of professional self-starters or potential strategists, and though examples of professionalism in many other respects, the cadre does not seem to have imparted an enthusiasm for professional reading to the busy cadets. Few of the latter took much advantage of the unparalleled resources available to them at the academy, checking out an average of only four to eight books per year. Some made lists of the works recommended by Thayer and their instructors, but U.S. Grant's reminiscences show the danger of assuming that those cadets who read substantially were doing so for professional purposes--he had "devoted more time to these [books he had checked out of the library], than to books related to the course of studies. Much of [that] time, I am sorry to say, was devoted to novels."40

After leaving West Point the officer's principal sources of military reading--save for the fortunate few attached to the War Department or the office of the chief engineer, which both had extensive libraries--were limited to private collections or those of the post libraries. Individually, Lieutenant Henry Hunt noted that "a very large portion" of his extra pay from detached service had been devoted "to the purchase of a military library," though "more would have been invested in the same manner had not recent events shown me but too plainly that my profession was by no means a certain passport" to career security. The post libraries were semi-official affairs established on officers' own initiative and individually funded through the quasi-autonomous councils of administration on each post. The system
therefore depended heavily on personalities (especially that of the post commander), and in 1840 a lead article in the *Army and Navy Chronicle* warned that when the frontier officer "seeks to find refuge in studies . . . he finds that there are few or no books at the post." The author proposed the imposition of a real system, "the purchase by the Government, for the use of each permanent post, of a good foundation of a library . . . a selection by an enlightened Secretary of War, of the best authors, ancient and modern, on military subjects," or at least "a well advised catalogue" to direct officers in their researches.\(^4\)

Professional reading was never systematized during this period, but by the 1840s most large posts had some sort of library, often in conjunction with regimental schools for enlisted men and their children. The collections tended toward general works and magazines of political opinion (usually from Britain as well as the United States) and, while they lasted, the professional journals: in 1841 Fort Mackinac in upper Michigan received the *Army and Navy Chronicle*, the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and the *Journal of the American Temperance Union*, and three years later the Fort Gibson library included the *North American Review*, the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *United Service Journal* (the only foreign professional journal that seems to have had wide currency among American officers) from Britain, and Sir Charles Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*. These libraries remained objects of dispute, particularly over their location when paid for from funds contributed by all the companies of a dispersed regiment. At least one officer wrote to another criticizing his commander for failing to erect a permanent reading room, but this letter appears to have been part of a more general schism within that unit.
rather than an example of a concern common to the officer corps as a whole.42

Individual officers sometimes contributed to these collections themselves, by donation or, more often, sale, just as Jonathan Williams and Joseph Swift had done for the West Point library. When he resigned in 1825, for example, Lieutenant John Hills asked Captain Rufus L. Baker to raffle off his military books to the other officers at Fortress Monroe or sell them to the post library. Indeed, building good collections often involved contact between the army's leading experts: nearly twenty years later Captain Erasmus D. Keyes asked Robert Anderson to recommend a list of books for the new post library at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina. Nevertheless, access to professional reading material remained spotty: even in 1843 a correspondent to the Army and Navy Chronicle complained that "in our service we have no regimental or post libraries, and, in the line at least, no large surplus of pay upon which the subaltern can draw to provide himself with the necessarily expensive works that would be required for a military library."43

Officers mentioned literature and light reading much more often than professional works in their letters and journals, and very few left reading lists or notes on their reading in their personal papers. (Indeed, Henry Halleck's "Military Notebook" was the only extensive set of notes uncovered in the research for this project, although Winfield Scott doubtlessly made some similar sort of compilation during the course of his extensive reading. Both men were exceptional figures, of course.) As we shall see, this silence was due as much to inertia, ennui, or social distractions as to material constraints, for the average army officer did not have a very busy schedule., while for general officers more burdened by the demands of fiscal and political accountability the reverse was sometimes true—even a man as powerful and motivated as
Edmund Gaines was "often . . . unable to lay aside my pen and official papers long enough . . . to read a dozen pages of a military" treatise or geopolitical analysis. (Like other officers Gaines was both responsible and self-interested enough to keep close tabs on current events through the congressional speeches reprinted in national newspapers.)

Experience served as the primary rationale for the study of history, one dimension of expertise of which American military officers were more cognizant than most of their counterparts in the civilian professions. Studying history did not mean studying technique--military science--alone, nor simply the works of genius and great men, but a rounded acquaintance with the operation of these factors in the context of circumstance and contingency. Indeed, though officers frequently recurred to the exploits of the "great captains" and believed that certain principles were applicable to virtually any situation, they generally envisioned history as a flexible guide to action, the presentation of example for the purpose of analogy (however extreme or inappropriate). Dennis Hart Mahan proclaimed this ideal in the first paragraph of his introductory chapter:

No one can be said to have thoroughly mastered his art, who has neglected to make himself conversant with its early history; nor, indeed, can any tolerably clear elementary notions even be formed of an art, beyond those furnished by the mere technical language, without some historical knowledge of its rise and progress; for this alone can give the mind those means of comparison, without which everything has to be painfully created anew.

Two decades later, in the midst of the Civil War, Mahan added that "it is in military history that we are to look for the source of all military science. In it
we shall find those exemplifications of failure and success by which alone the
truth and value of the rules of strategy can be tested."\textsuperscript{45}

Unfortunately, we have already seen the limited practical effect these
admonitions had on an often apathetic officer corps, and with few exceptions
American officers were probably significantly less historically conscious than
their counterparts and potential opponents in Europe. Like the Europeans,
those officers who read professionally did so eclecticly, though their primary
interests were naturally in the American Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars,
and contemporary European military establishments. On the other hand,
American officers' reading and writing on military history tended to be more
shallower than that of their counterparts, whether sentimental and filiopietistic
toward the Revolution or polemics about each other's battlefield
performances in the War of 1812, which dwelt primarily on disputes over the
facts of troop placement and timing rather than on the tactical interaction
between units or larger questions of strategy. The primary lesson that regular
officers took from the latter conflict was the disastrous inefficiency of the
militia, which was true enough in itself but did little to suggest means to
incorporate that indispensable source of manpower into realistic plans for
national defense. In other words, the search for professional monopoly over
the direction of armed force could be irresponsible in the long term.
Moreover, there were very few serious accounts of Indian warfare available to
officers, much less mentioned in their papers--insofar as the corps engaged in
professional reading it did little that was applicable to the immediate
problems at hand. The principal exception--and one that certainly helped to
make this deficiency good, at least insofar as its lessons could be generally
applied--was an extensive series of letters and articles published in the Army
and Navy Chronicle during the Second Seminole War, which treated a wide
range of the tactical and operational problems (principally the latter) encountered therein. There was also an extensive European literature on what the French called petite guerre---literally "small wars"--or what eighteenth-century officers called the "war of posts" or "war of places," but though present in the West Point Library and some lists of books purchased or considered for purchase by the War Department this literature is virtually invisible in the papers of American officers themselves.

Arguing from an absence of evidence is necessarily fraught with peril, yet research in thousands of documents in over a hundred manuscript collections has uncovered fewer than twenty instances in which an officer mentioned professional reading, much less discussed its content in any detail. Undoubtedly many others were missed, and further reading in the papers of more senior officers might uncover a greater tendency toward professional study (though the greater demands on their time make this a questionable proposition), but the point, reinforced by the opinion of virtually all scholars on the subject, must remain that junior army officers did very little professional reading and wrote very little about what they read. The exceptions tended to be idiosyncratic individuals or members of the cadre, whose interests tended to be technical rather than historical--more concerned with weapons, the minutiae of drill, and the organization and pay of European armies and their officer corps rather than strategy, operations, or tactics.46

Informal verbal discussions of military art and science must have been equally rare if one judges by the infrequency with which they were recorded. No doubt most conversations of this sort went unrecorded, but the sheer rarity with which they are mentioned in letters and diaries cannot fail to impress the historian. Indeed, some senior commanders implied that this
Silence was a problem: Brigadier General Gaines warned Lieutenant Abraham Johnston against converting casual remarks into courts-martial specifications, lamenting the tendency toward "conversations not purely intellectual or professional." Gaines' admonition was a disciplinary one intended to sustain collegiality and internal cohesion rather than the expression of a professional norm about expertise, however, and no reader of the papers of junior officers can help but observe that the vast majority of their reported conversations were social or occupational in nature, about rank, recreation, and postings rather than tactics, strategy, or military history. Their opportunities for face to face conversation were certainly limited by geographical dispersion, but informal discussion simply does not seem to have played a significant role in the average officer's professional education. Even in the Army of Occupation in Texas officers' letters and the conversations they reported back to comrades and family in the rest of the United States tended to concentrate almost entirely on army news of friends and postings or the likelihood of war rather than drill, tactics, or strategy, and few officers discussed the army's Mexican opponents in any detail.47

This paucity of informal professional discourse was mirrored and exacerbated by the absence of formal mechanisms for the encouragement of professional writing, a marked contrast to the flourishing military press in France and Britain. Some officers sought to use professional journals to remedy this lamentable state of affairs, but calls for professional writing were surprisingly rare, and the appearance of American military journals does not seem to have been the result of concerted reform movements like those in Britain and France--there was certainly a market for these journals that indicates substantial professional or reform sentiment, but American officers
did not themselves take the initiative in creating the platforms for their expression. Aside from the reports of the general officers during the reduction of 1821, there were several pamphlet-length efforts by individual junior officers in the years around 1820 to propose changes in American military education and defense policy, but they were exceptional in incidence and either derivative in content or (when they were not) went unimplemented in practice, and given spatial constraints I have not attempted to explore them at the length they may deserve.\(^4\) (I leave the content of officers' public correspondence to my examination of particular issues throughout the remainder of this work.) Indeed, the words of these officers testify more to the problems they faced than to their successful resolution. For example, "Coquille" reproved his fellow officers for their failure to contribute to the *Military and Naval Magazine* in sad though hopeful terms:

> \[T]he army and navy are filled with as intelligent men as the Union can afford. Every branch of science and literature find votaries in the quarters of the American officers; more than two-thirds of their time are devoted to books and conversation, the muses, and the society of the ladies; yet they suffer several numbers of a journal, established expressly for their use, and which they have been demanding for years, to be filled up with foreign [European] matter, and lists of laws.

His appeal, like his lament, was as much social as professional in nature, indicating a professional identity and commitment that he hoped would flower in cohesion as well as expertise:

> Brothers! forming as we do a family with which . . . we must ever be identified, let us united in rendering 'the Army
and Navy Magazine' the repository of American military talent . . . the hours of ennui, unavoidable in our comparatively monotonous career, will speedily cease to exist; we shall have a monthly Mercury, the very expectation of whose arrival will cheer our isolated existence, and assure us of our unabating connexion with society.49

The army's journals were fertile sources of professional discourse, but few historians have given them the thorough attention they deserve. The Military and Naval Magazine of the United States ran as a monthly from March 1833 until December 1835 (the month that the Second Seminole War began). It was supplanted by the Army and Navy Chronicle, a weekly newspaper of sixteen pages which ran from the beginning of 1835 through 1844, becoming the Army and Navy Chronicle and Scientific Repository in 1842. These journals published orders and notices of all sorts as well as editorials, anonymous correspondence, and articles reprinted from American civilian and European military journals. As "Coquille"'s comments indicate, about eighty percent of the contents of the first volume of the Military and Naval Magazine was composed of official, editorial, or foreign material, especially from Britain and the United Service Journal there. (The lack of French material indicates the limits of the Military Academy's success in teaching that language.) About two-thirds of the contents were naval-oriented, predominantly anecdotes and technological information, while non-naval material tended toward romantic reminiscences, particularly of Revolutionary and Napoleonic times. Although it included frequent lists of foreign forces and a number of significant articles concerning West Point, the dragoons, tactical regulations, enlisted discipline, and branch conflicts, the
magazine's principal function was to communicate and entertain rather than analyze.\textsuperscript{50}

The \textit{Army and Navy Chronicle} began in much the same fashion, but soon became the army's central forum for extensive debates over the causes and conduct Seminole War. By the second volume (July to December 1835) the \textit{Chronicle} was only slightly more than half naval in content, and by 1836 army-oriented material took up more than two-thirds of the space, with more than half of the total devoted to the Seminole War alone. The number of reprinted foreign articles and anecdotes declined precipitously, giving the \textit{Chronicle} a much more practical character than its predecessor, while the journal continued to serve as one of the principal means of communication from the War Department to the army as a whole, publishing general orders, congressional proceedings and legislation of concern to the army, and notices of appointments, transfers, deaths, resignations, and marriages. The civilian editor reprinted supportive articles from civilian newspapers and explicitly stressed army issues and interests in his opinion pieces.

Indeed, the \textit{Chronicle} is perhaps the most illuminating source of officers' public opinions about military policy and controversies within the army. Anonymity was the normal practice for military authors in both the \textit{Chronicle} and the \textit{Military and Naval Magazine}, which enabled the \textit{Chronicle} to act as a means both of communication and community-building within the army and an outlet for officers' frustrations, whether with Congress, white Floridians, the Seminoles, or one another (roles discussed at greater length in chapters seven, nine, and fourteen). While it published many analyses on specifically military issues of tactics and operations, the \textit{Chronicle}’s most significant impact was to buttress the officer corps' collective identity as a professional body and to provide a safe channel for expressing
the frustrations engendered by the Seminole War and congressional
antipathy, an outlet that eased civil-military relations during an era of
substantial dissent within the officer corps.

In the end, however, this role seems to have become either
unnecessary or insufficient, because the Chronicle folded for lack of readers in
1844 after several years of near-insolvency. (Indeed, it had ceased publication
for several months early in 1841 before finding new sponsorship.) Simple
apathy seems to have been all too common and all too reflective of the dearth
of interest in professional self-improvement among the vast majority of
officers not part of the small cadre of experts, and given the constant barrage
of disputes aired in the Chronicle it is unlikely that the journal did much for
internal professional cohesion. Doubtlessly many officers agreed with--
though they rarely echoed--the one who wrote that "all officers are bound to
[support] the only paper where their interests are solely studied," but during
the journal's hiatus in 1841 another warned of the dangers that such a forum
posed to professional comity: "it is perhaps fortunate that the Chronicle is no
longer extant as a vehicle for numerous criticisms which it would bring
forth." Criticism of this sort notwithstanding, that fall the revived Chronicle
sold at three dollars per year and ten dollars for five copies delivered to a
single post, prices which make it understandable that the journal went under
but almost incredible that it had problems securing subscribers, and this in
itself says little for the commitment and cohesion of the army officer corps.
Furthermore, it seems doubtful that congressional documents alone could
have served the function of a professional journal, as William Skelton has
recently suggested, for they were either too formulaic, too closely focused on
budgetary questions, or too few in number (especially those with really
substantive military content) and rare in circulation to achieve the impact of the weekly *Army and Navy Chronicle.*

Until the 1840s officers' letters and articles in the civilian press were usually polemics aimed at fellow commanders rather than expositions on the nation's military needs and policy (which were published in various reports to Congress and the War Department). Winfield Scott was the army's leader in doctrinal development and probably its most prolific author in civilian periodicals, but virtually all of his public communications were partisan political polemics or attacks on his rival General Gaines, who responded in kind. Gaines was the army's only "strategic entrepreneur" or publicist of any consequence; that is, only he consistently propounded a scheme of national defense (which I examine in chapter twelve) via printed pamphlets and letters to newspapers. Theater commanders and their junior adherents published a number of letters in partisan Washington newspapers during the Creek and Seminole Wars criticizing one another or defending themselves from attack, and the controversy aroused by General Jesup's criticism of West Point instructors during the latter conflict has already been noted. Fortunately, commanding generals Brown and Macomb both eschewed their subordinates' polemicism, probably from fear of its divisiveness and the openings it gave to enemies of the army.

Junior officers, most of whom served as instructors at West Point, began to write anonymously for the civilian press during the 1840s, usually to defend the Military Academy and the army in periodicals friendly to military preparation. Not all of these authors and forums were politically Whiggish: Captain Frederick Augustus Smith (an assistant professor of engineering in 1833 and 1834) was an active writer who published pieces in the *Washington Globe* and the *Democratic Review* in response to attacks on West Point, while
Minor Knowlton did so in the New York Evening Post. Indeed, Smith wrote at the urging of Chief Engineer Totten, who felt that his article in the Democratic Review "should by all means, come out before the assault is made in Congress--coming from that quarter its influence may be decisive."

Though their primary purpose was always to rouse public support for the army, such men could easily become subjects of controversy if they were seen as advocates for or critics of a particular branch or unit: Lieutenant Braxton Bragg's extended series in the Southern Literary Messenger was quickly followed by published attacks on and defenses of his conduct in going to Washington against general orders to lobby for his regiment's interests before Congress.53

Articles like these were primarily intended to convince public opinion of the necessity of a strong army and military academy in the face of congressional attack and the resolutions of state legislatures and militia conventions. As such they demonstrated a more public sense of professional identity than had been the case in the 1820s or 30s, a development attributable to the intersection of the officer corps' Seminole War experience of disenchantment and dissent with the postwar wave of congressional attacks on the army's size and compensation. Such essays had little to do with concrete questions of future military operations or strategy, however, though Bragg and his fellow lieutenant Daniel Harvey Hill provided detailed critiques of the overall state of the army (especially its supply services), the latter published just as the army went to war in 1846. Henry Halleck composed wide-ranging paeans to preparedness and the need for a military establishment in the New York Review and the Democratic Review which later formed parts of his Elements of Military Art and Science, and Lieutenant Edward Hunt (another assistant professor of engineering at the academy)
repeated most of Halleck's themes in the *American Whig Review* the summer the war broke out. (Hunt opposed the war, however.)

Insofar as specifically military questions were discussed in civilian periodicals, the focus tended to be on the desirability of the coastal fortification program given the advent of steam power and other technological developments, an issue debated intermittently but extensively from the late 1830s onward and discussed in chapter twelve herein. Edmund Gaines was the leading actor in this arena. He was also the only officer to undertake a speaking tour to publicize his views, doing so in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York during the winter of 1840-41. (Henry Halleck declared that he developed his *Elements of Military Art and Science* in a series of hastily organized lectures to the Lowell Institute of Boston in the fall of 1845, but it is clear that he had been developing its themes for several years in his newspaper essays, a lengthy report to Congress, and his personal "Military Notebook.") Officers played no specialized part in the era's movements to enhance popular knowledge; with the exception of Halleck and Gaines those who spoke at lyceums usually did so on nonmilitary topics at the invitation of the communities where they were stationed, a product of their recognition of officers as educated gentlemen rather than a hankering after military knowledge. It is far from clear why officers did not use these forums more actively to advocate military preparedness; there was certainly no official proscription against doing so, and I can account for this inactivity only by assuming that officers felt that arguing in favor of their profession before the local respectables was somehow undignified or controversial, and thus to be avoided as a matter of good manners and political neutrality.
The most important professional writing by officers was probably the
dull work of crafting regulations for the internal governance of the army as
an institution, an important dimension of its growing bureaucratization and
its officers' attention to issues of bureaucratic accountability. Winfield Scott's
work revising the Army Regulations is certainly well-known, but a number
of junior officers also published works under (or in hopes of) official
sponsorship, particularly digests of laws relating to the military
establishment. (Alfred Mordecai did so in 1833, and Trueman Cross, one of
the principal quartermaster officers and later an acting quartermaster general,
did so in 1825.) The 1830s were especially prolific in this regard, as each of the
staff bureaus published regulations for its own internal procedures in the
middle of the decade. (It is not clear whether this reflects a simultaneous
critical mass of institutional maturity fifteen years after the staff
reorganizations of the Calhoun era, a part of commanding General Macomb's
quest to bring the staff under his control, or a reaction to his drive for
centralization.) This growing articulation of standardized norms and
procedures culminated in the early 1840s with a new set of Army Regulations
and several works dedicated to the rationalization of court-martial procedure.
In creating this body of rules, the army officer corps took important steps
toward assuming responsibility for its internal life, a responsibility that was
accountable to the bureaucratic and professional norms of efficiency necessary
for organizational effectiveness, the congressional demand for fiscal
economy, and in the cases of the general regulations and courts procedures to
societal norms of fairness and equality between officers and of good treatment
for the enlisted men under their care. In turn, this accountability helped the
army to establish a reasonable compromise in its routine relations with
Congress and the War Department, by demonstrating a capacity for
responsible self-governance that enabled it to claim substantial autonomy in its everyday functioning.\textsuperscript{56}

Despite all the attention given to foreign military institutions and methods, it remains a fact that this interest, like most of the other "professional" ones we usually reify as constituents of expertise, was limited to a small cadre of officers, primarily those in the technical branches. The vast majority of combat arms officers, whether infantrymen on the western frontier or artillerymen in coastal fortifications near the major cities, left little evidence of giving consideration to the comparative dimensions of professional military expertise. Indeed, Thayer worried in 1817 that "the study of the French has been much neglected . . . very many have graduated & been commissioned even in the Corps of Engineers without being able to translate a sentence of that language," and despite the time devoted to rectifying this deficiency, several of the officers sent to France in 1839 and 1840 lamented the inadequacy of their French, which suggests that many of their less active comrades had little chance of reading anything not already translated.\textsuperscript{57} These men probably satisfied their limited curiosity with reading in the service periodicals established in the mid-1830s. Their lack of personal inquisitiveness was part and parcel of the more general problems the army faced in cultivating professional expertise among its officers: dispersion, lack of funds, and, among many officers, simple inertia and immersion in day-to-day routine. The last of these obstacles had two dimensions: the constant paperwork necessary for the fiscal accountability demanded by Congress and the constant quarrelling among officers themselves. A laudable attention to the former and a regrettable fondness for the latter constrained the pursuit of professional expertise among those
officers who did not feel an immediate interest in the details of their work by virtue of special assignment or extraordinary personal interest.

Drill alone, the sole exposure most officers had to their professional work after graduation from the Military Academy and passage through the schools of practice, proved wholly insufficient to stimulate professional self-improvement, which was ultimately left up to the individual. Perhaps American army officers tacitly understood everything there was to know about their work, but it seems indisputable that professionalism would have been better served by men willing to explicitly articulate the content as well as the rationale of military expertise. Whether a great measure of theoretical or abstract expertise was actually necessary for the practical needs of the frontier constabulary is certainly a matter open to doubt, but the army clearly failed to institutionalize its cultivation beyond the initial years of an officer's lengthy career. We must acknowledge that the most concrete obstacle to the development of professional institutions was inadequate funding, but we must also recognize that congressional parsimony was in itself a policy choice based on the lack of concern most Americans felt about foreign threats and their pervasive desire (facilitated by geographic isolation) to limit the scope of government activism, and as such it is difficult to condemn such inattention without espousing an anachronistic and politically biased hindsight.

The efforts of the army's cadre of experts were successful in three important respects. Despite the rather limited professional literature it produced, the cadre was able to keep American military knowledge generally up to par with European developments. More importantly for the long run, the concept of a peculiarly military expertise, substantially derived from and validated by reference to the great generals and campaigns of Europe, was an essential component in the professional identity of American officers, and
this identity was an indispensable foundation for occupational cohesion (if only in jurisdictional competition with civilian politicians and the part-time militia) and a specialized sense of professional mission and responsibility. Militarily, although few could be or would have described themselves as strategists, American officers were probably as well trained (though again, socialized is probably the more accurate word) in the mindset of administration, with all the commitment to rational planning that it involved, as in battlefield leadership and drill. The two put together gave them the potential to become effective logisticians and executors of large-scale operations like the expedition to Mexico City, though the disparity between their early experiences and the scale upon which they would ultimately be called to apply them would lead to difficulties in the first three years of the Civil War.
Chapter IV


I. Patronage and the Development and Application of Individual Expertise

2 Journal entry, June 11, 1818, Roger Jones Papers, LC. In one rare example of an officer touring American battlefields, Robert Anderson visited Quebec in 1836, stopping at Fort Ticonderoga and "the ever memorable battleground" of Saratoga on the way (Anderson to his mother, July 6, 1836, Anderson Papers, LC). Anderson was one of the most professional officers in the army, however, and can hardly be taken as representative. Huntington, The Soldier and the State, p. 218, notes a "Naval Lyceum" at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, to which there was no equivalent in the army.

3 See e.g. Major George M. Brooke, February 22, 1816, recommending Lt. Patrick Henry Galt (aide-de-camp to Winfield Scott, 1822-1829) for admission to West Point "for his improvement in the Military Art," file B-95, SW:LR-Reg.; Acting Secretary of War George Graham to Thayer, October 3, 1817, alerting Thayer that a Lt. Monroe, nephew of the president, had "obtained a furlough with the view of spending some time at the Military Academy for the purpose of improvement," Thayer Papers, USMA; "Military Academy," ANC 8 (May 16, 1839): 316; Kinsley to Robert Anderson, July 10, 1835, and Anderson to his mother Sarah, November 21, 1835, Anderson Papers, LC. See Appendix B for a list of the principal instructors at West Point and their assignments. Note that Kinsley unsuccessfully sought to return to the army by appointment as a major in the expanded Ordnance Corps in 1838, a goal well beyond the political influence and seniority he was able to claim. (See Kinsley to Rep. Gouverneur Kemble, February 2, 1838, soliciting his support, Kemble Papers, USMA).


5 Thayer to Gratiot, July 6, 1834 (recommending Lt. William H. Bartlett for the professorship of mathematics, which he received), Lt. William W. Mather to Thayer, March 4, 1835, Totten to Thayer, September 5 and October 23, 1839, and passim, Thayer Papers, USMA; Pappas, To the Point, p. 233; Thayer to Delafield, October 1, 1838, Delafield Papers, USMA. Thayer had sought "a free & direct correspondence with the War Department"--i.e., without the mediation of the Chief Engineer, who he probably distrusted after Swift's
vacillating support for Partridge, as soon as he took up the superintendency (Thayer to Acting Secretary of War Geogre Graham, August 4, 1817, Thayer Papers, USMA). Thayer was a member of the Board of Fortifications from 1838 onward; his contributions to various reports on national defense are noted in Part V.


7 Colonel James Bankhead to Smith, April 23, 1842, Charles F. Smith Papers, USMA; Pappas, To the Point, p. 112; Totten to Delafield, August 29, 1843, and Delafield to Totten (asking again), January 31, 1844, Delafield Papers, USMA.

8 See Edward S. Wallace, General William Jenkins Worth: Monterey's Forgotten Hero (Dall's: Southern Methodist University Press, 1953), passim. Worth was refused the senior staff positions of adjutant general and inspector general, for which he had no prior experience, when they were vacant in 1823 and 1825, an indication that his association with Scott could only do so much for him before he had enhanced his professional resume with these posts. See Lt. William Eustis to Lt. Abraham Robinson Johnston, June 17, 1841, Abraham Robinson Johnston Papers, USMA, concerning Twiggs and Worth.


II. Missions Overseas

10 By military culture I mean the full range of army life and society, including rules, rituals, customs and administration. These topics are examined in chapters 6-9. See Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians, pp. 31-37; Millett and Maslowski, For the Common Defense, chs. 1-2; and Weigley, History of the United States Army, chs. 1-4, for summaries of the English inheritance. It is examined in more detail in Royster, A Revolutionary People at War, and Gruber, "The Anglo-American Military Tradition and the War for American Independence," in Hagan and Roberts, eds., Against All Enemies, pp. 21-48.

11 Birkhimer, Historical Sketch of the Artillery, p. 301; Donald E. Graves, "Dry Books of Tactics": U.S. Infantry Manuals of the War of 1812 and After." Military Collector and Historian 38 (1986): 173; Molloy, "Technical Education
and the Young Republic," pp. 368-70; Scott to Secretary of State Monroe, June 20, 1815, manuscript copied from State Department Archives in Scott Papers, USMA; O'Connor, February 10, 1820, file O-21, SW:LR-Reg. See chapter 7 for Tone's concept of expertise and responsibility, which definitely did not include service with the troops in garrison, and his disbandment.

12 Mahan to Macomb, March 17, 1826, and to Secretary of War Peter B. Porter, January 5, 1829, Letters Received by the Chief of Engineers (hereafter cited as LR:CE), RG77, NA. Professor David B. Douglass also applied to tour "the civil and military public works" of western Europe in early 1826, but was rebuffed. See Douglass to Thayer, January 12, 1826, copy in Thayer Papers, USMA.

13 Mahan to Mrs. Mary Ann Charlton, June 25, 1827, Mahan Papers, LC; to Secretary of War Barbour, January 10, 1827 and March 25 and 27, 1828, to Macomb, July 7, 1827 and April 10, 1828, and to Secretary Porter, January 5, 1829, LR:CE.


16 Eustis to Johnston, October 27, 1839, and Turner to Johnston, November 27, 1839, Johnston Papers, USMA.

17 Alexander J. Swift Papers, USMA, 1840-1841 passim, especially to his father (Joseph G. Swift), January 18, May 9 and 26, and June 9, 1840 (quotations), and to his father August 4, 1840 and January 2, 1841 and his sister (Sally) April 24, 1840, May 17, 1840, and February 18, 1841 (other information cited). Ironically, Swift found France a place much like Tocqueville found the United States, without any of the redeeming qualities.

18 Huger to Mrs. Sara Mordecai, June 2, 1840, and Alfred Mordecai to Sara, June 30 to July 14, Mordecai Papers, USMA.

19 Alfred Mordecai to Sara, July 25 to August 7, August 24, August 31 to September 7, and passim, 1840, Mordecai Papers, USMA.
Thayer Papers, USMA, 1844-1845 passim. It appears that Thayer returned in 1845 rather than 1846 as is sometimes reported.


Ibid.; O'Connor, February 19, 1819, file O-20, SW:LR-Reg.; Ryan to Thayer, April 26, 1826, Thayer Papers, USMA; Elliott, Winfield Scott, pp. 253-54. Lt. John Pickell asked to be sent to Europe to escort Lafayette to the United States (Pickell, April 1, 1824, file P-6, SW:LR-Reg.).


Macomb to Secretary of War John Eaton, in "The Expediency of Merging the Marine Corps," etc., communicated to the Senate December 29, 1829, ASP:MA 4: 211; Kearny, Service with the French Troops in Africa (New York: n.p., 1844); Floyd, "U.S. Army Officers in Europe," p. 28; Totten to Delafield, March 31, 1843, and to Knowlton, January 10, 1849, Letters and Reports of Colonel Joseph Totten, RG77, NA.

Alexander Swift to Sally Swift, April 24, 1840, Alexander Swift papers, USMA; O'Connor, May 21, 1817, file O-7, SW:LR-Reg.

Anderson to Scott, February 5, 1842, HQA:LR.

III. The European Influence: Manuals, Treatises, and Contestation

Swift, November 5, 1816, file S-256, Gratiot, February 6, 1817, O'Connor, February 19, 1819, file O-20, all in SW:LR-Reg; Thayer to Secretary Calhoun,

29 Douglass to Secretary of War Barbour, March 1, 1827, Douglass Papers, USMA; Macomb to Thayer, January 31, 1826, Thayer Papers, USMA. Douglass’s proposal was probably refused because Mahan and Tyler were already performing this function. Douglass’s apparent eagerness to escape his teaching post at the military academy was noted in the previous chapter.

30 "Conseils a un jeune officier de Cavalerie par le Vicomte de Chollet (Du Cavalier et de son Cheval),” Anderson Papers, LC; Cullum to his civilian cousin Alfred Huidekoper, November 24, 1833, Cullum Papers, LC; Alfred Mordecai to Ellen Mordecai, November 21, 1833, Mordecai Papers, LC; Kearny to Hitchcock, September 2, 1833, Hitchcock Papers, USMA.

31 Eustis to Anderson, October 23, 1839, Anderson Papers, LC; Alfred Mordecai to Sara Mordecai, May 3 and September 16-27, 1840, Mordecai Papers, LC; Symington, April 19, 1842, HQA:LR; Knowlton to Anderson, August 22, 1842, Anderson Papers, LC; Ringgold to Duncan, May 1, 1842, and Hunt to Duncan, March 17, 1844, Duncan Papers, USMA.

32 Alexander Swift to Joseph G. Swift (who was also promised a copy), June 27 and November 12, 1840, Alexander Swift Papers, USMA; Totten to Thayer, November 1 and 16, 1843 and January 13, 1845, Thayer Papers, USMA; Totten to Mahan, January 29, 1846, LRCT; Welcker to Thayer, August 25, 1845, and Theophilus S. Fay to Thayer, March 2, 1846, Thayer Papers, USMA.

33 "Hindman," "The New Infantry Tactics, No. 1," ANC 1 (October 15, 1835): 333; Major General Jacob Brown to Secretary of War Barbour, annual report communicated to Congress by the president December 4, 1826, ASP:MA 3: 333; Thayer to Claudius Berard, August 1817, Thayer Papers, USMA.


35 Memorial to Congress, December 1825, file H-300, SW:LR-Reg.; petition to the secretary of war, with cover letter to Major General Brown, February 19, 1827, file B-236, SW:LR-Reg.; "One of the Schoolmasters," "General Jesup and the Military Academy," ANC 6 (March 1, 1838): 139; "One Who Knows,"
"Reflections on the Changes Recommended in the Quartermaster General's Report," ANC&SR 3 (February 22, 1844): 244. Mahan's letter cited just above was written in support of his application for an extension of his European furlough.

36 Mahan to Spencer, November 10, 1841, Mahan Papers, USMA; "F.R.D.,” "Thoughts on the Army," ANC 10 (April 9, 1840): 226; McClellan to his civilian brother Tom, August 28, 1846, McClellan Papers, LC.

37 Alexander Swift to Joseph G. Swift, November 12 and 24, 1840, Alexander Swift Papers, USMA; Harris to his father, July 31, 1832, David B. Harris Papers, Duke University. See Knowlton's report on the British forces in Canada, transmitted March 31, 1841, HQA:LR, for a summary of the relative merits of British and French tactical systems.

38 Jesup to Calhoun, November 22, 1823, ASP:MA 2: 559; Gaines, October 18, 1825, file G-138, SW:LR; Alexander Swift to Joseph G. Swift, November 12, 1840 and February 26, 1841, Alexander Swift Papers, USMA; Gaines to Secretary of War Poinsett, May 6, 1839, AGO:LR.

IV. Professional Reading, Writing, and Discussion: The Limits of the Cadre

39 Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," p. 455; Swift to Thomas Aspinwall (U.S. consul in London and an ex-lieutenant colonel), October 7, 1817, (see also Claudius Berard, list of books received from England, July 20, 1818, Berard Papers, USMA) and Thayer to Aspinwall, January 24, 1833, Thayer Papers, USMA; Mahan to Delafield, September 5, 1838, USMA Archives.

mathematics together accounted for 189 works, history and travel 123 (Shallat, "Structures in the Stream," Table 3, p. 61).


44 Gaines, June 23, 1822, file G-4, SW:LR-Reg.

45 Mahan, An Elementary Treatise on Advanced Guard, Outpost, and Detachment Service of Troops, pp. 7 and, in the 1864 version, 217-18.

46 My conclusions are similar to those of Winton, "Antebellum Military Instruction," pp. 89-92 and 121. The most notable readers I encountered were (as one would expect) Dennis Hart Mahan (not a serving officer) and Henry Wager Halleck (an engineer whose Mexican War experience was primarily civil-military and naval). Among others who commented on their reading, Alfred Mordecai noted perusing Washington's letters and "a scientific account of the 'Battle of Paris'" (the June Days); Inspector General Sylvester Churchill owned a copy of Wellington's despatches; and Maskell C. Ewing, a lieutenant of artillery, noted reading about logistics in a "Life of Washington." See Halleck, "Military Notebook, Begun January 1st, 1843," Halleck Papers, LC; Mordecai to his sister Ellen, September 22, 1831 and December 19, 1835, Mordecai Papers, LC; Churchill, list of books at end of Journal no. 3, (c. 1844), Churchill Papers, LC; Ewing Diary, entries for May 29-June 1, 1827, USAMHI. See also Meigs, "List of Books" and "Library, Recommended [by] Col. Thayer" (virtually all of which were French), Meigs Papers, LC. Other readers of note in the interwar army would include P.G.T.
Beauregard and, at the end of the period, George McClellan, a West Point graduate of 1846.

47 Gaines to Johnston, September 13, 1844, Johnston Papers, USMA. I examine the letters of officers stationed with the Army of Occupation in chapters 7 and 15, and in my "Manifest Destiny and Military Professionalism: A New Perspective on Junior U.S. Army Officers' Attitudes Toward War With Mexico, 1844-1846," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly (hereafter cited as WHQ) 99 (April 1996): 466-98.

48 See Lt. Theobald Wolfe Tone, Essay on the Necessity of Improving Our National Forces (New York: William A. Mercein, 1819); Capt. John M. O'Connor, "Reflections on the Means of Improving Scientific & Military Education in the United States," April 5, 1821, file O-31, SW:LR-Reg.; and Capt. John LeConte, supplement to the report of the Board of Visitors to West Point, June 1821, file L-151, SW:LR-Reg. Note that Tone and O'Connor were artillerymen and LeConte a topographical engineer. O'Connor was disbanded in 1821; Tone resigned in 1826 and LeConte did so in 1831.

49 "Coquille," "To the Officers of the Two Services," MNM 1 (July 1833): 303.

50 Samuel Huntington referred to the journals as an important dimension of what he labelled "the Military Enlightenment" of this period, but he did not examine the form or content of the journals themselves. (See The Soldier and the State, pp. 217-21.) Note that the so-called Military Magazine published between 1839 and 1842 was printed by a New York militia organization and devoted to militia matters.


52 See Kieffer, Maligned General, chs. 6-9, on the newspaper wars between Generals Jesup, Scott, and Gaines (who was seconded by Ethan Allen Hitchcock). Gaines' pamphleteering is discussed in Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, chs. 10-11.

53 Knowlton to Capt. Robert Anderson, March 2, 1843, Anderson Papers, USMA; Knowlton to Capt. Frederick Augustus Smith, July 3, 1843, Frederick Augustus Smith Papers, USMA; Chief Engineer Totten to Smith, January 29, 1844, Totten Papers, USMA; Bragg to Lt. James Duncan, May 18, August 12, and December 6, 1844, Duncan Papers, USMA; Bragg, "Notes on Our Army,"
in the Southern Literary Messenger 10-11 (February 1844-February 1845). See also "F.H.S.," "United States Military Academy," Southern Literary Messenger 9 (November 1843): 665-70, by Francis H. Smith, an assistant professor of ethics who had retired to teach mathematics at Hampton-Sidney College and then became the first superintendent of Virginia Military Institute. Bragg's attacker was Lt. Col. George Talcott, Chief of Ordnance, in a piece titled "Fair Play." His defender was Capt. Erasmus D. Keyes, aide-de-camp to Winfield Scott from 1837 to 1841 and artillery instructor at West Point at the time of the Bragg controversy.


56 See the bibliography for a number of these works; many are also mentioned at the appropriate points where I discuss the staff bureaus in chapter 8.

57 Thayer to Claudius Berard, August 1817, Thayer Papers, USMA; Lt. Henry Turner to Lt. Abraham Johnston, November 27, 1839, Johnston Papers, USMA; Lt. Alexander Swift to Joseph Swift, January 18, 1840, Alexander Swift Papers, USMA.

**THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARMY IN 1843: DISPERsal ALONG THE BORDERS AND FRONTIERS**
Chapter V

Attempts to Transmit Organized Expertise: Boards of Officers, Doctrinal Development, and the State of American Military Thought

The activities of the army's expert technical cadre were largely individual ones whose efficacy was limited in the absence of mechanisms for their diffusion on a broader scale. This chapter concludes Part II by examining the very limited efforts to create a more systematic cognitive framework for the employment of military expertise, whether at the tactical level of combat drill, the grand tactical one of battlefield maneuvers, or the strategic one of force structure. Doing so in a manner which is not dissociated from contemporary realities requires some further comparison with the professional thought of the officer corps' European counterparts. Higher military thought was normally the work of senior officers, of whom there were far fewer, both absolutely and proportionately, in the United States than in European armies. Seen in this light, American officers may have been more active than their foreign counterparts. On the other hand, the infrequency of doctrinal commentary and the utter rarity of debate over policy in the American professional journals contrasts sharply with those in Britain and France—although the American corps possessed a number of individuals who were interested in tactical drill and technology there was little to compare to the extensive discourse on these subjects occurring in France, Prussia, and by the 1840s, Britain. Similarly, only two American officers wrote notable book-length works on the art of warfare, and Dennis Hart Mahan's was in reality no more than a digest of methods and aphorisms, perhaps better suited to American circumstances than most but still the sort
of book that was a dime a dozen in Europe. Without more of these works American officers did not, and perhaps could not, develop or use the extensive professional vocabulary common in French or Prussian debates.

While comparative information is lacking, the rarity of American commentary or reflection on personal professional activities is both notable and lamentable. Junior American officers did not write about their professional learning experiences at the schools of practice, on western expeditions (their journals of which tended to be either dry chronicles of distances or florid observations on Indians and the countryside not unlike those of civilians), or, as we shall see in chapter fifteen, in the camps of the Army of Occupation in Texas. In this sense, the hopes of their seniors that geographic concentration would stir professional activity went unfulfilled. Aside from Gaines, there were no "strategic gadflies" of the sort--often quite junior officers, commonly on leave--who criticized official military thinking in France and Britain. Halleck's work, though successful in drawing together and synthesizing many of the commonplace of American military thought, did suffer from their tendency toward a mixture of abstract platitude and extreme specificity, which European works sometimes seem to have transcended. Given these conditions, talk of an American military epistemology during this era would be an analytic anachronism.¹

Similarly, the specifically or distinctly military content of the officer corps' occupational culture seems to have been surprisingly limited. Again the argument must be drawn largely from the absence of material rather than its presence, but it is truly remarkable how very little the officers in a sample of more than a hundred manuscript collections wrote about their military duties in any but official missives. Whether writing in diaries, letters to civilians, or those to fellow officers, the rank and file of the corps simply left
very little record of their thoughts on military issues. They did not comment on official reports (published or unpublished), on their training, or on the letters and articles in their professional journals, including the debates over policy, operations, and tactics in the Seminole War. Officers occasionally noted their own opinions, but very rarely those of others, and the scholar searching for an internal professional dialogue on the art and science of war cannot help being frustrated by these silences.²

There were two prominent exceptions to this tendency, but neither invalidates the general conclusion. Staff officers, especially those in the scientific and technical branches like the ordnance, wrote to one another about their work, sometimes quite extensively, and many officers of all ranks and corps commented on congressional activities regarding the military. These issues were not directly related to the core military duties and expertise of strategy, operations, and tactics, however, nor were they intellectually complex—it is again remarkable how narrow the foci of these officers' concerns were. Indeed, the officer corps' near-silence over the military uses of railroads (discussed at greater length in chapters eight and thirteen) is nothing short of amazing when we remember that West Point graduates were the best-trained engineers in the nation, many of whom resigned in the mid-1830s to work on those very railroads. Here stereotypes about a uniquely American technological prowess are confronted and confuted by the narrow mental horizons inculcated in officers at West Point or through their duties.

Officers' commentaries on congressional debates were squarely focused on the organization and autonomy of the army; their conclusions can be summed up without oversimplification as a belief in the need for a larger army with higher pay. These goals were certainly phrased as aspects of and contributions to military preparedness, but they were presented as little more
than aphorisms, combined with a fair amount of vitriol against those in ultimate control of the army's affairs. "Technicism" and army politics are not places to find evidence of a military expertise conceptually or functionally different from that of any skilled civilian occupation under the supervision of an external authority. Abstraction beyond the point of aphorism was not a strength of American officers, and their attention to detail was more directed to the concrete, easily measured realities of weapons and appropriations than the friction-bound and largely psychological realm of battlefield tactics and leadership. As we shall see in the next chapter, the first of these realms was considered a matter simply of practice, the second something almost innate, the product of character socialized by experience in the military value system of hierarchy, discipline, and individual and unit pride, both derived from the officer's class status and historical origins as a gentleman.

Why this lack of professional activity? Reasons may be found in officers' motives (individually and collectively similar), in the still fledgling state of the art and science of warfare in that era, and in the specifically American political and cultural context they worked in. The collective motivation of the officer corps tended toward institutional security and social gentility, two exclusionary ideals often subjected to attack in Jacksonian America. Practically, overwork might be suggested as a reason for the officer corps' inattention to questions of expertise, but American officers (like civil service workers of that era) commonly worked for no more than six hours a day; those whose record-keeping and reporting requirements were heaviest were not in command of troops; and officers' papers bear abundant testimony to the free time available and the apathy it often induced. Though the American army had no half-pay status akin to those of the European forces, enough American officers were on furlough or easy duty like recruiting to
obviate this distinction and the suggestion that it prevented them from concentrating their energies on the study of warfare like their European counterparts. A more substantial source of passivity was the relatively simple nature of warfare in this era, but this does not account for the professional activism of the French and Prussian officer corps. American geostrategic circumstances provide perhaps the best explanation, because the nation was clearly in no real danger from any serious opponent. As a result the army was small, dispersed, underfunded, and slow to develop specialized suborganizations, all circumstances unlikely to encourage professional discourse.

These conditions were all exacerbated by American political culture, with its antagonism toward centralized power--standing armies--and government expense. The mass army implicit in the assumption that the militia would provide America's wartime manpower needed skilled managers and administrators to supply it more than expert tacticians to lead it in battle. Indeed, given the absence of a serious threat it was hopeless to expect that civilians would turn aside from their peacetime pursuits to gain military training, so it was inevitable that any American army would be partially commanded by amateurs on the battlefield, while practical politics as well as the Constitution dictated that ultimate strategic command would go to the president as commander-in-chief. Civilian political control through the close attention of Congress also played a dominant institutional role in the circumcision of military debate within the army; Congress was the forum for virtually all important public debates on military policy, with the army usually doing no more than supplying statistical and other concrete data while offering stilted and often very passive or abstract recommendations that either accorded with cultural and political commonplaces or could easily
be interpreted to do so by anyone who wished. Senior officers and their well-connected juniors were much more active lobbyists in person and in private, but their initiatives were commonly verbal and when written related primarily to the concrete material issues of force size, organization, recruitment, and remuneration.

Mainstream American popular and political culture of the era was strongly anti-intellectual, and army officers like civilian professionals had to swim upstream if they were to articulate a specifically and exclusively military function and expertise. Although historians are beginning to recognize the growth of functional specialization during the Jacksonian period, there was nevertheless no American equivalent to the German concept of Bildung, or intellectual culture, nor the ideological justification for specialized expertise developing in Britain through the work of the Benthamites and utilitarians. Under the circumstances the Whigs, sympathetic to most of the elements in the officer's worldview, could only concern themselves with the general principles of military preparedness and expertise as manifested in larger appropriations and expansions of the army's staff corps. (Their distaste for American expansionism and Indian removal often ran counter this tendency, however, and it was the Democrats who saw to the addition of dragoons and mounted riflemen as security for the westward movement.) In this politico-cultural context fiscal accountability was considered a more important indicator of professionalism than functional expertise, and the most professional responsibility that officers could hope for was to exercise operational command and to advise the executive on national strategy. This pattern of civilian dominance, both theoretical and in practice, held true in both the Mexican and Civil Wars.
Assessing the character of "higher" or more abstract American military expertise--doctrine and strategic thought--also requires us to take note of the particular problems, perhaps unique among those professionals face in their scope and intensity, that military officers encounter in their professional practice, in other words, in combat itself. Doing so presents us not only with a significant contrast with the work of civilian professionals, but provides us with a background for understanding the army's practical training and models and styles of battlefield leadership explored in the next chapter. The single most characteristic feature of any battlefield--often the dominant one--is uncertainty. In Clausewitz's words, "war is the realm of uncertainty," and "no other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance." "There is no activity like war to rob men of confidence in themselves and in others, and to divert them from their original course of action." The military leader operates in a resistant environment that can be comprehended only by uncertain inference (educated guesswork) or costly experience--he fights mentally and physically to contain and overcome the friction of combat, to motivate subordinates and force enemies to do his will amidst the chaos and flux of battle. Clausewitz therefore cautioned that "action in war is like movement . . . in water, so in war it is difficult for normal efforts to achieve even moderate results," and "the very nature of [this] interaction is bound to make [war] unpredictable." Consequently, while "everything in war is [technically] very simple . . . the simplest thing is difficult" to achieve in practice.³

Indeed, the very organization which gives armies their power contains the seeds of disorder and failure, for Clausewitz noted that "we should bear in mind that none of [the military organization's] components is of one piece: each part is composed of individuals, every one of whom retains his own
potential for friction." This "friction" and uncertainty is the most important source of the cognitive and ultimately institutional conservatism of military officers and organizations. As military sociologist Morris Janowitz observes, "the military establishment remains resistant to sudden innovations or [putatively] brilliant insights which might cause doubt and temporary paralysis" in the midst of a crisis, for the ultimately impersonal obedience given to superiors in the hierarchy of military rank is instrumentally essential for military organizations to function effectively, given the probability of casualties that would incapacitate organizations dependent solely on the charismatic leadership of specific individuals. (This dependence was a major reason for the limited cohesion of tribal bands and feudal armies.)

The role of the military professional is therefore made especially complex by its mixture of charismatic and bureaucratic characteristics, the tension between subjective moral leadership by means of "character"--the cultural norm during the nineteenth century--and the more impersonal and universalistic (and therefore putatively impartial) requirements of bureaucratic "management." Military professionals direct the employment of organized resources on a far larger scale (and geographic scope) than do most civilian professionals, and one scholar observes that the "coordination of masses of men and material clearly requires those properties of precision, impersonality, and reliability which make bureaucracy the most efficient form of large-scale organization. [Indeed,] the [premise of battle] greatly intensifies the need for those same qualities." Nevertheless, the success of the officer operating in this environment of entropy and uncertainty cannot be achieved simply through mechanical obedience to orders from above, and the individualism of American society and the gentry values which officers
shared forced commanders to reckon—and indeed to rely—on the potent
impetus of personal ambition and competition among their officers.\textsuperscript{5}

Clausewitz believed that only experience could mitigate the effects of
friction, but the limits and subjectivity of military expertise are compounded
by the officer’s inability to practice the art of his profession in circumstances
anything like the environment of deadly opposition and entropy that he will
encounter in wartime. This was especially true of American officers during
most of the interwar period, because their exposure to active operations and
combat was so rare. Because armed conflict is in the long run an exceptional
event in human life, and occurs in an environment innately made fluid by
opposition, military organizations cannot calculate their options or base their
actions entirely upon probabilities derived from everyday experience (another
characteristic that identifies officers as professionals, because of the abstraction
and inference thus required of them). The potential for human error is
compounded by the very need to act together as a unit, and the strong
probability of error must be compensated for as much as possible by cognitive
standardization in the form of doctrine and bureaucratic controls through the
institution of a hierarchy of ranks, in which individuals are expected to be
horizontally interchangeable (at the same rank) and capable of upward
mobility (to take superiors’ places) should casualties occur.

The individually (and potentially societally) fatal consequences of
failure therefore place an premium on reliability and precision through
automatic responsiveness to command and a doctrinal system of rules and
standard operating procedures, despite the potential for mental stultification
(or at least lack of critical thought) that ensues. Nevertheless, one must also
remember that leaders and subordinates in any organization form unique
personal ties through long association and mutual experience of stress and
sacrifice, and the most effective military leaders are often those with innately personal gifts of charisma, be it called "character" or "the air of command."
The intensely human character of combat means that the disruption or loss (eagerly sought by an enemy) of these leadership qualities and relationships cannot be fully offset regardless of the flexibility of professional training and doctrine, and we will have to go beyond abstract systems of doctrine to explore the character of military leadership and drill and the social values and class relationships that undergirded them if we are to understand the actual practice of the army officer's work.6

* * * *

I. Boards of Officers and the Halting Development of Tactical Doctrine

The United States Army had no tactical or operational "doctrine" in the modern sense of the word (meaning a unified system of abstract goals and assumptions underlying and coordinating planning and policymaking and guiding individual decisions in the field) until the twentieth century. The artillery had no standard tactical system until 1840, while the infantry had little more than a system of close order drill for small units. Although that system was elaborated at the level of grand tactics (or those of fighting a battle as a whole through the coordination of individual units) in the second and third volumes of Winfield Scott's books of infantry tactics, it was virtually impossible to practice "evolutions of the line" (meaning those of entire brigades, or several regiments acting in tandem, as required in battles like those of the wars that framed this era) when the army and its units were dispersed across the country in posts of no more than a couple of hundred men apiece, and aside from a few lectures at West Point there was no
organized forum in which officers could envision or practice these tactics, leaving officers to experience them solely through their reading of military history. There were no staff rides or wargames, and Mahan's short art of war segment does not appear to have provided interactive opportunities to practice historical tactical problems in detail. Similarly, training at the branch schools of practice discussed in the next chapter was essentially in parade-ground drill intended to improve the troops' ability to maneuver in cohesive formations rather than maneuvers that would have enabled officers to replay historical engagements or to practice different resolutions to specific tactical problems. The army only held one "camp of instruction" with real maneuvers during this period, and less than a thousand men were involved.

In other words, all the limitations to the officer corps' military expertise described so far were aggravated by the inability to apply the principles of higher tactics embodied in the drill and history books with units in the field. These institutional deficiencies meant that there were no organized, official, or established mechanisms for doctrinal development--the process was largely individual and entirely ad hoc. Aside from the French and Prussians, European armies also had little in the way of grand tactical or operational doctrine, but the Continental powers had far greater opportunities to concentrate their forces and practice large-scale evolutions on the parade ground or on maneuvers, however unrealistically stilted these were. The U.S. Army's campaigns were therefore undertaken in an ad hoc fashion driven by immediate circumstances rather than by the application of a carefully thought-out system based on theoretical assumptions presumed to be generally applicable to distinct categories of operational circumstances, and only a few simple platitudes--essentially the need for force to intimidate and for mobility to engage--guided operations against Amerindians.
Doctrinal interest and development certainly did not flower in the field. The debates published in the *Army and Navy Chronicle* during the Second Seminole War constituted the only sustained discourse on military operations and tactics during the early national period, but the authors' comments were limited to the situation at hand and concerned primarily with operations rather than tactics per se, for most officers professed to consider the conflict an anomaly because of the swampy terrain involved. The Second Seminole War was the only significant experience of combat for the army between 1832 and 1846 and indeed the only one between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War which extended beyond a single season of campaigning, but its impact on tactical thought and practice was mixed at best. The army's task in 1835 had nothing to do with the European foes it had trained to fight, but the army employed variations on the traditional linear tactics embodied in its 1835 drill manual without discussing the details of their battlefield modification in official forums or private correspondence. (There were no officially standardized after-action reports or analyses, though officers did write narratives of battles and defenses of their conduct.) The most prominent features of American battlefield tactics in Florida were pinning (or attempting to pin) the enemy by fire (including artillery bombardments when possible), the flanking maneuver and the bayonet assault, all standard methods though conducted in open order lines of dispersed skirmishers intended to close with the Indians before they could evaporate into the swamps. Nevertheless, in this terrain it was simply impossible for the army to coordinate its forces to the degree necessary to achieve decisive results by encircling the Seminoles and preventing their escape. Indeed, most battles were brought on by the enemy's choice to remain in place long enough to draw the Americans into a costly assault on worthless
terrain. The army accepted this attritional calculus because it felt that there was no other way to catch the enemy, but by mid-1838 the Seminoles had ceased operating in large groups and main-force engagements came to a halt, leading to an extended low-intensity conflict.7

The army was forced to learn from its mistakes and adapt to its opponents' methods, but these adaptations were temporary and situationally specific rather than doctrinal in nature and expression. Individual American officers and units gradually learned from experience to fight a guerrilla war in small, dispersed formations using speed and concealment to harass the Seminoles, but the failure of ordinary tactical methods and the Seminoles' refusal to accept combat on a potentially decisive scale led the army's officers to a public search for solutions at the operational level. The focus of the army's internal debate therefore lay in the type and abilities of the troops to be employed and the operational rather than tactical plans for their use: junior and field-grade officers used the Army and Navy Chronicle to air their views on the desirability of employing light and irregular troops and the means of deploying them in Florida rather than their actual tactics in battle, which undoubtedly—and probably wisely given the flexibility necessary to their effectiveness—were left to individual initiative and circumstances. (As we shall see in chapter fourteen, these discussions also illustrate regular officers' opinions of Indians and white frontiersmen and citizen-soldiers.) They commented extensively (though anonymously) on the operational plans of their superiors and proposed their own, many of which are analogous to those employed in American counterinsurgency efforts since then, and by the end of the war the army's officers had learned to stress skirmishing and other light infantry tactics, lessons that were reflected in postwar training and inspection reports but were not incorporated into official doctrine by an army
whose officers remained dedicated to warfighting against European forces. Similarly, each regiment contained a "light company," but no specialized light units were officially authorized or created during or after the war. (These companies were formed into a battalion during Winfield Scott's invasion of Mexico, but they acted more as an elite assault force against fortified positions than as specialized skirmishers.) Nevertheless, the army had learned a good deal about guerrilla warfare, however informally it was articulated, and in the 1850s the "Third Seminole War" was fought much more effectively and won much faster, with far fewer troops and a more decisive conclusion.

Few officers wrote to the Chronicle or its predecessor about tactics or doctrine aside from this operational discourse and the debate over the 1835 regulations discussed at the end of this section. Similarly, tactics and drill were rarely the objects of comment or analysis by officers writing privately about their experiences in field or garrison, and few below field rank ever wrote to senior officers or the War Department with suggestions for improvement. Officers recognized the inadequacies of army drill manuals, and some proposed to write or translate new ones, but it appears that few commanders actually experimented with different systems or substantial modifications in the field. One very rare exception occurred in 1819, when Inspector General Arthur P. Hayne reported that Lieutenant Colonel Talbot Chambers of the Rifle Regiment had "devised a system of File Movements predicated on the movements of Light Infantry . . . which he has practised whenever circumstances would permit." More extensively, Charles K. Gardner, who had served in a variety of staff posts (including adjutant general of the Northern Division under Jacob Brown) before his resignation in 1818 (when the staff structure was reorganized), published a
"Compendium of Infantry Tactics" in 1819, but it was not adopted for official use. In a rare comment more than twenty years later, Lieutenant Philip Thompson of the 1st Dragoons rejoiced that "the new system of Tactics . . . is the best I have ever seen," but his comrade William Eustis (son of the artillery colonel and a member of the dragoon mission to Europe in 1840) remarked that there was "a good deal of opposition" to them at Fort Leavenworth. Neither officer commented on the substance of the new tactics or sought their reader's opinion.\textsuperscript{8}

In contrast to the extensive tactical discourse in the French and British armies, there were only two notable debates over questions of tactical doctrine within the American officer corps: that over the choice of British or French systems for artillery and the extensive criticism and defense of the 1834 infantry tactics aired in the first volume of the \textit{Army and Navy Chronicle} in 1835. (The debate that year over exchanging the stations of the infantry and artillery regiments spurred extensive discussion about specialization and the expert division of labor, but not over tactics per se, and the commentators' primary goal was to defend their branch jurisdictions and the consequent perquisites, so I handle this controversy in chapter nine.) This section now turns to follow the development of the army's tactical regulations and examines these two debates.

The potential capability of new weapons notwithstanding, technological change provided little actual impetus for tactical experimentation or development among the infantry during this period. The adoption of rifles was repeatedly recommended by officers with experience in Florida and the west, but despite repeated tests of Hall's and Colt's breechloading rifles the army continued to use Napoleonic-era muskets until
1841, when percussion caps were substituted for flintlocks in the firing mechanism of the new pattern (.58 caliber) muskets introduced that year. This made no difference to the guns' accuracy or the army's tactical doctrine, however, and smoothbore muskets remained standard until 1855. (Indeed, .69 caliber flintlocks firing buck-and-ball--several buckshot loaded along with the usual cartridge--were still common in the Army of Occupation that fought the initial battles of the Mexican War.) The principal obstacle impeding adoption of the rifles was--as so often in the armies of this era--expense, but serious doubts were also entertained as to their reliability under field conditions. Infantrymen seem to have praised the Hall's rifles they were given to test, but dragoon officers disparaged their breechloading carbines, which often discharged accidentally.9

The focal point for the army's slowly budding doctrinal development and tactical standardization after the War of 1812 was a series of official yet essentially ad hoc boards of officers, most of which concentrated on limited questions of battlefield drill. Some boards addressed larger policy issues, however, and all served as vehicles of professional patronage. Indeed, the first board of officers was organized early in 1815 to choose the officers to be retained in the postwar army. The second major board translated the French infantry regulations of 1791 immediately after the end of the War of 1812 for use as a standard system of tactics throughout the army--the first time since the Revolution that this goal was met. The third, the Fortification Board (whose work developing coastal defense policy is discussed at length in chapter twelve) completed its most important work by 1826, but some version of it continued to exist throughout the century. The Fortification Board's general role as a platform for strategic planning was supplemented by the
temporary Militia Board organized in 1826, which was formally charged with revising the tactical regulations for the militia but went beyond that mandate to recommend changes to the militia system itself.

The work of the Militia Board grew out of Brigadier General Winfield Scott's ongoing efforts toward a comprehensive revision and standardization of American tactical doctrine. Scott, the architect of the camp of instruction that trained the American regulars victorious at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, was also the president of the board that standardized the army's infantry tactics in 1815. (At the time Edmund Gaines thought Scott the "best qualified" officer in the army for this task.) As required by the general order authorizing it, the new drill was a virtual "carbon copy" of British colonel John Macdonald's translation of the French *Reglement* of 1791, which Scott then thought "decidedly superior to any other extant." Time constraints prevented the inclusion of drills specifically designed for light infantry and skirmishers, however, and nine years later Scott advised the War Department that he had found the result "not only cumbrous & ambiguous, but in very many parts extremely vicious."

The future commanding general's interest in regulations and procedural standardization extended beyond battlefield drill to the routine daily operations and discipline of the army, for which Scott deserves the same recognition earlier accorded to Sylvanus Thayer for his drive for "regularity." Scott envisioned the regulations as a comprehensive system of administration "securing alike fidelity to the troops and to the Government" through what he later labelled "regular analysis" and "a due logical connection and dependence between the parts"--an essential instrument for inculcating social responsibility and political accountability in a corps of high-spirited officers. After visiting Europe in 1815 to collect information on the
procedures of European armies, Scott wrote a new set of Army Regulations which were published in 1821 after review by a board of eight senior officers from several branches and staff departments, including Quartermaster General Jesup, the army's chief logistician and Scott's most important counterpart in the movement toward administrative standardization, efficiency, and accountability.

The review process was subjected to powerful personal and organizational imperatives of rank, army hierarchy, and honor: Scott first took the regulations to Major General Brown, his immediate superior, for comment, but too little time was available and Brown suggested a review board composed of captains and field-grade officers, which Scott protested (since they were his juniors in rank) and persuaded Secretary of War Calhoun to reject. Scott instead proposed to read and explain the regulations to the secretary and whoever else Calhoun chose for their comment. Calhoun selected Brigadier General Edmund Gaines, Scott's counterpart in the Southern Division and soon to be his chief rival, and later invited major generals Brown and Jackson to provide their opinions. These acts demonstrated laudable accountability on Scott's part and--both acts of professional responsibility since they secured indispensable internal and external support for the new regulations. The product has been characterized as "the first comprehensive management manual published in the United States."

The incremental process and glacial pace of tactical change and doctrinal development in the army of this era is illustrated by the work of a second "Infantry Board" inspired and chaired by Scott, which crafted another set of infantry drill regulations in 1824 after carefully consulting "all the commenta[ries] on the French system of Tactics since 1791" and testing their
questionable points through some small field exercises. Sylvanus Thayer and William Worth were members of the board along with artillery colonel John Fenwick, a member of the 1815 board and the official commandant of the Artillery School, which suggests that the testing was probably done at West Point and Fortress Monroe using the cadets and troops at those schools. (Note that including Colonel Hugh Brady four of the five members of the 1824 board had served together in Jacob Brown's Left Division on the Niagara in 1814, indicating once again the crucial role of personal acquaintance and patronage in shaping the development and diffusion of expertise.)

The board tested its work against the British and French regulations with what Scott considered generally favorable results—indeed, Scott claimed that the British drill manual of 1824 gave him "much additional trouble without much profit," save for "the consolation that our system is by far the better." Nevertheless the "new" drill was still Macdonald's twenty year-old translation of the French Reglement with a few corrections. Given Scott's self-confidence and his allegiance to the French system it is hardly surprising that the new regulations were not significantly different from the old ones, although the revised tactics incorporated a system of light infantry drill which Worth had adapted from European manuals for use at West Point. Even the light drill was not substantially different from that of the line, however, and it still did not include instructions for skirmishing in open (dispersed) order. Scott asserted that his new work was "in advance of that of any other nation," but within a decade he revised it again, and the significance of the tactics published in 1825 therefore lies more in the methods used to develop them (test exercises at West Point, and Worth's initiative concerning light infantry drill) than in their actual content.12
The 1826 Militia Board was intended to provide revised tactics for both the army and the militia in order to create a uniform system. Scott therefore suggested "the assistance of one or two militia officers, as members" of what--since he had just completed new infantry regulations--he saw as "the expected Cavalry and Artillery Board," specifically Massachusetts adjutant general William Sumner ("a well informed infantry soldier") and General Thomas Cadwalader of Pennsylvania, who Scott characterized as "the best cavalry officer in the United States" and "one of the best informed soldiers generally in our country." These men were appointed in July, along with Scott, Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Eustis (John Fenwick's chief subordinate and the de facto commandant of the Artillery School), infantry lieutenant colonels Zachary Taylor and Enos Cutler, Captain Charles J. Nourse (who had acted as adjutant general from 1822 to 1825), and North Carolina's adjutant general of militia.13

Scott was the president and guiding hand behind the group (which he continued to label as the Cavalry and Artillery Board), and his recommendations regarding its proceedings provide a good example of the practical work involved and the use of junior officers to assist it. Scott provided an extensive reading list for its members, consisting primarily of (in roughly equal proportion) French and British works on cavalry, and observed that "a comparison of the French, Prussian, & English systems . . . will be almost indispensable." Because he thought that the available works had probably been superseded, Scott suggested that the American ambassadors to Paris and London send the most current regulations they could obtain. In the meantime, Cadwalader "proposed to prepare . . . a projet for the cavalry which might serve as a basis for discussion & comparison," and Scott hoped that Eustis would do the same for the artillery. Scott recommended that the War
Department detail a junior officer to assist Cadwalader, preferably Lieutenant William Theobald Wolfe Tone (the board's original secretary), who had already prepared a system of his own, though Scott feared that Tone's "circumstances might render him too anxious to urge the superiority of his own work." (Tone had actually, however, opined that "we have little need of" cavalry in the United States, since "the enemy cannot send against us any considerable force . . . by sea, & our [wooded] Northern Frontiers are unfavorable to its movements." He obviously gave little thought to the nation's westward expansion.) If Tone proved unsuitable Scott suggested that Sylvanus Thayer could recommend a recent graduate on furlough. The energetic general also examined a very extensive catalogue of books presented for sale to the War Department, which he found highly "valuable to a professional student" but substantially overpriced.14

Despite his energy, Scott's "Cavalry and Artillery Board" had little lasting impact on American tactical doctrine. The tactical regulations crafted by the board were not much used in the army--there were no cavalry units until 1833, while senior artillerists like John Fenwick and his subordinate Abraham Eustis continued to complain about a lack of established doctrine for the next twenty years. Congress authorized sixty thousand copies of the infantry tactics and five thousand of the artillery (a French manual translated by Lieutenant Daniel Tyler in 1826, not a creation of the board itself) for distribution to the militia in 1829, but the next time this force was mobilized en masse was 1861, long after the 1825 and 1826 regulations had been replaced. On the other hand, Scott had finally succeeded in securing statutory confirmation of the principle of doctrinal standardization and uniformity between the regular army and the militia. Volunteer and regular units in the Seminole and Mexican Wars used the next set of regulations written by Scott
(in 1834), and the volunteer forces of the Civil War relied on William J. Hardee's tactics published for the regular army in 1855.\textsuperscript{15}

Despite Scott's rather narrow focus on cavalry and artillery tactics, the Militia Board's most important work was more general, by providing an analysis of the militia system as a whole. Scott and his compatriots took the initiative to prepare a report calling for what at that time would have been a thorough-going federalization of the militia, which is doubtlessly why their recommendations went unadopted. Their proposals were hardly new, but they did reflect the regular officer's respect for professional expertise: a call for annual "camps of instruction" for all militia officers under the supervision of instructors from the regular army and a suggestion that an adjutant general for militia be appointed to the War Department along with adjutant and quartermaster generals for each state. This apparent desire to spread expertise through the militia was only superficial, however, for Scott and Taylor seem to have opposed increased training for the militia for fear of blurring the distinctions between regular and militia, which might have threatened the regulars' privileged position. Like most of the army's other doctrinal efforts (those of the Fortifications and Infantry Boards, for example), the Militia Board's product was derivative, conservative, and outdated by the time it would have been used. More favorably interpreted, however, this work was part of an incremental process that maintained some degree of standardization among the far-flung American military establishment, while providing intellectual continuity as a basis for future development.\textsuperscript{16}

The foci of the army's boards of officers generally narrowed after the Militia Board shut down and the Fortification Board completed its initial planning. The last of the interwar army's boards of officers tasked to examine
issues beyond tactics, equipment, and daily administration was the Board of War (commonly referred to as the "Military Board") formed in 1832. This board was essentially an interdepartmental working group, in theory composed of the commanding general and all the heads of staff bureaus, to be convened by the secretary of war when he felt need of expert advice on a particular issue concerning the "discipline, police, economy, or expenditures of the Army, or any other subject connected with Military Affairs as he may think proper." With a mission statement as broad this the new board had the potential to bring a disparate collection of staff leaders--in essence, the "General Staff" established during and after the War of 1812--together to present a unified front in advising the War Department, which might have led to the formation of a true general staff in the sense we know today, but the primary motive behind the formation of the board was a desire for administrative centralization rather than the creation of a mechanism for providing expert advice to policymakers.17

In reality, it appears that the Military Board was primarily a product of internal politics, an effort by commanding general Macomb to regain control over the increasingly independent staff bureaus by creating a central reporting instrument. The secretary of war does not seem to have used his discretion to seek advice on the "other subjects" mentioned in his initial order, which could have included the nation's general strategic situation or even (during the Franco-American claims crisis of 1834-35) war plans, and the Military Board's actual work tended toward the pedestrian administrative affairs that consumed so much of the interest and attention of the officer corps as a whole: equipment and accountability for it, pay and allowances, and individual claims for compensation and rank. In 1834 Scott proposed to the secretary of war that he submit his newest revision of the Army Regulations
to the board, but it is not clear whether this was done, or how much alteration the staff chiefs would or could have proposed to the work of the army's premier expert on such matters. In all probability Scott asked the advice and comment of the staff chiefs he got along with, which fortunately would have included leading professionals like Quartermaster General Jesup and Adjutant General Jones. The Military Board ceased meeting in 1835, just before the army became enmeshed in a series of crises that forced senior officers to begin considering its strategic plans more systematically, but the board was not revived to aid them in doing so.18

The "Board of War" failed to realize its potential as a strategic planning group precisely because it contained so many senior officers and was charged with such diffuse responsibilities. Indeed, the board was really a coordinating rather than a planning body, for it lacked the staff of junior officers necessary to do research on a full-time basis. Though composed of a set membership, the board was neither a standing body charged with a specific policy area like the Fortifications Board nor did it have the focus provided to the Militia Board by the demand for new tactical regulations and a report on improving the militia. Moreover, its meetings were to be held at the discretion of the secretary of war, a dubious mandate for action in the face of bureaucratic infighting and the day-to-day administrative duties of the members. The charge to oversee "the expenditures of the Army" could provide an opening for more general explorations of policy, but it appears that the members avoided the divisive discussions that would have been necessary to reconsider spending priorities. The board did not even survive to act as the reporting mechanism to support the commanding general's authority that Macomb had hoped for.
The failure of the Military Board certainly did not bring an end to the use of officer boards as an administrative tool. A wide range of ad hoc boards were convened throughout the 1830s and 40s to test material like small arms, uniforms, and cavalry equippage, while others were proposed (but not formed) to oversee changes in the curriculum of the Artillery School and to examine officers for promotion. Boards of regimental officers were routinely used to inspect supplies delivered to their posts, while other groups like the standing post councils of administration and the commissioners customarily assigned to survey military roads operated on the same general principle of delegating responsibility to those most familiar with local conditions. Officer boards thereby served as one of the principal means of communication and coordination in army administration, especially where the efforts of more than one branch or department were required, and by doing so supported the accountability of the officer corps as an occupation and the army as an institution. Though normally ad hoc rather than permanent, the boards were an essential step in the bureaucratization of the army, a significant advance towards fiscal accountability and responsibility to civilian political control.19

Aside from the Fortifications Board (discussed in chapter thirteen below), the longest-lasting and most institutionalized of the major specialized boards created before the Mexican War was the Ordnance Board, initially authorized in 1831 just before the Ordnance was reestablished as a separate staff department. These measures were undertaken in response to the perceived inadequacy of American artillery, which urgently needed standardization and modernization. The first complete system of artillery material (guns, carriages, etc.) officially adopted by the army had been based on the recommendations of an ad hoc board in 1818, which advocated the
adoption of the French system created by Jean Baptiste de Gribeauval in the late eighteenth century. This system was proven in the Napoleonic Wars, but ordnance chief Decius Wadsworth observed the new British system in action during the War of 1812 and sought its adoption instead.

Wadsworth's views were rejected by the 1818 board, but not enough money was available to replace the confused mixture of American artillery with the Gribeauval system, and within a decade the commanding general reported that "in all our forts and sea batteries there is a lamentable deficiency of artillery material. Almost all the Atlantic posts require new supplies of ordnance, new platforms, and new carriages." The following year (1827) Lieutenant Daniel Tyler (who translated the artillery manual for militia from the French in 1826 and then became adjutant of the Artillery School at Fort Monroe) applied on his own initiative to be sent to the French artillery school of application at Metz to study the Gribeauval system, translate the relevant drill manual, and examine the French adaptations of the British system recommended by Wadsworth a decade before. Once there he sent home the French report comparing the two systems, along with the complete Gribeauval manuals and specifications of the new system, all at his own expense. In 1829 Inspector General Wool (who normally focused his inspections on the Eastern Department and the artillery posts and ordnance installations concentrated there) recommended the formation of a board to meet annually to study the question of artillery equipment, and in his annual report for 1830 General Macomb warned that "many years must elapse before a sufficient supply [of cannon] can be furnished for defence of the seacoast."

The necessity of a board to develop the proper ordnance had become glaringly obvious.
The new board's initial members were Macomb, Wool, Chief Engineer Gratiot, chief of ordnance George Bomford, and Abraham Eustis (who was once again in command of the Artillery School). Eustis was particularly eager to serve on the new board, "influenced solely by the desire of contributing all in my power to the proper establishment of the arm in which I have served more than twenty three years": "I am one of the very few officers remaining in the army, who have had experience of the service of Artillery in the Field."

Upon his appointment, Eustis promptly sent to ordnance captain Rufus Lathrop Baker to ask for technical information, and informed Baker that "one or more officers are to be sent immediately to Europe to obtain . . . English and French field guns, carriages &c, & models of all their heavy guns & fixed carriages." Inspector General Wool undertook this mission and inspected the British artillery school at Woolwich, which he considered excellent, but he returned with nothing more than some expensive swords and dress uniforms. Indeed, Wool felt certain that he "could form a School of practice superior" to Woolwich but for the expense involved. "It is not so much in the materials . . . that England and France excel us. It is the constant practice which makes them so superior," the inspector general declared, tacitly indicating the gap between the technicism of the cadre and the practical needs of field soldiers.21

Nevertheless, it was undeniable that American ordnance material was both unstandardized and out of date, and the board moved ahead in greater detail. By 1835 enough material had been accumulated to test the French system, which was done under the supervision of a new, more specialized board with Wool, Eustis, Gratiot, and three ordnance officers, Lieutenant Colonel George Talcott, Captain Benjamin Huger, and Captain Alfred Mordecai (who had already benefitted from a European leave of absence and
tests conducted at an arsenal under his command). Its work on carriages and caissons was adopted in 1836 and the group moved on to cannon themselves. Their recommendations, based largely on Mordecai’s designs, were questioned by Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett, who appointed a new, even more specialized board (minus engineers and inspector general) in 1837 with Eustis, Talcott, Mordecai, and Rufus Baker.22

This process went on with annual or biannual board meetings throughout the era, spurred by the cadre of scientific professionals, their desire for "uniformity and simplicity," and their dissatisfaction with the incomplete progress made in modernizing the artillery. An 1834 article in the Military and Naval Magazine warned that "it is absolutely requisite, as the first step towards a proper organization [of the artillery], that the material in all its branches be unalterably fixed. Without this there can be no unity of purpose; and consequently no stability, or permanence." When Sylvanorus Thayer gave Representative Gouverneur Kemble his views on the probable increase of the army in late 1837 he lamented that "the ordnance is a fair subject for experiment, legislation cannot make it worse than it is," and the following year Secretary Poinsett lamented in his annual report that there was not "a complete train of artillery for a single one of the four regiments in service." That year Colonel Fenwick replaced Eustis and the board was directed to concentrate on creating a system for horse artillery, which Fenwick had sought for at least twenty years.23

The 1838 board finally succeeded in designing a uniform system of artillery material, with light, field, mountain, siege, garrison, and coastal defense components. It recommended the procurement of rockets and presented a complete nomenclature for all artillery material and equipment. This seemingly simple but highly technical measure was the basis for the
standardization of American artillery. In 1839 Talcott, Mordecai, Baker, and Huger were appointed to a permanent Ordnance Board with the mission of "establishing uniformity in all the operations of the Ordnance Department," which had been made a fully independent staff bureau in 1838. In 1840 the three captains were sent to Europe with a civilian cannon-maker to gather more data, and upon their return they wrote a manual with rules for cannon foundries and recommended that ordnance officers be attached to the foundries as "attending agents." The board (principally Mordecai) intermittently continued its work drawing up a complete system, which was finally published in 1849. The Ordnance Board thereby became a focal point for research and development efforts, testing most of the principal weapons of the Civil War during the 1840s and 50s, but the dominant problem for the army remained securing the appropriations to implement these advances.24

As the efforts of the Ordnance Board indicate, the standardization of material and tactics was a slow process in the interwar army. This was particularly the case for the artillery, largely because of the lack of technological uniformity in its equipment, which was patterned on a wide array of European models. This mimicry resulted from the nation's limited manufacturing base, which was in turn the product of the highly competitive investment opportunities available amid the general shortage of capital in the United States. No private concentrations of capital were sufficient for the expensive long-term research and development necessary for cannon, nor were the potential profits worth forgoing those offered by other opportunities in the immediate future. The American nation-state was unable to act as a stimulus by providing subsidies or sponsoring large-scale armaments industries directly in the European manner, because republican ideology and accountability to expense-conscious voters led to congressional reluctance to
raise the revenues necessary for military preparation during peacetime. The same considerations meant that the army and navy could offer businesses little more than contracts to replace worn-out ordnance, and the American arms industry was limited to small arms development and copying foreign artillery designs on a small scale.

The process of developing a tactical system for the artillery throws the work and limitations of the army’s expert cadre into bold relief. The only drill manual available during the War of 1812 was quickly put together just before the war began; it encompassed the "school of the piece" (that of firing and handling individual cannon) and the maneuvers of field and horse artillery batteries (units of four to six guns). Winfield Scott incorporated detailed guidelines on the administrative duties of artillery commanders into his 1816 version of the army regulations, but no tactical system was written to parallel that adopted for the infantry. In 1818 Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick of the Light Artillery Regiment warned that "we have no System of Instruction for either field Light or garrison Artillery," but the manual he offered was not adopted. Two years later the French exile General Henri Lallemand published two thorough volumes on artillery, but the result was more a treatise than a practical manual for field instruction and operations. Both it and Daniel Tyler’s 1826 manual for the militia were used in varying degrees (Lallemand’s at West Point, and probably Tyler’s at the Artillery School) but never officially adopted. Similarly, Tyler’s 1828 translation of the French Gribeauval system was distributed to units but concern that the related technology was obsolescent prevented its official adoption as a standard system.25
Adjutant General Roger Jones, an artilleryman himself, hammered home the need for a new system of tactics when he endorsed Tyler's application to go to France: "if . . . it be important to construct & fashion the material of the Artillery Arm . . . 'tis not less important to supply the artillerist who is afterwards to fight . . . with a system which would enable him best to defend, or avenge his country's honour . . . with the least loss of life and treasure." Applying language that revealed the growing mindset of rationalization and standardization among reformers, an 1834 article in the Military and Naval Magazine called for the formation of boards of artillery—not ordnance—officers "to regulate the practice of Artillery," by calculating firing tables and drawing up "a synopsis of a course of instruction to be studied and practised by every artillery officer." The task of doing so was delegated solely to artillery lieutenant Robert Anderson (then serving as artillery instructor at West Point). Anderson completed his work of translating the most current French system by mid-1837, wisely trying to adopt the command terminology of Scott's infantry tactics whenever possible so as to reduce confusion when officers and men of one branch were required to carry out the duties of the other. Two years later the manual had not yet been adopted and Colonel Eustis asked Anderson, now Winfield Scott's aide-de-camp and AAG, to use his influence to bring the project to completion. Parts of the manual were used at Camp Washington in New Jersey that summer, but the following spring Eustis was still complaining to Anderson that he was "utterly disgusted" with the "vacillating conduct of the secretary of war" in delaying its adoption for general use. Indeed, Eustis caustically averred that he would "have nothing further to do with it."26

The Anderson manual was officially adopted a month later (April 1840), the first time that the army had a uniform and officially sanctioned
system of artillery drill. The sole exception lay in the horse artillery drill, because Captain Samuel Ringgold, the leading advocate of that arm, preferred his own version of the British system to the French one on which Anderson's work was based. Anderson's papers from 1841 to 1843 contain numerous letters from other officers asking for clarification or commenting on Anderson's system, while Anderson himself was sent to test the coastal artillery drill he had translated. In 1843 the army formed a board including Ringgold and Lieutenant Minor Knowlton of the Military Academy to review Anderson's manual; Anderson and Mordecai were both consulted, and the British and French horse artillery systems were tested together by the light company in each regiment. The revised version, which incorporated Ringgold's preferred system for horse artillery, was published in 1845 and used in the Mexican War. This manual was a work of limited scope that covered only the school of the piece and the battery; its tone was often unclear and it lacked an explication of underlying principles. Nevertheless, the antebellum and wartime performances of these artillery officers testify to a high degree of specifically military professionalism, frequently but unavoidably focused on basic technical details before the war.27

American infantry tactics suffered from different problems. Much as in 1815, Winfield Scott came away from his work on the 1824 Infantry Board satisfied that the infantry tactics published the following year were "superior to any now extant" elsewhere in the world, and he claimed to hope that they could be used for thirty years. On the other hand, a modern authority labels Scott's system "a patchwork affair," a verdict Scott himself confirmed by pressing for their revision in 1834. The reasons for his application are unclear, though both France and Britain had issued new drill regulations in
the intervening decade (in 1831 and 1833 respectively). Secretary of War Lewis Cass suggested the need for a revision to the House of Representatives and assigned it to Scott, but it seems likely that Scott was the motive force behind this action, as Cass was encumbered by administrative affairs and did not normally take an interest in tactical questions. Indeed, despite Scott's personal dedication and the volume of professional literature being produced overseas, the 1834 manual (officially adopted the following year) differed only incrementally from its predecessors. Scott apparently copied the new work directly from the French regulations of 1831 (which took four years to complete, in contrast to Scott's hurried work), which suggests that he remained tightly wedded to the French system first published more than forty years before, on which the 1831 drill was based. (One historian has declared that Scott's 1834 regulations "incorporated features of the Prussian drill system," but their content and salience are both unknown. In all probability both were marginal, as France rather than Prussia was justifiably considered the leader in doctrinal development at this time, particularly by Scott, who did not read German in the detail necessary to draw on the Prussian drill regulations.)

Despite his admirable persistence, it is difficult to escape the impression that Scott's efforts through the years amounted to little more than the tinkering congenial to a scholastic mind, based on inordinate if not irresponsible respect for the French classic and an exceedingly narrow technical conception of the possibilities of tactical evolution and doctrinal development. In large part we may attribute these limitations to the rather limited nature of the changes that actually occurred in weapons technology during this period, for smoothbore muskets were still the standard infantry shoulder arm throughout Europe, and percussion caps began to replace
flintlocks only during the 1840s. More generally, the limitations of American tactics were derived from a Eurocentric model of linear combat that took little account of the army's primary opponents during this era. Though they were not dominant, calculations of self-interest cannot be excluded from a consideration of Scott's motives, for in his memoirs Scott admitted that he had fought to avoid consultation and the consequent need to share credit for the new regulations. Indeed, a decade before Scott had written to the War Department proposing that he begin a new edition of the Army Regulations less than a year after the current version had been adopted, noting pointedly that "the revision is necessary to my own literary and military standing." In that instance Scott sought no further compensation, but declared that he would drop his claim to the post of commanding general (which was held by his ailing superior Brown) until he completed the new edition, which he said would advance his candidacy. In other words, Scott would remain subordinate as long as he received congenial duties that would advance his promotion prospects, setting an example of careerism at the army's highest levels.29

This behaviour, as well as the similar criticism levied at Scott by subordinates in 1834, simultaneously warns us of the limited consciousness of, interest in, and need for doctrinal and tactical change as well as the ever-present jealousy and infighting within the officer corps. The 1835 debate over infantry drill in the Army and Navy Chronicle was the only one accessible to the army as a whole, and it illustrates the limited horizons officers brought to military analysis. "Clairfait," the leading critic, primarily attacked the form of the regulations, not their substance, because he felt that the latter had not been significantly changed. Indeed, he believed that there was little need for substantive change in the army's tactics:
Whatever 'improvements may have taken place in military science, since the establishment of the present system of Discipline for the Army,' but very few of them have made their appearance in the new compilation, and those few are not of sufficient importance to warrant their adoption for the use of the service. A spirit of change, rather than a desire for real improvement, appears to characterize the new work; and we look in vain for that beautiful harmony, that admirable simplicity, brevity, and clearness, which constitute the chief excellencies of the present system. Words of command are introduced in one part, to which we find no subsequent analogy . . . Explanations, which can never be too brief, consistently with clearness, are now loaded down with a redundancy of words . . . while in some cases important fundamental exercises are omitted, which are subsequently referred to, as though they had been learned.

"Clairfait" declared himself "well satisfied" with the existing system and wondered "what could have occurred to render a change either necessary or desirable," since only ten years had passed since its publication. Even more disturbing, he worried that a new system would do no good, since "it is moreover notorious, that there are many officers . . . who are not yet acquainted with the system in use, and who, it is not too much to say, will never trouble themselves about the new one."30

"Clairfait"'s critique was not entirely limited to the clarity of the 1835 system, however. Initially his principal substantive concern was the increased emphasis given to the three rank firing line, "a principle which has long ceased to be acted upon by the best disciplined army in Europe" (the
English). "Clairfait" wisely pointed to the skeleton establishment of American companies, which was supposed to be filled out by additional recruiting in wartime, and to the probable losses which would soon erode that added increment of strength, as reasons why the three rank line was superfluous if not counterproductive. In other words, "the time devoted to drilling on the three rank system would be nearly lost; to say nothing of the confusion and irregularity attendant upon the" transition between the two systems. ("Clairfait" was essentially saying that half the strength of the wartime units would be composed of new recruits, although he did not go on to question the skeleton concept itself.) The three rank system was therefore "altogether unsuited to the state of our army, and the character not only of our troops, but of the [wooded or broken] ground upon they which they would probably be called to act." As a result, the critic wrote in a second article, "instead of forming a nucleus for the instruction of new corps, we should be but little better than the levies we would be expected to teach."

Scott's persistent preference for the three rank line appeared to be primarily the fruit of a stale reverence for inappropriate French precedent, and the War Department reacted to these critiques by ordering in April 1835 that the three rank formation be dispensed with until further notice.31

The controversialists of 1835 also recognized the indispensibility of light forces in American woodland terrain and centered much of their critiques and defenses around the new manual's provisions for skirmishing and light infantry drill. "Clairfait" criticized "the substitution of skirmishing without a basis [meaning as individuals without any prescribed formation] for the light infantry drill," and he devoted the sixth in his series of seven articles with a thorough examination of this branch of service, which he labelled "one of the most powerful levers of American warfare," warning that
"too much care cannot be bestowed on the discipline of light infantry and riflemen." He first laid out the characteristics of an effective system:

This system should be complete in itself; and should be characterized by simplicity and uniformity in the evolutions, and brevity and clearness in the commands, in order to secure that expertness and rapidity of execution, which render light troops so formidable. It should . . . be adapted to the genius and habits of the troops, and the peculiar nature of their operations.

Satisfied that these qualities were already present in the 1825 regulations, "Clairfait" expressed "surprise and astonishment when we see it deliberately supplanted by a series of mere skirmishing manoeuvres" (those "without basis"). He then proclaimed that the few maneuvers in formation were "but slightly" different from those already in use, although--contradictorily but correctly--he characterized these as precisely the same as those used by the line. In other words, "Clairfait" was disturbed by the lack of any open order drill to bridge the gap between the cumbersome close order line and the anarchy of individual skirmishing.32

Nevertheless, "Clairfait"'s "objections to this system of skirmishing" were "more against its incompleteness, and the inordinate length of the words of command, than against the manoeuvres themselves." The critic was especially concerned with the lack of clarity in the commands, and the regulations also seemed to leave out important commands and explanations, which he correctly felt essential to expectations for standardized performance in a geographically dispersed army: because "the light companies . . . are constantly thrown together, and with a frequent change of commanders . . . nothing should be left, either to the construction of the officers or men."

"Clairfait" pointed to the 1835 drill's failure to explain the execution of unit
and individual fire as a prime example of the urgent necessity of clarification and standardization, and predicted that "those officers who take pride in their men, and are ambitious concerning their efficiency, will be obliged to resort to the [previous] Light Infantry drill for many of their most important lessons."
The critic closed with a plea that the number of light companies be doubled at the expense of the line.33

"Clairfait" repeatedly cautioned that "the changes of the words of command, the diffuse explanations, the French idioms, and the singularly odd words scattered throughout the work only serve to clothe an old acquaintance in a new garb, which is not the less outre from being sanctioned by persons of rank and influence." "Clairfait"s concern for effective tactical communications and his amusement at the idiosyncrasies of Scott's work was echoed by "Young Fogram," who noted the "inordinate length of all the commands" and the omission of bugle calls for battlefield communication among the light troops. "Fogram" then asserted that "this part of the tactics has undergone a total and thorough alteration of the manoeuvres and commands . . . all for the worse! . . . It is so different, and withal so deficient, that it will be found useless, and in time of need, recourse will necessarily be had to the old system of light infantry." He joked that Scott had hoped "to captivate the young officers, and to prevent too frequent resignations" (a prominent subject of concern in 1835), but suggested that the general should try "to fascinate the old stagers of the army who have not prevailed on themselves to learn theoretically or practically the ugly, huge mass of 1826."
He encouraged officers to examine the new system, "confident that an attentive reading . . . and comparison with the old drill" would result in the retention of the latter.34
Writing from the Military Academy, "Amator Justitiae" objected to such criticism but worried that aesthetic flaws in the system might lead to battlefield disorder and defeat. A much more thorough defense of the new system was made by "Hindman," whose series of nine articles (later reprinted in pamphlet form) effectively constituted a short history of French and American tactical systems and debates that demonstrated familiarity with the exhaustive French tactical debates of the eighteenth century and the post-Napoleonic era as well as the French regulations of 1791 and 1831 and their British counterparts. "Hindman" responded to each of "Clairfait"'s criticisms and defended the new regulations as a product of extensive experience which allowed great flexibility in the choice of formations. He reminded the critics that the 1815 manual had no system for skirmishers and he correctly attacked the "vicious" treatment of light infantry in the 1825 manual as "a duplicate or parallel system, in which most of the manoeuvres for infantry of the line" were reproduced in superficially different and confusing forms that bore no resemblance to true light infantry tactics. "Hindman" warned that a new edition had become necessary because of the flood of professional analysis produced in Europe (particularly France) since 1825, and castigated "Clairfait" as "a soldier . . . utterly incurious as to all that may occur in the military world beyond the pale of his immediate post," who awoke "from his slumbers at the head of some thirty men" with uninformed criticism. He then summed up the debate with his view that the system should be written by a single individual and then "subjected to the severest ordeal of criticism," which had occurred. The debate petered out after these rebuttals, and the new manual was adopted and used until the 1850s without apparent damage to American battlefield proficiency in Mexico. Indeed, although the actual relationship is impossible to demonstrate, the officer corps' willingness to permit individual
skirmishing during the Second Seminole War may have owed a great deal to
the authority of the 1835 regulations, but whatever officers' claims in this
matter, it is more probable that skirmishing began when soldiers broke ranks
to take cover from Seminole fire.35

This debate was the only doctrinal controversy aired in public during
the interwar era. (The artillery debates did not make it into the Army and
Navy Chronicle.) Although the professional journals had made the debate of
1835 possible, they did not last long enough to revive it in the aftermath of (or
immediately prior to) the Mexican War. There was some localized
controversy over the new cavalry tactics issued in 1841--according to Colonel
Eustis's son William "a good deal of opposition" to them appeared among
the 1st Dragoons at Fort Leavenworth--but no debate was joined in the Army
and Navy Chronicle, for which the younger Eustis was thankful. Going on to
information of more interest to the average officer, he related gossip about
another regiment's foibles: a major's effort to have his squadron stationed
near the heart of Washington for social purposes, the adjutant's desertion
with the unit funds, and the colonel's refusal to serve in Florida while his
chief rival was in command there. Though these scandals are extreme
examples, I close with them to remind the reader that the majority of army
officers had very different concerns than "Hindman" and "Clairfait."
Whatever the efficacy of the 1835 tactics, doctrinal historian Henry
Osterhoudt has observed that "the doctrine was changed by one man, Scott,
who [merely] translated the latest French text, and then it was officially
sanctioned by the Army leadership without test. This was doctrinal
formulation of the most haphazard sort."36

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II. Henry Wager Halleck, Dennis Hart Mahan, and the Limits of an American Art of War

Besides the senior officers like Scott, Gaines, and Totten, whose analyses of national defense policy we shall examine in Part V, there were only two army officers who are generally accorded the title of major American military thinkers in this era: Dennis Hart Mahan and his protege Henry Halleck (an assistant professor of engineering at the academy during 1839 and 1840). Captain John Michael O'Connor's 1817 translation of Guy de Vernon's A Treatise on the Science of War and Fortification was the most far-ranging and complete, though unoriginal, of American military treatises between 1815 and the publication of Halleck's Elements of Military Art and Science in 1846, in large part because of O'Connor's hundred page supplement incorporating extracts of the work of the prominent military authors Saxe, Bulow, Lloyd, and Jomini. This book was putatively the West Point text for military engineering during the 1820s and early 1830s, but it is virtually invisible in both primary and secondary sources. (Indeed, it was abandoned as the text in 1832, with Mahan's acquiescence if not at his initiative.) The fate of O'Connor's work represents the potential and failure of American officers to absorb the European art of war—they certainly knew what to read, but few did so. The works of Halleck and Mahan, on the other hand, are frequently taken by historians as codices of the collective opinions of the officer corps and an indication that the state of American military thought was relatively advanced in 1846, so we must refer to them here in summarizing some of the flaws and contradictions in these bodies of thought and attitude and connecting them with the application of military expertise in the Civil War.37
As previously noted, Mahan actually gave little classroom time to instruction in the art and science of war, but his lectures presaged his writings in *Field Fortification* (1836) and *An Elementary Treatise on Advanced Guard, Outpost, and Detachment Service of Troops* (commonly known as *Outpost*) (1846). The former has been aptly described as a practical field manual, and the latter was essentially a collection of the lithographed lecture notes Mahan distributed to cadets, published after a decade of teaching. At least one scholar has labelled *Outpost* a broad doctrinal guide to independent operations by the subdivisions of a field army; another--somewhat contradictorily--both "a handbook on tactics" and "the first systematic American study of warfare." Its chapters covered unit tactics, grand tactics (the combination of units on the battlefield), topography and battlefield positioning, advance guards, reconnaissance operations, and detachments, but Mahan's most prominent theme in *Outpost* was the inadequacy of untrained troops and the superiority of regulars.38

Mahan's cardinal tenet was flexibility; he wisely presented a set of principles based on historical experience rather than rules based on abstract models or scenarios. Tactically, Mahan's specific recommendations were the product of Napoleonic warfare, soon to be outdated by the introduction of the rifled musket, but as a general principle he stressed the application of an officer's common sense to the circumstances (including terrain and the enemy) in which he fought. The book gave more attention to cavalry than most American military writing, though again Mahan's inability to predict the effects of rifled technology led to an exaggerated emphasis on shock action. Aside from this Napoleonic anachronism Mahan provided a succinct but accurate analysis of the usefulness of mounted forces for the reconnaissance, screening, and other detached duties they would most often
be called upon to perform. The final chapter of Outpost was devoted to "Surprises and Ambuscades," a useful primer for officers sent to Florida but one that seems to have taken several years to spread given the army's initial performance there. (Indeed, the need for effective reconnaissance has always been a prominent theme in American military thinking, but one honored as often in the breach as in the observance.) Outpost was also remarkable for its attention to troop morale, a subject generally neglected by contemporary American officers. Indeed, one of the sources of Mahan's admiration for French methods was his belief that the French soldier was the closest European analogue to his American counterpart. Unfortunately, this may have been the least-understood or accepted section of the book, because Mahan maintained that "Prussian" (meaning Frederickian, or eighteenth-century) discipline was inappropriate for American soldiers, an axiom contradicted with appalling frequency by army practice.

Halleck's Elements of Military Art and Science was a much more wide-ranging work, though it routinely fluctuated between highflown abstraction and technical specificity in a positivist manner common in every sort of nineteenth-century text. The book's format suggests that Halleck intended it in part as a text for cadets at the Military Academy, though this was never done on an official basis. He began with an extended attempt to refute the arguments against war presented by Francis Wayland's widely read textbook on moral philosophy. Chapters on strategy, tactics, logistics and the organization of the army's branches followed. Three chapters on fortifications were dispersed at several points through the book, while three more on "military polity" (national defense), the engineers, and the northern frontier also stressed fortification. A closing chapter on military education
lauded the Military Academy and called for the exclusion of nongraduates from the officer corps.

Contrary to the words of some scholars, *Elements* was not "an almost literal translation of Jomini," despite the emphasis that historians and military analysts have placed on its strategic advice. Indeed, the most salient characteristic of the book, and one of the officer corps as a whole, was its concentration on occupational and organizational issues like those pertaining to the individual branches and the fortification program. Much more so than Mahan's work, *Elements* was an explicit polemic in favor of the principles of military expertise and preparation, against the militia and volunteers and in favor of the regulars. Halleck's ideas on these issues were generally a synthesis of those articulated (however unevenly) throughout the officer corps, but these questions were assessed primarily from the perspective of an engineer officer, adding an additional layer of polemicism and self-interest to Halleck's conclusions. His analysis therefore had all the weaknesses of the thought and attitudes of the officer corps as a whole, particularly a dismissive view of the militia, an exaggerated faith in the regular army's ability to forestall Indian wars, and very limited attention to the content of Indian warfare itself. (Halleck never saw combat until the Civil War.)

As a military treatise *Elements* was sound but unoriginal, the well-argued work of a highly competent collector and synthesizer of ideas already in widespread currency rather than that of a uniquely American Jomini or Clausewitz (whose *On War* Halleck listed without comment among twenty-eight books on the art of war). To label *Elements* a distinctively American approach to the study of war ignores Halleck's reliance on European precept and experience and his disdain for some of the more uniquely American considerations involved, most conspicuously the social origins, cultural
authority, and political power of the militia ideal. ( Viewing Halleck's work in the context of contemporary American literary and intellectual culture we might compare him to Emerson, the synthesizer and popularizer of views first propagated by elites, rather than Thoreau or Whitman, the idiosyncratic yet populist authors of specifically American ideas.) Halleck's more comprehensive statements were mostly truisms or aphorisms familiar to educated civilians as well as officers. The sum of the book was just what its title implied, a survey of disparate elements of military art and science together with a more detailed description of American military institutions and policy, not an in-depth critical consideration of strategy, tactics, or general principles of warfare. Halleck's surveys and descriptions were syntheses that appealed to the received wisdom of the officer corps and like-minded civilians rather than exercises in critical analysis. In Halleck's defense it must be said that he had a civilian political as much as a professional military audience in mind, but the former lacked the self-interested certitude of the latter and were therefore more likely to reject his arguments for the very reason that they lacked a critical perspective or dimension. Halleck was preaching to the choir, while the paucity of advanced American military thought meant that he could do little more than collect and organize truisms. There was simply too little available in the way of a distinctly American literature of warfare to provide a foundation for a work of broader scope.

Regardless of their derivation, the works of Halleck and Mahan do not seem to have had much direct impact upon the army's conduct of operations in the field, for Halleck's ideas were too vague or diffuse and Mahan's so straightforward as to be obvious. Officers followed many of Mahan's precepts during the Second Seminole War, but these were distillations of already well-
known practices (like tactical encirclements, depriving the Indians of food
and shelter, and using the superior discipline of closed order bayonet assaults
to break Seminole ambushes) dating to the colonial period. Winfield Scott
skillfully directed an eighteenth-century war of maneuver during his
advance on Mexico City, but it is difficult and largely artificial to attempt to
separate the "Jominian," "Clausewitzian," and "Napoleonic" elements
therein, much less to demonstrate their actual derivation from specific
sources. (Neither Clausewitz nor Jomini had been published in English,
though Scott had doubtlessly read Jomini's work in the original.) Scott was
forced to confront the Mexican army repeatedly en route, and he probably
would have preferred to destroy it in a single Napoleonic battle, but his
primary strategic goal was the enemy's capital rather than their army per se.
Tactically, Scott sensibly struck at the Mexican flanks where possible, but did
not go out of his way to avoid direct assaults, a desiderata that became
increasingly difficult to achieve as the army came closer to its fixed objective.
The American army rarely engaged in much pursuit after battle, but this was
less an operational failing on Scott's part than the institutional consequence
of fighting with little cavalry deep in enemy territory with tenuous supply
lines subject to guerrilla attack. Like Napoleon after seizing Vienna, Scott
temporarily halted his advance (outside Mexico City) in order for negotiations
to occur, but he was forced to move against the capital itself when the
Mexican government proved unable to offer terms without being
overthrown from within. Doing these things hardly made Scott a
"Jominian," since they were largely common sense, nor could they have
made him a follower of Clausewitz, since it is unlikely that Scott had read the
as-yet untranslated German. He did demonstrate professionally responsible
attention to the American government's political goals and sensitivity to the
opinion of the Mexican populace, but these were skills learned in decades of bureaucratic infighting and partisan politicking, not in the pages of books.  

The primary criticism historians and military analysts have made of Mahan and Halleck is that their emphasis on fortifications and quasi-geometric "lines of operations," respectively derived from the West Point engineering mentalité and Jomini (who actually disparaged the use of field fortifications, yet on whom Halleck drew much more extensively and explicitly than had Mahan), led Union commanders like McClellan to act with excessive caution, implicitly lengthening the war. (Ironically, McClellan was known as the "Little Napoleon.") The purveyors of this view have since been taken to task, but it must be granted that Mahan and Halleck were hardly strenuous advocates for aggressive command and the sustained offensive. Mahan admired Napoleon and emphasized a "celerity" of movement modeled on his early campaigns, but he felt that the emperor had become too reliant on ponderous mass and attrition (which we might equate in the Civil War with Grant's operations against Lee in the Wilderness Campaign) in his later years, a common theme of French military critics (though not Jomini, who preferred operational and battlefield concentration in the manner respectively of Frederick the Great and the later Napoleon) that Mahan may have picked up from reading their work. This theme was also part of the French officer corps' drive for a smaller, more professional army of long-service veterans to conduct colonial campaigns and act as the nucleus for expansion in case of a European war, a move for professional autonomy in the face of a tradition of mass levies not unlike that of the American officer corps in the face of the militia ideal, and Mahan doubtlessly found it attractive for that reason.
Second-hand intellectual transmission is usually a confusing process to trace, and that from Jomini to Mahan to the Civil War provides us with no clear lineage of ideas or practice. This dilution was exacerbated by the sheer volume of Jomini's writings, which were conceived at enough different levels of operation, contained enough historical examples from both Frederick and Napoleon, and changed enough over the years that they provided something for everyone, including modern historians bent on criticizing or validating the conduct of the Civil War. Though he spoke often of "celerity" and aggressive elan in the attack, Mahan's preference for flanking movements or envelopments—which had been more characteristic of Napoleon's early generalship and was praised by the postwar French critics, though Jomini remained ambiguous, depending on the scale of the envelopment in question; his cautionary stress on securing one's own flanks against surprise attack (which did accord with Jomini's caution and belief in concentrated movement)—which is difficult to do when engaged in a turning movement; and the frequency with which he qualified his admonitions meant that his work was ambiguous at most in advocating the offensive. Halleck was even more defensively minded than Mahan, and his emphasis on the power of fortifications (both tactically via temporary works and strategically via permanent ones) and the need for an invading force to mask or reduce them harked back more to his chief influences, Jomini and the very conservative Austrian Archduke Charles (who had inherited a tradition of defensive field works going back to the 1750s), and the "war of places" characteristic of the eighteenth century than to the Napoleonic impulse to strike decisively at an enemy's army, which Mahan had at least admired in the abstract.
Indeed, given the prevalence of romantic Napoleonic images in contemporary American views of warfare, it is certainly remarkable that so many Northern officers appear to have been so hesitant to seek decisive battle. Some historians have explained this reluctance as the product of a sense of psychological inferiority derived from the myth of the southern cavalier and doubts among northern elites (including officers) about the moral strength and efficacy of an urban, industrial, and democratic social order, while others have claimed that American officers recognized the defensive power of rifled weapons before the war began and attempted flanking maneuvers to avoid them. Leaving aside the first hypothesis, which I find somewhat persuasive but difficult to integrate in the present analysis, the latter is certainly questionable given the conduct of most Civil War battles and the limited recognition of change evident in the tactics adopted during the 1850s, which were based almost entirely on the Napoleonic experiences (short-range firefights verging on shock encounters) of the Mexican War battlefield and the elan (or shock)-based tactics of the French chasseurs rather than the range and accuracy of rifled weapons per se. Indeed—and ironically—both Halleck and Mahan seemed to espouse the utility of the tactical offensive for forces on the strategic defensive, a view that (while sensible and obvious insofar as total inaction cedes total initiative to an enemy) otherwise ran in dangerous contradiction to the stress both men placed on the battlefield power of fieldworks and the defense. Indeed, the limits of their influence are clear recognizable when we remember that contrary to the assertions of some historians entrenchments were not employed "almost universally" until mid-1863 (prior to which units usually made do with natural cover like sunken roads and fencerails, which were obvious both as cover and as guidelines to orient troop formations). The two authors suggested no more
than the obvious in stating that a belligerent would ultimately have to go on
the offensive to achieve victory against an unyielding opponent, but if the
Civil War generals followed Mahan and Halleck they clearly did so in
different ways, for these prescriptions for the tactical offensive proved
damaging to southern forces attacking numerically superior Union
concentrations during the Civil War. Indeed, neither the Union nor the
Confederacy appears to have arrived at a tactically and strategically effective
synthesis of the nineteenth-century art of war until Sherman's Atlanta
campaign in 1864, an unfortunate but understandable state of affairs to which
Helmut von Moltke's prescient recognition of the tactical power of the
defense combined with a strategic offensive provides an apt comparison.44

Sorting out the manifold contradictions of protean military principles
(like those articulated by Jomini) and the specific levels of operations at which
they were intended to apply by different analysts and practitioners is
ultimately a fruitless endeavor for scholars seeking "influences" on the
conduct of the Civil War. Many Union commanders seem to have taken the
Jominian cautions of Mahan and Halleck to heart, while their Confederate
counterparts often chose Napoleonic and Mahanian offensive lightning bolts
to check and throw back the invader. Insofar as the latter practice contributed
to Union caution and political malaise it was a success, but insofar as it
contributed to disproportionate Confederate casualties it was a failure. Both
outcomes contributed to the political and psychological attrition necessary in
total war, the first against the Union by seizing the initiative and the second
against the Confederacy by force of material attrition. Why these different
stances seem characteristic of the two sides, and of specific individuals in
command, are complex questions of politics, resources, culture, psychology,
and timing that cannot be answered by pointing to the vague and
contradictory words of Mahan, Halleck, or Jomini. David Donald was almost certainly correct when he suggested that "most Union and Confederate army officers had no theoretical ideas about warfare at all."45

The limitations of these thinkers also went beyond the conduct of operations to the organization of armies and military resources. The dominant theme both Halleck and Mahan pressed was the need for a trained force in lieu of the militia, but this was a preference impossible to sustain during the people's wars of a mass democracy, as the French professionalizers would out find for themselves in 1870. The regular army was too small to win the Civil War by itself, though its commissioned and noncommissioned officers might have been used much more effectively as a cadre dispersed throughout the volunteers than they were as an elite skeleton force—if the former alternative had been politically possible given the democratic processes unavoidably at work in the manning and officering of these citizen forces, which were necessarily organized in and by the nation's localities. The human cost of Civil War battles was not so much due to tactical inexperience or incompetence (as European military observers asserted at the time) as to Napoleonic romanticism and Victorian values of courage that were shared by regular officers and their counterparts in Europe and demonstrated in 1859, 1866, 1870 (by both sides when on the tactical offensive, including the Prussians at Spicheren, Froschwiller, and Gravelotte-St Privat), and ultimately 1914. Highly disciplined regulars fighting in inflexible linear formations under rifle fire would merely have taken greater casualties because of their steadfastness, for in 1870 even the rapid rushes of the superbly trained French chasseurs and Zouaves proved disastrous against accurate, steady Prussian fire. Indeed, "celerity" (a Napoleonic and Mahanian watchword) and capability require not regulars per se, but veterans, and by
late 1864 Sherman's army of citizen-soldiers from the heartland was as experienced and capable as any regular force before the war.46

On the other hand, the tactical constraints imposed by the rifle should therefore lead us to question whether the caution which may have been imparted by Halleck and Mahan (or Jomini) was as damaging to the Union cause as many scholars have suggested. Applying close-order Napoleonic offensive tactics in the face of rifles during the Civil War led to bloodbaths without precedent in American experience, while historians have generally come to doubt the ability of Civil War armies to decisively defeat and pursue their opponents in the manner--actually rare even in Napoleon's campaigns--of a Jena-Auerstadt. (The Austrian and French armies did collapse in 1866 and 1870, but in both cases the Prussians had important strategic, technological, operational, and leadership and morale advantages over their opponents which were not consistently available to either side in the American conflict.) Union commanders were often far too cautious, but their critics may be ignoring the need for a balance between military advantage and political feasibility (or public opinion) in a people's war. The political damage incurred by losses like those in the Wilderness campaign could not have been sustained over a much more extended period; indeed it may not have been until 1864 that the Northern public was sufficiently inured to casualties on such a scale as to make them acceptable at all.47

Halleck and Mahan (neither of whom were field or combat arms officers or saw battle before 1861) were prescient neither tactically nor strategically, but their failure to advocate or foresee tactical and strategic attrition on the scale of 1864 can hardly be faulted when most contemporary French officer-scholars besides Jomini were reacting against the mass armies and attritional battles of Napoleon's later years. The solutions these French
critics advanced proved inadequate in 1870 because they assumed that elite training could still enable a small army to transcend the physical, spatial, and temporal dimensions of a mass army's resilience in the rapid and decisive manner of Napoleon's early campaigns. Those campaigns were decisive in large part because of the shock they wrought against the physically and mentally cumbersome eighteenth-century armies of the ancien regimes--forces actually more "professional" in most respects than the mass armies which succeeded them. The patriotic fervor of Spain, Britain, and Russia combined with the open spaces of the latter defeated Napoleon's blitzkrieg, however, and within four to six years Austria and Prussia had recovered from their shock, preventing the emperor from duplicating his earlier victories against them after he was driven from Russia.

Insofar as the Civil War was Napoleonic it was because officers and other Americans held up the emperor as a romantic ideal; as Russell Weigley has put it "for soldiers to emulate the great Napoleon was a much more compelling motive than to master the study of strategic theory."

Nevertheless, the Napoleonic ideal of destroying an enemy's entire army in one decisive battle was always a dream, based on exaggerations of both historical experience and physical possibility. When Americans found themselves compelled to fight campaigns of attrition they were as much over places (Richmond and Atlanta) as armies--the Confederate armies submitted to the relentless pounding they took at Grant's hands during the Wilderness campaign and to the losses they incurred in hopeless attacks against Sherman's advance on Atlanta because those places had decisive political and economic value. Even then, however, the pressure of public opinion, the course of events (the failure to outflank the Army of Northern Virginia and get between it and Richmond, which might well have forced Lee to attack),
and the desire for personal vindication in the contest against Lee effectively drove Grant to seek what he may have still have hoped for—the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia—and he was essentially successful, though at great cost, which forced Lee into Petersburg and set the stage for continuing attrition until the southern army could no longer fight in the field and was forced to surrender. Thus, though putatively focused on the seizure of places rather than the destruction of armies, the drives on Richmond and Atlanta were no more "Jominian"—in the sense that Jomini's works reflected the limited place-centered warfare of the eighteenth century—than "Napoleonic" in derivation—they were historically specific, contingent, and discrete events which were fostered by the American political and cultural context and embodied the rise of mass or near-total attritional warfare.

In the end the Union had to settle for a bludgeoning war of attrition in Virginia and the tactical defensive around Atlanta because neither a single decisive battle of annihilation nor an indirect approach by bloodless maneuver was feasible in the context of a near-total war that had pushed the mobilization of popular resources and energies—and thus the capacity of armies—to a new peak of resiliency. Grant and Sherman wore down the southern armies until they could no longer defend their nation, and it is difficult and perhaps ultimately irrelevant to debate which objective—army or territory—"came first." Though they would not have put it so directly, Sherman and Grant implicitly recognized the interdependence of army, society, and nation, which speaks well for their senses of social and political responsibility as well as their military ability. Though few would have said so at the time, neither Napoleon nor Jomini provided blueprints for success in attritional mass warfare, and in consequence much of the art of warfare inherited by American officers of the antebellum period was already outdated,
leaving them to fashion a practical solution from the American materials and context at hand. Who took the offensive in what form, at what point, and for what reasons during the Civil War was much more a matter of national resources, individual psychology, and contingent political and operational circumstances than the influence of a couple of lectures to college students or a few contradictory, and ultimately superficial, passages in a general survey and a pair of field manuals. In a near-total war between powerful economies with large and committed populations the decision became a matter of long attrition between mass armies of citizen-soldiers rather than something attained by small professional forces in the space of a single campaign or afternoon, and the Civil War and the Franco-Prussian one five years later both confirmed the ascendancy of the modern mass army over smaller but more "professional" ones, whether constructed along eighteenth-century lines or those of a cadre and constabulary.48

Under these circumstances, professional military "expertise" was ultimately a matter less of tactics than of organization and administration, mobilizing, concentrating, and supplying vast armies with which to wear down an opponent and, strategically, recognizing that this was necessary and there were no shortcuts to victory. The Prussian General Staff certainly demonstrated remarkable operational proficiency in 1870, but Prussian strategy was hardly innovative—their success was principally the product of a more rapid initial concentration of numerically superior forces, which enabled them to seize the initiative from hapless French generals (who had after all rejected Napoleonic "giganticism" in favor of colonial wars and the long-service professional army) utterly unprepared to maneuver and fight on such a massive scale. Military strategy in nineteenth-century America was largely a matter of politics, and Americans socialized in the competitive
arenas of partisan politics and the market economy rarely understood or condoned waiting on the defensive, whatever its putative advantages.\textsuperscript{49} Operations were essentially matters of logistics and aggressive anticipation and movement--bringing large masses of men to key (yet obvious) points, getting there "the firstest with the mostest" as practical Americans liked to put it. Attempting to concentrate one's forces on an enemy's vulnerable points (like his flanks) was not a concept that required a French or Prussian genius to discover. Given the inability to conceive tactics capable of surmounting the defensive advantages of the rifle, victory in Civil War battles and campaigns became a matter of execution rather than conception and planning--successfully bringing mass to bear at appropriate points in time and space despite the effects of friction and the fog of war, a milieu in which moral and physical aggressiveness and endurance--the fortes of a Ulysses S. Grant--were at a premium. Sherman may have considered it "a lasting disgrace" for officers to "be ignorant of . . . the principles of the art of war (Mahan and Jomini)," but, as Grant remarked of his ignorance of Jomini "the art of war is simple enough; find out where your enemy is, get at him as soon as you can, strike him as hard as you can, and keep moving on."\textsuperscript{50}
Chapter V


2 The significance of occupational culture in the French army is emphasized in ibid., pp. 53-57. Skelton maintains that a similar phenomenon was common in the American army, but I believe that its content was much less distinctly military in function than was true of the French (An American Profession of Arms, pp. 258-59).


6 Clausewitz, On War, p. 120 (see also bk. I, ch. 3 in general); Gerke Teitler, The Genesis of the Professional Officer Corps (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1977), pp. 16-17 and 20-21; and Davis, "Bureaucratic Patterns in the Navy Officer Corps," pp. 383-384 and 389. Clausewitz’s work is notable for his recognition of the interdependence of mental and physical factors and the relationship between character and technique, whether through the decisive role of politics and the inherent dialectics of conflict or in his constant awareness of the effects of individual and group psychology. The concept of friction itself is
founded on the dynamic interaction of both friends and foes and the difficulty of achieving precision in communications between humans.

I. Boards of Officers and the Halting Development of Tactical Doctrine

7 See Assistant Surgeon Thomas Henderson to Assistant Surgeon Benjamin King, February 6, 1838, King Papers, LC, for an example of a willingness to accept attrition: "as is often the case, the two late actions [the battles of Okeechobee and Lockahatchee] however severe our losses, may be ultimately beneficial, by emboldening the Indians to renew the combat."

8 Hayne, confidential IR, October 1819; Thompson, August 27, 1841, and Eustis, June 17, 1841, to Abraham Johnston, Johnston Papers, USMA.


13 Scott, June 20, 1826, file S-274, SW:LR-Reg.


17 General Order No. 13, February 7, 1832, in "Proceedings of the Military Board, 1832-1835," HQA.


19 A spectrum of the other boards mentioned or proposed by officers can be viewed in Major General Jacob Brown, April 2, 1824, file B-8, SW:LR-Reg. (regarding oversight for the Artillery School); report of board of officers on breechloading weapons, communicated to the Senate October 3, 1837,
ASP:MA 7: 466-82 and 525-32; Lt. Minor Knowlton to Major Levi Whiting, September 16, 1839, Knowlton Papers, USMA (asking authority to have a board assess value of old uniforms for possible sale); Lt. James Allen to Lt. Abraham Johnston, March 25, 1842, Johnston Papers, USMA (regarding cavalry equipment); and "An Officer of the U.S.A.," "Notes on Foreign Military Schools and Army Organizations, in the Year 1840," ANC&SR 2 (November 16, 1843): 621 (proposing boards to examine officers for promotions).


22 "Proceedings of a Board of Officers Held in the City of Washington (March 28, 1832)," "Proceedings of a Board of Officers Convened at Watervliet Arsenal, New York (September 7, 1835)," and "Proceedings of a Board of Officers Assembled at West Point, New York (July 4, 1837)," in Special File, Box 24, Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, RG156, NA. See also Falk, "Soldier-Technologist," passim.


of the Ordnance Department (Washington, D.C.: Francis P. Blair, 1834); idem., Ordnance Manual for the Use of Officers of the United States Army (Washington, D.C.: J. & G.S. Gideon, 1841); and the Mordecai Papers, LC, passim. Thayer recommended the formation of a new board with Chief Engineer Totten on it; Totten was seeking to reabsorb the artillery and ordnance and to make five of the seven officers proposed for the board artillerymen (Totten to Secretary of War Poinsett, November 7, 1837, LRCT). Perhaps the engineers were jealous of the ordnance officers' potential role in fortification planning.

25 Birkhimer, Historical Sketch of the Artillery, pp. 301 and 303; Fenwick, January 1, 1818 (quoted from) and January 19, 1819, files F-1 and F-55, SW:LR-Reg.; Birkhimer, pp. 303-305; report of the Board of Visitors, June 22, 1825, in the annual report of the secretary of war, ASP:MA 3: 149; Macomb to Secretary Eaton, annual report communicated to Congress by the president December 8, 1829, ASP:MA 4: 156; "Remarks on the Present State of the Artillery of the United States," MNM 3 (June 1834): 268; Robert Anderson to Capt. Samuel Cooper, May 1837, Anderson Papers, LC. See also Lallemant, December 3 and 31, 1819, files L-51 and L-94, SW:LR-Reg.


27 Wool to Anderson, October 5, 1841, and Lt. William G. Freeman (an assistant adjutant general and an ex-assistant artillery instructor on the 1843 board) to Anderson, June 15, 1843, Anderson Papers, LC; Ringgold to Lt. James Duncan, May 1, 1842, Duncan Papers, USMA; Birkhimer, Historical Sketch of the Artillery, pp. 60 and 306.


29 Timothy D. Johnson, "Young Fuss and Feathers: Winfield Scott's Early Career, 1808-1841" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alabama, 1989), p. 191; Scott, Memoirs, 1: 258; Scott, June 19, 1822, file S-16, SW:LR-Reg. See also Scott's correspondence to the War Department in November and December 1824, in SW:LR-Reg. A note in ANC 1 (April 9, 1835): 116, said that Scott's work was being reviewed by an ad hoc board including inspector generals John Wool and George Croghan, artillery colonel John Fenwick (who had
served on the 1815 and 1825 boards), quartermasters General Thomas Jesup and Major Trueman Cross, Adjutant General Roger Jones, Commissary General George Gibson, Paymaster General Nathan Towson (Scott's artillery commander in 1814), and infantry captain John Garland (who later commanded brigades in both Scott and Taylor's armies in Mexico), but Osterhoudt asserts (p. 43) that at least one member later declared that he had failed to read it. (The personnel said to have served on this board were essentially those of the Military Board and several principal assistants to staff chiefs and the War Department, suggesting that the Military Board may have been tasked with reviewing the regulations.) Osterhoudt goes on to conclude that "at least, a common doctrine had been agreed upon and young officers would study it to one degree or another for the next decade," but I would suggest that this constitutes a very minimal standard for doctrinal success. The army had had a common drill book for almost twenty years, and our knowledge of the lack of studiousness among its junior officers makes "one degree or another" a pessimistic equivocation at best. See Perry D. Jamieson, Crossing the Deadly Ground: U.S. Army Tactics, 1865-1899 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994) for a thorough study of the evolution of the army's first real system of tactical doctrine.


33 Idem., "The New Infantry Tactics No. 5," ANC 1 (April 23, 1835): 133-34. Were it not for his close friendship with Scott, one might suspect that "Clairfait" was actually William Worth, who had authored the light infantry drill in the 1824 regulations and was one of the few officers knowledgeable enough to author such an extensive critique.


II. Henry Wager Halleck, Dennis Hart Mahan, and the Limits of an American Art of War

37 Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 220-21, for example, labels Mahan "the most outstanding [American] military thinker of these years," and Halleck's Elements "the most sophisticated volume written by an American military man before the Civil War." Both statements are reasonable—the problem is that Mahan and Halleck were the only "military thinkers" in the interwar army, and their volumes were the only book-length American treatises on the art of war during this period.

38 Winton, "Antebellum Military Instruction of West Point Officers," ch. 1; Weigley, Towards an American Army, pp. 51 and 44; Mahan, A Complete Treatise on Field Fortifications; idem., An Elementary Treatise on Advanced Guard, Outpost, and Detachment Service of Troops (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1846) (quotation from p. iii). See also Mahan, lithographed note on "The Composition of Armies," pp. 33-36, George L. Welcker Miscellany, USMA, and Weigley, The American Way of War, ch. 5. Mahan's preface stated that the book had originated in "a professional intercourse ... with a few intelligent officers" of the militia and was intended to provide them with guidance.


40 Weigley, Towards an American Army, p. 57. There was also a review of Clausewitz from a British journal in MNM 5 (August 1835): 426-36, but these are the only references to him that I have found.

41 James W. Pohl, "The Influence of Antoine Henri de Jomini on Winfield Scott's Campaign in the Mexican War," SWHO 77 (July 1973): 85-110, argues that Scott's actions follow Jomini almost to the letter, but I believe that Pohl demonstrates correlation rather than causation, and that Scott's actions are easily explicable by common sense, experience, and political astuteness without the need for resort to artificial and sometimes gratuitous displays of a nebulous affinity. The limits of Pohl's arguments are shared by most of the historians who have employed Jomini or Clausewitz in support of their
analyses. American generals relied on the common sense that suggests concentration against weakness in any antagonistic endeavour, be it politics, sports, marketing, or war. Frankly, I think it likely that as many Civil War generals had read Machiavelli as Jomini, yet we do not search for the Machiavellian sources or analogues of American military strategy and doctrine, and rightly so. (The military author most widely read by American officers was probably Julius Caesar, though their lack of commentary on such readings makes it impossible to say this with certainty.) The goal of Civil War military history should not be to validate the teachings of European theorists who were hardly read in the United States, nor are these European theories necessary to justify American practice. Contemporary professionalizers like Halleck had some reason to do this, because they wanted to employ the cultural authority of European origins in their quest for organizational and occupational monopoly, but who are modern historians appealing to? It is always worth seeking out connections between American life and foreign precedent, but recognizing that American generals were led by common sense is in no way to assert American exceptionalism, merely the real and virtually self-evident superiority of practice over theory in practical affairs. All military analysis ultimately recognize this, but many historians of the Civil War have put the cart before the horse in their enthusiasm to demonstrate the success or failure—by European standards—of American military expertise in that conflict.

42 See Connelly and Jones, The Politics of Command, p. 12, concerning Jomini's antipathy towards field fortifications; Griffith, Military Thought in the French Army, chs. 4-5, on the French debates; and Connelly and Jones, The Politics of Command, pp. 11-12, regarding Jomini's preference for Frederickian operational concentration, in contrast to Napoleon's practice (following Guibert) of dispersed maneuver (the battalion carre, or corps system) before battle. Civil War armies normally moved in some general version of the latter. T. Harry Williams, "The Military Leadership of North and South," in David Herbert Donald, ed., Why the North Won the Civil War (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960), pp. 33-54, makes the most aggressive statement of Jomini's damaging influence on the Civil War commanders. Williams' criticism (pp. 45-46) that the early Union commanders were too enamored of Jomini's principle of concentration (thus leading to McClellan's delays and other cases of the "slows") has some truth to it, but concentration was also a political goal, sought by generals in their competition to play the role of the nation's savior and as a means to prevent defeat and the consequent criticism—both responsible goals, though undertaken for self-interested rather than socially responsible purposes. David Donald was the other leader in this scholarly offensive; see
"Refighting the Civil War," in his *Lincoln Reconsidered*, pp. 82-102, and Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952). See Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won*, pp. 21-22, for a quick summation of the debates on these questions, which have largely died out since the late 1970s. They note that the index to the *Official Records* of Civil War operations contains only two references to Jomini, but they use his works (and to a lesser extent Clausewitz's, which were not even published in English until after the Civil War) as a guide to evaluating operations and strategy in a manner which is frequently just as ahistorical (and unnecessary, if not gratuitous) as that of earlier historians. See also T. Harry Williams, "The Return of Jomini: Some Thoughts on Recent Civil War Writing," *MA* 39 (December 1975): 204-206; Archer Jones, "Jomini and the Strategy of the American Civil War: A Reinterpretation," *MA* 34 (December 1970): 127-31; and Joseph L. Harsh, "Battleword and Rapier: Clausewitz, Jomini, and the American Civil War," *MA* 38 (December 1974): 133-38. Despite their differing conclusions, I find all these arguments much like Pohl's for the Mexican War--Jomini is taken as a catch-all, while the depth and influence of West Point training is significantly overestimated, often because the evidence for it was based on second-hand or apocryphal accounts rather than an examination of the actual curriculum.

43 Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won*, stress Jomini's advocacy of flanking maneuvers of various sorts, which provides one of the best illustrations of the flexibility and frequent contradiction of his works, since flanking could be done in preparation for (as was often the case in Scott's Mexican campaign, e.g. at Cerro Gordo) or on the battlefield, one of operations (i.e., maneuvering around an enemy threatening to strike his flank or rear or to cut his immediate communications to force a battle, as at Second Manassas), or a deep or strategic envelopment of the sort Napoleon carried out in 1805 and 1806. Given the limited geographic scope of the Eastern theater during the Civil War it can be quite difficult to distinguish between these levels of operation. Moreover, it would be difficult if not impossible for an army to maintain Jomini's geometric "base" and "line" of operations when executing a strategic envelopment, though Hattaway and Jones attempt to demonstrate that this was frequently done. Hattaway and Jones restate these views in Richard Beringer, et al, *Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); indeed, Jones gives Jomini even more credit as an advocate of turning movements than he had done in The Politics of Command. Again, the question is which Jomini?--Who read what when, and how can we tell if they didn't comment on it? I reiterate that our objective as historians of an American military conflict is not to find the
"right" Jomini, or to find the one that makes American generals look good, or the one that seems to fit American practice best.

Connelly and Jones, The Politics of Command, pp. 27-28 (n. 11), suggests that the Austrian Archduke Charles was a more significant influence on Halleck than Jomini, at least in Halleck's field operations in the Civil War, because Charles went beyond Jomini (who did after all stress concentration and the offensive) in advocating the use of fortifications, particularly in dispersed cordon defenses. Indeed, Connelly and Jones conclude (p. 30) that Halleck was not a "[disciple] of Jomini," as previous historians like Stephen Ambrose have maintained, but they do not demonstrate the intellectual linkages between Charles and Halleck as explicitly as one would like. More importantly, they do observe (pp. 12-13) that the basic lesson that American officers received from Jomini was the need for safety and security (to avoiding losing) rather than the decisiveness Mahan sometimes stressed, which is my point regardless of the specific influence of Mahan, Jomini, or Archduke Charles on individual generals. Regardless of where it came from, Halleck's Civil War operations do demonstrate this timidity—which as a refusal to risk the lives of democratic citizens needlessly and endanger popular support for the war effort was professionally responsible (up to a point).

More generally, Halleck was the only American who was both theorist and practitioner; he was only one general, and he only commanded in one significant campaign (Corinth, in the spring of 1862). See Stephen A. Ambrose, Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962) which stresses Jominian influences in an artificial manner similar to that employed in the works of Donald, Williams, Pohl, and Archer Jones. Jones in particular is engaged in an effort to rehabilitate Jomini as an analyst who recognized and advocated the lessons of Napoleonic warfare, but the effort is routinely undermined by the need to explain Jomini's own vagueness and contradictions. (See similarly Gat, The Development of Military Thought, pp. 20-24.) Ultimately, one cannot escape the fact that Jomini diluted Napoleonic lessons with prescriptions more appropriate to eighteenth-century limited warfare, which he preferred for political and cultural reasons, so if he did influence anyone directly—which I rather doubt, at least in the literal sense which historians used to claim—it was probably in the damaging way first denounced by Donald and Williams. Remember also that Jomini was never on Napoleon's staff—he was on the Tsar of Russia's, not a notable center of progressive military or political thought. Jomini's views changed somewhat over the decades in which he wrote, but trying to ascertain "which Jomini" Civil War generals learned merely takes us back to square one by enmeshing us more deeply in the opaque doctrinal mire.
44 See Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Vintage, 1988), p. 185, and Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians*, pp. 392-412 and chs. 1 and 12 on Napoleonic imagery and the quest for decisive battle. See Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), chs. 2, 3, and 6, on Americans' cultural preference for aggressive warmaking. Winton, "Antebellum Military Instruction," pp. 216-17, observes that the "direct impact of West Point theory on Confederate strategy and tactics appears to have been slight." Michael C.C. Adams, *Our Masters the Rebels: A Speculation on Union Military Failure in the East, 1861-1865* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978) explores northern fears of southern military prowess; Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won*, p. 683 ("almost universally") and passim, suggest that American generals believed in decisive battles but recognized before the war that they could not be won by frontal attacks in the face of rifled firepower and that they therefore sought turning movements to seize key points and force the enemy to come to them. Rather contradictorily, they laud American generals for learning the lessons of World War One (that attacking entrenchments head-on is suicidal) within a month during the Wilderness campaign of 1864--but these lessons should have been apparent to observers of Antietam or Fredericksburg a year and a half before, particularly if they had recognized the power of rifles before the war. In other words, this recognition of lethality did not produce tactical answers, which the experience of World War One ultimately did. One reason was that American officers of the mid-nineteenth-century had neither the institutions for nor the experience with ongoing doctrinal development, which the Germans (and to a lesser extent all the other belligerents) possessed by 1914.

Hattaway and Jones are writing about *How the North Won* rather than *Why the South Lost*, so they largely ignore the very substantial attrition caused by southern tactical offensives, which Jamieson and McWhiney demonstrate in *Attack and Die*. Jamieson and McWhiney attribute the failure to change to the experience of success in the Mexican War, the influence of French chasseur tactics (which promised a rapid advance that could "run in under" the trajectory of rifled fire with relatively minimal casualties), and among Confederates the impact of southern culture and Scots-Irish ethnicity. While the latter of these views may be exaggerated and difficult to historically substantiate, Jamieson has demonstrated the doctrinal impact of the former very clearly (much more so than the influence of Jomini has ever been). See Wawro, "An 'Army of Pigs',' for an example of an army which felt compelled to adopt French-style assault tactics after its defeat by those tactics in 1859 but was decimated seven years later by Prussian rifle fire. The French had been able to run in under the Austrian fire, which was poorly directed by
officers who could not speak the language of their troops, who were poorly educated, trained, and motivated conscripts and usually aimed high. The Prussians had none of these handicaps, and better rifles than the French had had. Paddy Griffith devotes much of his revisionist Battle Tactics of the Civil War to arguing that Napoleonic columnar assaults could still be undertaken against rifle fire by disciplined troops aggressively led, using chasseur tactics as his doctrinal baseline and the Franco-Austrian War as his historical example. American troops were neither as disciplined as the French veterans (for purposes of the attack) nor as poorly trained and motivated as the Austrian conscripts whom the French succeeded against, however. When troops of nearly equal quality fought in the Franco-Prussian War the defense dominated. Griffith's calculations leave extremely little room for error, and indeed bear not a little resemblance to those of tactical theorists at the time and prior to the First World War--yards covered versus rounds fired, a singularly bloody equation to base one's offensive doctrine on. See Showalter, "Infantry Weapons, Tactics, and the Armies of Germany"; Gordon A. Craig, The Battle of Koniggratz: Prussia's Victory Over Austria, 1866 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1964); and Howard, The Franco-Prussian War, on Moltke's operational synthesis. A wide range of books and articles discuss European efforts to overcome the effects of firepower prior to World War One; see especially Paret, ed. Makers of Modern Strategy: Travers, The Killing Ground; and most recently Daniel J. Hughes, "Schlichting, Schlieffen, and the Prussian Theory of War in 1914," JMH 59 (April 1995): 257-77. American efforts are examined in Jamieson, Crossing the Deadly Ground.

45 Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, p. 86.

46 The most important contemporary works that present the regular and citizen-soldier ideals as applied to the war are Emory Upton, The Military Policy of the United States from 1775 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), and John A. Logan, The Volunteer Soldier of America (Chicago: Peale, 1887). (Note that even the location of the publishers implies the differences between the authors.)

47 Owen Connelly, Blundering to Glory: Napoleon's Military Campaigns (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1987) provides a revisionist account of Napoleon's generalship that stresses contingency and luck rather than genius and preparation. For a brief introduction to these issues, see Peter Paret, "Napoleon and the Revolution in War," in Paret, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy, pp. 123-42. Note that Napoleon still had to fight at Austerlitz after forcing 27,000 Austrians to surrender at Ulm, to face the stalemate at Eylau and the indecisive winter campaign of 1806-1807 after Jena-Auerstadt, and
that he was never able to destroy the Austrian armies in 1809 or the Russian in 1812. By 1813 the Allied forces (and willpower) had grown far beyond even Napoleon's ability to defeat in a single battle or series of tactical successes.

T. Harry Williams, who was one of the leaders among the historians of the 1950s who criticized Union efforts during the first three years of the war, concluded that the North won once it found leaders without Jominian (or limited war) illusions, which I would modify to state that the North won once it found determined leaders whose plans and reactions were not dominated by concern for the impact of casualties on public opinion. In other words the war became a near-total one in its methods as well as its objectives, and Jomini's Enlightenment values (which made him prefer the limited wars of the eighteenth century to national, Napoleonic, or popular warfare), which may indeed have been applicable under the political circumstances obtaining in 1861, became irrelevant. See Ambrose, Halleck for another--and a more nuanced--recognition of the impact of this transformation on Union strategy, although Ambrose is similarly too literal is attributing Halleck's earlier actions to Jominian influence. The best recent discussion of the movement toward total warfare and the popular acceptance of attrition is Royster, The Destructive War.


48 Weigley, The American Way of War, p. 89. Hattaway and Jones, How the North Won, p. 693, suggest that by 1864 American generals realized that
annihilation was impossible and sought attrition against enemy resources instead, but I think that Grant was equally focused on defeating the enemy through fighting in the field, though this meant attrition rather than a single climactic battle. See William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: Norton, 1981) for a clear understanding of Grant's personal combativeness.

49 See e.g. the essays in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Decision on the Rappahannock* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), especially those by George Rable, Alan Nolan, and Gallagher, for examinations of the mixed Confederate reactions to their defensive success at Fredericksburg.

50 Sherman quoted in Donald, "Refighting the Civil War," p. 90; Grant quoted in Louis A. Coolidge, *Ulysses S. Grant* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1922), p. 54.
Part III

The Application of Professional Expertise and Responsibility in Field and Garrison: Training and Preparedness, Commitment, Cohesion, and Capability
Expertise was no mere abstraction, nor can it be abstracted from performance and practice. Officers believed that "practice and experience are the surest guides to excellence in whatever a person undertakes," and experience meant on-the-job training, by far the most common type officers received.¹ This search for practical experience took a wide range of forms, from the schools of practice to the boards of officers and daily drill itself, and in order to assess the quality of officers' expertise, we need to understand how the army practiced what it learned. Though institutionally deficient by European standards, the small American army did have several sizeable garrisons for concentrated training. Since contemporary tactics were largely a matter of discipline, these "schools of practice" were intended primarily to "mature the discipline of the men" to promote unit cohesion and automatic responsiveness to command on the battlefield. This focus on discipline leads us to investigate the form and degree of cohesion among officers as well as enlisted men, and the next two chapters mix assessments of officer, unit, and army-wide expertise and--more broadly conceptualized--capability, with evaluations of officers' commitment to their work as unit (and ultimately combat) leaders. The collegiality of service with fellow officers in field or garrison and exchanging professional information with them was thus a junction at which cohesion was both expression and reflection of responsibility, and it is here that we might speak of an "occupational culture" of shared experience, habit, and affinity within the officer corps. Though we tend to think of commitment as intention and cohesion as consequence, cohesion in the sense of a shared body of norms and behaviours encouraged commitment and identity formation, and none of these categorizations can be left aside when assessing responsibility.
By combining evidence of professional commitment with our knowledge of the officer corps' expertise we can arrive at a more nuanced sense of their and the army's capability that incorporates both intention and outcome, and the corps' success or failure in securing this capability illustrates and manifests the depth, character, and shaping of its sense of professional responsibility--degree, form, and process, motive, objective, and consequence. As we enter the realm of practice it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between the analytical categories of cohesion and responsibility, for officers who avoided field or garrison service were disrupting the army's organizational cohesion and that of their profession as well as refusing to apply their expertise in the manner demanded of them by society and government, all of which damaged capability. Ultimately, professional responsibility in a military organization arises from the combination of abstract expertise with its practical use to improve the force's capability to execute its missions, and this requires cohesion among the officers who command it. (I therefore speak of "capability" as shorthand for the responsible application of expertise to improve individual and institutional effectiveness, much as I often refer to accountability as the practical application of--or a more precise form of--responsibility to civilian government and society.) It is responsible application rather than abstract expertise per se which best characterizes the true professional, and deficiencies in individual and organizational capability are as often a product of dissension and dereliction as they are of inadequate knowledge or ability--failures of cohesion are in some respects as "irresponsible" in impact as failures of (or more precisely failures to adequately pursue or diffuse) expertise. We might simplify these complex and often confusing matters by speaking of initial commitment and consequent capability, but this shorthand
for cause and effect should not blind us to the closely meshed pattern of connection and repercussion that constitutes historical change.

This section therefore provides a thematic transition between the focus on expertise in the abstract stressed in Part Two and that on cohesion and more explicit dimensions of responsibility in Part Four, while demonstrating the reciprocal connections and overlap between them. Chapter six evaluates the preparedness, proficiency, and capability of the army and its officers by focusing on the transmission and diffusion of expertise through unit training and leadership, including the growth, decline, and in some respects rebirth of a system of specialized branch schools. It also examines the rebirth of the American cavalry arm, a matter of the most practical responsibility through the application—indeed, recreation—of expertise specifically intended to increase the army's capability to perform its duties effectively in new environments. Chapter seven turns to the malaise and inertia of garrison life and the frequent absence of officers from their units, presenting evidence of widespread irresponsibility in the inspection reports of the 1820s and the epidemic of resignations and absences during the Second Seminole War, but concluding with the much more positive evaluations presented by inspection reports in the 1840s and officers in the Army of Occupation deployed in Texas just before the War with Mexico. In stressing internal dissension and irresponsibility, chapter seven demonstrates the harm thereby done to army capability, foreshadows the concerns of chapters eight and nine, and anticipates some of the tensions in civil-military relations that we will see in Part Five.
Chapter VI

Responsibility and Readiness, Inertia and Reform: Applying Expertise and Improving Capability at the Unit Level

This chapter turns to the army's efforts in the realm of practical troop training in order to conclude the emphasis on expertise as a realm of cognition that has characterized the three preceding it and begin a shift to the examination of practical application that will characterize the following one. The first two sections of this chapter survey the army's mechanisms for postgraduate officer and troop training: the branch schools of application founded during the 1820s and 1830s, routine drill within units, and several exceptional concentrations of troops intended to provide the opportunity for large-scale exercises. Consequently, the search for a fiscally and politically acceptable means of geographically concentrating the army in order to improve its efficiency is a constant thread in this chapter. As in Part Two, another of the underlying themes of this chapter is "learning"—the diffusion of professional knowledge and expertise through the officer corps via the application of past experience and the activities of a few professionally active officers. However, the last section of this chapter also begins to suggest the inertia, frustration, and ennui that often characterized the army in garrison, for lengthy company duty during peacetime could easily foster task routinization and skill compartmentalization, which obscured the creativity and challenge of professional military leadership and led to endemic dissatisfaction and resignations from the army, subjects related to the officer corps' cohesion as an occupation which we shall examine in much greater depth in chapters seven and nine.
Similarly, the third section of the present chapter evaluates officers' understandings of leadership, the culturally constructed and subjective motivational aspect of military expertise which I have neglected to this point, which will anticipate the discussion of social values and class relations within the army presented in chapters nine and ten. The nineteenth-century Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz observed that "moral values [by which he meant psychology rather than ethics] cannot be ignored in war," and the military officer's skills are at base moral and psychological rather than "scientific"--he is a "manager of violence," a leader and director of men rather than a practitioner of what he commands. He motivates and directs others in the execution of policy, but is not charged with killing the enemy himself, and to concentrate on doing so would have been a distraction from his professional role as leader. Outside the exigencies of small-scale colonial warfare against ethnic and cultural "others," by the nineteenth century direct killing by officers was often viewed as a dirtying of the hands, and though romantic attitudes permitted individual clashes that resembled duels, officers spent most of their time on the battlefield waving their swords or pistols about while trying to urge their men on. My examination of the officer corps' concepts of leadership therefore marks a turn from the study of expertise in the abstract and its application--ideally in a form that is politically accountable and responsive to societal norms--in the human and social relations involved in managing an organization, and it foreshadows the discussion of officers' motives in chapter nine and class relations in chapter ten, two dimensions of the elite class formation to which "professionalization" contributed.²

* * *
I. Postgraduate Branch Institutions: The Schools of Practice

In August 1823 Alexander Macomb wrote to the War Department to recommend granting a commission to a man dismissed from West Point for academic deficiency that June. The words of the chief engineer and future commanding general indicate the limited role the academy played, or could play, in fostering military expertise:

[His] principal deficiency is that of tactics, but . . . he will be employed for years to come in a course of practical exercises in tactics [meaning drill] . . . He is well grounded in all the duties of the soldiers and the school of the company and Battalion. The Higher branches of tactics [however] must be the result of much reflection . . . and of their application on a large scale.³

As Macomb's letter suggests, the army's leaders never believed that West Point was capable of providing the full range of specialized training necessary for the professional officers who would direct the nation's forces in wartime—insofar as practical military rather than purely technical knowledge was concerned the Military Academy provided graduates with a basis for rather than the substance of a rounded military education. Indeed, Simon Bernard and William McRee of the Fortification Board compared the academy to "an elementary or common school, where the knowledge common to every arm should be given alike to all who are intended for the army," and commanding general Jacob Brown warned Secretary of War Calhoun that it was "almost in vain that military education is fostered, if it is to terminate with the course of studies at West Point."⁴

Less senior officers agreed with these assessments of the academy's limitations. "Warren," writing in the Army and Navy Chronicle in 1842,
recurred to the principle on which the army's existence as a distinct organization was founded: "War, in this age, is a deep and difficult science, and no one will presume to say [that] he is perfected in its theory when he leaves the Military Academy; he knows it is the study of a lifetime." Because the academy's principal limitation was a lack of opportunity for practical experience, the obvious solution was to send new officers to their units to learn on the job through drill and active operations. Professional leaders felt that this was insufficient, however, because the army's geographic dispersal meant that by the early 1820s few posts held more than a couple of companies and a hundred men, making it impossible to practice tactics on the scale that the army would use in wartime, while aside from a few dragoon expeditions in 1834 and 1835 the army conducted fewer than half a dozen active campaigns between the First and Second Seminole Wars, only one of which (the Black Hawk War of 1832) exceeded battalion scale (roughly five hundred men), and that only because of the involvement of the militia. Senior officers moved to establish separate schools of application for each of the combat arms in order to overcome these constraints: in General Brown's words, each new school was "anxiously looked to as a supplemental institution in which the theoretic instruction [here meaning book-learning] of the academy graduate might be applied with good effect to the practical duties and relations of military service."5

The initial impetus for the postgraduate school movement came from the engineers and artillery, because of the more technical nature of their work and the greater likelihood that they would be detached on individual service supervising fortification construction. In 1817 Joseph Swift proposed a two-year school for artillery and engineer lieutenants just graduated from West Point. Two years later General Bernard and Major McRee recommended the
establishment of a separate school for these branches, and Secretary Calhoun incorporated their suggestion into his proposal for an additional military academy. Congress refused to fund any of these plans but the army's leaders did not give up. Their principal concern was not so much with the officers' inadequacies as with the "approaches of sloth and imbecility" among its soldiers caused by the army's widespread dispersal in small units constantly immersed in routine garrison duties (principally manual labor) without the opportunity for large-scale training and the competition between units that it fostered. Commanding general Brown wrote to Calhoun that "there can be but one opinion among military men" on the desirability of concentration, while Quartermaster General Jesup asserted that "the importance . . . of a school of practice is too obvious to require demonstration." Jesup felt that "without such an establishment uniformity of discipline cannot be expected," while Brown urged "the expediency and necessity of some system of concentration for the preservation of the vigor and efficiency of the army." Otherwise, he warned, "it cannot be disguised, that the virtues of an army employed . . . in little else than the ordinary course of garrison service are in danger of debilitation." Something had to be done "in order to preserve the energies and active vigor of our ranks" and halt their apparently inevitable slide into physical, mental and moral "imbecility." Indeed, Paymaster General Nathan Towson proposed creating companies of invalids in order to relieve a regiment from garrison duties so that it could be "profitably employed in appropriate professional duty, the acquirement of military knowledge."

The army's artillery regiments were particularly unprepared for combat because of their greater geographic dispersal and their officers' lack of the specialized training necessary to perform their wartime duties. In 1819
Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick of the Light Artillery Regiment warned that "but few of the officers and none of the men . . . have ever been instructed in the field Evolutions" (tactical maneuvers), and he suggested that a single company be assigned as a school therein, to rotate the officers and men through and render the officers capable of commanding detachments. Nothing was done then or in 1821, when Secretary Calhoun proposed restructuring the artillery with a separate branch staff and commandant to exercise more central control than was possible with four battalion or regimental hierarchies, but he was rebuffed by a parsimonious Congress. Two years later Inspector General Samuel B. Archer found that only one company out of forty had held some form of field training during the past year, and he urged that the artillery be concentrated for training in peacetime, since doing so would be impossible in the middle of a war. War with a major European power was unlikely, however, and in most other operations the artillery simply acted as infantry, a situation which provided little incentive to remedy its lack of gunnery training. Material deficiencies caused by lack of funding (another product of the improbability of large-scale war) also hampered the artillery, and as commanding general after Brown's death, Alexander Macomb suggested that the school could be "instrumental in diffusing throughout the artillery the practical knowledge necessary to the efficiency of that arm," which had "been too much confined to the duties of infantry from a want of suitable equipment."8

The army's leaders had wider goals in mind as well. Brown hoped "to select as much fitness and talent as possible" while placing new officers "under a severe and enlightened discipline for a few years that their habits as soldiers may become deeply settled." The commanding general believed that "propriety and uniformity in the discharge of [their] duties . . . can only be
secured through the agency of a supplemental school." Jesup felt that every junior officer should be required to pass through a school of artillery, where they would be temporarily ranked according to their proficiency as tested by an entry exam. The system could then serve as a means of officer selection by acquainting the government with "the character, capacity, and attainments of its officers" so that it could "employ them with advantage in the event of war." Jesup also supported the school as a means of training generalists capable of directing combined arms operations, maintaining that "no man is fit to command a regiment, or even a company of infantry, unless he have some knowledge of fortification, and be well versed in every branch of artillery duty." The quartermaster general hoped that the school system would ultimately embrace "the theory and the practical application of every branch of military science," and Chief Engineer Macomb wanted to incorporate staff and engineering training. Jesup summed up his proposal as decisively as possible: "In developing character and talent, a school properly organized would have the same advantages in peace which active service would have in war."9

Despite all these ideas, the funding made available by Congress was inadequate for anything more than an artillery school of practice. Its basic outline was conceived by Winfield Scott: ten artillery companies (a quarter of the total number, with about fifty soldiers each, or about a regiment in total strength) concentrated at Fortress Monroe near Norfolk, Virginia under specially selected officers, to rotate to new posts every two years after receiving training. The school was established under Colonel John Fenwick's command in 1824 as the "Artillery Corps of Instruction," a title which indicates that the institution was intended as much for training enlisted men
as for officers. Fenwick's principal assistant, and the man who actually organized the school and commanded it during most of its existence, was Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Eustis, considered by Scott (who undoubtedly pressed his appointment) the best qualified officer in the army for the post, who later commanded the army's only large-scale maneuvers between the wars (the camp of instruction at Trenton, New Jersey, in the summer of 1839) and served on a number of official boards for ordnance and doctrinal development, including Scott's Infantry Board that fall. All new Military Academy graduates going into the artillery (approximately a dozen a year) were to be assigned there for initial training (theoretically of two years duration) before moving on to their units.10

Despite all the hopes of its proponents the Artillery School was essentially remedial in nature, and from the beginning discipline was its keynote among both officers and men. Fenwick proclaimed in Order No. 1 that

the object of the Government . . . is to give to the artillery that perfection which is found impossible to obtain in the present dispersed state of the Corps. . . . [This] will require from every grade the most absolute subordination, perfect harmony, and zealous cooperation. . . . Let us guard carefully against the approaches of disaffection and cabal and devote our energies to our professional improvement and the perfection of the artillery.

The urgent necessity of this admonition was quickly demonstrated when Fenwick was temporarily forced to suspend training because of disputes among his subordinates over rank and seniority. Although these were resolved, the school's operations and its efficacy as a center for officer training were constantly hampered by shortages in material and staff and the officers'
belief that troop discipline (usually thought to be fostered by frequent close order drill and a spotless post) was the first priority. The officers attended complex lectures and laboratories on ordnance and kept detailed records of their gunnery, but in 1833 commandant Eustis complained that "no Books have been sent here from the War Office since 1824." Ammunition was limited and so few horses were available that cannon had to be moved by hand, effectively precluding maneuvers as batteries in the field. Aside from material limitations there was no uniform and officially sanctioned system of artillery tactics for officers to practice, though consistent use of the same manual at the Artillery School (if this was indeed done) would at least have effected some standardization through practical acquaintance. (One would assume that the school used the French manual translated by Lieutenant Daniel Tyler in 1826 while he was adjutant there in 1827, but this is only a probability, and the Lallemand volumes used at West Point were really too awkwardly structured for use as field training manuals.) Indeed, one has to ask why the school was not more aggressively used to conceive and promote such a system, for infantry drill was the standard tactical exercise at the Artillery School, just like any other post.11

These limitations were noted by outside observers, who continually made recommendations for the school's improvement. In 1829 Inspector General Wool reported that the officers were capable and motivated but that too much emphasis was placed on infantry training. An annual encampment was held for artillery experiments and limited field exercises, but this was the only time when troop instruction went beyond routine drill. Insofar as field training went, the artillery school was little more than an ordinary post, though larger than most. Wool therefore concluded that the program was too ambitious and suggested that the school be made permanent
but reserved for officers alone, with a fixed curriculum, annual examinations by a board of officers, and a two-year tour not subject to interruption by leaves of absence or detached service elsewhere. Major William J. Worth, the "Director" at Monroe between 1829 and 1832 after eight years as commandant at West Point, advocated a similar plan, while other suggestions included the establishment of a "school of tactics" for noncommissioned officers.\textsuperscript{12}

These proposals were never implemented, and as late as 1833 Wool found that the artillery training did not go beyond the handling of individual cannon. The school’s principal benefit for junior officers was to allow comparatively large groups to meet and work together under the direction of well-qualified seniors. Nearly 120 captains and lieutenants passed through the school, along with thirty-three of the thirty-six companies of artillery, twenty-five of them for at least two years apiece. (One hundred and forty-one lieutenants were commissioned in the artillery from West Point between 1824 and 1833.) Nevertheless, an article published in the \textit{Military and Naval Magazine} the year after the school closed regretted that many artillery officers had had only "quite limited" opportunities "for becoming acquainted with the details of their profession."\textsuperscript{13}

The artillery school went into decline after 1828, when Jacob Brown died and was replaced as commanding general by Alexander Macomb. Macomb was constantly enmeshed in quarrels with the War Department and the staff, so he had little time or authority with which to support the school which he had earlier advocated. Artillery officers and companies "found deficient" by inspections were ordered to the school, but the unit rotation system was temporarily abandoned under pressure from a series of emergencies along the eastern seaboard. Fort Monroe was the most central post along the coast and had the largest concentration of troops there, so its
companies were repeatedly called on to act as a de facto strategic reserve, to ward off potential slave uprisings during 1830 and 1831, to participate in squatter removal in Georgia and Alabama, and to garrison Charleston harbor during the Nullification Crisis. Indeed, the army was so hard-pressed for troops that six of the ten companies were sent to Illinois during the Black Hawk War, and the growing momentum of Indian removal in the southeast finally led to the school's closure in 1834. Eustis pleaded that the post be allowed to keep its technical books, but these were removed and sent to the War Department. As for the post training that most artillery units were limited to, the aforementioned Military and Naval Magazine article asserted in 1834 that "there are few [posts] which make any pretension to a course of instruction going beyond the mere drill of a few field pieces." Indeed, it was not until 1842 that routine target practice was required throughout the army.14

Senior officers put even more stress on the strategic, troop-training and disciplinary functions of concentration in their proposals for an infantry school of practice. In December 1825 General Brown suggested that a post of this sort located near the mouth of the Missouri River could serve as an ideal strategic reserve for the frontier, while this concentration would foster "uniformity and accuracy in the practical routine of service, fresh incitement to the cultivation of military knowledge, emulation and esprit de corps among the troops, and mutual conformity and general elevation of individual character among the officers." (In other words, cohesion—the simple ability to work together as a unit—was as important to capability as expertise per se.) The following February Brigadier General Edmund P. Gaines, commander of the Western Military Department, proposed that "two
or three companies of each one of the Regiments" be stationed together "to form an Infantry Corps of Instruction" for basic training. All new recruits would be assigned to the corps, along with soldiers in their last year of enlistment, who Gaines hoped would be induced to reenlist by service away from the frontiers, and these composite companies would be rotated back to their normal stations at the end of a year.\textsuperscript{15}

The post was quickly established that summer and soon consisted of three nearly complete regiments (the 1st, 3rd, and 6th), totalling twenty-two companies and over a thousand soldiers. Gaines—"one of the army's two line brigadiers"—was offered the command but chose to remain as head of the Western Department (in essence, theater commander). The position was then given to Colonel Henry Atkinson, who Jacob Brown had sought for the post of adjutant general in 1821. (Atkinson had refused that post because he would have lost both rank as a brevet brigadier general and independent troop command as the head of the Missouri Expedition and its successors.) Fresh from the Yellowstone Expedition of 1824 and 1825, Atkinson was an experienced commander who had long shown an interest in troop training and efficiency. Brown, Gaines, and Atkinson conferred in May 1826 and the construction of Jefferson Barracks began in July. Atkinson's zeal was supplemented by Gaines' order that the school demonstrate "the same vigilance, and scrupulous exactness in the discharge of every duty, that a state of war, with the daily expectation of an invading foe, would demand." The units stationed at the school were lent added prestige by being designated as a brigade—officially the only one in the army at the time.\textsuperscript{16}

Gaines initially ordered that "a concise course of artillery, cavalry, and rifle exercises" be added to the infantry drill, and one scholar has written that the training included "every type of field piece." On the other hand the post
was often short of artillery, and a modern student suggests that "probably little more than the manuals of artillery and infantry was ever taught." (It should again be remembered that there was no uniform system of artillery tactics at the time.) These limitations do not seem to have hampered the infantry school too badly, as in 1827 Inspector General George Croghan found the brigade one of the best-drilled units in the army. (Indeed, Gaines had chosen elements of the 1st Infantry to get the school off the ground because under the care of senior captain Stephen W. Kearny he had "found [it] to be one of the best disciplined corps in the Army." ) Gaines spent more than a month inspecting the post that fall and found the 1st Infantry Regiment's training excellent, especially as light infantry. (The 3rd and 6th were less proficient, probably because they were more often detailed on other duties.) The following year infantry officers newly graduated from West Point were ordered to the school for introductory training, but, as in the case of new enlisted recruits, it is unclear how consistently this policy was implemented. The post was also used, like West Point and Fort Monroe (and later the cavalry school at Carlisle Barracks), as a testing ground for new weapons, particularly Hall's breechloading rifle. Ironically, given its mission the Infantry School's weak point seems to have been lax discipline. The soldiers were warned constantly but ineffectively about the dangers of contracting venereal diseases in nearby St. Louis, and the desertion ran at about twenty-two percent per year in the 1830s, most prominently just before units transferred elsewhere. This occurred despite the reimposition of flogging in 1833, a penalty which was "warmly received and vigorously carried out" by the officers. The officers themselves feuded constantly, from Atkinson and his principal subordinate (Colonel Henry Leavenworth, also a brevet brigadier general) on down. 17
Unlike Fort Monroe, Jefferson Barracks had no designated faculty or formal curriculum. The infantry school faced the same difficulties as its counterpart in maintaining a uniform schedule of training because it was centrally located and employed as a reserve on the western frontier, one of General Brown's original objectives which was soon written into official policy. Indeed, the school was officially closed in 1828 when the 1st and 3rd Regiments were sent to suppress the Winnebago Indians. This was only a temporary interruption, however, and the school remained active until its component regiments were sent to Florida in 1837. The post was then virtually abandoned until 1842, when it was rejuvenated by the arrival of the 4th Infantry after the end of the Second Seminole War. In 1843 the 3rd Infantry returned and Inspector General Croghan referred to the forces at Jefferson Barracks as "a school for brigade practice," meaning the "evolutions of the line," a part of grand tactics. That fall Inspector General Sylvester Churchill reported that "the advantages of concentration of infantry companies were favourably shown by the performances at Jefferson Barracks, the only place" where there were enough troops to permit brigade maneuvers. (Note that this brigade was actually the strength of two regiments, each of what today would be battalion size, or a total of about a thousand riflemen.) In May 1844 these regiments were ordered to Fort Jesup, Louisiana, where they formed the core of the Army of Occupation that was sent to Texas the following summer. The benefits of their training at Jefferson Barracks quickly became clear to them: in camp at Corpus Christi Lieutenant John Porter Hatch of the 3rd Infantry contrasted "the advantage" of "a year at Jefferson Barracks" with the inefficiency produced by the dispersal of the 5th Infantry. That summer Jefferson Barracks became the headquarters for Colonel Stephen W. Kearny (temporary commander of the
1st Infantry when it began the Infantry School in 1826) and his 1st Dragoons, whose training there was characterized as "exacting and rigorous." This regiment later became the core of Kearny's Army of the West, which conquered New Mexico and consolidated the American hold on California.\textsuperscript{18} 

The heyday of the principal schools of practice was over by the mid-1830s, when the army was called on to apply its knowledge directly in the Second Seminole War. After the Seminole War ended a series of congressional attacks forced retrenchment and momentary inertia until the annexation of Texas led to the army's concentration on the border with Mexico. The army's remaining branch schools supported specific innovations of the 1830s and 40s--the need for a mounted force that could pursue the Plains Indians and the long sought-after combination of mobility and firepower provided by the horse artillery. Both represented adaptations to suit the new situations encountered in the army's evolving role in westward expansion, but the failure to institutionalize an infantry school of practice or some form of camp of exercise demonstrated the army's inability to attain the outside support necessary for it to evolve into a force as thoroughly and as formally expert as the European ones its leaders expected to fight.

The cavalry was the least significant of the combat arms in the United States army, primarily because it was too expensive to gain sustained congressional support prior to the beginning of large-scale migration onto the Great Plains during the 1850s. The regiment of light dragoons (essentially mounted infantry, who rode to battle but often fought on foot) raised during the War of 1812 was disbanded in 1815 without much debate, and no further mounted units were authorized until 1832. Similarly, the regiment of light
artillery raised in 1808 was a mounted unit only on paper, and it was disbanded in 1821. From 1825 on army leaders from Brown downward unsuccessfully advocated reestablishing mounted units to serve along the Plains frontier, while proposals were made to introduce cavalry and horse artillery instruction at West Point in 1822 and 1831. Training in these arms was also planned for the infantry and artillery schools, but only in the last of these cases does there appear to have been any actual instruction. The urgent need for cavalry in operations against the Plains Indians was forcibly illustrated by the difficulties encountered by an expedition escorting traders to Santa Fe in 1829, an experience which provided the concrete evidence necessary to support the proposals made by senior officers. Congress responded in 1832 by authorizing a volunteer Battalion of Mounted Rangers, which became the 1st Dragoon Regiment the following year. The 2nd Dragoons were authorized three years later but spent most of the next six years fighting on foot in Florida. The Second was temporarily dismounted as a cost-cutting measure between 1842 and 1844, after which the need for mounted troops in the west became too pressing to ignore. The last of these units created in the interwar period was the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen rumored for several years in the mid-1840s as an escort force for the Oregon Trail, but it was not actually authorized until a week after the declaration of war with Mexico, and most of its officers (like those initially appointed to the Battalion of Mounted Rangers and the 2nd Dragoons) were western Democrats appointed directly from civil life via partisan political patronage.

The recreation of an entire branch of service gave officers ample opportunity to discuss the need for military preparedness and expertise. Junior officers writing in the new professional journals praised this development in the belief that "a perfect army should possess at least, a
nucleus corps of every arm used in active service, by which a knowledge of its duties might be communicated in time of need." On the other hand, it was clear that there was much work to do: "[T]here are probably not twenty officers in the service, who are at all acquainted with the duties of cavalry," wrote a correspondent in the second issue of the Military and Naval Magazine in 1833. The only drills manual available had been adopted for the militia, and official regulations for the dragoons were not published until 1834. Even then they were not adequately distributed: one officer reported that "there are but two copies of cavalry tactics . . . in the possession of the dragoons: the officers have been drilled in squads, in order to teach the men." He added that the difficulty of cavalry tactics "only creates the greater necessity of being prepared beforehand." In 1837 Colonel Stephen Kearny published an official drill manual, but these difficulties were still exacerbated by the dispersal of the dragoon regiments: that year "A Subscriber" wrote to the National Intelligencer that "never having served together . . . no opportunity has been offered to revive . . . a practical knowledge of that important arm."

Intermittent expeditions into the area from Iowa west to the Rockies (discussed in chapter fourteen) provided extensive practical experience of campaigning, but not actual training in battle tactics.20

These deficiencies provided the impetus for the establishment of a depot for new cavalry recruits at Carlisle, Pennsylvania when the second dragoon regiment was created in 1836. In 1838 this post became the Mounted School of Instruction, with a six month training cycle in both infantry and cavalry tactics. The cavalry school operated much like the artillery and infantry ones before it, and like them Carlisle served primarily as a training ground for troops rather than officers. The latter seem to have been rotated through the post in a routine but unofficial fashion dependant on the
officers' personal connections--Carlisle was a desirable station because of eastern location--and the regiments' needs in the field. Like its counterparts, the post was used to test cavalry equipment and weapons (including a Colt repeating rifle), and in 1841 the commandant used the recruits to test a new drill manual, but the cavalry school also suffered from many of the material constraints that had hampered its predecessors. Only eighty horses were authorized, despite a normal strength of about twice that many recruits, and in 1838 commandant Edwin Vose Sumner complained to the adjutant general that he lacked enough room to practice cavalry charges and light artillery drill. Six years later Inspector General Churchill found the soil "very bad for maneuvering in wet weather" but praised the facilities and their occupants. Indeed, the dragoon officers themselves displayed great enthusiasm for their new school: "We shall succeed in setting up a splendid thing," wrote Lieutenant Benjamin Stone Roberts in 1838, and two years later his comrade Richard Stoddard Ewell found "drilling & reciting tactics" at Carlisle "most agreeable." Commandant Sumner was an energetic commander who seems to have got on comparatively well with his subordinates despite a reputation as a martinet, and by 1846 the dragoons (or at least the 1st Regiment thereof, for the 2nd was principally known for hardheaded officers and brutality toward enlisted men) were among the most highly regarded of the army's corps.21

The last of the army's attempts to create a branch school combined cavalry and artillery training in order to rejuvenate the light (or "horse") artillery. The army organization act of 1821 authorized one "light company" in each artillery regiment, but this provision was long considered too expensive to implement. The impetus for action came from Secretary of War Joel Poinsett, who ordered Captain Samuel Ringgold to form an experimental
battery in 1838. The unit was trained at Carlisle Barracks and made its public
debut in 1839 at Camp Washington in New Jersey. An impressed Congress
then authorized the conversion of one battery in each of the other artillery
regiments into horse artillery, though their personnel were never fully
mounted (i.e., as individuals) for that role. The "light companies" acted as
schools to train the other batteries, which were rotated through the cadre
companies' posts, and in 1841 they were designated regimental schools of
practice for all artillery lieutenants (who rotated through them a few at a time
for a year or two apiece), thus performing much of the role that Fort Monroe
had played a decade before. This system was slow in operation; it caused
some confusion over rank and command; and there were the usual problems
of insufficient material and funding (especially for land and horses), but the
new schools continued in operation until the Mexican War. Officers clearly
appreciated the value of the new arm: indeed, one quite unrealistically one
called for the conversion of "at least two regiments, as the means of practical
instruction" in it, and the close-range fire support provided by the cadre
batteries (which were commanded by same enthusiastic officers throughout
the era) was the most decisive American tactical edge during the Mexican
War, especially in its opening stages and the battles of Taylor's northern
army. 22

With the important exception of those in the light artillery batteries,
the primary value these schools provided was the discipline and efficiency
they promoted among the assigned units, not the skills learned by their
officers. The army's commanders universally feared the debilitating effects of
its dispersal across the country on dozens of small posts performing
roadwork, construction, or frontier law enforcement, and they hoped that the
schools of practice would act as centers of instruction and discipline for the soldiers as well as their officers. Indeed, Carlisle Barracks was primarily a basic training center for dragoon recruits. Jefferson Barracks was initially intended to serve this function for the infantry, but it came more closely to approximate an ongoing "camp of instruction," a concentration of units constantly drilling and occasionally practicing battlefield maneuvers together. The model for such an institution was Winfield Scott's camp at Niagara in 1814, to which officers (and many historians) later attributed the victories of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane. Surprisingly, Scott himself does not seem to have pressed his laurels with the sort of repeated proposals for similar camps that one might expect from a man of his professionalism and ego, but in 1820 generals Jackson and Macomb lamented that "the efficiency of the army must in a proportionate measure be diminished" because no such camps--"which are so essential to the maintenance of discipline and for forming both officers and soldiers"--could be held given the army's geographic dispersal.

Secretary of War Poinsett provided the political push which secured appropriations for an experiment on these lines in 1838, first proposing four permanent camps of instruction which would be located near the frontiers (at Lake Champlain and Jefferson Barracks) and at central points in the interior (Carlisle Barracks and Augusta, Georgia) and serve as theater reserves (like Jefferson Barracks, and in effect, the Artillery School in its later years) and wartime rallying points for the militia. Nothing was actually done to implement these ideas, but during the Maine boundary crisis the following year commanding general Macomb recommended establishing similar camps on a systematic and comparatively massive scale (8000 regulars at Washington, D.C., 30,000 volunteers at Albany, 20,000 at Bangor, and 10,000 apiece at Washington and Long Island), "in order to accustom [the army] to
act together and manoeuvre on a large scale and practice all the various arms, clearly in preparation for a possible war with Britain. The army's only designated camp of instruction occurred that summer, when units of all arms—including Ringgold's horse artillery battery and the entire 4th Artillery—were brought together at Trenton, New Jersey under the command of Colonel Abraham Eustis, frequent member of boards on artillery doctrine and material and long-time commandant of the Artillery School.24

"Camp Washington" was a great public relations success that cemented the existence of the horse artillery, and it provided the sole opportunity for combined arms training on a significant scale between 1815 and 1845, but congressional parsimony precluded its institutionalization (as was successfully done in France and, by the 1850s, Britain), despite Poinsett's enthusiasm. A number of officers also came away skeptical: Eustis, fifty-four at the time and suffering from ill health, seems to have reached the end of his professional tether under the strain of managing such an endeavour, pleading with assistant adjutant general Robert Anderson the following spring to "ask the General [Scott] to have me excused" from any further camps. (Eustis was nominally the commander of the geographic department encompassing the northeastern border with Canada, where active constabulary operations were then under way, but he relied on junior colonels like William Worth and inspector general John Wool.) Indeed, at least one artillery officer asserted that "it is idle and ridiculous to talk of concentration" and asked "what avail was the camp at Trenton" for a force (specifically the artillery) whose mission required its dispersal in company-sized forts for coastal defense. According to this officer, "numerous desertions, useless annoyances . . . and great expense to the Government" were the only results of reform efforts like Poinsett's. Beset by dispersal on
frontier and coastal garrison duties, meager appropriations, and republican ideology, the American army was never able to hold the sort of mass maneuvers common in Europe during this period. Nor, as it happened, and as most politicians probably understood implicitly, was there any real need to do so. European maneuvers and parades were held in the context of a closely contested balance of power that did not exist in North America, and the conservative continental monarchies intended these demonstrations of military might to intimidate liberal and working-class unrest, a domestic political function virtually inconceivable for the early and mid-nineteenth century American army.25

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II. Unit Training and Drill

For all its prominence, the expert technical cadre discussed in the last three and a half chapters made up only a small proportion of the army officer corps. The staff made up as much as two-fifths of the corps, but most of them were supply officers preoccupied with administrative minutiae, and few really qualify as professionalizers in the sense of men like Robert Anderson or Alfred Mordecai (the latter of whom was a technical specialist). The vast majority of most officers' professional activity was limited to the dry routine of filling out forms and drilling the soldiers under their command. The latter process began when a future officer was at West Point, an experience that could either stir or sour his martial aspirations. Indeed, George McClellan overcame his first bout of depression at the academy through a successful performance on the parade ground: "You can't imagine how much more inspired I feel since I have acquitted myself handsomely at this mornings drill," he wrote to his sister effusively. McClellan never lost his interest in
drill—as a new lieutenant he saluted his company as the best in the army, "above all well drilled," and his most valuable legacy to the Army of the Potomac fifteen years later was as a trainer and organizer. Other cadets felt differently, however: U.S. Grant found his initial encampment "very wearisome and uninteresting," and Jacob Bailey felt that "Tactics are disgusting. I would as soon commit to memory a table of logarithms as some of the lessons in these studies." (After two years in the artillery, Bailey returned to West Point as a chemistry instructor; he became full professor four years later and relinquished his military rank.) Indeed, Dennis Hart Mahan himself criticized what he considered excessive drill, fearing that its repetitive manual character fostered "distaste" for military life among the independently minded cadets. (One did not drill gentlemen, who by definition already knew how to behave.)

The same contrast in attitudes was evident among serving officers, though they wrote very little about drill or their opinions of it. Despite occasional outbursts of pride or criticism, few officers cared to note their opinion of each others' aptitude for or interest in drill in letters or diaries, yet another dimension of their apparent inattention to the details of their occupation. Although this reluctance to criticize may well have been evidence of group and occupational solidarity and cohesion (perhaps a dysfunctional form of collegiality), it is certainly no evidence of personal, organizational, or professional responsibility. In the 1st Dragoons Lieutenant Richard Stoddard Ewell reported to his brother Benjamin (an assistant professor of math and science at West Point until he resigned to become a railroad engineer in 1836) that he found "drilling & reciting tactics" at Carlisle Barracks "most agreeable," but at Fort Leavenworth his comrade Lieutenant Philip Roots Thompson wrote of "plodding on here as usual without much
excitement or variation." Drilling men in the same repetitious motions for several hours a day could become quite wearisome, and officers often delegated this duty to their sergeants. Aware of the slackness and inefficiency this negligence could produce, that "excellent disciplinarian" and "accomplished tactician" William Worth reminded his company commanders that "the constant presence of your officers with the men is indispensable... to keep up their discipline and instruction." Nevertheless, the professional journals contained frequent references to the "mechanical routine of daily drill and guard duty... services [one officer found] just sufficient to check the current of social intercourse or [to] interrupt his intellectual pursuits, without adding one ray of intelligence to his mind or one new spring to his ambition."27

The army's training definitely acted as a physical and mental discipline for its working class enlisted men, but it hardly deserves the name of a system, and historian Edward Coffman notes that "training... was not given priority" among the soldier's day-to-day duties. Winfield Scott prepared a new edition of the Army Regulations each time he returned to the question of tactical drill (in 1821, 1825, and 1834), but few other officers seem to have taken the effort to create such a regimen. In 1819 John Fenwick of the Light Artillery warned that "we have never had a stable police in our country" (by which he meant a system of rules to regulate daily routines), but after Scott's thorough revision of the Regulations it appears that no one else attempted to reexamine them during this period. Historian Ronald Spiller rightly labels military training "a pragmatic, holistic process" (my emphasis) that cannot be understood solely in terms of regulations or formal procedures alone, but it is still surprising how little the army and its officers did to standardize routine training, especially given the number of detailed manuals published to
regulate so many other areas of army activity (e.g., ordnance, clothing, court-martial proceedings, and quartermaster duties). The Army Regulations required regimental commanders to exert themselves "to the utmost in the instruction of the regiment," but Spiller observes that inspection reports from the 1820s devote much more space to the appearance and "police" of units than their instruction per se, and this is also true of Sylvester Churchill's reports from the early 1840s. Spiller nevertheless suggests that "the importance of mastering the drill requirements seems to have been communicated to unit commanders," and he concludes that "most commanders made some attempt to train their units," often successfully.28

On the other hand, historian Dale Steinhauser concludes that "officers appear to have made little effort to insure the quality of [the] basic training" in the school of the soldier, a failure which would have undermined the entire training process and the army's tactical proficiency had it not been remedied by noncommissioned officers. The 1825 Army Regulations written by Winfield Scott concluded that two months of initial training would suffice to teach the soldier the fundamentals of his craft, but the provision of this training was extremely uneven, and no training manuals were issued to individual soldiers before 1865. Recruits were normally held together at their depots, whether regimental or general, until the officer in charge decided that there were enough of them to send on to a post, but recruiting officers normally seem to have left any instruction, usually at the level of basic close order drill (parading) and perhaps the "school of the soldier" (the individual manual of arms, teaching basic firing procedures) to their sergeants. In 1837 Fortress Monroe was declared a center for recruit training, but it is unclear whether this order was implemented, or if so how effectively and for how long. After joining their companies it does not appear that recruits received
any further training beyond that given to the unit as a whole, but one would assume that good first sergeants did this in an informal capacity, almost as a sort of remedial or catch-up training. Aside from the Infantry and Artillery Schools, there was no "advanced individual training" of the sort standard in the army today.29

Similarly, there was no formalized noncommissioned officer (NCO) training during this era, and officers left little mention of informal efforts to improve their NCOs' skills. Insofar as the army developed a highly competent noncommissioned officer class to supply its commissioned officers' deficiencies, the success was largely the product of career NCOs who took the responsibility for their development upon themselves, a process that suggests that they developed a sense of duty, identity, and cohesion as veteran soldiers regardless of the limited range of their expertise and their limited autonomy as subordinates. In the language of occupational sociology, the NCO corps probably deserved to be called a "semi-profession" analogous in its relation to the commissioned corps to the role of nurses vis-a-vis doctors, and Ulysses Grant acknowledged this when he wrote in his memoirs that the Army of Occupation was a professional army "to a man."30

In keeping with the army's "doctrinal" emphasis on the rigidly linear tactics of close order drill and massed unit firings, marksmanship practice was not officially mandated until 1858, when the widespread distribution of rifled muskets, example of British experiments, and the initiative given to the French chasseurs finally overcame miserly budgetary constraints. Until then, the quest to improve marksmanship was dependent on the experience and efforts of individual commanders—in Florida soldiers normally aimed and fired as individuals, but there is little evidence that they practiced doing so before battle. (Colonel Talbot Chambers of the Rifle Regiment and the 1st
Infantry stressed constant target practice, while his successor, Colonel Willoughby Morgan, added a reward for success through assignments to hunting parties charged with providing meat for the garrison.) Similarly, routine artillery firing practice was not instituted until 1842, when a general order required that each gun be fired one to two hundred times a year with the results recorded and sent to the adjutant general. (One would presume that the Inspector General's office would have been a more appropriate destination for these reports, but one of the two inspector positions was about to be officially abolished by Congress, and the inspectors had none of the adjutant general's office staff for and experience with handling incoming records on such a large scale.) In consequence, artillery units were commonly without training in their primary function until the last years of this era. This ordinarily did not matter much, of course, since the artillery regiments were usually deployed as infantry, while few of the cannon they would have employed for coastal defense were actually mounted and capable of use.31

Despite its highly scientific education at West Point, technical ingenuity and innovation does not seem to have been a prominent characteristic of the officer corps outside of the ordnance and engineering branches. In 1828 Captain Daniel Ketchum of the 6th Infantry experimented with increasing the accuracy of Hall's rifles by not "patching" the balls fired from them (in effect, by firing the lead balls alone without wadding).32 This expedient increased the rifle's rate of fire and may have reduced the friction in the barrel, but it is unclear how widely this practice was adopted or whether it succeeded in increasing accuracy. In another rare display of personal initiative, inspector and former ordnance officer Sylvester Churchill (who became inspector general in 1841) unofficially "made a trial to ascertain the comparative number of hits of the musket and rifle . . . at 100 yards" in
1836, using picked regulars with muskets firing buck-and-ball against rifle-wielding volunteers (in effect a trial of the principal alternatives in American military manpower policy).

As his choice of picked men indicates, Churchill's experiment was not intended as an unbiased tests of alternative weapons technologies, but as a way of justifying the regular army's status as the core of the nation's defenses. After ten minutes of unregulated firing--in other words, aiming as individuals rather than firing en masse as a unit per the drill regulations--the regulars had made 114 hits (including 54 bullets) with 217 discharges, versus 72 hits by the rifles (out of an undetermined but doubtlessly lower number of discharges). The figure for the regulars was certainly a remarkable one, but soldiers normally aimed and fired as individuals during the Seminole War, which gave Churchill a pool of marksmen to choose from and a justification for deviating from the approved method of firing. Although he had clearly biased the test, the results were ambiguous enough that Churchill could claim to rebut assertions of a peculiarly American finesse with the rifle that was usually associated with citizen soldiers. He apparently did not attempt to do so publically, however. (Another officer wrote to the Army and Navy Chronicle the following year to advocate more extensive use of buck-and-ball in Florida "for close contests in the hammocks," because of the higher effective rate of fire.)

Churchill provides an example of a line officer, albeit an artilleryman who had served on ordnance stations, with technical interests and aptitude like those commonly found among the specialists of the ordnance and engineering branches. A month before the trial described above he had a boat built with a gunmount atop a platform "to enable me, in ascending rivers, to fire over or above the banks." Other officers displayed similar concerns,
whether objecting to the weight and percussion caps of the new carbines issued to the dragoons in 1843 or "like many other experienced officers, . . . to the manner of strapping the greatcoats . . . as obstructing the rear rank men in firing." Though neither Churchill nor Ketchum were West Point graduates, men like them reflected a practical concern for the details of their professional work that speaks well for their responsibility. Unfortunately, these examples are presented to show that such experiments did occur rather than as representative activities characteristic of a flourishing occupational culture in which officers found professional stimulation in adapting and improving the methods and equipment of their work. While engineer, ordnance, and other technically minded officers were often active tinkerers, the vast majority of the officer corps seems somehow to have lacked the inquisitiveness and technical ingenuity of the famed "American mechanic" and the Jacksonian man-of-all-trades.34

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III. Class, Cohesion, and Concepts of Leadership

Combat commanders have always feared that fighting leadership and spirit would be submerged in the formal rigidity and standardized procedures of bureaucratic management. As we shall see in the next chapter, line officers frequently complained about staff details, absences from the field, and other apparent derelictions of duty, but army bureaucracy did not mean a loss of fighting spirit in the combat arms, at least in situations when culturally sanctioned opportunities like the war with Mexico were available. (The lack of glory to be won fighting Indians in swamps limited the attractiveness of Seminole War service, however.) Despite the administrative standardization
embraced in Scott's 1821 Regulations, army leadership remained personal
and charismatic in source and form, rooted in the same aristocratic class
values of the army's European counterparts and the U.S. Navy, and the
concept and practice of battlefield leadership remained a bastion of
individualism, whether expressed in personalism, paternalism, or
eccentricity. "Commanding" meant looking the part—not just knowing, but
appearing to know what to do amidst the chaos of combat. Indeed, Ronald
Spiller has observed that "successful leadership in the nineteenth-century
army was largely a matter of style" rather than specifically military or tactical
knowledge or psychology, and officers were most often praised for calm and
cool demeanor, which demonstrated a self-control that could be used to calm
and direct frightened men amidst the chaos of battle. Among others,
historian Stow Persons has observed that contemporary social commentators
intended the concept and practice of gentility "to discipline and control the
potential anarchy of a highly mobile and fluid society" through calm
department and manners which distinguished the bearer from the passionate
mob around him—a concept remarkably similar in form and objective to
leadership on the nineteenth-century battlefield.35

In the more general civilian terms which sustained the officers' social
and class prestige, these qualities signified an officer's right and ability to
command to his comrades (and to soldiers who accepted the authority of
these characteristics) through his adherence to the behavioral code of the
gentleman. Combining both dimensions, publicist and erstwhile officer
Fayette Robinson (who was not a graduate of West Point) characterized
Stephen Kearny as "one of the coolest and calmest men imaginable" in his
1848 Dictionary of the Officers of the United States Army, while "the plain,
unassuming" Jacob Brown was praised posthumously in the Army and Navy
Chronicle for exemplifying a more earthy version of these qualities of dutiful disinterestedness—a willingness to sacrifice oneself in the service of others—and the steady self-restraint of passions that could otherwise lead to irresponsible aggressiveness or cowardice and flight. Similarly, Lieutenant John Porter Hatch reported his satisfaction with Zachary Taylor as "a very sensible, plain man" not unlike "a good clever old farmer."36

Though battlefield deaths were rare among officers in this mostly peaceful era, those killed in battle were always praised for a sort of debonair nonchalance, phrased with a light and often down-to-earth touch of irony calculated to appeal to genteel and paternalistic sensibilities when published. Their eulogies also provided the most immediately relevant leadership advice in print, with vibrant examples of gallantry and heroism unavailable in the dry Army Regulations. Epitaphs to the soldiers slain in the Dade Massacre that opened the Second Seminole War provide a case in point, uniformly referring to "the gallant Dade" and his subordinates. One of these, Lieutenant George W. Gardiner, had displayed a paternally proprietary interest in his men by racing to join the column as soon as his wife recovered from the illness that had first spurred Francis Dade to take up Gardiner's command. Though Dade offered Gardiner command, the latter unselfishly permitted Dade (who was actually his senior in rank) to retain it. When the force was ambushed Gardiner exhorted the soldiers as "my lads" and apologized to them when he was no longer able to lead them because of his wounds, while Lieutenant William Basinger, the last of the officers alive, cried out "come boys, let us sell our lives as dearly as possible!" (The word "bravery" was certainly used, but "gallantry" provided a more precisely nuanced expression of the characteristics shown, and brevets for combat leadership always spoke of the latter.) Similarly, newly promoted lieutenant
colonel Alexander Thompson, mortally killed leading his men in a charge at the battle of Okeechobee, called out to them to "remember the regiment to which you belong" before he died. Accounts of junior officers slain in battle stressed similar virtues and provide exaggerated (if not fantasized) portraits of the loyalty they sought from the soldiers under their command. According to his eulogist Captain Samuel L. Russell of the 2nd Infantry "died most bravely!": "he addressed his men in that familiar yet decisive manner (which made them always love and obey him,) 'Boys, stand your ground, and don't give way an inch.'" Russell was twice wounded but tried to conceal his injuries before falling. The author underlined the concept of paternalistic leadership implicit in this account by relating the sorrow of Russell's soldiers, who supposedly "loved him as a father": "the gloom which has since fallen over the minds of his company, is most indescribable."37

Epitaphs and testimonials like these, which were published in the professional journals in memory of senior officers and some of the junior ones who fell in battle during the Second Seminole War, provide some of the best sources for the values of the officer corps, values which contributed to cohesion and thus capability, but these memorials virtually never referred explicitly to an officer's tactical (or other specifically military) expertise or ability. (Enlisted men were virtually never memorialized, either by officers or their fellows, doubtlessly because class biases made it mentally inconceivable that they would demonstrate the same sort of sentimentalized, quasi-aristocratic "gallantry" as officers.) Nearly twenty field, company, and staff officers (including men from four regiments) gathered together in 1842 to testify to their respect for Captain (brevet major) R.A. Zantzinger, an old veteran of the War of 1812 whose services at Chippewa and Erie attested to "his zeal, courage, and patriotism"—or commitment, responsibility, and
accountability, in our terms. The field and company grade officers of the 4th Infantry did the same for their lieutenant colonel, William S. Foster, in February 1840, lauding his "cool though daring courage, high military skill, and invincible determination," which "nobly justified, in many a well-fought field [during the Second Seminole War], the enthusiastic confidence which he inspired in all under his control." Foster's battlefield gallantry set a direct example for his officers and men in combat (as well as an ideal for civilian admiration), while his strong sense of corporate identity gave them confidence in his commitment to their welfare as a group. These personal attributes contributed to group solidarity in the context of relationships within and without the army: Foster's "strict sense of honor, kindness of heart, and unwearied devotion to the interests of his regiment" led his officers "to lament him alike as the accomplished gentleman and sincere friend"--a leader and man of standing in both military and civil society. Although a form of expertise, leadership was a matter of specifically military knowledge ("how to") than of building cohesion and providing a channel for its expression in battlefield esprit de corps and setting an example of dash and elan--the "gallantry" so often cited in brevets for battlefield performance--for soldiers to emulate. Indeed, brevets were rarely ever given for "expert" maneuvers, or if they were this was routinely cloaked by reference to "gallantry" in the citation, clearly indicating what leadership meant to the society the officer corps was responsible to.38

These qualities represented general values held by the officer corps, not merely the personal attributes of a single officer. When Foster's superior Colonel Alexander Cummings died two years later, his subordinates praised him in much the same tones as a "most amiable and excellent officer" who had lived "a long life of eminent usefulness and honor." Like Foster,
Cummings had combined the qualities of a soldier and a gentleman: "remarkable for his devoted patriotism, his professional zeal, and his unswerving and intrepid discharge of duty"—all aspects of responsibility—he was also esteemed for "his unblemished reputation," "the uprightness of his conduct, the purity of his motives, and the amenity of his manners"—matters of cohesion as well as accountability. A year later General Abraham Eustis of the 1st Artillery was memorialized for his "distinguished services, exalted intelligence, integrity, manly and soldierly qualities," and "unaffected singleness of purpose." These tributes reflected the virtues necessary for successful military command and service: Eustis had been "brave, disinterested, just, and humane"—committed, responsible, accountable, and consequently a good manager, motivator, and director of the men under his command. In his officers' eyes, Eustis had been rewarded with "an elevated and enviable fame"—the honor and reputation (emblems of accountability) sought by every military gentleman.39

A decade earlier Colonel and brevet brigadier general Henry Leavenworth of the 3rd Infantry had provided a similar example for junior leaders to emulate: his epitaphs stressed "his energy and promptitude," his initiative and decisiveness, and his disinterested selflessness in the performance of duty. Here expertise was a matter of accepting responsibility and acting steadily. Like other senior officers, Leavenworth was lauded as a worthy heir of the Revolution: "He was a kindred spirit with the men of a former struggle, who held all, save their honor, as nothing worth, in comparison with their country's rights." Indeed, "duty controlled him" and "he never shrunk from a responsibility," as home was "sacrificed, and the distant and arduous service cheerfully assumed." His relations with subordinates encouraged regimental cohesion, for Leavenworth "knew how
to care for the rights and feelings of others," an important skill in an army of touchy gentlemen. As for enlisted men, "no rank was with him an apology for forgetting that soldiers were men" and "while enforcing towards the officers under him all proper deference, no one ever maintained more sacredly the claims of the inferior grades to kind and considerate treatment." His eulogist therefore considered him "a most sincere and esteemed friend" to soldiers and officers alike.

Indeed, the personal qualities of commanders like Leavenworth were thought to obviate the need for more institutionalized systems of grievance resolution or mediation: "In his own generous nature the lowest individual of his command found the only advocate needed for the assertion and protection of his rights." The successful unit commander clearly had to be a diplomat, and "to no better hands could have been confided the sometimes conflicting interests of a regiment, for he entered into the feelings of all and, a thorough soldier himself, knew how to interpose and reconcile all." Yet the army was a hierarchy, and Leavenworth "always commanded his regiment, and they who composed it learned to appreciate, in the order and harmony which prevailed, an efficient head." Leavenworth's superior, brevet brigadier general Henry Atkinson, left the world eight years later to similar tributes: his epitaph, signed by more than thirty officers, averred that his "every feeling and exertion were devoted to [the] welfare and reputation" of his regiment. Like all the other officers, Atkinson was said to unite all the "character, abilities, and services" of the genteel military commander: "The strictness of military discipline was in him most happily united to the urbanity of the polished gentleman, and his whole deportment and conduct as an officer furnish a bright example for the imitation of the junior members of his profession."40
Similar attributes were also valued in junior officers. Lieutenant James F. Izard, son of General George Izard of the War of 1812, was slain leading a river crossing in Florida early in 1836, and two epitaphs in the Army and Navy Chronicle memorialized him as the beau ideal of an officer: "temperate, judicious, brave, and prompt in the discharge of all duties assigned him," while "in his social intercourse he was characterized by his magnanimity . . . his steadiness of purpose, his intelligence, his gentlemanly deportment, [and] his politeness and urbanity." Izard was thus said to combine military and social virtues, along with "manly character and moral worth"—every dimension of positive evaluation possible for an officer and a gentleman. Lieutenant Benjamin Poole, though a victim of disease, received a similar testimonial three years later for "his devotion to his profession—his attachment to his fellow officers" and "his ever active and burning spirit." His commander wrote a friend that Poole "was the most prompt, attentive, and faithful officer I have seen in many years": "a more intelligent officer and polished gentleman the army [could] not boast." Another casualty of disease was lauded several weeks later for his "energy, activity, and intelligence . . . in the discharge of all duties" and "the high integrity and the honorable and generous spirit" which rendered him "not less [praiseworthy] as a friend and companion, than as a valuable and efficient officer." The same blend of professional ability and genteel character was valued among the army's surgeons, who praised one of their number for "his untiring zeal and devotion in the discharge of his professional duties," "a high order of professional excellence," and "a benevolence of disposition" and "a suavity of manners and deportment."*41

Despite the benevolent tone of these eulogies, the army remained a comparatively rigid hierarchy which embodied the potential extremities of
the evolving American class and occupational structure, and we shall see a very different reality in our examination of relations between officers and enlisted men in chapter ten. Indeed, William Skelton observes that leadership was defined "almost exclusively in terms of control, discipline, and punishment," especially as embodied in the physical mechanics of close order linear tactics. Coercion always underlay paternalism: a wage laborer supervised and subjected to violent (though usually illegal) constraint by supposedly genteel "managers," the enlisted man's status was not unlike that of an indentured servant under an overseer, and army officers constantly walked a thin line between coercion and paternalistic leadership by example in their relations with enlisted men. There was more than one mask of command in the army: commanders like Winfield Scott and William Worth personified the storybook soldier in their brilliantly handsome physical appearance, while many frontier commanders like Gaines, Taylor, or Daniel Twiggs led with a more earthy style that variously encompassed gruffness, frequent swearing, and occasional physical violence, which we shall see more of in chapter ten. (Taylor liked to seize and twist soldiers' ears as an on-the-spot punishment.) Men like Atkinson and Leavenworth fell somewhere in between, while Scott was considered rather soft on enlisted men (prior to his command in Mexico) and Worth was widely viewed as a martinet.42

Senior officers certainly realized the importance of their example and those of their subordinates, but they could do little to force officers protected by class distinctions and comrades' support from misusing their power and abusing their charges, and as we shall see in chapter ten some set personal examples of violence and official oppression. Nevertheless, the example of commitment, military bearing, dutiful service, and disinterested responsibility and sacrifice set by Scott, Gaines, and the colonels mentioned in
the epitaphs above was certainly taken to heart by some, and accepted as an ideal by many, junior officers. After the first round of campaigns in Florida, for instance, Lieutenant Robert Buchanan wrote to Robert Anderson that General Gaines "is truly a soldier Bob, and set an example in his own person, of patient endurance of fatigue and hardship, which was calculated to stimulate the veriest laggard to action." Two years later, when the 1st and 4th Artillery were relieved from Florida duty and directed to march north, Winfield Scott ordered that "no Company Officer, not in command of a Column or labouring under some serious disability, should be allowed to ride" so that the soldiers could see officers sharing in their hardships rather than riding by like lords. This consciousness of the need to set an example and build cohesion only reached the company level in a very uneven way, of course—in 1841 Lieutenant Philip Thompson reported to Abraham Johnston that another officer's "character [as an "inefficient, imbecile, a drunkard"] is known to the men and they have no respect for him, and their respect for the other officers is . . . diminished by their knowledge of this one." Perhaps this lack of respect is what caused Thompson to assault a soldier the following year, but doing so can hardly have eased the tensions between their antagonistic castes or improved the army's cohesion and capability as a fighting force.43

* * *

IV. The Inertia of Garrison Life and Proposals for Reform

One reason for the disinterest many officers demonstrated in drill and garrison life was the negligible size of their commands on company-sized (fifty to a hundred man) posts. If drill had the potential to please the eye and
inflated the ego through the pomp and show of parade, small, understrength units made officers appear faintly ridiculous—no much help in their quest for prestige and social status through command—while drilling these units soon became a mechanical exercise in rote learning, with none of the intellectually satisfying opportunity to practice the "grand tactics" of combining units and arms to simulate the synthesis of action and intellect found on actual battlefields. In this respect the often-praised skeleton system (the organizational expression of the expansible army concept) was clearly counterproductive to combat readiness, and in March 1838 artillery lieutenant Charles F. Smith warned Representative Gouverneur Kemble that to render an Army effective, Captains must have respectable Commands. You may far better dispense with Field Officers than allow a Captain to rule over but a handful of men. I know from experience the evil effect on discipline that arises from small comp[anie]s officers and men feel equally indifferent as to soldiership—they have nothing to appeal to their pride. For four years that I served with my comp. I was the only officer on duty with it who drilled it, and in all that time my daily parade varied but from 8 to 14 files [24 to 42 soldiers]. I cannot tell you of the disgust I felt at this, as it were, playing at soldiers.

The Military Academy's principal instructor of infantry tactics then went on to conclude that "[you may] have as few Regt.5 or Comp.5 as you please but let every comp. be on its war establishment." Indeed, Smith actually professed a willingness to sacrifice a promotion (which he would receive if the number of companies per regiment was increased) in order to achieve this objective. Smith was perhaps more capable of doing this than most officers, because he had been serving at West Point, where he had the equivalent of half a
regiment to direct on drill, for eight of his twelve years, and he was clearly in line for—if not already assigned to—the commandantcy which came open at the end of the month. The question before Congress was whether to have a tenth company in each artillery regiment or to increase the strength of the existing units, and abolish the skeleton system, and Smith may well have feared returning to the company command of fifty men if promoted due to the creation of additional companies. The 1838 army law expanded both the number of companies and their strength; Smith was promoted captain that summer but remained at West Point for another four years.44

Smith's essentially selfless responsibility was certainly rare, but most thoughtful officers recognized the problems of geographic dispersion and the desirability of concentration, which Inspector General Sylvester Churchill summed up in May 1843: "The efficiency of any force . . . for service in the field, is lessened in [direct] proportion to the number of posts at which it must leave guards." A similar quest for the benefits of numerical concentration was evident in an 1844 Army and Navy Chronicle article that proposed stationing the dragoon regiments together: "the companies . . . would constantly be kept in order for [active] service . . . [and] instruction, discipline, and efficiency, would be the result." The author also suggested that companies from different regiments should serve together on advanced frontier posts, "exchanging ideas on duty and emulating each other in [the pursuit of] professional skill and knowledge," but chapter nine will show that even highly expert dragoon officers devoted more of their time to controversy and contention than professional training and improvement.45

In 1825 General Gaines proposed a different solution to the problem of dispersal through the periodic rotation of units from one station to another. Gaines claimed that doing so would acquaint officers with the duties of
different branches of service and familiarize them with the military resources and topography of the different frontiers they would be called to serve upon in time of war. Gaines also wanted the War Department to redraw the lines between the Eastern and Western Departments to return to the pre-1821 system of northern and southern divisions: he and Winfield Scott had already exchanged command of the Eastern and Western Departments once (in 1823), but Gaines was disturbed that all the theaters of likely activity were in the Western Department, which prevented the officers stationed in the east from gaining field experience during peacetime. Gaines did possess an ulterior motive: he was about to rotate back to the west, and he believed that each general should command both infantry and artillery. He therefore implied that the artillery on the coast and the infantry on the land frontiers might exchange posts, which would relieve the latter of "the privations of remote wilderness and unhealthy positions" (a proposal that foreshadowed the public debate between infantry and artillery officers a decade later which is examined in chapter nine). Although most infantry regiments periodically moved about for operational purposes, the artillery only exchanged stations (among themselves) once during the years between 1821 and the outbreak of the Second Seminole War in 1835. Gaines' proposal was rejected, and the system of exchanging department commands between Gaines and Scott quietly ended after Macomb replaced Brown as commanding general in 1828.46

Brown and his fellow generals were all too correct about the problems fostered by the army's dispersal, which were shared to some extent in garrisons around the world. Despite the variety of their duties, the workload of most line officers in garrison was light indeed, leaving a great deal of time for idleness and mischief. This was equally the case among teachers at West
Point and supervisors at the ordnance arsenals: even at the outset of his first semester as an instructor in natural and experimental philosophy (the physical sciences) Alfred Mordecai found his new duties light enough that he could read mathematics, philosophy, and the novels his sister sent, and a decade later Mordecai lamented that

so far from running any risk of injuring my health, or tone of mind by too constant application and too much thought, my misfortune is that I do not think at all—t merely muse and dream. . . . I try my best to take an interest in business, and just when I fancy I have succeeded, I find myself perfectly disgusted [with it]—when I was at West Point, on the court-martial, it was difficult for me to divest myself of the idea that the whole was a ridiculous farce."

Indeed, Mordecai's career illustrates a number of these motives, for Mordecai often expressed "a desire to be freed from what seems at least to be bondage." Like many other officers, Mordecai had initially gone to West Point to secure a technical education rather than begin a military career. The sense of competition and individual responsibility encouraged by academy life often fostered ambitions that were ill-suited to the constraints of army life, but new graduates could hardly ignore the value of the security of their commissions: "When I shall be actually free from thraldom and be able to style myself my own man is rather problematical at present," wrote Mordecai in 1822, "but there is one satisfaction that as long as I shall continue to wear Uncle Sam's livery I shall not be in danger of [poverty]." Indeed, Mordecai's ability gained him a post as Charles Gratiot's assistant, and he apparently spent much of 1827 and 1828 "dancing, drinking eggnog, [and] eating good dinners" while working a nine-to-three day in Washington. Even though he was appointed
to the Ordnance Corps in 1832, Mordecai became bored with this life—which he felt unstable and insignificant—and the limited pay available, and in 1837 he decided to leave the army. In doing so Mordecai claimed that his goal was not wealth, but "constant occupation . . . and above all a home, in which I may feel that I am settled, with a moderate competence." Fortunately for the army the Panic of 1837 derailed these plans and Mordecai remained in service until 1861.48

Service in the "field" (which usually meant in garrison, of course) did not seem to promise much relief from this boredom, and the private letters and public correspondence of the officer corps ring out with constant declarations of dissatisfaction with the monotony of garrison life. "Garrison life is ever monotonous, and additionally so at outposts where there are few officers," wrote Lieutenant Joseph Irons from his first post at Portland, Maine, four months after graduating from West Point in 1841. (Irons found amusement and escape in flirtation with a local heiress.) Indeed, in 1817 Captain John Michael O'Connor turned the presumed equation of field service and military professionalism on its head, explaining to the secretary of war that "were my object ease, or pleasure, I would long since have requested leave to join my command" rather than completing his translation of a French military treatise. O'Connor sought an extension of his leave in order to do this, claiming his hope "that my objects in the Army and in Life. are of nobler kind than [the] ease, pleasure and indulgence" of garrison duty.

O'Connor's case demonstrates some of the tension between academicians and field practitioners noted by sociologists of professions and organizations, and foreshadows the similar friction between line and staff officers which is treated in chapter eight. O'Connor's superiors must have resented his
derogation of the basic duties of their profession, for he was disbanded in the reduction of 1821 after five years absence from his unit. The inertia and ennui of garrison life could easily lead to physical, moral, and intellectual degeneration, stirring thoughts of resignation and an alternative career. One essayist in the Army and Navy Chronicle described this process: "Another winter . . . passed at Jefferson Barracks. It . . . left little impression on my memory; and . . . less on my mind. It is a confession that many might make, under the unfavorable circumstances of the service. I . . . determined to throw up my commission, and to seek a more stirring, exciting (if not more ambitious) profession." Sometimes resignation was unnecessary because officers could take up civil pursuits: shortly after arriving at Fort Scott (his first station) in 1845, brevet second lieutenant David Russell observed that "we have no military duty to attend to," and "the opportunities for fishing and hunting cannot be surpassed at any other post in the army . . . The objections I have to this post are, a total waste of society and its great distance from any other place." Nevertheless, Russell looked forward to the completion of a nearby saw mill so that he could be relieved from military duty to take charge of it.

A number of officers expressed similar sentiments in their private letters, usually in conjunction with the suggestion that military service was something they had fallen into rather than chosen as a profession or career. For example, even the highly professional Robert Anderson wrote to his sister in 1827 (when he had been only two years in service) that he had "become a soldier from chance rather than choice" and asked her "whether it be better to leave it for the more diversified life of a citizen." Completing his final semester at West Point thirteen years later, Richard Stoddard Ewell echoed these thoughts in a letter to his brother, an erstwhile officer himself:
"I have no particular wish to stay in the army but a positive antipathy to
starving or to doing anything for a living which requires any exertion of
mind or body." Ewell, like many other officers, seemed paralyzed by the
security and monotony of army routine: "Since I have been here I have
found it difficult to ascertain what my inclinations are on any subject. It
seems that a person after being subjected to orders for a long time loses all
will of his own." Under circumstances like these, one correspondent to the
Military and Naval Magazine warned that "those scientific attainments, the
fruit of so much emulous strife and industry at the [Military] Academy, meet
no demand at the hand of the Government, and but for a noble course of self-
discipline, energy, and diligence, they are in danger of being lost."\textsuperscript{51}

Monotony was not simply an individual question, however. An
officer writing to the Army and Navy Chronicle in 1840 laid out the path to
professional perdition in thorough detail. The newly commissioned
lieutenant arrived at his post, his interests, motives

character and habits . . . [as yet] unconfirmed . . . but he is
astonished; he is disappointed. He at least expected to find
himself among soldiers, but sees none but ragged workmen . . .
he expected some command of men; he finds instead that his
company . . . is under the charge of the quartermaster [for
construction duties], and will hardly recognise . . . his authority.
He expected to be occupied with his duties; he finds he has scarce
any employment. He then seeks to find refuge in studies . . . he
finds that there are few or no books at the post. . . . [His
comrades] will enter into no permanent, common plans of
improvement or amusement. The hearts of some are far away
in the eastern cities, where . . . those that should be their
companions [are stationed]. . . . Useful and improving pursuits are out of the question.

The author added that "it is not in human nature to stand all this," so young officers quickly yielded to the easily available temptations of gambling and drink. Laboring under the malign influence of these "vicious excitements and habits of indolence," the new officer sunk into inertia and ennui and forgot the military knowledge and pride they had learned at the academy. Worse still, their counterparts appointed directly from civil life did not have the West Point experience of mental discipline to safeguard them from moral and professional degeneracy.52

Though certainly well-known to the officers of the 1810s and 20s, the professional journals of the 1830s gave new exposure to these problems. One correspondent proclaiming himself as "Truth" deplored the "indifference to forms, to the minutiae of discipline, a listlessness, a carelessness to many of those points which he has learnt at the academy, and which he believes are essential," while "Nothing to Do" lamented "that at most of our frontier posts the officers do drag out a lifeless, inactive, lazy, an miserable existence, with but little apparent devotion to the service . . . and in a manner wholly unworthy of men possessing their . . . high intellectual attainments." The latter author warned that "indolence and the dull monotony of garrison life . . . seem to be destined to dry up the very fountains of vitality itself," and he advised that "active service is necessary for the health, happiness, and efficiency of our army. A stimulus is wanted for the . . . mind and body, to invigorate the system, shake off indolence, arouse the dormant faculties, and develop the latent energies of the mind." To "insure efficiency in the field" he proposed annual marches along the frontier to impress the Indians, "promote health and happiness in garrison," give experience to the officers
and men, "and in a few years afford a complete knowledge of the frontier" at substantial savings to the government in case of war.53

Though officers had recommended and experimented with routine expeditions during the late 1810s and early 1820s, by the 1830s and 40s they were common only among the 1st Dragoons on the edge of the plains, and we shall see in chapter fifteen that some otherwise professional officers found them quite monotonous. Looking at the problem from the other side of the coin, officers satisfied with an easy life in garrison or on leave could hardly be expected to seek out actual field duty, and they frequently complained when ordered to return to their units, especially those engaged in active operations. In other words, for a substantial portion of the officer corps battlefield command, the profession's ultimate raison d'être, was an irritant, and the closer such men came to troops in the field the more uncomfortable and upset they became. Rare though they were, orders for such service were one of the more common sources of resignations, which had an impact on officer morale far in excess of their usually limited number. Similarly, many officers continued to make the location of their assignments an important and sometimes decisive consideration in their choices to resign or remain in the service, particularly in the unsettled years between 1815 and 1821. In 1819, for example, Captain Milo Mason complained that his resignation had been wrongfully accepted by the War Department when all he had sought to do was to avoid being stationed at New Orleans by resigning his office as an assistant quartermaster (AQM) while retaining his line commission. Once General Jackson asked Mason to join his "military family" in Tennessee all the captain's doubts about his position ceased and he wrote directly (outside the legal chain of command, of course) to President Monroe damning the War Department's order as "indelicate and unjust," "a violation of my rights
... without precedent" in the department's history. The beneficiary of
Jackson's influence, Mason was retained and served another eighteen years
before his death.\textsuperscript{54}

The inertia many junior officers encountered upon arriving at their
units was not simply the product of inadequate mental preparation,
geographic dispersal, or lack of things to do. Indolence and drunkenness also
grew out of pervasive favoritism and a system of promotion founded on the
principle of seniority rather than tested merit. The army had no retirement
system, so aging men stayed on well past their prime and clogged up the
already-narrow rank hierarchy without providing any incentive for self-
improvement, while officers who demonstrated outstanding expertise or
energy (or those with good social and political connections) were routinely
detached from their units on staff or administrative details, one of the
downsides to the advantageous patronage we saw at work in chapter four.
Though often exaggerated, officers' anxieties over their prospects for
promotion were certainly strong: an 1835 estimate in the \textit{Army and Navy
Chronicle} asserted that a twenty year old second lieutenant would not reach
captain until the age of fifty-four. (The reality was more like thirty-four, but
today it would be about twenty-eight.) Eight years later another one officer
publically laid forth the consequences of this inertia:

\begin{quote}
A few months' contact with the listless indolence of those of his
own grade, and of the superannuated imbeciles above him, puts
to flight all his high purposes. He learns that his promotion is
just as certain whether he be ignorant or learned; that the
Government... takes no measures to ascertain the claims of
[different] candidates [in apportioning rewards]; that if a new
regiment is to be raised, the friend of some influential politician
\end{quote}
... is far more likely to get a captaincy than the most accomplished subaltern in service. Having therefore, no incentive to exertion, and finding indolence more attractive than unrewarded industry, who can wonder at his choice? ... instead of advancing, he actually retrogrades in military intelligence, till ... his mind becomes as stultified as those of the numerous imbeciles that, like dead weights, are crushing our service.

The author concluded that even the unjust British system of promotion by purchase was "better than the ruinous system of seniority."55

The Seminole War soon drew the majority of the army (of which the 1st Dragoons and the 5th Infantry were ultimately the only exceptions) into active service in Florida, but officers continued to complain of the same afflictions as before, and by the early 1840s the persistence of these conditions led to a growing cry for reform. A letter to the Army and Navy Chronicle from 1840 may serve as a comprehensive summary of these proposals. The author's first suggestion for improving morale was to relieve soldiers of the manual labor of constructing military roads and buildings by employing civilian laborers: "the officer would be happier, in being occupied with his profession" in drill, and he would "be able to entertain feelings of military pride and emulation," while "the soldier would cease to be deceived" by the promises of recruiters and would become "better contented" and "less apt to desert." The provision of a sword-master and a gymnasium for each post would provide valuable diversions from the garrison routine, and the physical and moral health of officers and soldiers alike would be improved by these "preventives of desertion and dissipation." Second, the author proposed "a radical change of [the] system, under which ... nearly two-thirds
of the officers are habitually absent from their companies or posts." The officer's society would be "much improved, and an opening would be made for emulation" and competition in their purely military duties: "There would [then] be a public opinion [among the larger groups of officers] to act [against] vicious individual pursuits or inclinations. We would be a united family." The writer urged both structural and procedural reform in order to reduce favoritism and promote fairness and cohesion: he called for separating the staff from the line, so that no individual could hold a regimental rank while avoiding company duty by performing staff services hundreds of miles away; and confirming the legitimate legal authority of the official chain of command by prohibiting requests to general headquarters outside of the prescribed hierarchy (an endemic problem that several previous orders had done nothing to correct). Both measures would have accelerated the rationalization of army bureaucracy, the first by rank and organizational differentiation based on specialization and the second by clarifying lines of communication and chains of responsibility and authority.

Finally, at the meeting point of expertise, cohesion, and responsibility, the author admonished his comrades that the "simple[st] distinction [for] the exhibition of superior information and abilities would prove the greatest incentive to improvement, for the sake of reputation in the profession." Furthermore, suitable reforms would sustain the army's accountability as an organization by supplying "the want of some standard of ability or test of merit" and permitting objective judgments of capability and worthiness for promotion. The author therefore recommended a tripartite system to halt and reverse the officer corps' intellectual degeneration, through the provision of post libraries, the creation of "a system . . . for the encouragement of Essays on subjects connected with the profession" (perhaps
akin to the British *Papers of the Royal Engineers* first begun in 1837), and most important of all, a process of examinations for promotion like that employed in Prussia, which by fostering emulation and self-improvement would unite the officer's senses of responsibility and competitiveness in the service of commitment, cohesion, and combat capability. The anonymous reformer closed his appeal in the Jacksonian language of relentless competition by warning that "the busy world around us is all in motion; the pursuits of civil life . . . lead continually to eminence; while we are in danger of falling continually to the rear in the great theatre of life and action, of those of less abilities . . . but of more persevering industry. . . . [T]here is no resting place; we must continually gain, or we lose ground." Three years later another officer (probably Henry Halleck) reasserted this urge to reward military endeavour by recurring to the examples of European armies (those of Prussia, France, and even Austria and Russia) and the Medical Department in quest of promotion by merit, through examinations "in strategy, the rules of military command, the theory & practice of their particular arm, &c., &c., by a competent board of officers selected for that purpose," without whose assent none would be promoted. Something of the sort was clearly necessary, for officers without prospects for staff service quickly lost whatever enthusiasm they had developed for professional study at West Point.56

The sort of competitiveness necessary to make such a system work was not widely characteristic of the officer corps, which was doubtlessly one reason why nothing of the sort was implemented during this era. Indeed, the security of a military career was equally motivating and enervating, because there was no regulation mandating nor any pecuniary provision to encourage retirement during this era. (Only the families of officers disabled or killed in action were eligible for the rather meager pensions available.) Indeed, of the
eleven officers who served as colonels in the artillery regiments between 1821 and 1846, all but one died in service, and that man retired in 1863 after fifty-seven years in the army (the second longest among these officers). Four of these men had begun their careers before the turn of the century; indeed, Moses Porter (who died a colonel and brevet brigadier general in 1822) had fought at Bunker Hill. The average service of these eleven men was forty-one years, meaning that subordinates could easily view them as superannuated obstacles to promotion. The consequence, as one officer observed to a cousin in the Senate, was that "the Army is almost paralyzed by the imbecility of its old officers. . . . Congress could not possibly . . . benefit the army [more] than . . . [by] establishing a retired list." In 1838 Sylvanus Thayer proposed a retirement bill to his friend Gouverneur Kemble, which "would bring into action . . . the highest grade of talent & would leave every officer without excuse for not devoting all his faculties to the public service." Otherwise, Thayer proclaimed that the lack of incentive was "well calculated to drive from the Army all but the useless & worthless." (Thayer's own presence demonstrated that this was untrue, but his concern was a responsible one that less committed officers usually avoided raising.) His recommendation was publically seconded in the Army and Navy Chronicle and the secretary of war proposed a system of retirement to Congress (an idea Macomb repeated in 1840), but the legislature took no action because of the expense involved and the ideological clamor against creating a sinecured establishment like that in England. In 1844 Secretary of War William Wilkins put forward a less expensive and more utilitarian scheme in which officers would retire after twenty-five years service with a section (640 acres) of public land and two years paid furlough to enable them to start anew while
diffusing military expertise to the militia, but his plan had no greater success.57

The government's response to officers' reform proposals was muted, and this chapter therefore concludes on a rather somber note which will prepare us for the discordant occupational landscape and the mixed evaluations of the officer corps' professionalism painted in chapter seven. Civilian laborers gradually replaced enlisted men on military construction projects; post libraries were generally established; and the staff and line were almost fully separated in 1846. On the other hand, the process of detailing officers from their companies continued largely unabated until then; officers continued to circumvent the chain of command for personal purposes (especially gaining furloughs) whenever they felt it necessary to do so; the Army and Navy Chronicle died without a successor in 1844; and officers' self-interest in the security of promotion by seniority precluded the institution of promotion exams until the 1890s. Only during the Civil War did the nation finally enact a retirement law, and the separation of staff and line ultimately created a whole new set of institutional and civil-military problems that had to be remedied in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.58
Part III

1 "Engineer, and Topographical Engineer Corps," ANC 1 (January 22, 1835): 30.

Chapter VI

2 Clausewitz, On War, p. 137. The concept of the "management of violence" forms the basis of Samuel P. Huntington's definition of the military professional, which has come to be accepted as virtually normative among students in the field (The Soldier and the State, pp. 11-18). (He drew this concept from Harold Lasswell.) Huntington's definition is essentially a functionalist one. This distinction is also the reason why officers in charge of Platoons (units of thirty or forty soldiers) are called "leaders" in twentieth century armies, while those in charge of larger units are called "commanders" (as in "company commander")--the lowest rank of commissioned officers normally "lead" their subordinates in the direct execution of superior officers' commands, while "commanders" must consider questions of resource allocation in their "management of violence" under the usual system of twentieth century military organization. The smallest subunit that nineteenth century officers ordinarily commanded was the company (then of between fifty and one hundred men), so the distinction did not then operate in the same way.

I. Postgraduate Branch Institutions: The Schools of Practice

3 Macomb, August 16, 1823, file E-29, SW:LR-Reg.


8 Fenwick, January 19, 1819, file F-55, SW:LR-Reg.; Birkhimer, Historical Sketch of the Artillery, pp. 169-70; Archer, IR, October 30, 1823; Macomb to Barbour, annual report communicated to Congress by the president December 2, 1828, ASP: MA 4: 5-6. See also Macomb, December 20, 1822, file E-60, SW:LR-Reg., requesting that an officer be detailed to plan the school. In fall 1823 the four artillery regiments occupied twenty-nine posts and the seven infantry regiments occupied seventeen. Twenty-eight of these garrisons had fewer than one hundred men; twenty of those were artillery posts (Arthur, The Coastal Artillery School, p. 13).


10 Scott, February 14, 1823, file S-364, SW:LR-Reg.; Scott to Barbour, March 30, 1826, Jacob Brown Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; General Order No. 18, April 5, 1824, Orders File, AGO.

Eustis to Lt. Abram Van Buren, March 19, 1833, HQA:LR; Wool to Brown, December 4, 1825, Wool Papers, New York State Library.

12 Wool, IR, November 23, 1833; Worth, October 19, 1829, HQA:LR; Colonel James House, February 25, 1829, AGO:LR.

13 Wool, IRs, November 16, 1827, April 13, 1829, November 5, 1830, and October 24, 1831; "Remarks on the Present State of the Artillery of the United States," MNM 3 (June 1834): 267. See Arthur, The Coastal Artillery School, pp. 102-107, for lists of the officers who passed through the school.

14 General Order No. 58, October 29, 1828, Orders File, AGO; Eustis to Lt. Abram Van Buren, March 19, 1833, HQA:LR; "Remarks on the Present State of the Artillery of the United States," MNM 3 (June 1834): 267; General Order No. 21, April 1, 1842, Orders File, AGO.


16 Nichols, General Henry Atkinson, pp. 79-80 and chs. 4-7; Gaines, Order No. 38, November 8, 1826, quoted in Carswell, "Infantry School of 1826," p. 366.


21 General Order No. 12, May 14, 1838, Orders File, AGO; Henry Turner to Abraham Johnston, November 9, 1840, Johnston Papers, USMA; Capt. Sumner to AGO, October 17, 1838 and April 27 and May 16 and 24, 1841, in Carlisle Papers, vol. 3, Misc., 1838-1857, USAMHI; ex-lieutenant Andrew Talcott, unaddressed, February 18, 1842, in ibid.; Churchill, IR, October 24, 1844, HQA:LR; Roberts to Abraham Johnston, May 28, 1838, Johnston Papers, USMA; Ewell to his brother Benjamin, October 21, 1840, Richard Stoddard Ewell Papers, LC. In general, see Childress, "The Army in Transition," pp.

22 Birkhimer, *Historical Sketch of the Artillery*, pp. 50-61 and 132-33; General Orders No. 46 and 42, August 19, 1841 and October 17, 1844, Orders File, AGO; Sylvester Churchill, IR, February 24, 1842, HQA:LR; Lt. James Duncan to Capt. Edmund Schriver, April 6, 1843, March 29, May 17, and July 29, 1844, March 10, 1845, and passim, in official letterbook, Duncan Papers, USMA; Capt. Harvey Brown to Winfield Scott, April 17, 1844, and Ringgold to Scott, September 23, 1844, HQA:LR; "Archer," "Horse Artillery," ANC 10 (April 9, 1840): 227. See also James Wynne, *Memoir of Major Samuel Ringgold, United States Army* (Baltimore: J. Murphy, 1847). Ringgold was mortally wounded at Palo Alto, the first battle of the war, and became its first romantic hero. In contemporary artillery parlance, the company was the administrative unit, and the tactical one when employed as infantry, while the battery was the unit when training or fighting with its cannon.


24 Poinsett, annual report communicated to Congress November 28, 1838, cited in Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, p. 353; Macomb to Poinsett, March 20, 1839, HQA:LS. See General Order No. 28, May 20, 1839, Orders File, AGO; Adjutant General Jones to Macomb, April 27, 1839, AGO:LS; and Eustis, June 10, 1839, file E-34, AGO:LR, concerning Camp Washington. Roughly speaking, a "camp of instruction" was a temporary one were previously trained troops maneuvered and practiced their drill in large formations. In Europe this was sometimes done for troops preparing to go on campaign. A "school of practice" (often labelled a "school of application" in imitation of the French) was a more permanent place to train troops or officers in formations and their handling on a rotating basis. "Camps of exercise" tended to describe a middle ground between the other two but could also mean something akin to mass maneuvers, and the distinctions were easily blurred. Routine unit training, which almost always took the form of parade drill, will be examined in the next section of this chapter.

(August 22, 1839): 115, suggested that officers be rotated through the camp during succeeding summers. Eustis had only three more years to live.

II. Unit Training and Drill

26 George McClellan to his sister Frederica McClellan, June 28, 1842, and his brother Tom, September 22, 1846, McClellan Papers, LC; Grant, Memoirs, I: 38; Bailey to his mother, February 4, 1832, Bailey Papers, USMA; Griess, "Dennis Hart Mahan," p. 211.

27 Richard S. Ewell to Benjamin Ewell, October 21, 1840, Richard Stoddard Ewell Papers, LC; Thompson to Abraham Johnston, August 27, 1841, Johnston Papers, USMA; opinions of Worth from Thomas J. Cram, "Recollections" of West Point, undated but probably 1870s, Cram Papers, USMA; Worth to Capt. [Joseph] Bonnell, December 30, 1838, in official letterbook, Worth Papers, LC; "Lt. Slowmatch," "Infantry and Artillery," MNM 3 (March 1834): 44. See Lt. James Allen to Johnston, March 25, 1842, Johnston Papers, for a rare example of an officer's evaluation of the drill performances of his fellows (a simple "he is much behind us in the drill").

28 Coffman, The Old Army, p. 161; Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," pp. 104-112 (quotations from 107, 110, and 112); Fenwick, January 19, 1819, file F-55, SW:LR-Reg. Spiller also suggests that "the major difference between the force that fought at Cerro Gordo [in 1847] and the one that fought at New Orleans [in 1815] was the level of individual and unit training," but I think that the distinction was largely between a force of regulars (and volunteers trained under the supervision of regular officers and West Point graduates who had resigned and reentered the army in 1846) and a force of militia, volunteers, and recently recruited regulars—more a matter of time to train and regular officers (those imbued with the professionally responsible sense of discipline, order, and regularity) that they brought from West Point to the task of unit drill) willing to do it than of the quality of the training per se. Highly trained units were present in the U.S. Army in 1815: it seems unlikely that the force at Cerro Gordo was significantly better trained than Winfield Scott's brigade of Jacob Brown's Left Division on the Niagara frontier in 1814, although the earlier force had to rely on Scott's forceful personality and devotion to discipline and drill for this to occur. See Foucault, Discipline and Punish for the general concept of "disciplines," which are both mental, like those felt by Scott and inculcated in West Point graduates, and physical, like those drilled into the enlisted men under their command; see among others Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum for an American example from the period I am studying. Ignatieff, A Just Measure of Pain elaborates (often rather heavy-
handedly, but certainly with some core of truth) on Foucault's themes of the prison's utility as an instrument of capitalist class power and a means of inculcating the self-disciplined habits and mindset necessary for efficient industrial work.


30 Grant, Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Selected Letters, 1839-1865 (New York: Library of America, 1990), p. 114. It is the distinction between leadership and command, which requires the use of some abstract knowledge, and the direct application of violence, which is essentially a mechanical craft, that is normally used to exclude enlisted personnel from consideration as military professionals, although they may possess professional skills in associated fields. Graham, p. 111, mentions that in 1833 Colonel Henry Leavenworth ordered the NCOs of the 3rd Infantry to study drill and tactics in their leisure time; somehow one doubts how widely he was obeyed or emulated--I have found no similar statements in my research.

31 Colonel Arthur P. Hayne, confidential IR of the 9th Military Department, October 1819; Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," pp. 242-44; General Order No. 21, April 1, 1842, Orders File, AGO, cited in Birkhimer, Historical Sketch of the Artillery, pp. 116 and 141-42.


34 Journal entry, October 17, 1836, Churchill Papers, LC; Capt. John Burgwin to Abraham Johnston, July 27, 1843, Johnston Papers, USMA; Churchill, IR of Ft. Ontario, June 14, 1842. Burgwin still felt that the carbines "are far superior to any we have yet had" (principally Hall's).

III. Class, Cohesion, and Concepts of Leadership


36 Fayette Robinson, An Account of the Organization of the Army of the United States; with Biographies of Distinguished Officers of All Grades (2


40 "N.S.H." (presumably Lt. Nathaniel Sayre Harris of the 3rd), "Brigadier General Leavenworth" and "Proceedings at Fort Jesup," MNM 4 (October 1834): 102-104; "The Late Gen. Atkinson, U.S.A.," ANC&SR 1 (January 19, 1843): 56. See Atkinson, February 23, 1819, file A-79, and Leavenworth, June 5, 1820, file L-13, SW:LR-Reg., for examples of these colonel's care for their officers. The calm and moderate demeanor of commanders like Leavenworth impressed enlisted men as well as officers. Dragoon James Hildreth considered him "a plain-looking old gentleman, tall yet graceful . . . affable and unassuming . . . mild and compassionate toward those under his command." Indeed, Hildreth agreed with the commissioned obituarist that Leavenworth "was a man universally beloved by those under his command." Zachary Taylor was also liked by enlisted men for his plain looks and demeanor, and the qualities Hildreth stressed were prominent in enlisted descriptions of Colonel Stephen Kearny, who one dragoon soldier labelled "rigorously strict . . . when on duty" but "affable, just and kind, when off." Indeed, Hildreth and Kearny both paid one another high tribute: the busy colonel visited him when Hildreth left the army, while he lauded the officer as "the best exemplification of a republican Soldier possible." See James Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rocky Mountains (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1836), pp. 104-105, 180, and 228-29; and John Flynn, "Reminiscences of Some Incidents of a United States Dragoon between the Years 1839 and 1844," typescript, USAMHI, p. 3.
IV. Evaluations of Army and Officer Capability and Suggestions for Reform

42 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 265.

43 Buchanan to Anderson, March 18, 1836, Anderson Papers, LC; Scott's order issued by Robert Anderson as acting assistant adjutant general (sometimes cited as AAAG hereafter) Eastern Division, July 21, 1838, Anderson Papers, LC; Thompson to Johnston, February 20, 1841, Johnston Papers, USMA. The sole obituary I have found for an enlisted man, the resolutions of "a meeting of the N.C. Officers, Musicians and Privates" at Ft. Snelling stressed the "high respect for the many virtues, the unassuming conduct, and correct deportment . . . of our fellow soldier," a corporal. See "The Late Corporal H.C. Turner," ANC 6 (June 21, 1838): 396-97.

IV. The Inertia of Garrison Life and Proposals for Reform

44 Smith to Kemble, March 7, 1838, Charles Ferguson Smith Papers, USMA.


46 Gaines, October 18, 1825, file G-138, SW:LR-Reg.

47 Mordecai to his sisters Mrs. Rachel Lazarus and Ellen Mordecai, September 14, 1823 and February 22, 1833, Mordecai Papers, LC.

48 Mordecai to his sister Ellen, November 27, 1822 and December 28, 1826, Mordecai Papers, LC; and to his brother Samuel, February 12, 1837, Jacob Mordecai Papers, Duke University Library; Falk, "Soldier-Technologist," pp. 9, 113-19, and 216-26.

49 Irons to his sister H.R. Irons, November 21, 1841, Irons Papers, USMA; O'Connor, January 31, 1817, SW:LR-Reg.
50 "Notes and Reminiscences of an Officer of the Army–No. VI," ANC 11 (August 20, 1840): 122; Russell to his brother Cornelius, December 14, 1845, David Allen Russell Papers, USAMHI.

51 Robert Anderson to Maria Anderson, February 11, 1827, Anderson Papers, LC; Ewell to his brother Benjamin, March 29, 1840, Ewell Papers, LC. Some active but unspecified service intervened the following spring and the author retained his post.

52 "F.R.D.;" "Thoughts on the Army and Suggestions for Its Improvement," ANC 10 (April 9, 1840): 225.


54 Henry Turner to Abraham Johnston, October 30, 1845, Johnston Papers, USMA; Mason to President Monroe, March 1, 1821, file M-271, and Mason, December 24, 1817, file M-471, SW:LR-Reg.


58 See Graham A. Cosmas, An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War, 2nd ed. (Shippenburg, Pa.: White Mane, 1994), chs. 1-2, regarding the reforms of the 1890s.
"Our small but efficient army"?: Paradoxes of Responsibility and Readiness and Evaluations of Officer, Unit, and Army Capability in Garrison and Field

However nuanced, the picture of expertise that has been drawn up to this point is an illusory one if not qualified by assessments of the army in the field. Shifting from the abstractions of expertise and the formalities of drill to the practical realities embodied in the concept of responsibility also draws us into the inner social life of the officer corps, the arena in which its professional identity was shaped on a daily basis. Indeed, the creation of individual and collective professional commitment and cohesion faced even greater obstacles than the diffusion of expertise, and failings or deficiencies in each realm affected the other. This chapter develops the theme of responsibility—and very often, irresponsibility—in the officer corps, and in doing so prepares the way for chapter nine's examination of cohesion, dissension, and motivation. Having stressed the cadre and efforts at reform so far, the present chapter emphasizes the negligent underside of army life, particularly the persistence of individualism in the form of frequent and often quite lengthy absences from field and unit duty.

These themes lead me towards an assessment of the growing capability of and continuing derelictions among officers, units, and the army as a whole through the testimony of officers' correspondence and the inspection reports made by commanding officers and the inspector generals. As usual, the availability of sources is a determining factor in the composition and shading of this portrait, because the inspector generals were looking for problems and the officers who wrote to superiors or professional journals were either
complaining of abuses or seeking favors themselves. Nevertheless, the very presence of complaint indicates a widespread desire for reform that individual officers balanced with the more self-interested motives and objectives present in their daily lives, while the reports made about individual officers in preparation for the 1821 reduction tell us a great deal about the values and priorities of the officer corps as a whole. These reports also provide the basis for a number of brief vignettes of officers’ careers that are both representative of patterns and possibilities of duty and reward within the officer corps and illustrative of the mobility, paradox, and irony of careers even in this most bureaucratized segment of the opportunistic society of Jacksonian America.

In addition to the questions of motivation, capability (or combat readiness), and responsibility raised by these abuses, this chapter introduces several inter- and intraorganizational controversies encountered in Part Four, particularly conflicts between staff and line priorities and prerogatives (especially those over staff claims to hold ranks in both staff and line simultaneously), the dilemmas of sustaining motivation and attentiveness to duty under a stifling system of promotion by seniority that made no provision for retirement, and individual quarrels over the duties and postings assigned to officers and units. These disputes were all the more complex because of the number of different levels of organization and action at which they found expression, for as one of the most rationalized and functionally articulated institutions of its time, the terms of quarrels within the army easily escalated from the personal to the interorganizational (or bureaucratic) and ultimately into the civil-military realm. These controversies stirred engendered psychological as well as ethical tensions within individuals, since the answers fashioned by personal behaviour
shaped individual and ultimately collective occupational and organizational identity.

In turn, these disputes and the often incomplete resolutions which officers fashioned also reflected larger questions and compromises in nineteenth-century American life, whose urgency was exacerbated in the army by the officer's declared commitment to serve society and state within an increasingly bureaucratized organizational hierarchy unlike any other of that era: the tension between the individual rights of men motivated by the will to command and the subordination demanded by the needs of their organizations and profession, a friction often expressed in the language of fairness and equality against favoritism and abuses of official patronage; complex tensions between individual ambition, claims to disinterestedness, and the quest for individual, organizational, and occupational security, all of which were dimensions of the officer corps' claims to gentility; and the professionalizer's dilemma--sharpened by the pressures of life in a fluid, democratizing society antagonistic to exclusive institutions--of stimulating and sustaining social responsibility and political accountability while attempting to secure them through an undemocratic monopoly of expertise, commitment, and career. In consequence, aside from providing a closer look at the everyday realities of officers' lives, the rather dismal picture of irresponsibility presented here will ultimately appear in contrast to the officer corps' behaviour along the nation's borders in ways that will help us to understand the paradoxical growth of military accountability to civilian political control--to the popular sovereignty of representative democracy--despite frequent civil-military conflict and the persistence of frequently dysfunctional individualism within the officer corps.
I. Evaluations of Officer, Unit, and Army Capability in the 1810s and 1820s: The Inspector Generals and the Reductions of 1815 and 1821

Shorn of the urgency of wartime service, it appears that the quality of the officer corps' professionalism may actually have declined in the years immediately after the War of 1812. The confidential inspections performed by the divisional inspector generals (IGs) present us with an unflattering look at the officers of these years. Jacob Brown seems to have failed to forward the reports of his inspector general (sometimes referred to as IG hereafter) (John Wool) to the War Department, but Arthur P. Hayne's 1818 report on 122 officers of the Southern Division provides us with a significant sample (nineteen percent) of the corps as a whole. The evaluations of thirty-four of these men (twenty-eight percent of the group) were negative: twelve (ten percent of the group) for intemperance, eight (one in fourteen) for some combination of temper, immaturity, and insubordination, eight for inefficiency, lack of zeal, or lack of mental acuity, and six for physical ill-health. One captain, John McIntosh of the 4th Infantry, was labelled "so intemperate that I consider him incapable of ever being entrusted with an independent command." Nevertheless, the well-connected Georgian (probably a member of the extended family of planters and duellists which had contributed some of the most senior leaders of the "Patriot" filibusters in East Florida in 1812) was promoted to major in the 8th Infantry the following spring, although he resigned at the end of 1820, probably when it became clear to him that he would not be retained during the pending reduction in force. He became U.S. Customs Collector for Darrien, Georgia three years later.²
The absence of inspection reports (sometimes referred to as IRs hereafter) from Wool and Brown prior to 1821 makes it somewhat difficult to assess the readiness of the Northern Division, but one example suggests the efficiency of the army along the northwestern frontier: while travelling with Brown in 1819 Captain Roger Jones inspected the garrison at Fort Michilimackinac on Wisconsin's Upper Peninsula and noted that "the firings were admirable—and the[ir] spirit and precision . . . evinced the highest state of discipline [among] the troops, and reflects the greatest credit on all of the officers." Infantry units stationed in the arc between the Missouri River and the Great Lakes normally tended to receive good evaluations because they were usually concentrated in larger numbers (though still no more than a half-dozen companies) because of the need for occasional campaigns of intimidation against the Indians, and this concentration led to more competition (or "emulation," in the language of the day) and esprit de corps among their officers and men than among those in the more dispersed artillery on the Atlantic coast. Similarly, the western infantry also had far greater opportunities for healthy exercise because of its frequent marches changing stations or threatening the Indians, which often meant the same thing as the army moved westward after 1815. These patterns of health, efficiency, and readiness persisted after the reorganization of 1821 because units stationed in the Western Department were usually more concentrated and active than those in the Eastern Department, although there were exceptions since the Eastern Department included active, concentrated posts in Wisconsin and the Western Department included small isolated posts on the malarial Gulf Coast.³

Hayne's confidential summary for 1819 provided capsule evaluations of each officer above the grade of lieutenant, using language which
illuminates the qualities contemporaries sought in an effective officer. The most common of these was "intelligence," which in this instance meant a fusion of intellectual capacity with mental energy and activity. Hayne routinely added some reference to an officer's industry, activity, and attentiveness to duty: Major William Bradford stood out among the officers of the Rifle Regiment as "brave, enthusiastic, and devoted to his profession," while Captain Bennet Riley (who ultimately rose to colonel and was brevetted three times for gallantry in Florida and Mexico) was lauded as brave and "enterprising." Riley's success notwithstanding, the outcomes of these men's careers also provide miniatures of the postwar officer corps' limitations as a professional body, for Bradford became deeply involved in Arkansas territorial politics, running twice for territorial delegate to Congress while still in uniform before he resigned to serve as a brigadier general of militia in 1824. Colonel Talbot Chambers of the same regiment received the sobriquet of "a faithful & vigilant officer--none more so in our Army--& in every respect acquainted with his Duty." Judging by his record of illegal violence toward enlisted men (and at least one civilian), Chambers' faith was certainly not directed toward his soldiers, but if discipline was duty Chambers may well have won awards for vigilance toward his men. He was ultimately court-martialed and dismissed for drunkenness in 1826, one of only two regimental commanders (out of the forty-three men who held such a post) who were dismissed during this era.  

These problems illustrate the persistence of dysfunctional patterns evident in the army before 1812. Indeed, these deficiencies and derelictions appear to have been most common in the very force most involved in active combat operations during the immediate postwar years, for the unhappy conclusions of Hayne's 1818 report on the Southern Division were
corroborated two years later by that of Major John Davis, its assistant IG, which modern authorities have characterized as "almost a long bill of indictment against a fair percentage of the officer corps" for negligence, intemperance, and embezzlement. Despite the persistence of personal disputes, the situation improved significantly after the reduction in force of 1821, demonstrating the army hierarchy's success in weeding out the irresponsible and uncommitted when selecting officers to be retained. The army conducted only two comprehensive evaluations of its officers during the interwar era, one apiece in preparation for the reductions in force of 1815 and 1821. After 1821 the inspector generals ceased to provide confidential reports, but the impact of this decline in the institutional mechanisms for enforcing responsibility was ameliorated by the superior quality of the officers retained in that year. (On the other hand, the regulation that the IGs provide these reports was not actually cancelled until 1835, which suggests the still-spotty character of army bureaucracy if not a lack of accountability per se.)

In 1815 the selection process was carried out by the six field generals (Brown, Jackson, Scott, Gaines, Ripley, and Macomb) who were retained (though Jackson and Gaines were not actually present at their deliberations in Washington) along with adjutant and inspector general Parker, while the selections six years later were made by Brown, Scott, and Gaines based on the confidential reports sought from and sent in by the commanders of regiments, geographic departments, and major posts. (These men were not themselves the subjects of such reports from their superiors, but the War Department had the confidential reports of the inspector generals for this purpose, and the qualities of the fifty-odd officers above the rank of captain were generally well-known in Washington and the army.) The order establishing the 1815 board set forth several fundamental criteria of fitness,
principally competence to engage an enemy in the field, "distinguished military merit and approved moral character." When these proved equal, the board was authorized to consult seniority, "a capacity for civil pursuits, and the pecuniary situation of the parties"--in other words an officer's ability to support himself outside the army. (Sectional balance was also sought, though for obvious reasons it was not officially noted as a criterion.) Only 489 of the 2271 officers on the rolls as of January 1, 1815 were retained; the most prominent casualty was the irresponsible James Wilkinson. Although a fair number of the discharged officers were reappointed during the following year to make up shortages and new needs caused by resignations, most of these men ultimately left the army by 1822. One exception illustrates both the perspicacity of army patronage and the frequent conflicts between ambition and the desire for security that motivated career officers, for Zachary Taylor, a wartime major, was retained as a captain. He initially declined this commission, but returned within a year as a major, largely due to the support of President Madison and Thomas Sidney Jesup's lobbying on his behalf.\(^6\)

Based on essentially the same criteria as those used in 1815, the 1821 reports made confidentially by post commanders about their subordinates provide us with the closest contemporary analogue to the officer efficiency reports (OERs) standard in today's armed forces. The 1821 OERs routinely categorized company grade officers as either first, second, or third class based on "intelligence, habits [meaning deportment, especially gentility and moderation in the use of alcohol], and military skill." Like most other commanders, Lieutenant Colonel George Mitchell of the artillery elaborated on the social and cultural dimensions of these standards to include "honorable principles and correct moral character" among the attributes of 1st class officers, and only men ranked in that class could feel certain that they
would be retained, while a ranking in the 2nd class indicated an officer " unfit for the Service . . . who ought not to be retained." The fate of officers rated 3rd class depended on the number of slots available and more precise calculations in which family needs, economic potential, and connections within the army played heightened roles. Some commanders ranked the men in the 3rd class by individual merit to facilitate this, while others did not.7

Moderated by Secretary of War Calhoun's desire for an expansible army with a disproportionately large officer corps, the 1821 reduction was much smaller than that from wartime strength in 1815, and on the whole the colonels' reports were positive: of ninety-two artillery officers (out of 156 in that regiment), including the 1st and 2nd battalions thereof, fifty-nine were rated 1st class, twenty-five 3rd class (or subject to question), and only eight 2nd class. Mitchell rated eleven of his fourteen officers 1st class and only one in the 2nd, while Brigadier General Henry Atkinson, commander of the 9th Military Department (including the expeditions then in process in the Upper Missouri Valley) and the favored nominee for adjutant general (which he turned down to remain in active command), labelled forty-two of the officers of the 6th and Rifle regiments 1st class, thirteen 2nd, and only four 3rd (three of whom were "Intemperate" or drunkards). (This distribution reversed the usual proportion of 2nd and 3rd class ratings, so it seems that Atkinson was either much more decisive—and thus responsible—in his evaluations, or that he considered the 3rd class officers to be the expendable ones.) Colonel Daniel Bissell of the 1st Infantry was pleased to find so many officers "intelligent and attentive," "efficient," and "indefatigable in [their] duty," while artillery major James Many considered the majority "officers of intelligence, of considerable skill in their profession . . . who have served long and faithfully."8
Among the more thorough individual evaluations, artillery colonel James House noted that an infantryman under his command had displayed "good talents and gentlemanly deportment" and was "calculated both in manners and disposition to make an elegant officer—he has a strong predilection for the military profession." Although few commanders ranked their post surgeons, those who did tended to use similar language: artillery major Jacob Hindman considered his battalion's surgeon "very highly respected in his professional character, very Intelligent & active, of exemplary moral habits, & possessing in a very high degree the honourable & high toned character of a good Soldier." On the other hand, House also did the army a service by warning that an infantry lieutenant who had done no duty with his own regiment had shown himself deficient under House's observation, and he pointed to one of his lieutenants for examples of the sort of qualities the army could do without: "his habits of insolence & his want of a spirit of ambition & enterprize, [both] requisites for a useful officer."9

As these examples indicate, most of the evaluations, especially critical ones, were made in terms that had little to do with military expertise per se, and they commonly reflected social and cultural values as characteristic of civil society (or at least of the genteel classes to which the officer corps belonged) as of the army's specifically functional needs. To this degree, evidence of cohesion was considered a more important indice of capability (and thus responsibility) than tactical expertise, which no commanders rated in a distinct category. Obedience to superior authority was an essential military and political aspect of accountability to civilian authority via the constitutional chain of command valuable trait that all the respondents sought: Colonel Mathew Arbuckle of the 7th Infantry complained of insubordination while Henry Atkinson (who unlike most of the
commanders ranked his field officers) praised Colonel Talbot Chambers of the Rifle Regiment for his growing "mildness and equanimity" but criticized other officers as "restless," "somewhat discordant," and "a little petulant."  

Similarly, a demonstrated sense of honor was another primary desiderata, because it distinguished officers and gentlemen—those able to command respect, and thus obedience—from enlisted men and manual workers who could not: artillery major John Walbach warned that the prospects of a "well educated" lieutenant "of [otherwise] genteel deportment" were hampered by "the circumstances under which he left his command," which "were not creditable to him, as an officer possessing highly honorable feelings." (The officer in question was ranked in the 3rd class and retained, but he resigned two years later.) Genteel manners were functionally significant because they embodied the emotional restraint necessary in both subordinates and commanders within an organized occupational community of interdependent practitioners: Daniel Bissell found one 1st class officer "correct in his habits and gentlemanly in his deportment," but another was "fond of litigation" and a third was "without character, intemperate [one of the most frequently applied terms of criticism in the evaluations], ignorant, and inattentive to duty." (Both of the latter officers were ranked in the 2nd class and disbanded.)

The actual character of "expertise" and the value attributed to it by experienced senior officers was therefore highly subjective, and its expression in the OERs varied from officer to officer, but all agreed on the close correlation between gentility, unit cohesion, and the ability to command. The quest for gentility was not a mere matter of form for form's sake—historian Richard Bushman has recently observed that "gentility bestowed concrete social power . . . It was a resource for impressing and influencing powerful
people," and it afforded a generally accepted definition of social position amidst the confusing fluidity of American democratic society. In the army the qualities of genteel deportment and practical expertise meshed smoothly in the concept of command presence, while the frequent emphasis on energy, industry, and attentiveness to duty suggests that the ability to apply one's expertise in practice by sustaining the readiness of one's unit meant far more than the possession of expertise in the abstract. Artillery major Jacob Hindman, for example, characterized one lieutenant as "intelligent, attentive to his Duty, & very studious," but rated him 3rd class because of his inexperience. From a broader perspective, expertise and "capability" themselves were largely social constructs which commanders drew from the values of the early republican gentry—which in turn owed a great deal to those of the English gentry and aristocracy—and the "respectable" middle classes who aspired to emulate them.12

In a society still largely dominated by the Revolutionary gentry and those who aspired to succeed them, education and gentility were clearly—indeed quite intimately—linked, both in the minds of commanders and in the values and behaviour taught at the nation's colleges and academies. As a result West Point graduates had a distinct edge in the rating game even though they were being evaluated by men who had not undergone the academy's socializing process: Colonel Mitchell praised one West Point-trained lieutenant as "an elegant officer" in the 1st class, while he judged a captain without academy training a "good practical soldier" who had "served with much credit during the war" but was "deficient in education" and consequently 3rd class. The first of these men was appointed a captain in the ordnance in 1832 and rose to major before his death in 1855, while in the latter instance education and gentility translated directly into culturally
constructed boundaries of class and career opportunity, for the latter officer in question was disbanded and accepted the civilian post of sutler—he lost his rank among the lower gentry and became a merchant, his clientele largely working-class enlisted men. He would associate with officers but they would never see him as their equal. Similarly, John Walbach evaluated one of his lieutenants, who had served as a sergeant and subaltern in 1812 and had been recommissioned after entering the army for a second time as a sergeant in 1819, "a good and correct duty officer," but warned that "his manners are not sufficiently polished, and his education is not such as an artillery officer ought to possess." The man was rated 2nd class and disbanded, whereupon he too became a sutler.¹³

Gentility meant self-discipline, and overcoming passion in oneself enabled an officer to direct and discipline others. Social and functional (i.e., the more purely military) values therefore meshed closely in the desire for officers able to maintain discipline and order through their example of emotional balance and calm yet firm leadership. Like other commanders, Colonel House repeatedly referred to military command as a distinct profession, but in his language the practice of command was more closely connected to gentility, education, and the ability to give and accept orders than to specifically military knowledge or expertise. Thus one officer seemed both "honorable and worthy" to House, yet "from education, habits and mode of thinking" he was not "calculated for the military profession and never [could] do himself credit as a disciplinarian or police officer." Turning the tables on these terms, Major Hindman described a 3rd class officer as "an excellent Police and Garrison officer" (one who kept the post neat and sanitary), "active & smart, and a man of very honourable character," but "Inferior to the Captains of the First class in that steadiness of character &
military discipline so eminently characteristic of those Gentlemen." (In military parlance, "policing" means to physically clean up an area and put things in order. House saw discipline and police as demonstrations of command ability, while Hindman assumed that they were practical matters less important than gentility per se.)

Command required a degree of emotional control inimical to strong feelings of sympathy for one's subordinates—and in that respect distinct from civilian concepts of gentility—John Walbach warned that one of his lieutenants was "of weak [meaning soft, or perhaps empathic] mind" emotionally and unsuited for command (though a capable commissary officer). Similar attitudes appeared in Walbach's evaluation of his surgeon, who he labelled "honest, good natured, well meaning, and of correct habits, but not well skilled in his profession, a much better nurse than a physician." (This man resigned in 1824.) Aside from the implicit meanings of gentility, these evaluations were sometimes explicitly gendered by the language of masculinity or its absence, usually phrased in terms of experience. Expecting green twenty-one year olds to command the respect of older, often combat-experienced, men has always been a problem for armies which substitute formal education and genteel manners for practical experience, and some officers simply lacked the maturity required in a leader of men: Bissell labelled one "a boy and no character as an officer."

How to apply these evaluations was a separate question open to argument, and examining the fate of the officers ranked 2nd or 3rd class can tell us a great deal about the values commanders brought to the task of evaluation and selection. First of all, social values shared by civil society were just as important as military expertise; indeed, they were mentioned substantially more often. Second, commanders usually referred to military
aptitude as a matter of attentiveness--of energy, enterprise, zeal, and industriousness--characteristics of responsibility rather than knowledge per se. Third, the West Point graduate had a definite advantage, even though none of the men making the recommendations were graduates themselves, but (fourth) academy training was valued as much for its socializing influence as for the "military education" it imparted. Fifth, the confluence of education and gentility meant that officers appointed from the enlisted ranks were more likely to be disbanded, even though there was no policy overtly discriminating against them. Moreover, politics, friendships, and the desire to protect older men who had devoted their lives to the service of their country also influenced the selection process, and these personalistic connections meant that some older officers were retained despite their relative incapacity.

Senior officers demonstrated varying degrees of responsibility and attentiveness in their reactions to the process of evaluation and reduction. Some officers were led to decisiveness by unit self-interest--given discretion in selecting where to transfer the officers retained from the Rifle Regiment (which was being disbanded as a unit), Henry Atkinson attempted (though with ultimately limited success) to keep those he considered most qualified for service in his department despite pressure from the War Department to transfer some elsewhere. Colonel Josiah Snelling of the 5th Infantry was responsible enough to send in his evaluations even when he realized that they would not arrive in time, but in some apparently clear-cut cases he hesitated to recommend action: one captain had been unfit for duty for many years because of an incurable disease, but Snelling merely labelled his situation "unfortunate" and averred that "discharging him . . . is not for me to determine." This was certainly true in a formal legal sense, but what
Snelling meant was that gentility and collegiality forbade him from recommending the dismissal of an invalid, however capable.\textsuperscript{16}

In the 2nd Artillery Battalion, Major Walbach's rankings demonstrate the practical problems which commanders encountered in making evaluations of men dispersed around the country on various detached duties, and the complexity of judging their responsibility in such cases. Walbach ranked the 3rd class officers in his unit by individual merit rather than as a single group and suggested staff appointments for his best subordinates, a responsible act of personal and professional patronage that demonstrated remarkable collegiality, but he did not rank the captains, deflecting that task to the War Department since he thought it had the confidential IRs made by Inspector General Wool to go on. (Both of Walbach's favorites eventually served as commissary officers, but one resigned in 1830 while the other rose to major and distinguished himself in Florida before dying in 1851.) Like other commanders, Walbach felt forced to rate officers who were "not personally" known to him, whom he usually (but not disproportionately) placed in the 1st class, including three staff men--in whose cases he deferred to the implicit judgment the War Department had made in detailing them for special duties--and Lieutenant James Monroe (the president's nephew), for whom he relied on "the recommendations of correct officers who are personally acquainted with him." The latter practice suggests that commanders probably consulted with junior officers when they felt it necessary, since it seems unlikely that they would have exposed themselves to imputations of dishonorable conduct by seeking or providing this information to each other in writing, but George Mitchell enclosed a private letter from Hugh Brady concerning an officer who became "much more" attentive to his duties since his transfer from one post to another, probably a
reference to excessive tavern-going or to consorting with prostitutes given the context.\textsuperscript{17}

Although the available records are overlapping and incomplete, samples from the Artillery Regiment (a large corps then structured as four battalions widely dispersed along the coasts) will serve to illustrate in more nuanced detail the practical impact on officers' careers of the social values commanders brought to the selection process. Walbach ranked eleven of his officers as 1st class, two (both of whom were disbanded) as 2nd, and seven (including four West Pointers) in the 3rd. Among the officers in the 3rd class one was disbanded and became a sutler while five resigned over the next fifteen years: the nurse-like surgeon in 1824 and three West Pointers in 1823, 1832 (to become a railroad engineer), and 1834. (The third of the academy men became a military storekeeper four years later.) As these examples demonstrate, the army's selection process was as personalized, subjective, and occasionally particularistic as it was bureaucratic, and despite the relative security of careers in state service, the paths some army officers after the reduction took demonstrate the same paradox and irony as those of civilian Americans during this era: the fourth 3rd class academy graduate (he "of weak mind" mentioned above) served throughout the entire period of this study, while a "well educated" lieutenant "of genteel manners" and the usual intelligence, industry, and good behavior resigned in 1822, only three years after being commissioned from the enlisted rank of quartermaster sergeant.\textsuperscript{18}

Class, cohesion, and administrative ability were keynotes at Colonel House's post in New York harbor, where eighteen officers ranked as 1st class, three as 2nd, and six as 3rd. Two of those in the 2nd class were disbanded in 1821 and the other resigned five years later. Of the six 3rd classmen (those whose careers were up in the air), three--two of whom had begun their
military careers as sergeants during the War of 1812—were disbanded in the reduction, while three—two of whom were the only West Pointers among the six—were retained. Here the imperatives of cohesion and expertise clashed: one of the academy graduates had served as the artillery instructor for four years there, but House classed him in the 3rd rank because he regarded him as insubordinate. Experience in logistical and administrative duties was a clear asset for men caught in the toils of the 3rd class: all three of those retained served or were serving as assistant commissaries of subsistence (food supply officers), and one went on to serve as an AQM, ADC, and acting AAG to General Jesup in Florida. In all, about twenty percent of the officers of this battalion were forced to retire during the 1821 reduction, including five of the nine rated as 2nd or 3rd class. Of the other four, one died two years later, one resigned, and two died, one killed in the Dade Massacre at the outset of the Second Seminole War and the other of disease in Florida in 1838 after serving in a variety of staff posts.19

As implied by the careers of Walbach’s subordinates, the consequences of these evaluations suggest that their vague terminology was not necessarily an accurate predictor of future military success. From Charleston, South Carolina, Major James Bankhead rated eleven men of the 1st Artillery Battalion 1st class, one man (who was "without military skill—and of doubtful character") 2nd, and six 3rd, routinely characterizing the 1st classmen as "intelligent & skillful," with "very correct habits." Bankhead did pay more explicit attention to expertise than most of his counterparts: he usually noted West Point training as "military education" (in tacit contrast to nongraduates), and unlike most commanders he attempted to rank the 1st classmen at each grade "according to merit," though it is unclear whether he did so in case cuts needed to be made among these men or in anticipation of a
restructuring of the seniority hierarchy on the principle of merit. Among the 2nd and 3rd class officers in Bankhead's command, one man of each was disbanded in 1821, the 3rd classman because he was "idle and inattentive" despite being a West Pointer "intelligent and well acquainted with his duties." Another 3rd classman rated as "industrious & attentive" with "excellent habits " but "no skill" was retained but died later in 1821; and a third was dismissed in 1826 despite sharing these qualities in 1821.

Though similarly ranked, Lieutenant Joseph S. Gallagher became the army's leading temperance advocate; still a lieutenant after sixteen years, he resigned in 1836 and pursued his true vocation as a chaplain and co-founder of the Army-Navy Religious Convention. The two remaining men rated 3rd class died in service: one in 1836 after twenty-three years in the army, despite being rated inattentive, idle, and without military skill, while the other (WP'20, but also rated as lacking military skill) won a brevet for gallantry early in the Seminole War but drowned himself in 1837 after he was apparently driven insane by wounds suffered in Florida. Unlike Walbach, Bankhead refused to rank Captain John Michael O'Connor because that officer had been absent for five years travelling to France and translating Guy de Vernon, while the major had never even seen Captain Milo Mason (WP'08, whose postwar service was as an aide de camp and quartermaster officer) or Lieutenant Matthew Patrick, an aide de camp who had begun his career as a sergeant and was disbanded in 1815 and reappointed two years later. O'Connor was disbanded despite his recent submission of a thorough proposal for reforming West Point and American military education; Mason and Patrick were retained--in this case, good connections and practical staff work counted for much more than abstract expertise.20
Investigating the qualities and careers of the less capable officers also provides us with a number of examples of the problems that plagued the officer corps. From New Orleans Lieutenant Colonel William MacRea of the 2nd Artillery Battalion (a veteran of twenty-eight years service) ranked eight of his officers 1st class, two 2nd, and four 3rd using much the same language and criteria as Bankhead. (MacRea used the word "professional" more often, along with several variants on "respectable.") Both of his 2nd class officers were disbanded, one because he would have been "arrested for drunkenness" had he shown up at the post. (Similarly, John Walbach recommended that one officer be dismissed if he did not curb his drinking, and the officer in question resigned two years later.) Of MacRea's 3rd classmen, one captain with twenty-seven years service was rated "intelligent in his profession" but "rather intemperate in his habits" and "disagreeable as an ill-tempered and quarrelsome associate." He was retained but died in 1825. Commitment and responsible service were not easy to predict, for another officer was given a positive evaluation but resigned later in the year after seeing only a year's service. The two West Pointers among the six rated 3rd class were given the benefit of the doubt and retained: one seemed "of too obstinate . . . a disposition to make a good officer" in 1821 but served for four years as Jacob Brown's aide de camp before resigning in 1832. The other, who had not spent much time with his unit before wandering off to his home in North Carolina, ultimately distinguished himself three times in the battles around Mexico City before succumbing to disease.21

The 1821 OERs were usually honest but vague, and the ultimate efficacy of the selection process was not immediately manifest: however revealing, these evaluation processes only occurred in 1815 and 1821, and we
must return to the army in the field in order to assess their success. The
army's efficiency in garrison and field was not left solely to the execution of
company-grade officers and their unsung sergeants, for the army had a
healthy tradition of centralized inspection and reporting dating from the
activities of Baron von Steuben during the Revolutionary War. The
principal army organization act of 1812 authorized an inspector general and
two assistant inspectors who were selected from the line, and regulations
promulgated in 1813 required the Inspector General's Office (sometimes
referred to as IGO hereafter) to collect and maintain all muster rolls and
inspection reports and to send all new IRs to the War Department twice a
year. Wartime legislation also provided for additional inspectors to be drawn
from the line and placed on the staff of each division and brigade. The
general staff law of 1816 eliminated all these positions save those of a single
inspector general and the AIG (Brigadier Daniel Parker, essentially the chief
administrative aide to the secretary of war, and virtually a civilian himself),
but in practice two IGs continued to serve, one for each of the army's
geographical divisions.

This organization received official sanction in the 1821 legislation
reducing the army, which abolished the post of AIG and replaced him with a
single adjutant general. In 1842 one of the IG slots was eliminated by
Congress, and President Tyler demanded that Sylvester Churchill be
disbanded, but Winfield Scott cooperated with the secretaries of war to keep
Churchill, who had foreseen just such a contingency and attempted to refuse
his elevation to IG the year before because he was forced to give up his senior
line majority. Colonel George Croghan (an infantryman and hero in the War
of 1812 appointed directly from civil life in 1825 to replace Samuel B. Archer
upon the latter's death) had serious problems with alcohol and gambling but
continued to act as an IG and was paid through congressional appropriations explicitly made for that purpose (despite earnest protests from Scott, who declared that he would not employ Croghan "on any public duty" unless ordered to do so) until the second IG slot was restored by law four years later. (In other words, Congress knowingly paid for Croghan's salary just as Wool and a number of topographical engineers were paid without holding statutorily authorized positions between 1815 and 1821.)

Inspection was the primary mechanism for evaluating the army's expertise and preparedness and providing the oversight and quality control necessary to supervise a force dispersed in small units across thousands of miles. The duties and efforts of the inspector generals, officers officially members of the staff who were tasked by and reported to the commanding general rather than the autonomous staff bureaus or the War Department, are examined here because of the IGs' critical role as the commanding general's field representatives, pressing for military preparedness and attempting to enforce accountability to the chain of command from center to periphery. Every inspection was thus an act of both expertise and responsibility, a means of ascertaining capability or incapacity so that the army's high command could take timely measures in order to assure the highest possible level of readiness for war. Doing so led the IGO down the same path of bureaucratization as the staff bureaus and army administration in general. At first the IRs were made in whatever form the inspecting officer chose, but this resulted in virtually incomprehensible digests like Samuel Archer's 1822 journal, which modern historians have labelled "a staccato listing of . . . mostly unrelated adjectives." Reports like these were useless for the larger purpose of summarizing the army's readiness to Congress and requesting budgetary support to remedy deficiencies, and when Alexander
Macomb became commanding general in 1828 he ordered the IGs to prepare
answers to a series of specific questions. 23

The concept of inspection and the office of inspector general were
abstractions which only took real form and meaning in practice.
Consequently, the duties of the IGs were open to a variety of interpretations,
which gave office and act alike great potential as sources of strategic thinking
and reform proposals but drew the IGs into conflicts over the practical extent
and meaning of their authority to make inspections. Chapters eight and nine
will note the IGs' role in conflict between the commanding generals and the
staff bureaus, which grew out of overlap between the functions of the staff
and the IGs' oversight duties. Similarly, the IGs frequently made
recommendations to post commanders on the spot, which was doubtlessly a
sore point among men jealous of their right to command. Indeed, the 1821
regulations called for the inspectors to evaluate the resources and
transportation infrastructure of the regions they toured and to recommend
locations for new posts when desirable, though they usually only did the
latter, limiting the value of their reports for strategic planning. Given the
army's precarious financial support and the constant inquiries from an
economizing Congress, the duties of the office soon shifted toward
maintaining accountability for public property (especially ordnance stores),
which limited the time the IGs (especially Samuel Archer and John Wool,
who were assigned to inspect the Eastern Department and, in practice, the
army's artillery posts and ordnance installations) could actually spend
inspecting troops and their proficiency. Nevertheless, the IGs possessed
substantial autonomy and presented their own ideas for military reform
within their annual reports: in 1817 Arthur P. Hayne recommended higher
pay for lieutenants, an end to the contract system of supply, and a new set of
Army Regulations which he had prepared, while Samuel B. Archer called for an officer's emoluments and allowances to increase along with his rank as an incentive.24

Regimental and departmental commanders were also supposed to carry out periodic inspections of their commands, tasks they often delegated to trusted aides or subordinates. Jacob Brown undertook several major tours between 1815 and 1819 as his Northern Division moved northwestward along the upper Great Lakes, but he did not actually forward individual IRs to the War Department. Indeed, inspections conducted by a command within its own jurisdiction hardly satisfied the standards of disinterested accountability sought by Secretary Calhoun and the army's senior officers (when it did not conflict with their self-interest, as in Brown's case before 1821 or Winfield Scott's thereafter), and after 1821 the IGs were assigned directly to the commanding general as field agents to encourage responsibility on the army's "peripheries" by reporting derelictions and deficiencies to the center. The 1821 Army Regulations developed by Scott made inspection a function and responsibility of command and set out a systematic timetable for inspections by officers from lieutenant upward. Indeed, modern experts suggest that because of their pervasiveness in Scott's regulations, inspection served a routine management function, but the officer corps' reaction to this demand varied widely, even among those who we would expect to be most receptive. Edmund Gaines soon began to make inspections semiannually, and he ordered his subordinates to report to him on a similar basis. Gaines also made a very thorough tour of the Western Department in 1826 when western defense policy and postings were being reconsidered, complete with a report of well over a hundred pages which included his usual proposals for improving military readiness and national security, and recent historians
have remarked that he was perhaps the most active and effective inspector of any senior commander between Anthony Wayne and the Civil War.25

Winfield Scott, on the other hand, objected to the IGs' role as the agents of the commanding general and their independence from the departmental commanders, claiming that they would effectively supersede the brigadier generals contrary to rank and the overriding military principle of subordination and hierarchy. He therefore secured a compromise in which the brigadiers could see and annotate the IGs' reports, which—given the strong factional alliances which soon developed around Scott and Gaines—may have been the reason why the IGs ceased to provide OERs after 1821. Scott was in effect protesting against dual lines of authority, which he feared would permit inaction by commanders who could shuffle responsibility off to the IGs, but he was confusing the IGs' right of inspection with the right of command, and his penchant (here clearly a matter of self-interest as well as principle) for strict lines of subordination could itself become an excuse for avoiding or even refusing accountability. Moreover, Scott does not seem to have devoted a great deal of attention to the stipulations of his own regulations, for (following the example Brown had set before 1821) Scott does not appear to have sent any reports to Washington after 1823, even though the units in his Eastern Department suffered much higher average rates of disease and desertion than most of those on the western frontier. (Indeed, Scott had long since set a disruptive precedent for failing to report, for he had not done so following the battle of Lundy's Lane in 1814, an omission that led to extensive recriminations against him among the regimental commanders in his First Brigade.) This resistance continued—and doubtless set a malign example for more junior officers who were aware of Scott's views—even after Scott was appointed commanding general in 1841, for he was unfamiliar with
Churchill and distrusted Croghan, and in 1845 he declared that a single IG was sufficient to perform inspections not undertaken by unit commanders. In other words, Scott demonstrated much the same rigidity, self-interest, and irresponsibility in the realm of inspection that we saw marring some of his efforts at tactical reform. (On the other hand, Scott did support the reauthorization of a second IG early in 1846, appealing to the need for frequent inspections to assure efficiency and accountability.)

As commanding general of a dispersed army that he could not inspect himself, Jacob Brown's self-interest lay much more responsibly in the promotion of efficiency and readiness and the ability to hold commanders accountable to these standards, and he used the IGs much as Scott's regulations suggested. (Indeed, Alexander Macomb initially used them even more strenuously as part of his efforts toward centralization by ordering Gaines and Scott to cease their tours of inspection, which though probably damaging to the army's readiness improved administrative efficiency and concentrated inspection authority in the commanding general's agents.) Samuel Archer's IRs seem to have been of little value, but John Wool and Archer's successor George Croghan provided indispensable services to the army of the 1820s. In 1824 Wool toured the Atlantic fortifications and northwest posts and found an army in near-crisis. Discipline was soft, which encouraged frequent unruliness by the soldiers: the garrison of Ft. Preble in Portland, Maine was "almost destitute of the habits of soldiers," while the officers at Madison Barracks in Sacketts Harbor, New York were indolent and devoted to pleasure-seeking. Wool found the company books at Sault Ste. Marie the only ones he had "ever seen in which the accounts of the soldiers were kept according to regulations." In general he reported that both public property and professional knowledge were neglected, largely because of the
irresponsible passivity of field officers and regimental commanders. High rates of disease were also a problem, especially along the malarial swamplands of the South Atlantic coast: at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina a third of the garrison was sick or under confinement, and there were no guards or work details posted. (Wool's attention to this problem was probably one reason for the exchange of stations between northern and southern artillery regiments ordered by Brown in 1827.)

Responsible commanders at the seaboard posts echoed these concerns, and Lieutenant Colonel's Abraham Eustis's comments on the 4th Artillery in 1822 corroborate the implications of Wool's reports two years later: the garrison of St. Augustine had "for many months been too closely confined to labour to have made much progress in practical gunnery," while one of the two companies at that post had been physically "abandoned by the officers assigned to it." In this case, however, the enlisted men carried on successfully with minimal supervision, for Eustis found that the example of the other company, "the constant attention and esprit de corps of the orderly sergeant [the only noncommissioned officer in the company], and perhaps still more the military pride of the soldiers" had supplied the deficiency and prevented the onset of "recklessness and degradation." The company stationed at Savannah had not been so fortunate in its enlisted personnel and their cohesion, however, perhaps because they lived in sheds on a barren island amidst "general deprivation" brought on by logistical failure. The balance of responsibility between officers and soldiers was more nearly the one expected by most commanders, however: Eustis stated that the captain at Savannah was "one of the first [meaning best] company officers in the Army," while many of his men were reputedly "confirmed drunkards" and "convicted rogues." In consequence the force was "almost to a man . . . shattered by
disease," and the best that the captain could do was to keep up appearances and keep his men properly fed despite "the want of vegetables and fresh meat." He apparently had little time to direct his men in infantry or artillery drill, probably because of their ill-health.28

Constant economizing played a substantial part in creating these delapidated conditions, for one authority reports that "many posts were on the verge of [physical] collapse by 1825," when the big problem in artillery garrisons on the southern seaboard had become shortages of material. (Remember the endemic shortages of cannon mentioned in chapters four and five.) A new inspector found that the Savannah garrison (now quartered in the town itself, which rarely helped discipline because of the troops' consequent exposure to grog shops) drilled daily as infantry, but artillery training was still impossible because "the carriages of the field pieces [we]re so decayed as to be of no use." This deficiency was not the only one crippling the training of these units in their putative function--Augusta Arsenal, supposedly the logistical center of the nation's southern defenses, had no cannon balls available. None of the posts this officer inspected in 1825 had the quadrants necessary for aiming the guns, and only the arsenal had an implement for testing the powder in their charges, without which the shots were likely to fall short because the powder was too weak, or go long because it was too strong, which could also lead the guns to explode when fired. These problems led to new missions for the IGs themselves, for as the army's material deteriorated the focus of Wool's work shifted toward ensuring accountability for public property by creating and verifying inventories of ordnance stores and recommending when to dispose of decaying material, a responsibility first given to the IGO in 1824. (Samuel Archer died the following summer, and Wool took his place as the de facto ordnance and
artillery inspector in the Eastern Department. Croghan specialized in
inspecting infantry posts, largely in the Western Department, and remained a
commentator on troop discipline, training, and readiness.)

Only two field-grade line officers and twelve captains had graduated
from the Military Academy as of 1821, but the reduction of that year and the
rapidly growing proportion of West Pointers in the subaltern ranks did lead
to a general improvement in evaluations of the army and its officers when
compared with those of the 1810s. By 1824 Jacob Brown felt confident that "in
the junior grades of the army, we cannot well go amiss for fitness of the first
order," but these effects took time to work themselves out. Moves toward
concentration and a rigorous training regimen at the schools of application
doubtlessly improved the army's discipline, capability, and readiness for
combat, and the growing incidence of active service after 1831 left few
companies outside the northeast free to idle and rust. (In 1830 Wool reported
that the artillery units stationed there were still deficient, which he attributed
to the inaction of their colonels.) Buoyed by their common socialization at
West Point and the opportunities for more active service, junior officers used
the service journals of the 1830s to express their sense of esprit de corps and
defend their profession against public attack by praising the wider diffusion of
expertise: in 1835 one Military and Naval Magazine correspondent defending
the value of the Military Academy contended that while "scientific
acquirement" had been conspicuously lacking in the officers of the War of
1812, "at this time, such a requisition would meet with a fit agent in nearly
every subaltern of the army."
II. Evaluations of Officer Responsibility and Army Capability:
The Second Seminole War and the 1830s

Whether scientific ability was a sufficient guarantee of military expertise and responsibility was another matter, and one cannot therefore conclude that the quality of the officer corps and the capability of the army as an instrument of national defense simply progressed along with the growth of its educational facilities, nor were the IGs the only officers who detected irresponsibility and incapacity in the army. Asked to comment on proposed detachments for ordnance and topographical duty in 1826, the adjutant general reported on four artillery companies which contained one lieutenant apiece; seven others were on various staff duties, three were on furlough, and three were simply not present for duty with their units. Just prior to the outbreak of the Second Seminole War a decade later, another correspondent to the *Army and Navy Chronicle* maintained that "the truth is, [that] there is too much apathy in our army; too little devotion to the service; and the explanation lies in a nutshell":

There are too many officers absent from the regiments; [and] a certain set [is] always so: this, of itself . . . is enough to make us a divided body, and to destroy all feelings of unanimity, confidence, [and] mutual support. . . . These officers seek eternally to be absent; on furlough, on detached duty of any and all kinds: [and] this passion . . . is cherished by the facilities offered under a system of misgovernment and favoritism.

The critic resented the "drudgery" and social isolation in which he and other faithful public servants were left by these beneficiaries of patronage, and he warned that "instead of a state of mutual improvement" and "contented and brotherly feeling," "each [officer] is hankering after some separate and selfish
object." (U.S. Grant demonstrated some of this apathy when he gave up his reading in mathematics after discovering that he would be unable to secure a teaching post at West Point, since his regiment already had so many officers on detached service.)

A "rising tide" of personal dissension and conflict over promotion aside, the physical absence of junior officers from their companies and regiments was probably the most often complained of problem in the daily life and military preparedness and efficiency of the officer corps and the units under its direction, and it was one of the most serious sources of dissension within the officer corps as a profession. The multifarious administrative and logistical duties required to support an army spread throughout the nation gave officers bored with garrison life a wide range of opportunities to seek other employment, and many did so eagerly, leading their comrades to cry favoritism and inequality when disappointed themselves. Recruiting, quartermaster, and commissary duties were common routes for infantry and dragoon officers "mak[ing] shift' to escape frontier service" (as one put it), while staff duties with the topographical engineers and ordnance were means commonly resorted to by artillery captains and lieutenants seeking a less monotonous routine that would employ the technical knowledge they had learned at West Point.

A small number of officers were also requisitioned for duty as AAGs with the War Department, or with general officers as aides-de-camp, while service at the Military Academy was a much sought after assignment which frequently drew the ire of unit commanders short of capable company officers. All of these duties had to be performed, and without an adequate number of permanent staff officers most of them would be tasked to officers detailed from the line. In reality the army had far more officers than it
needed for troop command alone, and these detachments were probably not as onerous as many claimed, but the disparity between the opportunities for material, social, and intellectual compensation in garrison and detached service were great enough that the issue was always phrased as one of personal favoritism and injustice rather than the legitimate bureaucratic needs of a large, far-flung, and highly complex organization, another dimension of the conflict between personalistic social and cultural attitudes and impersonal bureaucratic imperatives that the experience of the officer corps illustrates so well.

Moreover, officers were sometimes—though much less often than before the War of 1812, since the federal civil service and the capabilities of local government had grown substantially—able to get away with multiple office-holding in both civil and military posts, since they commonly possessed political connections in addition to their collegiate education. The service of men like Robert Anderson as diplomatic aides and personal secretaries to ministers overseas has been noted in chapter four., while Samuel Hodges, who had resigned after a year's service as an artillery lieutenant in 1814, successfully sought reappointment to that corps four years later, simultaneously applying for leave to serve as consul to the Cape Verde Islands. Unlike most officers on leave, Hodges claimed none of his military pay or allowances, but he refused the commission, probably because of difficulties in attaining the necessary furlough.33

All of these tasks were necessary services performed in the public interest, however, and their impact on the line of the army was substantially less significant (with the exception of details to West Point) after the staff expansion and reform of 1838. The frequent manipulation and abuse of extended furloughs and leaves of absence (all of which were paid for by public
funds, although officers on leave lost the allowances granted to them as
commanders of posts) was a source of equal jealousy and greater dysfunction,
because the officers who employed these methods to escape company duty
were virtually lost to the army altogether, often profiting from the practice of
some civilian business or profession even as they continued to receive their
official pay and allowances. In one of the more egregious examples,
commissary lieutenant Timothy Paige (WP'24) became a pork merchant in St.
Louis during the mid-1830s while still putatively with his regiment; he was
court-martialed but allowed to remain in the army, still selling pork, until he
chose to resign, when he became a lawyer. This sort of dysfunctional
patronage and negligence flourished amidst the paternalistic atmosphere of
the officer corps, in which subordinates looked to their seniors as father
figures who should grant favors to junior comrades even when those men
ceased to perform the functions of soldiers. (Similar problems were far from
unknown in the civil service of the era; both situations reflect the difficulty of
reconciling the personalistic values of the early republican gentry with the
needs of effective bureaucracy, especially in a politicized atmosphere.) Indeed,
applications for furlough extensions made up substantially more of the letters
received by the commanding general than reports on troop training,
efficiency, and readiness, and it was routine practice to grant leaves when
officers wanted to move their families or needed to administer
inheritances.34

The latter practices were at least reasonable compromises made in the
interest of retaining valuable officers who might otherwise resign, but it was
also common for officers to seek and receive furloughs prior to resignation,
with the explicit understanding that the leaves would be used for officers to
establish themselves in business. In 1829, for example, Lieutenant R. Edward
Hazzard (WP'24) wrote to commanding general Macomb (obviously outside the chain of command) asking "an extension of my furlough for six months," as "the arrangements which now closely occupy my attention are intimately connected with my future comfort and prospects in life." Hazzard's extension was apparently refused, as he resigned five weeks later and ultimately became chief engineer for the state of Louisiana, which presumably was the appointment he had been pursuing. Perhaps it may be suggested that the pervasiveness of extended furloughs constituted an informal equivalent of the half-pay system common in European armies, but if so the very informality of these leaves posed questions of fiscal accountability and civilian control that went unaddressed. Congress repeatedly rejected formal proposals for a half-pay system as the potential basis of an aristocratic leisure class, but the executive branch (along with individual congressmen doing favors for their friends in the officer corps) seems to have successfully dismissed these concerns as it permitted dutileless officers to feed at the public trough. As in the Federalist and Jeffersonian civil service, the social and political ties between officers, congressmen, and the executive branch sustained an informal system of personal patronage politics long before the growth of the overtly partisan patronage practices associated with Jacksonian government and the second party system.35

Indeed, these golden parachutes seem to have been a more common form of dereliction of duty and fiscal waste in the Jacksonian officer corps than the dual officeholding and pursuit of civilian business interests which had been so common in the Federalist and Jeffersonian armies. Many officers seemed to feel that leaves of absence and the pay and allowances provided during them were customary rights for officers pondering whether to resign. Lieutenant James Barnes of the 4th Artillery wrote directly to Macomb in
1836—in violation of the legal chain of command and general orders requiring
the transmission of requests for leave through an officer's immediate
superior, as was usually the case—that he had only intended to resign if he
could receive eight months' leave, and when this was refused he
"immediately wrote recalling my resignation." Barnes' manipulation of the
furlough system in a year of constant resignations was masterful but
ultimately ineffective: he spoke in person to Macomb during the general's
visit to his station at Springfield Armory, secured the secretary of war's
acceptance of his reappointment, and finally sought a second furlough of
several months from Macomb. As with Hazzard, the commanding general
held firm, and Barnes resigned five days later, indicating that he had no
intention of remaining in service otherwise. (Indeed, Macomb himself
frequently refused furlough requests from men whose companies were short
of officers, although he often had to bow to political influence from
congressmen or the secretary of war.) Much like Hazzard, Barnes soon
became a railroad engineer in Massachusetts.36

Documents provided to Congress by the adjutant general allow us to
approach the problem quantitatively. As of February 1831, 320 of the 511
infantry and artillery officers (63%) were on duty with their units, while 140
(27%) were on staff or other detached service (including recruiting,
topographical duty, instruction at West Point, and quartermaster and
commissary duties with their regiments) and 51 (10%) were on furlough.
Seventy percent of the infantry were in command of their units, but only
slightly more than fifty percent of the artillery were on line duty. Contrary to
anecdotal evidence, no officer had been on furlough for more than ten
months, however. This pattern worsened despite general orders attempting
to limit the practice of detached service in 1833: four years later, the adjutant
general (sometimes referred to as AG hereafter) responded to a congressional resolution by reporting that 81 of the authorized complement of 180 company-grade artillery officers (45%) had served outside their units in 1836, while 40 of 210 infantrymen (19%) had done so, twenty-five under the Corps of Engineers, thirty-two with the topographical engineers (and thus fifty-seven on internal improvements, or in a few cases fortification construction), twenty-five on ordnance duty, twenty at West Point, and twelve in the Indian Department (a practice begun in 1834). Six served as aides in Washington. This group of 121 officers did not include those detailed as aides-de-camp (seven) or for quartermaster (twenty), commissary (five), and recruiting (twenty-eight) duties, which were all done with or in connection with units, and disproportionately by infantryman. Thus 183 officers were employed in non-command positions or outside their regiments, while about sixty more were on some form of leave, leaving about 180 (or roughly two out of five) actually on line duty throughout the year 1836. What was more disquieting, the detached officers had served an average of somewhat less than one year out of the previous five with their regiments.37

The absence rate among field-grade officers during this era was usually substantially lower, yet still high, largely because of their frequent service on court-martial boards, whose members were supposed to be at least equal in rank to the accused so that he would not be judged by subordinates in violation of the basic principle of military hierarchy. In May 1826, for example, thirteen of the thirty-two field-grade infantry and artillery officers were away from their commands: two recruiting, two on furlough, seven on courts-martials, and two under arrest. (Only two were reported to be on tours of inspection.) The number of men detailed to courts that year was exceptional because the War Department was cracking down on alcoholism
and the mistreatment of enlisted men, but the list makes no mention of supernannuated officers present but unfit for duty, a problem that became increasingly serious as the years went by without a retirement system.38

The army hierarchy fought these problems with varying energy but little effect. In 1817 Andrew Jackson's division AG ordered all medical officers in the division to report for duty and demanded that unit commanders report all officers absent and the causes thereof as soon as they occurred, threatening to dismiss recreants, but the army of the teens and twenties remained notoriously lax in enforcing such strictures. In 1829 Macomb sought feedback on the disciplinary problems of the army in the field when he instructed the inspector generals to evaluate the success of general orders (which necessarily meant asking whether they were adhered to in practice) and make recommendations concerning changes in the Army Regulations and Articles of War.39 Four years later, public criticism spurred by the Jacksonians' quest for fiscal economy combined with tensions inside the army over favoritism and inequality to force the issue to the notice of a previously silent War Department, which was finally compelled to issue a general order to deal with absences and other urgent issues related to officer discipline.

General Order Number 48 of May 1833 became the most famous, and among many officers the most infamous, order in the three decades between the battles of New Orleans and Resaca de la Palma, and it deserves extended examination as the most explicit official notice of the ills plaguing the officer corps. Indeed, the order provided a general framework for holding officers accountable for the services they were paid and educated for. Its third section stated that "no leave of absence shall be granted to any officer until he has
joined his regiment, or corps, and served with it at least three years," but set out the essentials of a system of leave by providing for annual furloughs thereafter, with their length determined by an officer’s time in service. The order also attempted to force new officers to report to their units promptly after their postgraduate leave (usually of ninety days): "any graduate failing to join [his regiment or corps] at the specified time" would be assumed to have forfeited his commission. Perhaps the best evidence that the army was increasingly becoming both bureaucratized and (at least in theory) accountable lay in the publication of standardized forms for furlough and medical leave requests along with the order.

The most fundamental demands of fiscal accountability led to a statement that any officer absent without leave would have his pay and allowances suspended, but the furloughs commonly granted (at public expense, of course) prior to resignation were only limited to a single year rather than eliminated, leaving the officer’s version of a "golden parachute" essentially intact. (The order also disapproved of granting extra allowances unless they had been specifically provided for in legislation or army regulations.) The oft-bypassed authority of the chain of command was reaffirmed by requiring officers to submit applications for leave through their immediate superiors. Similarly, officers had to receive the commanding general’s permission to visit Washington, D.C., and stopovers there during the course of other travel were limited to twenty-four hours, during which the travelling officer had to report his presence to the AG, a restriction that was intended to prevent officers from lobbying congressmen or the secretary of war for personal reasons, a phenomena that had "been [found] injurious to the public service" in its disruption of officers’ duties, the picture of favoritism it displayed to other officers, and its impact on public opinion.
The order also attempted to ensure that all line officers received some experience of their regemental duties before seeking other duty and to limit the duration of detachments for staff service in the interest of equality among officers: the order's fourth provision stated that "an officer shall not be allowed to fill any Staff appointment [aside from those within the regiment, like adjutant or, though this was not made clear, AQM or commissary] . . . until he has served at least three years with his regiment." The order also required that "as far as practicable, all appointments in the Staff . . . will be equalized [in their impact] on the several regiments, according to the strength of each regiment in officers." (This had first been ordered by the acting secretary of war in 1830, without any real success.) These restrictions were held to apply to ordnance, topographical, and all other detached duties, including those at West Point, all of which were limited to two years at a time. Officers not in compliance with the terms of the order were directed to return to their regiments within a year. To enforce these measures regimental commanders were to submit annual reports listing the officers they considered most capable of staff duty and those actually on detached service, a potential mechanism of officer evaluation and specialized allocation that could have contributed greatly to the army's efficiency and capability.40

Unfortunately, the order's provisions were only "intended as limitations upon the prevailing practice" and its specific application was left to depend "upon the professional character and services of the applicant." This flexibility, laudable in less pressing circumstances, was promptly seized upon by officers seeking personal exceptions to the order for themselves and their subordinates, while other officers saw General Order 48 as a direct assault on their rights as citizens and private individuals. Indeed, Lieutenant
George Washington Cullum, later a Civil War general but best known as the chronicler of West Point, referred to commanding general Macomb as "that greatest of all jackapes" and told his sister Catherine that "I wish the old fool was sunk in the Potomac. . . . a man not even allowed to visit the seat of his government! . . . Such a thing would hardly be tolerated in the most despotic government, then how does it comport with our republican institutions?"\textsuperscript{41}

Beside the question of officers' rights as citizens, a full implementation of General Order Number 48 would probably have temporarily crippled instruction at West Point while causing substantial expenses and waste in the other staff bureaus due the loss of experienced administrative personnel. The provision for annual reports by the regimental commanders--which would have drawn them directly into disputes over the allocation of officers, and perhaps provided them with a means to justify detaching those of inferior quality via false reports--was soon dropped, along the prohibition on trips to Washington, while the pressures of influence and necessity therefore forced the secretary of war to privately countermand the order's implementation in many cases. In all, the issuance and nonimplementation of General Order 48 was a fiasco for the army's cohesion, which led one commentator to complain in the \textit{Military and Naval Magazine} that "there is a total want of confidence throughout the army, and this will be the case so long as orders are published, merely to be countermanded, and regulations are made expressly to be violated."\textsuperscript{42}

The army was intentionally organized with a disproportionate number of officers in 1821, but the necessity for officers to remain with their companies in the field rather than on detached service or leaves of absence became increasingly apparent as the army faced a series of operational crises
in the early and mid-1830s. The army's dedication to preparedness for combat and the power of the line commanders, represented by the commanding general, were also at issue, and in 1832 Macomb complained that too many officers were detached from their line posts for service on internal improvements: "it is seldom [that] as many as two officers are present for duty with each company. It may therefore be conceived how difficult it is to afford the necessary instructions to our soldiers, or to maintain that discipline in the army which is requisite, in order to render it efficient for active operations." (Infantry companies were allotted three officers, the artillery five, and the artillery bore most of the burden of details for rail and canal surveys.)

Two years later—despite the publication of General Order 48—at least 122 line officers, or about a fifth of the entire corps, remained on detached duties. This proportion was the lowest since the early 1820s, and it may have reflected the best balance between the needs of line and staff that it was possible to achieve under the existing structure, but the crisis then seems to have accelerated, for by July 1835 only 168 of the authorized 421 officers (39%) were on company duty. Of the ninety-four West Point graduates commissioned in the infantry and artillery between 1833 and 1835, twenty-seven were on detached duty in August 1835, and half of these had never served with their companies. Macomb responded to the failure of efforts to return these men to their units with a provision in the 1835 Army Regulations that required the IGs to file special reports on any officer deemed unfit for duty to check up on claims of ill-health. (The regulation was not intended to provide a mechanism for weeding out incompetents, for the 1835 regulations also dropped the requirement that IGs file confidential OERs, which had usually been ignored since 1821.) Unfortunately, the IGO was then
going into decline: Croghan was effectively incapacitated by alcoholism, ill-health, and gambling debts and made no inspection tours between 1834 and 1838, while Wool was detailed to lead the concentration of the Cherokee in 1836 preparatory to their removal and was sent to the Canadian border to lead the effort to maintain American neutrality during the filibusters of 1838. Indeed, Croghan did not tour in 1832 or 1839, either, making five years out of the decade in which one of the army's two inspector generals was inactive. Combining this statistic with Wool's other duties, we can see that the IGO effectively had only one officer, and none actively touring in 1836.44

Macomb also sought increases to the permanent staff in his annual reports for 1832, 1836, and 1837, a plea intended to reduce the necessity for detachments from the line that was finally acted upon in the reform legislation of 1838. (Macomb's 1837 proposal for pensions to retiring officers did not meet with the same success, though he argued that it would produce a net profit for the government by paying the men promoted to replace the retirees at the salaries of their previous grades.) By the latter year the army was no longer operating in the political vacuum of general congressional disinterest: the public outcry caused by the mass resignations of 1836 and officers' attempts to avoid service in Florida gave impetus to critics of fiscal irresponsibility and the employment of officers on private railroads, leading the House of Representatives to report (though not to pass) a bill that would have required line captains to remain with their companies under all circumstances.45

Staff chiefs quickly joined the critics of absenteeism because it put greater pressure on the pool from which they drew most of their subordinates, which inflamed their already tense relationships with the line commanders. Writing in 1836, Adjutant General Jones attempted to phrase
his language in such a way as to stress the problems of furloughs and quasi-civilian duty on internal improvements rather than those of staff details within the army, which enabled him to hit political hot buttons while avoiding some of the ire of line commanders—an act of political accountability but only limited responsibility, because Jones failed to address the deeper problem posed by an inadequate number of permanent staff officers. (Jones remained opposed to the permanent institutional separation of staff from line, though he had been forced to give up his own line rank in 1835 after a prolonged struggle with Macomb.) Instead, probably fearing that Congress would rebuff any request for additional officers, Jones warned the War Department that "the employment of the officers of the line away from their regiments and companies should be restricted to the military staff of the army proper; and that practice of assigning them to any description of business not congenial to the spirit and character of military duty [should] be discontinued."46

The adjutant general noted that this problem was one of motivation as well as manpower, for comfortable civil duties sapped the military spirit of duty and service. "There are instances of officers being separated from their companies for ten, twelve, and even fifteen years . . . [and] instances of officers . . . who resigned without ever having joined, or performed any military duty with the army," he warned. Indeed, Jones blamed "the long separation of . . . officers from their troops, and their subsequent estrangement from all military duty" for many of the 117 resignations that year: "Their more civil vocations . . . gradually, but surely, allure[d] them into other pursuits (in the reasonable hope of better fortune than [could] await them in the army)," and consequently "many resignations were tendered almost immediately on receiving the order" to go to the field. The army's chief administrative officer
closed his public letter by warning that "the army must certainly become less
and less efficient for active field service" if these practices were allowed to
continue. The War Department responded that October with a general order
signed by the president requiring officers on furlough to report to their units,
but—as in 1833—the secretary of war promptly countermanded this directive in
a number of individual cases, permitting the delinquent officers to remain on
civil duties or leaves granted for (putatively) health reasons.47

The presence of officers with their regiments became extremely urgent
as the army mobilized for active operations in Florida and officers reluctant to
fight a guerrilla war in the swamps resigned in unprecedented numbers.
William Skelton has observed that "more than any other single fact, the
overall infrequency of resignations demonstrates the growing cohesion
within the military profession," but the crisis of the mid-1830s illustrates how
tenuous this cohesion still was. The complement of officers assigned to the
regiments was consciously designed to be disproportionately large in order to
provide a reservoir for detached service, but resignations and the informal
accommodations made to avoid them led to an endemic shortage of officers
in the field in Florida. Over two hundred officers resigned between 1835 and
1837, 117 (approximately the equivalent of three annual classes from West
Point) in 1836 alone—nearly eighteen percent of the entire officer corps, in an
era when an average of only twenty officers—less than four percent of the
corps—normally resigned each year. Indeed, the only infantry regiment then
stationed in Florida lost half of its first lieutenants to resignation in 1836, and
the size of the officer corps actually declined some ten percent in 1836, an
unprecedented event for a year in which its authorized size was not reduced.
The wave of resignations peaked in 1836 and, following the course of the
economy during the Panic of 1837, declined to normal levels within two years as more officers came to value the security of their commissions.48

The most significant connection between resignation rates and the war was for officers on staff or other detached service, often in coastal cities with or near their families, who were ordered on Florida service and made a rational calculation that it was against their best personal interests. Fifty-three percent of the ninety-eight line captains and lieutenants who resigned in 1836 (excluding those who had just graduated from West Point) were on leave or detached on staff or recruiting duty. (Five out of the thirty engineer officers resigned, but none of them were on leave or orders for Florida, and their decisions can easily be explained by the civilian opportunities for railroad engineers.) Of the ninety-eight, thirty-three had been on staff duty (including fourteen on internal improvements, six at West Point, three recruiting, and two with the Indian Department) at that time or in the recent past, twenty-seven (including eight staffers and eight graduates of the class of 1836) had been on leave, seventeen had not served with their units during the previous five years, and twelve others had never even joined their units. (Eight were graduates from the West Point class of 1836, and four were staff men.) Twenty-one had resigned after receiving orders for Florida or shortly after their arrival there; seventeen of these men had been staff officers, though only one had also been on leave of absence at the time of his resignation.49

Personal convenience and economic circumstance were clearly dominant considerations among the officers who chose to resign. Among the combat arms themselves, the artillery (fighting as infantry) bore most of the initial burden of service in Florida, while its officers were accustomed to easy service at desirable seaport stations, and fifty-five of the line resignations were from the artillery—nearly half its complement of company officers. Of the
twenty-one resignations correlated with orders for Florida, two-thirds were among artillerymen. (Although there were seven infantry and only four artillery regiments, these percentages are not quite as disproportionate as they first appear, since the artillery regiments contained fifty to fifty-two officers apiece while their infantry counterparts held only thirty-eight to forty-two, including supernumerary brevet second lieutenants in both figures.) One must also remember that pensions did not exist at the time, so the pecuniary deterrents to resignation were minimal, especially for engineers and supply officers, who could readily put their experience to use building railroads or managing businesses. In these cases, West Point engineering training proved more compelling than cohesion provided by the academy's military socialization, for 155 of the 202 men who resigned between 1835 and 1837 were graduates—more than seventy-five percent though only some sixty percent of the corps were graduates. Moreover, ninety-seven of the 117 officers (nearly eighty-five percent) who resigned in 1836 were graduates, a statistic which illustrates the close correlations between academy training, artillery service, resignation, and railroad employment. (The nongraduates who resigned were dragoon officers and officers commissioned before 1821, mostly captains. Were it not for the disproportionate resignation rate of West Pointers, one might say that these resignations increased the army's professionalism by enabling academy graduates to advance.) Indeed, the number of graduates working for civilian railroads surged from twenty-seven to 107 between 1834 and 1837, an increase that would account for more than half of the graduates who resigned during the period. (Some of the new engineers had resigned before 1834 but had not immediately taken up railroading, of course. Of the officers on the 1830 army list who resigned and left record of their postservice occupation, twenty-eight percent became civil
engineers.) In contrast, officers above the rank of captain, virtually none of whom were West Pointers aside from the engineers trained before 1812, had much more to lose by quitting the army, and only seven such men resigned in 1836.50

The reluctance of company officers was not initially shared by the army's generals, who saw field command in Florida as an opportunity to gain glory and prestige, or by many field grade officers, who ranked too high for detached staff service and received the opportunity to handle substantial independent commands during the war. Although a number of these men were too old to serve in Florida, their participation rate in the conflict was much higher than that of their company-grade subordinates, and their resignation rate was far, far lower. Fourteen of the twenty-one men who served as colonels in the regiments deployed to Florida actually went there, while twenty-seven of the thirty-eight field grade officers listed in those units on the 1835-1837 Army Registers did so. Indeed, four colonels (three of them brevet brigadier generals, including Zachary Taylor) served as overall theater commander through five of the seven years of the war. This statistic indicates the declining enthusiasm of the army's most senior officers for command in Florida: all but one of the army's five general officers (Gaines, Scott, Jesup, Wool, who was promoted in 1841, and Macomb) took turns commanding in Florida, but only Jesup (a staff officer) did so for an extended period. Indeed, junior officers could claim example for their reluctance to serve in the inaction of the commanding general himself. General Macomb visited the theater of war for several months in 1838 on a peace mission but never directed active operations there, while Scott (who had failed in a brief campaign in 1836) left his protege William Worth (the most junior of all the regimental and theater commanders) in charge after becoming commanding
general in 1841. One 1838 article in the Army and Navy Chronicle maintained that "the duties and uses of the Major General of our army have been strangely perverted. His sedentary employment at the seat of Government, and [his] total abstraction from service in the field... seem to indicate that he is now to be regarded as a mere chief of bureau in the Department of War." The author did not believe that this had been the intent of the law creating the post of commanding general, "whose time ought rather to be devoted to service with the troops on the frontiers and in the field." On the other hand, given the constant furor over favoritism in Florida assignments it is rather surprising how little complaint there was about Macomb's absence from the field, which suggests that the army's officers expected little from their chief besides administrative patronage and legislative representation. ⁵¹

Among the majority of officers who did not resign, Lieutenant William Wall expressed a very widely shared sentiment toward service in the Florida swamps: "How happy I would be to surrender the command of Company D 3d Artillery to some friend on such a glorious campaign," he wrote, after just missing the Creek War, adding that a recent alert was "the nearest approximation that I have made towards being involved in an Indian battle--may I never be more near!" Throughout the war commanders constantly maneuvered to procure leaves of absence to avoid or escape service in Florida, and postings to Florida were a source of constant conflict between officers and their civil and military superiors, one in which the junior officers in the field often had the upper hand because of the presumed shortage of men willing and qualified to take their places if they resigned. Field commanders and company officers routinely plotted to avoid summer duty (the sickly season, when there was little combat prior to William
Worth's arrival in 1841) by securing leaves of absence, and a number of officers gave sudden illness or ill-health as a reason for resignation from the army or threatened to resign if not given leaves from Florida service.52

Some officers actually tried to justify their absence from the field, but it seems unlikely that their arguments would have been found convincing by critical civilians or more dutiful fellow officers: in response to the public criticism aroused by such derelictions a correspondent to the Army and Navy Chronicle asserted that officers should be spared "the tedious and debilitating service of Florida" in summer and that he, one of only eleven of thirty-six eligible artillery captains actually serving there at the time, did not grudge the others a respite, "but would contribute to their comfort, by taking charge of any three of their companies besides my own." This attitude can be viewed from the intraoccupational perspective of the army officer as an example of camaraderie and group cohesion, an tacit exchange of leisure for the responsibilities and authority of a larger command, or from the outside--the perspective of the officer's civilian superiors and critics--as consciously abetting negligence and irresponsibility.53

However one chooses to construe this argument, only six of the 1st Artillery's fifty-five officers were present for duty in Florida at the time, in the midst of a guerrilla war that required large numbers of small detachments and at a time when few officers placed much trust in their enlisted men.54 Insofar as the army's officers had the power to bring the war to a more rapid, cost-effective, and (from the American perspective that they were supposed to serve, though we shall see that many were unhappy with the removal policy) propitious conclusion, their frequent desertion of their duties must certainly have hindered the attainment of their nation's objectives. Indeed, we must recognize that in some respects--and certainly in the most essential one of
presence or absence from duty--extended furloughs and resignation were the
officer's legally sanctioned version of desertion, which were considered
acceptable because of officers' privileged position as independent gentlemen
in the American class structure. Class made a great deal of difference in the
service which could be compelled of army personnel during the Seminole
War--desertion was normally quite common among enlisted men, but it was
difficult to get away with in Florida because of the poor communications and
terrain and the ease with which a new face could be picked out in small
communities frequently visited by army officers. Ironically, when it came to
the crunch, the "gentlemen" who proclaimed their devotion to duty, service,
and sacrifice found it much easier to escape all three than their "mercenary"
enlisted men.

Indeed, some officers even doubted that promotion was compensation
enough to endure the dangers of Florida: Henry Mallory of the 2nd Artillery
resigned in 1837 after his promotion to captain, which forced him to join his
company in Florida after three years of pleasant arsenal duty in Rome, New
York. Feeling threatened by ill-health, Mallory claimed that "nothing but the
conviction that I should be a victim of disease would have induced me ... to
resign a profession to which I had been so long attached," and he sought a
furlough of six months or a year to prepare for the future. (He received three
months, an indication that Macomb was losing patience with this practice.)
The most senior of the officers to resign, Lieutenant Colonel John Bliss of the
6th Infantry (whose actions had caused the first incident of cadet unrest under
Thayer in 1818), was ordered to Florida in 1837 but threatened to resign unless
permitted a grace period until the fall; in a rare case of rigidity or decisiveness
the War Department accepted his resignation despite twenty-five years of
service. (Colonel Duncan Clinch of the 4th resigned in 1836, but largely
because he was unable to secure the theater command in Florida, an example of a different sort of individualism and irresponsibility.) On the other hand, any route out of Florida seemed attractive to desperate officers mired in the swamps, and under these circumstances automatic promotion by seniority became counterproductive as lieutenants gained captaincies which drew them to companies outside the theater of combat--early in 1838 Lieutenant Joseph Smith looked forward to gaining his promotion "[a]nywhere, so [long as] I get out of Florida this summer." (Smith was certainly no coward, and his reactions to different wars were representative of the officer corps as a whole, for he was brevetted twice and wounded twice in Mexico a decade later.)

These individual examples are supported by statistics provided by Adjutant General Jones, who reported to Congress in 1837 on the number of officers present for company duty in Florida during the previous year: forty-seven for twenty-six companies in March, including only fourteen captains--the company commanders--and none for the eight companies of the 4th Infantry; thirty-three for the same number of companies in June, including only nine captains; thirty-eight (with fourteen captains, of whom the seven companies of the 4th now had one) for thirty-one companies in September; and forty-six for forty companies at the end of the year, when there were no captains for the seven companies of the 2nd Artillery, two for the eight companies of the 3rd Artillery, and still but a single captain in the eight companies of the 4th. Of the 114 officers authorized the twenty-six companies in June, eighty-one (more than seventy percent) were absent from field duty, and the proportions did not improve after the summer was past.

These figures illustrate both the flight from heat and disease in summer and the very imperfect correlation between the number of officers and the size of the force: the number of companies grew by half (fourteen)
throughout the year, but there was actually one less officer (and one less captain) present at its end. Consequently the proportion of companies commanded by captains fell from fifty to thirty-three percent while the average number of officers per company declined from two to one. Even these numbers conceal the magnitude of the problem, for in May one group of eleven artillery companies had a total of only six officers, and eight infantry companies were commanded solely by NCOs. These problems were not due solely to flight from Florida, for the arrival of nine companies in the last quarter of the year added six second lieutenants but only two captains. (The 1st Artillery added a company but lost a captain; three second lieutenants replaced captains in the 2nd Artillery; and a single captain accompanied four newly arrived companies of the 3rd.) Similar problems were evident among the sixteen companies engaged in the Creek Nation in Georgia and Alabama that June: thirteen of their captains were present but five had to be detached for service as battalion commanders (usually the responsibility of a major or lieutenant colonel) or inspectors of volunteers and militia. A total of twenty-two officers were then serving with these companies, while fifty—nearly seventy percent of their authorized complement—were not.57

As always, individual maneuvering within a bureaucracy open to personal and political influence quickly led to cries of favoritism and inequality, and within a month of the Dade Massacre complaints (sent only ten days after the battle) appeared in the Army and Navy Chronicle about officers who were neglecting their principal duty:

I trust that GOV. CASS [the secretary of war], and General MACOMB, will now look to the proper interest of the service, and that they will no longer permit so many officers to remain from their Regiments—some of whom are employed, in a way,
which has as much affinity to our Army duties, as, the
construction of a turnpike.

We, who are performing our proper, though arduous
duties with the troops, feel the hardships of this partial and
ruinous system... the more severely, because double, nay treble
duty thereby devolves upon us.

New general orders went out in June and October 1836 in an effort to force
officers to return to their line commands, but in many cases these directives
were frustrated by influential patrons and individual delaying tactics, if not
outright disobedience or resignation, and the shortage of officers during a year
of constant resignations frequently allowed those who did not resign to get
away with avoiding Florida service because of the ever-present threat that
they might do so. Indeed, in twenty-seven of thirty-seven cases the June
order was countermanded by the secretary of war two days after it was issued,
and no significant number of officers were ever dismissed for failure to report
to their units. On the other hand, President Jackson's orders that officers
return to their regiments probably acted as the precipitating factor behind the
mass of resignations that occurred in the latter half of that year, for while only
nineteen officers were on orders to go to Florida when they resigned, eighty
percent of the ninety-eight company grade officers in the line who resigned in
1836 did so after the October order was published.58

The failure of discipline in the face of officers' pursuit of self-interest
and the army's continuing needs for officers outside Florida forced the
government to adjust its personnel policies by both accommodation and
eventually—though contrary to the interests of the officer corps as an
occupational group—innovation. The above-mentioned Joseph Smith
appealed directly (and as usual outside the chain of command, and contrary to
General Order 48) to the commanding general, received leave, and was then posted on easy recruiting service in New York state, gaining almost twenty months to rest and recuperate before he was sent back to Florida. Officers' reluctance to serve in Florida also contributed to the appointment of large numbers of officers directly from civilian life during these years, because West Point was unprepared to graduate enough cadets to supply the vacancies created by resignations and the increase of 1838, while immediate dissatisfaction with officers' reluctance to serve melded with the more general Jacksonian antagonism toward the army as an institution and the officer corps as a privileged monopoly or establishment to encourage attacks on West Point and the employment of officers as civil engineers. Aside from the medical and pay departments, which normally drew most of their personnel from non-West Pointers, 102 such commissions—forty-three percent of the total—were granted between 1837 and 1839, and by the latter date about one in six officers had been commissioned directly from civil life—an influx far greater than that which officers had protested against so strongly during the creation of the dragoon regiments in 1833 and 1836. (Only five men were commissioned directly from civilian life between 1840 and 1842, after the needs of replacement and expansion had been met.) Similarly, the demonstrated success of noncommissioned officers forced to lead independent detachments in Florida probably encouraged the short-lived experiment with commissioning some of them in 1838. Although neither practice was explicitly partisan, and neither altered the social and professional character and values of the officer corps as a whole, these innovations in officer selection were adjustments that civilian policymakers previously sympathetic to the corps' exclusive pretensions were forced to make in order
to deal with recalcitrant individuals and an organization that could not constrain them.\textsuperscript{59}

On a more general level, which displays the frequently intimate links between group cohesion and professional irresponsibility, many veterans responded to the lack of an official system of unit rotation by writing to the \textit{Army and Navy Chronicle} to press their regiments' case for relief from service in Florida. Indeed, one correspondent (who assumed an Indian pseudonym to show his displeasure with the policies in force) wrote to the editor in 1838 that the officers of the 3rd Artillery intended to petition Congress to disband their unit (which had served in Florida since the beginning of the war), since many wanted to resign but were unwilling to do so while their regiment was in Florida for fear that their motives would be impugned. (He also complained that the regiment's officers had been denied the leaves normally granted after graduating from the academy on grounds of military necessity while more recent graduates had received them, and he noted that some officers were not expected to rejoin the regiment until it left Florida.) Two years later another officer warned that the 6th Infantry was "a regiment of victims" completely unfit for summer service; he called for "the assurance of a biennial change" of stations to "cheer us up." Responding leniently to this demoralization, the War Department codified its policy on leaves of absence to acknowledge practical realities in 1841, when officers with at least two years service were permitted to seek furloughs of up to eighteen months under urgent circumstances, a qualification which usually meant health problems but proved loose enough to include a great deal of private business.\textsuperscript{60}

These numbers did not improve a great deal as the Seminole War went on. During the summer of 1837 not a single company of the 6th
Infantry was commanded by a captain, and War Department's annual report for 1837 showed one officer for every forty men in the 4th and 6th Infantry. (The army-wide ratio was about one to twelve, while today it is roughly one to six, though certainly lower in combat arms units.) Indeed, the lieutenant colonel of the latter had just resigned rather than go to Florida. The following March a captain in the 4th Artillery reported that two of his three lieutenants had or were about to resign, which would leave him one officer to help command six companies. Both of the two were graduates of the West Point class of 1836; one had already resigned in June 1837 but remained with the battalion until the War Department accepted his resignation, while the other served until 1841. The third lieutenant, who had spent ten of his seventeen years of service at West Point, resigned in 1839 and became a professor of mathematics at Kenyon College. These six companies were entitled to twenty-four officers according the army's tables of organization, and should have been commanded by a lieutenant colonel. Another group of five artillery companies had but three officers, the most senior of whom, Lieutenant Colonel William Gates, had been dismissed from his majority in the 1st Artillery in June 1836 but was reappointed and promoted six months later. (He ultimately retired in 1863 with fifty-seven years service.) One of his officers had already been under orders to go to the academy for six months when this data appeared in the Army and Navy Chronicle.61

These derelictions of duty extended beyond the line of the army to its staff and medical corps, and late in 1836 Adjutant General Jones reported to the War Department that "it cannot be doubted that the public service . . . continues to suffer from the want of an adequate staff for service in the field." This was true even for the most elemental and essential staff duties necessary for the efficient transmission of orders: Generals Winfield Scott, Duncan
Clinch, and Mathew Arbuckle were all without aides-de-camp to copy their official letters or prepare the muster rolls while commanding on the southern frontiers in late 1835 and early 1836, while General Gaines complained about the problem throughout his entire career. (Arbuckle also lacked officers to act as AAG and inspector. Regiments had adjutants, but generals did not, unless the bureaus sent them or the generals pulled officers from company duty.) Jones therefore suggested that eight officers be detailed to his office for assignment to the general officers in the field. This was not done on a formal basis during the Seminole conflict, but the 1838 army bill increased the number of AAGs to six, and four more were added for the duration of the Mexican War in 1846, along with a "military secretary" for the commander of the principal army in the field. (Three more AAGs were temporarily added in 1847.) It should also be noted that these deficiencies were not limited to the field, nor were they a product of bloated central staffs: in February 1846 there were only a dozen officers (including the staff chiefs themselves) in the headquarters of the principal bureaus in Washington, including the quartermaster, ordnance, and topographical departments and the adjutant general's office.62

The shortage of engineers was an immediate tactical and operational problem in Florida, where unmapped swamps presented special obstacles to troop movement and supply, but the army had no units dedicated to field engineering (or "pioneering," as it was then termed), and only a single officer of the Corps of Engineers served in Florida between 1836 and 1841. On the other hand, the army's engineers were not then trained in field or combat engineering beyond the content of Mahan's limited comments on field fortifications, so the problem was as much one of lack of foresight and inflexibly selective mission orientation as of negligence or dereliction per se:
the Corps of Engineers was dedicated to fortification building, the
topographical engineers to railroad, canal, and harbor surveys and
construction. (Remember that the first company of sappers since the War of
1812 was not authorized by Congress until 1842, and then at least in part
because of the experience of the Seminole conflict.) Indeed, much of the
construction necessary in Florida was simple and familiar to officers and men
already used to road building, and ex-quartermaster John Lane of the 2nd
Dragoons invented a primitive sort of rubber boat for pontoon bridging.63

Of more serious import, very few of the topographical engineers
explicitly charged with reconnoitering the terrain in active theaters of war
ever served in Florida, a failing that cannot be excused by a lack of surveying
training. (Among the rare exceptions, Lieutenant George Meade—who did
not then hold a topographical commission, but spent most of his career
performing surveying duties—served with his company in Florida for several
months, but he resigned at the end of the year to become a railroad engineer
and surveyor.) Indeed, a number of topographical officers reported to General
Jesp’s headquarters there only to show orders permitting their immediate
return to other stations, and Captain William Gibbs McNeill, a prominent
railroad engineer who had done no military service since 1831, was allowed
to resign by the secretary of war as long as he reported to Jesup first, an
obvious effort at providing political cover for the secretary. Abuses like these
threatened the army’s fiscal and political accountability as well as its cohesion
and military capability: Jones reported in 1836 that "no monthly return"—the
records without which Congress could not determine the amount spent on
pay and rations—"of the forces serving in the Creek nation, or in Florida, has
been received from any commanding general of either army," while Jesup
(who was acting as a field commander himself, while he delegated the
Quartermaster Department to subordinates) warned the commanding general that "these things are not right, and if not corrected . . . efficient service ought not to be expected from the army."\textsuperscript{64}

Medical officers serving in Florida manifested the same sort of jealousies and divisions of opinion as line officers, and in the summer of 1839 several medical officers published a series of letters in the \textit{Chronicle} criticizing each others' efforts to avoid service there. Surgeon Benjamin King attacked one of the controversialists as a "man who had not been in Florida \textit{four months}, before he made application for a change of station to the north . . . setting forth the novel and absurd doctrine that an officer should be placed on duty in the climate and section of the country of which he is a native." King (who clearly knew his putatively anonymous antagonist) observed that the surgeon in question had not served a single day in the field during twenty-three months in Florida, "although from his seniority . . . he could at any moment have claimed the post of honor with a regiment in the field."

On the other hand, the medical service rendered the most valuable aid of any of the staff corps, and many surgeons came to identify themselves quite closely with the officers and men of the fighting army. Indeed, Surgeon General Thomas Lawson led his department into the Creek Nation and Florida personally, the only one of the staff bureau chief to do so, though Macomb first ordered him to help organize and supply volunteers concentrated in Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{65}

The War Department continued to make at least the appearance of pressing officers to serve in Florida, but it was not until a new administration arrived in Washington that its efforts became effective. In September 1838 Zachary Taylor wrote to Robert Anderson in the latter's capacity as AAG to welcome another order for company officers to join their units, as "their
services are absolutely necessary... while the women and children in Florida and Georgia are constantly butcheted," largely "for the want of Compy Officers, many of the companies being paralysed on that account. It is no time for soldiers to think of leaves of absence." In a private enclosure Taylor noted that success depended on being "properly sustained by those in authority (which I fear will not be the case)," but his staff complement was nearly two-thirds greater than Jesup's the previous year, while the number of officers present with the 6th Infantry had nearly tripled and that in the 2nd Infantry had increased by half. Two years later (in 1840) the number of staff officers had increased by a third again (to sixty-two), while the no-nonsense disciplinarian William Worth had brought twenty-seven of the thirty-three officers in his 8th Infantry with him to Florida.66

These improvements notwithstanding, as late as January 1841 Captain George Pegram wrote to Anderson that most of his comrades in the 1st Infantry "calculate on getting out in the summer," when he expected to see "much scrambling for leaves of absence." Indeed, Pegram himself resigned shortly thereafter when he was refused leave to visit his wife. This refusal signalled a long-overdue change in policy that was soon confirmed by orders prohibiting furloughs to officers in Florida. The 1841 order seems to have been more rigidly enforced than those in the past, since Pegram had just completed two years service as one of Winfield Scott's aides-de-camp and can thus be expected to have been a prime beneficiary of any influence at work to bypass them. Many officers considered the new policy a foolish mistake, but Worth's summer campaign provided the year-round pressure that reduced the Seminoles to the point that the army could finally declare victory and cease fighting the following year.67
Responsible officers were well aware of the damage this selfishness caused to the army's combat efficiency, and the *Army and Navy Chronicle* provided a receptive platform for officers to express their dissatisfaction and to suggest better ways for the army to conduct its affairs. These views were sometimes expressed by inverting the positions of white and Seminole: in 1840 the *Chronicle* ran a long series of satires titled "A Visit to Sam Jones's Camp," in which apocryphal Seminoles talking to a "captive officer" skewered the army's tactics and personnel policies with irony. Alluding to the court-martial battle fought between generals Gaines and Scott over their ill-fated campaigns in 1836, the author's captors supposedly professed to believe that "the white people, who have sense enough to invent a rifle with six loads," could not possibly "be so foolish" as to keep officers at home "to adjust old men's quarrels." The "letter" closed with a "Seminole order" that "troops take the field to wield the rifle, not the pen, to be soldiers, not clerks," transmitting the "Seminole general's" proclamation that he would "arrest the first man who transmits a long windy report [in which both Scott and Gaines specialized] to my headquarters."

A second installment a month later went further in mocking the army's accountable bureaucratic system of filing and endorsing letters and strength returns: when the captive's interrogator questioned the value of the newly introduced "Soldier's Book" for recording the pay and allowances and dates of service of individual enlisted men, the captive cried out that he would "die a martyr . . . in defending the endorsement of letters, and all the concatenation of superfluous scribbling--that system, so dear to every true supporter of the first republic on earth." Nevertheless, the "aboriginal general" asked how American officers "take any pride in their military avocations, when they are told, by innuendo at least, that they are not even fit
for clerks" when their forms were returned by the staff chiefs marked up for errors. "It seems to me," he remarked, that "you must in time become very good clerks, and very bad soldiers," and he suggested making officers out of the clerks of northern businesses.68

The frustrations of fighting a guerrilla war in Florida seriously undermined unit and officer morale. Officers admitted this even as they attempted to justify the performance of their own units: "Let it be premised as a sad but undeniable fact, that there exists, in almost every corps of the army, a want of zeal and devotion to the interests of the service, attributable, in a great measure, to the inactivity and enervating effects of a long peace of more than twenty years standing," observed a soldier of the 2nd Infantry in the Army and Navy Chronicle in 1839. He went on to admit that his regiment contained "officers deficient in a proper knowledge of duty" with "a strong aversion to an active and efficient discharge" of them, but remarked that these problems were characteristic of every regiment which had served in Florida. Two years later Lieutenant Philip Kearny, Macomb's aide de camp, added that

the regiments that have been there any time are utterly useless; for . . . the generality [of their officers] have become listless and inefficient, disheartened by the hardship of the country, and the want of success of their continual and laborious scouts--So that the experience they have gained will not compensate for the want of energy in men doing their duty merely to fulfill the letter of their orders and instructions.69

Similarly, a correspondent to the Army and Navy Chronicle observed that "continued hard service in Florida has rendered many young and active officers unfit for service for the time being," but worse still, the age of many
field-grade officers led to "Majors command[ing] regiments, Captains and Lieutenants command[ing] battalions" (phenomena that would be repeated in the Army of Occupation in Texas nearly a decade later). The author warned that this lack of experienced officers hampered operations and efficiency at every level, as enlisted men had too few officers "to look up to" while young lieutenants had no one to advise them. The absence of company officers led another author to observe that a similar demoralization was occurring among the enlisted soldiers, "whose spirit has been much broken down by this harassing and fruitless service." Indeed, the paucity of company officers seems to have contributed to the growing tensions between officers and enlisted men during the war, as the former tried to crack down on what they perceived as growing insubordination (brought on by the absence of many of their fellows and the injustice enlisted soldiers perceived therein) while the soldiers took advantage of greater opportunities to assert their autonomy. Nevertheless, officers who called for their comrades to do their military duty often met with outright indignation--General Jesup provoked cries of outrage and betrayal from the army's junior officers when he implicitly challenged the West Point mission and monopoly by publicly asserting that "the spirit of the service is gone . . . when officers of respectable standing can be found ready to abandon the high and honorable duties of their profession [in Florida] to become schoolmasters at West Point."70

Robert Anderson, perhaps our best example of a rounded professional, was also disturbed by these trends. Anderson was promoted to captain (meaning company command) in his regiment in October 1841 after three years service in Washington as an AAG and General Scott's aide. The 1838 army law required officers to choose either staff or line rank, and Anderson relinquished his staff captaincy (and its much more generous emoluments) in
order to take up field and probably combat command. (His regiment was one of the few still left in Florida by that time.) Ambition and responsibility went hand-in-hand in Anderson's motives, as he proclaimed that lineal rank was inherently superior to that on the staff, and "an officer holding two commissions should serve under the highest":

I believe that however good and perfect may be the organization of the staff of an Army, unless the character, pride, and esprit de corps of the company officers have been elevated and maintained, that that army cannot be depended upon either in peace or in War...the best means...of securing good discipline and perfect order in the companies is to keep the captains of the line with their companies--as experience has shown that none but the captain feels that interest and pride in the welfare and condition of the company which are essential [to] make the soldiers contented and efficient.

The army's leaders thought Anderson too valuable to waste away in a line command and warned him that his regiment was leaving Florida, but when commanding general Scott offered him the chance to return to West Point (where he had already served as artillery instructor from 1835 to 1837), Anderson refused appointment there unless provided with an assistant instructor. Scott's aide, who like Anderson had spent much of his career (eight out of eleven years) in that role or at West Point, pressured Anderson to go to the academy but soon followed Anderson's path one more time, joining his own company upon his promotion to captain in June 1842.71

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III. Inspection Reports and Evaluations of Officer Responsibility and Unit,
Officer, and Army Capability in the 1840s: Efforts at Reform and the Army of Occupation in Texas

The malaise of the Seminole War era was not limited to Florida alone. In 1841 Lieutenant Henry Turner asserted that Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, the commander of the 1st Dragoons and author of the dragoon tactics of 1837, gave "himself not the slightest trouble to enforce a regard to the Tactics--he rarely appears on drill, perhaps once a fortnight." Turner's observations bear more extensive quotation because of the deficiencies they suggest in a unit and officers considered among the army's most professional by contemporaries and historians alike. (Only two years before Edmund Gaines had suggested that the dragoon soldiers were "the best troops I have ever seen," and in 1842 Lieutenant James Allen reported that "our old companies are well disciplined--we have gone over and over the whole drill.")

I never thought the Colonel even a tolerable drill officer, but by heaven, he is now totally unfit for the command of an active Regiment: . . . I would like to see him Adjutant General of the Army, for he is certainly the best overall officer of his rank in the Army: but his energies have almost entirely deserted him: he says it has become exceedingly irksome to mount his horse, a strange admission for a young Colonel of Cavalry--The Colonels example of course has its influence upon every officer at the Post, and the result is, that the Military feeling of our post, is scarcely perceptible.

Turner, one of the rare officers who often commented on professional questions in his letters, had just married after his return from the French cavalry school and was not innocent of negligence himself--he went on to say that "I am perfectly contented, but I must confess my contentment is derived
from my immediate household, and that I take not the slightest interest in the Company to which I belong." On the other hand, Turner's bitterness seems to have been temporary (perhaps the product of comparing the reality of the American army to his recent experience of the French one), for six months later he opined that "we have the finest Regt. in Service at this time."72

Some senior commanders shared Turner's pessimism about the level of responsibility shown by army personnel, and some agreed with him about the inaction or incapacity of officers in their own grades. Colonel Abraham Eustis felt that there was not "the slightest idea of moral obligation to the U.S." among enlisted men, "and sooth to say, I fear there is very little on the part of the officer. I am in fact disgusted with my everyday experience of the service, and have not the slightest hope of improvement," lamented the thirty-two year veteran in 1840, blaming the army's problems principally on these ease with with junior officers could appeal over the heads of their commanders, which led to "an anxiety to evade responsibility" throughout all levels of the chain of command. Zachary Taylor, on the other hand, wrote in 1841 (when he professed to think of retirement himself, perhaps because it was unlikely that he would receive the new brigadiership opened up by Winfield Scott's promotion to major general) that "the army is now paralyzed by too many broken down officers . . . who must be gotten clear of . . . before it can be restored to a proper state of health and efficiency.73

The problem of leaves and detached service also remained a significant one during the early 1840s. Early in 1844 Henry Turner wrote to his comrade Abraham Johnston that two of their fellows were "doubtlessly permanently absent," though he expected that William Eustis (Abraham's son) might "try the duties of Captain upon being promoted" under the seniority system.
(Turner later charged that Eustis "has no Constitution whatsoever, & should be transferred from the Dragoons or cease to claim promotion." Eustis resigned in 1850.) The other absentee, Lieutenant Lucius B. Northrop, reported in February as unable to perform his duties in consequence of a wound, was in Charleston "studying Medicine and will resign as soon as these studies are completed," probably in two years time. Northrop had actually been studying there since 1839, and did not resign until 1861, though he was dropped from the rolls and promptly reappointed in 1848. (He was licensed as a physician in 1853.) It is unclear where he might have suffered a wound, if he did so at all, since the 1st was never engaged in actual combat until the Mexican War.74

Perhaps the best example of an officer absent from his regiment and dismissive of its duties was Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock, a member of the army's intellectual elite and a troop trainer and tactician of enough merit to be considered for the post of inspector general in 1841. That spring he requested a leave of absence from his regimental commander, William Worth (then the senior field commander in Florida), remarking that "my presence with the Regt. is not only not necessary, but never has been necessary except as a kind of statue to fill a niche that would otherwise be empty." Hitchcock apparently felt that the implacable Worth exerted such stifling control over his subordinates that there was no room for their own initiative, and he directly wrote to Secretary of War John Bell (outside of the chain of military command, which he was accustomed to ignoring whenever it suited his needs to do so) that "if I can be permitted to retain my Army Commission . . . without complaint, I would greatly prefer to be the Chief Clerk in the War office; but if not, my preference points to the Indian
Bureau," where he had served as an agent independent of the military hierarchy on and off since the mid-1830s.75

Hitchcock was nevertheless forced to serve in Florida for a time (from where he wrote directly to Secretary of War Bell advocating a peaceful resolution to the conflict), and in mid-1842 he wrote to the secretary again asking him to withdraw the 3rd Infantry (to which Hitchcock had been promoted lieutenant colonel and de facto field commander, though he not yet taken up that role when he wrote) from Florida to Jefferson Barracks. Worth, by then the theater commander in Florida, was "filled with disgust and indignation" that Hitchcock--who was not even in the theater of operations at the time--was escaping field service, much as he had done during the crises on the Canadian border several years before (when Worth had served as theater commander for New York state and Hitchcock had been promoted to major in Worth's 8th Infantry). "But what could be expected other than that he . . . should be infidel to his profession. . . . Already standing before the service recreant to appropriate duty he shall hereafter carry the brand of falsehood," Worth told Winfield Scott, pledging to "expose [Hitchcock] to the Army, and [to] subject him hereafter to its scorn as he is already to its contempt."

Worth's outraged narrative of his former subordinate's recent career provides us with a significant example of the professional field officer's sense of duty and mission, as well as one of the most detailed examples of an officer consistently absent from regimental duty and his motives for being so:

In July 1838 [Hitchcock] was placed over the heads of veterans of the highest merit, illustrated on the field of battle long ere he went to the Military School, to the Majority of the 8th Regiment, where, instead of seeking to vindicate that . . . act of partiality
and reconcile the offended Service to his unmerited advancement by . . . sharing in the arduous service in which it was engaged, he clung to a clerical Indian service at St. Louis—which . . . he was also on when that brave Regiment (the 1st Infantry) in which he was a Captain, was foremost in Florida and . . . crowned itself with high honor at [the battle of] Ocheechobee! . . . It was only in the month of June 1840 [twenty-three months after the 8th was reauthorized by Congress], after the fatigues of the Winnebago operation had ceased, that he presented his hitherto unknown person to the [8th] Regiment.

Worth claimed that while the 8th had rested at Jefferson Barracks that summer Hitchcock had spent "three out of every six days attending to his private affairs at St. Louis." After the regiment's move to Florida late in 1840, the major "procured himself . . . a clerkship at Washington [the subject of Hitchcock's letter to the secretary of war early in 1841], [although] his Regiment [was] then in the presence of the enemy and he at that moment in command of five companies most advanced toward that enemy." Indeed, at "the very moment when he was playing clerk" six companies of his regiment stationed in Arkansas were commanded by a captain of another regiment, and when forced to return to Florida late in 1841 Hitchcock showed himself "always perfectly reconciled to remain quiet and see his Colonel [Worth, who was by theater the de facto theater commander and should not have been leading field forces] head every detachment, from a grand division" (several companies) up. (As one of the two field officers under Worth in the 8th Infantry, Hitchcock would normally have been expected to command one of the primary subdivisions of the regiment.) Worth also accused Hitchcock of corrupting and suborning the regiment's junior officers by his example: "so
far from ever seeking any [active] service... no effort of his was omitted to chill the spirit of enterprise in young officers." (Hitchcock had formulated a peace plan and sent it to the secretary of war while Worth was trying to wage an intensive year-round campaign.) The colonel closed his indictment with these damning lines from Hitchcock's own letter, written when "his command... was the only portion of the whole Florida Army then in the field!":

I wish to feel that I am doing or live in the prospect of doing something. I have a perfect horror of stagnation--of idleness--of mere existence--hence the duties of a confined garrison life are beyond description irksome and despicable [to me]. The thought of such a life on a small scale puts me almost into a fever of desperation, ... and I am ready to scream at the top of my voice "give me something to do [!]"

Worth concluded that the commanding general should "send the gentleman to his Regiment, now commanded by a Captain and in the presence of the enemy, and if [his] heroic fit holds we will find him 'something to do.'"\textsuperscript{76}

Scott, Worth's chief patron, felt similarly: Hitchcock had "with ignorance, spoken of a Field Officer's duties with troops... for these he has a perfect Contempt... For more than twelve months... he has been absent while other field officers have found 'something to do' in Florida--marching day and night in much water and rain--liable to be cut off [killed] at any moment by the enemy or disease." Scott resented Hitchcock's imputation that Worth had taken the winter of 1838-1839 as a vacation in Albany, for "every body but Lt. Col. H knows that Worth was during nearly the whole of that same winter travelling on the frontier of Canada, in the midst of frost and snows, rendering the most signal services in maintaining the honor and
peace of the country," while Hitchcock had been "comfortably lodged at St. Louis engaged three hours a month in making disbursements to Indians!" In Scott's opinion, Hitchcock's views were "resented as an insult by the best part of the army--the marching and fighting regiments." The commanding general concluded that "[Hitchcock] seems to have lost his military pride, and to think that the army would be an excellent place for him, but for the soldiers." Scott pledged to order the lieutenant colonel to the command of his regiment as soon as he was released from special duty. Hitchcock, on the other hand, wrote to a civilian friend that December that "the Genl. may thank me that I have never tried to injure him when I have had it in my power to do it." By this time the dispute was doubtlessly connected to Hitchcock's support for General Gaines, whom the lieutenant colonel had served as aide and inspector during Gaines' Florida campaign and his peacekeeping operations along the Texas border in 1836.77

This was not the first time Hitchcock had displayed such a self-centered sense of his responsibility. For all his undoubted intellect and ability, Hitchcock demonstrated a continual unwillingness to assume the military officer's primary responsibility of command, a dereliction of which he was only one of the more extreme examples in the officer corps. Hitchcock spent most of his career before the Mexican War either at West Point or as a roving inspector for the Department of Indian Affairs, where he remarked in 1838 that "I never was better satisfied in my life, having never been more usefully employed." Indeed, after his valuable service as commandant at West Point between 1829 and 1833, Hitchcock spent only about twenty-eight months out of the nine years between 1833 and 1842 with units in garrison or the field, despite the constant employment of his regiments in active operations in Florida and along the Canadian border between November 1837 and July
1842. A man of remarkable moral and intellectual arrogance, Hitchcock always seems to have mentally reserved the right to determine which assignments provided him with the most useful employment, and he constantly used his political connections to secure these posts, which usually provided him with substantial independence from the constraints of military hierarchy and command.78

The scholarly Hitchcock long seems to have felt a horror of taking command as well as subordination to others: in 1827 he had appealed directly to President Adams (well outside the proper chain of military command, of course) to halt his transfer from West Point to his regiment in Wisconsin (the result of his refusal to serve on a court of inquiry he considered of dubious legality), while simultaneously remarking to a friend that "I have nothing in this world to do." A year before his appeal to Adams he had written to his mother that he hoped that Worth would remain as commandant at West Point so that he would not be faced with the responsibility of actually having to assume the position: "I do not wish the honors of the place, nor anything connected with it, but I desire my friends... to know that sufficient confidence can be reposed in me to entrust me with the responsibilities connected with it." On the other hand, Hitchcock certainly did not want to leave the academy, leading to a comedy of errors (if not a tragedy of irresponsibility) as he tried to have his cake and eat it too. After he served as commandant for four years (from 1829 to 1833), Hitchcock's initial concerns about the position were apparently confirmed, and he refused reappointment to the post in 1837, stating that "mere pecuniary prudence" alone required that he "avoid incurring the liabilities" to which he was subjected the first time around.79
Indeed, throughout his career Hitchcock provides one of the best examples of the often dysfunctional persistence of individualism in a fledgling bureaucratic organization, a highly capable officer—indeed an expert at whatever he took up—who simply refused to bear the burdens his comrades took for granted as their duty. By placing his personal sense of substantive responsibility above the accountability represented by subordination to the nation's duly constituted military hierarchy, Hitchcock did the nation valuable service but proved a disruptive influence in the officer corps, and he ultimately refused to act on his moral qualms over expansionism and Indian removal by resigning from the service, an indication that the security of an army career (and in Hitchcock's case the opportunities it provided for psychologically satisfying work in an autonomous setting, much like that enjoyed by "free professionals" and the academics described by historian Burton Bledstein) proved more powerful than individual ideological dissent.

A much more responsible example of an expert line officer who served much of his career on detached service comes from Charles F. Smith (WP'25) of the 2nd Artillery. Sought out by his regimental commander to command the regiment's new "light company" (horse artillery) in 1842, Smith initially responded that he would prefer to keep his post as commandant of the corps of cadets at West Point, but he protested that "I trust you will not impute it to want of soldierly feeling, or want of interest in the Regt." Smith added that he had never sought the posts he had filled at West Point for the last thirteen years, but had applied to join his company in Florida the day after the news of the Dade Massacre arrived. This request had been refused, as his adherence to General Order 48 had been countermanded, by the secretary of war. Smith asked Colonel James Bankhead to consider the honor of his current station,
its utility for the advancement of Smith's military knowledge, and, candidly enough (as Smith always was) its additional emoluments. Bankhead responded graciously that he recognized these advantages and had merely sought to tempt Smith back to company command with a plum post therein. Caught in a dispute with the Corps of Engineers over his authority at the academy, Smith took up the light company command that fall, and he was one of the few officers to win three brevets (to full colonel) for battlefield gallantry in Mexico, distinguishing himself at five battles from Palo Alto to Churubusco.80

In some respects the army seems to have come out of its doldrums in the early to mid-1840s, but the internal cohesion of the officer corps remained tenuous, its record replete with instances of dissension and, as we shall see in chapter ten, mistreatment of enlisted men. In 1842 (his first year as inspector general, though he had acted on and off in that capacity in Florida throughout the Seminole War) Sylvester Churchill reported that "I have found much to approve [and] but little to condemn" in the officer corps as whole. The officers commanding the posts he had inspected that year "appear[ed] to have discharged their duties with zeal and ability in the discipline, instruction, efficiency, health and comfort of the troops, preparation for defence, and the preservation and provident use of all public property and supplies."
Churchill's annual summary for the following year stated that "in all the corps [regiments] there were emulous exertions for improvements in drilling, the application of soldiers' labor instead of hired citizens [a matter of fiscal economy which necessarily limited the time available for drill], the comforts of the men, [and] their sobriety, morals, and intellectual discipline." On the other hand, Churchill's annual reports may well have been sanitized for civilian political consumption during a period in which the army was under
more vociferous attack than usual, for example when he maintained that "instances of intemperance in officers are very rare, and these and immoral practices are regarded with reforming pity and reprehension," statements contradicted by extensive evidence from throughout the army.\textsuperscript{81}

Similarly, the inspector asserted that he was unaware of excessively lengthy absences from duty, and continued in this rather deceptive way to contend that "great unanimity and respect for each other and their appropriate functions [of staff and line] seem to prevail among the officers," who were then engaged in a renewed round of staff-line controversies over the pay scales proposed in various bills pending before Congress, as well as the usual run of courts-martials and courts of inquiry into each others' personal and official behaviour. Indeed, the only prominent failing the inspector pinpointed was that of aging among the army's field-grade officers, since "some of the older ones are not now so intelligent and expert in tactics as commanders of troops should be." A more balanced evaluation of the officer corps' responsibility and the army's readiness is implicit in the War Department's statement of officers on furlough from February 1844. Only fifty-four officers out of more than eight hundred were officially absent from military duty, a substantially lower percentage than a decade before, and most had been absent for no more than a few months. On the other hand, ten had returned from leave but claimed to be unable to perform their duties for health reasons, while five, including Colonel James B. Many of the 3rd Infantry, had been absent for an average of more than four years apiece because of ill-health. (Many had already served forty-two years when he went on paid medical furlough in 1839; he remained in de facto retirement until his death in 1852 while his regiment was commanded by subordinates like Ethan Allen Hitchcock in Florida and Texas.) Sylvanus Thayer and Henry
Halleck were using their medical leaves to visit Europe on quasi-official missions, while Colonel Daniel Twiggs of the 2nd Dragoons was engaged in a seven-month furlough, probably lobbying in Washington (where he had passed a similar "campaign" the previous winter) to have his regiment remounted against the opposition of antiexpansionist Whigs.82

Despite some occasional obscurantism, Churchill's reports for 1842 to 1844 present a detailed picture of the army's tactical capability in the years just before the crisis with Mexico. During the former year Churchill praised the "celerity" of the artillery garrison at Buffalo but criticized the drill of an infantry company just arrived at Plattsburgh from field service in Florida, which was "not very exact as compared with garrison troops." Churchill reserved his harshest criticism for a company in Maine which was "rather below mediocrity . . . having been detached for more than a year, occupying a post by itself, reduced in numbers, and necessarily engaged in the arduous labors incident to a new post in the wilderness" (the sort of labor he lauded in the next year's annual report) The rest of the 1st Artillery Regiment performed its drills (as both artillery and infantry) "with great precision," "in excellent order," and "admirably." As usual, the units at Fort Monroe possessed the advantage of "having, previous to the[ir] present concentration," occupied sizeable posts of four companies (several hundred men) apiece. Churchill reported that the effects of the Seminole War were still being felt a year and more after its cessation: units stationed in the South tended to be less tactically adept due to their depletion while serving in Florida and the influx of replacements since their return, but the army and its inspector general had both learned to stress skirmishing and other light infantry tactics: frequent changes of officers had left Company F of the 3rd
Artillery at "middling" tactical proficiency, but Company A was "well instructed" in infantry drill, "including skirmishing." Moving west the following spring, Churchill reported in March 1843 that the dismounted 2nd Dragoons (now titled a "rifle" regiment because armed with Hall's rifled carbines) at Baton Rouge had not been drilled as a squadron (the cavalry equivalent of a battalion, or half a regiment) for nearly a year, while their infantry maneuvers were "indifferent." Tactical problems stemming from the army's failure to provide official drill regulations continued to plague certain branches of service, principally "rifle" units: the 6th Infantry at Ft. Towson on the western frontier "drilled very well," but its "rifle [or "light"] company" had "not been drilled with its new arm" (which Churchill labelled, perhaps incorrectly, carbines) "for want of a system of Tactics." Several "rifle" (erstwhile 2nd Dragoon) companies at Ft. Washita in Arkansas maneuvered "in a very creditable manner notwithstanding the[ir] recent change from mounted to foot service" by congressional mandate. The drill was also done "with great perfection" at Ft. Gibson, Indian Territory, the infantry better "than any I have recently seen," though it had "not been drilled . . . as skirmishers." Aside from material deficiencies ("the arms and equipments in the dragoons are not uniform"), Churchill concluded that the units stationed on the western frontier were generally "in excellent condition," and that "in all the [regiments] there were emulous exertions for improvements in drilling." Churchill began his tour for 1844 along the eastern seaboard, where the 1st Artillery Regiment again met with his approbation, although he "recommended a course of drills" for Company E, whose performance during a review was "irregular." On the northern frontier Churchill lauded the "accuracy of marching, the step and alignment" of the 2nd Infantry at
Plattsburgh and noted the practice of skirmishing drills at Ft. Ontario. Returning to the coast, Churchill found the 4th Artillery at Ft. Monroe "excelling any" in the precision of its drill, largely due to the regiment's concentration as a unit and the space available for drilling. On the other hand, they had "not been drilled at their guns for a long time" because (despite all the work of the cadre and the Artillery and Ordnance Boards) there was still no "exercise" (meaning a drill manual) available at the post. This frequently noted discrepancy between the official existence of tactical regulations and their limited implementation in unit training was also due to the official adoption of drill systems (Scott's 1835 regulations) that many officers considered unclear or insufficiently distinctive for use by the light branches of infantry and artillery. The 1840 artillery manual was then in the throws of revision, and in an army as small as the American one most of the artillery company commanders were well aware of if not directly involved in this process, a situation in which their sense of responsibility may well have tempted them to try alternatives to the methods embodied in the 1840 manual. Churchill rarely criticized officers during his 1844 tour, but he did note mistakes by those of the 3rd Artillery, whose commander "declined manoeuvering in battalion for the reason that 'he has not drilled the companies in such manoeuvres during the past summer on account of the heat.'" Churchill also noted that material economies and the consequent labor needs continued to hamper the army's military development; he had no doubt that "the labor performed" by the garrison of Fort Mifflin at Philadelphia was "the essential reason why [that] company is deficient in their military performances," and he seconded the commander's request for a cart and horses to relieve the men of some of their burden. Churchill seems
to have been right that the army was engaged in more intensive drilling than a decade before, but the rewards of this effort were not yet clear.85

Evaluations of the army and its officers present us with a similarly mixed, but ultimately positive, picture in 1846. Historian Russell F. Weigley has written that the Mexican War was the first in which the army's officers equalled their men in quality, and K. Jack Bauer praises the regulars of the Army of Occupation as "the most professional and the best-trained body with which the United States ever had fought the initial battles of a war." Ronald Spiller, the leading historian of military leadership in this era, observes that the officers who fought at Cerro Gordo were less well-trained than their soldiers, but attributes this inexperience to their lack of opportunities to practice combat leadership during the years of peace. Soldiers became expert at drill through constant repetition, but the army had no institutionalized mechanisms to teach grand tactics: like the art of leadership itself, grand tactical expertise could only be derived from reading, intuition, and the scant experience earned on a few small-scale Seminole battlefields. As Lieutenant John Porter Hatch observed at Corpus Christi, "the different parts of the Army var[ied] much in the[ir] state of discipline," because they had been together as regiments for varying, and sometimes quite short, periods of time, which "of course has prevented them from learning the battalion drill . . . [and] as the officers [have] had no occasion to practice they [have] forgotten all their tactics." Taylor sought to remedy these deficiencies by establishing a battalion training program at Corpus Christi, but Bauer labels its effectiveness "questionable."86

Reading books was not enough to assure tactical competence, much less brilliance, and all responsible officers knew it, but there was simply no
sustained opportunity for them to gain tactical practice or experience in the
dispersed antebellum army after the closure of the infantry and artillery
schools. As a result, their ability to conceive battle plans often took too little
account of the uncertain effects of friction and enemy action, and they
frequently had difficulty thinking in real time on the battlefield in order to
visualize and coordinate the impact of their units' actions to achieve the
objectives set forth in those plans. In Mexico the result was that the flanking
movements prescribed by Mahan's books and lectures frequently went awry,
so senior commanders were forced into an undesirable reliance on head-on
assaults against the center of the enemy lines. (On the other hand, the grand
tactical maneuvers of the Mexican War were significantly more extensive,
complicated, and sophisticated than those of the War of 1812, even in the
vaunted Niagara campaign of 1814.) Though costly, the victories won by
these assaults around Mexico City had a damaging long-range impact because
they gave volunteer officers and the more romantically inclined among the
regulars the confidence that courage and gallantry (to which the regulars
would of course add discipline) could carry the day against concentrated
enemy fire, a view in accord with the cultural values of Victorian America
that would lead to enormous casualties against rifle fire in the Civil War.87

Nevertheless, most junior officers were quite confident, and a
significant number commented in very favorable terms on the proficiency of
the Army of Occupation as it awaited developments. "Our army is well
drilled and disciplined," wrote Lieutenant Richard E. Cochrane of the 4th
Infantry (later killed in action at Resaca de la Palma), while Lieutenant John
Porter Hatch felt that "our officers are as fine a set of men as can be found
anywhere and very well behaved--and that is rather more than I had reason
to expect. There is no drinking or gambling in the Third, and I doubt not that
it is in the best state of discipline of any Regiment in the 'Army of Occupation.'" Hatch was equally proud of the enlisted men in his unit, proclaiming to his sister that "my Company is allowed by all to be the best in the Regiment."
Captain William S. Henry of the 3rd Infantry considered the army's drill "quite creditable" and assured himself and the later readers of his diary that "we all felt that a more efficient army . . . was never brought into the field." Lieutenant Robert Hazlitt of the same regiment also proclaimed that "a better little army . . . never took the field," and Ulysses S. Grant's later pronouncement that "a better army, man for man, probably never faced an enemy" is commonly quoted to support such evaluations. This was a matter of enlisted men as well as officers, of course; for many of the soldiers were seasoned veterans: twenty-six of the fifty-four enlisted men mortally wounded or killed in action in the war's opening battles at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma had served at least five years (in other words, had reenlisted at least once), while only eight had served less than a year. Casualties among inexperienced soldiers are usually higher as a proportion of their numbers, so these figures lead one to an exaggerated but not unrepresentative sense of the number of veteran soldiers in this vanguard of American expansionism.88

On the other hand, the much more experienced (and more egotistical) professional Ethan Allen Hitchcock (who had finally chosen to accept the post of field commander of the 3rd Infantry, and later served as the inspector general of both Taylor's and Scott's armies) believed that "neither General Taylor nor Colonel Whistler [of the 4th Infantry, commander of the army's 3rd Brigade and an officer of forty-five years service] . . . could form the army into line! Even Colonel Twiggs [of the 2nd Dragoons, later commander of the 1st Division] could put the troops into line only 'after a fashion' of his own.
As for manoeuvring, not one of them can move a step in it." Conveniently forgetting his erstwhile commander and chief rival William Worth (commander of the army's 1st Brigade), Hitchcock added that "I am the only field officer on the [parade] ground who could change a single position" professionally.89

Hitchcock's aspersions were not solely the products of his acerbic temperament, for one historian has calculated that aside from Hitchcock there were no West Point-trained combat arms officers in the Army of Occupation with permanent ranks above captain, and only five in the army as a whole. (Indeed, my own count is three besides Hitchcock, one of whom died that summer.) Eight of the fourteen regimental colonels were detached from their units as commanders of geographic departments in 1845, and only four (out of a possible eight)—Taylor, Twiggs, Whistler, and Worth—actually accompanied their units to Texas, all of whom had to serve in higher capacities as brigade, division, and army commanders. (Colonel Stephen W. Kearny also led his 1st Dragoons to California.) Of these men, Whistler was sent home under arrest for drunkenness on parade, and Worth was rushing back from pleading his case for brevet rank in Washington when the initial battles took place. (Hitchcock himself was on sick leave, which was extended that summer until the new year.) Consequently, the 3rd, 4th, and 8th Infantry Regiments were all commanded by captains at Palo Alto, as was the "Artillery Battalion" employed as infantry (since the army's only mobile guns were in the horse artillery batteries). Indeed, the entire left wing in that battle was commanded by a captain (albeit a brevet lieutenant colonel) of the 8th, who later acted as Taylor's inspector general throughout the war. Eight of the twelve artillery field officers were deemed incapable of active service in 1846, and only one ever served with Taylor. (After their deaths Eustis and Fenwick
had been replaced by men almost as senior as themselves.) A third of the infantry field officers were similarly incapacitated, and Taylor wrote to Secretary of War William Marcy that there had never been an army "so inadequately provided" with officers of these grades. (He therefore proposed authorizing an additional major for each regiment, which Congress approved for the duration of the war in 1847.)

These deficiencies do not seem to have handicapped the army, though the inefficiency of its adversaries cannot be discounted when making this judgment. Ronald Spiller, the most thorough investigator of the army's training during this era, observes that the Mexican War "demonstrates convincingly the effectiveness, if not of the army's training system, at least [that] of the training process" among junior officers and enlisted men. Taylor's plans for Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma displayed no sense of how to utilize the American advantage in horse artillery or to counteract the Mexican one in cavalry, but even as a sort of figurehead the general provided his soldiers with a reassuring image of calm, confidence, and reliability, and K. Jack Bauer observes that the aggressiveness of small American units carried the day despite Taylor's vague (or at least undeveloped) plan and the inability of his field officers to retain effective control over the regiments once they became engaged. "Junior officers demonstrated that well-trained leaders, given only very general direction [by their superiors], could fashion the tactics necessary for victory" in a battle composed of many small firefights, and the army's rank and file seized the initiative and demonstrated its proficiency by finding gaps in the Mexican line and "winkling out" the defenders: the company officers contributed an aggressive small-unit leadership compounded of Victorian character and romantic style, both very much aspects of the gentility they claimed, while many enlisted men displayed a
level of initiative that few officers (in this case blinded by class) would have claimed to expect prior to the war. The aggressive maneuvering and devastating fire directed by captains James Duncan, Samuel Ringgold, Charles F. Smith and Lieutenant Braxton Bragg, the commanders of the army's elite horse artillery batteries, serve as the best examples of this initiative and expertise, while during the battle of Resaca de la Palma Captain Philip Barbour led a small force of infantry that penetrated to General Arista's headquarters and disrupted the Mexican army's primitive command, communications, and control structure.

On the other hand, aggressiveness sometimes led to failure if romantic attitudes left it unrestrained by expert leadership: dragoon captain Charles May led repeated charges at and through the Mexican batteries at Resaca de la Palma without ever dismounting to seize them, allowing them to continue inflicting casualties on his force each time it passed. (Remember that dragoons were usually supposed to dismount to fight. Similar problems occurred in California later in the year, where Abraham Johnston and two other officers were killed while leading a rash charge that exhausted their horses and exposed them to Mexican lancers in the midst of a rain which wet their powder.) The infantry finally took the batteries during a fight in which Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh was wounded three times while cut off and facing five Mexican soldiers. The foolishly reckless (some said feckless) May received credit in the press for a romantic exploit, and both officers were brevetted for gallantry, but the more expert and responsible McIntosh went on to die of wounds he sustained while leading the storming of the fortress at Molino del Rey near Mexico City. (May rose to major and resigned in 1861.)

Spiller reserves his criticism for the field-grade officers who commanded the army's regiments, brigades and divisions, who with few
exceptions seem to have been unready and unable to direct the movements of their forces on the battlefield with the adroitness demonstrated in the actions of the other ranks. We must attribute this deficiency primarily to the absence of opportunities for practice and experience before the war rather than purposeful negligence, but Bauer adds that there appears to have been little "learning" of the sort expected in modern armies after their initial battles: "no [contemporary] discussions of the lessons learned [in these battles] have come to light"; and officers' comments on the initial battles were offhand remarks confined primarily to the decisive performance of the horse artillery rather than analyses of the problems encountered in grand tactical and combined arms planning and execution. Because the army's first battles were victories, its leaders did little to change their rather haphazard methods in later engagements, and the army succeeded largely on the strength of its growing confidence and the collapse of Mexican morale rather than (with the exception of the horse artillery) by tactical innovation or technical proficiency in the execution of the close order drill prescribed by prewar doctrine.  

No new professional journals or schools were founded in the decade after the war to discuss or teach its lessons, and the new infantry drill introduced in 1855 was essentially a faster version of the old, intended to take advantage of American morale to charge and disrupt an enemy more quickly, relying primarily on the psychological shock of that advance rather than attempting to win fire superiority in an attritional engagement between dispersed forces under cover. Consequently, Americans went into the Civil War with a tactical doctrine that was already becoming obsolete in the face of rifled weapons. Like the British and French armies of the Crimea, the United States army of 1846 was well-suited to the small-unit engagements of
"colonial wars" applying romantic Victorian values of character and courage within the context of Napoleonic (smoothbore) technology, but it was unprepared to apply those tactics on the mass scale that was required in a much more deadly technological environment fifteen years later. That is in large part to say that for all the professional spirit of some of its senior and expert officers, the antebellum field army was ultimately a frontier constabulary whose capability was shaped by its practical mission and external circumstances like the absence of a serious European threat, rather than the mass army Americans had always striven to avoid. All of these factors limited army budgets and the urgency of professional development. On the other hand, the bureaucratic mental habits and administrative and logistical abilities officers acquired in the antebellum army proved more easily and more effectively transferable to the Civil War context of mass mobilization and attritional warfare, a sign of the officer corps' ultimately successful adjustment to and leadership in the creation of large, complex organizations devoted to functional efficiency--one of the most important responses to the problems posed by the extent of American space and the growing scale of American social interaction--that was beginning to transform American life.
Chapter VII

1 Quotation from "Bruce," "Change of Stations," MNM 3 (May 1834): 236.

I. Evaluations of Officer, Unit, and Army Capability in the 1810s and 1820s:
The Inspector Generals and the Reductions of 1815 and 1821


3 Jones, journal entry, June 19, 1819, Jones Papers, LC.


5 Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, pp. 124 (quotation) and 162.

6 Acting Secretary of War Dallas to the selection board, April 8, 1815, in Gordon, A Compilation of the Registers of the Army, pp. 53-54; Coffman, The Old Army, p. 43; Kieffer, Malignant General, p. 94. See SW:LR, Unregistered Series (Microform Series 222), RG107, NA, for records of the 1815 decisions. See Colonel Hugh Brady to Colonel George E. Mitchell, March 21, 1821, SW:LR-Reg., for an example of an appeal to officers' financial and family situations in these decisions.

7 Coffman, The Old Army, p. 45; Snelling (first quotation) and Mitchell, confidential OERs, June 8 and March 26, 1821, files S-382 and M-233, SW:LR-Reg. OERs are available in the SW:LR-Reg. series from all regimental and battalion commanders save those of the 3rd, 4th, and 8th Infantry and the Light Artillery Regiment; those for the 6th Infantry and the Rifle Regiment were either composed or forwarded by Atkinson. They are cited in this section without the "SW:LR-Reg." attribution.

8 Mitchell, Atkinson, Bissell, and Many, March 26, April 21, 19, and 10, 1821, files M-233, A-87, B-225, and M-313.


10 Arbuckle and Atkinson, April 11 and 5, files A-91 and A-97.
11 Walbach and Bissell, March 25 and April 19, 1821, files W-156 and B-225.


13 Mitchell, March 26, 1821, file M-233.


15 Walbach and Bissell, March 25 and April 19, 1821, files W-156, and B-225. Remember that contemporary nurses were usually men, so the reference to the surgeon speaks more to his inability to command (nurses then being considered subordinate personnel doing manual labor) than to gender dichotomies.

16 Atkinson and Snelling, April 21 and March 25, 1821, files A-87 and S-382.

17 Walbach and Mitchell, March 26 and June 8, 1821, files W-156, and M-233.

18 Walbach, March 25, 1821, file W-156. See also Acting Secretary of War George Graham to Thayer, October 3, 1817, Thayer Papers, USMA. The junior Monroe served as battalion adjutant from 1816 to 1818, ADC to Scott from then until 1822 and ACS from 1828 to 1832. He regained the post of ADC to Scott in 1832 but resigned that fall and went on to become the president of the board of New York City aldermen, ADC to Governor William L. Marcy (who was later secretary of war under Polk), and a congressman from 1839 to 1841.


20 Bankhead, March 17, 1821, file B-140.

21 MacRea and Walbach, March 18 and 25, 1821, files M-234 and W-156.

22 Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, p. 101 and passim; Scott to Secretary of War William L. Marcy, March 11, 1845, NASP:MA 12: 334-36 (quotation from 336). Indeed, Croghan had used $11,000 worth of postal funds to pay personal debts, largely from gambling, hoping to borrow enough from friends to make up the shortfall, before his appointment in 1825, and his brother-in-law Thomas Sidney Jesup had to do so when an audit uncovered the diversion (Kieffer, Maligne General, p. 111). The IGs were not responsible for keeping army accounts, however, and the
incident seems to have been a lapse of judgment (of which Croghan certainly had many) rather than an intentional effort at embezzlement.

23 Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, pp. 135 (quotation) and 153.

24 Ibid., pp. 120, 134, and 138.

25 Ibid., pp. 134-35 and 141.

26 Ibid., pp. 133, 135, and 140; Graves, The Battle of Lundy's Lane, pp. 184-86; Scott to Secretary of War Marcy, March 11, 1845 and January 2, 1846, NASP:MA 12: 336 and 344. The conflict over control over the IGs had begun before 1821, see Clary, p. 125.


28 Eustis, December 4, 1822, IRs, AGO.

29 Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, pp. 142 and 144; Major William Wilson, February 17, 1825, IRs, AGO. See Francis Paul Prucha, Army Life on the Western Frontier: Selections from the Official Reports Made between 1826 and 1845 by Colonel George Croghan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958) for a picture of Croghan's activities, interests, and conclusions.


II. Evaluations of Officer Responsibility and Army Capability:
The Second Seminole War and the 1830s

32 Quotations from Skelton, "The United States Army," p. 273 ("rising tide"), and Henry Turner to Abraham Johnston, November 30, 1837, Johnston Papers, USMA.

33 Hodges, August 28, 1818, file H-256, SW:LR-Reg.

34 Lt. Robert Buchanan to Robert Anderson, January 13, 1836, Anderson Papers, LC. Buchanan was not really complaining about Paige or his activities per se; he just hoped that Paige would resign, as this would result in Buchanan's promotion by seniority.

35 Hazzard, August 23, 1829, HQA:LR. See Leonard White's series of books on these three eras in the development of the federal civil service.

36 Barnes, July 26, 1836, HQA:LR; Skelton, "The United States Army," p. 283. Barnes had not received leave prior to his request to Macomb, but he had served as an instructor at West Point for nearly four of the seven years of his career.

37 "Statement of the Number and Rank of Officers of the Army on Duty in Line, Staff, or Detached Service, and Those Absent on Furlough," communicated to the House February 8, 1831, ASP:MA 4:684-86; "List of Officers of the Army Employed Upon Duty Which Separated Them from Their Regiments or Corps During the Year 1836," communicated to the House March 3, 1837, ASP:MA 7: 119-24. The minor numerical discrepancies are present but unaccounted for in these documents.


39 Colonel Robert Butler, Division Order, April 22, 1817, Andrew Jackson Papers, LC; Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, p. 153.

40 General Order No. 48, May 18, 1833, published in MNM 1 (July 1833): 313-17; Jones, circular to regimental commanders, June 22, 1833, AGO:LS.

41 Cullum, May 25, 1833, Cullum Papers, USMA.

43 Macomb to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, annual report communicated to Congress by the president December 4, 1832, ASP:MA 5: 31.


45 Macomb to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, annual reports communicated to Congress by the president December 4, 1832, December 6, 1836, and December 5, 1837, ASP:MA 5: 31, 6: 817-19, and 7: 589-90 (to Secretary Poinsett); bill on "On the Expediency of Prohibiting the Appointment of Captains in the Staff, of Reducing the Number of Cadets, and of Promoting Meritorious Non-Commissioned Officers of the Army," communicated to the House February 8, 1832 by the Military Affairs Committee, ASP:MA 4: 870-71.

46 Jones to Acting Secretary of War Benjamin F. Butler, November 26, 1836, published as "Letter of the Adjutant General" on the front page of ANC 4 (February 16, 1837): 98-99.

47 Ibid.; General Order No. 69, October 16, 1836, Orders File, AGO.


50 Coffman, The Old Army, pp. 52-53; Daniel H. Calhoun, The American Civil Engineer: Origins and Conflict (Cambridge, Mass.: Technology Press, 1960), pp. 43-44; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, Table 11.5 (p. 218). The growing persistence of army careers is ironically evident in the return of twenty-seven of these men (including twenty-one West Pointers) to the regular army, while thirty-five others volunteered in the Mexican and Civil Wars. Eight of the officers given topographical commissions in 1838 had resigned during 1836 and 1837.

52 Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, p. 136 (Figure 7.1); Wall to Robert Anderson, August 19, 1836, Anderson Papers, LC.


54 Statistic from Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 188. Presumably the figure for the 1st Artillery included brevet second lieutenants waiting for commissions, and perhaps attached personnel under temporary command, since the normal complement of officers for an artillery regiment was approximately forty-two at the time. In 1836 a full-strength infantry "company" was the size of a platoon today, with an authorized strength of forty-two privates and three officers (though one was usually absent on some form of leave or detached service); their real average tended to be about twenty privates. (Artillery companies had four officers and forty-eight or fifty privates, but it was generally understood that one of the officers would be on ordnance duty.) While it was hardly impossible for a single officer to direct eighty men (two companies), the officer corps had long predicated its demands for expansion (or for the retention of officers during force reductions like those in 1821 and 1842, in the latter of which only a single officer was discharged, for reasons that had nothing to do with the reduction) on the proposition that a disproportionately large force of officers was necessary in case of war to command an army that would be at least doubled in numbers by recruiting, and the disparity between this rhetoric and the Florida reality doubtlessly injured the corps' cause. In July 1838 Congress authorized strengths of eighty privates in infantry companies and fifty-eight in the artillery, though sickness kept the proportion actually available for duty (one-half) about the same. In contrast, the complement of company officers in the artillery was actually reduced by the transfer to the staff of supernumerary second lieutenants (those in excess of the one authorized to each company).


57 Ibid.; Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 54. The number of field officers followed similar trends, from nine to seven to three to seven, for a force the size of three regiments composed of elements of four (five in the second half of the
year). These numbers reflect a much higher proportion of officers present for duty in the field, however, because each regiment had only three field-grade officers (a major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel). In the first half of the year the regiments averaged two of these men present (and three per regimental equivalent—nine or ten companies—in the first quarter); this number was halved in the summer to a single field officer for each regimental equivalent (three), but only one-fifth of the total number of field officers (fifteen) in the five regiments then present in substantial numbers; at the close of the year the proportion of field officers present had risen to half that total and roughly two per regimental equivalent.

58 Letter, January 5, 1836, within "Seminole War," ANC 2 (January 28, 1836): 56; General Orders Nos. 43 and 69, June 28 and October 16, 1836, Orders File, AGO; Macomb to Jones, June 30, 1836, AGO:LR.

59 Joseph Smith to his wife Juliet, March 24, 1838, in Mahon, ed., "Letters from the Second Seminole War," p. 341. See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 144, and Coffman, The Old Army, p. 55, regarding officers commissioned directly from civil life (i.e., those who did not graduate from West Point first). Twenty-seven were commissioned in 1837, sixty-three in 1838 (more than the number of West Pointers that year), and 33 in 1839. Seven sergeants were appointed lieutenants in 1838, the only enlisted men to receive commissions between 1821 and 1847 (Skelton, pp. 147-48).

60 "Chitto Emathla Tustanugge (successor to Sam Jones)," "The Third Regiment of Artillery," ANC 9 (August 22, 1839): 115-16; letter in ANC 11 (August 27, 1840): 138; Coffman, The Old Army, p. 54. According to the ANC editor's note, the officer who wrote about the 6th was not actually a member of that regiment.


Meade was initially sent to join his company, but after a short period he developed a low persistent fever (probably malaria), and was sent to supervise the removal of a group of Seminoles to Arkansas. He was then assigned to detached service at the Watertown Arsenal in Massachusetts (a desirable station in itself), but resigned to take a position with his brother-in-law Capt. James D. Graham, the chief engineer of the Alabama, Florida, and Georgia Railroad. Meade was then employed under Capt. William H. Chase on the survey of the Sabine boundary with Texas, under Capt. Andrew Talcott surveying the Mississippi river delta near New Orleans and compiling its results in Washington, and with Graham again on the Maine boundary survey in 1840. Given the growing insecurity of civil engineering employment in general after the Panic of 1837 and Jacksonian investigations of the profession, Meade turned to the army for permanent employment by securing a commission in the topographical engineers in 1842, under the patronage of Rep. Henry Wise of Virginia, one of John Tyler's principal advisers. See George Gordon Meade, ed., *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, Major-General United States Army* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), vol. I (as are all citations to Meade's letters herein), pp. 12-17.

King letter, in **ANC** 9 (September 19, 1839): 186-87; Winfield Scott to Lawson, May 27, 1836, and Macomb to Lawson, September 20, 1837, Thomas Lawson Papers, LC.

Taylor to Anderson, September 8, 1838, , Anderson Papers, LC; figures from Sprague, *The Florida War*, pp. 104-105.

Pegram to Anderson, January 18 and February 3, 1841, and Capt. William McClintock to Anderson, May 1, 1841, Anderson Papers, LC; Hughes, "The Adjutant General's Office," p. 162. The complement of officers serving in Worth's 8th Regiment in Florida was down to half its authorized strength by
November 1841, but the decline of eleven may not have been evidence of irresponsibility given ordinary details and Worth’s need to use his subordinates (i.e., those he knew personally and could control by the potential threat of informal internal sanctions) as staff officers.

68 "Junius," "A Visit to Sam Jones’s Camp," parts 2 and 6, ANC 10 (May 7 and June 11, 1840): 300-301 and 381.


71 Anderson, draft of application to join company, November 26, 1841, and Lt. Bradford Alden to Anderson, February 9, 1842, Anderson Papers, LC; Anderson to Alden, February 12, 1842, HQA:LR. There were actually two assistant artillery instructors at West Point in 1842, so it is unclear why Anderson did not take the post.

III. Inspection Reports and Evaluations of Officer Responsibility and Unit, Officer, and Army Capability in the 1840s: Efforts at Reform and the Army of Occupation in Texas

72 Turner to Abraham Johnston, June 16 and December 2, 1841, Johnston Papers, USMA; Gaines quoted without citation in Dwight L. Clarke, Stephen Watts Kearny, Soldier of the West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 76; Allen to Johnston, March 25, 1842, Johnston Papers.

73 Eustis to Robert Anderson, June 22, 1840, Anderson Papers, LC; Taylor to Ethan Allen Hitchcock, July 28, 1841, Taylor Papers, LC.

74 Turner to Johnston, February 8 and October 30, 1844, Johnston Papers, USMA.

75 Hitchcock to Bell, March 7, and to Worth, March 8, 1841, Hitchcock Papers, LC. Hitchcock wanted to go to Washington in order to look a several career options—Zachary Taylor had recommended him as a special military adviser to the inexperienced secretary of war, and within several months the death of commanding general Macomb would open up a new general officer slot to
which Inspector General John Wool was elevated. Hitchcock refused the inspectorate because he knew of commanding general Winfield Scott's opposition; he was refused the head of the Department of Indian Affairs because of his honesty in reporting frauds committed against the Cherokee.

76 Worth to Scott, July 10, 1842, James Duncan Papers, USMA.

77 Scott, "Notes on Lieut. Col. Hitchcock's Application . . . ," unaddressed but apparently prepared for submission to the secretary of war, June 27, 1842, James Duncan Papers, USMA; Hitchcock to Mrs. Ann J. Hunter, December 7, 1842, Hitchcock Papers, LC.

78 Hitchcock to C.A. Harris (Commissioner of Indian Affairs), September 5, 1838, Hitchcock Papers, USMA.

79 Hitchcock to Lt. Richard Bache, August 1, 1827, and to Lucy C. Hitchcock, July 23, 1826, Hitchcock Papers, USMA; Hitchcock to Chief Engineer Charles Gratiot, May 17, 1837, Hitchcock Papers, LC. See also Hitchcock to Bache, June 14, 1827 and August 31, 1828, Hitchcock Papers, USMA, and Croffut, ed., Fifty Years in Camp and Field, pp. 53-62.

80 Smith to Bankhead, April 17, 1842, and Bankhead to Smith, April 23, 1842, Smith Papers, USMA.

81 Churchill, annual reports, November 15, 1842 and November 4, 1843, HQA:LR.


83 Churchill, IRs, 1842, HQA:LR.

84 Churchill, IRs, 1843, HQA:LR; letter to Adjutant General Jones, May 20, 1843; and annual report, November 4, 1843, HQA:LR. It is probable that Churchill's IR for Ft. Towson referred to a rifle company of the Regiment of Mounted Rifles rather than the 6th Infantry, which like other infantry regiments had no officially designated rifle units. On the other hand he may have been referring to a company armed with the percussion rifles first issued in 1841 but confused them with carbines since the army's rifles and carbines until the 1840s had both been Hall's percussion breechloaders. It is hard to
envision Churchill confusing either units or weapons, but the latter seems less unlikely. The Regiment of Mounted Rifles was actually intended to be a dismounted unit (the product of a congressional retrenchment drive in 1843), but it is uncertain whether the 2nd Dragoons (of which it was the heir) ever completely sold off its horses and equippage. At any rate, the unit was remounted and redesignated a dragoon regiment in 1844.

85 Churchill, IRs, 1844, HQA:LR.

86 Weigley, History of the United States Army, p. 185; Bauer, "The Battles on the Rio Grande," in Heller and Stofft, eds., America's First Battles, pp. 58 and 60; Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," pp. 145-46; Hatch to his sister Eliza, October 28, 1845, Hatch Papers, LC.

87 See Linderman, Embattled Courage, and Jamieson and McWhiney, Attack and Die!, for the effect of Victorian values and Mexican experience on American tactical doctrine and practice in the Civil War.


89 Hitchcock, diary entry, September 2, 1845, in Croffut, ed., Fifty Years in Camp and Field, pp. 198-99.


91 Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 120; Bauer, "The Battles on the Rio Grande," pp. 73, 77, and 78.

92 Ibid., p. 80. See Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," pp. 140 and 147, for examples of enlisted men who blamed their officers for vague instructions but took the initiative to make them work.

93 The Artillery School and the Cavalry (or "Mounted") School were reopened in the 1850s, reflecting the technical cadre's interests and the
importance of the cavalry as Americans penetrated and settled the Great Plains in the 1850s.
Part IV

Bureaucracy, Social Attitudes, and Professionalism: Socialization, Identity, and Accountability in Class and Occupational Formation
The experience of the Second Seminole War notwithstanding, the officer corps acquired a new stability in the years between 1821 and 1846, as the median career length of officers on the 1830 army list doubled that of those on the 1797 list, and William Skelton has observed that this longevity was "certainly the most important ingredient in building a corporate identity." The personnel of the commissioned officer corps remained unstable during the half-decade following the reduction of 1815, but men with good prospects in civilian life tended to leave voluntarily after the conclusion of the War of 1812, while those who remained did so because they saw the army as their most likely route to security and status. Even Zachary Taylor received his postwar majority because many officers like him had refused to accept reductions in rank and had resigned, and like Taylor's, most of the commissions granted in 1815 and 1816 went to men discharged in 1815 who proved willing to return to the army when they found their civilian prospects inadequate or were offered higher ranks. Between 1817 and 1820 352 men were nominated for commissions as lieutenants in the army, but only twenty-seven percent of these men were West Point graduates, and as late as 1817 nearly half of them were men discharged two years before. Sixty-nine percent of these 352 were commissioned directly from civilian life, while another four percent--fifteen men--were promoted from the enlisted ranks.  

This instability effectively came to an end after the reduction of 1821 and the growth of West Point under Sylvanus Thayer. Another 184 officers left the army between 1820 and 1822, largely because of the reduction in force of 1821, and by the end of this process only thirty-three of the remaining 241 officers ranked above lieutenant (including paymasters and surgeons) were veterans of the army before 1808. Between 1821 and 1831 only seven men entered the officer corps without graduating from the Military Academy;
three of them were ex-cadets and the other four had previously served as officers. No enlisted men were promoted directly into the commissioned ranks between 1821 and 1837, and by 1830 only twenty officers (3.4% of the corps) had enlisted experience, a figure in sharp contrast to the officer corps of 1797 (14%) or 1815. As a result, the proportion of West Pointers in the corps more than quadrupled during the years between 1817 and 1830, from one officer in seven to nearly two out of three, and this growing homogeneity of training and socialization provided the foundations for a more committed officer corps. Nearly sixty percent of the officers on the 1830 army list served at least twenty years; nearly forty percent served for thirty or more years, and one in six served for four decades or more. These trends continued among officers commissioned after 1830, and of those on the 1860 army list near a quarter ultimately served at least forty years.2

William Skelton has suggested that this stability was accompanied by growing cohesion, often developed in isolation from civilian society and expressed in antagonism to or alienation from its values, and my differences with him are greatest on these questions. Part Four therefore delves into the internal cohesion of the officer corps and finds it a less unified quality than Skelton did. As he has aptly demonstrated, the officer corps did demonstrate a distinct sense of itself as a professional group with a special mission and identity, but it is simply impossible to downplay the epidemic conflict within the officer corps. Indeed, Skelton himself has somewhat contradictorily suggested that this conflict encouraged professional accountability in the form of subordination to civilian political authority because the corps was too fragmented to cooperate as a unitary interest in politics, and I think that this insight is a good one that deserves more attention. More importantly, the alienation Skelton sees was not from American society as a whole or per se,
but from certain elements within it. Officers did not stand outside society; rather they approached it—and especially the changes occurring in it—from the perspective of men socialized in genteel values and behaviour more characteristic of the eighteenth-century gentry than the egalitarian atmosphere of the Jacksonian era, and if so inclined we could easily lump officers together as Whigs of one sort of another (though to do so would be a different species of oversimplification).  

The next three chapters focus my analysis squarely on relationships between groups within the army, whether staff and line (as in chapter eight), within and between regiments and branches (as in chapter nine), or officers and enlisted men (as in chapter ten). In doing so these chapters examine both the officer corps cohesion, or lack thereof, and its responsiveness to social norms and trends. Examining the principal staff bureaus, chapter eight suggests that the growth of army bureaucracy improved both administrative oversight and logistical efficiency, two indispensable components of accountability both in the fiscal realm and ultimately in that of military capability and preparedness for war. On the other hand, chapter eight also continues the story of dissension begun in chapters six and seven, and adds to it the dimension of organizational aggrandizement by the staff at the expense of the combat arms. Chapter nine picks up these themes, but also adds to the exposition of officers’ motives present in the three chapters preceding it though an account of the socialization process at West Point that illustrates the connections between self-making and occupational and class formation and identities. The cohesion developed by cadets at the academy was often expressed in antagonism to the constituted authorities of the institution, however, a pattern that was repeated in daily regimental life. It was in the latter setting that officers’ disputes took on their most personal tone, and I
have used the letters of officers of the 1st Dragoon Regiment to build on the picture of inertia drawn in chapters six and seven and dramatize the spectrum of conflict within the officer corps. In turn, identifying the objectives, values, structural factors, and behaviours that led to and shaped these conflicts demonstrates their primarily social and largely class-derived (rather than specifically military) form and origins. Chapter nine then ends by drawing connections between the concern for specialized expertise articulated by the staff chiefs and the use of these arguments in quasi-jurisdictional conflicts over unit and branch postings in the mid-1820s and 30s. Taken as a whole, chapter nine explores the motives of officers, especially the tensions between ambition and security, and their self-interested expression in internal conflict of all sorts.

The insights developed in this section of my work are founded to a significant degree in the work of historians of American civilian professionalism like Samuel Haber and Burton Bledstein. Bledstein has observed that "the middle class in America matured as the mid-Victorians perfected their cultural control over the release of personal and social energies," and this channelling of ambition, apparent in cadets' socialization at West Point and officers' careerism, was also a key aspect of their relations with working-class enlisted men, which are examined in chapter ten. As Bledstein notes, "the professions cultivated the inner aristocratic or elitist social instincts often found in a democracy," and military command served this purpose quite overtly by establishing and giving legitimacy to social distance from enlisted men, who became a negative social, cultural (and often ethnic), occupational, and institutional reference group officers could use to define themselves in opposition to. Indeed, it is here more than anywhere else that we may speak of cohesion among officers, but this cohesion was as
much social and class-bound as military in origin and expression, and it reflected a lack of responsiveness to democratic ideals that points out the difference between formal accountability and the deeper obligations of responsibility.⁴

The officer corps' treatment of enlisted men was intimately linked to its members' personal, occupational, and organizational quests for order, stability, and authority. Faced with the social fluidity and disorder of the Jacksonian era and the market revolution, Bledstein suggests that "the middle class [individual] required a more reliable institutional world" in which to seek prestige and authority, but this hardly led to the "incarnation of the radical idea of the independent democrat" and the "self-governing individual" of whom Bledstein speaks. Officers socialized in the individualistic value system of the early republican gentry had ambition, which was frequently—and often dysfunctionally—expressed in highly competitive terms, but this ambition was ultimately contained and channelled within the army's organizational structure and bureaucratic and rank hierarchies, which assured officers of personal economic security and gradual advancement by insulating them from the frequently entropic workings of the competitive market economy. On the other hand, the officer's status was ultimately dependent on his command over enlisted soldiers, and here we see both the officer's distrust of human nature and his desire to subordinate and channel it to serve his personal and occupational interests.⁵

Indeed, Bledstein observes that "the distrust of self was . . . intrinsic to the culture of professionalism with its vertical angle of vision," and while it is unlikely that many officers actually distrusted their own selves, their socialization at West Point did teach them mental habits of self-discipline and
values of service and sacrifice that they applied in their everyday lives and to those around them. Moreover, given their class biases it is certain that officers distrusted enlisted men and sought to discipline them not by the offer of security and regular advancement embodied in the concept of career, but by coercion, or at best paternalism. In turn, and more responsibly from a functionalist perspective, this mastery was thought necessary in order to fight effectively--"the man must control his environment [including his soldiers] by mastering himself," in Bledstein's apt phrase, and doing so enabled the military officer to lay claim to the status of public servants whose function and jurisdiction transcended partisan politics and social change. In other words, the monopoly of command--an authority largely derived from class assumptions and values--was intimately lined to the regular officer corps' monopoly over the social role of managing and directing the organized use of violence by the nation-state; again, occupation, class, and state formation were mutually dependent, and once this is recognized it becomes difficult to refer to officers as isolated from their society and its currents.⁶
Chapter VIII

Logistics and Administration, Bureaucracy and the Staff Infrastructure: Rationalization, Accountability, and Conflict

An effective logistical and administrative infrastructure was essential for governing the dispersed army, and the skeleton army concept embodied in the reduction of 1821 required a disproportionately large staff in order to prepare for wartime expansion. Consequently, every officer consulted on the subject of the reduction called for a well-rounded staff structure, even at the expense of unit commands, and staff officers consistently made up nearly two-fifths of the officer corps during this era. These needs had implications beyond the army—many military and institutional historians have observed that the growth and articulation of military administration represents the emergence of bureaucracy on the American scene, and some have gone on to suggest that army officers were "the catalysts of managerial reform in America." Regardless of the army's specific influence on civilian business practices, its need for an efficient staff structure was definitely a catalyst for greater task and organizational specialization, which helps to explain why this process was further advanced in the army than in any civilian profession or business enterprise of the era.

Indeed, the logistical structure created to supply the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War was the first real bureaucracy in the independent United States, and historian Charles O'Connor observes that "by 1783 the army was by far the largest, most complex, and most rational organized corporate body in the United States," with the most thorough and formal organizational articulation, statutory definition, and internal
regulation (via the Articles of War and the Army Regulations) of any institution in the nation. Efficient routine—the accountable performance of service—demanded procedural standardization via codification, and these characteristics were necessities in order for the army to function when it was unable to rely on the uncertain and inefficient transmission of orders over the long distances from the nation's center to its peripheries. Geographic decentralization therefore fostered a greater degree of managerial decentralization in the army than was common in most businesses, which though less hierarchical in structure and mentalité acted on a much smaller scope and scale which permitted the persistence of comfortably informal personalism, while it is notable that early business enterprises which operated on a transregional scale often organized their employees into units with titles derived from military practice, like the "brigades" of the early fur companies and railroads. Unable to rely on frequent personal contact or chains of locally trusted middlemen, army administrators were forced to turn to formal rules and procedures in order to standardize individual conduct in the interests of fiscal and military efficiency and fiscal and social accountability.7

Despite valiant efforts to meet these objectives, the army staff faced structural problems and repeated lapses of accountability that hindered its effectiveness until after the War of 1812, when one of Secretary of War Calhoun's principal objectives in reforming the military establishment was to reorganize the staff along more rationalized lines. His success in doing so was largely dependent on a small cadre of professionalizing officers led by the new quartermaster general, Thomas Sidney Jesup, whose regulations were the most explicitly articulated of the reformers' efforts at formulating a comprehensive administrative philosophy for application throughout the army. Where most other "organizing" programs in American society failed
during the 1820s and 30s, army bureaucracy withstood internal dissension and external attack and functioned far more responsibly than its counterparts in civilian government. Indeed, William Skelton has drawn an analogy between bureaucratization in the army and suggestions by recent scholars that the Jacksonian principle of personnel rotation in government bureaucracies implemented during the 1830s was intended to depersonalize administration and accountability by replacing the authority of personal factional allegiance and informal and idiosyncratic administrative procedures with the formal authority of functionally specific offices and standardized rules systems--fully articulated bureaucracies in the Weberian sense--a process that seems to have been significantly farther along in the army than in the civil service. Moreover, the staff chiefs appointed at Calhoun's behest remained in office for decades, bringing a new experience, continuity, and stability that sustained "regularity" and efficiency in army administration. (The principal staff chiefs of this era averaged nearly forty-nine years in the army when they left the service, with thirty-one years heading their departments.) While army supply efforts remained hampered by inadequate appropriations throughout the nineteenth-century, there were no catastrophes like that at Terre aux Boeufs in 1809, and Jesup's efforts at rationalizing logistical procedures significantly enhanced the army's ability to project power over long distances, permitting campaigns like Scott's invasion of Mexico that would have been impossible with the attenuated staff structure available in 1815. Staff autonomy, which fifty years later would become a source of inertia and obstructionism, was in the 1830s and 40s a progressive measure that clarified organizational specialization and responsibility, leading to a better-supplied army capable of tackling previously insurmountable distances and obstacles.8
The road to this efficiency was not a smooth one, though staff leaders had a clear sense of their objectives and the means to achieve them. This chapter examines three of the principal staff departments and advert to several others, while touching briefly on the work of the adjutant general’s office, which served as the army’s central records depot and personnel department. (Indeed, the expression some sources suggest that the expression “red tape” is derived from the binding which held together strength returns there.) It then concludes with an examination of the internal conflicts over rank, pay, and compensation between staff officers and their counterparts in the line. The chapter does not attempt a comprehensive narration of the confusing series of alterations made to the staff structure between 1815 and 1821, nor is it possible to deal with the Medical Department adequately given spatial constraints.9

Among the three departments the chapter will examine, the Quartermaster Corps was responsible for the army’s logistical maintenance through the construction of facilities, the procurement of most supplies, and their distribution to the individual posts. It was aided by the Subsistence Department, which purchased rations, but the quartermasters were the dominant force in army supply, and Jesup was the dominant figure in administrative reform. The duties and demands of the quartermasters often became flashpoints for staff-line conflict, for unlike ordnance or engineer officers the quartermasters worked at garrisons using soldiers temporarily requisitioned from combat units, which led to constant friction with line commanders over the allocation of men and resources. The Ordnance Corps was charged with the testing, procurement, distribution, and inspection of weapons, ammunition, and related materials. It had the most catholic responsibilities of any department--scientific research and supervising
production at the armories, and purchasing, storing, and sometimes
distributing ordnance supplies—but was structured as a quasi-formal subunit
within the artillery from 1821 to 1832, leading to some of the most overt staff-
line conflict as it sought institutional autonomy. (The principal ordnance
activities related to doctrine and policy—artillery development and supplying
the coastal fortifications with cannon—are examined at the appropriate points
in chapters four, five, and twelve.) The topographical engineers, subordinate
to and struggling against the Corps of Engineers until 1838, were principally
concerned with surveying, usually for civilian internal improvements like
canals and railroads, but wider considerations—in some ways akin to those of
economic census takers—gave them the opportunity to examine American
defense policy from the perspective of the economy. I will use their
experience assisting civilian transportation projects ("internal
improvements") to illustrate the recognition of connections between
economic—civil and specifically American—and military (and usually
European-derived) considerations that informed some senior staff officers' conceptions of professional responsibility and identity.

Faced with constant—and highly logical, given the military emphasis
on unitary lines of authority—resistance from the line, institutional
autonomy did not come quickly to the staff. Indeed, between 1821 (when the
ordnance was absorbed into the artillery) and 1832, the Corps of Engineers was
the only staff corps with a fully developed and fully independent internal
rank and promotion hierarchy. Most of the junior supply officers (AQMs and
commissaries of subsistence) were detailed from the line with the temporary
rank of captain, and the topographical engineers had a mere ten officers in
two ranks with no promotion opportunities (in their department, in the
Corps of Engineers, or in the line, as they had no regimental rank) other than
honorary brevets. The same was true of the Medical Corps and the Pay
Department, whose officers performed essentially civil duties, held no
military rank or authority whatsoever and were denied even brevets. These
inconsistencies were gradually rationalized beginning with the reformation
of the Ordnance Corps in 1832, continuing with its expansion (and that of the
Quartermaster Department) and the creation of an independent Corps of
Topographical Engineers in 1838, and concluding in the 1846 law which
effectively separated the staff and line and ended the practice of dual
rankholding. This resolution to the staff-line duality lasted with few
exceptions until 1912, when the by then excessive power of the staff bureaus
led to overt civil-military conflict and the statutory reorganization and the
reabsorption of much of the staff (scientific branches like the Medical Corps
aside) into the line.10

Taken as a whole the principal subject of this chapter is the growth,
differentiation, and institutional articulation of a distinct staff identity and
institutional structure founded upon precepts of specialized expertise
(whether in the form of experience or schooling) and bureaucratic rationality
and accountability. This process occurred and was manifested through
conflict within and between organizations: the staff chiefs' arguments for
more officers to be permanently assigned to their departments, demands
which were usually phrased in terms of the division of expert labor, the need
for experience, and the limited adaptability of highly specialized expertise; the
efforts of subordinate staff organizations to free themselves of control from
other departments (principally the ordnance from the artillery and the
topographical engineers from the Corps of Engineers); and the controversies
between staff and line officers over their perquisites, stations, and promotion
opportunities. (Examining these disputes also allows us to continue pursuing
themes of patronage and favoritism introduced earlier.) I also touch on conflicts between civilian and military engineers over railroad and fortification construction, tensions that materially illustrate the distinctive mentalités of men socialized in bureaucracy, hierarchy, and accountability rather than the "boundlessness" and anti-institutionalism of Jacksonian America.

This chapter therefore draws together the concerns of those immediately preceding and succeeding it, continuing the study of functional readiness and internal conflict begun in chapter seven (and in the latter case continued in chapter nine) and connecting it with the army's relationships with American civil government and society that are pursued from chapter eleven onward. Tasked with supplying the army and planning for its future needs, staff officers dealt with a wider range of civilians on a day-to-day basis than most of their line counterparts, and these duties and interactions led them to a frequently articulated sense of the growing functional specialization and interdependence of an increasingly complex society. The political imperatives of fiscal economy and accountability led supply officers on a quest for bureaucratic rationality and efficiency that frequently led to conflict with line commanders but improved the army's management and administration of the resources granted to it by the American people. The experience and long-term stability of a staff leadership dedicated to accountability to civilian political authority led to greater responsibility and the more efficient use of resources, enhancing the army's ability to perform its duties and providing officers with the evidence of fiscal responsibility necessary to persuade Congress to preserve the army's appropriations and its jurisdiction over the direction of organized military force. As such, the efforts of the staff were often a source of conflict within the army officer corps, but they played a vital
role in assuring its responsibility to society and defending its successful drive for occupational monopoly.

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I. The Quartermaster Corps: Administration, Accountability, and Efficiency

The disasters and frustration of the War of 1812 gave senior army officers a strong consciousness of the importance of effective logistical support. In the following decades Quartermaster General Jesup repeatedly stated that "the promptness and effect of every military operation" depended on efficient supply, and his subordinates were by far the most important staff officers in the army. Following supply problems during his Florida campaign in 1818, Andrew Jackson raged that "until military men are taught to know that when ordered to be at a particular place with supplies . . . they must be there [or] they will always retard operations," and in his first general order to the army in Florida eighteen years later Winfield Scott proclaimed that "to handle and preserve the supplies . . . [is a duty] equally required of every good soldier," thereby placing logistical ability at the very forefront of military identity. At the strategic level of preparation, the Quartermaster General's Department played the same key roles in planning and construction on the western frontier (primarily concerning military roads, including the strategic one built parallel to the frontier during the 1830s and discussed in chapter fourteen) that the engineers played on the seaboard, while on a daily basis the quartermasters provided the backbone of the army's logistical structure. The quartermasters' duties were among the most extensive and fiscally "responsible" in the officer corps, for these officers served as the logistical middlemen of the army, tasked with most local purchasing and the
transportation and distribution of virtually all supplies as well as the construction and maintenance of barracks. (The Corps of Engineers directed most activities associated with the construction of coastal fortifications, including contracts and disbursements but not the provision of ordnance.) Though not normally subject to service in other departments they were commonly liable to double duty as assistant commissaries of subsistence and were often assigned to pay out Indian annuities and to purchase and distribute supplies for the Indian agencies.11

Until 1815 the Quartermaster Department was regarded as a necessity only in wartime, to house and supply the troops in the extraordinary circumstances of the field. The structure established in 1812 was retained by Congress after the war, though initially because of the expense of changing or shutting it down during the demobilization process rather than for reasons of specifically military efficiency. Having survived the staff reductions and reorganizations of 1815 and 1816, its duties were multiplied in 1818 when the old system of contracting with civilian businessmen for the provision and delivery of supplies directly to individual posts was theoretically brought to an end as one of Secretary Calhoun's reforms. (The contract system could not be dismantled immediately, however, and chapter fourteen will note the problems Jesup encountered with politically well-connected contractors supplying the Missouri Expedition in 1818 and 1819.) The structure and authority of the Quartermaster Department was also centralized in 1818, as the deputy quartermaster generals were formally separated from the geographic divisions and the brigade quartermasters were replaced by a generic category of AQMs. Calhoun chose Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup of the infantry, the erstwhile commander of a southwestern department twice brevetted for gallantry and tactical success at Chippewa and
Lundy's Lane, who like Gaines and Scott had labelled the contracting system "madness" in 1814, to take the newly permanent position of quartermaster general with the prestigious rank of brigadier—the only staff officer so ranked after the reduction of 1821. (Gaines and Scott were the only other brigadiers retained in 1821, as Macomb accepted a demotion to colonel and command of the Corps of Engineers.)

Jesp's appointment demonstrates Calhoun's perspicacity as well as the extensive personnel turnover and maneuvering that occurred between 1815 and 1821: the secretary's first choice—a civilian with experience as an adjutant general in the War of 1812—had declined in order to retain his business pursuits; Jesup, who had written to Senator John Crittenden seeking political support for his candidacy, was first appointed divisional adjutant general before being offered the quartermaster post. Indeed, a group of officers wrote Calhoun protesting Jesup's adjutant appointment as a violation of seniority. Their arguments against Jesup's appointment anticipated many of the issues over which the staff and line struggled for the next three decades: the memorialists claimed that "the staff is a distinct corps . . . endowed with as important rights as any other" and that Jesup's expected retention of his lineal rank was without precedent. (Ironically, after 1821 this argument would usually be made by the line against staff officers.) Indeed, the language of the petition says a good deal about the individualistic mentalité that pervaded the officer corps throughout this era, for its authors felt entirely justified in making a "manly representation of their rights and injuries," and they warned of "creating faction" and "suppressing the laudable ambition of a soldier" should Jesup receive the post.

The 1818 appointments were long-lived ones who provided continuity, stability, and eventually extensive experience to the direction of the army's
logistical network. Jesup served until his death in 1860, after fifty-two years in the army and forty-two as quartermaster general. Similarly, Commissary General of Subsistence (CGS) George Gibson retired in 1861 after fifty-three years in the army and forty-three as head of bureau. Callender Irvine, the CGS until 1818, was transferred to Commissary General of Purchases (for clothing and the like) and served there until his death in 1841, after which his responsibilities were transferred to Jesup. Three of Jesup's principal assistants were also appointed in 1818: Henry Stanton (who had just resigned from the artillery when his appointment came through) and Thomas F. Hunt (actually only an AQM prior to 1838, but usually stationed at the department's central office in Washington to aid Jesup), both of whom served continuously in the department until their deaths in 1856, and Trueman Cross, who did so until his death in Texas in 1846 aside from a brief tour as assistant inspector general between 1820 and 1821. Of these men, Stanton had served as a quartermaster for a year during the war and had spent another year as General George Izard's secretary, while William Linnard continued the service first begun (as a purchasing agent) in 1802 until his death in 1835.¹⁴

Like Thayer or Scott, Thomas Jesup supplies us with an example of the ambition that drove army officers both to zealous efforts to improve its capabilities and to jealous and sometimes dysfunctional defenses of personal and organizational jurisdictions and prerogatives against competitors in and out of the army. When accepting the post he vowed "to make the [quartermaster corps] in our service, what it is in all European services, the first Department of the Army." His goals were simple and clear: "I wish to give it that character . . . which will render it efficient in time of war, and which both in peace and in war, will ensure a strict responsibility [meaning fiscal accountability] in all its branches." Jesup's emphasis on efficiency and
"strict accountability" soon became the hallmark of the department. He immediately set about developing regulations for its operations based on his study of the contemporary French, British, and Prussian armies and American logistics in the Revolution and the War of 1812. Like Calhoun, Jesup explicitly sought a "regular chain to a final accountability at the treasury" (where all financial accounts were ultimately judged) through "a uniform system of returns" with ultimate control over and responsibility for disbursements centered in the quartermaster general himself. Having complained about the greed of civilian contractors as far back as 1814, he successfully proposed that the department's personnel be drawn from the army, rather than from "hired persons who are without military responsibility"—a phrase meaning both subordination in the rank hierarchy and a more general loyalty to national rather than personal pecuniary interests—an important step in securing the army's autonomy as an organization even though Jesup did not explicitly propose it as such. To forestall conflicts of interest, Jesup's regulations prohibited active participation in civilian business enterprises, while subordinates who failed to furnish their accounts and vouchers regularly and promptly were to be replaced. Jesup entered these rules into the 1821 Army Regulations and developed standardized printed forms to list, categorize, and summarize all expenditures, measures which enabled him to enforce fiscal accountability with unprecedented consistency and rigor.\textsuperscript{15}

Unfortunately, without the contracting system the supply services lacked the political and cultural visibility of the combat arms and the economic utility of the engineers, and in 1821 the department was cut from thirty-seven officers to thirteen (ten of them AQMs detailed from the line with staff ranks of captain), losing all the specifically regimental
quartermasters. Jesup considered this structure "entirely inadequate."
Overburdened by new duties, the growing distances caused by the westward
movement of the army, and the paperwork required to ensure accountability
as the army was dispersed over these distances, Jesup filled his reports to the
secretary of war and Congress with constant pleas for additional personnel.
His persistence was rewarded in 1826, when twelve more officers (two
quartermaster majors and ten AQMs) were detailed from the line, nearly
doubling the department's size. The very accountability Jesup demanded
exacerbated his personnel problems, because quartermaster officers had to
give bonds (usually raised from private banks and businessmen) to the
government for their fiscal responsibility, and unlike engineer and paymaster
officers they received no commission on their disbursements. (Jesp
complained that AQMs were paid less than "the majority of [government]
clerks" in Washington, and a third less than army paymasters.) Because of
this heavy financial responsibility refusal to undertake or remain on staff
duty was not normally considered disobedience of orders, and Jesup pressed
aggressively for increased rank and compensation for his subordinates, for he
feared that they would otherwise refuse the burden of their duties and
"abandon their stations and return to their companies" in the line.16

Jesp also warned that only officers with specific relevant experience
were qualified to do quartermaster work effectively: "experience has prove[n]
that . . . service and military experience, united to habits of business, are
indispensable." Faced with these recruiting and retention problems, the
quartermaster general sensibly espoused the general principles (soon taken up
by officers of all the staff departments in their quests for rank and
compensation) that "compensation should always bear a just proportion to
the responsibility incurred and the duty performed," while "additional rank
would add to the efficiency of the department by presenting higher inducements for young officers of talent and character to enter and remain in it." Officers engaged in part-time civilian work seem to have been another problem plaguing the department, and Jesup claimed that better pay and promotion prospects would encourage them "to devote their whole time and attention to their official duties, by which means alone can efficient service be expected or economy and punctuality be introduced and maintained."

Already a strong advocate of the schools of practice and general military education as means of improving the army's preparedness and capability, Jesup was equally certain that "by employing young officers thus, we shall have a corps compleatly educated in time of peace, from which an efficient staff may be formed in the event of war."17

In addition to clarifying quartermaster functions through detailed forms and reporting requirements, Jesup demanded greater fiscal accountability from unit commanders, an effort at controlling their budgets that made the department eternally unpopular with line officers. At the most basic level he sought to hold senior officers accountable for purchases made for their personal use and sometimes billed them for these, though the practice was never completely eradicated. These policies easily led to conflict—in one case General Gaines put a quartermaster major under arrest for refusing to disburse money for postage. More generally, Jesup fervently believed that "the only way to insure strict accountability is to confine officers to the duties of their own branches of service." His regulations ordered quartermaster officers—who remained strictly under his control, much to the anger of commanders who demanded military subordination by rank hierarchy rather than office and function—to report "all orders of commanding officers requiring the expenditure of money contrary to
regulations," and more generally "whether supplies be forwarded promptly, and . . . proper regard be paid to economy." Jesup condemned the occasional diversion of quartermaster funds by line officers and the not uncommon practice of using one geographical department's supplies in another, which distorted the accounts and left the chain of responsibility for expenditures unclear. Because Congress often appropriated moneys very specifically and maintained close oversight over their expenditure through constant inquiries, diversions like these, however honestly intended, could easily cause political embarrassment to the Quartermaster Department and the army as a whole. Officers (staff or line) requesting "any extraordinary expenditure," particularly those outside the normal scope of their department's responsibilities, were therefore to submit certificates demonstrating their necessity, stating whether "the failure of any other department" had occasioned the expense. These responsible precautions led many line officers to view Jesup's agents as nit-picking spies from the army's administrative center, callously unresponsive to the needs of the men "doing the real work" in the field, but the strict demands of this bureaucratic accountability were the most conspicuous portents of the army's growing rationalization as an institution.18

The choices involved in bureaucratizing the Quartermaster Department were complex ones: Jesup did not seek paperwork and regulations for their own sake, and he had to maintain a delicate balance between political imperatives (the demands of Congress) and the consequent need for and burden of recordkeeping, the need to grant subordinates enough autonomy to carry out their tasks without constant, stifling, and ultimately counterproductive supervision, and the simple personalized accountability of a centralized hierarchy run by men of character and honor. The government
was extremely conscious of expenditures during this era, and officials routinely sought a delicate system of checks and balances over fiscal authority, in which administrative complexity alone—bureaucracy in today's pejorative sense—was often equated with accountability. Despite his moves toward geographic and procedural decentralization, Jesup moved to introduce rationality (or system, as he would term it) into army logistics by replacing horizontal redundancy—that of competing offices with overlapping functions—with vertical reinforcement and centralization of accountability—the examination of accounts by several succeeding levels of authority. In his view, centralizing control would reduce the confusion of functions and individual opportunities to take advantage of the loopholes.

The most compatible relationship between centralization, efficiency, and fiscal Accountability did not become apparent immediately, however, and the reorganization and reallocation of army administrative and logistical duties continued throughout the era and beyond. Moreover, we must not exaggerate the degree to which Jesup trusted an impersonal system of regulations, forms, and procedures to restrain individual peculation—in 1823 he wrote that employing "men of character would better secure a strict accountability [his favorite phrase] than all the restrictive laws on the statute book." Even bonds were defaulted on, Jesup warned, and "the best guaranty the nation can have for the proper application of its funds will be found in the honor, intelligence, and abilities of its officers." Centralization in this instance meant relying on a few men of virtue and integrity. Coming from a man who defended his honor and promoted his rank and reputation as tenaciously as Jesup, this was not simply pap to reassure the public. Jesup truly thought that he could do the job more efficiently and accountably than anyone else, and his conviction and ambition constantly led him to seek
more authority to do it. Jesup recognized that bureaucracy, rationalization, and system was the wave of the future for large-scale organizations, but he felt that traditional virtues of personal character were necessary to guide its implementation.\textsuperscript{19}

The Quartermaster Department continued to take on new duties as it expanded and became more efficient, and Jesup came to function as something akin to a chief accountant for the army, paralleling the adjutant general's function for personnel and the IGOs' role in ascertaining the army's preparedness (which included making ordnance inventories). The 1821 Regulations required company commanders to keep duplicate records and vouchers for articles issued to their soldiers (one set for the company books and another for transmission through the Quartermaster Department to the Treasury), and Jesup took this itch for accountability to a previously unheard-of extreme by calling for individual accountbooks to be kept for every soldier's clothes and equipment in addition to the required quarterly returns and vouchers from each company. The most significant new responsibility given to the quartermasters after 1818 was the distribution of clothing, formally placed in their hands for the first time in 1821, and however prosaic, the system for providing soldiers with clothing illustrates the extended, and for that era rather complex, chain of organizational responsibility common in army logistics, along with the internecine friction this complexity often produced. The Purchasing Department and its predecessors had developed an extensive putting-out network for the manufacture of clothing in the Philadelphia region well before the War of 1812, but the commissary general of purchases only directed the procurement of clothing and other equipment that could be ordered en masse at central locations. Regimental commanders sent estimates of their needs, usually crafted by attached quartermaster
officers, to the Quartermaster Department headquarters, which sent annual estimates for procurement and expenditure requirements to the Purchasing Department, which in turn furnished the clothes to quartermasters at central depots for distribution to the posts, where boards of line officers inspected them before they were issued to the soldiers. By 1823 Jesup felt confident that his procedures had attained "as much perfection . . . as possible" without further legislation, but the following year he proposed "to prescribe and enforce a system of accountability for all clothing," an authority Congress granted to the Quartermaster Department in an 1826 statute which allowed the quartermaster general to charge delinquent sums against the pay of disbursing officers. After 1826 the department codified and printed Jesup's ideas and designed and issued a standard accountbook to record the clothing and equipment for each company and soldier.20

The struggle over responsibility for army clothing also provides the best illustration of Jesup's search for administrative centralization. The Commissary General of Purchases preferred an older system of diffused accountability using paymasters and the inspector generals (whose intervention would of course have introduced staff-line conflict, since they were the representatives of the commanding general), but Jesup successfully concentrated this authority in the Quartermaster Department, arguing that the army's dispersal necessitated concentrating the function in one organization specifically charged with its execution. In 1824 the Commissary General sought control over the clothing estimates, which virtually determined his budget, but Jesup succeeded in preserving his department's intermediary role by appealing to its superior efficiency—like its accountability largely a matter of thorough record-keeping. Eight years later the Quartermaster Department lost control over the estimates to a new Clothing
Bureau created within the War Department, but Jesup regained this authority in 1841 when that organization was eliminated as an economy measure. The following year the Purchasing Department was abolished after the death of its longstanding head and the Quartermaster Department absorbed its functions, nearly completing the centralization of army supply.\textsuperscript{21}

Perhaps the most important reform in supply operations, and that longest-sought by officers, was the replacement of the contract system for providing rations by the commissariat one in 1818. This did not mean that army supply officers made all purchases of food directly, but rather that civilian contractors delivered rations to four central depots (New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, and St. Louis) where commissary officers inspected them. The assistant quartermasters then oversaw their distribution to individual posts, where the assistant commissaries issued them to the troops. Problems continued, however, and in 1828 the commissary general appealed to the War Department for the discretionary authority to make purchases directly rather than by middleman because of a sudden rise in prices, "the many failures of the existing contractors," and the contractors' frequent refusal "to comply with the terms of their proposals." (Remember that the early national government had great difficulty in enforcing compliance from its fiduciary agents and contractors, who in many cases were legally immune from suits for damages.) Adding to these difficulties, the Subsistence Department responsible for providing the army with food was authorized only a single permanent officer, its commissary general (a quartermaster general during the War of 1812) until 1829, when Congress authorized two military aides separated from the line to take the place of those temporarily employed to make purchases when the contractors failed to deliver. (Congress authorized five more officers for this purpose in the general
expansion of 1838, making a grand total of eight for an army flung across half a continent.) The numerous assistant commissaries (as many as fifty, drawn from lieutenants of the line and normally stationed with their regiments) were then subjected to quartermaster duty, a net plus for Jesup’s department at the cost of potential confusion in roles and expenditures, which doubtlessly drove the quartermaster chief to even greater exertions in pursuit of accountability.22

This concentration of occupational functions along lines of specialized expertise was a prominent aspect of the growing division and rationalization of organizational labor in the army and its officer corps. This development was accompanied by a growing understanding of cognitive and organizational interdependence, and in consequence the quartermaster general’s duties were recognized as essential to strategic and operational planning. (Indeed, in Europe this was one of their earliest functions.) Jesup listed these duties in detail in his initial statement of purpose to Calhoun, which was later embodied in the army regulations:

It shall be his duty to make himself acquainted with the frontiers, both maritime and interior, and with the avenues leading to the contiguous Indian and foreign territories, with the resources of the country, and particularly of the districts of the frontier, with the most eligible points for concentrating troops and supplies . . . with the military force of the different sections of the country. The relative expense of concentrating at particular points, and the relative military advantages of those points. And with the prices of all articles of supply and of transportation.
In the field the Quartermaster Department's primary function was "to give the utmost facility an effect to the movements and operations of the army" by transporting supplies and establishing advanced depots in anticipation of the army's needs—in acting quartermaster general Cross's words attending to the "considerations on which all the movements of the army depend, and by which they must necessarily be governed." Cross recognized that the duty of the staff was to allow the commander to concentrate on operations: "A general cannot enter into the perplexing details [of supply] . . . without neglecting his higher and more appropriate functions."²³

The fears of junior line officers notwithstanding, these assertions were not attempts to seize de facto command of the army, and senior line commanders agreed with this vision of the Quartermaster Department's duties: besides making disbursements under responsible authority, Gaines expected quartermasters to have "local and detailed knowledge of the actual resources applicable to military purposes, of the differing sections of the country" through "previous observation" and "personal inspection of the topography." This would enable them to direct the resupply of the frontier "most promptly and economically" "on the approach of war." (Cross therefore recommended that an assistant quartermaster general be assigned to each army in the field, which was done a decade later in Mexico.) Senior officers of the line understood this and supported the department's requests for additional officers, but they sometimes confused the quartermasters' specific specialized role with that of other staff officers (usually the adjutants and adjutants general) and traditional aides-de-camp, who who acted as "gophers," or general assistants, primarily to facilitate communications by carrying messages, and this confusion of roles led to disputes over the duties of staff personnel. Gaines, who wanted a personal secretary as much as
anything else, lamented "the want of such an officer as a permanent member of my staff," since "the absence of all such officers [has] compelled me . . . to make disbursements of public money" which could not be avoided without "neglect of duty, and, in some cases, cold indifference to the affective calls of suffering humanity, such as war . . . never fails to exhibit." 24

Gaines' request would have directly subordinated members of the staff to line commanders, a move universally resisted--and normally with success--by staff officers, who considered their work a specialized realm of expertise and authority (or to use Jesup's favored wording, responsibility). Jesup agreed with Gaines' desire that quartermasters be knowledgeable and experienced, but he argued that these properties were to be gained through application "in the practical operations of the Department at important military stations" rather than on general officers' staffs. A skillful bureaucrat, Jesup warned that attaching quartermasters to headquarters would lead to demands for officers from every staff bureau, a move sure to rouse their members in defense of his prerogatives. Moreover, Jesup could readily appeal to the sacred principles of political and fiscal accountability, since Congress had chosen to eliminate the headquarters staffs in 1821 as a cost-cutting measure. 25

We need not look to Jesup's correspondence alone for an understanding of the duties and dilemmas encountered by his department. Jesup's arguments were ably supplemented by those of his subordinates, like Major Cross, usually his principal assistant at the department headquarters in Washington, who warned in 1836 of the "very injurious tendency" of cutting off the possibility of promotion to men handling large sums of public money and suggested that the flat rank structure then in place (Jesup as brigadier general, followed by four quartermasters like himself at major and the mass
of assistants from the line at captain) would mean that an officer from outside it, and inexperienced in its methods, would probably be appointed to replace Jesup in case of casualty. (Jespur had just been sent to the Creek Territory, and would soon go on to command in Florida, where Stanton served as his assistant adjutant general—an example of personalized professional patronage outside the rationalized boundaries of Stanton’s quartermaster assignment—and one of William Linnard’s sons as his acting AAG and aide-de-camp.)

This, Cross wrote, would "be a fatal error," "at war with all our theories of organization," and it would nullify the principal argument (experience) for retaining offices "more with reference to the future contingencies than to the present necessities"—the expansible army concept at the heart of the staff’s organization and autonomy. Major Thomas F. Hunt (one of the most senior of the assistant quartermasters) reiterated these arguments several months later, calling for expansion, elongation or vertical articulation of the department’s rank structure, and separation from the line for all quartermaster personnel, who would then form a distinct corps with their own promotion hierarchy like the Corps of Engineers.26

The following year Cross, now acting quartermaster general himself, repeated his arguments in the light of a year’s warfare in Florida, which had exposed the inadequate size of the department and subjected it to extensive criticism from officers of the line. Only one quartermaster officer remained in the Northwest, and only one on the western frontier north of the Arkansas River, while the ardent controversialist Ethan Allen Hitchcock had publically charged that the department had failed to supply General Gaines’ campaign in Florida. "In fact," Cross maintained, "nearly the whole force of the department has been required for active service in the field . . . while [civilian] agents, without experience, and not under bonds to the United States, have
been necessarily employed to attend to important duties elsewhere"--an emergency revival of the contracting system so disastrous during the War of 1812. Pending operations were therefore in jeopardy, for at least six quartermasters were needed to adequately supply the removal of the Cherokee, but only two could be sent. An inability to overrule the orders of unqualified commanders also hampered effective logistical support: specialized expertise was necessary to ensure the responsible performance of complex administrative duties, but in Florida the army quartermasters were commonly outranked by their militia counterparts, who like the civilian agents were "wholly destitute of experience in the details of the service, and act[ed] under no pecuniary responsibility" (whether that of military discipline or a financial bond) to the government. Cross warned that "under such circumstances, nothing like system, order, or economy can be introduced or enforced; and . . . delays, confusion, and waste will be the necessary consequence." Arguing the imperatives of economy and efficiency, Cross closed by citing the staff organizations of 1799 and 1816 as precedents for a larger department with more gradations of rank. Nothing was done in 1837, and personnel shortages soon threatened strategic preparations along the western frontier, so Cross repeated his plea for more officers in an 1838 report on the western military road sought by Secretary of War Cass: for two years no quartermasters had been available to superintend its construction, and at least eight were necessary to do so. Cross warned the War Department that "I could not hesitate to abandon my present position [i.e., resign] rather than undertake the hopeless task" of building the road without the officers needed to supervise it. 27

As a result of these arguments the 1838 army law provided for mounted pay (the additional compensation allotted to dragoon officers to
cover the cost of keeping up their horses, worth several hundred dollars a year), an elongated quartermaster rank structure with two colonels and two lieutenant colonels (who lost their lineal rank), placed between the four existing majors and Jesup, and another twelve officers, which returned the department to the thirty-seven it had possessed seventeen years before. Majors Cross and Stanton were promoted to the colonelcies, while Thomas F. Hunt left the line for a majority as quartermaster and moved up to one of the new spots as lieutenant colonel within a year. Unlike many of the other units and departments expanded in 1838, the quartermasters were also able to avoid accepting inexperienced appointees commissioned directly from civilian life. All the quartermaster officers were originally to be separated from the line as Hunt had suggested in 1836, but this provision of the 1838 law was repealed almost immediately (possibly with Jesup's support).28

Despite achieving immense savings, the quartermaster corps' record in the field was mixed. The law of 1838 provided for enhanced operational capability through the appointment of wagon- and forage-masters, positions abolished in 1818, to supply the need demonstrated by operations in Florida, but an 1840 letter in the Army and Navy Chronicle lamented the "irregular and uncertain" employment of local farmers as teamsters and recurred to the experiences of the War of 1812 to warn of the delays incurred by such a method. Despite Jesup's warning about the scarcity of teams and wagons in the west, no permanent supply train was authorized by Congress, and quartermaster officers were hard-pressed to find transport for the Army of Occupation in Texas five years later. Nevertheless, by the end of the Seminole War most quartermaster officers had gained extensive experience (including the use of rubber pontoons and amphibious transportation first developed by a junior quartermaster officer) in rigorous field conditions and
difficult terrain that helped prepare them for more effective service in the Mexican War. Under Jesup's leadership the department had achieved a systematic stability and continuity highly conducive to efficiency and accountability, and senior quartermaster officers were able to gain experience in higher administrative duties while acting in his place during his absences on field duty and furlough. Cross and Hunt, who acted as the de facto theater-level coordinators for the department in Florida, provided the experience in logistical expertise and administrative ability that sustained (however precariously) the concentration of the Army of Occupation at Corpus Christi and Brownsville in 1845 and 1846. Jesup himself directed the logistical support for the invasion of Mexico, the most ambitious military operation conducted by United States forces prior to the Civil War.29

* * *

II. The Topographical Engineers: Conflict and Jurisdiction

The Corps of Topographical Engineers was first authorized in 1813 with a complement of sixteen officers subordinate to the chief engineer; it performed functions that mixed those of the Quartermaster Department and the engineers proper. Only nine of these officers were actually appointed, including majors John J. Abert, Isaac Roberdeau, and John Anderson, the leaders of the branch for the next three decades. (Roberdeau died in 1829, leaving Anderson as the senior "topog" officer until his demise four year later, but Abert led the bureau until his retirement in 1861 after forty-seven years in the army and twenty-seven as topog chief.) After a postwar reduction to two majors the corps was expanded in 1816 to six majors, three assigned to each geographical division. Four captains (one a French aide to Assistant
Engineer Simon Bernard) were added without explicit statutory authorization in 1817 and 1818, but Congress made appropriations for their salaries every year until the posts became statutory ones in the corps' next expansion twenty years later. The topogs were subjected to the Engineer Department under the staff law of 1818; they theoretically became a separate bureau in 1819 but remained subject to the orders of the chief engineer. Their duties on coastal surveys soon led to the detachment of an average of about twenty-five officers from the line, and from 1824 on the topogs became closely associated with and frequently supervisors over the civilian engineers employed under the provisions of the General Survey Act passed that year to encourage internal improvements. The bureau gained substantial independence from the Corps of Engineers in 1831, and it became a fully distinct corps formally equivalent to any other in 1838. That year the department finally received a formal increase to thirty-six officers (including ten captains and twenty lieutenants), nearly four times its previous complement of permanent military personnel, along its own internal promotion hierarchy with Abert as full colonel at the head (where he continued for another twenty-three years). The army law of 1838 also prohibited the employment of army officers on civilian transportation projects, and the Topographical Corps' attention then shifted toward the work of western exploration soon made famous by John C. Fremont.30

Until then (that is, throughout most of the period discussed herein), the topographical engineers were principally responsible for surveys and reconnaissances of the frontiers and the coast, sometimes for purposes of strategic planning but primarily for planning civilian canal and railroad routes, whether state-owned or private. (In other words, it would be an anachronism to label the topographical engineers, or any of the other staff
bureaus "planning staffs" in the modern sense first applicable to the Prussian General Staff. Strategic planning in the American army remained an unsystemized process dispersed among a dozen different bureaus and individuals. Military engineers, topographical or otherwise, were therefore the army's most obvious participants in what today would be labelled "nation-building" (as distinct from state-formation, which was more the province of line officers establishing national sovereignty and the authority of the federal government by policing the borderlands and engaging in Indian removal). Most of the army's duties were executed along the frontiers; even during the violence-ridden 1830s and 40s regular forces were virtually never called on to suppress domestic disorders. Consequently the engineer was the officer (discounting recruiters) whose work was most evident to the citizens of America's burgeoning towns and cities during peacetime, and the engineers' experiences illustrate several prominent themes and sources of friction in early republican civil-military interactions. (Note that from here forward "engineers" is ordinarily used to describe an officer's function, not the actual branch he belonged to. Many of these men were putatively artillery officers, and some infantrymen, and I will refer specifically to the Corps of Engineers or to its officers as fortification engineers when necessary to distinguish them from the topographical, or in effect civil, engineers who are the focus of this section.)

Historian Daniel Calhoun has pointed out that the experience of the army officer corps was intimately related to the growth of American civil engineering because both occupations combined specialized technique (be it centered on technology or tactics) with the power of direction (or command), and engineering often became an alternative source of employment for dissatisfied officers, who even then continued to face the same sort of
egalitarian criticism that they had in the army. Like government administration and military command (and for similar reasons related to the scale of investment necessary for success), engineering was very rarely done independently of organizational sponsorship and control, and like officers civilian engineers experienced tensions between personalism and rationalized organization in the form of jurisdictional disputes over their operational control over the planning and direction of canal and railroad construction. This friction had a cognitive and cultural parallel in the distinction between "practical experience," learned on the job and informed by related occupations like surveying and artificing, and scientific training in schools, informed by mathematical theory of mostly French origin. The former tradition was derived from British experience, which minimized the distinctions between pure and applied science and was congenial to the "jack of all trades" ideal acclaimed by Jacksonian Americans. The British engineering occupation had been generated through self-schooling and observation in the field, the French through systematized institutional training centered under the control of the nation-state, and these distinctions clearly paralleled major fault lines in Jacksonian-era social attitudes and culture. This contrast was also one of social origins and accountability--in Britain occupational control was exercised primarily by private entrepreneurs and proprietors (who sometimes acted as engineers themselves), in France by the national government, which granted corporate privileges to the profession and trained it in quasi-military surroundings to inspect and supervise state-funded projects. A third major distinction was social and cultural--while both traditions required a willingness to get one's boots muddy and perform manual labor, the French concept of an engineer demanded formal learning so that the professional could maintain his status
(and by extension the prestige of the national government) as a gentleman in local society, while the Briton might be a gentleman by birth or education, but did not gain that status through his professional practice and was not required to attain it for professional success.\textsuperscript{31}

The American social and cultural climate was far more favorable to the British tradition of civil engineering, but army engineers embodied the French one because of their scientific training and hierarchical socialization under the auspices of the nation-state at West Point. American civilian engineers came from diverse social and occupational backgrounds and were at first employed primarily by private entrepreneurs. Denied employment opportunities by the inaction of state and federal government and the very limited liquid capital available for investment in major internal improvements projects before 1815, there were no more than about thirty full-time civil engineers in the United States in that year, and they had few traits in common with one another. As in so many other areas of endeavour, foreign specialists were frequently employed to supplement the deficiency, but the supply of emigre European engineers (largely Frenchmen like Simon Bernard or William Tell Poussin, his assistant) dried up in the 1820s, just as American states and corporations resumed building canals on a new scale after a ten to fifteen year hiatus, which forced indigenous engineers to step to the fore in new numbers.\textsuperscript{32}

The demand was met from two sources whose differing teachings corresponded in many ways to the two archetypes described above. By 1825 practical on-the-job experience on the New York canal system had more than doubled the number of trained civilian engineers in America. At the same time, the Military Academy at West Point, the only academic source of engineer training in the United States, became a regular source of highly
trained scientific practitioners as a result of Sylvanus Thayer's reforms, which added intense discipline (or training in accountability) to the French ideal of professional scientific education which he had learned under Jonathan Williams. By the height of the internal improvements boom in 1837 as many as one hundred and twenty West Point graduates were working as civilian engineers, whether on indefinite leave of absence or (in most cases) after resigning from the army, and perhaps eighty others had done so at some point in preceding years, a total that far exceeded the number of practitioners first trained by civilians on the New York canals.33

Once the demand for civil engineers was met occupational control became the most important issue in the development of their profession. The few engineers in America before 1815 had been proprietors, shareholders, or local men (who stood to benefit from higher land values) as often as not. Despite—indeed in antagonism toward—the influx of West Pointers, American transportation businesses came to prefer practical experience and demonstrated success rather than theoretical scientific education in the engineers they employed, and those engineers who asserted an exclusively "professional" style based on scientific abstractions were criticized for putting on aristocratic airs and placing their own reputations above the interests of the projects employing them. As historian Daniel Calhoun observes, "ownership and economic involvement were guarantees [of accountability] the mere professional could not offer." The hired scientific expert appeared altogether too abstract in his motives and calculations, too distant from the fortunes of the men who employed him to be relied upon to serve their interests rather than his own conception of science.34

These attitudes did not change during the transportation revolution after 1815. American civil engineers were employed almost exclusively
within and in subordination to public or private organizations of increasing size and complexity, and their services were usually dispensed with after construction was completed. Those with the capital necessary to form companies of their own were incorporated into this structure: some became organizational executives, but these were selected for their prestige and connections or their investment interests in a venture rather than their expertise per se, and engineers rarely offered to undertake projects for a set sum as independent contractors themselves. (When they did so their bids were invariably rejected.) Some became consultants, especially in the fluid 1820s when the supply of engineers lagged behind demand, and others eventually worked under subcontractors once projects and organizations became more complex, but these situations often led to confusion and conflict with the proprietors or primary contractors, and the engineer's normative occupational role and position soon became standardized as planning and inspection (rather than the immediate supervision of construction) under the ultimate oversight of a corporate or government employer.35

Corporations and state departments of internal improvements accepted the need for experts once their pretensions had been brought under control. Doing so proved most difficult in the case of senior army and army-trained engineers, who brought a distinctive sense of formal order and a mental habit of authoritarian command to their work that appeared martinet-like to civilians unused to military hierarchy. Military engineers also demanded a precision in fiscal accountability and record-keeping that civilians as yet inexperienced in bureaucracy were unused to, along with work standards (concerning materials, for instance) that often seemed excessively rigid or impractically expensive. Thus an 1836 Army and Navy Chronicle article noted that after a series of contractor defalcations the government had placed
army engineers as superintendents on construction of the Cumberland road. "young men with science enough to judge of the quality of the work being done; and integrity enough" to prevent fraud. Supposedly "unused to such uncompromising scrutiny of observation and firmness of honest purpose," the contractors apparently fought back by securing a resolution of the Ohio legislature against West Point.66

Many of the topogs had first learned management and administration supervising fortification construction projects, which the Corps of Engineers had taken over from civilian contractors in 1820 because of Calhoun's concern for accountability, a policy parallel to his termination of the contracting system for army supplies. These officers were required to submit detailed cost and material estimates, work schedules, and vouchers; they were subject to thorough end of project audits and the sanctions of military discipline if their accounts were found deficient. Besides rigid reporting requirements imposed from above, several leading engineer officers had written regulations for civilian workers, created project staffs, and defined the specific duties and lines of authority of their civilian subordinates, a command management style which quickly raised cries of unreprespublican military despotism from men used to loose, informal relationships based on custom and trust secured by personal acquaintance and reputation rather than formal record-keeping procedures. Army officers possessed a strong occupational identity forged in much different circumstances that gave them an almost self-righteous sense of professional rectitude and prerogative (disinterested servants of the nation and all that), and to civilians they seemed to personify the distant, aloof, inhuman professional (in other words, one unaccountable to his employers in the use of his expert power), a portrait that we shall have frequent occasion to revisit as I examine civil-
military relations in other realms. Nevertheless, the expertise of army engineers was undeniable, and transportation corporations soon learned to set up internal boards to monitor their work in order to make use of this knowledge while ensuring conformity with the proprietors' objectives and constraints. Civilian or military man, the individual unconnected or unreconciled to the organization's goals rarely found sustained employment as a civil engineer. By the mid-1830s states and corporations found a middle ground of expertise and responsibility by rejecting both the pure scientist and the traditional proprietary builder (who now tended to become a subcontractor or corporate shareholder). Individualism of either sort was unacceptable to the organizations that invested their (or the taxpayers') money in economically vital enterprises.\textsuperscript{37}

The Depression of 1837 temporarily strained this evolving consensus and reopened some of the issues of professional accountability to public debate. Four out of five engineers employed on state or private projects lost their jobs, and state funding led to legislative investigations where radical Jacksonians inveighed against corporate and professional monopolies granted to transportation companies and army engineers. On the other hand, the inquiries also produced long explications of the engineers' duties that helped to explain their practical utility to a suspicious public, and Democrats with rigid republican ideals of public virtue and economy gradually came accept state engineers as expert public servants whose job was to inspect and oversee the use of public funds. (Thomas Sidney Jesup was one such Democrat.) One way or another, Daniel Calhoun observes that "the central issue had already been substantially settled"--engineers had been incorporated into organizations under their clients' control.\textsuperscript{38}
The army topographical engineers were primarily employed in surveys in support of internal improvements projects, which began under federal auspices shortly after the War of 1812. This practice took several years to become routine—in 1816 Chief Engineer Swift unsuccessfully sought appropriations for ten line officers to serve with the U.S. Coastal Survey and recommended that six more be detailed and given brevets as engineers to learn how to construct turnpikes and canals, but a majority of Congress remained reluctant to authorize military officers (i.e., agents of the national government directly subordinate to its control rather than that of the states and localities) for this purpose until the 1820s. Meanwhile, enduring constitutional scruples precluded national funding and direction for the projects themselves: President Madison vetoed the Bonus Bill for redistributing surplus federal funds from the Bank of the United States for internal improvements the day before he left office and Monroe wrestled indecisively with his own constitutional conscience, leaving the potential for a national system without strong executive guidance and support until the election of John Quincy Adams.

Even so, engineer and quartermaster officers gave frequent consideration to the possibilities of commercial development (and thus military strength) in their surveys and inspection reports, as did the divisional commanders (Jackson and Brown) and inspector generals, illustrating their personal responsibility and their recognition of the interdependence of warfare and society as well as the army’s lack of a centralized and specialized General Staff dedicated to strategic planning. (Jackson’s thoughts on logistics and strategic planning for the southern frontiers are discussed in chapter eleven.) Topographical inspections along the Canadian border immediately after the war included assessments of
natural resources and economic conditions and potential, and in 1817
topographical major Stephen H. Long proposed connecting the Mississippi
with Lake Michigan via canals between existing rivers. Two years later
Secretary Calhoun’s report on roads and canals recommended the use of
military engineers on works of internal improvement, and in 1820 Calhoun
ordered the Fortification Board to aid a North Carolina state commission
investigating the navigability of Albemarle Sound. The following year
Totten and Bernard made surveys of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, and in
1822 they examined lead mines on the Upper Mississippi. That year Inspector
General Wool evaluated the commercial potential of various western towns
in his report on his inspection tour of the west. A year later the Fortification
Board turned its attention back to the east and proposed an artificial harbor in
Delaware Bay which would serve Philadelphia. The board also supported a
New Jersey proposal for a canal which would increase the supply of coal, iron,
and food to New York City (a strategic consideration in itself), reducing prices
(a benefit which Totten and Bernard explained in the emergent language of
the commercial marketplace), sustaining population growth, and stimulating
industrial development. Among the topographical engineers themselves,
Stephen Long remained in the west and began an extensive series of surveys
during these years through the Upper Mississippi region as far as the 49th
parallel.39

The use of military engineers on civilian projects was obviously
accepted, indeed encouraged, by senior engineer officers. For these men, civil
engineering was a responsibility combining professional development,
organizational aggrandizement, and nation-building alike. They ignored, in
Abert’s case almost to the point of insubordination, the constitutional issues
and political considerations that so exercised civilian politicians—a rare (albeit
rather minor) instance in which officers actually came close to placing their
definition of the national interest over that of their civilian masters, but one
in which they could rely on the diffusion of authority inherent in the
American political system to provide them with civilian allies. As early as
1816 Major Isaac Roberdeau's outline of the department's duties
foreshadowed its extensive involvement on public works but included
military and even politico-diplomatic concerns, suggesting that its officers
might where possible "describe the Soil and Settlement of the Country [being
surveyed], its probable increase, as it regards supplies to be reasonably
expected," and "the Inhabitants, their mode of life and civil condition as it
respects their own Government." (The last of these desiderata sounds to
modern ears suspiciously like a sort of intelligence-gathering on local
loyalties to the national government, presumably fostered by the recent
memory of the Hartford Convention.) Politico-economic investigation
remained a matter of individual initiative, but Roberdeau's annual report for
1822 illustrates the intimate connections between the political and
professional desirability of economic national-building (or, one might say,
"market-formation"):

No country in the world . . . appears so much to feel the want of
professional characters of this kind [meaning civil engineers] as
do the United States, nor is there perhaps a nation whose
prosperity and improvement so much depend upon the
establishment of some system by which the deficiency may be
supplied.

Believing that "there are few well educated, practical engineers in our
country," Roberdeau was certain that "every individual impressed with a
proper feeling for national advancement must agree" that "from the
patronage of Government alone, efficient results can be had." He argued that neither corporations nor the states could undertake internal improvements on a scale that would "offer suitable encouragement for exclusive devotedness to the profession," a circumstance which limited the opportunities for civilians to learn it and sometimes forced these entities to use foreign engineers.40

This statism was characteristic of the topographical engineers. More than a decade later Abert reiterated the argument that scientific engineers "can never be made by the common wants of society." He believed that "national objects [and ideally national projects] . . . alone can form and foster them" and warned that the alternatives were errors wrought by inexperience or a resort to implicitly untrustworthy foreigners (a reference to Simon Bernard and U.S. Coastal Survey chief Ferdinand Hassler). In 1835 Abert elaborated on Roberdeau's arguments in favor of the valuable experience civil surveys gave to engineers planning national defense:

He obtains on these duties expertness . . . the habit of investigating the resources of a country, commercially, morally, and physically; its supplies . . . its population, and the best means by which it can be commanded [meaning mobilized and directed] in cases of emergency; its military aspect [topographically] . . . and the various roads . . . he is perfecting himself in the practice of his profession . . . and gathering the most valuable information in relation to the capabilities of self-defence of the locality . . . and its ability to aid in the defence of other parts of the country.41

Writing early in 1824 before the passage of the General Survey Act, the Board of Engineers (Totten and Bernard) added a Hamiltonian assessment of
the political, economic, and incidentally military value of nationally sponsored internal improvements, which would open

a system of communication to unite all the sections of the Republic by the bonds of commercial intercourse and rapid mutual aid in time of danger. This system will contribute essentially to the great end of rendering the means of our government more efficient; for . . . it will reduce . . . the great distances which divide the sections of our vast empire from each other, and will enable us easily and promptly to transfer the means and produce of one climate to another; it will give a new value to the agricultural and mineral riches of our soil, and a new life and activity to our manufacturing industry, by facilitating their circulation.

The two engineers concluded that "without a free and constant circulation, the political, as well as the human body becomes paralyzed and benumbed in its operations," a clear indication of their sympathies for a program of nation-building through economic stimulus. While their language was probably drawn as much from Bernard's reading of the French physiocrats as from Adam Smith, their words once again demonstrate a clear recognition of and desire to encourage the commercial or market revolution transforming, and they hoped unifying, the United States. Chief Engineer Macomb put these considerations in more explicitly political terms that demonstrated his awareness of growing sectional tensions, observing that "it is desirable that the southern portion of the Union should not only see but feel some of the benefits."42

Explicitly military concerns were distinctly secondary in the minds of these men: aside from the occasional references cited above, it should be
noted that very few of the engineers' commentaries on railroads and other internal improvements projects explicitly argued their potential military value or use. Historian Forest G. Hill reports that "military considerations were a criterion which the army engineers kept constantly in mind," and it is certainly probable that most officers understood the military utility of internal improvements as a truism, but the rarity and vagueness of its statement in the documents themselves still comes as a surprising omission given the common repetition of such truisms in most other official reports. Consequently, it seems to have been Secretary Calhoun, rather than an army officer, who put the connection best in his report on canals in 1819: "whether we regard . . . internal improvements in relation to military, civil [economic], or political purposes, very nearly the same system, in all its parts, is required."43

For nearly a decade after the War of 1812 political resistance to federal aid to internal improvements limited these surveys to a small group of engineers acting without statutory congressional sanction, but by 1824 the National Republican consensus forged by the needs of state enterprises and the desire of national factional leaders to court their support was strong enough to pass the General Survey Act. While the practices which it authorized had been going on for several years in various guises, the act explicitly authorized the federal government to employ military engineers on civil projects to a degree previously impossible. Totten, Bernard, and a civilian engineer were assigned to the Board of Engineers for Internal Improvements (commonly known as the Board of Engineers), and eighteen engineers (twelve military) were organized into three surveying parties, tellingly labelled "brigades." After half a decade of experience and
preparation, Totten and Bernard were ready for the task. They promptly submitted a list they had prepared before the Board had been established, which ranked potential survey projects according to their military and commercial priority.\textsuperscript{44}

By the end of 1824 twenty-six officers were serving in some capacity directing civil works. By the end of the following year that number had reached forty, and by the end of 1826 fifty-three--about ten percent of the entire officer corps. The number of surveying groups increased from three to eight during this span, and by 1830 there were thirteen, ten commanded by army officers. The supply of army engineers did not catch up to the demand, however, and in 1825 Secretary of War James Barbour's proposal to increase their numbers failed in Congress. Senior staff officers continually sought to remedy this deficiency with proposals that advanced the monopolistic interests of their branches and the army as a whole: in 1828 Chief Engineer Macomb urged that the twenty-four line officers (mostly from the artillery) then acting as topographical engineers be permanently appointed to that corps, and in 1830 Abert suggested an end to the use of civilians as engineers for the federal government. The delicate political and organizational balances between officers and civilians and staff and line precluded any orderly and decisive resolution along these lines, however.\textsuperscript{45}

Army engineers first became involved in railroad projects (all of which were funded by private corporations or individual states during this era) in 1826, when Captain William Gibbs McNeill was assigned to survey future canal and railroad routes between the James and Kanawha rivers in Virginia. Secretary Barbour's recognition of the efficiency and utility of the new technology was demonstrated the following year in his correspondence with the president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, with which ten army
officers served as engineers over the next three years. (See Appendix G for a list of these men and their later careers.) Their duties quickly grew beyond the surveying authorized by the act of 1824, and they went on to supervise the construction of more than a dozen state and private railroads over the following decade. Others followed in their footsteps under War Department orders, particularly in New York state during the early 1830s.46

Nevertheless, the General Survey Act never fulfilled the hopes of its most ardent sponsors (Henry Clay, for example) for a system of national planning to direct the progress of the economy through the location of transportation projects. Under its compromise provisions Congress could fund but not direct, a necessary cession to the power of the state coalitions that dominated American politics for a decade and a half after the collapse of the First Party System during the War of 1812. The rationale for a central planning board of federal officials disappeared without a national system to plan for, and the Board of Engineers became less and less active until it was abolished in 1831 after Simon Bernard (and his aide, William Tell Poussin, who soon wrote an account of American society akin to those of de Tocqueville and fellow engineer and French army officer Michel Chevalier) resigned. Army surveying activities (though not the supervision of railroad construction) were limited beginning in 1832 because President Jackson renounced his power to order surveys under the provisions of the 1824 act, leaving their authorization to congressional resolution alone.47

Andrew Jackson's reluctance to engage the national government in internal improvements had mixed effects on the employment of army engineers, whose use did not go unchallenged or unhindered by government oversight or civilian competitors. In November 1831 the War Department issued a regulation prohibiting officers (especially those in the line) from
acting on transportation projects outside its auspices. Three of the ten officers with B&O experience resigned almost immediately, and eight did so by the end of 1832, foreshadowing on a small scale the officer corps' reaction to orders for active service in 1836. (William McNeill was the ninth of the B&O veterans to resign, in 1837, and the tenth did so by the end of that year. George W. Whistler went on to become chief engineer of the railroad between Moscow and St. Petersburg.) Even so, the restriction quickly became meaningless because the War Department continued to lend engineers to civilian corporations for duties not specifically authorized under the terms of the General Survey Act. The department tried to ensure a degree of accountability by giving priority to surveys specifically appropriated for by Congress, but the demand for army engineers continued to grow, and in 1835 at least fifteen state and private railroads received some aid in surveying or supervision from army officers, the high point of military assistance to civilian internal improvements during the Jacksonian era. These lenient policies continued as long as Lewis Cass, a westerner acutely aware of the need for more extensive communications links, remained secretary of war. In 1836 he ordered McNeill to survey the western military road he had proposed to Congress, but Abert was somehow (presumably by appealing to allies in Congress) able to convince the secretary that a rail survey in North Carolina was more important (or appropriate to the topogs' mission) and the orders were countermanded, leaving quartermaster and line officers to attend to this supposed strategic priority.48

This support ended when Benjamin Butler became acting secretary of war later in 1836. Abert still tried to keep McNeill (who was by then connected to twelve railroad companies in one capacity or another) off regular army duty, but in 1837 he was ordered to Florida while acting as one
of the chief engineers of the state of Georgia (at a lucrative salary far in excess of his army pay) and felt compelled to resign. McNeill was the most illustrious of the B&O veterans, gaining a reputation that led him to service as chief engineer on eight different railroads before his resignation from the army in 1837, and his experiences illustrate in personal detail the intimate connections between the civil and military spheres in the middle stages of the transportation revolution in America. The economic--and thus political--value of his work made McNeill a favored officer within the army, and he was rewarded for his utility with a brevet to major for ten years faithful service in one grade in 1833, one of the last such brevets given. (He was promoted to that rank via ordinary seniority processes the following year.) That year alone he acted as chief engineer to four railroads ranging from Rhode Island to Missouri. Such constant dealings with influential corporate leaders honed the political skills and connections that made McNeill chief engineer to the state of Georgia in 1837 and major general of the Rhode Island militia during the early stages of the Dorr constitutional crisis in 1842.49

Their utility aside, criticism of army involvement in civilian transportation projects increased as the pool of civil engineers grew during the 1830s, and in 1837 acting secretary of war Butler suggested an end to the practice of lending army engineers to civilian corporations. Major Abert continued to resist this pressure, arguing that the War Department's control over priorities prevented the misallocation of resources, that a rigid prohibition would drive "some of the most valuable . . . and most enterprising officers from the Service," and, most fundamentally, that topographical engineers were public servants at the disposal of the taxpayers--in this case, at the disposal of the transportation companies. Civilian critics like Secretary Butler correctly refused to recognize a military officer's
authority to decide the taxpayers' interests, while civilian engineers attacked the competition from government officers, both of which smacked strongly of the state-authorized ("established") monopolies then under general assault throughout American society. This criticism grew as the Panic of 1837 deepened into depression and extended recession while Stephen H. Long received a salary of five thousand dollars from the state of Georgia during an extended leave of absence from the army, and in his annual report at the end of the year Secretary of War Poinsett proclaimed that "not only is it no longer necessary to aid States and companies . . . but, in doing so, an act of injustice is committed towards the civil engineers of the country."50

The following year senator and future president James Buchanan led the Jacksonian attack on army engineers in civilian service, charging that they grew rich and excluded civilian engineers from work while the government's business went neglected. As a result the army act of 1838 prohibited the use of officers "on civil works of internal improvement" (including those on rivers and harbors) or "in the service of incorporated companies." This legislation effectively brought an end to army involvement in transportation projects for the next decade and a half, although Secretary Poinsett's order for an end to the loan of army engineers to civilian corporations did not take effect until July 5, 1839, and even then Stephen Long and William H. Swift remained on civilian duties for another year without official censure. The last formally authorized railroad survey before the Mexican War, and the only one between 1838 and 1854, took place across Florida in 1844 on the orders of Congress. On the other hand, if one looks to the civilian engineers trained in the army, by 1848 twenty-nine West Point graduates were or had been the chief engineers of railroads or canals, including such luminaries as Herman Haupt. A number of West Point graduates also entered the U.S. Coastal
Survey under the leadership of Alexander Dallas Bache (WP'25), its head after 1843. By 1867 this government-trained legacy of expertise and fiscal accountability had grown to thirty-five presidents of railroads and other corporations, forty-eight chief engineers, and forty-one superintendents of railroads and other public works projects.\textsuperscript{51}

These surveys were a source of friction within the army as well as between officers and civilian politicians. The topographical engineers' responsibilities often overlapped with those of the engineers and the quartermasters when their surveys involved recommendations on the locations of coastal fortifications and inland roads. Indeed, the 1841 regulations of the topographical corps assigned them "the examination of all routes of communication . . . both for supplies and military movements" and "the construction of military roads," duties previously associated with and claimed by the Quartermaster Department. The overlapping jurisdiction did not necessarily create confusion or dissension, however: documents pertaining to the western road proposed by Secretary of War Cass show that the quartermasters retained control over the actual construction of roads (including all the financial aspects), but normally turned over the surveying duties to mixed commissions of topographical engineers and local line officers (who presumably supplied tactical expertise and knowledge of local conditions). In this way the quartermasters retained control over expenditures in their role as disbursing officers--accountability in the subjective human environment--while more scientifically expert officers took up the specialized duties needed to plan works in the fundamentally objective natural environment as a matter of functional efficiency.\textsuperscript{52}
The long struggle between the Corps of Engineers and the topographical engineers, on the other hand, provided perhaps the best demonstration that interorganizational and intraoccupational conflict was not limited to the line of the army and its relations with the staff. This friction was due first and foremost to the arrogance of the fortification engineers, who saw themselves as an intellectual elite unmatched by any other corps in the army. To many fortification engineers this superiority justified the subordinate status of the topographical engineers within the Engineering Department. Joseph Totten set the tone for this attitude, informing Secretary Calhoun that "we have great pleasure in [counting] most of them amongst our personal friends, but we see nowhere among the many, not a single individual . . . whom we could see introduced into the Corps of Engineers without mortification or pain." He tried to justify this venom with familiar arguments from the division of labor but came out sounding strangely like contemporary southern whites predicting a race war: "There being no identity of function, there can be no identity of interest; and a constrained & unnatural union must result either in precipitating the . . . [two corps] into fatal extremities, or in entirely suppressing [the topographical corps]." Topographical engineer Stephen Long, on the other hand, complained to Roberdeau

Is it honorable to our corps that we are always to remain mere [beasts] of burden? Are we incompetent to express our judgment, or give an opinion in matters of professional duty-- Are we to be mere chain bearers in the giant work of internal improvement--[Are civilians] to be placed over us as directing engineers, while we are to be mere drudges?
Long, who seems to have been the most ambitious of the topogs, later
confided to Roberdeau that the engineers "cordially hate us, or more probably
are jealous of our rising reputation."53

Topographical major John J. Abert soon became the leader of this
insurgency within the Engineer Department. In 1827 he moved aggressively
by transmitting memorials to Congress and the secretary of war explaining
the topogs' case. Abert recognized the necessity of defining the duties—in
effect asserting the jurisdiction—of his branch in order to distinguish them
from those of the senior engineering corps, and the memorial to Congress
was primarily devoted to a description of the functions and history of the
topographical engineers. The future bureau chief first recurred to the duty
prescribed by the regulations of 1813, "to exhibit the positions of contending
armies on the fields of battle," and then referred to a letter from Simon
Bernard calling for the creation of a central depot akin to that in France:
"Such a depot must secure not only all maps, charts, plans, surveys, and
military memoirs, but also all the various documents necessary to the history
of the several wars made [by] the country." These would include "itinerary
tables respecting the concentration of militia" (a matter already addressed by
the Fortification Board, although traditionally and theoretically under the
jurisdiction of the quartermaster general) and a "critical history of operations
during the last war . . . to help the government in planning" future ones.
Following French example, Bernard considered the topographical engineers
"an essential branch of the general staff," effectively a central library of
military information and experience which would have paralleled the
quartermaster corps' informal function as the army's accountants.54

Roberdeau, the bureau chief in Washington from 1819 to 1829, sent a
letter to Chief Engineer Macomb later in 1827 which also drew on the French
paradigm (a central records depot), but he went on to appeal to specifically American imperatives:

In the United States, the Militia is justly considered the strength of the nation, but a System [of record-keeping] such as this is indispensable to its efficiency, for knowledge is in no case so really identified with strength, as in the knowledge of the Country which is our own. . . . The evils that have been experienced [during the War of 1812] . . . have arisen almost entirely from inattention to those objects, and the consequent absence of information necessary to the adoption of decisive measures [at the outset of war].

Like all other staff department heads and senior line commanders, Roberdeau based his case on the need for preparedness demonstrated by the experience of the War of 1812: "To this [unprepared] course may be attributed the disasters and unprofitable expenses of the last war, and in the event of another the like distresses would be again felt unless experience should urge the necessity of adopting timely measures to avert them." Roberdeau closed by recurring to the hallowed experience of the Revolution and the basic intellectual desiderata of collected knowledge and its analysis:

[T]he modern system of warfare demands the most correct knowledge of the topography, and resources of the Country . . . as without it . . . the movement of every description of troops, [is] rendered insecure, uncertain, and disastrous. Almost every page of the history of the War of the Revolution, as well as of that which succeeded it, contains deplorable accounts of the effects resulting from inattention to such important concerns.
Despite this military focus, the catholically minded Roberdeau had not abandoned his more wide-ranging goals of 1816, adding that the topographical surveys would "[identify] the different states and territories . . . with each other, and with the General Government"—a common hope among nationalistic army officers—while helping to destroy the distinctions between regular army and militia, a politically useful argument that could not have made him popular with his comrades in the line. "Persons of military acquirements" would be induced to serve in the militia, giving "a character to it, which is at present unknown." "Their interests [then] being the same, the views and measures of all would coincide, tending to the most efficient as well as economical projections, from which sectional feelings . . . would be banished in consulting the general welfare."\

These memorials sought consideration for a bill proposing thirty-two topographical officers separately from one for the increase of the Corps of Engineers, because the topogs felt that their case was stronger (due to the popularity of internal improvements) and feared its dilution by association with the parent body:

We are not desirous of sheltering ourselves under any reputation which may belong to the engineers of fortifications, nor of impeding their prospects by any want of reputation in ourselves. We are willing to rest our claims . . . upon the necessity for [an] increase and whatever merit may be considered as attached to us from our long and . . . useful services.

The topogs argued their disinterestedness in a cleverly mixed idiom of genteel public-spiritedness and the more contemporary liberal metaphors of improvement and economy: "We do not . . . wish to be thought emulous for personal distinction, further than is compatible with our public vocation or
may extend our usefulness, enabling us to render to the government an adequate return." Abert’s second memorial then concluded with an appeal to the experience of "other nations, who have frequently tried the blending of this with other corps" but had ultimately "resolved it into a separate and distinct command" because of the "importance, extent, and distinct character of its duties."

The Corps of Engineers was not the topographical bureau’s only opponent, however. The topographical leaders were fighting a two-front war for organizational independence, professional identity, and occupational respect, for like their counterparts in the quartermaster and ordnance bureaus, they routinely criticized the practice of detailing officers from the line as inefficient for the army and damaging to individual careers. "We . . . are brought at last to consider our duties as a mere school of practice in the most simple part of our profession, and are placed in consequence, under the necessity of extending our demands of aid from the army beyond what would otherwise be requisite, as we have to make up in numbers what is wanting in familiarity," asserted Abert’s 1827 memorial. This practice was inevitably more expensive to all involved, for officers detailed from the line had no motivation to perform topographical duties as attentively as they would their ordinary ones, "no personal fame or [the] fame of his corps dependent upon his efforts." Such officers were all too "conscious of losing . . . the practical knowledge of [their] proper calling, and of becoming a stranger to [their] own officers and corps" to the detriment of their relationships with their company and regimental commanders. (An 1835 Army and Navy Chronicle article reversed the equation, warning that the detailed officer "loses . . . his aptitude [for company duties], and perhaps . . . becomes less reconciled to them than before.")
The topogs were unable to secure their independence in 1827, but Chief Engineer Macomb, a catholically minded officer who held no brief for the staff in general or the engineers in particular, did not share Totten's antagonism toward the topogs, and the following year he proposed that additional officers be permanently detailed for topographical duties so as to retain their experience and expertise. This recommendation, made just before Macomb became commanding general, undoubtedly aided the topogs' accelerating quest for organizational independence, but a year later Abert (now head of the bureau after Roberdeau's death) complained again that he had "no superintendence whatever of the operations of the officers of his own corps, no means of obtaining a knowledge of their employment, no influence in their destination[s] or duties." Abert maintained that Congress had intended his branch to be independent of the engineers, that there was no good reason for the connection between them, and that their mutual welfare and that of the "public interest" required "a separation of duties and command."

Secretary of War Eaton proposed an independent topographical organization essentially equivalent to that of 1838 as early as 1831, but the direction of the topographical engineers remained in a compromised state until the general army expansion in the later year. Abert resumed the offensive in 1835, and his observations again bear extensive quotation because of their explicit articulation of principles regarding the organization of expertise--i.e., functional jurisdiction--which were shared by the leaders of the other branches of the staff. Abert began by specifying the need to centralize the topographical duties under the control and sponsorship of the nation-state: "Such investigations are beyond the resources of individuals, and the States limit those which they authorize to the extent of their territories. If the United States does not, therefore, complete the chain of knowledge by a
continuation of its efforts . . . an extensive region, rich with the most valuable [resources] [the Western territories], will continue to remain unknown."

Aside from organizational independence, Abert’s principal concern was still with the provision of his department’s personnel via details from the line and the appointment of civilian assistants authorized by the act of 1824. Abert took carefully calculated pains to demonstrate empathy for the line perspective in his argument against the former practice. Such officers might lose much of their practical familiarity with the functions of their permanent corps while learning little of the topographical ones, and the bureau was thus forced "to increase its demands upon the army, that it may compensate partially by numbers for deficiencies in [its] experience. These demands [however], but increase the general evil" while fostering "a continued series of unpleasant bickerings with the line." "It is a system, therefore, in which the permanent interests of the line and of the [ordnance] corps are diametrically opposed"--a state of affairs that plagued all the departments and corps of the army during this era. Knowing this, Abert was satisfied by experience "that the duties of the topographical engineers can only be carried out to that extent of perfection . . . which the nation has a right to expect by a system which shall permanently attach its assistants to the corps."

Lest Congress simply take officers from the line to staff the new body (a measure the line would certainly oppose, which would probably defeat the measure), Abert was careful to present a warning that doing so would be as damaging as the practice of details, a minor financial saving but not a "true economy."59

Employing civilians in conjunction with military officers posed a different set of problems, the mirror image of the dilemmas civilian
businesses faced in employing military engineers. Like contractors, civilian engineers were not subject to the Army Regulations and Articles of War which provided the basic framework for the army’s accountability to the central government. "[N]o subordination or authority can well be established in such a service," Abert wrote, and the two groups could not seem to work harmoniously together without clearly specified lines of authority. Abert once again demonstrated a clear understanding of the concerns on both sides, which suggests that his goal was not simply to displace rivals to the army topographers: "The military engineer is unwilling to be placed under the civil, and probably cannot be by law, or in a way which would [insure] any legal responsibility. The civil engineer is equally unwilling to be viewed as a subject only to be commanded . . . It is a moral prostration of his branch of service . . . in itself unjust" and damaging to the cohesive operations of the topographical corps as a whole.⁶⁰

Abert therefore proposed restructuring his bureau as a corps of permanent commissioned officers with its own independent rank and promotion hierarchies directly subordinate only to the secretary of war. In place of the twenty-six lieutenants and thirteen civilians then employed in addition to the ten permanent topographers he recommended a force of thirty-six officers, with two of the six existing majors promoted to colonel and lieutenant colonel and ten captains and twenty lieutenants. Civilians would no longer be employed on War Department surveys, but those already serving with the bureau would be candidates for commissions in the expanded corps, while future officers would be drawn solely from West Point (since scientifically trained civilians were so rare). Centralizing the organization of these duties would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their performance: "the lesser numbers . . . are considered capable of doing
more duty than [those] of the existing plan," because constant experience would lead to the acquisition of "exact and persevering powers of investigation," "facility and aptness of execution, and readiness in the application of theoretical knowledge," skill categories much akin to the sequence of diagnosis, inference, prescription, and treatment found in the practice of modern scientific professionals. Abert based his claim on the more concrete ground of experience, proclaiming his argument "but an application of the simple axiom, that he who is acquainted with the theory and practice of any profession can do more of it, and better, than any number of those who have not this knowledge."61

Despite continued resistance from the engineers, Abert's internal professionalization project finally found fulfillment in 1838, when Congress authorized an independent topographical organization virtually identical to that which he had proposed three years before. On the other hand, fifteen of the nearly thirty new officers were appointed directly from civilian life, usually via political patronage, and the army law of that year effectively brought an end to military support for internal improvements for the next fifteen years, factors which undoubtedly reshaped the internal culture and mission of the corps. (Eight of the officers given topographical commissions in 1838 were West Pointers who had resigned during 1836 and 1837, however.) Seeking a new role to play within the loose-limbed Jacksonian resolution to the national dilemma of organizing space, the Corps of Topographical Engineers turned to western exploration--and implicitly Manifest Destiny--for more glamorous (but still highly politicized) employment within which to express its nationalism. With a preponderance of men appointed directly from civilian life like John C. Fremont, the
topographical engineers became a haven for romantic individualists as well as proponents of a state-centered "American System." 62

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III. The Ordnance Corps: The Nuanced Reality

The experience of the Ordnance Corps provides similar evidence of conflict between the staff and line of the army, staff arguments for specialized experience and expertise, and the bureaucratic skill which senior staff officers used to secure resolutions favorable to their organizations without causing overt damage to the line. The Ordnance Corps combined aspects of the duties of engineers, supply officers, and artillerists, being responsible for the testing, purchase, storage, issuance and inspection of the army's weapons. Ordnance officers administered the nation's growing system of armories and arsenals (fifteen by 1833), which manufactured arms and stored them for the militia's use in war. These men had to combine the qualities of scientists, businessmen, and administrators with military knowledge. Before 1812 these duties were carried on under the direct supervision of the Secretary of War, one of the many duties that burdened him with administrative minuteria inappropriate to his rank and purpose. The Ordnance Department was established as an separate entity that year with a commissary general and up to thirteen assistants. In the peacetime establishment of 1815 it was expanded dramatically to a force of forty-four officers, virtually the equivalent of a regiment, but six years later it suffered the most of any staff branch in the general reduction in force, as it was absorbed into the artillery. Colonel Decius Wadsworth was discharged after twenty-seven years of on-again, off-again service and his principal subordinate George Bomford became the de
facto chief of ordnance, stationed in Washington with a supernumerary captain in each artillery regiment and an average of about thirty other company-grade officers detailed from the artillery for approximately a year at a time. As in the other staff bureaus, the senior ordnance officers provided continuity, stability, and experience for decades to come. Bomford remained in this post until his death in 1848 after forty-three years in the army and twenty-seven as chief of bureau. His chief subordinate, George Talcott, entered the ordnance in 1813, was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1832, and served as department head for three years after Bomford's death. (He had effectively done so since 1842, when Bomford's failing health limited his duties.)

This system was theoretically intended to diffuse "a practical knowledge of Ordnance" throughout the artillery. Indeed, in 1824 General Gaines, ever the generalist, proposed expanding this program by placing "a few brevet 2nd Lieutenants [fresh] from the Military Academy under [brevet] Colonel Walbach at the Arsenal, [where] his instruction . . . will be worth much to them, to the ordnance department, and to the army." When Bomford requested an officer for duty at Frankfort Arsenal (near Philadelphia) two years later, he noted that an officer who had never done so would have "the strongest claim" to the desirable post. Operating under this theory, each arsenal effectively became a small-scale ordnance school of practice, and 111 artillery officers received experience of this sort between 1821 and 1826 (a number roughly equal to that which passed through the Artillery School between 1824 and 1833), but unfortunately the practice proved much less efficient for the purposes for which the department was responsible than permanent assignments, and as early as 1822 inspecting officers suggested that arsenal officers were "without occupation except as storekeepers."
Bomford therefore reported late in 1826 that "the expectation that temporary service at Arsenals, would impart a practical knowledge of Ordnance duties, has not been realized to any beneficial extent," and he proposed the reestablishment of the department as a separate corps, albeit on a smaller scale than in 1820. Besides the desirability of concentrated experience given the complexity of the work in question, Bomford drew on an impressive array of arguments intended to appeal to every concerned interest. He suggested that the Artillery School performed taught practical field ordnance knowledge more effectively than arsenal duty because officers could immediately apply the products of their exercises, "without separating [them] from their . . . regular duties in the line." Bomford drew on the potent example of the Corps of Engineers as an independent scientific branch and disbursing agency; he remarked on the necessity of well-maintained ordnance stores for mobilizing an effective militia and the need for fiscally accountable administration over the large sums expended and the valuable stores maintained; and he even contrasted the overwhelming support of the House of Representatives for an independent department to the Senate's bare majority against it in 1821.

Indeed, Bomford's arguments sounded much like Abert's, indicating the essential similarity of functional needs and bureaucratic circumstances among the army's staff departments. At base it was the technical complexity of ordnance work that demanded more permanence in its practitioners: "The qualifications requisite for . . . this branch of service . . . are to be attained only by long experience and zealous application . . . not to be expected in those who are but temporarily engaged in such duties." Indeed, being on temporary detail these men had no incentive to exert themselves, and the practice had proven "prejudicial to the service of the line of the army, by reason of so
many officers being detached from their respective companies." Like Abert speaking for the topographical engineers, Bomford concluded that "an entire separation . . . is indispensable to the most efficient exercise of [the department's] . . . functions." In the interim he began seeking out officers with prior experience and kept them on ordnance duty for increasingly longer periods until an expert cadre had been formed. Though no one articulated the issues in this way, a concept of expertise favoring depth over breadth, one in fact more attuned to the need for scientific experimentation—which here served as preparation for war—and accountable administration in the department's peacetime operations, had triumphed over one which promised a minimal expertise in field activities but required additional instruction to do more than secure the routine maintenance of arms and ammunition.65

Pursuing this policy, Bomford recommended an independent Ordnance Corps of twenty-seven officers separated from the line, or as a less expensive fallback thirteen plus details from the lieutenants of the line. Further savings could be attained by taking the thirteen from the line tables of organization so that no new appointments need be made, though Bomford recognized (but was willing to dismiss) the inconvenience such a measure would pose for the line units affected. The artillery, which had no central command as a branch, did not resist this initiative, but the usual mixture of congressional antagonism, apathy, and economy kept the ordnance in official limbo until 1832, when a fourteen officer department (four field officers and ten captains, with additional lieutenants temporarily detailed from the artillery as before) was authorized along with the Ordnance Board and its experiments on a new artillery system. The new corps included three of the four supernumerary captains authorized in 1821, of whom George Talcott
(now made lieutenant colonel and second-in-command of the corps) and Rufus Baker had served continuously in the ordnance since their appointments in 1813.

Several years later the Seminole War required the services of many of the lieutenants previously detailed from the artillery, producing a shortage and, in response, a dramatic expansion of the department’s permanent cadre. Twenty-four more officers, all but two of them lieutenants transferred from the artillery, were added to the department in 1838, when the Ordnance became a fully independent corps complete with its own internal rank and promotion ladder separate from the line. As in the case of the topographical engineers, senior engineers like Joseph Totten and Sylvanus Thayer opposed this expansion. Indeed, Totten proposed a bill for amalgamating all the staff departments into one, presumably to be dominated by the Corps of Engineers, and returning the ordnance to the artillery. (The engineers obviously failed to reckon with the influence and determination of Quartermaster General Jesup.) The struggle over appointments to the new branch was vigorous, and provides one of the best examples of disputes over promotion and military and political patronage. Although artillery officers repeatedly called for the resubordination or absorption of the ordnance during the 1840s and 50s, the independence gained by the department in the 1830s allowed ordnance officers to devote their attention to professional matters rather than organizational infighting, and the next decade saw the marked advances in American ordnance knowledge and practice described in chapters four and five. The ordnance also became involved in active combat operations: during the Mexican War the department organized a siege train for Scott’s expeditionary force, which ordnance officers led despite the antagonism of their counterparts in the artillery, who saw the unit as a combat or line
command. (So did the ordnance, who wanted the glory, prestige, and authority of such a command, though for political purposes they argued that the siege train was merely an extension of the work of ordnance sergeants and artificers.)

The Ordnance was less directly involved in strategic and operational planning than the other major staff departments discussed hereto, because its principal responsibility in this realm was simply to make available the necessary weapons at places and in numbers decided by other authorities. Nevertheless, ordnance officers demonstrated a similar understanding of the interdependence of government, economy, and warfare in an increasingly complex society of growing scale and scope. As early as 1817 Decius Wadsworth suggested a national stockpile of steel, for which the United States was otherwise dependent on foreign countries, equal to a three years' supply, and he later extended the scope of this proposal to include a year's worth of iron ore and other unspecified "articles of foreign Importation." Like civilian promoters, ordnance also supported proposals for expanding the nation's system of arsenals and armories, particularly in the west, and beginning in 1831 the Board of Ordnance and the Ordnance Department routinely suggested the establishment of a national cannon foundry to take the place of private enterprise. Such ideas were well outside the accepted boundaries of state activity in Jacksonian America, however, and nothing came of them. Officers who saw state supervision as the guarantor of efficiency had to be content with the appointment of a superintendent (a civilian founder and ex-ordnance captain from the 1820s, displaced by William Worth's appointment in 1832) and the regulations in the Ordnance Manual for the direction of civilian cannon-making.
IV. Staff-Line Conflict and the Nuances of Cohesion and Responsibility

Sociologist Eliot Freidson has identified one of the most common sources of conflict within organizations as that between "professionals" (in this case the line or combat arms officers who direct the application of violence against enemies) and "managers" (in this case the administrative and logistical staff) over the allocation of resources and the direction of policy. Scarcity means that resources will inevitably be rationed in some way, whether at practitioner (army) or client (nation or taxpayer) expense, while professionals stress success in the performance of their tasks over the use or expense of doing so. Consequently, they demand that certain standards of capability and readiness be maintained despite administrative pressure to bend or dilute them in the interest of rapid expansion or cost reduction.

Though the army's ultimate "managers" were civilian politicians, the staff frequently served as a convenient surrogate for the frustration and anger of line officers. Following European military precedent and the functional demands of military command, Winfield Scott's 1821 Regulations stressed the subordination of staff (logistical and administrative, or support) officers to the post and unit (combat) commanders of the line, but William Skelton has observed that staff-line conflict "represented the deepest institutional cleavage within the antebellum officer corps."68

This tension was embodied by the distinction between the images and functions of line and staff officers--commanders and practitioners versus administrators and logisticians, or soldiers versus bureaucrats and clerks--and exacerbated by that between rank (usually in the line) and office (in the staff) in distinct organizational hierarchies. Prior to 1846 most staff officers retained
regimental ranks even when absent from those units for years on end. This phenomenon led to endemic organizational confusion and conflict, for staff officers combined the authority of professional expertise and that of bureaucratic office within autonomous rank hierarchies in the staff departments, holding positions based on functional administrative expertise which lacked command authority without forgoing their rank and promotion prospects within the line of the army. Staff officers functioned under immediate line command on army posts, but they also had their own hierarchy to whom they could and did appeal unwelcome decisions, leading to what one historian has labelled "chronic" jurisdictional conflict. In effect, the supply experts and their resources were supposed to be at the service of the generalists commanding combat units, but the latter officers were subject to the effects (though not the orders) of the decisions of higher-ranking staff officers who headed the supply and support departments (the Quartermaster General, for instance).69

At the national level the bureau chiefs were theoretically subject to a line officer, the commanding general of the army, but they frequently ignored his directives and sought shelter under the arms of the civilian Secretary of War, who theoretically became the arbiter of jurisdiction and policy. (Indeed, the staff bureaus were headquarterd in the War Department building, while the commanding general operated from the State Department building until 1829.) Calhoun had indeed seen himself (rather than General Brown) as chief of staff, but among all the secretaries during this period only he had the ability and stature to successfully restrain organizational conflict, and the staff soon secured de facto autonomy. The bureau chiefs made weekly reports to the secretary and requested his approval for each expenditure, but these communications appear to have been formal rather than substantive, for no
one individual could handle the mass of information they generated. (Indeed, attempting to do so had been a principal cause of the department's problems before the War of 1812.) Although the chiefs prepared formal budget estimates for the department, the secretary rarely questioned requests or altered the estimates. To complicate matters further, officers of all ranks constantly appealed to congressional allies in their struggles, and, its contracting duties and their implicit potential to exert influence aside, the staff was geographically well-placed to outlobby the line. Ironically, however, the staff's autonomy and the army's division into warring branches helped to sustain accountability to civilian control, for there was little chance that the military might form a unified interest group.70

Although often expressed in terms of differing expertise and functional jurisdiction, the tensions between junior line and staff officers were ultimately grounded in the pervasive belief among line officers that the staff constituted a sort of aristocracy within the officer corps. This was a question of pride and material self-interest, not ideology, for the line did not argue against the idea of a staff or of bureaucracy per se. Rather, dissatisfaction was usually centered on the inequalities implicit in staff assignments, be they of compensation, perquisites, daily autonomy, or opportunities for networking and easy living, while line officers resented staff imputations (both tacit and occasionally overt) that they had failed to receive these choice posts because of intellectual inferiority. Besides holding ranks and promotion prospects in regiments some had never even seen, staff officers lived at more socially eligible posts and received greater pay and compensation in the course of duties many line soldiers considered "anything but Militarily." For example, despite an order to the contrary in 1831, officers stationed in Washington prior to 1839, received a per diem of $1.25, or an annual increment of $300-
450--enough to increase a lieutenant's salary by about fifty percent--while
working a nine-to-three day. 71

This aristocracy of wealth and leisure also appeared to be self-
perpetuating, for privileged access to senior civil and military officials in
Washington and contacts with prominent civilians throughout the country
enabled staff officers to move on to similar posts again and again--or into
lucrative civilian jobs upon resignation--until a captaincy came open in their
regiment and seniority propelled them into company command over the
men who had actually remained with the unit. Indeed, it was the staff more
than the line which developed a distinct ethos and identity, as essentially
civilian bureaucrats, businessmen, or scientists, and the taste of sophisticated
urban society and interaction with the nation's power players line officers
received while on detail often led to resentment when their details were over
and they had to return to "the drudgery" of isolated frontier posts. Material
and social inequities were exacerbated by the division of labor between staff
and line, for staff officers enjoyed and many combat arms officers sought the
greater intellectual stimuli and personal autonomy of ordnance, surveying,
or directing fortification construction in preference to drilling and
disciplining a few dozen men and filling out strength returns under the eyes
of their superiors. Staff officers justified their advantages by appealing to the
army's need for their specialized expertise, often using language which
suggested that line officers were merely greedy fools.

Though necessary to maintain fiscal accountability and to assure the
efficient performance of specialized duties, the staff's independence from line
control was a problem of personal identity and ambition as well as
institutional structure: although usually junior in rank, supply officers
commonly wielded power far beyond that of line officers of the same grade
(or even that immediately above) because of their control over disbursements and expenditures and their demands on the time and manpower of units and their commanders, who generally resented what they considered the usurpation of their authority by men outside the legitimate chain of military command. Since command was the ultimate source of authority in the army and a principal source of the officer's prestige in civil society, the independence and interference of staff officers was a challenge to the combat soldier's basic motivation and the legitimacy of his professional stature, while the supply officer's concern with forms and recordkeeping sometimes seemed to outweigh his consciousness of and commitment to preparing for the army's ultimate mission.

Some line officers responded to these iniquities and the callousness of the staff by dismissing staff functions as inappropriate or inauthentic work for military officers, and the social and functional dimensions of line antagonism came together in the sense that staff officers were either layabout socialites if stationed in the cities, or miserly accountants--that is, not gentlemen or soldiers--and interfering meddlers if stationed with combat units like the quartermasters and commissary officers. While the staff officer mindset developed in positive contrast to the duties and inertia of the line and stressed specific jurisdictions over and attributes of expertise and responsibility, critics of the staff lashed out in general and essentially civilian social language that smacked of envy as much as the articulation of a combat arms ethic: in an 1844 critique published in the Southern Literary Messenger, artillery Lieutenant Braxton Bragg--politically a Democrat--raged that staff soldiers were "silk-stocking and boudoir gentlemen" living in "carpeted parlors in princely government edifices."
These concerns were ultimately personal and self-interested, but by no means were they therefore less real, or simply parochial. Staff officers did receive a wide range of material and psychological perquisites unavailable to the ordinary company officer, and staff chiefs worked hard to exclude those men they felt unfit for staff work. On the other hand, in what many line officers could only perceive as an instance of glaring hypocrisy, staff officers fought stubbornly to maintain their hold on ranks in the line regiments, thus assuring themselves of regular promotion through the seniority system without having to endure any of the sacrifices that officers isolated on small company posts were subjected to. Aside from the fundamental question of equity, a dissident quartermaster pleaded that the system struck at the very roots of military hierarchy and subordination, since it permitted temporary staff captains (specifically AQMs like himself) to hold permanent ranks as "subalterns in the line . . . [while] claiming sometimes a precedence over Captains in whose Companies they belong." 73

Indeed, staff officers continually fought to assert and maintain formally independent relationships with the commanders of their posts. In 1830, for example Captain Aeneas MacKay, assistant quartermaster at the Artillery School and formally ranked in the 3rd Artillery, wrote to the post commander, Major John Walbach, denying the latter's right to order him to attend parades and inspections, on the grounds that "the Genl. Staff of the army is intended to be exclusively accountable and responsible to the Head of Depart. at Washington, except in such cases as are especially designated by the letter of the Regulations." From this characteristic staff perspective, staff officers "form[ed] a connected link of subordinates . . . directly responsible to him the head of their department," and "it [wa]s not intended that they sh[oul]d be restrained by any [other] authority." MacKay claimed to fear
harassment (though it is unclear whether he meant actual discrimination or merely time-consuming irritations) that would prevent him from performing his duties, and he asserted that since line commanders were not held accountable for the official conduct of staff officers at their posts, the latter were responsible (i.e., subject to the orders) solely to the hierarchy of their own departments.74

Staff officers also claimed more material perquisites like preference in housing and excusal from ordinary post duties (guard mount, officer of the day, and the like). In 1824 the Adjutant General’s Office (sometimes referred to as AGO hereafter) felt impelled to issue a general order explicitly requiring assistant commissary officers to do company and post duty, and three years later General Brown felt compelled to seek a legal opinion from the attorney general on the authority of post commanders to appoint staff officers to garrison courts-martial boards (those which disciplined enlisted men). In 1825 post commander Captain John Garland and quartermaster major Henry Stanton clashed over quarters at Detroit, leading to a War Department decision that the senior rank would have precedence regardless of branch. Although the case at hand was actually one of brevet rank, its implications clearly ranged to the independence of the staff and the supremacy of the line, and in this case the principle of simple hierarchy won out over that of military or post command per se.75

A decade later the Army and Navy Chronicle contained an exchange of letters between a line lieutenant and several assistant surgeons over the assignment of quarters, which were normally apportioned according to rank and seniority therein (and informally but secondarily by family size), which often meant that a settled officer had to move from his quarters upon the arrival of a senior. Army Regulations rated even the most junior of medical
officers above second lieutenants, whatever their time in grade. "Sub-Senex" cried out against the surgeon's higher pay and his precedence in choice of quarters, while his medical opponents spoke of the surgeon's responsibilities and suggested that officers should be content with the free education given them (but not to surgeons, who were appointed directly from civilian life after examination by a board of army medical officers) at West Point. Both sides portrayed themselves as experienced public servants contending against untried youths, but "Sub-Senex" better characterized the collective opinion of the army when he warned that his antagonist "knows but little of the feelings of the army, if he supposes that every regulation . . . is either equitable or just." Disputes of this sort proceeded at varying levels of intensity throughout this era and beyond, dependent largely on the personal relationships between the officers in question: a decade later Lieutenant Philip Thompson of the 1st Dragoons wrote that "there is no one more clever hospitable and pleasant than Tom [Thomas Swords, AQM] --Q.M.D. [quartermaster duties] apart."76

The army's combat and support branches normally managed to cooperate well enough to maintain unit efficiency and readiness, but these quarrels sometimes took on a more serious aspect when staff officers refused to allow their facilities to be inspected, asserting their independence of control by the commanding general and the entire line hierarchy. While they may have been formally correct in doing so, the War Department had no inspectors of its own and relied on the commanding general (who relied on the IGs for data from the field) for expert military advice, meaning that these staff officers were in effect denying the accountability to War Department oversight that they claimed to be protecting. Aside from West Point (which is discussed in the next chapter), ordnance facilities like the arsenals and
armories were perhaps the principal scenes of these disputes, for they were
distinct posts rarely located alongside other army installations, with civilian
workers under semi-military control rather than soldiers under ordinary line
command. In 1820 Secretary Calhoun was forced to order Chief of Ordnance
Decius Wadsworth to acknowledge the IGs' rights to make full inspections of
all ordnance posts and to require his officers to render all necessary assistance
to the inspectors. Indeed, one can surmise that the ordnance corps' resistance
to inspection may have encouraged Calhoun to accept Wadsworth's discharge
and its absorption into the artillery in 1821, and to obviate this problem
Inspector General Samuel Archer (an artilleryman) later recommended
(unsuccessfully) that the arsenals be placed under line command.\textsuperscript{77}

These conflicts did not end with the ordnance's amalgamation with or
release from subordination to the artillery, for in 1824 Brown ordered the
inspector generals to make inventories of all ordnance stores and to collect
and verify quarterly returns made by the ordnance officers themselves, and
two decades later ordnance officers protested when General Scott ordered an
artillery company to protect the Augusta arsenal from a rumored slave
uprising, fearing that its captain would attain effective command of the
installation by virtue of his lineal rank and seniority. (Instead, the captain
soon wrote to Winfield Scott seeking his company's withdrawal.)\textsuperscript{78}
Similarly, the line hierarchy did not accept Thomas Sidney Jesup's quest for
line accountability to quartermaster record-keeping without bureaucratic
reactions of its own. In 1823 Jacob Brown demanded that his brigadier and
inspector generals take closer inventory of quartermaster accounts and
business practices in order to report on their adherence to regulations
prescribing the timeliness and frequency of their returns, and in 1831
Inspector General Wool sought to make regulations for sutlers.\textsuperscript{79}
Despite their claims to institutional autonomy and a more specialized expertise, many staff officers agreed with the glorification of troop command and combat leadership and aspired to command themselves should the opportunity become available, usually upon promotion to captain within their regiment. (The engineers also struggled to secure command authority, over a specialized combat unit of sappers if nothing else was possible.) Chief Engineer Walker Armistead fought to exclude line officers from the engineers in 1818, but at the end of the year AAG Captain Charles Nourse (the acting AG of the army between 1822 and 1825) advised the War Department that "the good of [the] service requires that officers of the Adjutant and Inspector Generals Department should be aided by rank in the line," while IG Colonel Arthur P. Hayne labelled lineal rank "absolutely necessary to give respectability to this useful branch of the service." (Ironically, Armistead was shortly returned to the artillery himself in the reduction of 1821.) Given his noted facility for bureaucracy, Quartermaster General Jesup provides one of the best examples of the persistence of this ambition for line command, for in 1828 he presented his application to be considered for promotion to brigadier general in the line upon Scott's or Gaines' elevation to major general, and in 1841 he repeated this request, as line "duties would be more agreeable to me than those I now perform." (Jesup also implied that he might seek to retain his quartermaster brigadiership, which would suggest a more self-interested and practically irresponsible motive.) Though this never formally occurred, Jesup got his wish for troop command eight years later during the Creek and Seminole wars, first as Scott's subordinate and then for almost two years as the army's commander in its principal theater of active operations.\textsuperscript{80}
Our judgment of the "responsibility" of the staff-line conflict over rank must balance the juxtaposition between motivation—which was in many respects laudable—and consequence, which was often damaging. The staff officer's desire for lineal rank and promotion did indicate a responsible commitment that illustrates the conflicts created by individual ambition in a still-fluid institutional setting. Clearly, this ambition did not promote cohesion, and insofar as staff officers avoided or lacked experience in company duty it damaged the army's field capability and was therefore irresponsible in outcome. Besides promotion and command opportunities there were two primary rationales for staff officers holding lineal rank: as inspectors clothed with the authority of rank sufficient to give orders to insure the efficiency and capability of the army as a whole—indeed to order officers to open their posts and parade their troops for inspection—and when motivated by feelings of individual military identity and esprit de corps, evidence of cohesion and solidarity.

Though he was not seeking military rank per se, Paymaster C.B. Tallmadge provides an example of this positive motivation: though completely outside the line rank hierarchy he felt that "it would be agreeable to me, and [would] give satisfaction to the Regiment, if I were authorized to wear the Light Artillery uniform. It is always desirable to keep up the esprit du corps, and the military distinction of dress is not without influence in that respect." Roger Jones, the adjutant general and a senior captain in the 2nd Artillery until the secretary of war forced him to resign that commission in 1835, provided a more direct testament to professional ambition in response to arguments for the separation of staff and line when he asserted in 1837 that "if subordinate commissions in the staff be only granted at the price of the regimental commission, the most competent, active, and aspiring young
officer, who regards the army as his profession... would reject, unhesitatingly, the boon at such a sacrifice." More self-interestedly, Jones and other staff officers saw their quests for regimental rank as necessary security should they be forced out of the staff—as he had temporarily been—by another reduction like that of 1821. (IG Wool provides another example of this motive, for he consistently though unsuccessfully sought lineal rank to supplement that which went along with his office, both before and after the reduction of 1821, which his successor, Sylvester Churchill initially attempted to refuse his appointment and retain his regimental majority.)

Line officers almost unanimously objected to staff men holding regimental rank. The 3rd Artillery provides us with several examples: in 1823 Lieutenant Joseph P. Taylor (Zachary Taylor's brother) wrote to the War Department objecting to Samuel B. Archer's dual rank as staff inspector general (which ranked at colonel) and captain, while six years later a group of lieutenants sent a remonstrance to Macomb against Lieutenant James Graham's ability to retain his lineal rank upon appointment as assistant topographical engineer, a staff commission with the non-command rank of captain, whose previous recipients had not held line rank, "to the prejudice of the subaltern officers of the 3rd." (Graham was then the senior lieutenant in the regiment, meaning that he could return to take up company command upon his lineal promotion to captain, or that another lieutenant would gain promotion if Graham lost his regimental rank.) The petition did not ask any specific action against Graham, but he resigned his regimental rank two years later (in 1831), along with another lieutenant from the 4th Artillery who had been appointed assistant topographical engineer that year, which suggests that command general Macomb, a patron of the line who sought to contain staff independence, had been able to maintain the precedent that permanent
topographical commissions required separation from lineal rank and promotion prospects. Similarly, Archer held on to his regimental rank until his death in 1825, but his successor was commissioned from civil life (though a War of 1812 veteran) without lineal rank.82

Like Bomford and the topographical chiefs, some junior staff officers shared the concerns of their line comrades, whether from concern for the army’s cohesion or its efficiency while company officers served on the staff. In 1840 Captain Benjamin Huger of the ordnance—whose officers had been completely separated from the line in 1838, meaning that Huger no longer had any regimental rank to defend, while he may have been jealous of staff officers who still did—objected to the provisions for dual rankholding in the annual army appropriations bill: "the same feature in the Organization of the [Quartermasters and Commissary] Department has caused more bitter blood in the line of the army, than Dragoon Pay and double rations can ever sweeten—In its operation it will cripple the Regiments of the line and create discords among their officers [and] it will establish a precedent which in case of a war with a civilized power will most certainly be abused" (whether to avoid field service or to secure field command). Huger saw a clear conflict of responsibility at stake: "Shall they serve God [meaning the profession and nation] or Mammon [themselves]?" he queried.83

The best example of this struggle over dual (or even triple) ranks came in the career of Adjutant General (staff rank colonel) Jones himself, which amply illustrates the lengths to which ambitious officers would go to seize on any legalistic expedient to win promotion. Scion of a prominent Virginia family, Jones became an assistant adjutant general within a year of his 1812 appointment as an artillery captain. He was brevetted twice in 1814 for gallant service at Chippewa and the sortie from Fort Erie and served as Jacob Brown's
aide-de-camp from 1815 to 1818, when he became adjutant general of the Northern Division at Brown’s initiative. Ironically, Brown (who had initially asked for Thomas Sidney Jesup, whose candidacy was nixed by the opposition of a number of staff officers) sought a "confidential friend" for this post, but Jones threatened to seek the abolition of the post of commanding general unless he received the appointment of AG of the army during the reduction of 1821. Rebuffed in his quest, Jones was retained in the 3rd Artillery but temporarily had to undergo the humiliation of returning to his regimental rank as a captain despite brevets to lieutenant colonel and service at the grade of colonel while divisional AG. Three years later—not coincidentally during the presidential campaign of 1824—Jones gained the brevet of colonel for ten years' faithful service in one grade (supposedly lieutenant colonel) when fellow Virginian and U.S. Attorney General William Wirt extended the practice of granting these honors from the topographical engineers to the army as a whole, even though Jones had not actually served ten continuous years in the duties of his brevet rank of lieutenant colonel as the letter of Wirt’s opinion would have required. However, in 1824 Jones had at least held the earlier brevet itself for a decade, unlike his second such brevet from colonel to brigadier a mere eight years later, which he successfully claimed on the basis of three years as AG from 1818 to 1821 and seven from 1825 to 1832. (In essence Jones was building brevets for time served upon brevets for combat service.)

With Brown’s recommendation Jones was finally able to secure the adjutancy of the army in 1825, where he served until his death in 1852 after forty years in the army and twenty-seven as AG. (Jones was replaced by Samuel Cooper, whose career illustrates a similar degree of favoritism and significantly less line service. Cooper served as Macomb's aide-de-camp from
1828 to 1836, became one of the two principal AAGs in 1838, and resigned in 1861 to serve as the Confederate AG. He only gave up his line captaincy in 1852, and unlike Jones he never saw combat.) As the most senior captain in the artillery, Jones was promoted to the majority of the 2nd Artillery in 1827 despite less than five years actual service (out of his fifteen) in that branch. By this time Jones was successfully claiming a line majority, a staff colonelcy, and a brevet colonelcy (which though supposedly honorary carried the potential for additional compensation and future promotion if Jones could, as he did, swing them). In 1829 Congress forced a three year moratorium on further ten-year brevets, and in 1833 they were abolished altogether, but Jones still managed to squeeze in a brevet of brigadier general during the short window of opportunity in 1832, again successfully claiming ten years' service in the prior grade despite only seven years continuous service as a colonel (his rank as AG) and eight at that brevet.85

Jones' next promotion illustrates the complicated promotion sequences in the army of this era. In 1834 Colonel James House of the 1st Artillery (one of Jones' judges at his 1830 court-martial) died, leading Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Eustis (the most senior artillery officer in his grade) of the 4th to take his place. As the senior artillery major Jones (of the 2nd) then succeeded Eustis, whereupon Captain Benjamin Pierce of the 4th protested that this would prevent Major A.C.W. Fanning of the 4th from replacing Eustis, which would preclude his own promotion to major sub Fanning. Pierce promptly wrote to Macomb soliciting him "as Commander of the Army, to guard my rights as an officer against all prejudice or invasion," on the grounds that Jones' promotion would be illegitimate because he would not serve with the regiment. Promotion above the rank of captain was by seniority in grade within the artillery (or infantry, as the case might be) branch as a whole,
however, and though army regulations required that transfers between officers of different regiments at the same rank be limited to cases where no one else’s seniority and promotion interests would be prejudiced, this did not restrict transfers caused by the ordinary operation of promotion, and Jones secured his lieutenant colonelcy in the line. This promotion stirred up such an extensive outcry among the officers of the artillery that Macomb and the secretary of war finally forced Jones to choose between his line and staff ranks the following year. Macomb apparently hoped that Jones would resign the adjutancy so that he could have Captain Henry Whiting of the quartermaster corps (Macomb’s aide after the War of 1812 as Jones had been Brown’s) appointed, but Jones finally felt secure enough—and apparently doubtful enough of war and lineal promotion, despite the pending French claims crisis and the implications of Jackson’s Indian removal policy—to choose the post of chief administrative officer over regimental second-in-command.  

Jones’ battle to retain his lineal rank was ultimately a losing one, as the commanding general and the War Department began to push staff officers to choose between ranks once their lineal seniority put them in line for promotion to major. (The men appointed to the Ordnance Corps in 1832 were also required to give up their lineal ranks.) This trend is demonstrated by the cases of the quartermasters (who were ranked as staff majors) and the principal assistants to the Commissary General of Subsistence beginning in 1829, when Captain Joseph Taylor (ironically the complainant against Samuel Archer’s lineal rank in 1823) was forced to vacate his captaincy in the 3rd Artillery upon appointment to the commissary department at that grade. Three years later James Hook, the senior captain in the infantry branch, was forced to choose his commissary rank of major when he would have been promoted to the infantry majority opened by Colonel Willoughby Morgan’s
death and the ensuing promotion sequence, while Captain Joshua Brant was forced to relinquish his lineal rank because he was promoted to quartermaster major. George Bender put up more of a fight: yet another captain in the 5th Infantry (whose fellow officers must have been outraged at having three of their seniors in permanent staff posts clogging up the seniority ladder) appointed to the Quartermaster Department in 1818, he was promoted to quartermaster major in 1826 and to an infantry majority in 1830. Forced to relinquish that rank in 1832, he resigned the following October and gained employment as the chief clerk of the Ordnance Department in Washington. Trueman Cross also secured his quartermaster majority in 1826, but was not forced to vacate his infantry captaincy until 1835 (in the wake of Jones' defeat).

While Jones advanced his rank commanding general Macomb was engaged in trying to subordinate the staff--and most specifically the AGO, since it played such an important role in personnel assignments, and thus army patronage--to his control. Macomb was initially motivated by Winfield Scott's refusal to acknowledge Macomb's orders after his promotion over Scott's head in 1828, but Macomb also believed that General Brown had permitted the staff to escape line control contrary to Calhoun's intent (or at least Macomb's perception thereof). As Chief Engineer Macomb had seen plenty of evidence of this tendency, and he was resolved to bring the staff back to heel. In 1830 Macomb court-martialed Jones for issuing orders through the War Department (in the secretary of war's name, though with his tacit approval) without reference to the commanding general. (Macomb was also engaged in trying to bring the departmental commanders more directly under his control by forcing them to communicate to the War Department through him.) This practice gave the secretary of war a means to bypass the commanding general, and although this was not the secretary's intent,
challenging the practice raised an implicit challenge to civilian supremacy by suggesting—though this was not Macomb’s intent—that the commanding general held a veto power over the secretary’s orders. A bureaucratic politician of the first rank, Jones had expertly played the middle and drawn in the slack from both ends to become a powerful actor in his own right.

Jespup and Scott both supported Jones, whether from friendship, antagonism to Macomb, or a belief in bureaucratic specialization and staff autonomy, but Macomb ensured that the court was packed with line officers (headed by brevet brigadier general Henry Atkinson and including artillerist and erstwhile Chief Engineer Walker Armistead and Inspector General Croghan), who following the wording of the regulations had to find Jones guilty. Jones was sentenced to an official reprimand and Macomb sent him a detailed description of his duties which placed him under the commanding general’s direct supervision, but these sanctions proved only marginally effective: the 1836 Regulations left the issue unclear and Jones remained effectively autonomous. Macomb was unable to pursue the issue any further given the delicate political interests at stake, but he seems to have been satisfied with the example he had made, and the two men worked together effectively for the next decade until Macomb’s death. Indeed, Jones seems to have served as an effective mediator between the commanding general and the secretary of war, something his successor Samuel Cooper was unable to do when faced with the ferocious quarrel between Winfield Scott and Jefferson Davis in the 1850s.87

Recognizing that the secretary of war was far too busy to exercise effective oversight and control over the staff, Macomb turned to other means of centralizing administrative authority under his supervision. General orders issued in 1831 required that the staff chiefs report all important
measures and personnel movements in their departments, including their own departure and return from Washington—a rule which never achieved more than the status of a courtesy performed for the sake of efficiency—and Secretary of War Cass supported Macomb by providing standardized forms for the bureau chiefs' reports and convening the Military Board examined in chapter five. After continuing conflict with the Corps of Engineers over the right of inspection (discussed in the next chapter), the 1834 Regulations set out the commanding general's oversight "over the economy of the service" and his authority "in all that regards [military] discipline." The right of inspection was given absolute status at all installations and posts, and the bureaus were required to send their annual budget estimates and operations reports to the commanding general for inspection and transmission to the secretary, but a revised edition deleted the latter provision, doubtlessly because of staff opposition.86

By the late 1830s there was a clear impetus among junior and senior officers alike for the separation of staff and line. Officers from both categories joined in articulating this argument, although those from the line remained most prominent because of their more obvious self-interest. An 1837 letter to the Army and Navy Chronicle called for consistent functional specialization from the staff perspective, declaring that "many line officers . . . are called to act in the staff" without appropriate experience, "while they who belong to, and have been in those departments for many years, are absent, performing some common-place duty, or perhaps that which does not belong to them."
The latter statement appears to have had little truth, but it does demonstrate the sense of confusion felt by officers under the mixed system. Foreseeing the coming separation and hoping to ameliorate its own potential for dysfunction, Sylvanus Thayer wisely suggested that officers receive
preliminary experience in both line and staff posts before being permanently appointed to the latter, advising Representative Gouverneur Kemble the following February that he hoped that the lowest grades in the staff departments would be filled by lieutenants who had been "found on trial to possess the requisite qualifications" for administration or science, rather than promoting new brevet second lieutenants into them directly from West Point. (It seems doubtful that Thayer intended to include the Corps of Engineers in his proposal, which did not achieve legislative status and was not applied to the three independent staff corps in practice, while it would simply have codified the existing practice among the quartermasters.) On the other hand, artillery captain John L. Gardner, an AQM from 1820 to 1830 who distinguished himself in combat in Florida and later received two battlefield brevets in Mexico, proposed separating the staff from the army entirely, divesting its officers of all military rank and authority whatsoever, because he felt that their duties were so unmilitary and their status was so confusing and disruptive.89

Nevertheless, Jones continued to advocate line rank for staff officers right up until the final separation between the two in 1846. In 1838 the two line officers (usually lieutenants of some seniority, including in this case Samuel Cooper) detailed to the AGO were formally granted staff commissions at the rank of major, along with four such officers (including Winfield Scott's aides Robert Anderson and Erasmus D. Keyes) ranked at captain, but until 1846 they and their successors retained the right to hold line commissions. (Anderson stopped serving as aide-de-camp, however, while Keyes preferred that post to that of AAG and declined the latter, indicating that the War Department sought at least formal separation between the personnel and duties of the army's central bureaucratic apparatus and those of the
individual assistants granted by custom to general officers.) As we have seen, however, several (like Anderson) refused to do so in preference to assuming company command, a small sign of the effect of line dissatisfaction with dual rankholding on the attitudes of the officer corps as a whole, and of a growing sense of army-wide cohesion and responsibility among the individual officers who declined the opportunity to indulge in the practice. The issue nearly erupted again in 1841, when Scott’s promotion to major (and thus commanding) general opened up a brigadiership in the line which was filled by Inspector General John Wool, a staff colonel who had no regimental rank. Scott personally preferred infantry colonels (and brevet brigadiers) Atkinson or Brady, as either "would have satisfied military principles & the line of the army," but—doubtlessly satisfied with his own promotion and demonstrating a responsible sense of cohesion that he showed all too rarely—Scott refused to make an issue of Wool’s precise status and claims. When asked for his professional opinion on the nomination by a member of the Senate Military Affairs Committee Scott responded he would not object to Wool, which the legislators accepted as sufficient recommendation to confirm the nominee. (Note that all the officers in question were commissioned in 1808 or 1812 and had served on the Canadian frontier during the War of 1812.)

Aside from everyday friction over duty priorities in garrison, two principal sources of staff-line tension remained after the expansion of the staff in 1838: the continued presence of AAGs, AQMs and commissaries in both line and staff, and the pay differential introduced by the allotment of mounted pay to the staff. The initial act of 1838 provided for the separation of assistant quartermasters from the line, but the ammendatory act passed two days later repealed this provision. When Congress returned to the question
of army organization in 1842, the Senate Military Affairs Committee reported a bill that would have compromised between the status quo and a full separation of staff and line by rotating AAGs, AQMs, and commissaries between the two forms of service in a manner akin to that suggested by Sylvanus Thayer four years before. Captain Charles F. Smith, an artillerist, then embroiled with the Corps of Engineers in disputes over his authority as commandant at the Military Academy, wrote to the chairman of the committee, proposing "that to make both classes of officer[s] . . . as efficient as possible, they sh[ou]ld be separated" completely. Indeed, Smith considered it "a great mistake ever to have clothed the officer[s] of these Depts. with Mil[itar]y rank, their duties being essentially civil (as much so as the surgeons & paymasters)." Smith therefore questioned the efficiency of periodic rotations, which would "compel an officer to return to the performance of a set of duties for which his long performance of others, dissimilar in their nature, & in no-wise Mil[itar]y, have completely unfitted him; to say nothing of the injury it will do to certain officer[s] of the Staff in depriving them of their just expectation of promotion" within their bureaus. (The bill directed that only line officers would be appointed to the field grades of the staff, which Smith declared--if only for rhetorical purposes--unjust to the staff.)

Smith's sense of the distinction between civil and military duties led him to agree with the adjutant general and the bill at hand that the AAGs should retain lineal rank but be required to return to their companies when promoted to their captaincies, as several were then doing voluntarily. Otherwise he proposed that all new AQMs and commissaries be appointed from the line but required to give up their lineal commissions upon accepting the staff posts, while those already serving in these departments would have to choose between their line and staff commissions when
promoted to company command or (if already captains) a line majority, a stance which was essentially adopted in the law of 1846. To speed the process and clarify the War Department's authority, Smith concluded that all staff officers holding line rank should be considered subject to orders to join their companies or regiments at any time, a stricture that would probably have driven many to give up their lineal ranks, thus opening extensive promotion opportunities in the regiments. 91

All the proposals for restructuring the relationship between staff and line were characterized by different conceptions of the most desirable mechanism for fostering specialization and the consequent attentiveness and efficiency. Faced with staff opposition, no reforms were actually made in 1842. Two years later the issue was revived by Quartermaster General Jesup himself. Displaying the belief in the primacy of the army's combat mission that had driven him to seek field command in Florida and to call for field services from officers esconced at West Point, Jesup proposed a plan to rotate lieutenants serving as AQMs back to the line biennially and recommended that all AQMs return to the line upon promotion to captain. Dismayed by what he perceived as constant organizational turmoil brought on by the needs of the Seminole War, one of the junior quartermasters objected to this plan as well as the organization of 1838, which he claimed to regard as "but a sinecure" for the field-grade quartermaster officers it authorized. Asserting the same principle that staff leaders had argued for twenty years, the writer maintained that "no army can ever be efficient so long as company officers are detailed for other duty," but unlike Jesup and Jones he took this priority to its logical conclusion and called for the entire separation of line and staff as was common in Europe. Like the staff chiefs, this "One Who Knows" told his readers in the Army and Navy Chronicle that "it must be admitted that [such]
officers would perform their duty with more energy and a stricter eye to the wishes of their chief than he who comes in to-day and leaves the next," and these views ultimately triumphed when Congress undertook the next reform of military structure in preparation for the war with Mexico in 1846.92

The other major source of staff-line conflict was compensation. The efforts of individual officers and bureau chiefs toward increasing their pay and emoluments have already been noted, and in the act of 1838 virtually all staff officers were allotted dragoon or mounted pay worth at least several hundred dollars a year as compensation for their supposedly greater responsibilities and expenses. This "partial provision" stirred tensions even before it was signed into law. That March William H. Chase, a maverick engineer captain, wrote to the National Intelligencer that "the interests of the army demand that no distinction should exist; and its creation . . . [would] dissolve those kindly feelings which so happily subsist between officers of different corps . . . producing [instead] those of jealousy and distrust." In an ironic inversion of the cohesiveness that officers usually displayed toward legislation for the army, Chase placed the blame for this "invidious distinction" on the lobbying of staff officers rather than the action of Congress. This was not necessarily true, either of himself or of Roger Jones, who wrote to the chair of the House Military Affairs Committee shortly after Chase's letter was published. Phrasing the issue in the much same language of equity as Chase, Jones called for an equal raise for the infantry and artillery, reminding Congress that "the excluded class consists of the officers . . . whose more active arms of service, employed for the most part on the frontiers, at isolated stations, and in the field, subject them generally to greater hardships and privations, being habitually most exposed to the vicissitudes of climate, and often to the perils of Indian warfare." The following winter a number of
line officers responded on their own initiative by sending memorials to Congress asking for an equalization of pay rates between staff and line (in other words, a raise), but their display of cohesion and esprit de corps was ignored.93

A letter to the Army and Navy Chronicle two years later will serve to sum up line criticism of the staff and demonstrate its intensity. Taking the "Pay of the Army" as his putative topic, "Duroc" first observed that unlike the administrative and scientific work of the staff, "the practical duties of the line officer are purely military, and have little analogy to those of any other department of human affairs. They tend constantly to unfit the individual who engages in them for the pursuits, and to estrange him from the interests, of civil life." Pursuing the very Jacksonian theme of unequal privilege, he then followed the route common among critics of army inertia, following an aspiring officer from his days as a cadet at the academy, where "he is not taught . . . that it takes a higher order of merit or qualification to constitute a [staff officer] than it does to constitute an artillery officer," to his regiment, where he "sees captains of twenty, twenty-five, and thirty years service . . . who receive perhaps less pay than a class-mate of his own" in the staff. Watching the latter "moving about the country . . . free from the restraint of any orders but such as emanate from the head of his bureau, cultivating society under the most favorable auspices," the line soldier would naturally apply to secure such a post, but amidst the stern competition of his fellows "a young man of unknown connexions . . . seldom finds an appreciation of his merits in our army after he leaves West Point" and the aspirant would almost certainly be disappointed. Indeed, the critic remarked that even "when merit is the ostensible ground of selection, how seldom does it avail against the partiality of him who selects, or the influence of him selected."
Positing a virtual caste system within the officer corps, "Duroc" went on to complain that even prior to the added increment of dragoon pay granted the staff in 1838, its duties were "so universally attractive" that anyone with "the slightest hopes" of success sought them, for staff men had no guard or night duty to perform and "are never obliged to march on foot," if they marched "at all." Citing the deaths and ill-health incurred in Florida, he noted that only a single engineer had served there. The author did not disagree with the principle that "superior diligence and capacity" should be rewarded with greater pay and more agreeable duties, "but when the rewards . . . are made perpetual, the qualities for which those rewards are given not infrequently cease." In addition, since all of the preferred posts were in the staff, meritorious line officers could only be acknowledged by being removed from the scene of their success and made "non-combatants," perhaps "converting a good fighting officer into a bad staff officer, or [else] suffering merit to go unrewarded." Pointing to the ultimate purpose for which the army claimed to exist, he derided staff claims of superior responsibility, for "to plan a campaign, or to fight a battle, requires as much genius as it does to plan a fort or to construct one." As to the pecuniary responsibility stressed by bureau chiefs like Jesup, "that of staff officers is occasionally troublesome, but that of captains of companies is equally so, and far more constant."

"Duroc" closed his letter with an appeal against the "introduction of an onerous distinction of rewards," and he reminded the staff that it was "easy for them to be respectable without degrading the whole line of the army by odious comparisons with themselves" in point of merit, knowledge, expertise, or responsibilities.

The charge of a sordid disposition on the part of the line in wishing an increase of their pay, which I have so often heard
from officers of the staff, is aristocratical, and shows that the ill
effects of the unequal advantages enjoyed by the different corps
are beginning to exhibit themselves. If it be the evidence of a
sordid disposition in the line to wish for more than half the pay
of the staff of equal grades, it certainly is proof of a similar
disposition in the latter to throw obstacles in the way of their
getting it.

Demonstrating a peculiarly bureaucratic consciousness, the critic asserted his
certainty that it was not the wish of "my class" "to reduce the pay of the staff,
but to obtain for myself an amount of compensation equal to that awarded to
others of my own grade and length of service throughout the army." He
called on his "brethren of the line" to act in concert until "those who sweat
and bleed in the front of battle should be at least as well cared for as those who
are not similarly exposed."94

Invidious distinctions between the staff and the line continued to
haunt the army throughout this era. A year and a half later the "Corpus
Christi Memorial" from the Army of Occupation in Texas complained that
the army seemed to have become "a mere convenience for the staff corps,"
and the general army act of 1846 finally formalized the separation between
line and staff by prohibiting officers from holding the same rank in both staff
and line simultaneously, thus requiring staff officers promoted to an equal
rank in the line to choose between their commissions. Contrary to Jones'
professed fears most chose to remain in the staff rather than assume company
command or resign from the army, which demonstrates the comfortable life
and identity they had created for themselves. (By 1846 the staff bureaus also
had more vertically articulated rank hierarchies, providing greater promotion
opportunities and scope for ambition than the flat structure of the pre-1838 departments, which relieved much of the psychological and material pressure to retain lineal rank.) As a result of the expansion of 1838 and the law of 1846, the proportion of permanent staff officers in the corps grew from about one-fifth to one-third, while the proportion of staff posts remained relatively constant at about two-fifths of the available slots. (The total number of officers approximately doubled between 1830 and 1860, primarily in the major increases of 1838 and 1855.) Lieutenants in the line could still hold staff captaincies as AAGs and perform staff functions as assistant commissaries, but assistant quartermasters were thereafter drawn from captains of the line who chose to give up their regimental commissions, leaving the commissary and AGO personnel as the only officers whose branch and rank status was mixed. Nevertheless, the growth of the AGO may provide the statistic that best demonstrates the growth of army bureaucracy and the accountability to civilian fiscal and therefore political control that it represents, for by 1860 there were fourteen formally designated AAGs available to assist the adjutant general, who had not had a single legislatively authorized assistant in 1830.95
Part IV


2 Ibid., pp. 161 and 181 and Tables 11.1 and 11.2 (pp. 182-83); idem., "The United States Army," p. 40.


4 Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism*, pp. 80 and 93.

5 Ibid., p. 31 and 87.

6 Ibid., pp. 114 and 214.

Chapter VIII


8 Ibid., p. 2; Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, ch. 6, especially 118-19; Crenson, *The Federal Machine*; Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 136. Of the principal staff chiefs during this era, all but one served until after 1850, and six served into the 1860s (when four of them retired). Paymaster General Nathan Towson held his post from 1822 to his death in 1854, while Joseph Totten served fifty-eight years, forty-five on the Fortification Board and twenty-five as Chief Engineer, prior to his death in 1863. (One of his descendants was a friend of my father's in the army twenty years ago.) For further detail see Hughes, "The Adjutant General's Office"; Skelton, "The United States Army," chs. 4 and 9; Garry D. Ryan, "The War Department
Topographical Bureau, 1831-1863: An Administrative History" (Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1968); Spiller, "John C. Calhoun as Secretary of War"; and Smith, "The United States War Department." See Wiebe, The Opening of American Society, ch. 11 ("Comprehensive Programs"), on the "organizing" efforts of the 1820s. Later in this chapter I discuss the mixed success and failure of army (federal) assistance to internal improvements projects, one of the centerpieces of Henry Clay's American System and John Quincy Adams' similar program.

9 The present chapter says little about the smaller, less specifically military, staff bureaus and personnel like the paymasters and the chaplains, and its examination of the Corps of Engineers is limited to their work on internal improvements. See Mary C. Gillett, The Army Medical Department, 1818-1865 (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1987), for a thorough examination of that branch. Its significance for my analysis lies in the incorporation of "free" professionals from the civilian world, who were used to independent practice as individuals (remember that there were virtually no hospitals at the time) into the army bureaucracy in a suborganization which was autonomous in its expertise and the practice of its duties but not independent of political oversight from the War Department. (Army surgeons usually continued to practice as individuals, because there were few sizeable hospitals in the army in peacetime.) Because of these dualities, army surgeons developed a mixed professional identity peculiar to themselves alone, combining pretensions to scientific expertise and authority derived from their craft with a close and amicable association with officers and a strong emotional allegiance to the army as an institution, the former born of social interaction and similar values of gentility, the latter from the practice of their craft in attempting to heal officers and enlisted men stationed in unhealthy posts. Although a government officer, the army surgeon's primary clients were internal--members of the line unit to which he was attached--rather than external--the government or society as a whole. While some surgeons treated their charges with negligence and contempt, the majority seem to have felt greater empathy for enlisted men than did the military officers who commanded them--a distinction between treatment and command that was founded on the different clientele--society and individuals--to whom officers and surgeons were responsible. Indeed, the army medical officer may well be considered a paradigm of professional responsibility within the army because of the sense of duty and solidarity he developed toward his charges. On the other hand, medical officers also shared many of the less responsible characteristics observed in other officers, particularly their quarrelsomeness, their strong sense of rank and precedence,
and their ardent pursuit of desirable stations and increased remuneration. Like other staff officers, surgeons sought to share the benefits of both staff office and lineal rank, but medical personnel did not actually hold military rank of any sort, a status they considered insulting and unsuccessfully tried to change. Taken in sum, the attitudes of army medical men provide perhaps the best illustration of the way in which the army's status as an organized body (in contrast to the "free professions") shaped occupational priorities and professional identities.

Officers of the Pay Department also sought a more articulated rank structure within which to advance themselves. See e.g. Major Thomas Leslie (paymaster at West Point) to Rep. Gouverneur Kemble, January 26, 1841, Kemble Papers, USMA, seeking the creation of assistant paymaster generals (ranked as lieutenant colonels) as an intermediate grade between the paymasters and the Paymaster General. He would himself have received one of these posts.

I. The Quartermaster Corps: Administration, Accountability, and Efficiency

Jesup to Calhoun, March 8, 1824, ASP:MA 3: 164 (communicated to the House January 5, 1826); Jackson to Gaines, July 2, 1818, Gaines Letterbook, Records of Army Commands, 1784-1821, RG393, NA; Scott, Order No. 1 of the "Army of Florida," February 22, 1836, printed in ANC 2 (March 17, 1836): 168; Jesup to Calhoun, July 17, 1818, in PICC 2: 390-91; Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, p. 215. Leaving aside the frequently changing staff organizations before 1821, army regulations and practice made some very specific formal—and in practice quasi-legal—distinctions between "corps," "departments," and "bureaus." The first were fully autonomous branches of service, with their own internal promotion hierarchies, like the combat arms and the Corps of Engineers, while only staff organizations were labelled departments or bureaus. These two terms were largely interchangeable, though bureaus had a slightly lower status. Both were directly subordinate to the War Department, i.e., independent of the line of the army and its head, the commanding general. The Topographical Bureau, which had its own limited promotion hierarchy (of two ranks, plus a recognized head of bureau), was long subordinate within the Engineer Department, which also included the Corps of Engineers and was supervised by the Chief Engineer (the most senior officer of the Corps of Engineers, ranked as a colonel). (The Military Academy was another part of this department, while Simon Bernard's position as Assistant Engineer was a purely advisory one that carried no place in the rank hierarchy of that corps or any other.) Between 1821 and 1832 the
ordnance was a department all of whose officers were drawn from the artillery though it was administratively independent of that branch. From 1832 to 1838 the ordnance enjoyed a mixed status while remaining a department, having a corps of its own permanent officers but continuing to supplement them by temporary details from the artillery. It finally became a fully independent corps with its own internal promotion hierarchy completely distinct from that of the line in 1838, as did the topographical engineers. All the supply and support organizations were departments: quartermasters, subsistence, purchasing, paymasters, and the medical department, but the three latter had separate (though limited, to one or two ranks respectively plus the chiefs of department) promotion hierarchies like corps and received their officers from civilian life rather than the Military Academy. (Indeed, the Medical Department was frequently referred to as a corps.) The quartermasters and subsistence departments had a few permanent officers in their limited higher echelons (usually composed of two grades, the department chief and two or four equally ranked subordinates) supervising a mass of juniors drawn temporarily from the company grades of the line; only in 1846 did the Quartermaster Department become a corps with a fully independent promotion hierarchy. Smaller, more specialized supply organizations, most of which were dropped after the War of 1812 in the move toward administrative centralization, were usually called bureaus, whether attached to these departments or directly to the office of the secretary of war. (Prewar examples include the apothecaries, postwar ones the Clothing Bureau of 1832 to 1841.) The adjutants and inspectors, though sometimes styled or styling themselves distinct departments, were individuals directly responsible to the secretary of war or the commanding general (respectively) after 1821. See in general Henry C. Corbin and Raphael P. Thian, Legislative History of the General Staff of the Army of the United States (Its Organization, Duties, Pay, and Allowances), from 1775 to 1901 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), and Histories of the Administrative Bureaux of the War Department (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901).

12 Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, pp. 177-82; Jesup to an unnamed colonel, September 8, 1814, Jesup Papers, Box 1, LC.

13 Crittenden to Jesup, April 1, 1818, Jesup Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan; Major Perrin Willis, April 10, 1818, file W-91, SW:LR-Reg.

14 Note that Thomas F. Hunt was a captain in the 5th Infantry; Thomas Hunt was also, but he served as the chief assistant in the central office of the Commissary General of Purchases.
15 Jesup to Calhoun, June 5 and July 17, 1818, in PICC 2: 330 and 390-92; Jesup to an unidentified colonel, September 8, 1814, quoted in Kieffer, Maligned General, p. 40; Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, pp. 183-86; Jesup, February 9, 1824, file Q-130, SW:LR-Reg. (second quotation from end).

16 Jesup to Calhoun, November 22, 1823, ASP:MA 3: 162 (communicated to the House January 5, 1826).

17 Jesup to Calhoun, November 22, 1823, and March 8, 1824, ASP:MA 3: 162 and 164 (the latter two communicated to the House January 5, 1826); Jesup to Calhoun, June 5, 1818, in PICC 2: 330; and in general Jesup, February 9, 1824, file Q-130, SW:LR-Reg.

18 Jesup to Calhoun, November 22, 1823, ASP:MA 2: 559, and July 17, 1818, in PICC 2: 391-93; Gaines, June 3, 1828, AGO:LR; Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, pp. 186-87.

19 Jesup to Calhoun, July 17, 1818, in PICC 2: 391-93, and November 22, 1823, ASP:MA 2: 560. See Crenson, The Federal Machine, on the symbiotic interplay between concepts of bureaucracy and personal character in the reorganization of the civil service under President Jackson. Jesup had no intention of being rotated from his office, however—a practice that army officers (much like Whigs, who shared the officers' concern for functional specialization) tended to look on with fear and derision.


21 Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, pp. 201 and 251; Long, "The Quartermaster's Department," in Rodenbough and Haskin, eds., The Army of the United States, p. 54.

22 Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, p. 202; George Gibson (Commissary General of Subsistence) to Secretary of War Porter, December 11, 1828, ASP:MA 4: 38; John W. Barriger (brevet brigadier general and assistant commissary general of subsistence), "The Subsistence Department," in
Rodenbough and Haskin, eds., *The Army of the United States*, pp. 75-78. See also U.S. War Department, *Regulations for the Subsistence Department of the Army* (Washington, D.C.: Blair, Rivers, 1835); U.S. Quartermaster Department, *Regulations of the Quartermaster Department* (Washington, D.C.: J. & G.S. Gideon, 1841); and John W. Barriger, *Legislative History of the Subsistence Department, U.S. Army, 1775-1876* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876). Assistant quartermasters and commissaries were made subject to duty in each others' departments by the law of 1826. The systems of food and clothing provision for the army would be a profitable topic for a monograph looking at the growing scale and scope of American business and the penetration of market systems of production and exchange into the hinterland, particularly that around Philadelphia.

23 Jesup to Calhoun, July 17, 1818, in *PJCC* 2: 390-92; Cross to Acting Secretary of War Benjamin F. Butler, January 14, 1837, ASP:MA 6: 990.

24 Cross to Acting Secretary of War Benjamin F. Butler, January 14, 1837, ASP:MA 6: 990; Cross to Acting Secretary of War Benjamin F. Butler, January 14, 1837, ASP:MA 6: 990; Butler to Cross, January 24, 1837, NASP:MA 2: 14; Gaines, August 8, 1826, file G-147, SW:LR-Reg. (See also Gaines, June 23, 1822, file G-4, SW:LR-Reg., and Gaines to Secretary of War Cass, February 25, 1837, HQA:LS.)

25 Jesup, August 29, 1826, enclosure to file G-147, SW:LR-Reg.


27 Cross to Butler, January 14, 1837, ASP:MA 6: 989-90; Cross to Poinsett, March 16, 1838, NASP:MA 2: 8. The latter set of points is repeated in Cross to Poinsett, April 27, 1838, NASP:MA 2: 25. For examples of criticism of the Quartermaster Department's performance in Florida, see "Quartermasters," ANC 6 (February 15, 1838): 108, which maintained that "the mismanagement of this Department has been a fruitful source of failure in the Seminole War" because it employed junior officers from the line "against their consent." Jesup responded to Ethan Allen Hitchcock's attacks on the department in ANC 2 (February 14, 1836) (a letter first printed in the Washington Globe a week earlier).


II. The Topographical Engineers: Conflict and Jurisdiction


32 Shallat, ""Structures in the Stream,"" chs. 2 and 3; statistic in Calhoun, *The American Civil Engineer*, p. 22.

33 Ibid., ch. 2 (statistics at pp. 30 and 43-44). See also Molloy, "Technical Education and the Young Republic," among the numerous works on the Military Academy. Overall, Calhoun estimates that about one quarter of American civil engineers were academically trained (p. 52). (The disparity lies in the many smaller public projects that emulated the New York system of on the job training.)

34 Calhoun, *The American Civil Engineer*, ch. 1, pp. 16 and 23 (quotation).

35 Ibid., chs. 3-5.
36 Letter from the Portland, Maine Jeffersonian, reprinted in ANC 2 (March 17, 1836): 165.

37 One critic asserted of these "essentially military" engineers that "to excite the admiration of those whose tastes delight in elegance and grandeur without regard to cost is their chief ambition" (quoted on p. 137). For a similar example of conflict, see Capt. Roger Jones to a Mr. Robinson or G. Taylor, October 9, 1817 (official letterbook in the Peter Force Collection), in which Jones threatened to stop signing these contractors' accounts (without which they could not be paid) unless their agent filled them out correctly. See Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 1, for the general problem of professional distance and the appearance of inhumanity.

While a company officer Roger Jones recommended using soldiers for fortification construction, because they would not require the higher wages of skilled labor, but this was rarely done on a consistent basis, and most officers saw it as a diversion from more appropriate military duties like drill. Nevertheless, the quartermasters usually drew on soldiers for local post construction and roadwork, despite opposition from the line. See Jones to Acting Secretary of War George Graham, July 14, 1817, Official Letterbook for Ft. Washington (on the Potomac), in the Peter Force Collection, Series 8D, Volume 81, LC. See also Capt. James Gadsden, August 16, 1818 and September 24 and October 11, 1819, and Lt. Col. Charles Gratiot, January 1, 1820, LR:CE, and Calhoun, The American Civil Engineer, ch. 6 and pp. 191-92.

38 Ibid., ch. 7 (statistic at p. 142) and p. 192.


41 Abert to Cass, April 2, 1834, quoted in Hill, Roads, Railways, and Waterways, p. 83, and annual report of the Topographical Bureau, November 2, 1835, ASP:MA 5: 715.
42 Totten and Bernard, report on canal routes examined in 1824, February 2, 1825, quoted in Hill, Roads, Railways, and Waterways, pp. 66-67; Macomb to Calhoun, October 2, 1824, Letters Sent, Internal Improvements, RG77, NA.


44 Hill, Roads, Railways, and Waterways, pp. 44, 48-49, and 52 (ch. 2 passim). See Wiebe, The Opening of America, ch. 10, on the struggle over federal aid to state and local projects.

45 Hill, Roads, Railways, and Waterways, pp. 59, 62, and 65.


47 Ibid., pp. 76-77 and 81-82. See generally Wiebe, The Opening of America, ch. 11 ("Comprehensive Programs").

48 Hill, Roads, Railways, and Waterways, pp. 113-14, 120-23, and 147.

49 Ibid., pp. 117-18, 123-24, and 145.

50 Ibid., pp. 86-88 and 126-28 (Abert to Butler, January 24, 1837, quoted on pp. 126-27); Poinsett, annual report communicated to Congress December 2, 1837, ASP:MA 7: 573-74.


54 "A communication from the topographical engineers to the Secretary of War" and "A communication from the topographical engineers to the Committee on Military Affairs," January 2, 1827, ASP:MA 3: 492-94.

55 Roberdeau to Macomb, April 13, 1827, file E-89, SW:LR-Reg.

56 "A communication from the topographical engineers to the Committee on Military Affairs" and "A communication from the topographical engineers to the Secretary of War," January 2, 1827, ASP:MA 3: 492-95.


58 Macomb, March 24, 1828, file M-11, SW:LR-Reg.; Abert to Secretary Peter B. Porter, February 12, 1829, Topographical Bureau, Letters Sent, RG 77, NA.

59 John H. Eaton, "On the Importance of the Topographical Engineers of the Army," communicated to the House January 21, 1831, ASP:MA 4: 631; Abert to Cass, November 2, 1835, ASP:MA 6: 6. See also "Engineer, and Topographical Engineer Corps," ANC 1 (January 22, 1835): 30. Operational needs in the Seminole War appear to have played a less significant role in the expansion of the topographical corps than in that of the quartermasters and ordnance, probably because before the 1840s the topogs were generally understood to be surveyors—collectors of information—rather than planners, a role usually associated with the Quartermaster Department insofar as it was considered a staff responsibility at all. See Adjutant General Roger Jones to Acting Secretary of War Benjamin Butler, November 26, 1836, published in ANC 4 (February 16, 1837): 98, for an uncommonly explicit reference to the need for officers acquainted with frontier topography.


62 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 144; Coffman, The Old Army, p. 56; Wiebe, The Opening of American Society, ch. 12. See chapters 14 and 15 herein for brief discussions of the topogs' duties in the west. William H. Goetzmann, "The Mountain Man as Jacksonian Man," American Quarterly 15 (Fall 1963): 402-415, provides a glimpse of a different response to that resolution that partook equally of American nationalism; the Corps of
Topographical Engineers epitomized by Fremont shared much of the mountain man’s romanticism and sense of individual and national mission as described by Goetzmann. Given the frequent assumption, following Goetzmann’s widely read work, that the topogs epitomized the officer corps—which is certainly untrue—there has been little scholarly attention directed to the change that must have occurred in the Topographical Corps when its size was quadrupled, with half of the increase coming from the ranks of civilians. I have myself taken Fremont as a representative type for the Topographical Corps after 1838, but perhaps James D. Graham, who made military surveys in Maine as well as running boundaries like the Sabine, or George Meade, who joined the corps in 1842 and served with the Army of Occupation in Texas, are more representative figures than the flamboyant romantic—perhaps Fremont set an example that officers after 1844 aspired to emulate, but the change was probably not immediate. Remember that Fremont resigned in 1848 after escaping dismissal by court-martial.

III. The Ordnance Corps: The Nuanced Reality

63 Major C. E. Dutton, “The Ordnance Department,” in Rodenbough and Haskin, eds., The Army of the United States, pp. 126-27; Bomford to Barbour, January 8, 1827, ASP:MA 3: 579. Wadsworth had first entered the army in 1794 as a captain in the Corps of Engineers and Artillerists; he resigned in 1796 after coming in conflict with the corps’ chief but was recommissioned as a captain in 1798, promoted to major in 1800, and retained until he resigned again in 1805 (to avoid southern service). He was reinstated in 1812 as the commissary general of ordnance with the rank of colonel. See also William A. DeCaindry, A Compilation of Laws of the United States Relating to the and Affecting the Ordnance Department (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872). Talcott’s sons also played significant roles in the army, Andrew as fortification and railroad engineer and surveyor, George H. as commissary in Florida and ordnance captain, acting major of Voltigeurs (volunteer light infantry who fought as individual skirmishers), and commander of a battery of mountain howitzers at Cerro Gordo. Though a staff officer, George H. did not lack military spirit—he was brevetted for gallantry in Florida and at Molino del Rey, but resigned his commission in 1848 when he was retained as captain with the brevet of major rather than major brevet lieutenant colonel as he had ranked with the Voltigeurs.

64 Bomford, November 28, 1826, file O-20, Gaines, February 28 and April 24, 1824, files G-84 and G-85, and Bomford, January 9, 1826, files O-1, SW:LR-Reg.; Major Jacob Hindman to Winfield Scott, IR approved by the latter February
1823, quoted in Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, p. 139. See also the James B. Dyer Journal, LC (probably that of Lt. Alexander B. Dyer, per the bibliographic registers); Lt. Col. William Lindsay to Scott, IRs approved February 1823, cited in Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, p. 139; and IG Samuel B. Archer, IRs, November 3, 1822, October 30, 1823, and November 17, 1824.


67 Wadsworth, October 14 and December 18, 1817, files W-206 and W-250, SW:LR-Reg.; Falk, "Soldier-Technologist," p. 298; Dutton, "The Ordnance Department," in Rodenbough and Haskin, eds., The Army of the United States, pp. 129-30. See also the "General Report on an Examination and Survey of Various Sites for the Establishment of an Armory on the Western Waters," communicated to the Senate May 28, 1830 (which includes many letters by engineer Capt. John L. Smith on prices and plans), ASP:MA 4: 479-578. The superintendent of cannon was William Wade, who had resigned when superseded by William Worth for one of the promotions to ordnance major in 1832.

IV. Staff-Line Conflict and the Nuances of Cohesion and Responsibility

"Professions and the Occupational Principle," in Freidson, ed., The Professions and Their Prospects (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1971), pp. 19-38, Freidson accepted that "the autonomy connected with skill should not be confused . . . with the autonomy of the traditional self-employed professional" (p. 36), but he maintained that the "occupational principle" of skill "is logically and substantively in contrast to . . . the administrative principle" (i.e., resource management) of office (p. 19). By this he meant that "management" no longer controls the content of work, which is instead coordinated through the orders of professionals whose authority is derived from expertise (pp. 23-25). The problems of this sort of formulation are clear in the case of military professionals (whose authority is ultimately based on expertise and responsibility but immediately--within their organization--on accountability through office as qualified by their rank within a hierarchy).

69 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 233 ("chronic").

70 Macomb to Secretary of War John H. Eaton, October 9, 1829, HQA:LS; Skelton, "The United States Army," pp. 85-86. These conflicts had first come to a head in 1817, when Andrew Jackson countermanded War Department orders transferring several staff officers from his division without informing him, for Jackson believed that staff independence "disorganise[d] the whole military system of subordination." This otherwise minor administrative issue became the basis of a serious civil-military dispute that threatened the principles of executive control and civilian supremacy. When he first came to office Calhoun felt compelled to reassure Jackson despite the cost to these principles, but the 1821 Army Regulations provided a much more clear definition of the lines of authority that gave the staff bureaus effective freedom from direction by line commanders. See Jackson to President Monroe, September 9, 1817, PAJ 4: 136. See also Gaines, IR, November 25, 1824, IGO, and Scott to Adjutant General Jones, September 8, 1827, AGO:LR.

71 "An Officer of the Army" (Capt. Charles F. Smith) to the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, May 8, 1842, Charles F. Smith Papers, USMA. See General Order No. 7, April 6, 1831 (Orders File, AGO), and Secretary of War Marcy to Rep. John W. Davis, February 24, 1846, NASP:MA 14: 113-16, concerning the Washington per diem.


74 MacKay to Walbach, April 4, 1830, HQA:LR. MacKay had already been involved in a similar question at West Point, where he relied on the Corps of Engineers' control over the academy in refusing Commandant William Worth's orders that he repair the latter's house. A court-martial convicted MacKay of insubordination, but President Adams quashed the verdict. (See Skelton, "The United States Army," p. 99.)

75 General Order No. 24, April 16, 1824, Orders File, AGO; Brown, October 31, 1827, file B-300, SW:LR-Reg.; Skelton, "The United States Army," pp. 96-97.


77 AIG Daniel Parker to Wadsworth, February 22, 1820, in the Richard L. Baker Papers, USMA.

78 Archer, IRs, November 3, 1822, October 30, 1823, and November 17, 1824; General Orders 55 and 60, August 3 and 9, 1824, cited in Clary and Whitehorne, The Inspectors General of the United States Army, p. 142; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 234; Capt. John R. Vinton, "private," October 1, 1843, HQA:LR. See also Lt. Col. George Bomford to Jones, August 7, 1826, AGO:LR, asking whether he had to fire a salute to honor an inspector's arrival (in effect acknowledging the line's right to inspect), and Jones' response (August 14, 1826, AGO:LS) that this was a matter of course (though Jones skirted the real issue by referring to the presence of an artillery company there rather than maintaining the line's right of inspection outright).


80 Nourse, January 1, 1819, Hayne, December 22, 1818, and Jesup, February 28, 1828, files N-23, H-100, and J-50, SW:LR-Reg.; Jesup to Secretary of War John Bell, June 29, 1841, Jesup Papers, Box 8, LC.
Tallmadge, August 11, 1819, file T-7, SW:LR-Reg.; Jones in "Letter of the Adjutant General" to the secretary of war, ANC 4 (February 16, 1837): 98; Hughes, "The Adjutant General's Office," pp. 200-201; Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," pp. 52-53; Winfield Scott to Secretary of War Marcy, March 11, 1845, HQA:LS. In some bibliographical sources Wool is cited as holding a line lieutenant colonelcy in 1818, but he was not carried on Army Register as such that year, nor was he listed in any regiment. He sought a brigadiership in 1819 and tried to secure a lineal colonelcy before the reduction, both without success.

Taylor, May 28, 1823, file T-183, SW:LR-Reg.; Lt. George Corpereu, October 7, 1829, HQA:LR. On the other hand, the army's junior officers said little against Jesup's position in Florida, for Scott and Gaines had already failed to suppress the Seminoles when Jesup took up the task in late 1836, while Macomb never seems to have made a serious effort to assume the theater command. Indeed, Jesup had been the more active general during the Creek War that summer, striking and scattering the Creek while Scott built up a ponderous force in hopes of carrying out the sort of encirclement that had already failed in Florida that winter. Jesup's demonstrated success in 1836 and his record of battlefield leadership in 1814 probably assuaged any doubts about his right or fitness to command.

Huger to Robert Anderson, February 27, 1840, Anderson Papers, LC. Officers in command of posts received "double rations," a significant boost in their pay, on the theory that they would use these funds to entertain distinguished visitors.

See Brown to Thomas Sidney Jesup, October 1, 1817, Jesup Papers, Box 2, LC, and Secretary of War Calhoun to President Monroe, August 8, 1821, Monroe Papers, NYPL.


Pierce to Macomb, November 21, 1834, HQA:LR; Capt. James W. Ripley to Robert Anderson, December 26, 1834, Anderson Papers, LC; Hughes, "The Adjutant General's Office," pp. 199-207. See Capt. Alexander Fanning, July 20, 1832, HQA:LR, for another example of the principles governing transfers. Whiting provides us with a case not unlike Jones' in the use and abuse of brevet rank: first brevetted to captain in 1814 (in the same month that he refused a commission in a new regiment at that rank) and promoted to that rank by seniority in 1817, he received a brevet in 1830 to date from 1824 for ten
years' service in his previous brevet rank, and another in 1834 after Congress had supposedly abolished the ten year provision. (Congress had to approve these brevets, however, and did so.)

87 The most thorough account of the dispute between Macomb and Jones is in Hughes, "The Adjutant General's Office," pp. 238-50. See also "Proceedings of a Court-martial in the Case of Adjutant General Roger Jones," communicated to the House May 14, 1830, ASP:MA 4: 450-79, and Skelton, "The United States Army," pp. 230-34. (See ibid., pp. 134-37 and 288-94 on conflicts over the control of communications between line officers, especially the department commanders, and the secretary of war.) Besides the strong personalities involved, Cooper had little of Jones' stature at a time when the army was being expanded by several regiments, which put control over personnel decisions at a premium. Cooper had graduated from West Point in 1815 but had not served in the War of 1812 and was not promoted to captain until 1836.

88 Ibid., pp. 238-39 and 245-46; General Order No. 22, June 6, 1831, Orders File, AGO; War Department, General Regulations for the Army (Washington, D.C., 1834), pp. 115-16.


90 Scott, no addressee, August 12, 1841, Scott Papers, USMA. General officers were selected by merit rather than seniority. They held no regimental rank, but they remained a part of the line and exercised their command authority over geographically organized divisions or departments. Jesup's commission as brigadier was a staff one like Jones' or Wool's as colonel, and he only commanded field forces in Alabama and Florida by order of the president and secretary of war.

91 "An Officer of the Army" (who an informed reader like a senator would have recognized as Smith, given the West Point postmark and the arguments made) to the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, May 8, 1842, Charles F. Smith Papers, USMA.


Chapter IX

Socialization, Motivation, Identity, and Cohesion: Careerism, Internal Conflict, and the Endurance of Individualism in the Military Academy and the Regiments

The inertia of army life remained a constant presence and an unmistakable threat to the officer corps' otherwise growing professional commitment and identity. Writing to a civilian friend on the Fourth of July in 1844, eight year veteran Robert Allen (a first lieutenant) fell into melancholy and complained that

I do not feel as if I were pursuing or practicing a profession; for the military service, in time of peace, is but nominally a profession. There is no progress in it; no advancement in prospects, nothing to be learned, nothing out of which reputation can be made. I have wished a thousand times that I had never seen the army, not because my time does not pass pleasantly enough, but because it does not pass profitably.¹

These lamentations notwithstanding, Allen obviously preferred the security and entree of an army commission to a life of civilian business competition, for he never resigned. Allen had or made outstanding political connections, but he was otherwise an average officer: he had been an average cadet at West Point; he was promoted to first lieutenant very quickly because of the force increase of 1838 but accepted a quartermaster post in 1846 and vacated his regimental rank when promoted to captain the following year. His career illustrates the sluggishness of army promotion, the value of political influence, and the simple persistence which came to characterize so many officers during this period, for he remained in service until 1878—forty-two
years—gaining both regular and volunteer brevets to major general though he went no further than colonel in the regular hierarchy.

We arrive rather late to an explicit analysis of the officer corps' collective mindset, but many of their principal motives and values have already been suggested and explored, especially in chapters three, six, and seven. This chapter begins with an examination of the socialization process at West Point and uses what we learn to suggest the values and worldview of the officer corps, particularly as they were expressed in internal conflicts. Although the pattern that emerges is one of careerism and a quest for security rather than progressive professionalization, the two archetypes are much less far apart than they first appear, and the remaining chapters of this work will demonstrate their consonance in the context of the corps' external relations with working-class enlisted men, American civilians and politicians, and foreign officials and ethnic and cultural "others" like Amerindians and Mexicans.

The present chapter uses a series of case studies to explore the values and motives of the officer corps and the cohesion and dissension they fostered. It does not attempt to trace the internal life of the army systematically (a task which would require entire volumes), but is intended to suggest the mentalité and worldview which officers brought to their relations with individuals and groups outside the army. As such, the chapter concludes the internal focus which has characterized much of this work so far, and provides the basis for my examination of officers' interactions with their society (including the enlisted men as discussed in chapter ten) and the members of other national and ethnic groups they encountered on the borderlands of the United States. Like officers' careers, the chapter will begin with an examination of the socialization process at the Military Academy.
The West Point motto "duty, honor, country" was no mere slogan, for each of these values held potent, but in practice often complex, meaning for the academy's graduates and the officer corps in general. Army officers went to the nation's borders imbued with a strong sense of personal honor that though often dysfunctional in their personal relationships embodied ideals of disinterested service and dutiful obligation to others which underpinned their actions on behalf of the expanding American nation-state—the ethical foundations of a sense of special responsibility for national defense (or control over the direction of the use of organized armed force) and accountability to civilian political authority. On the other hand, officers' sense of themselves as an elite clearly contributed to an authoritarian mindset which sanctioned their endemic mistreatment of enlisted men and a willingness to serve as the violent agents of the Anglo-American nation-state in repressing the quests of alien ethnicities (Amerindians, African-American maroons, and Mexicans) and border and frontier localities within the United States for freedom from constraint by the American government and the historical processes of Anglo-American cultural and economic expansion and social and political centralization that it ultimately represented.

Army officers learned and shared the belief in character and self-disciplined restraint characteristic of the growing middle class in the Jacksonian era, but they commonly espoused values that harked backward to the ideal of the eighteenth century gentleman. Officers spoke and acted upon the zealous (and jealous) republican language of personal rights and independence, a trope that originated among the aristocracy in monarchical society but later percolated throughout democratic society. Although largely from middle class rather than elite economic backgrounds, army officers did come disproportionately from urban areas and from the families of
government officeholders and professionals—the sons of farmers and merchants were significantly underrepresented in the officer corps, and it is obvious that very few men from families beneath the middle class had any chance of becoming officers. Aspiring military commanders learned and espoused genteel values of social distance and hierarchy and personal decorum and honor, to aspire to fame, reputation, and authority rather than great material wealth. They upheld tradition, social order and cohesion, public service to the nation as embodied by the central government, and the appearance of material and political disinterestedness—in other words, partisan neutrality and a sort of transcendant social objectivity in the service of the nation—as ideals despite frequent lapses of responsibility as individuals.2

Nearly thirty year ago William Skelton wrote that the army’s institutional conflicts "owed their form and intensity at a given time to the individuals involved," and this insight cannot be downplayed, because it helps us to concentrate on the motives of individual officers and the limits to the evolution of army bureaucracy and the bureaucratic mentalité. This chapter explores a wide range of themes first introduced in chapters seven and eight—claims of favoritism and inequality (especially as they were expressed in regard to various forms of patronage), struggles over the authority of brevet rank and courts-martials, the ease with which disputes at one level of personal or organizational interaction were transmitted to and exacerbated at other levels, and the related persistence of feuds (including court-martials and duels) which tore at the internal fabric of the officer corps—but its primary intent is to explore officers' motives and values through several case or community studies compounded through and supplemented by short individual biographies. The first section examines the form and
content of the officer candidate's initial socialization at West Point, where aspirants learned the core values of gentility, personal honor, and nationalism; the second investigates the inner life of a single regiment, the 1st Dragoons, which though considered elite by contemporaries provides more than ample illustration of the often dysfunctional persistence of individualism, civilian social values like gentility and honor, and internal feuding. In effect, the first section examines the process of self-making at the academy and the second explores that of self-expression in the field, patterns that demonstrate the close integration of civilian class and social values in the mental and behavioural formation of occupational identity and culture.

The last section examines the public controversies over the respective location of infantry and artillery stations, in which officers stressed both functional advantages of expertise and capability and organizational considerations of fairness and equality, in order to remind the reader of the nuanced intersection between the presumptively objective and the socially and organizationally subjective dimensions of professionalism (or more crudely put, between urges toward the elaboration of functional expertise and the creation and maintenance of group and subgroup cohesion). My treatment of this controversy also highlights the ways in which arguments derived from one category of "professional" thought and practice were used to support individual and organizational ends in another, a phenomenon we shall see again in more damaging forms in chapter twelve's discussion of the Corps of Engineers' work on the coastal fortification system. The case studies in the present chapter ultimately lead us toward the ability to assess the motives of the officer corps, particularly the complex balance between personal ambition (the quest for fame, glory, and reputation) and the search for individual material security through career and organization. Seen in
larger historical perspective (or hindsight, if you will) the values of the officer corps, though seemingly old-fashioned in the context of the market revolution of Jacksonian America, anticipated and through their actions on the borderlands led the country toward the sociocultural consolidation which occurred in the mid- and late nineteenth century—in the army officer corps, self-making, professionalization, and class and state formation were united endeavours.

* * *

I. Commitment, Identity, and the Nuances of Group Cohesion: Class and Occupational Socialization at West Point

The West Point experience changed men. Many spoke of their arrival as a turning point in their lives, and in 1833 William Frazier articulated this sense of distinctiveness at length:

I feel indeed like a different being from what I was two short years ago, I perceive the change in myself and in every thing connected with me, in fact from the very moment I got my appointment as a cadet, I felt a care on my mind which I had never had before, I knew that from that moment commenced my buffeting with the world, and that everything depended upon my own exertions.

Isolation at West Point distanced cadets from their past loyalties as well as their homes. In 1838 Joseph Irons (WP'41) remarked that cadets on furlough "found everything so altered that they wished themselves back at West Point," while Frazier (WP'36) felt "as contented as a person could be" at West Point: "when I look back the last few years seem like a dream to me . . .
Lancaster does not seem like my home any more . . . the changes in the society . . . are so great that I know I should not take much pleasure there."
Sustained for four long years by this esprit and cohesion, Alfred Mordecai (WP'23) lamented that "it will go hard with many of us after living together on terms of intimacy so long to separate without [knowing when] . . . we may next meet."³

After producing a series of thorough analyses of the training and curriculum at West Point, historians have recently begun to turn their attention to the socialization cadets received there, a process which was ultimately more significant in the formation of officers' identities and the character of their expertise. Chapter three herein demonstrated the limits to the academy's value in military training, and I hinted then at the bifurcated professional identity that led many of the most capable graduates to remain at the academy as instructors or to resign for civil engineering posts. The present section is intended to examine the social dimensions of the West Point experience through the contemporary letters of the cadets themselves. As suggested in chapter six, we will observe a consistent disinterest in specifically military duties like drill and a tendency, doubtlessly in reaction to the demanding routine cadets faced, to prefer ease and inactivity, which foreshadowed the inertia officers commonly encountered during their service careers. Nevertheless, following chapter three's conclusions about the beneficial effects of Thayer's regime of discipline on the aspiring officer's mental habits--the creation of a mindset conducive to responsibility and accountability--this section will concentrate on cadets' socialization in personal honor and group cohesion, the foundation of their commitment to a distinct professional identity. This socialization was not absorbed without conflict, contestation, or reinterpretation, however, for cadets frequently
expressed their senses of individual honor and of the cohesion of the corps as a whole through resistance to the legally constituted authority of the academy hierarchy, a pattern that foreshadowed the endemic personal conflicts cadets would encounter and participate in during their later careers.

The product of this tension between authority, representing obligation to the collectivity expressed in and through an organizational hierarchy, and individualism (usually expressed in the language of honor, which encompassed the word "rights") was a complex balance of "independence" and subordination that reflected the nuances and contradictions of American gentility—in effect, socially elite individualism justified by claims to disinterested social service—as it operated in an authoritarian organizational environment. In other words, class formation was a complex process in the officer corps, because the values of gentility were legacies of a personalistic age friendly to "natural" or organic hierarchy like that putatively in operation between genteel officers and working-class enlisted men, but antagonistic to the formalized bureaucracy and subordination which officers would be forced to submit to throughout their careers. (This balance of social modes and dynamics has been anticipated in the sentimentally paternalistic side of military leadership observed at the end of chapter six, and will become further evident in chapters ten and eleven when I discuss officers' relations with enlisted men and civilians.)

Academy training thus fostered two very different faces of social and political accountability, depending fundamentally on the class status and relations of the individuals involved: the rigid hierarchical discipline at West Point probably predisposed certain officers to mistreat the men under their command, but it also inculcated mental habits of system, order and "regularity" that suited officers for responsible service in a bureaucracy. The
academy was socially irresponsible in its effective alienation of aspirants from
the democratic mainstream of American culture, but it also stressed merit,
equal opportunity, and formal equality of treatment and taught habits of
accountability that encouraged subordination to the democratically elected
civilian government. West Point was also an agent of state formation, for its
atmosphere engendered what was probably the strongest nationalism then
extant in American society, for graduates routinely praised the academy as the
only truly "national institution," a training which served "to divest [all] those
connected with it of sectional prejudices." Officers' nationalism was
commonly phrased in opposition to localism, or as officers saw it to self-
interested parochialism, a sense of putatively objective neutrality that served
the officer corps' interests and those of the nation-state at the expense of or in
conflict with less centrally minded inhabitants of the nation's peripheries and
borderlands.4

In effect, the academy created the first national managerial class in the
United States, an elite which was neither economic nor overtly political (in
the sense of partisan activism), but whose bureaucratic power, social prestige,
and cohesiveness as a corporate interest group were equalled by few other
groups in the society of that era. Indeed, the education cadets gained at the
academy also fostered a sense of gratitude that many would soon cease to
speak of as officers: in 1822 Alfred Mordecai remarked that the "permanent
benefits" he had secured formed "an indissoluble tie . . . between me and the
scenes of so many happy days," and he told one of his sisters that "I shall not
yet desert Uncle Sam, who has rendered the last four years of my life so
serviceable to me." Two decades later Joseph Irons added that despite "some
pretty hard times" at the academy he was "deeply and sincerely grateful to my
country for her kindness, for her generosity, and the fostering care with
which she watches over and protects us." (On the other hand, the academy was not impervious to the growing sectional feeling in American life--the cadet Dialectic Society debated and voted in favor of the right of secession in 1841, and two years later it discussed nullification.)

The Military Academy of the Thayer era was a grim place, but its very rigor drew cadets together in indissoluble bonds of affection tempered in the furnace of adversity, and academy historian George Pappas observes that remarkably few cadet letters complain about the spartan conditions. Both sides of this equation were evident in Lieutenant Maskell Ewing's letter to a cadet several years after graduating: "I always connect fear with a reminiscence of the place, notwithstanding the agreeable hours of many a wild adventure, and the companionship of Cadets I love with perhaps as warm affections as any friend I have on earth." Pappas concludes that the cadets' morale was "astounding considering their way of life," and some cadets even claimed to regret the passage of Thayer's regime and the mildness which succeeded it. Indeed, an 1835 letter in the Army and Navy Chronicle provides us with perhaps the starkest example of the West Point ethic of discipline, "solitude and severity." Writing in support of a proposal to remove the hotel adjacent to post lest it distract the cadets from their studies, the author--apparently a cadet or very recent graduate himself--called for an end to all furloughs and a standard of living of stunning asceticism. "No one should leave the spot until he left with a diploma! . . . I would allow no Cadet to visit his relatives, or his relatives to visit him, for four years!" he exclaimed. Perhaps driven insane by his studies, the author proclaimed that he "would cause the Cadets to exercise the utmost self-denial; I would make him sleep in the open air" (this in November). (As it was, cadets had to sleep on the floor until cots were permitted in 1838.) Indeed, the reader unfamiliar
with the excesses of nineteenth-century American rhetoric might well think this letter a satire save for the author's earnest injunctions that young American become like Romans or Spartans, or their ancestors of the Revolution: "In short, I would make soldiers of them! And those who could not undergo the fatigues of such a life, I would discard, as unfit for the service of their country." "[A]dopt some rigid system . . . deprive him of all the luxuries . . . which others enjoy! . . . Then they must be driven to their books for amusement . . . What a happy community! What erudition would soon be developed! What soldiers!"

Beyond satisfying political imperatives of economy and thrift and accustoming future officers to discomfort and sacrifice, the severity of West Point was intended to produce intense mental concentration and a sense of equality among the cadets, which would in turn contribute to their individual commitment and group cohesion as aspiring officers. As early as 1818 Thayer wrote that "the emulation excited by the Class-Reports & by the Merit-Rolls has produced a degree of application which is believed to be unexampled at this Institution," and most persons associated with the academy considered this competitiveness the underpinning of a meritocracy based on equal opportunities for all cadets, which one officer labelled "the very gist of republicanism." Six years later Dennis Hart Mahan exulted in passing the sons of the governor of Pennsylvania and the attorney general to be the first in his class at graduation, but the cry of meritocracy sometimes took on ironic dimensions: a decade later, petitioning against what they saw as favoritism by Mahan, the class of 1834 asserted that "honorable and open emulation in the contest for class ascendency has always characterized the young men of this institution . . . and this has perhaps contributed more largely than any other cause to its present high character."
Like serving officers, the cadets constantly complained of favoritism, but in the larger picture—which was the one most cadets and graduates presented in the accounts they meant for the outside world—the Military Academy was a highly competitive place where success was formally determined by frequent and precise mathematical grading (the results of which were published weekly for every cadet to see), and the consensus among cadets and graduates alike was that aside from individual incidents the academy was a refuge of meritocratic equality unequalled anywhere else in the nation. Two letters from the plebes (first-year cadets) of the class of 1846 illustrate this feeling: Samuel Raymond complained that "success in a great measure depends upon favor" but concluded by pronouncing that "every one must be tried," while George McClellan reported that Chief Engineer Totten's son had just been dismissed, which "shows how impartial they are here." Indeed, it is a remarkable testament to the cohesion of each class that so little academic favor was actually sought and that cadets cooperated so much (sometimes illicitly) in studying together, despite the importance of their final rankings to their future careers.8

The shared experience of West Point created the customary and attitudinal foundation for the cohesion of the officer corps as an occupation and profession. Passage through the academy taught graduates the customs and traditions of the army, accustomed them to the discipline and regularity of a soldier's life, and led to enduring friendships, "those ties of social brotherhood . . . which death alone dissolves." Graduates commonly referred to their "fond recollections" of the academy, a sense of comradeship and fellow-feeling that was publically expressed in an officer's letter to the civilian National Intelligencer in 1838:
You can form but little idea of the pleasure that the officers of this as well as other regiments derive from meeting after a long separation. There is a degree of cordiality and good-fellowship amongst the officers of the army not to be found in the same number of young men elsewhere. This arises from their having been educated at the same school, and entertaining similar views upon most subjects. . . . It is exceedingly gratifying for me to observe the correct deportment of these young gentlemen.9

Indeed, the cohesion of West Point graduates and army officers was reflected in a masculinity that was often less overtly aggressive than we might expect from combat leaders and frontiersmen, and the sentimentally romantic atmosphere at West Point surely contributed to the growth of affectionate relationships, perhaps not unlike some of those that developed in English public schools, among the cadets. Historian Anthony Rotundo views the intimate relationships between nineteenth century men in their late teens and early twenties as the products of a temporary stage during which they felt a particular need for emotional support that they could not derive from parents or wives—i.e., young adulthood—and turned to each other instead, as peers with similar circumstances and anxieties. All-male voluntary associations like debating clubs added a practical education in the exercise of organizational power and persuasion, and although the limits to their autonomy were far stricter than those faced by young civilian men the West Point environment encouraged aspiring officers to develop both dimensions of homosocial cohesion.10

Unlike most civilian men, army officers maintained these close relationships for years if not decades after their graduation. Perhaps this was because their world was more interdependent than that of most civilian men.
Combat was rare, but when it came soldiers shared an experience of deadly peril utterly alien to most civilians, and the military ideal demanded cohesion and a shared sense of service and responsibility that restrained the expression of the preeminent nineteenth century masculine values of independence and self-distinction. Plagued by the cognitive dissonance of frustrated ambition and garrison inertia, the army community was often a fractious one, but the professional identities of career officers included a social and ideological commitment to their colleagues via the ideal of officership and the medium of their occupational community, a sense of connection that was hard for many civilian men to maintain amid the stresses of the competitive marketplace. Although officers often moved from one post to another, they were constantly meeting old friends as they did so, and their assignments maintained and recreated peer networks rather than forcing soldiers to build new ones. Most regulars eventually married, and many of them turned to their sisters and mothers for empathy before then, but at several points during their lives most of an officer's close associates were bound to be other men. Although there is no evidence to tell us whether other soldiers considered such intimate friendship "unmanly," men like Mordecai, Swift, and the officers of the 1st Dragoon Regiment do not appear to have noticed any incongruity or felt any threat to their manhood. Indeed, the army life bears some significant similarities to the ethic of mutuality some historians have found in women's culture and experience during the nineteenth century, and there were civilian parallels to these soldiers, who were protected from the strain of competition by institutional security, among members of the gentry who were insulated by wealth or ideology and sustained similar friendships long after marrying and choosing a career.
The academy's romantic atmosphere of patriotic history and sentiment was well suited to inculcating a sense of mission and identity, and incoming cadets were usually impressed by their surroundings. In an 1822 letter plebe James Engle wrote that "by turning your head in any direction you may behold the work of patriotism falling in [presumably romantic] ruins," while the following year plebe Washington Hood compared West Point to St. Helena because of their mountains and referred to the story of the British spy Major Andre and the Revolutionary echoes of ruined fortifications. Monuments and rituals were other means by which aspiring officers developed and expressed their group cohesion and military identity, both among themselves and in connection to their predecessors and their wartime service and sacrifice: in 1818 the academy dedicated a memorial to Eleazer Wood (WP'06), a lieutenant colonel killed in action during the sortie from Fort Erie in 1814 and the most senior graduate to be slain during the war. Burials at the academy were always held with military honors, and in 1828 plebe William Chapman reported that his class had erected a memorial to a deceased comrade.\textsuperscript{12}

Although most of this influence unfolded informally, the academy's superintendents and commandants periodically made speeches which were intended to stimulate and reinforce the cadets' senses of commitment, identity, and cohesion by promoting the allied values of mission, duty, and obligation—or duty, honor, and country. In 1842 plebe George McClellan glowingly (and tellingly) described the new commandant's speech to the corps: "after invoking our military spirit . . . he wound up by saying 'You are not common soldiers! You are gentlemen—gentlemen of manners . . . of education. The U.S. looks to you! The country looks to you! The Army looks to you!'" A decade later the president of the Board of Visitors, an ex-
officer himself, gave "an oration on the Duties and the requirements of an American officer" to the cadet Dialectic Society which was later published as a pamphlet at the society's expense. (In one of the ironies that make the story of West Point and the officer corps both complex and familiar to the student of nineteenth-century America, this very officer had "organiz[ed] a combination against authority" while a cadet in 1835, the very incident which had finally spurred President Jackson to halt the lenient disciplinary policy that had driven Thayer to leave. After graduating, this officer served only six years before resigning—the very fact that he was invited to present this address can only bemuse the scholar.) This sense of military cohesion was also an international one founded on professional function: when an indigent Polish officer appeared at the Point in 1833 the cadet captains sought contributions to pay his passage to Charleston, and William Frazier reported that "there was not a dissenting voice."13

The army was well aware of what Winfield Scott called the "important effects of manners, Sentiments, and conduct, on the part of seniors, upon juniors," and in the post-Thayer regime the cadets' military cohesion was also cemented by informal association with the young officers assigned as instructors, many of whom had been cadets several years before along with underclassmen still at the academy. Newly commissioned officers often corresponded with cadets who they had known as underclassmen: in 1842 Lieutenant Henry Lane Kendrick wrote to his erstwhile pupil Joseph Irons (who had just graduated) with news from West Point, including academic standings and disciplinary inquiries. These connections were supplemented by informal rituals which integrated impressionable young cadets into the army community, often in the actual family settings of officers' homes. Doing so reduced the social distance otherwise indispensable to discipline,
and rewarded cadets with an emotional sense of acceptance that went far beyond academic success of making good marks. Indeed, social rituals and events at the academy helped to accentuate the cadets' sense that they were being accepted as men, with all the responsibilities and prerogatives thereof. James Wall Schureman (WP'42) wrote that the officers generally attended and danced at cadet balls during the summer encampments, while plebe William Dutton (WP'46) told his uncle that "to mingle with the Professors [in Sunday school] is very pleasing--They let themselves down from their high dignity with so much ease & appear so much like men--for you must know that officers are not men--[and] never hold intercourse with those beneath them."14

Ties with serving officers also drew cadets' attention to the army's active operations and their future role as combat leaders, and the socialization cadets received at the academy appears to have been remarkably successful when contrasted to the reluctance with which many serving officers reacted to the Second Seminole War: the entire First (fourth year) Class volunteered for (but were refused) immediate service in Florida upon hearing of the Dade Massacre, in which two 1835 graduates were slain, and early in 1836 Jeremiah Scarritt (WP'38) reported that "since the adjustment of our dispute with France it has formed almost the only topic of conversation here." Indeed, cadets took intense pride in the performance of academy graduates in the war, and they said nothing in their letters about the wave of resignations between 1835 and 1837. Commenting on the Dade Massacre, Scarritt wrote to his sister that

if you are the girl I hope you are, the particulars of the fate of gallant Soldiers cannot be uninteresting. As some of them were well known at the Point you may well conceive that their bloody
though glorious death excited our sympathies as well as our admiration. Lieut Mudge [WP'33] was instructor of tactics at this place no longer ago than last June. Lieuts Keais and Henderson [both WP'35] were I may say intimate acquaintances of mine—we were in the corps a year together. . . . Their fate forms a bright and tragical page in the history of our army.

Three years later Lieutenant Benjamin Alvord (WP'33) delivered a lengthy address to the cadets of the Dialectic Society (later published as a pamphlet at their expense) "in commemoration of the gallant conduct of the nine graduates of the Military Academy, and other officers of the United States Army, who fell in the battles" of Dade's Massacre and Okeechobee (1837). In 1845 this heritage of sacrifice and valor in the service of American expansionism was commemorated in a monument which still stands at the academy.15

This commitment notwithstanding, cadet cohesion was not necessarily a force that encouraged dutiful subordination and responsibility, for in a group largely drawn from the gentry (or members of the middle classes who aspired to that status) and informally socialized in the punctilious niceties of personal honor the interaction between cadets and junior officers sometimes foreshadowed later combinations against fellow and superior officers. In the summer of 1835 cadet Edward Morgan (WP'37) wrote to Lieutenant James Duncan (WP'34), who had been a mathematics instructor for several months earlier that year before becoming engaged in a feud with another officer (the very Lieutenant Mudge slain in the Dade Massacre that December) and being transferred, that "you are no doubt aware of the strong sympathy your treatment by the Superindt. excited in the Corps of Cadets; indeed I never knew more unanimity of sentiment on any occasion." Morgan assured
Duncan that the corps had refused to invite Mudge to a play put on by their Thespian Society, and had ostracized him during the Fourth of July celebrations, at which the cadets became "most celestially fuddled." The cadet referred to this inebriated state in a manner which stressed the temporary relief from military restraint which it involved, "the exquisite felicity of being independent" personally--i.e., from onerous military discipline and routine--as well as nationally. (Morgan also reported the new postings of instructors at the academy and teased his erstwhile teacher about the possibility of marriage.) Morgan apparently felt no hesitation in concluding that "we are as lazy as usual in encampment"; his attention was primarily engaged in reading history. Nurturing a discrete yet effective balance between the delicacies of gentry individualism and the imperatives of authoritarian command was a difficult job for any officer or institution.16

Though they accepted and praised the academy's competitiveness, few cadets were enthusiastic about the privations they encountered, and the harried students seemed happiest when at ease, which usually meant during the summer encampments officially devoted to military training. Their reactions to these breaks from academic struggle illustrate a great deal about the character of their socialization, particularly their changing motives and values. In May 1841 James Wall Schureman wrote to his sister Mary that "our daily drills help much to enliven the scene" as he studied for examinations, but in camp two months later he waxed thankful that "a different order of things has arisen, the disordered arrangement of chance and hurry has been thrown aside and another has taken its place, whose peculiar beauty consists in convenience and neatness. Everything has now assumed that uniformity so inseparable from the military life[--]the clock strikes, the
drum beats and the duties are performed at the appointed times." (There were cotillion balls three times a week to entertain the cadets, however.) On the other hand, plebe Samuel Raymond initially found his academic studies "much more agreeable to me than [the] military duties" of camp, and--his later professionalism notwithstanding--Henry Wager Halleck (WP'39) found both military and scholarly life at the academy "dull monotony." Eagerly looking forward to his graduation, Halleck added that "a few months more & I shall be free from the trammels of this institution--May it come quickly," but in the meantime he was happily engaged as an assistant professor of chemistry while relieved of ordinary military duties. Like these men, Schureman had begun his second encampment (in 1839) with a decided preference for nonmilitary duty, but his letter to Mary that July illustrates a number of the aspects of the West Point socialization process, for he justified the superintendent's decision to deny furloughs, as it "would be impossible to keep up a military appearance" if all his class were gone on leave. Though otherwise beset by isolation and the monotony of uninterrupted study, Schureman concluded that "there is always an intimate connexion between all the graduates of the Academy" that provided emotional compensation for its rigors. Indeed, in his final spring Schureman initiated and edited a short-lived cadet publication, "The West Pointer," that combined army news with sentimental literary productions.17

The formal socialization process at West Point was primarily aimed at inculcating habits of discipline and accountability in order to form responsible officers, while cohesion was a secondary matter that developed largely from the cadets' informal reactions to their experiences and the values embodied by their environment. The West Point code of honor was one of strict honesty that reflected the military principle of accountable subordination, and
the academy did not overtly teach table manners or bodily management, but gentility and honor were the principal social values cadets learned at the academy. Given their relatively elite upbringings, we can be fairly certain that these values were also the ones they brought with them to the academy, indicating once again the difficulties the institution encountered in forming specifically military identities and those which scholars encounter in attempting to distinguish cause and consequence in this process. In 1823 plebe Abner Hetzel exclaimed with pleasure at the "universal politeness" that was fostered by a regulation prohibiting personal insults, while a decade later William Frazier declared that "I have always determined to act perfectly honorable and upright in all my affairs . . . and never to give an insult nor ever to take one." The mutual respect reflected by this equanimitable demeanor provided the social underpinning for a sense of occupational (and thus national) and class cohesion that transcended the differences (especially the potential or actual sectional ones) of men gathered from around the nation: "never have I seen a set of young men, act more gentlemanly or honorably in my life, if any one acts to the contrary he is soon despised by the whole corps," wrote Frazier.18

Indeed, it is clear that Thayer's behavioural code was a socially as well as militarily valuable one, because the qualities of character sought in military leaders were ultimately not much different from those sought in civilian ones. In 1818, for example, Thayer forced John Dunny to resign because he was "confirmed in low & ungentlemanly habits & is, therefore, unfit to associate with the cadets of this Institution," while Thayer himself was commonly praised as possessing "all the essentials of an officer and a gentleman--decidedly a man of the first respectability & talent." Gentility was a malleable quality, however, and cadets or their patrons applying for
leniency commonly referred to their gentility or its more high-spirited counterpart, honor, to excuse derelictions and demerits. Seven years after Dunny's dismissal engineer captain John Smith appealed to the War Department to reinstate J.F. Swift, who had been dismissed by court-martial for two hundred offenses violating ninety-eight paragraphs of the academy regulations, hoping "that the lofty sentiments of honor and high chivalrous feelings that distinguish [his character] . . . will be fairly appreciated." By this time the Thayer regime was in full effect, however, and Swift was not readmitted to the academy. 19

Indeed, the diverse implications of the army's quest for gentility are illustrated by a letter written a month later by Chief Engineer Macomb to his friend John Walbach, a highly experienced artillery major with whom Macomb hoped to supplant Worth and Thayer, for Macomb was afraid that Thayer's rigidity was incompatible with true gentility. Alluding to Walbach's "correct, honorable and military deportment" and his possession of "every other quality of the man and the gentleman" (as well as his expertise with cavalry, which Macomb wanted taught at the academy), the chief engineer remarked that

from what I have seen at West Point . . . there has been a great want of the paternal care as well as paternal influence . . . [and] many of the difficulties which have disturbed the Institution have originated in too severe a course [being] pursued towards them. There is evidently a want of cordiality and generous feeling between the officers and the cadets, which has heretofore separated them and kept them at a greater distance from each other than that distance preserved between the rank and file of the army and the officers. When we consider that these young
gentlemen . . . are destined to be the Generals and officers of our army, too much pain cannot be bestowed in forming both their habits and manners and giving them just conceptions of the military character. If we bring them up with too much severity they will [do the same] when they come to exercise command . . . and thus a discipline of tyranny may be introduced into our service little comporting with justice and military propriety and the character of our civil institutions & the feelings of the people. Justice, firmness and moderation ought to mark the character of an American officer.  

Like some of Alden Partridge's later proposals, Macomb's letter represents an alternative path that army discipline and leadership could have taken, one which would have produced an atmosphere more in tune with the values of republicanism and the democratic spirit of Jacksonian America, but nothing came of it, for Macomb's initiative was doubtlessly blocked by Winfield Scott in defense of Thayer and Worth.

As noted in chapter three, President Jackson seems to have shared these concerns, sensing that Thayer's authoritarian rigor was inconsistent with republicanism and the maturation of individual honor and gentry independence. Socializing high-spirited youths in military hierarchy and subordination was certainly no easy task, and the academy's leaders realized that it would be dangerous to simply break the spirits and individualism of their charges. Army officers were supposed to be aggressive combat leaders, disinterested public servants aloof from the pressure of interested parties, and respectable gentlemen capable of a free discourse with leading figures in civil society, but the mindset of personal "independence" (or in more modern terms integrity) and "high-toned" self-respect necessary to fulfill these
functions could not be inculcated in an atmosphere of servility. The disciplinary balancing act that this delicate process of socialization required left some cadets bewildered, while others took advantage of the inevitable loopholes, and in studies and escapades alike the cadets fashioned a natural camaraderie and cohesion which was conducive to esprit de corps yet frequently antagonistic to bureaucratic regulations and restraint from above. As in the army itself, this cohesion was frequently dysfunctional: in 1839 William T.H. Brooks (WP'41) wrote to his father that the principal characteristic of being an officer in the corps of cadets was that one "has a very good opportunity of gaining the ill will of nearly every man in the corps provided he does his duty . . . I have made a secret resolution to never report a cadet for an offense unless . . . I am liable to get neglect of duty [by not doing so]. At any rate I dont think that I will have many scruples against applying for a furlough." (Brooks served as Daniel Twiggs' acting AAG in Mexico and received two brevets there.)

Similarly, many cadets excused their demerits by comparing them with those of less-disciplined fellows: in 1831 Morris Smith Miller (WP'34) wrote to his mother that his demerits were "not offences against moral character or principles but mere oversights doing duties." Political interference in the academy's administration exacerbated these problems by offering opportunities for cadets to appeal to external authority. Though it was against regulations Miller certainly did not expect to be dismissed for gambling, but he told his mother that among the cadets "it is considered no disgrace to be dismissed for so trifling a thing. There are at least twenty in the Corps now who have been dismissed and reinstated." Miller became commanding general Macomb's aide-de-camp between 1838 and 1841 (marrying the
general's youngest daughter early in 1841); he was appointed AQM in 1845 and relinquished his regimental rank the following year.22

Under these circumstances "honor" was a highly contested term, for the academy authorities interpreted it as the duty to obey all regulations and the integrity to honestly own up to their violation, while cadets who observed one another committing indiscretions (up to and including various forms of cheating) sensed integrity as group cohesion and honor as loyalty to their comrades. William Brooks was but one of many cadets who seem to have placed their immediate allegiance to their fellows above that to the abstractions of military discipline, and aside from the violence depicted in chapter three there were a number of incidents that demonstrate the evolution of a sense of cohesion within the corps in opposition to the academy's administration. In 1822 Superintendent Thayer attempted to pressure the corps into signing a circular committing themselves to several years of military service after graduation, which they saw as a measure intended to place them under more severe military discipline in the aftermath of the Christmas rioting of 1821. The measure would apparently have limited their right to petition or resign, and a number of cadets resigned rather than sign. Indeed, it was at this time that James Engle noted that the principal tactical instructors were "dispised by nearly the whole corps," and "every morning when we go to revelee you will see all through the both Barracks pieses of poetry" lampooning them.23

Indeed, a cadet's disobedience of the honor code did not disqualify him from a productive career, which might even include service at the academy itself if he were so qualified. A decade later Frederick Augustus Smith (WP33) appealed to the secretary of war for relief from charges which he felt were imposed in order to compel him to inform on his fellow cadets. Smith
felt confident that this strategy would fail "among men of any honour," for the cadets would "suffer rather the penalty of the offence, than the loss of their own self-respect," and though the penalty might only be a handful of demerits, Smith believed that their effect on "our character abroad & our place in the class here . . . justify our using all honorable means to cancel them." Smith recovered from the charges to graduate first in his class the following June; he served at West Point the following year as an assistant professor of engineering, and during the Mexican War as the instructor of field engineering. (See Appendixes H and J on Smith's career: Appendix H supplements the picture of officer career patterns presented in Appendix J by providing a statistical assessment of the careers of the officers ranked first and last in their classes at West Point.)

These acts of resistance to academy authority continued throughout the interwar period. In 1843 Cave Couts refused to testify against classmates accused of stealing turkeys. Couts claimed to believe the order to do so illegal, "and [thus] apprehended that I should be regarded by my associates in the character of an informer, and as having been guilty of a dishonorable act in complying"--clear evidence of the power of peer pressure and group loyalty even in this bastion of hierarchy and discipline. Couts demanded a court-martial to vindicate himself; this obstinacy led Chief Engineer Totten to issue an order lamenting that "the vulgar and unprincipled habits of a few have reflected disgrace upon the Corps of Cadets." Totten denounced their "false code" of comradely honor as "sure to subvert . . . all those nice principles of honor which characterise alike the soldier and the gentleman." Proclaiming that "no community can allow Evil doers . . . to annul a portion of its moral code," he concluded by expressing the hope "that no Cadet will allow his moral sense to be blinded as to the really degrading nature" of such actions,
"the public knowledge" of which "would deeply affect the reputation of the institution." Totten then warned Superintendent Delafield in private about clearing the matter up as quickly as possible before public antagonism toward the academy became aroused, and this was done without cashiering Couts, who graduated that July. (Couts went to the 1st Dragoons, where he probably fit in perfectly, but he had an undistinguished career and resigned in 1851.)

A more collective consciousness that it represented the interests "of those who may succeed us" led the First (fourth-year) Class of 1834 to complain as a group to the secretary of war that Dennis Hart Mahan's "unnecessary exhibition of temper and sarcasm" toward them was "at variance with the courtesy we have inevitably met with in our other Instructors." Indeed, their petition suggested that Mahan had offered to settle any differences "as one man does with another," though such an invitation to duel sounds entirely out of character for Mahan. Such disputes were ultimately exceptions to the rule, and their greatest impact was to draw negative publicity to the academy's disciplinary regime. Facing public criticism initiated by clergymen who questioned the teachings of the West Point chaplain and the religiosity of the institution as a whole, the army convened a court of inquiry in 1840 to investigate "the moral condition and discipline of the Military Academy." Headed by Winfield Scott himself, the court concluded that "the deportment of officers toward cadets . . . had been [routinely] gentleman like," and "there is perhaps not another association of gentlemen of equal numbers . . . not set apart mainly for religious purposes who could have sustained an inquiry so rigorous."

Ultimately, the ability to concentrate learned at West Point was probably more important than the content of the studies themselves, for graduates developed an austere mental discipline that shaped them
throughout their lives. Viewed in the larger context of nineteenth-century American culture, the Military Academy was an experiment in self-making through a rigid process of internal and external discipline broadly akin to those then occurring in poorhouses, penal reform and the treatment of the insane. Academy discipline was intended to sustain military hierarchy by inculcating a deep-rooted sense of honor, honesty, and integrity founded in the experience of responsibility for self (above all in academic competition and obedience to regulations) and others (as cadet officers) and accountability to superiors. Even after the end of the Thayer era West Point could be a trying experience for new cadets who had yet to make the friendships that would sustain them in trial and adversity. This experience often seemed like being thrown into a whirlpool or an ocean (metaphors used by several cadets), but among those who survived (roughly a third of all those appointed) it generated a new sense of self-confidence based on their success in seizing responsibility for themselves. In 1845 Charles Alvord (WP’49) wrote to his sister that "I am here as shut-out from all friends . . . everyone cares only for themselves," while three years before George McClellan had written that "I am as much alone as if on a boat in the middle of the Atlantic . . . Not one here would lift a finger to help me; I am entirely dependant on myself--must think for myself--direct myself, and take the blame of all my mistakes, without anyone to give me a word of advice. But I can keep to myself here, and have nothing to do with anyone more than I can help." McClellan decided that "I must make my mind up to it," and both men went on to graduate, Alvord resigned three years afterwards.27

McClellan realized that he was passing through a temporary stage encountered by most cadets, and he remarked (with some characteristic exaggeration) that once habituated to the academy's ways "they get to like it so
much, that they would not [leave] on any account if they could help it." Most cadets soon absorbed the values of order embodied by their surroundings, which fostered a sense of distinctive identity and embodied and expressed the corps' cohesion as a group. Even amidst the harsh discipline of the Thayer era, Abner Hetzel advised his father that he was "in very good hopes of becoming a soldier yet . . . I never found myself in better spirits or health." Their adaptation to a world of order and hierarchy suggests a desire for the certainty, comfort, and security that characterized many serving officers: like many other cadets, Hetzel enjoyed "the camp life much better than I expected I would. The discipline is severe on those who neglect their duty--but those who pay attention to orders come off very well." (Hetzel's interest in discipline, duty, and order--or in a broader sense accountability--flourished after his graduation, for in 1846 he compiled a book of laws relating to the military establishment.) Orderliness was also a social value and behavioural habit clearly linked to the assertion of officers' gentility and social standing--a decade later Morris Miller wrote that "I can wear almost anything here if it is only clean but elsewhere the dignity of an officer must be preserved in outward show as well as inward principle. It would never do for a soldier to look out of order as we would term it."28

Rather than concentrating on the McClellan, let us examine the academy careers of several cadets who made little impact on the army, which will do even more to demonstrate this socialization process in action. Writing shortly after his arrival in 1819, James Engle initially thought that "I shall like it very well" because of the "very nice young gentlemen" he first encountered, but after two years of Thayer's discipline Engle suggested that he would resign and seek a naval commission as midshipman, telling his mother that "there is nothing more common than resigning [they] are
resigning every Day almoste," some to enter the navy. That December (1821) Engle wrote to his mother about the recent cadet rebellion but hoped that the academy would survive any inquiries, "as I expect to go through after this examination." The following January he told her to "be shure to write that it is absolutely necessary" that he receive a furlough, but he was no longer worried about being set back in his course. In June he sent her a letter to copy and send to Thayer in order to secure a furlough for the summer, but he was again unsuccessful. In January 1823 Engle reported that there had been no disturbances during the previous Christmas, "but it has got to be so common a thing to be under an arreste that some think it rather an honour than a dishonour." Engle disagreed with this opinion, but suggested that that was the only issue on which he supported the administration. Nevertheless, Engle gradually came to feel a sense of military identity: in July 1824 he signed his letter "U.S.A.," and the following May he expressed his happiness that he was not destined for the (then socially elite) Marine Corps. Engle graduated after six years and wrote home about his "fellow officers," but he ultimately resigned in 1834 after a rather isolated and undistinguished career in the wilds of Wisconsin.29

Two decades later William T. Dutton (WP’46) presents us with a similar uncertainty over his place at the academy but a much more explicit sense of corporate cohesion. Upon his arrival in the summer of 1842 Dutton wrote to an uncle that "it is hard getting here, and then it is easy to get away. But not one leaves without leaving bitter tears." Two months later he added that "staying here creates a much greater degree of love or friendship, or respect wherever the feelings have been exercised or indulged. We even look on those from the same state as almost connected by the tie of consanguinity." (Indeed, Dutton told his fiancee that his roommate at the Military Academy
"was passionately attached to me;" and they "both cried like children when we parted" after his friend was dismissed.) Nevertheless, Dutton constantly longed for home and his fiancee, which seriously circumscribed his desire to lead a military life. Early in 1844 he wrote to her about congressional attacks on the academy: "Let them fight--if it stands well & good--if it falls I can come home sooner." Several months later, Dutton lamented "what a dreary time we should have" "were it not for the occasional visits per Post." The lonely cadet did not look forward to war with Mexico, but he prepared himself for the service required of him, and in January 1846 told Lucy that "one suit of 'cits' [civilian clothes, derived from the appellation officers sometimes gave to "citizens"] is always considered indispensible for the furlough [after graduation]--They are not wanted after the 1st of November" when new officers entered into army life. Dutton himself never made this transition; he took ill and was permitted to resign the fall after his graduation.30

The letters of Samuel Raymond presented an appraisal of the West Point experience and its individual and national utility that was constantly evolving yet remained nuanced by his concerns for the future in a small army with limited opportunities. Shortly after his arrival in 1842 Raymond wrote to his brother that "many a man is sent away . . . who either upon obtaining a reappointment acquits himself with honor or becomes useful and distinguished in the [civilian] world." The demands of ambition and security were frequently at overt odds in the academy's socialization: the young cadet remarked that his fellows were dismissed "because their proud spirit refuses to yield to the overbearing haughtiness of [their] superiors . . . but if a person can pass over all these unpleasant conditions he is well repaid in the end by the possibility of a good education and a sure means of using [it] to obtain a subsistence." Two weeks later Raymond wrote to his mother explaining that
his demerits were commonplace, for they had simply been minor errors detected by "the observation schooled in rigor and born to command" of his superiors, language that indicated emerging values on his own part, and acceptance rather than resistance to the academy's discipline.31

By the following spring Raymond had become more appreciative of the academy's objectives, for he remarked that West Point created gentlemen, "a fact which must speak ever in its favor," and that the school needed "only justice to support it" in the eyes of the public. Later that spring Raymond demonstrated that he had also absorbed some of the political accountability of a neutral public servant; pleased with the public relations value of the Board of Visitors, he also set forth a vision of dutiful service: "US is [his] own master and we his humble servants and it behooves us to obey whatever may be our own wish or opinions." (More disturbingly, this neutrality extended even to moral questions: "right or wrong the responsibility is not ours.")

Like other cadets, Raymond had wearied of "the dull monotony of our stay in barracks" and looked forward to the summer encampment, "by far the pleasantest part of a cadet's life" though he by no means considered it a romantic one. Three months later he wrote to his mother that "I never enjoyed any thing more in my life than an encampment," because the cadets finally had spare time to socialize and form the intimate friendships he had observed among upperclassmen like Schureman.32

Visits from foreign military men reinforced this sense of professional identity: that October Raymond wrote to his father about a visit from General Bertrand of the French Army (who he noted as one of Napoleon's marshals), and described the general's emotional meeting with an old musician who had served under him "in the most celebrated battles in the world" thirty years before. In doing so, Raymond was mentally constructing an image of
the appropriate relationship between officers and enlisted men, one of mutual affection and sentimental attachment that reserved enough social distance to remain paternalistic rather than comradely. The cadet also asked his father to send copies of his academic reports, which were periodically issued to parents, so that he could maintain a more precise sense of his progress, an indication of his growing commitment to a military career. Raymond soon ran into disciplinary trouble again, however, and in February 1844 he wrote to his sister that he had been trapped between "the extremity of despotism [and] the too mild [restraint] of civility and excessive kindness" among the academy's officers. Nevertheless, he resolved to move forward, for "I may safely say that the advantages which I now possess are such as but few in our country are ever able to obtain," and Raymond's personal problems did not keep him from defending the academy to which he had become attached: "There is no institution in the world where the pupils are kept more constantly and laboriously employed and where they labor to as much advantage." Like most cadets, Raymond continued to balance his assessment of the benefits of the academy with his uncertainty about the future; he warned his sister that their brother "wants a little more foundation in the form of mental discipline" (one of the principal advantages gained at West Point), but he added that "the prospect of a brevet supernumerary second lieutenancy is a poor inducement to enter the army unless we . . . raise a breeze with somebody."33

After another encampment Samuel felt reinvigorated, but he still did not expect to remain in the army long after graduation. "My course of study [chemistry and mechanics, or physics] is rather more interesting than it has been heretofore and of much more practical importance," so he had "dispensed with all such thoughts" of melancholy and "appl[ied] myself to
my studies with renewed vigor and pleasure." Raymond then set forth the advantages and disadvantages of a military career as many cadets and junior officers saw them: "The service will doubtless afford a comfortable subsistence and is as easy a life as man may wish to lead, but it is at best but a small affair and an assemblage of as perfect tyrants and slaves as can be met with in any place... this side of the Ottoman Porte." Inertia and authoritarianism notwithstanding, Raymond was "willing to embrace [the army] if it would offer me a fair inducement to remain," but he did not expect this to occur and planned on resignation as soon as possible (i.e., four years) after graduation.34

Unfortunately, Raymond never had the chance to make this choice, for he took ill and died the following January. On the other hand, it was perhaps in death more than in life that Raymond came to reflect the values of the aspiring officers at West Point. Headed by the highly sentimental William Dutton, Raymond's classmates sent a testimonial to his parents which expressed the cohesion which had developed among them. Dying, Raymond had "suffered acutely, without a complaining word," but his friends admired his genteel demeanor as a friend as much as "his heroic firmness" in the crisis of death:

we mourn him as a brother--a brother bound to us by strong ties, the severing of which makes our hearts bleed.

Our aspirations, those of a soldier, were in common... our hopes--to be permitted with him to share the toil of the field, and mingle together in the delights of the social circle... the warm impulses of a heart alive to every generous emotion, have endeared him to us and will be ever... registered in our hearts.
Though he was not permitted to be an example as an 
Officer, still his influence will be felt by those who loved him . . . 
[and] his virtues will be handed down from class to class as a 
legacy well worthy of their imitation.35

* * *

II. Careerism and Dissension: The Persistence of Civilian Values and 
Individualism in Regimental Life--The 1st Dragoons as a Case Study

The story of the United States Army is commonly told as a narrative of 
organizational development (especially that of the staff bureaus) and conflict 
with external opponents--Indians, Mexicans, or Anglo frontiersmen and 
Congress. We gain different perspectives by studying the army's internal 
dynamics, and although the context set by general policy cannot be ignored, 
this is best done at the regimental level, where these processes had their most 
immediate and constant impact. Rather than drawing on a diffuse mix of 
randomly selected quotations to make points about the careerism and 
dissension within the officer corps, this section examines the dynamics of a 
single regiment, the 1st Dragoons, using the letters received by one of its 
company grade officers, Lieutenant Abraham Robinson Johnston, to provide 
microcosm of the inner life of the army as a whole. Although a range of cases 
have already been noted to illustrate the endemic monotony, dissipation, and 
disputatiousness that characterized the officer corps, this method allows us to 
observe the dynamic interactions of individuals over a period spanning 
nearly a decade, so that we see individuals in context rather than isolation 
while receiving a biographical sense of their strengths, personalities, and 
foibles, and this in turn helps us to identify patterns of motivation, intent, 
and conflict that otherwise become lost in the general picture of dissension.
The first unit in a newly reestablished branch of service, the principal combat unit on the central portion of the western frontier, and a highly mobile force designed to conduct long-range patrols and expeditions onto the prairies and Great Plains, the 1st Dragoons was an organization in frequent flux. Abraham Johnston was stationed at a wide variety of posts in the east and west alike during the decade before the Mexican War, and his correspondents included officers in a variety of staff and line positions on the frontier, in Washington, D.C., at the dragoon training depot in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and on detachment to the French army's cavalry school. Nevertheless, although the 1st Dragoons were generally considered an elite regiment, there were no fundamental differences between it and the other line regiments, and its travails may be taken as representative of those of the officer corps as a whole. The 1st missed the cohesion-damaging hardships and dissension of the Second Seminole War, and since Inspector General Croghan had labelled the 1st Dragoons "better officered than any other in our service," the derelictions and deficiencies of its leaders stand out all the more starkly than those of ordinary infantry and artillery units. (It would be impossible to arrive at a "balance" between the hardships encountered by the army's different regiments; as the staff-line controversies show, the principal division in quality of life, and consequently frustration and dissension, was between those officers stationed in cities and those posted to the frontiers, and the 1st had both.)

Most of Abraham Johnston's correspondents were young company grade officers (captains and lieutenants) trained at the Military Academy. Like the vast majority of officers, these men--many detailed to responsible staff posts at an early stage of their careers--rarely analyzed or reported the details of military operations. To be accurate, their "professional" discourse should
be labelled occupational, or even bureaucratic: details of military technique and the articulation of an explicitly military service ethic or mission were much less common than internal questions of rank, command, and material conditions (largely regarding postings and living quarters). Similarly, dragoon officers may have felt the romantic urges suggested by some historians of the frontier army, but they did not express them overtly on paper. In these personal letters, officers' relations with one another appear to have been primarily careerist or social in nature, focused on frequent quarrels with superiors, constant but frustrated quests for promotion, and an obsession with each others' personal behaviour. These tensions fostered factionalism and court-martials, hampering the development of group cohesion while distracting officers from the pursuit of specialized expertise in their military roles. This supposedly elite frontier force suffered from the same problems of inertia and dissension as any ordinary regiment; its officers demonstrated much the same careerist pattern of motivation as the officers who tried to escape Florida service or to avoid regimental garrison duty through furloughs and details to the staff; and the depth of their concern for their health and their families anticipated that of the officers of the Army of Occupation in Texas examined in chapter fifteen.

The private discourse among these West Point-educated officers of the 1st Dragoons seems narrow and parochial in a number of other ways as well. News of other regiments was rarely mentioned; potential opponents and rumors of war were almost ignored; political issues and elections received little attention unless they affected the army. The occupational community itself--the officers of the regiment and their wives and families--was the focus of far more discussion. Personal affairs were highly significant to these men, and at least two major factors intensified this propensity: the boredom and
lack of what officers thought was socially suitable—meaning genteel—civilian company on isolated frontier posts, and the salience of good character and an honorable reputation among the officers themselves, who commonly expressed their animosities and their positions about controversial court-martials in socially and culturally loaded terms, even to the point of physically ostracizing fellow (and in some cases superior) officers.

The 1st Dragoon Regiment was formed in 1833 to replace the temporary Battalion of Mounted Rangers created the previous year, and the Jackson administration’s appointments policy affected the 1st’s internal dynamics for years to come. At a time when virtually all new officers came from West Point, all but five (all supernumerary brevet second lieutenants) of the twenty-nine officers of the volunteer rangers were commissioned directly from civilian life without examinations or training, and eleven of the twenty-four (including half of the company commanders) were appointed to the 1st Dragoons when the enlistment of the rangers expired a year later. Superficially this might not have presented much of a problem, for half of these men resigned or died within four years and three non-West Point captains resigned from each of the dragoon regiments in 1837, while their places were mostly taken by West Point graduates and transfers from other regiments, but several stayed on as (or soon rose by seniority to become) captains outranking the new West Pointers, who came to view them primarily as obstacles to promotion. Indeed, the very extent of the turnover weeded out most of those unlikely to remain, but the academy men seem to have expected the rapid turnover of the mid-1830s to continue and propel them into company command at an early age. Moreover, several brevet second lieutenants were commissioned into the dragoons from civil life when West Point was unable to supply the need for new officers (created by
the resignation wave of 1836 and 1837) in 1837 and 1838, exacerbating existing divisions and adding further reminders of the political favoritism which increasingly seemed to threaten the monopoly the West Point-educated junior officer corps had held before the creation of the mounted forces.

This dissonance between expectation and reality, or between the West Point graduate's sense of his worth and the institutional constraints which limited his advancement, led to endemic social and psychological tension within the unit and in the minds of its officers, and the officers of the 1st remained divided between West Pointers and men commissioned from civilian life until after the Mexican War. The division was exacerbated by the methods used and motives claimed by the administration in the initial appointments from civil life, for their selection was justified by the administration on the grounds that they somehow represented the manly frontier spirit and hard-won Indian-fighting experience of the west, in explicit contrast to the supposed (and in Jacksonian rhetoric the often effeminate) boyishness, studiousness, and inexperience of youthful West Pointers. In reality the ranger appointments and transfers to the dragoons were made on the basis of political influence—the squeaky wheel—rather than military experience, and only three of the ranger officers (one of them Colonel Dodge himself, a veteran of the Black Hawk War and a number of militia expeditions against the Winnebago and other prairie tribes) were able to compensate for their lack of formal training with claims to prior command experience. (This pattern of politicized appointments given to unqualified men was even more pronounced among the officers of the 2nd Dragoon Regiment, created in 1836 with only four West Pointers among its officers, and that regiment's social climate and occupational culture was generally considered much more representative of the frontier, though as we shall see
in the next chapter this did not make relations between officers and enlisted men any more equitable than in regiments dominated by academy graduates.

The West Pointers mostly easterners from urban backgrounds socialized as gentlemen at the academy, quickly began to assume airs of social and intellectual superiority over the older, less-educated men who commanded a number of their companies. The academy men considered their superiors incompetent, and more importantly, lacking in the social graces necessary to sustain the status and prestige of the army officer corps among enlisted men and civilians, yet the army's rigid seniority system of junior officer promotion within regiments allowed the ex-rangers and their friends to remain in command while the West Pointers were forced to scheme, plot, gossip, and bring court-martial charges against their commanders in order to secure promotion prior to their superiors' deaths. (Unfortunately, I have not been able to study the writings of the non-West Pointers, so I cannot say whether the non-West Pointers responded in ways similar to civilians who criticized the academy as a hotbed of privilege, effeminacy, and aristocracy, but the non-graduates responded in kind to the West Pointers' use of the military court system against their rivals.) As Lieutenant Henry Turner put it in 1843: "nothing but the old 'Mower' can help us along now--people never resign now a days, and if old [Captain Eustace] Trenor escapes this time we can hope for nothing from Cts. Martial." (Trenor was actually a West Pointer, but a much older man who was apparently incompetent and given to excessive drinking. He died in 1847 without serving against Mexico.)

This multi-faceted cleavage of rank, seniority, education, and manners was exacerbated by friction between line and staff officers. Most of the 1st's staff appointments went to young West Point graduates, exacerbating the
divide between graduates and civil appointees--Abraham Johnston and his closest correspondents were West Point educated staff officers, while the men they so frequently criticized were mostly civilian appointees holding line–field unit–commands. Indeed, the quest for promotion to company command among Johnston's correspondents should give us pause before we declare the staff a breed apart--officers on recruiting duty or serving as adjutants aspired to command more than anything else, although one quartermaster officer from the 1st clearly became more comfortable with staff duties than company ones and ultimately resigned his regimental commission in 1846.\textsuperscript{41}

Superior officers appointed young officers just out of the Military Academy to responsible staff positions on the basis of perceived merit but this took many of the best trained and educated officers away from troop command and experience, sending a signal that administration was their primary concern. \textsuperscript{42} Indeed, this practice raises the question of how to evaluate military professionalism--whether as a wartime ideal--the combat leader and manager of organized violence--or in its normal peacetime institutional context, where a range of skills, some highly specialized and technicist, rather than generalist, must be applied to different tasks and circumstances in order to maintain a large organization dispersed over great distances. The latter evaluation is clearly more realistic, but the attraction of an ideal type is important for a profession's self- and external images because it conveys the essence of the profession's expert service to society, which is the ultimate basis of its claims to prestige and authority, and thence the source of whatever autonomy it seeks to achieve. The preference for staff positions which was so common among army officers (including a disproportionate number of the best-qualified) and their superiors reinforces
the picture of careerism I am painting herein, but the context in which the army's professional work was performed must be taken into consideration, and I would suggest that the pattern of careerism was due in significant part to the very limited opportunities for officers to practice their primary professional skill—the management of violence—in the peacetime army.

The 1st Dragoons were dispersed throughout Missouri, Iowa, eastern Kansas, western Arkansas, and the Indian Territory before the Mexican War, mostly stationed on isolated frontier posts with limited civilian contact. Its officers found most of the civilians they came into contact with socially undesirable and they seem to have shared the disinterest many regulars felt toward partisan politics. Indeed, their correspondence was highly self-referential, and the climate appears to have been ripe for the development of professionalism in isolation (or even alienation) from the influence of civil society that William Skelton has sometimes suggested as a characteristic of the antebellum army. On the other hand, it is essential to recognize that army officers' distaste for the egalitarianism, disorder, and materialism of Jacksonian life and society was shared by many civilians, especially among the nation's elites, and often for similar reasons—the origin of these attitudes was not in a specifically or uniquely military socialization process, but in the class-bound one of West Point, and the social criterion of gentility was as significant a factor as the desire for stability and order derived from imperatives of battlefield command. Officers' affinity for the values of duty, service, and disinterestedness were not the products of an exclusively military professionalism, but those of careerists who aspired to genteel status and the security and prestige of an occupational monopoly over the direction of organized armed force.⁴³
Despite the regiment's isolation, professionalization did not occur in isolation (or more precisely, as a result of alienation from civilian values) in the 1st Dragoons. The presence of a large group of officers appointed directly from civilian life did lie at the core of the disputes and factionalism discussed in this section, but I do not think that this type of internal conflict can be considered professional from a normative standpoint, nor was this friction expressed in a clash of distinctly "civil" and "military" values. The question, which cannot be resolved here (if at all), is the degree to which the integration of the "unsocialized" group (those officers appointed directly from civilian life) was possible, or in other words whether the exclusiveness that some West Pointers in the 1st Dragoon Regiment sought was actually necessary for successful professionalization. Given the regiment's combat record and that of its officers (virtually all of whom received brevet promotions for gallantry in the Mexican War) it seems unlikely that this was the case, while the terms in which they criticized civilian appointees were more those of civilian society--the language of genteel conduct and honor--than objectively functional military ones. Since gentility was central to the definition of a professional in nineteenth-century America, social ostracism may have been part of a semiconscious effort to establish standards which civil society would accept as professional, but the practice certainly undermined unit cohesion and diverted a great deal of energy and attention from the pursuit of greater competence and expertise. Nevertheless, this internal social and cultural conflict should not surprise us, for the history of the early modern "professions" shows that the standards by which professionals judged each other and were judged by the public were always a complex blend of subjective social (or cultural) and theoretically "objective" functional values and characteristics. Abraham Johnston and his friends mixed social and
occupational values in their estimates of other officers, and the
historiography of American civilian professionalism shows that this was
normal.44

Parochialism was a prominent characteristic of the letters Johnston
received, which suggests practical limits to the cohesion of a far-flung
occupation. General army news and evaluations of officers in other units
were remarkably rare in these letters, especially when we remember that
several of his correspondents were staff officers with wide connections. The
artillery regiments and officers stationed on the coasts were virtually never
mentioned, nor were the staff bureaus and their personnel, even by staff men
like quartermaster captain 'Thomas Swords.45 The majority of the army news
and opinion reported by the officers of the 1st concerned the personnel of that
regiment, and exceptions commonly took the form of the critical evaluations
its officers seem to have levelled at everyone they came in contact with:
Lieutenant William Eustis reported the desertion of the 2nd Dragoon
Regiment's adjutant along with the unit's funds, its major's attempt to create
a cushy command for himself in the middle of Washington, D.C., and the
feud between its colonel, Daniel Twiggs, and Colonel William Worth of the
8th Infantry, which prevented Twiggs from serving in Florida under Worth's
command. (Twiggs was protege of Gaines, and Worth of Scott; the two
officers continued their feud into the Mexican War and they quarrelled over
seniority and brevet rank at Corpus Christi in 1845.)46

Gossip like this tended to be highly self-referential, mentioned largely
because the 1st Dragoons or the mounted service were involved in some way.
The 2nd Dragoons seemed an embarrassment in the eyes of Johnston's
correspondents: throughout the early 1840s lieutenant and regimental
adjutant Henry S. Turner discussed the odds that the 2nd would be disbanded, dismounted as infantry, or remounted, but by late 1844 he was giving more attention to villifying its officers and their allies for their criticism of Johnston, who had initiated court-martial proceedings against the 2nd's lieutenant colonel, William S. Harney, for "arbitrary and unmilitary conduct" and "conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline" against enlisted men that summer. General Gaines took Harney's side and censured Johnston for ungentlemanly conduct in reporting "conversations of a confidential character, such as may occupy the attention of men of honor when they feel assured that none but men of honor hear them"; Lieutenant Turner responded to the news by labelling Gaines "that d[amned]d old fool" for "showing his prejudice to our Corps" (meaning the 1st Dragoons). (Lieutenant Philip Thompson later chimed in by damning Harney as "a great ass and . . . an unprincipled men.) The following February Turner consoled Johnston that "you have many friends and Harney is pretty well known. As for Genl. Gaines I think it a matter of not the slightest consequence what he says or does." Turner reassured his friend that "you have certainly done right to reply to his unbecoming allusion[s] . . . and to appeal from his division in the case."

Gaines' reaction and Johnston's appeal entwined the case in the army's most significant personal quarrel, that between Gaines and commanding general Winfield Scott, who Turner felt would "take the right view of, and do justice to, your agency in the matter." The court-martial sentenced Harney to be publically reprimanded and suspended from his rank and command for four months, but both Turner and Thompson considered this an inadequate sanction, and Turner labelled the members "conspicuously contemptible." Scott shared their opinion of the sentence; he reprimanded Harney as a
"conspicuous violator of law and morals" but released him to his regiment, which was then on its way to Texas. That fall Thompson reported to Johnston that Harney was furious at the censure and swore vengeance against Scott, but Turner congratulated Johnston that "you have fixed a stigma upon [Harney] which will follow him to his grave. Turner went on to warn his comrade that being "destitute of all principle" Harney would "doubtless[ly] resort to anything to injure you," but he again assured Johnston "that it is impossible for such a man to do you injury in the minds of respectable men."48

Harney's case also illustrates the persistence of duelling, or at least of the potential for it, in the army officer corps of the 1840s. Actual duels were rare in the army by this time, but the language of honor, insult, and "satisfaction" was certainly not: Turner reported in 1845 that Lieutenant Colonel Harney had "asserted . . . publicly that he intended to resign his commission that he might with impunity chastise Genl. Scott [whose earlier willingness to duel was common knowledge] . . . [Harney] claims to have backed out Col. Kearny [forced him to retract some statement rather than fight a duel] yet never dared calling him, tho repeatedly invited to do so . . . [he] has never dared to ask for a meeting." As in the case of violence toward enlisted men, the 2nd Dragoons seem to have developed a reputation for aggressiveness as a result of the actions of their commanders.49

Violent criticism levelled at a superior officer also characterized the other major controversy between officers of the 1st and the commander of another regiment, brevet brigadier general Matthew Arbuckle of the 7th Infantry, who was also the commander of the geographic district which included Arkansas and the Oklahoma region, but this dissension was rooted in more overtly professional concerns than the reputation of the parties
involved. Upset with Arbuckle's conciliatory reaction to rumors of unrest among the Cherokee, Philip Thompson felt that "the vacillating and temporizing policy pursued by the Gen'l is a course that will never answer in regard to Indians, and it is much to be regretted that a man of a determined character is not at the Head of the 2d Military Department"; on the other hand, Thompson criticized Arbuckle for forcing the troops to march "in the most inclement season of an unusually severe winter" and called the general "the d[amne]d old fool who causes the whole Regiment to become thus disenchanted and, I may add, disorganized, merely to gratify a childish vanity to have his name before the public." Lieutenant James Allen requested that another officer bring his newspaper article criticizing the "late movement to the Cherokee Country" to Arbuckle's attention anonymously, and hoped that you will write too and publish . . . until some of our masters be made to feel that they cannot carry out every d[amne]d whim and caprice of theirs to the annoyance of better men than themselves--until they shall feel responsible for their conduct, in some quarter; and [be aware] that there are those by their side who will note their acts of folly and oppression and hold them to that accountability.

Lieutenant William Eustis accused Arbuckle of peculation via the use of troops to cultivate his plantation, and implied that the colonel received kickbacks from sutlers profiting from the presence of more troops at Fort Gibson; Eustis summed up these critiques by lamenting that "the Arbuckle fever appears to be raging extensively and the words decision and consistency have become obsolete."

The picture of backbiting and dissolute behavior that emerges from these examples is not pretty, and a dissection of the regiment's inner life only
darkens the portrait further. Indeed, the turmoil within this supposedly elite unit raises significant questions about the character and degree of its officers' professionalism. The most powerful concrete issue underlying all these controversies was rank, which brought with it command and material compensation. Johnston's friends were insatiable in their quests for promotion, but unfortunately for them the rapid turnover between 1833 and 1836 gave way to a much slower pace that quickly frustrated the artificially high expectations of young second lieutenants, most of whom did not become captains (and thus post or unit commanders) until the Mexican War. (This was far from an unusually slow pace for promotion, of course.) In 1840 Philip Thompson felt confident that he would be promoted within three years, but in 1841 he wrote that "there is no prospect of distinction or promotion in our little Army" and recommended marriage as a consolation. Writing in 1844, Henry Turner felt especially pessimistic: "John[ston] there is not the slightest promotion for us, there is every prospect of our remaining subalterns forever. I never expect to be a Captain."\textsuperscript{51}

The command hierarchy in the 1st Dragoons was at least unencumbered by brevet rank, though its officers occasionally questioned the authority of post commanders from other units.\textsuperscript{52} But there was no taboo against criticizing superior officers in private letters, and Turner filled his missives with unrestrained venom toward the older and non-West Point company commanders: Captain Eustace Trenor was "a drunkard and a liar," Captain Edwin Vose Sumner "a consummate ass" when not on routine duty, Captain Enoch Steen a "tattler," and Major Clifton Wharton "trifling." (Of these men, Trenor had finished West Point in 1822, while Sumner and Wharton had been commissioned from civilian life several years before and Steen had done so in the Mounted Rangers.) Ad hominem vitriol aside,
Turner (like the officers who criticized Mathew Arbuckle) clearly valued decisiveness, for in 1845 he reported that "Wharton is much complained of at Leavenworth, his old womanish ways, cause almost every Officer to be disgusted with him." (Thomas Swords wrote that he would not object to Wharton as a commander "if he brings Sister Joe [Josephine Ormsby, presumably related to Ormsby McKnight Mitchel, an erstwhile officer] along with him--otherwise the Lord deliver us.") Turner also relayed Captain Philip St. George Cooke's opinion of Steen: "A dolt that wavers with every breath; that has no mind at all: a notorious liar and perjurer too (if such a one be mind enough to be a responsible moral agent)." Turner's views and language were usually shared by Thompson, who contended that "my Captain [either Trenor or Steen] . . . is an ass but how great a one you do not know." Among the regiment's company commanders, Turner felt that "Boone, Trenor and Steen . . . resemble each other in but one respect, viz. an ignorance of all tactics, and a total incapacity for any system whatever." (Like Steen, Nathan Boone was commissioned from civilian life in 1833, but he was the only captain from the Mounted Rangers to remain in service until the Mexican War, a persistence which made him a major in 1847.)

Transfers between regiments and posts were another potential sore point for officers critical of their superiors. Major Wharton seems to have sensed the disdain of his subordinates, as he was rumored to have sought an exchange with Major Thomas Fauntleroy of the 2nd Dragoons in 1841 and was able to gain the command of Carlisle Barracks (Pennsylvania) in 1842 and a transfer of stations with Lieutenant Colonel Richard Mason in 1843. Lieutenant James Allen responded to these maneuvers by complaining that Wharton was "not entitled" to command at Carlisle, while the last of the major's moves led Thomas Swords to ask whether "the good of the service or
the private convenience of one of the officers [was] most consulted?" Swords had good reason to be suspicious, as he was well aware of the discretionary use of postings: in 1842 he opined that "the only chance to get 'D' Co. away" from Fort Gibson "would be for me to offer to take com[mand] of it on condition" that it be removed, since Colonel Stephen Kearny had long sought Swords' return from the staff. More than three years later, Swords planned to exchange posts with Robert Chilton, another quartermaster, but observed that "there is great uncertainty as to this change . . . as I have no reason to suppose [that] Genl Jesup is inclined to give me a pleasant post East," while Kearny would "certainly oppose" Chilton's transfer into his district. Regarding some of the company commanders, Turner wrote that "We do most earnestly object to the transfer of Beall [either Benjamin Lloyd or Lloyd James, probably the former--brothers who were both captains in the 2nd Dragoons] and Trenor; the latter is a sot & must soon kill himself; the former's moral character is no better & being a member of the temperance society may live forever--this objection [the greater obstacle Beall posed to promotion] is insuperable: Trenor . . . is very much flattered that some have expressed opposition, little dreaming of the cause."54

The quickest solution to slow promotion and professional incompetence appeared to lie in forcing superiors out through court-martials. "How does Mason get on before the Court of Inquiry? Is there any prospect of promotion in that quarter," asked Turner early in 1843. Eustace Trenor was a favorite target of court-martial charges; undergoing at least three inquiries, for "drunkenness on duty," "disobedience of orders and neglect of duty" (which encompassed "ignorance of the tactics"), and making false statements about these incidents. In the last of these cases, the charge was based on accusations that Trenor kept an Indian woman in his quarters as his mistress and had
frequent and violent arguments with her while intoxicated—"a striking picture of discord" that led to charges of "conduct unbecoming". (Trenor also allowed Corporal James Christopher to keep an Indian mistress of his own in the kitchen.) As usual, Turner showed no mercy in his comments, remarking that "Trenor is notorious in & out of the service, & I am informed that the members of his last Court entertained each other constantly during its sessions with his marvellous stories."\(^{55}\)

Trenor was never dismissed, and Turner was left to hope that he would be transferred to one of the regiments raised to occupy Oregon. Such indecisive results did not stop officers from constantly carrying their disputes into the military courts, despite the bitterness this must have caused. Among officers of equal rank, Captain Philip St. George Cooke exchanged charges with Trenor. In late 1842 Lieutenant James H. Carleton was the subject of an investigation on the grounds of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" for his role in covering up Lieutenant Charles Wickliffe's flight from arrest, at which time Turner welcomed Carleton's "opportunity to clear his character." Carleton defended himself by asserting that his statements which were brought into evidence had been confidential ones given in the expectation that fellow officers would not repeat them. (Indeed, this argument has an ironic yet entirely logical ring when we remember the similar ones made by cadets at West Point, for Carleton was not an academy graduate—the norms taught at the academy were clearly not the exclusive property of officers socialized there.) In a statement that illustrates just how far officers would sometimes go to protect one another, another officer testified that Carleton had detained several soldiers he caught slipping over the fort's walls (probably going absent without leave for a short drinking spree) in order to give Wickliffe time to escape without detection. Carleton
was convicted and sentenced to be dismissed from the army, but President Tyler remitted the sentence and suspended him from rank and pay for several months. Indeed, Wickliffe was the only one of the regiment's officers actually dismissed, but the offense—murder—suggests just how far an officer had to go before the War Department and army headquarters could overcome the officer corps' resistance to disciplining one of its own: Wickliffe (a West Pointer who fellow officers characterized as more often drunk than sober) ambushed and killed a civilian at Fort Gibson after the latter beat his Indian mistress, who Wickliffe was apparently seeing at the time. Having escaped incarceration, Wickliffe was reappointed as a captain in the wartime 16th Infantry in 1847 and promoted to major in the 14th Infantry before being discharged upon its disbanding in 1848.56

Superior officers had their own group interests at stake in court-martial proceedings, and officers were entitled to a court of their peers in rank, so it is not surprising that convictions were infrequent. In 1845 Philip Thompson observed that

I very much doubt, Bob, (and I say so with shame for our profession) whether in a contest between officers of our grade [lieutenants] and Field Officers, a Court could be instituted, composed of the 'old 'uns,' on which a majority would not be biased before the trial in favor of the Colonels &c. I once thought that a Court Martial was more certainly a Court of Justice, than any other. I now think the reverse, particularly where the culprit is of high rank. The results of the trials of Trenor & Harney . . . sufficiently prove this.

Turner warned Johnston that Harney's court-martial board would have "the full quantum of asses on it: his rank makes this certain."57
The duties and stations to which officers were assigned also fostered dissension among them. Johnston's friends usually expressed their allegiances and antagonisms in more personal and social terms, by discussing the merits of different posts and their inhabitants. The question of postings was certainly a double-edged one for Turner; in 1843 he confidentially asked Johnston if the latter would like to take up the adjutancy in his stead, as Turner felt "a preference for service with portions of my own corps; and a decided unwillingness to be pent up in a crowded garrison [Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis] with officers of another corps." Indeed, Turner observed that these feelings were "the same which induced me in 1839 to give up my Staff Appointment in the Adjt. General's Department," which was usually considered a plum post. In 1845, Turner wrote that "I really do long for motion, and would be the happiest man alive could I look forward with certainty to going on camping this summer with a large portion of the Regt."58

The limits of Turner's regimental allegiances were also exposed by rumored changes of station. "I despise the very atmosphere of Fort Gibson," he exclaimed in 1842, and that post seems to have been generally detested by Johnston's friends. Gibson was widely known as one of the most unhealthy posts in the country, and for some dragoon officers this distaste was due to professional considerations--the belief that the 1st was being kept there solely to consume the rations purchased from Colonel Arbuckle's plantation--but for most the reason lay in the officers stationed there--"the society of the post" as the phrase went. Given the close proximity in which officers lived while on post, the availability of suitable living quarters was sometimes a key factor in their career decisions. Turner's thoughts of resigning the adjutancy in 1843
were precipitated by the news that an officer with more seniority was due to arrive and dispossess him. "[Q]quarters aloof from the regular Barracks" had been essential to Turner's morale, as "the family privacy and comfort thus possessed, have compensated for the professional disagreements and ennui I have had to contend with," and in order to make an informed decision, Turner asked Johnston for "as clear an insight as you can [give] into the condition and description of quarters" he would occupy if he returned to his company. He ultimately chose not to do so because of his "horror of Ft. Gibson" (which would have been his new post) and the poor accommodations available there.59

Turner's opinions of prospective stations also illustrated the value he placed on rank and good company, which prior to his marriage outweighed his desire for good quarters: "My dear fellow stick to your company, even though it should continue at Gibson: better in command at Gibson, than [to] play second fiddle at Leavenworth: the sociability of the post is all gone, the bachelors are isolated and alone. I scarce know who they are." One of his letters from March 1843 deserves quotation at greater length as a summation of these concerns and their relationship with an officer's family life:

I may yet be permitted to continue in the occupation of my present quarters: in which event I shall hold on to my staff appointment [as adjutant]. Your account of quarters at Gibson is rather alarming, and deters Mrs. T more than myself from taking the step we had proposed . . . My life at this time approximates that of a civilian more than has ever been the case before, and I can assure you that it possesses but few charms for me: but for the comforts of my family, I should soon be in command of Compy. D. I have a horror of Ft. Gibson . . . and
unless there is a change in its community, nothing could induce me to take my wife there.  

Thomas Swords's letters also illustrate the importance of a post's society and quarters. In March 1843 he was transferred from Fort Scott, "to the devil perhaps--or to [Fort] G[ibson]--which is still worse": "What a change it will be for Mrs. S from the delightful society of Leavenworth." The following year, back at Scott, he thought it "a dull, very dull place" and wanted to leave, but was "content to let well enough alone at present." In the same letter Swords worried that Captain Burdett Terrett was "heartily disgusted with having so many of his men on extra [construction] duty" (under Swords' control as AQM) and he asked Johnston whether he could recommend Terrett's transfer to Fort Washita or Fort Gibson, where "he would have nothing but military duty [which Terrett preferred] to attend to." (Terrett had been commissioned from civil life in 1833 but was generally regarded as a capable officer.) In 1845 Swords noted the shortage of married quarters at Scott and complained that "we are the most humdrum set you ever saw--No body drinks, no body hunts, no body does anything but eat and sleep, and so our lives pass in [a] vegetable state of existence." Early in 1846 Swords discussed exchanging stations with Robert Chilton upon that officer's promotion to captain and assistant quartermaster: "I will consent to go East, provided I can secure a pleasant situation there" (because of his wish to visit family), "and as Chilton writes the vacant majority is to be filled, I want to be on the ground in order to get it."  

Like Turner--and perhaps most officers, given the frequent boredom and inactivity of army life--Swords had several moments of professional crisis, brought on in part because his professional identity was much more narrowly focused, being based primarily on his quasi-civilian duties as AQM.
In 1842 a bill was introduced in the Senate to effectively abolish the staff as an entity independent of the line. Swords doubted that it would pass, as he could not envision how they would get the staff duties performed... none would be fool enough to take pride in their performance, nor to give bonds... Let it pass, I am almost indifferent, as I am thoroughly disgusted with the present state of things. Sometimes [I] feel very much like throwing up my A.Q.M'ship—but the fear of Gibson always turns my thoughts into another current.

A year later Swords asked Johnston about the quarters at newly established Fort Washita, "as I may some of these days take a disgust at the Q.M.D. and take comd. of the "D"s. Am pretty well disgusted now, my only hope is in the instability of all earthly things, a change must take place some of these days—and any change must be for the better." These hopes were only temporary ones, and Swords seems to have become a sedentary bureaucrat, asking Johnston in 1842 whether it was "advisable for one so long separated from [company duty] as you and I have been to join if we can help it?" The following year Swords opined that he saw "but little in [company duty]... to excite a man's military spirit," and he termed the prospect of escorting merchant convoys to Santa Fe "horrid." In 1845 Swords wrote about Mexico—in one of the only letters Johnston received on the topic—that he "would like very well to revel in the halls [presumably of Montezuma] for a short time," but concluded that he was still "very well satisfied" to remain in Missouri in lieu of orders for Texas. (Swords ultimately went to Mexico, where he won a brevet for his services.)

Philip Thompson was a soldier who combined Turner's esprit and elan with Swords's discontent. A graduate of the Military Academy who primarily
served as a company officer with the troops, Lieutenant Thompson frequently found himself bored with inactivity. In 1839 Thompson went on furlough, and he assured Johnston that "I shall return after my short respite to my military duties with increased zest and preference to my profession." He visited St. Louis on his way, and his comments illustrate yet again the importance of the society of fellow officers to these men, while suggesting some of the reasons Turner disliked Jefferson Barracks there:

I have ceased to wonder at the Ennui declared by [then-lieutenant Philip] Kearny & Turner during the time they were stationed here, and can safely say that no consideration would induce me . . . to accept of the appointment of A.D.C. Genl [Henry] A[tkinson] is one of the most affable men I have ever met and I doubt not to do duty with him would be agreeable where there was a number of troops, but without the associations of officers who could unite with one in the feelings & and occupations of similar ages time must hang heavily, and ennui et les vapeurs noirs, be the accompaniment to the Aid[e]ship.

The following year Thompson wrote that he considered the service "a stale weary and unprofitable life and I almost wish something would offer to take me out of the Army, but alas my fate is sealed." Thompson finally sought consolation through marriage: "I confess candidly to the want of a wife . . . and also to my intention of making the search as soon as circumstances will justify--The idea of remaining as at present is insupportable to me; as there is no prospect of distinction or promotion in our little Army why should not a man's attention be directed to his happiness in a domestic way?" Marriage
notwithstanding, Thompson's army life seemed little different four years later:

I stumble along as easily as I can, but pray heaven daily for any change. In truth my life here has become a mere existence. I 'vegetate' but cannot be said to do much more--The absence of all those with whom I was formerly closely associated may be ascribed as one cause and the sameness and want of excitement in my life also lend their aid to this result--Swords is the only one left with whom I can be said to be intimate & being married he is of course differently situated. . . . In short I long for change and hope that it may soon come, hostile demonstrations on the Canadian frontier, an order for Florida or for the Rocky Mountains or any where else except Ft. Gibson would be to me the most agreeable of intelligence.

Thompson's malaise did not go unnoticed by his comrades--Swords suggested that he should take an extended furlough, as "he has been at this place too long entirely." A final example of a good field officer's demoralization came from Lieutenant J.H.K. Burgwin in 1840: "the black dog [depression] seizes me sometimes and worries me terribly." "You, who know what the army life is . . . will admit that there is no situation in which one is more subject to this malign influence," he remarked to Johnston. Like Turner, Swords, and Thompson, Burgwin thought that the ultimate solution to his woes lay outside the army, for "there is no happiness out of the married state." (James Allen also warned Johnston to "get married" before returning from the East, for "it is exceedingly stupid to live out here as we bachelors do.")63
Boredom and careerism among officers in close and constant proximity to one another led to endemic friction and conflict. This was often expressed in, and doubtlessly exacerbated by, the language of honor spoken by Johnston's correspondents. No regiment lacked cause for scandal, but ordinary tensions were exacerbated when one set of officers—in this case the young West Point graduates and staff officers—claimed to believe that another group—the line commanders appointed directly from civilian life—had no moral character. The result in several cases was systematic ostracism, which Lieutenant James Henry Carleton suffered for at least two years. "Do you think Carleton will hold out long, under the state of coventry to which he is subjected—Is there another officer of the Regt. who will speak to him?" Turner asked Johnston in 1843. Two years later Turner reported that Carleton was "constantly making desperate efforts to be restored to the favorable regard of the Officers . . . but failed signally—he was barely tolerated, as I presume he will continue to be as long as he remains in the Regt.," and he was expressly forbidden to go to a regimental party: "Carleton was invited a short time since by a member of the mess . . . The member . . . was afterwards required to inform Mr. C. that he would not be expected." (Swords wrote that "we are to be cursed here with Carleton. I shall give him a pretty wide berth.") Aside from (but not in contrast to) his complicity in Wickliffe's escape from arrest, Carleton's problems seem to have stemmed from his relations with women whom his comrades considered lacking in gentility: Swords remarked in 1843 that "by marrying he may do the post some service but the Regt a good deal of harm"; while Turner felt that Carleton "may marry one or both of them [a pair of sisters] if he chooses . . . [but] it will be the last outrage he will have an opportunity of committing on the Regiment." Carleton was apparently marrying into a family that Johnston's friends disliked, but—as usual—Turner
was wrong in his predictions of doom and his hopes for cleansing the regiment of the unwashed.\textsuperscript{64}

Eustace Trenor faced similar treatment on several occasions, his situation exacerbated by the hope that he would resign and foster a chain of promotions. James Allen remarked in 1842 that "Old Pat is back among us, but is not well received. None of the Officers visit him though most, like myself, speak to him--He looks better than I ever saw him--drinks nothing I believe and attends most rigidly to his duties--There is no chance of getting rid of him for years to come." Matters soon got worse; Thompson observed several months later that Trenor was drinking heavily and that Swords only spoke to him on duty, leading Thompson to conclude that Trenor had "no more pride or feeling [meaning sensitivity to insult] than a dog." As these letters indicate, alcoholism was clearly a problem among the officers of the 1st Dragoons: in an earlier letter Turner labelled Trenor "a drunkard and a liar" and reported that assistant surgeon William L. Wharton (Major Clifton Wharton's brother) drank at half-hour intervals throughout the day.\textsuperscript{65}

Habitual lying was another practice Johnston's friends frowned upon. Turner considered Captain Enoch Steen "another black sheep, would to God we could rid the Regt. of him," and discussed (or maligned) his character at length:

I have for a long time entertained a most contemptuous opinion of him; his want of veracity, his mischief-making spirit, and dishonesty make him in my opinion the worst subject in the Regiment--not even excepting Trenor. Steen is malicious, Trenor is not: Steen will lie under the solemnity of an oath, I believe Trenor will not. Steen's ignorance and stupidity serve to
palliate these traits, and but for this, I verily believe he would not be tolerated in the Regiment.

In the same letter Turner expressed his contempt for Carleton, who had accepted Lieutenant Colonel Mason's hand after that officer had preferred the court-martial charges that saw Carleton suspended; this proved to Turner that the accused acknowledged his guilt of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.66

Debt—meaning the imputation of an inability to sustain the refined lifestyle of a gentleman, or economic dependence—was also frowned upon by officers aspiring to genteel status: in 1845 Turner noted Steen's "repudiated debts"; and Thompson suggested that another officer, apparently Lieutenant Fayette Robinson, "cannot remain much longer in the Reg't--frequent complaints have been made to the Col. in relation to the debts he has left unpaid in different posts . . . the general feeling among the officers of the Regt is that he is a disgrace to the corps & to the army and should not be allowed to remain." (Robinson had been commissioned from civilian life in 1837; he resigned at the end of 1841, but his experiences do not appear to have prejudiced him against the army, since he later authored the highly flattering Dictionary of the Officers of the United States Army.)67 Sexual misconduct and the mistreatment of dependents was a final area where the West Point-educated officers' genteel ethos of honorable and correct behaviour came into play. We have already noted the distaste Turner demonstrated for Trenor's domestic violence, but the principal scandal in this area was that of Lieutenant William Bowman. Bowman's checkered career had begun with combat service as an officer in the War of 1812; he was discharged after the war, apparently enlisted as a private soldier and was promoted to sergeant in 1836, and was appointed a lieutenant in the 1st Dragoons in 1837. In 1843
Turner related gossip that he had deserted a wife and two children upon his reenlistment; he had apparently married again and was therefore "called on officially to explain" himself. Swords reported Bowman's apparent suicide the following October, "a very unexpected thing with us--as he was looked upon as one of the toughest cases in the Regt. [I]t is certainly a very melancholy occurrence for Mrs. B. and particularly unfortunate for poor Steen--but perhaps no great loss to the service, as the fewer of that set we have with us the better." Regardless of his conduct, Bowman would not have been popular as an ex-enlisted man, which probably helps to explain Swords' harsh judgement. (This bias also explains Turner's opinion of the French officers he met at Saumur, many of whom had been promoted from the ranks: "right good fellows, and . . . sufficiently civil, but I judge they are greatly inferior to our own officers [in] point of intelligence and gentlemanly bearing . . . I would not give the society of one of you fellows for a Regiment of [them].")\textsuperscript{68}

Another blast from the irrepressible Turner completes the picture of quarrels and scandals in this supposedly elite regiment:

I am utterly disgusted with what you tell me of Steen and [Lieutenant Daniel Henry] Rucker. Not so much surprised for I had never expected better things of either of them, yet 'tis matter of great regret that any Officer of the Regt. should have shown such indifference to insult, coming from such exceptionable characters as Beall and Hill [presumably Lieutenant John H., of the 2nd Dragoons]. The former is notorious & the latter is an unprincipled dirty fellow. He was found guilty of conduct in this city a few years ago, that would require him to abandon the service did he belong to any other Regiment. . . .
As for [Lieutenant Abraham] Buford . . . I am only surprised that he has had the face to return to the Regt: There is but one opinion in this part of the Regt. about him & I am not sure that the Colonel will not feel it incumbent [up]on him[self] to take active steps against him . . . the slayer of his own child; at least so regarded by those most familiar with the circumstances of the affair. Better things could hardly have been expected however of the man who would marry his own Mistress. The presumption is that she urged him to commit the act [--whether of murder or marriage is unclear]. [Presumably Buford's child died of sickness, which was attributed to neglect, as Turner have would been sure to tell us if there was actual foul play involved.]

Trenor has returned to duty under prospects decidedly favorable to a long continuance in the Regt. having abandoned entirely his habits of intemperance: I do not learn that he has ceased lying, but on that score he has repeatedly proven himself invulnerable. He can lie with impunity, 'tis so determined by the repeated decisions of Courts Martial. I do not however consider him as dangerous a liar as your present commander [Steen--Turner could "conceive of nothing more disgusting" than to be his subordinate].

This sort of internal social strife seems to have preoccupied the young West Pointers of the 1st Dragoons, and they evaluated each other not in the functional and relatively objective terms of military expertise, but in the much more subjective civilian ones of personal gentility and honor. While gossip may have been an informal means of regulating behaviour and
establishing "professional" standards in tune with those of society at large, it was clearly detrimental to the cohesion of the regiment's officer corps. The result was a series of court-martials that took commanders away from their units for extended periods but rarely forced errant officers to leave the service or to conform to "professional" norms. Ironically, Turner complained in 1843 about being constantly called away from his post on long trips to act as a character witness at court-martials. Perhaps he was reevaluating the criteria by which he judged fellow officers, for he was soon lamenting that the army's two most recent court-martial convictions for "unofficerlike and ungentlemanly conduct" "occurred in our Regiment." This mortification did not alter Turner's basic attitudes, however, as his assessment of Trenor's court-martial board the following year shows:

His Court was composed of Dolts & small-rate lawyers, just in proportion to do the state least service. . . . [Lieutenant Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock, one of the court's members] has become a great "refiner" [something Hitchcock had long been known for in his court-martial service]. Makes mountains out of mole hills, & conduct disgraceful in a gentleman admissible in an officer. . . . I dislike such men, although they do not disgrace themselves, they nevertheless permit disgraceful conduct in another to go unpunished, that they may appear learned before fools. Such men have not the interests of their profession at heart: 'tis decidedly a bad sign to see an Officer, especially one of rank & experience, throwing obstacles in the way of getting rid of an unworthy subject. ⁷⁰

Turner, a lieutenant throughout the period covered by this section, was a Virginian who graduated from West Point 21st out of a class of 36 in 1834.
His duties were usually those of regimental adjutant during this period (from 1836 to 1838 and 1841 to 1846); he served as acting AAG (with the rank of captain) in 1838 and 1839 (before going to the French Cavalry School) and under Brigadier General Stephen Kearny (the commander of the 1st Dragoons and Turner's patron) in the Army of the West, where he was brevetted major for bravery in the battle of San Pascual on December 6, 1846. (Abraham Johnston, by then a captain and aide-de-camp to Kearny, was killed in action leading a charge against Mexican lancers that day, along with Captain Benjamin Moore--one of the few non-West Pointers liked by Johnston's friends--and Lieutenant Thomas Hammond.) Turner's professional allegiances appear to have been always to his regiment rather than to the army as a whole, for he resigned in 1848 and became a farmer in Virginia when it became clear that Kearny was about to die of disease.

Turner was Johnston's most frequent correspondent from mid-1842 onwards, and his letters provide the best examples of the ethos of genteel behavior and honor that these officers espoused. Indeed, Turner was the most caustic of Johnston's correspondents in his evaluations, personal and professional, of fellow officers, but he also put the most stress on professional expertise and showed the most desire to serve with his regiment (though primarily in a staff capacity). In other words, Turner typifies in his very excesses the best and the worst features of the U.S. Army officer corps during this period, and I therefore find it highly significant that Turner was the first of major characters discussed in this section to resign. Turner was clearly a "professional" in his quest to improve his regiment's military expertise and capability, but his constant vilification of his comrades shows a very mixed understanding of collegiality or cohesion. On the other hand, social values do inform the cultural definition of professionalism in any particular context,
and claims to gentility and honor were doubtlessly intended to secure acceptance by at least the upper classes and other emerging national elites (including the politicians who determined officers' terms of service), and if a substantial portion of the officer corps was derived from these backgrounds (or at least from the urban middle classes that aspired to similar values) it would have seemed natural to base claims to authority on these characteristics, which were the standards by which English and colonial professionals had long been judged.

Gentility was a contested system of social behaviour, however, and some officers interpreted its dictates in terms much more conducive to the officer corps' cohesion as a group: the pragmatic General Gaines criticized the constant intrusion of questions of reputation and character in court-martial charges and proceedings, specifically in Johnston's charges against Harney, which the general labelled "most odious and most repugnant to the fair dealing and even handed justice of the votaries of Military Science," in contrast to "the open manly action of a United States soldier," and Gaines clearly found Johnston's charges against Harney a trivial waste of time and a threat to the cohesion of "brother soldier[s]." Gaines was certainly coming to the aid of a protege, but his words also expressed a sense of an officer's honor and reputation different from the rigid one held by censorious junior officers like Henry Turner. Gaines and Harney were grizzled frontier veterans and practical line soldiers to the core: they already held field and general rank and had distinguished themselves in combat. The old general may have been turning an uncharacteristically blind eye to Harney's brutal treatment and degradation of the enlisted men under his command, but Harney was a highly effective tactician and combat leader, and Gaines was certainly correct about the damage to the army's cohesion and public image wrought by the
incessant charges and countercharges that officers brought against each other on the smallest pretext. The rhetoric of reputation failed to create barriers to the presence of unfit or undesirable officers, for all the men Turner and Swords criticized remained in the regiment, yet the unit's combat performance does not seem to have suffered from their continued presence. (In some cases this was because the men in question simply did not take part in the regiment's active operations.) Although the 1st was rife with scandals and court-martials that can hardly have made it respectable in the eyes of the rest of the army, it did perform its missions successfully, first in patrolling the frontier and later in the Mexican War, where a part of it formed the core of Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny's expedition that conquered New Mexico and California in a series of small-unit engagements.71

The 1st proved an effective fighting unit, but all the principles of unit cohesion known to military analysts suggest that the regiment would have been even more capable if the standards of professionalism applied by its officers had been based more on competence and less on character, more on conduct in the field and less on conduct in the officers' mess. (Remember that Johnston and two other officers were cut off and killed in an ill-considered charge against Californio lancers when the damp prevented the Americans from firing their weapons effectively and they pursued the enemy's false retreat so quickly that their horses were winded and the unit became disorganized.)72 Character and honor were essential to social standing in Victorian America, and no group aspiring to the prestige and authority of a profession could afford to downplay these values, but their constant application and their lack of flexibility helped to aggravate dissension and distrust among men already frustrated by their limited prospects for promotion. The contentious officers of the 1st Dragoons were
careerists whose values and motives were fundamentally personal and social rather than professional in character, contrary to the standards set by functionalist definitions of professionalism. Claims to a unique expertise and responsibility—to a specialized military function in the social division of labor—were relegated to a distinctly secondary status while officers concentrated their energies on the quest for promotion and social respectability, and genteel behavior, not combat effectiveness, was held up as the primary criteria for membership in the fraternity of officers and gentlemen. Insofar as we choose to evaluate the officers of the 1st as professionals, we must therefore recognize that—particularly in the circumstances of the mid-nineteenth century—assessing military professionalism is no more a matter of measuring purely functional expertise than in the case of the civilian professions, where scholars have recognized the subjectivity and socially constructed character of professionalism and "professionalization" for several decades.

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III. Conflicts of Expertise, Cohesion, and Responsibility in the Debates over Rotating Infantry and Artillery Regiments

I close this chapter with an analysis of one of the most extensive controversies argued in the army's professional journals (principally the Military and Naval Magazine), that over the postings held by infantry and artillery units between 1833 and 1835, along with a precedent from the 1820s and the disputes in 1835 and 1836 over the stations of the 7th Infantry and the 2nd Artillery. Though short-lived, these debates between branches and regiments in the line provide us with a more localized counterpart to the more systemic staff-line conflict and the personal quarrels which constantly
gripped the officer corps. Examining these controversies also draws together the themes of geographic dispersal and (on an organizational scale) patronage and favoritism, while pointing to the highly subjective dynamic between policy considerations—the need to maintain both preparedness and morale—based on expertise and those founded in intraorganizational (in this case branch or regimental) cohesion. Aside from their impact on the army's internal life, the language used in these controversies demonstrates once again the parallels between the values, motives, and objectives of army officers and those of civilians from similar class backgrounds, and thus anticipates the broader civil-military questions addressed in Part Five, while acting as a reminder of the intraorganizational dilemmas faced by senior commanders and the frustrations felt by junior ones as they patrolled the nation's borderlands and frontiers.

Like the divisions between officers and enlisted men and the staff and line, that between the infantry and artillery replicated, or at least appeared to reflect, the class hierarchies of opportunity and prestige in American society, in this case those based on geographic and cultural distinctions between urban and rural, coastal and backcountry (or in this case, frontier), and politically speaking, center and periphery (or in contemporary terms, "Court and Country"). The infantryman who began the 1834 controversy argued that his comrades were "remote from comfort, far distant from friends, and frequently engaged in warfare with the savage," while artillerymen reclined "amidst the enjoyment of luxuries, the pleasures of society and the repose of peace." Actual Indian conflicts were extremely rare, but artillery officers agreed that they held substantial social advantages because of their stations—one remarked that lieutenants of artillery were "more eligible" than captains of infantry, presumably in social settings and courtship. It was also easier for
men stationed on the seaboard to make useful contacts with senior officers, the War Department staff, and influential civilians. The author suggested that as a result resignations were more common in the infantry than the artillery, and he warned that isolation threatened the infantry officer's sense of responsibility, for "being distant from society . . . [and] remote from the healthful influence of public opinion . . . has had a tendency to impair the morals of many."73

The dispute was also one between men who emphasized professional practice, albeit in the constabulary role of chasing Indians and smugglers along the frontier, which most officers considered distinctly less interesting or attractive than preparing for war with a European power, and those who stressed the army's role as "a conservatory of military knowledge and genius" in the midst of a supposedly pacific society in preparation for future wars--the expansible army concept held up by the expert cadre as the route to professionalization and occupational monopoly and by the engineers, ordnance, and artillery because of their roles in coastal defense. Infantrymen resented the artillery's stable residence in coastal stations in or near major ports, and they suggested that there was little foundation for this inequality: "It is almost superfluous to remark that the habitual duties of the Artillery are those of Infantry . . . [and] the officers of Infantry go through the same course of instruction at the Military Academy that officers of Artillery do," wrote the man who started the debate. (Indeed, each infantry regiment had several small field guns attached to it, which its adjutant trained soldiers to fire.)74

The problem as the infantrymen saw it was that their units were constantly stationed on the Indian frontiers doing hard expeditionary service, and "during this long period of banishment . . . [not] the least prospect has
been held out of a relief." Referring again to the tendency toward dissipation and demoralization amidst the inertia of frontier garrisons, this author therefore urged that infantry and artillery units exchange posts periodically, for "the prospect of restoration to society and friends, would prove an incentive to the continuance of such conduct as would be acceptable" to them, "while the subjection to public opinion would operate to check vice in its incipient state." The author closed his letter by appealing to the practice of European armies for precedent, though he said nothing of the antirepublican political origins of these policies, which sought to preclude excessive amity between soldiers and the local civilians they might be ordered to shoot, presumably the opposite of the effect he intended.75

A more thoroughly professional approach was taken by "Ulysses," who was apparently an artilleryman himself but felt impelled to write because of his concern for the survival of the army's collegiality and cohesion and his desire to improve its military capability. "Ulysses" cautioned against "infusing a selfishness or unkind feeling into the members of a profession, in which, if in any, union and harmony should be cherished," and refused to argue rights and privileges in the invidious and highly subjective terms preferred by many of the other disputants. Instead, "we will throw out . . . all personal considerations of the officer, as an individual: for we take it for granted that an officer entering a particular corps, has made up his mind to go whithersoever duty in that corps may call him, and that he expects to participate in the pleasures of a city life only when such indulgence is not detrimental to the public interest." As a more responsible alternative, Ulysses proposed to employ the dispute as a starting-point for reform, highlighting goals and concerns articulated by generals Jesup and Gaines a decade before: "if it is admitted that a knowledge of the several arms is worthy of regard, and
that the Topography of a frontier, likely to become the theatre of war, is also a proper study" for officers who might end up in command of combined arms forces there, "this knowledge may be generally diffused throughout the army . . . at little cost to the Government, by certain periodical changes of position of the troops of different arms." He added that this policy would give officers "a rapid conception of the advantages and weaknesses of positions" (terrain and topography) a skill they rarely received the chance to practice, although how this would actually have been done was not made clear.

The author did not therefore suggest sending artillery units to the west, where they would not be employed in wartime (units encumbered by artillery being unable to catch the Indians), but he did urge that they be stationed more frequently along the Canadian border. "Ulysses" agreed with his fellow artillerymen that the duties of the two branches were distinct, but he could not believe that officers of either corps would be rendered less efficient by acquiring some of the skills of their counterparts. Realizing the opposition this proposal might incur, he wisely closed with an appeal to self-interest crafted to support the functional values of military expertise and efficiency:

It is the duty, as it should be the desire, of every officer of the army having a prospect, however remote, of promotion to the command of a division, a brigade, a regiment or even a battalion, to qualify himself as far as practicable for the command of an army—that is to say, a detachment consisting of troops of every arm.76

These were the only letters by infantrymen or their sympathizers, but they ignited a firestorm of criticism by artillery officers threatened with the loss of pleasant stations and independent (which also meant better-paying) commands. Like staff officers responding to criticism from the line, most of
the artillery officers who commented on the controversy rigidly resisted the infantry's importunities, attributing them almost entirely to envy, greed (the desire for "double rations," an extra cash allowance given to post commanders, of whom there were many more in the artillery, since it was dispersed in single-company posts at the coastal forts), and an ignorance of the degree of knowledge needed for artillery service. Some of these responses were irresponsibly vitriolic: one letterwriter went so far as to proclaim the existence of social distinctions in civil life as sufficient justification for the different "stations" occupied by the officers of the two branches, while another sneered at a proposal for amalgamating the two branches as "so ludicrous, so anomalous and incongruous, that the idea was [at first] supposed to be the suggestion of insanity." (Of course, there probably was some truth to the former assertion, insofar as cadets from urban and professional backgrounds tended to be better prepared and to rank more highly at the academy, allowing them to choose the artillery upon graduation.) Most artillerymen were less provocative in their arguments, preferring to stress the specialized knowledge that they claimed was necessary to perform their technical duties, while they responded to criticism that their units were poorly trained as gunners by warning that this defect could not be remedied if they were sent inland to "infantry posts" without heavy (i.e., coastal) artillery. Artillery officers correctly doubted whether many of their infantry counterparts were actually resigning, and they laughed off the implication that urban life could be considered conducive to good morals. Indeed, one artillerist contended (without overt sarcasm) that infantrymen were better fitted for the plain frontier than the "luxuries" and "artificialities" of the cities, a veiled insult that could only have aroused jealous rage among his antagonists, while another argued that "the dull management of heavy
guns . . . could neither be agreeable nor useful to the mercurial spirit" of the infantry. (He advised that they target the engineers, whose pay was substantially higher but who might welcome the chance to command troops.) "Manlius," the author of a five part series in the New York American reprinted in the Military and Naval Magazine, observed that frequent changes of station and detached service limited the isolation of infantry life on the frontier, but he summed up the more deeply rooted problem by adding that "the monotony of a garrison life, in time of peace, is very little dependent upon the arm of service to which one may belong."77

Artillery commissions were also explained logically (and per official policy) as "rewards for closer application and greater proficiency in the sciences taught" at West Point, a system of selection that the artillerists rightly proclaimed necessary "to keep alive that spirit of emulation upon which so much depends." Proponents of the artillery were not content to remain on the defensive, however, and they countered critics with the assertion that the infantry were promoted more quickly because there were only two-thirds as many lieutenants per regiment. Indeed, some artillerymen resented this differential between their opportunities and those of the men who graduated well beneath them from West Point: "no consideration of climate or station--society or solitude--labor or leisure, can compensate an officer of an ambitious spirit, for the loss of rank," proclaimed "Lt. Slowmatch," who damned the army's failure to reward intellectual capacity and endeavour with promotion (a pernicious consequence of the expansible army structure and the seniority system, of course). Several artillery officers even suggested that they would willingly exchange branches in order to realize this more rapid advancement, although these comments went against the grain of everything else the artillerists wrote. Similarly, "Slowmatch" asked "who would not prefer the
wild, free range of the trackless west . . . rife [with] sport and game, [with] enterprise and adventure, to a little island residence in one of our harbors."

Finally, artillerymen commonly relied on the simple precedent that things were as they had always been, a variant of the officer corps' constant use of "experience" to justify a self-rewarding status quo.\textsuperscript{78}

The controversy over infantry and artillery postings stimulated other complaints by arousing the artillerymen to a consciousness of their corporate interests, but debating the merits and justice of these postings opened up a can of worms from everyone's perspective. Some artillery officers shared the infantrymen's concern for fairness, but they selfishly concentrated their ire on the problems facing their individual regiments, an allegiance which had the potential to divide the artillery against itself. In 1834 "Bruce" complained that, contrary to Jacob Brown's still-standing general order of 1827, the artillery regiments were never rotated, leaving some of them to face the sickly southern climate for years on end. He asked readers "what is it that forms the basis of our small but efficient army? It is, that all, as far as practicable, may be satisfied . . . by placing us all upon an equality. We are all serving our country on the same terms."\textsuperscript{79} A month later "Ulysses" cautioned against the growing urge to raise one's own individual or corporate claims to the forefront, for

\begin{quote}
if we everlastingly continue to consult our own ease, and our "individual rights and privileges," while we disregard . . . the "public expediency" of measures; patriotism must degenerate into selfishness, and the thirst for knowledge and distinction [will] sink into the all-absorbing, unsoldier-like passion for accumulating--what?--"\texttt{double-rations}!"\end{quote}
The infantry-artillery controversy then died down for about a year, until an artilleryman's manifesto on the purposes of the army--written primarily for civilian consumption--that appeared to neglect the constabulary role of the infantry drew a hostile response stressing that branch's practical services on the northern and western frontiers enforcing the revenue laws. ("Louisiana" also emphasized the infantry's role as a deterrent to slave uprisings, although artillery units were stationed widely enough in the south that they probably bore the brunt of the duties related to this mission.) Nevertheless, the question of infantry-artillery exchange or amalgamation--an argument largely carried out in the language of expertise and capability by defenders of the status quo--was replaced by more insular concerns--expressed primarily in the language of individual and corporate rights and equity--when the issue of artillery postings was revived in 1835.80

The artillery had some reason to fear the effects of a general exchange of posts, for it was the only corps of the army to have experienced such a measure since the redeployments following the War of 1812. Shortly after General Gaines' 1825 proposal for rotation between infantry and artillery, Surgeon General Thomas Lovell reported on the impact of unit rotation on the army's health, concluding that periodic exchanges of post between units stationed in the north and south would acclimate the entire force to the southern climate and disease environment. Concentration increased unit cohesion and self-consciousness as well as discipline, for a year later (in early 1827) more than a dozen officers of the 3rd and 4th Artillery stationed at the Artillery School (including a young Robert Anderson and the post commander, Abraham Eustis), who would otherwise have been posted along the Gulf and South Atlantic coasts, sent a memorial to commanding general
Brown "to solicit your aid, as Chief of the Army," in relieving them of their unhealthy posts in the south. (Indeed, sixteen officers of the 4th had died between 1821 and 1827, four times the average in the other artillery regiments.)

The language of this petition illustrates again the demand for intraoccupational justice and equality and the sense of individual and corporate rights which pervaded the army officer corps, usually to the detriment of its cohesion as a whole. The petitioners maintained that the disparity between northern and southern posts was "so complete . . . as to render it unequal and unjust" in regards to "health, economy, & the general objects of convenience in life." They protested that they would not have objected to this inequality "in time of war, when views of private convenience are necessarily merged in consideration of public utility," but they decried its perpetuation during peacetime. Relying on "the practice of every government of Europe," they also reminded readers that rotation through Fortress Monroe would eventually acclimate all the regiments to southern conditions, permitting such an exchange with limited casualties and rendering all the artillery regiments more efficient in wartime. Nevertheless, the memorialists' argument was ultimately one of justice, not utility, for they explicitly claimed "to consider the subject only with a reference to their own rights" and the principle of equality. The petition closed with an appeal to "that general plan of justice for which government itself is instituted," beseeching the secretary of war to act "as the guardian of their individual rights, and the rights of the establishment of which they are a part": "If the Army be, more immediately than the other portions of the community, under the control of the government, they do not infer from this fact that the claims of any part of the Army will be the less regarded."
This petition was seconded by an almost identically worded memorial from West Point, but (as was always the case in any personnel decisions in the army) proposals for change quickly aroused opposition from other interested parties. Responding to the latter petition, Adjutant General Jones (theoretically a captain of the northerly 2nd Artillery, and probably under pressure from members thereof) informed the secretary of war that six of the seven second lieutenants among the memorialists had never seen their regiments in garrison (though he ignored Fortress Monroe as such), and four had not yet served a year in the army. Jones dismissed these officers as "juvenile memorialists" and asserted that a majority of the officers on field duty in the 3rd and 4th Artillery would refuse the exchange. On the other hand, six of the West Point petitioners had been transferred into the 3rd or 4th Regiments from the 1st or 2nd ones because of a standing order that promoted brevet (temporary, or supernumerary) second lieutenants to ordinary rank in whichever regiment vacancies first occurred--these men had been transferred to the southern regiments because of the deaths that had occurred therein, certainly reasonable cause for their concern for the future should they be compelled to assume company duties.

Whatever the internecine forces at work in this struggle, Brown suddenly ordered that all artillery regiments be rotated biennially in order to relieve those stationed along the Gulf of Mexico from the casualties incurred in that climate. Justifying this action in his favorite idiom, military capability, Brown reported to the War Department that like geographic concentration, "the occasional movement of troops is . . . highly instrumental to the preservation of discipline and efficiency." The commanding general responded to stirrings of dissatisfaction among the officers of regiments
previously stationed in the north by cautioning that "it often happens . . .
that individual interests are more or less prejudiced by these changes of
station, but such interests must ever be viewed as secondary to those more
important attributes of military character which . . . can only be preserved by
an active and habitual exercise." The commanding general, soon to die of the
debility brought on by repeated stokes, closed with an appeal to professional
responsibility:

If it be an object to secure the martial energy and vigor of a peace
establishment from that natural decay which is [induced] by
habitual inactivity and ease, too much care cannot be taken . . . to
guard against the encroachments of sloth, to multiply [the]
objects of ambition, and to encourage all measures which tend to
stimulate the energies and elevate the character. Long
quiescence at particular stations is incompatible with these
objects.

Unfortunately, but perhaps not unexpectedly, the exchange did not work out
as Brown and Lovell had intended. Several units north and south suffered
serious losses while adjusting to their new climates, and the officers of the
regiments stationed in the north were incensed by the move, which was not
repeated until to the Seminole War, and then only because of redeployments
for operational reasons.83

Like so many other regulations (General Order 48, for instance),
Brown's order was neither cancelled nor enforced, providing ammunition
for those who felt injured by favoritism or sought to question the army's
administration, and artillery officers continued to quarrel among themselves
about exchanging their regimental stations in order to relieve those at
southern posts from exposure to disease. "Sub-Senex" reopened the debate in
August 1835 with a plea for a transfer of the 2nd Artillery, citing "the unhealthiness of nearly all the southern posts, the exorbitant prices . . . the high rate of transportation" costs, "and the many pleasures and conveniences enjoyed by those stations in the north." Although exchanges for the purpose of health appeared as reasonable a policy in 1835 as in 1827, "Miles" responded that "many of the officers who are actually serving [in the South] would be most reluctant to exchange" because of their local and family connections (which "Sub-Senex" minimized), and he criticized the exchange ordered in 1827 as a cause of "great expense to the Government," "ruinous [financial] consequences to the officers . . . and great distress to the soldiers" with families. Like "Ulysses," this controversialist appealed to the self-interest of his readers, for more of the officers of regiments stationed in the south received the double rations of post commanders, because their regiments were more widely dispersed than those in the north. This appeal reflected and exacerbated divisions among the soldiers of the 2nd, for "Sub-Senex" responded by questioning whether the interests of eight post commanders should be allowed to rule a regiment of fifty-seven officers and inviting the president's intervention. "Huron" carried forth the plea for change by recurring to "the common rule of equity in military details" cited in Brown's order, and declared that "the 'equal measure of justice' is the thing we are willing to rest our claim on; we ask nothing more."84

The army hierarchy did not officially comment on any of these controversies, and they died out late in 1835, only to be revived in even more atomistic form by the officers of individual regiments seeking transfers for their units out of the theater of active operations in Florida. Ironically, artillery regiments provided most of the regular infantry during the first two years of the Second Seminole War. Both sides in the infantry-artillery
dispute certainly had valid points to make; in the long run the artilleryists were correct about the need for specialization, but the opinions expressed by infantry correspondents clearly indicate that the army had failed to address the strong sense of injustice and inequality created by seemingly permanent regimental postings. (The Seminole conflict forced constant unit movements, which eventually gave the War Department the opportunity to shift some units around, but by and large the base stations established for the infantry regiments between 1815 and 1821 did not change before 1846.) The artillery's arguments for specialization apparently triumphed over "Ulysses"'s quest for breadth, but (as is usually the case when trying to evaluate specific policy decisions) it is unclear whether this occurred because senior officers and paymasters were convinced that the artillery required special experience and capabilities or whether a system of unit rotation was simply too threatening to the ease and self-interest of officers who had built up families and networks of friends at their existing stations. In more general terms, the stalemate caused by the balance of branch interests and congressional demands for fiscal economy doomed any change of such dramatic proportions from the very outset.

Similar, and in some respects even more highly charged, controversies arose at about the same time in the infantry. In June 1835 "Arkansas" asked whether the 7th Infantry had been detained amidst "the severity of a hot and unhealthy climate" on the borders of that state for fourteen years to gratify "the pecuniary advancement of . . . its higher officers," referring by implication to Colonel Mathew Arbuckle's plantation on the Arkansas River near Fort Jesup (which supplied Fort Gibson, the regiment's home station). (Arbuckle was not the only senior officer to profit from the coincident location of his headquarters and business affairs, for Colonel Duncan L.
Clinch based a sizable force at Fort Drane on his Florida plantation at the outset of the Second Seminole War, and was criticized for doing so. No other infantry regiment had remained so entirely in place during that period, leading the author to assume "that even handed justice has not been meted out" and he warned that "troops long in one place, and having no motive for ambition, lose much of their military pride, become interested [by family and investments] in the country, and ... are too apt to fall into vicious and immoral habits." The first response came from "Neosho," who agreed about "the effects of a protracted residence" and "the evils of the social segregation incident to infantry service," but used "Arkansas"s "wanton attack" on Arbuckle as evidence of the very lack of esprit de corps, "military enthusiasm," and "moral affections" the first critic had complained of.

"Neosho" then lauded the 7th's service and claimed its "right to choose itself a station from among those occupied" by the infantry, but he defended Arbuckle because of his "known fidelity ... to the best interests of the public service ... his devotion to the welfare of the red race ... with whom he holds a sort of patriarchal relation ... and out of the moral influence of his name, which tends essentially to the preservation of peace" among the Indians.85

A week later, a third correspondent (obviously a Washington-based staff officer given the speed of his response) attempted to transcend internal squabbling by laying the issue at the door of the government to which the army was accountable and looked for favors: "the policy of those who regulate army affairs at Washington, has always been to make the army popular with the people; a course that is essentially necessary in a government like ours," perhaps implying that the War Department saw permanence as a means of improving local civil-military relations through familiarity. He then recommended that the regiment press the War
Department for relief, and failing that that it should circumvent the executive branch by appealing to the military affairs committees or to individual friends in Congress. This political approach was appreciated but its utility disputed by a fourth author, who asserted that "it is to the Secretary of War and General in Chief that the army... look for a fair [and] impartial administration of its affairs." Although less eager to go to Congress on the issue, he was more at ease criticizing the politically popular policy of frugality as one which was likely "to impair the efficiency and harmony of the army."86

Several months later an artilleryman--obviously of the 2nd Regiment--chipped in with his support for the 7th Infantry, citing the higher desertion and lower reenlistment rates on southern stations as proof of the incapacity they promoted, and he set forth a general principle to guide assessments of expense by standards of efficiency and effect: "whatever decreases the efficiency of an army, in the same proportion increases the expense, and vice-versa." Like Jacob Brown and other officers pursuing concentration, this author saw periodic rotation as one of the most effective means of infusing life into the idle military body: "an occasional change would be of benefit to the discipline and instruction of the army" just like camps of instruction or schools of practice. The artilleryman then recurred to his own experiences on the Gulf Coast, "the life of a hermit, in the midst of boundless marshes, swarming with noisome insects--in a climate which exhausts a northern frame... cut off from all society." "Were these things but temporary--were there any glory to be won by such a life--were there any emergency in public affairs to call for such a sacrifice... it would be borne cheerfully," but otherwise, "a sacrifice of that equality which should characterize every branch of our institutions, to the consideration of a few thousand dollars [transportation costs], will necessarily [produce] the sacrifice of the spirit, and
consequently, [the] efficiency of the victims of such a purblind economy." (As chapter seven showed, officers did not find the Seminole War glorious enough to satisfy these concerns.)

The claims of the 7th met with little opposition, save perhaps from their colonel, but that which occurred implied a generational division between young West Point graduates and hard-bitten frontier veterans with experience in the War of 1812 that rarely appeared in such overt form. When one "Blowhard" did respond, by labelling the complainants grumblers without real experience of active service or combat, "One of the Seventh" lashed back by decrying his lack of "that courtesy which should always exist between gentlemen and between members of the same profession." The aggrieved officer charged that "Blowhard" had not "the right to meddle with that which does not concern him . . . for if he were in any event to to be removed to Fort Gibson, he should esteem it as the most fortunate event of his otherwise uneventful existence, as he could then practise those suffering virtues, and that commendable industry which he so strongly recommends to others." After recurring to the usual principles of efficiency, justice, and equality, he closed by refuting "Blowhard"'s sarcastic criticism of "veterans from West Point," maintaining that "they are universally urbane and . . . gentlemanly in their deportment," while those of the 7th had proven themselves soldiers in three times the field service of any other regiment in the army.

This controversy came to the attention of Congress, and thence the War Department, largely as a question of the health of the posts at which the 7th was stationed. Captain J. A. Phillips, the regimental adjutant between 1825 and 1831, wrote to Representative Richard M. Johnson, chair of the House Military Affairs Committee, in December, stating that six officers and
292 soldiers had died at Gibson—which ironically had been established in part because of a wave of sickness at Fort Smith, Arkansas—during the years 1834 and 1835, while 561 soldiers and nine officers had died there between 1824 (when the post was established) and the end of 1835. He charged that drill and discipline were neglected, and asserted that professional pride would make him feel "recreant to my duty if I did not claim for my company and myself all the rights and privileges which the laws of the country and the orders of the War Department bestow upon us." Initially quiet on the subject of Arbuckle's plantation, Phillips reacted to his colonel's opposition the following month: "Ought not the deaths of the officers and men...[to] be considered as a sufficient sacrifice on the altar of personal interest...to satisfy the selfishness of such a feeling?" The lieutenant colonel in actual command of the 7th then added his support for the move in a letter to commanding general Macomb, who responded to the War Department's inquiry by recommending that Fort Coffee (farther down the Arkansas) replace Gibson, being healthier, "more accessible," more directly on the line of communications between Forts Leavenworth and Towson, and better positioned to cover the frontier from Indian attack. Indeed, Macomb hoped to reduce the casualties incurred from disease by adopting "a general system...for all the forts which may be established on the frontiers." Doing so would have increased the soldiers' morale and saved money over the long run as hospital expenses declined. Arbuckle was apparently ordered to abandon the site early in 1841, but he was somehow able to sustain his position, and Fort Gibson survived as the principal post of the 7th until the Mexican War a decade later.
One of the most characteristic features of large organizations and bureaucracies is that they tend to develop an institutional inertia as their subdivisions foster competing but mutually balancing interests. In these situations senior leaders often grow increasingly unwilling to rock the boat and risk upsetting powerful blocs, or even worse, disrupting the entire balance of jurisdictional interests that makes up the informal inner structure of a large specialized institution. In turn, this inertia may lead outsiders to see an organization as unwilling to reform itself, a danger the army faced from critical politicians. The arguments employed in the infantry-artillery debate illustrate the cohesion that built up in suborganizations of all sizes within the army. While officers defended the army as a unit against civilian attack, they were sharply divided among themselves by branch, station, and duties as well as more individual questions of rank, command, and the differentials in pay, quarters, and emoluments that the rank hierarchy produced. The intermingling of arguments about expertise with calculations of self-interest makes it impossible to settle on a single meaning to statements like that which maintained that a change in branch deployment policy would "prove highly disadvantageous to the artillery as a professional body," and this multiplicity of meaning reminds us once again of the complicated character of nineteenth-century American military professionalism. As chapters seven and eight have shown, the dysfunctions of professionalism and the drive for jurisdictional monopoly which it represented appeared in conflicts within the army as well as between officers and politicians and citizen-soldiers; professionalization was a source of tension within an organization which often appeared (and often does so even today) monolithic to civilians unfamiliar with its extensive internal divisions. This tension had different effects on the army officer corps' responsibility as a professional
group dedicated to functional service and its accountability to civilian political authority, however--the endemic conflict undoubtedly damaged the army's cohesion and capability, but these disputes precluded the formation of anything like a unified army interest that might have accumulated political influence, and thus the very pervasiveness of argument and dissension contributed to the maintenance of civilian control over military policy and the army as an institution.\textsuperscript{90}
Chapter IX

1 Allen to Thomas Berryman, July 4, 1844, Robert Allen Papers, USMA.

2 See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 158-62, on the social origins of antebellum army officers. See my bibliography for a number of works on elites in American society which have influenced my conception of the social construction of elite status and identity. Like the early national naval officers Christopher McKee examines, army officers came disproportionately from educated, professional, and cosmopolitan, or what we would today call "upper middle class," backgrounds, even though their family wealth and incomes rarely approximated those of the economic upper middle class of prosperous merchants and farmers. See Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution, for analyses of "monarchical" (or aristocratic), "republican," and "democratic" mentalités: I think U.S. Army officers clearly fit into the transitional republican category, rather than the democratic one of most American civilians or the monarchical/aristocratic one of most European officers. This was more the product of their family backgrounds and their professional socialization in genteel behaviour than of ideology per se, however. See especially Bushman, The Refinement of America: Stuart M. Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Wiebe, The Opening of American Society. See Magali Sarfatti Larson, The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Inquiry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), on the claims to an objectivity transcending social conflict made by late nineteenth-century professionals, including academics and social reformers.

Army officers clearly lagged behind middle-class and professional civilians in their grudging acceptance of "self-made manhood." Those who wanted to participate in the market resigned in search of more lucrative remuneration and greater opportunities for upward mobility; many of those who stayed in found the army's ordered pace attractive, and felt themselves unsuited to the more demanding tempo of business life. (See Skelton, "The Army Officer as Organization Man," in Soldiers and Civilians: The U.S. Army and the American People, eds. Garry D. Ryan and Timothy K. Nenninger [Washington, D.C., 1987], 61-70, especially 62-64.) I would suggest that they can be more appropriately situated in E. Anthony Rotundo's first phase in the historical development of American ideals of masculinity, "communal manhood." See E. Anthony Rotundo, American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolutionary Era to the Present (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, , 1993): "a man's identity was inseparable from the duties he owed
to his community. He fulfilled himself through public usefulness more than [through] his economic success . . . . The line between public and private barely existed" (pp. 2-3, and 10-18 in general). The colonial patriarch's primary role as head of household was replicated in the officer's functional role as troop commander. In fact, generals referred to their staffs, and particularly their young proteges acting as aides-de-camp, as their "military family."

I. Commitment, Identity, and the Nuances of Group Cohesion: Class and Occupational Socialization at West Point

3 Frazier to his brother Reah, October 28 and November 11, 1833, Frazier Papers; Irons to his father Major John Irons, September 1, 1838, Irons Papers; Mordecai to his sister Mrs. Rachel Lazarus, December 9-10, 1822, Mordecai Papers, LC. All these collections are from USMA unless otherwise noted.

4 "The Military Academy," ANC 1 (December 24, 1835): 413.

5 Mordecai to his sisters Ellen Mordecai and Mrs. Rachel Lazarus, November 27 and December 9-10, 1822, Mordecai Papers, LC; Irons to his mother Mrs. John Irons, March 14, 1841, Irons Papers; Pappas, To the Point, p. 258.

6 Ewing to Cadet Moses Scott, undated but mid-1820s, Ewing Papers, USAMHI; "Highlands and 'Highlanders,'" ANC 1 (November 19, 1835): 373; Pappas, To the Point, pp. 78 and 153.

7 Thayer to Calhoun, January 31, 1818, Thayer Papers; letter from the Portland, Maine Jeffersonian, reprinted in ANC 2 (March 17, 1836): 165; Dennis Hart Mahan to his mother Mrs. Esther Mahan, June 29, 1824, Mahan Papers, LC; petition of the class of 1834 to the secretary of war, undated but 1834, James Duncan Papers.

8 Samuel Raymond to his father Joshua Raymond, July 31, 1842, Samuel H. Raymond Papers; McClellan to his sister Frederica, June 28, 1842, McClellan Papers, LC. See also "The Military Academy," ANC 1 (December 24, 1835): 413; "To the Hon. Mr. Hawes, M[ember]. C[ongress].," ANC 2 (June 16, 1836): 372-73, which was published in New York later that year as a pamphlet under a similar title; and "U.S. Military Academy," ANC&SR 3 (March 14, 1844): 343-47. The author of the second of these was apparently cadet Thomas W. Sherman (WP'36).
9 Cadet William Chapman to his mother Mrs. Mary C. Chapman, July 1828, William Chapman Papers; "To the Hon. Mr. Hawes, M[ember]. C[ongress].," ANC 2 (June 16, 1836): 372; Lt. Maskell C. Ewing to Cadet Moses Scott, undated but mid-1820s, Maskell C. Ewing Papers, USAMHI, and Alfred Mordecai to his sister Ellen, November 27, 1822, Mordecai Papers, LC; National Intelligencer extract reprinted in ANC 7 (August 9, 1838): 93.


12 Engle to his mother Mrs. Janet Engle, April 1822, James Engle Papers; Hood to his cousin John Hamilton, July 2, 1823, Washington Hood Papers; Chapman to his family, March 26, 1828, Chapman Papers.

13 McClellan to his sister, September 10, 1842, McClellan Papers, LC; M.C.M. Hammond, An Oration, etc. (New York: Baker, Godwin, 1852); William Frazier to his brother Reah, November 12, 1833, William Frazier Papers. See also Schureman to sister, January 12, 1840, James Wall Schureman Papers, LC. Hammond was a member of the prominent family of South Carolina planters and politicians of that name. He graduated forty-third in a class of forty-nine in 1836, served as an ACS and regimental adjutant in the 4th Infantry, and was reappointed in 1846 as one of the "additional paymasters" Congress authorized for the Mexican War. Taken ill, he resigned for a second and final time the following year. Cadets usually wrote away (primarily to family members) most often during their first year or so at the academy,
before they developed a local support network of fellow cadets. Using the letters of plebes has the methodological advantage that these youths were encountering the academy *de novo* and as yet unsocialized in military ways, so their reactions do not have the sometimes pro forma or polemic character of those expressed by upperclassmen or graduates defending the institution.

14 Opinion of the Court (headed by Scott) charged with "investigating the moral condition and discipline of the Military Academy," July 6, 1840, Jasper Adams Papers; Lt. Maskell C. Ewing to Cadet Moses Scott, undated but mid-1820s, Ewing Papers, USAMHI; Kendrick to Irons, January 28, 1842, Joseph F. Irons Papers; Schureman to his sister Mary, July 17, 1839, Schureman Papers, LC; Dutton to J.W. Matthews, October 19, 1842, William T. Dutton Papers.

15 Scarritt to his sister (unnamed therein), February 2, 1836, Jeremiah Scarritt Papers; Alvord, *Address Before the Dialectic Society, etc.* (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1839); Pappas, *To The Point*, pp. 228-29. See also Cadet James Mason (to his sister) quoted in Pappas, p. 229: "Their glorious death excited our sympathies as well as our admiration." Scarritt graduated fifth in his class and was commissioned in the 6th Infantry (then serving in Florida), but he immediately received a transfer to the engineers and served as an assistant professor thereof at the academy between 1839 and 184. He was brevetted for gallantry at Monterey in 1846. Mason, the son of Capt. Milo Mason, was commissioned an engineer in 1838 and won two brevets for Contreras, Churubusco, and Molino del Rey, in which he was severely wounded while in the storming party. Alvord was an infantryman who served in a variety of staff and academy teaching posts and won two brevets for Resaca de la Palma, Palo Alto, and several engagements with Mexican guerrillas.

16 Morgan to Duncan, July 9, 1835, James Duncan Papers. Return to the descriptions of field officers' leadership styles in the third section of chapter 6 for examples of the resolution of this dilemma by leading regimental and frontier commanders like Stephen W. Kearny, Henry Leavenworth, and Henry Atkinson.

17 Schureman to his sister Mary Schureman, May 26 and July 11, 1841, July 17, 1839, October 17, 1840, and January 24, 1841, Schureman Papers, LC; Samuel Raymond to his father Joshua, September 2, 1842, Raymond Papers; Halleck to Theodore Miller, February 28, 1839, Halleck Papers (see also Halleck to Miller, July 6, 1838).

18 Hetzel to his father John, June 17, 1823, Abner Hetzel Papers; Frazier to his brother Reah, November 12, 1833, Frazier Papers.
19 Thayer to Armistead, December 29, 1818, and Colonel George Bomford to G.W. Erving, December 11, 1843, Thayer Papers; Smith, August 31, 1825, file S-425, SW:LR-Reg.


21 Brooks to his father Delorma Brooks, April 14, 1839, William T.H. Brooks Papers, USAMHI.

22 Miller to his mother Mrs. Maria Miller, April 8, 1831, Morris Smith Miller Papers. See also William Frazier to his brother Reah, April 24, 1833, Frazier Papers.

23 Engle to his mother Mrs. Janet Engle, April 15, 1821 and March 9, 1822, Engle Papers.

24 Smith to Secretary of War Cass, December 9, 1832, Frederick Augustus Smith Papers.

25 Coutts to Secretary of War Spencer, January 9, 1843, Totten, Military Academy Order No. 34, January 14, 1843, and to Delafield, January 14 and 19, 1843, Richard H. Delafield Papers.

26 Petition of the class of 1834 to the secretary of war, undated 1834, James Duncan Papers; opinion of the court charged with "investigating the moral condition and discipline of the Military Academy," July 6, 1840, Jasper Adams Papers.

27 See e.g. Alfred Mordecai to his sister Mrs. Rachel Lazarus, December 9-10, 1822, Mordecai Papers, LC; "Highlands and 'Highlanders,'" ANC 1 (November 19, 1835): 372-73; Alvord to his sister, September 21, 1845, Charles B. Alvord Papers; McClellan to his sister Frederica, June 28, 1842, McClellan Papers, LC.

29 James Engle to Mrs. Janet Engle, June 11, 1819, March 4 and December 16, 1821, January 18 and June 4, 1822, January 16, 1823, July 18, 1824, and May 13 and December 24, 1825, Engle Papers.

30 Dutton to J.W. Matthews, July 12 and September 20, 1842, and to Lucy Matthews (his fiancee and cousin), February 18, 1843, January 28, 1844, and January 27, 1846, Dutton Papers. See also Dutton to Lucy, March 6, 1843, in which Dutton reports the death of his "very intimate" friend.

31 Samuel Raymond to Josiah Raymond, October 16, 1842, Raymond Papers.

32 Samuel Raymond to Josiah Raymond, March 25, 1843, to Joshua Raymond, May 6, 1843, and to Mrs. Joshua Raymond, October 28, 1842 and August 11, 1843, Raymond Papers.

33 Raymond to his father, October 28, 1843, and his sister, February 4, March 28, and May 5, 1844, Raymond Papers.

34 Raymond to his brother, September 24, 1844, Raymond Papers.

35 Cadets William T. Dutton, Truman Seymour, and C. Seafortn Stewart to the parents of Samuel Raymond, January 30, 1845, Raymond Papers.

II. Careerism and Dissension: The Persistence of Civilian Values and Individualism in Regimental Life--The 1st Dragoons as a Case Study

36 Croghan quoted in Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 116 (Prucha 143). General works that provided context for this section include Francis Paul Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, ch. 12; Michael L. Tate, "The Multi-Purpose Army on the Frontier: A Call for Further Research," in The American West: Essays in Honor of W. Eugene Hollon, ed. Ronald Lora (Toledo, OH: The University of Toledo, 1980), pp. 171-208; Gamble, "Garrison Life at Frontier Military Posts"; Willis B. Hughes, "The First Dragoons on the Western Frontier, 1834-1846," Arizona and the West 12 (Summer 1970): 115-38; and Carl L. Davis and LeRoy H. Fischer, "Dragoon Life in Indian Territory, 1833-1846," Chronicles of Oklahoma 48 (Spring 1970): 2-24, who characterize the 1st as one of the "most highly respected and most useful regiments in the Army" and state that "all things considered they served [the] Republic well" (p. 24). Willis echoes these conclusions (p. 138). The Johnston Papers include about fifty letters that he received--though none that he sent--from fellow officers between 1837 and 1846, and I have therefore cited them only by author
and abbreviated date in this section. Many of these letters have been transcribed.

37 Elements of the 1st Dragoons were frequently called upon to serve in expeditionary forces against Indians all along the western frontier. Lt. Henry S. Turner mentioned a number of these marches and he noted their deterrent intent, but otherwise they received remarkably little attention, and even he did not discuss them in any depth. See Turner, 8/14/42, 2/8/44, 9/2/44, 2/2/45, 2/11/45, and 10/30/45, Capt. J. H. K. Burgwin, 8/18/41 and 7/27/43, Capt. Thomas Swords, 8/13/43, and Lt. Philip Roots Thompson, 2/19/44; all in the Abraham Robinson Johnston Papers, USMA. (I will refer to letters sent to Johnston solely by author and abbreviated date.) In 1840 Lt. James Allen anonymously wrote "an article on your late movement to the Cherokee Country" in a Liberty, Missouri newspaper, criticizing the operation (1/30/40), but he later became eager to proceed on such an expedition (3/25/42). Lt. James H. Carleton authored the "Prairie Logbooks" published in The Spirit of the Times (a New York magazine) between 1844 and 1846, but these are much more travelogue and ethnography than operational narrative or military analysis, for there was no fighting on either of the expeditions Carleton describes. See Carleton, The Prairie Logbooks: Dragoon Campaigns to the Pawnee Villages in 1844, and to the Rocky Mountains in 1845, ed. with an introduction by Louis Felzer (reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), the very title of which suggests combat which did not occur.

Both Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 172, 255-56, and 305-306, and Coffman, The Old Army, p. 77, agree that army officers devoted little attention to Indian warfare, but one would expect more frequent mention of it, if only in routine news of officers' movements and postings, or in their lamentations about boredom and ennui. Similarly, only one letter in the entire collection contains any discussion of strategy (regarding the military road system in the West), and only one mentions the Army and Navy Chronicle, the closest approximation to a professional journal available at the time (Turner, 11/30/37, and Eustis, 6/17/41). Turner did note the deterrent effects of dragoon expeditions onto the plains, but only one letter contains any concern over the dangers of excessive troop dispersal on the frontier (Thompson, 4/23/40). Nor was drill a topic deemed worthy of much discussion, and officers virtually never critiqued each other on tactical grounds in these letters. (Turner, 6/16/41, quoted later in this chapter, provides the only significant example of tactical criticism that I found, in the same letter in which he felt "perfectly contented" and did not take "the slightest interest in the Company to which I belong.")
38 See Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic*, p. 331: officers "were an outstanding expression of the romantic impulse which marked so much of early nineteenth-century America." Although I am not unsympathetic to the short-lived historiographical trend (largely a product of the American Studies movement) which stressed and connected romanticism, sentimentality, and phenomena like "Young America" three decades ago, I find it regrettable that more detailed work was not done on these themes; unfortunately, Prucha provides little direct evidence or explication to sustain his sweeping assertion. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West*, focuses on the topographical engineers, who were not representative of the majority of army officers, most of whom seem to have left their romanticism at West Point. Indeed, I fear that the quest for romanticism in the Jacksonian officer corps was more a manifestation of historians' own romanticism than of historical reality. See Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians*, chs. 3, 7, and 11 (especially pp. 405-412), for a more nuanced version of this trend that located military romanticism primarily among the volunteers and in sentimentalized civilian representations of warfare and the Military Academy. In other words, these attitudes were a manifestation of civilian rather than specifically "military" social values. Cunliffe's evidence is largely drawn from the 1850s, which is not the period of this study, but I would assume that the experience of the Mexican War fit into and spurred on the growing romanticism of the 1850s, which was closely connected to the concern for national unity in the face of the sectional crisis. See George B. Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), ch. 5 ("Sentimental Regression from Politics to Domesticity"), which articulates these connections most directly, and to my mind quite convincingly.

39 The distinction I am making here bears some similarities to the one Charles Moskos has made between institutional and occupational (I/O) models of military social organization and motivation; but his "institutional" is in some ways what I label occupational, in that the officer's primary reference group is his institution and his workmates (his fellow officers). This is of course essential to the sense of group solidarity (which I call cohesion) that is one of the four classic characteristics of professionalism (specialized expertise and education, cohesion, a service ethic and sense of nonpartisan and nonideological social responsibility, and a degree of autonomy in exercising one's expert ability, including the power to set standards limiting entry to the profession). On the other hand, the armed services are by their nature bureaucratic organizations subject to a high degree of external control, which in combination with their inherently hierarchic command structure means that military officers lack the autonomy of the
classic (legal, medical, and perhaps academic) professional in independent practice.


In the institutional/occupational model, the antebellum Army possessed more of the characteristics of the former, "professional," category, but officers' concentration on promotion and other material considerations was careerist, which though encouraging future and potential commitment to the institution and profession is not to my mind fully consonant with the ideals of (and the ideal focus on) service, sacrifice, and the development of specialized competence that characterize professionalism (or the "true professional ideal" of contemporary practitioners themselves) viewed as a "calling." The locus and meaning of nineteenth century army officers' primary institutional loyalties is problematic within the constraints of the I/O schema, for the following reasons:

a) officers hoped for the aid of external powers (e.g., Congress) in their careerist quests, but with low expectations (and realistically so, given the American political climate)

b) officers primarily identified with one another (with their co-workers) rather than with civilians

c) officers identified with officers like themselves, most importantly with those at the same rank from the same (e.g., West Point and staff) backgrounds

d) officers had no incentive to identify with their superiors, as promotion was almost exclusively by seniority rather than by merit evaluated by more experienced superiors (a point made in Skelton, "The Army Officer as Organization Man," pp. 67-68, though this produced a lot more backbiting than whistleblowing or reformism).

In other words, officers' primary reference groups lay within the organization, but were horizontal rather than vertical in direction. I would suggest that Moskos's "occupational" orientation was not present among
nineteenth century officers, given its stress on the values of the marketplace, but I would also contend (along with most students of the professions) that officers' "institutional" orientation was necessarily a compound of professional and bureaucratic (or organizational, or hierarchic, or careerist) motives and influences, and that they often placed self-interest (though not in a crudely materialistic form) ahead of what could have been the greater efficiency and effectiveness of the army (This is of course a counterfactual argument, and the nation and the army were not faced with any national security crises of potentially decisive magnitude in the nineteenth century besides the Civil War itself, so perhaps this discussion is an entirely academic one.) Moskos himself has cautioned that "the I/O thesis assumes a continuum" ("Institutional/Occupational Trends in Armed Forces: An Update," p. 377) and I think that the place of the nineteenth century army officer corps therein is best expressed in the phrase "careerism."

In "Professionalization in the U.S. Army Officer Corps During the Age of Jackson," AFS I (summer 1975): 443-71, William B. Skelton writes that "professionalization meshed with the personal aspirations of American officers—their quest for career security and for public recognition of their superiority to the militia" (p. 465). In "The Army Officer as Organization Man," pp. 61-70, Skelton writes that "if there were a way of gauging mental energy, it would almost certainly determine that old army officers expended more of that resource in the pursuit of bureaucratic goals—promotion, higher pay, favorable assignments—than in any other phase of their professional lives" (p. 65), although he does "not wish to imply that officers' absorption in bureaucratic, 'careerist' matters undermined their official conduct" (p. 68). I think this is letting the officer corps off a bit too easily, although the United States' "free security" permitted (and to a degree probably encouraged) such an absorption without serious damage to national interests. Officers who wanted to participate in the market resigned in search of more lucrative remuneration and greater opportunities for upward mobility; many of those who stayed in found the army's ordered pace attractive, and felt themselves unsuited to the more demanding tempo of business life (Skelton, "The Army Officer as Organization Man," especially pp. 62-64). I would suggest that the motives of antebellum army officers were akin to those Peter Karsten has attributed to postbellum naval officers, i.e., personal and institutional security justified by expertise and a professional ideology—chauvinistic "navalism" in one case and the focus on preparation for war embodied in the cadre system and the expansible army in the other. See Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy: The Golden Age of Annapolis and the Emergence of Modern American Navalism (New York: The Free Press, 1972); and Skelton, "Professionalization," 460-61. See e.g. idem., "The Army Officer as Organization Man," p. 68: "the army's support of West Point and of a
'professional' view of military leadership arose largely from careerist motivations." I believe that careerism and professionalism must be more carefully defined and distinguished from one another than Skelton has done or than I have the space to do here, but the two phenomena cannot be equated, and careerism is at most necessary but not sufficient for the development of professionalism—a starting point and social foundation but in some respects detrimental to professionalization.

40 Turner, 8/30/43. In 1834 15 of the regiment's 33 permanent officers (a status which did not include brevet second lieutenants) were civilian appointees, two of whom had been dismissed from West Point while one had resigned from the army in 1829 and one had been cashiered from the Marines in 1832. By 1837 only seven of the regiment's permanent officers were civilian appointees, but four of these were company commanders. (Three resigned that year, but Enoch Steen succeeded to company command in 1840.) Of the 45 West Point graduates appointed to the 1st between 1832 and 1846, 22 remained in the army in 1846, 12 had resigned, two were dropped from the rolls of the army (one cashiered), six had died in the service, and three were killed in the Mexican War. Most of the resignations came during the tumult of the mid- and late 1830s—only one officer who graduated after 1839 resigned before the war. Only three of the initial company commanders were West Pointers: David Hunter (WP'22), who resigned in 1836 and secured reappointment as a paymaster in 1842; Daniel Perkins (WP'27), who transferred to the Paymaster’s Department in 1837 and resigned in 1839; and Eustace Trenor (WP'22), who rose to major in 1846 but died the following February in New York without seeing wartime service. Aside from the five captains commissioned from civilian life into the Mounted Rangers, the other two non-graduates were E.V. Sumner (commissioned in 1819), who stayed in the army throughout the Civil War, and Clifton Wharton (1818), who rose to lieutenant colonel but died at Fort Leavenworth in 1847 without seeing active duty against Mexico.

In April 1834 Colonel Henry Dodge, one of the transfers from the Mounted Rangers, wrote to a civilian friend that "I find more treachery and deception practised in the Army than I ever expected to find with a Body of Men who Call themselves Gentlemen[]." Dodge considered Major Richard B. Mason and Lt. Jefferson Davis as "two of My Most inveterate enemies," but noted that Mason seemed unwilling to duel. Indeed, Dodge warned that "unless Harmony and good feeling exists in a Corps the public Service Cannot be promoted and to undertake an Expedition with Such Men I should run the risque of Loosing what Little reputation I have acquired." See Dodge to George W. Jones, April 18, 1834, extract, in Haskell M. Monroe and James T.

Because it was a new branch in the U.S. Army (since the disbanding of the dragoons in 1815) the dragoon regiment had a large number of officers on various forms of detached service--recruiting, training recruits at Carlisle Barracks, and taking the French Cavalry School course. In addition, at least ten of the regiment's officers--a clearly disproportionate number in comparison to other regiments--served as assistant commissaries of subsistence purchasing rations for various posts. Johnston himself was frequently on recruiting duty, and also served as a commissary officer. Of his major correspondents, Thomas Swords was a temporary assistant quartermaster (AQM) from 1834 to 1838 and a permanent staff captain AQM from then on; Henry S. Turner was regimental adjutant (in effect the personnel officer) from 1836 to 1838 and 1841 to 1846, and an assistant adjutant general (with the permanent staff rank of captain) from 1838 to 1839 (when he resigned his staff commission); and Philip Roots Thompson was regimental adjutant between Turner's tenures. (Turner spent 1840 and parts of 1839 and 1841 in France.) Most of Johnston's other correspondents were assistant commissaries of subsistence and/or had other non-company duties at some point, especially during the early years of this correspondence (1837-1841). This was also true of most of the officers praised in these letters. In contrast, of their major "rivals"--Capt. Enoch Steen, Capt. Eustace ("Pat") Trenor, and Lt. James Henry Carleton--none held staff appointments during this period, and only Carleton thereafter. Trenor was the only West Pointer of the three, but he was from the class of 1822, between five and fifteen years older than his critics (and indeed, one of the oldest West Pointers in the unit). Steen and Trenor were company commanders throughout the period, and to Johnston's friends figured most prominently as obstacles to promotion (and thus objects of court-martials).

Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, would consider this emphasis on staff duties a species of "technicism" (ch. 8). The average class rank of the West Pointers in the 1st Dragoons was thirty-third, and only six had graduated in the top twenty of what were usually classes of forty to fifty.

In 1840 Thompson reported that the House had "finally succeeded in organizing themselves and electing a speaker"; he also noted the Whig presidential convention at Harrisburg, where "Gen'l [Winfield] Scott had a very respectable vote on the first ballot" (1/3/40). The following year Turner rejoiced that "Harrison is elected, hurrah for reform!" but his hopes seemed more defensive than hopeful of positive progress: "we must be bettered by a
change of administration, [we] cannot be worsted" (11/9/40). Four years later (10/30/44) Turner labelled Polk's election "a disappointment to all intelligent people."

Allan R. Millett has stressed the parallels between civilian and military professionalization, doubting "that even long-term professional socialization produced a coherent philosophical point of view that was uniquely military" (Military Professionalism and Officership in America, p. 15). Coherent philosophies or ideologies are not necessary to produce alienation, but I think Millett's point is generally correct and that Skelton overemphasizes the disjunction between officers and civilians, particularly when we view officers as members of the nation's social elite. See Huntington, The Soldier and the State, ch. 9, for the classic statement of the isolation thesis as it was applied to the post-Civil War army; this argument had been prefigured in Ganoe, The History of the United States Army, chs. 9 and 10; and was reiterated in Weigley, History of the United States Army, ch. 12. Paul M. Gates, "The Alleged Isolation of the U.S. Army Officers in the Late Nineteenth Century," Parameters 10 (Spring 1980): 32-45, provides the seminal rebuttal to this argument. Skelton now implies the existence of a rather similar process in the pre-Civil War army, but I think that many of the questions raised about it in the postwar context also apply before the war. Indeed, historians have long since concluded that both the "business pacifism" Huntington saw in the period after the Civil War and the Jacksonian "popularism" he saw before it are exaggerated portraits.

44 I have not been able to study the writings of the non-West Pointers, so I am unable to assess the true character of their "professionalism" (or lack thereof). Because this section relies on a single collection and deals with a single unit, it is inherently open to question as atypical, but my wider research lends confirmation to the suggestions herein, and the conditions and controversies I describe are widely discussed in general studies of the nineteenth century army. In some ways this section is a collective biography, particularly of Johnston's primary correspondents, Turner, Swords, and Thompson, and, in derogation at least, of their enemies. Turner in particular seems to have functioned as a clearing house for gossip and character evaluations; whether these were common knowledge cannot be ascertained, but other officers filled their letters with similar criticism in lesser degree, and the subjects of their opprobrium were the same officers and behaviors. There are several advantages to a study based on a single document collection: the scholar can quantify instances of a particular attitude or phenomena--thus my ability to refer to "the only" case in which something was discussed. As a result, when I do this I mean it literally, as is the case whenever I use a quantitative comparison herein. Although I am only dealing with fifty to
seventy five letters, and although one could always argue that men like Turner were simply gossipmongers writing private letters, these officers did discuss a wide range of issues, including "professional" ones--my surprise, and the theme of this section, is due to the relative rarity of many professional topics over so many pages.

45 Among the rare exceptions to this rule, Thompson, 6/28/39, contended that the charges against deputy quartermaster general Joshua Brant would be "a death blow not only to his commission but to his character & reputation" if substantiated, and Swords, 6/7/42, wrote briefly of what he imagined to be Winfield Scott's antagonism toward the staff. Brant resigned November 7, 1839.

46 Eustis to Johnston, 6/17/41, Johnston Papers, USMA.

47 Turner, two letters labelled "private" from April 1845, Gaines, 9/13/44, Thompson, 9/15/45, and Turner, 2/2/45.

48 Turner, 2/2/45; General Order 39, August 13, 1845, Orders File, AGO; Turner, 10/30/45, and Thompson, 9/15/45. See Turner, 8/14/42, 1/29/43, 2/8/44, 5/8/44, and 9/2/44 re the 2nd's status, and Turner, 2/2/45 and 10/30/45, and Swords, 11/10/44, 6/15/45, and 8/18/45 regarding its officers; both men reassured Johnston of the propriety of his course and the regard in which he was held by "the sensible and respectable portions of the Officers of the Army, of whom the 2nd Dragoons form a small part" (Turner, 2/2/45). Aside from the 2nd Dragoons only the 4th Infantry received any notice in these letters, despite the ongoing presence of the 7th Infantry at Fort Gibson and sometimes that of the 1st and 6th Infantry at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, where elements of the 1st Dragoons were stationed for a number of years. The 4th (also at Jefferson Barracks for a time, along with the 3rd Infantry) was noted only four times, though Lt. J. H. K. Burgwin regretted its move to Florida because of the harmony and good feeling existing between the two units. See Turner, 12/8/42, 3/7/43, and 9/2/44, and Burgwin, 8/18/41.

49 Turner, 10/30/45. Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 195-96, dismisses the significance of duelling in the antebellum officer corps; I would agree that its incidence declined dramatically, but officers continued to speak the language of challenges, which were not so uncommon. I think that the rarity of actual duels is secondary in importance to the ongoing use of this rhetoric and to the notoriety of those incidents that did occur. Neither constitutes a testimony to officers' cohesion and professionalism.
Dragoon officers had some reason to resent their detention at Fort Gibson, which had the reputation of being the unhealthiest post in the army in the 1830s; see Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 185, and Davis and Fischer, "Dragoon Life in Indian Territory," p. 18. The third section of this chapter will examine the reactions of some of the officers of Arbuckle's regiment to this problem and to his handling of it. Arbuckle's dealings with the Indians came under congressional criticism and he requested a court of inquiry into his conduct, but the antagonism many junior officers felt toward him was shared by some of the men senior enough to serve on the court, and Arbuckle asked President Tyler to exclude Zachary Taylor, Daniel Twiggs, Stephen Kearny, and Clifton Wharton from it (May 26, 1841, HQA:LR).

Swords, 8/18/45, observed that "The private history of the Regt. would be an interesting one could it be written."

Turner, 9/2/44, reported such a dispute at Fort Atkinson (in what would later be northern Iowa), in which Capt. Edwin Vose Sumner gained a leave of absence to go to Washington to question the posting of infantry major Greenleaf Dearborn in command over his company and one of infantry. (Turner thought Sumner "a consummate ass" in the case.) Swords, 11/10/44, initially thought that command prerogatives were behind Johnston's charges against Lt. Col. Harney of the 2nd Dragoons: "these kind of comg. officers are the ones that always create difficulty--no acting when it would be proper for them to do so, and interfering with small matters with which they have no concern." Thompson, who criticized General Arbuckle for his policy towards the Indians in such strong terms as "that d[amned] old fool" (4/23/40), also wrote that "[Lieutenant Seneca Galusha] Simmons appears to have acted in a most singular manner in speaking of the Genl's motives for calling for the Dragoons where such exposition was so little creditable to either the principal or the military confidant of the measure. Unless S's ideas coincide with the Genl's on this point he should have left his staff" (3/21/40). (Simmons was an aide-de-camp, essentially a voluntary post.)

Turner, 6/16/41, 9/2/44, 2/2/45, and 1/29/43, Swords, August 13, 1843, Thompson 2/19/44, and Turner, 6/16/41. Other examples include Turner, 11/21/43 and 10/30/45, Swords, 8/14/43, and Burgwin, 8/13/40. Turner was proud and high-tempered; few escaped his sharp pen--even Thompson "was always self-important" (obviously a common characteristic of army officers in this era) (2/2/45)--and by 1845 Johnston was "the only correspondent I have left" (10/30/45). Aside from "my dear John,” Turner only wrote positively of
a few of his fellows: Terrett "was a good soldier [about the only positive
evaluation on "professional" grounds I found in these letters] and an
estimable gentleman" (the regiment "sustained a great loss" in his accidental
death in March 1845) (4/7/45); when he became seriously ill Allen received
the faint (but from Turner high) praise that "we can better spare another
man" (2/2/45); Lt. Richard Stoddard Ewell was "a noble fellow in all
essentials"—"I like him very much" (2/2/45); and Turner wrote several times
to "give my love to the Plebe [Lieutenant John W. T.] Gardiner" (2/2/45,
2/11/45, and 10/30/45). Another rare—and I do mean rare, as these officers
apparently thought it unnecessary to discuss their friendships in any way, or
simply believed that reporting the news of each others' postings was
sufficient to do so—example of a positive statement was Thompson, 3/21/40:
"there is no one more clever hospitable and pleasant than Tom [Swords]--
Q.M.D. [Quartermaster Department] apart." (Quartermasters and line officers
often clashed over construction duties, clothing allowances, and supplies for
the troops, since economy was at a premium in retrenchment-minded
Washington. Allen, 3/25/42, wrote that "Thom Swords still sticks to us and
succeeds in making his dept. more odious every day.")

54 Thompson, 8/27/41, Allen, 3/25/42, Swords, 8/13/43, 11/26/42, and
1/26/46, and Turner, 9/2/44.

55 Turner, 1/29/43, 2/2/45, and 2/8/44; Allen, 3/25/42. See also Gamble,

56 Turner, 3/7/43, 4/20/43, 9/2/44, 2/2/45, and 12/8/42, and Burgwin, 7/27/43.
See Gamble, "Garrison Life at Frontier Military Posts," pp. 74-77 and 178; and
Turner, 10/30/45, concerning Wickliffe; Aurora Hunt, Major General James
Henry Carleton, 1814-1873: Western Frontier Dragoon (Glendale, Ca.: A. H.
Johnston acted as the Judge Advocate (or prosecutor). Other examples of
officers' hopes for promotion by court-martial include Thompson, 2/20/41;
and Eustis, 12/3/41.; other letters asking for or reporting court-martial news
include Turner, 11/30/37 and 12/2/41; and Thompson, 6/28/39. Indeed, only
21 officers whose names appear on the Army Register of 1830 were dismissed
or dropped from the rolls (3.5% of the officers thereon), though at least 11
more resigned under pressure (bringing the total to 5.6%) (Skelton, An
American Profession of Arms, pp. 213-25). Skelton, p. 195, asserts that "few
clashes between junior officers ended up in military courts" after the War of
1812 and notes that results were announced in only 96 cases between 1828 and
1845, but there were hundreds of charges that were not acted upon or only
resulted in courts of inquiry (without punitive powers), and I think it
obvious that the influence (or perhaps threat) of these proceedings was pervasive.

57 Thompson, 9/15/45, and Turner, 4/?/45 ("private"). Other examples of junior officers doubtful of their superiors' impartiality in court proceedings include Turner, 2/8/44 and 10/30/45.

58 Turner, 2/8/43 and 2/11/45. Such feelings were normal for Turner; while on leave in Virginia (11/30/37) he found himself "damnably tired already, of furlough life and [I] begin really to envy you fellows, in the happiness of your frontier amusements . . . I find myself longing for our prairie sports . . . there is too much tameness [here] for me." Turner's loyalties (like most people's, of course) began with his friends and decreased in intensity as they became more abstract. Of the 4th Infantry, he wrote that "I like them well enough, but would like my place much better, were this the station of a portion of my own Regt." (12/8/42) He later (2/8/44) wrote that "Our Regiment has done good service in the past year. In truth it has performed the whole police duty of the frontier. The Infantry now a days do nothing." Similarly, Turner, 12/2/41, wrote that "I really think that we have the finest Regt. in Service at this time" (though he had not been with the regiment very long since returning from France, and his estimate changed dramatically as he became reacquainted with it). One cannot close the tumultuous Turner file without noting his words on receiving orders for the march on Santa Fe in May of 1846: "tis important that we should acquit ourselves properly. The eyes of the country will be upon us" (5/?/46).

59 Turner, 12/8/42, 2/8/43, and 3/?/43.

60 Turner, 6/16/41 and 3/?/43. See 8/14/42 and 2/11/45 for other example of Turner's concern for his quarters and station. Turner and Swords often wrote critically of a Harris family at Gibson, but it is unclear from the Johnston collection how the friction with this family developed. (See e.g. Turner, 3/?/43, who spoke of the family's "vulgarity" and remarked that he had told J.H.K. Burgwin that he "would rather sacrifice his friendship than that he should marry" one of the sisters therein.) Using bibliographic sources it appears that this was probably the extended family of Arnold Harris, brevet second lieutenant in the 7th Infantry (stationed primarily at Gibson) from 1834 to 1837 and sutler at Fort Smith, Arkansas from 1838 to 1844. (Some sources also cite him as a sutler at Gibson.) All of Turner's and Swords's major enemies seem to have been tied to this family at one time or another, several by marriage: Carleton married into the family, and Steen or his wife
may have been connected to them by kinship, while Lt. William Bowman seems to have been married to one of Steen's daughters.

In another example of the significance of postings to individual officers, Capt. John Vinton of the 3rd Artillery wrote to Winfield Scott in 1843 ("private," October 1, 1843, HQA:LR) asking that he be transferred to an otherwise unappealing post where he would be in command and could secure some stability for his family:

I do not much like what I have heard of Fort Macon [North Carolina] as a Station, but my rank in the Regiments entitles me to a command, and I would rather be unpleasantly situated in almost any other respect than that of serving in a subordinate capacity. I have been a wanderer now for many years, not sufficiently situated anywhere to enjoy the presence of my family, or to build up around me even the semblance of a home.

61 Swords, 3/5/43, 11/10/44, 8/18/45, and 1/26/46. Apparently only "duck-shooting and wolf chasing" were the only things that reconciled Terrett to Fort Scott (11/10/44).

62 Swords, 6/7/42, 8/7/43, 12/5/42, and 8/18/45. Graduating 23rd out of a West Point class of 46 in 1829, Swords was appointed major quartermaster 4/21/46 and vacated his regimental commission. He went on to a long and successful career as a supply officer: brevet lieutenant colonel in 1848 for meritorious service in Mexico, lieutenant colonel deputy quartermaster general in 1856, colonel assistant quartermaster general in 1861, and brevets to brigadier and major general for "faithful and efficient service" in the Civil War. He retired February 22, 1869, less than four months short of forty years in the army.

63 Thompson, 6/8/39, 3/21/40, 2/19/44, and 8/27/41, Swords, 10/29/41, Burgwin, 8/13/40, and Allen, 3/25/42; see also Thompson, 2/20/41, in which he estimated the regiment's efficiency as "at low ebb." Thompson graduated from West Point 36th out of a class of 56 in 1835, was promoted to captain 6/30/46, brevetted major for gallant and meritorious conduct at the battle of Sacramento in 1847, but dismissed in 1855.

64 Turner, 11/21/43, 10/30/45, and 2/2/45, Swords, 8/18/45 and 3/5/43, and Turner, 3/?/43. See also Turner, 12/8/42, in which he hinted at disreputable dimensions to Carleton's first marriage and his involvement in the Charles Wickliffe affair.
Allen, 3/25/42, Thompson, 6/7/42, and Turner, 6/16/41. See Swords, 8/18/45, re Beall of the 2nd Dragoons. Trenor began his career in the 4th Infantry in 1822, graduating 23rd out of a class of 40 after five years at West Point; he transferred to the Dragoon Regiment as a captain in its initial draft of regular army officers in 1833, was promoted to major (by seniority, remember) 6/30/46, and died in New York City on February 16, 1847 after nearly twenty-five years in the army. He did not serve in the Mexican War.

Turner, 9/2/44, and 11/21/43. Steen was a civilian appointee to the Mounted Rangers in 1832; he made major in 1853 and lieutenant colonel in 1861, retiring in 1863 after more than thirty years service. Carleton was appointed directly from civilian life in 1839, became a captain in 1847 upon Trenor's death, was brevetted major for gallant and meritorious conduct at Buena Vista, and was promoted to major in the 6th Cavalry in 1861 and colonel of the 4th Cavalry in 1866. He received four brevets on the same date in 1865 for service in New Mexico (a bit of "grade inflation"), and died on January 7, 1873, after more than thirty-three years in the army.


Turner, 10/30/45.

Turner, 1/29/43, 4/20/43, and 2/8/44, Gaines, 9/13/44.

Gaines, 9/13/44.

It is difficult to evaluate the regiment's combat performance in the war, because it was the first combat experience for the units and most of its officers. These issues are therefore largely counterfactual in character. Persistence rather than "expertise" per se was the key to American success in the Mexican War, but perhaps some of that persistence was connected to or shaped by the determination of officers frustrated for promotion--perhaps the urgency of officers' ambition was powerful enough to outweigh the damage that it wrought to unit cohesion. Before the war, senior officers commonly attributed officers' bravery to their ambition for distinction, though they did not mean to slight or downplay the need for teamwork and cooperation, which was the effect this ambition had in peacetime.
III. Conflicts of Expertise, Cohesion, and Responsibility in the Debates over Rotating Infantry and Artillery Regiments

73 "The Army to the President of the United States," *MNM* 1 (August 1833): 337-39; *MNM* 2 (October 1833): 91 ("more eligible"). The author of the first of these articles added that "we may be . . . told that the Artillery occupy the Arsenals for the purpose of instruction in Ordnance duties. Such is the theory, we know. Practically, however, the truth is otherwise; for at most of the Arsenals there are not the means of making even a rocket" (p. 339). Major Wilson, "Republicanism and the Idea of Party in the Jacksonian Period," *IER* 8 (Winter 1988): 419-42, and idem., "The 'Country' Versus the 'Court': A Republican Consensus and Party Debate in the Bank War," *IER* 15 (Winter 1995): 619-47, trace the persistence of "court and country" rhetoric, particularly during the Bank War, and army officers often spoke of Washington as "the court." On the other hand, they said nothing of a "country" element (nor does Wilson make much of this specific rhetorical trope), which indicates that the officers' concern was primarily with the evils of favoritism rather than any deeper meaning drawn from republican ideology.


76 "Ulysses," "Infantry and Artillery," *MNM* 2 (February 1834): 347-48. See also idem., in *MNM* 3 (July 1834): 381.


79 "Bruce," "Change of Stations," *MNM* 3 (May 1834): 236. See also General Order No. 54, October 12, 1827, Orders File, AGO.
80 "Ulysses," "Infantry and Artillery," MNM 3 (July 1834): 381; "Louisiana," "The Army," ANC 1 (August 27, 1835): 277. Army officers often resorted to classical and Latin pseudonyms, but their titles were unimaginative and straight to the point.


82 Jones, March 29, 1827, file J-129, SW:LR-Reg., enclosing the West Point petition. During the controversy over infantry and artillery stations, "Lieutenant Slowmatch" warned readers that "in both corps, there prevails . . . a very general repugnance to itinerancy . . . with all the consequent inconvenience and expense so peculiarly burthensome to a married officer; the continual disruption of local ties . . . which present[s] our domestic circumstances in such mortifying contrast with those of our peers in . . . civil life." See "Infantry and Artillery," MNM 3 (March 1834): 46. In 1837 six officers of the 4th Infantry (including its lieutenant colonel) protested against a proposed postwar exchange of stations between their regiment and the 1st Infantry (a northwestern unit prior to the Seminole War), petitioning the commanding general that they had "become wedded to the climate[,] They have married the daughters of the soil and created many friends--Their interests, affection, health, and constitutions require a southern clime" (November 8, 1837, HQA:LR). These men suggested that a transfer north would force many officers to resign; they blamed their colonel (Enos Cutler, long one of the chiefs of the General Recruiting Service before taking up the regiment's command) for the proposed move. For whatever reason, he resigned two years later, and after the war the 4th remained in the south, though it was moved westward and formed one of the initial units in Zachary Taylor's Army of Observation in Louisiana. Zachary Taylor combined these concerns for stability and family unity when he discouraged his daughters' marriage to officers because of their transience (Bauer, Zachary Taylor, p. 69). (Taylor was unsuccessful, of course.)

83 General Order No. 54, October 12, 1827, Orders File, AGO; Brown to Secretary of War Barbour, December 22, 1827, ASP:MA 3: 655-56. Brown apparently did not inform the AG and the secretary of war of his intent to do this until the last minute.


"Miles" also questioned its probable effect on the army's enlisted men, referring to the regimental strength returns for 1828 to demonstrate the remarkable losses sustained to illness that year, and reminded readers that "many soldiers who had families could not be permitted to carry them . . . in the transports, and were obliged to leave them behind without any means of subsistence--many . . . were thus thrown as paupers on the parishes in which they were left." In this case, an officer's self-interest moved him to make arguments that were unusually responsible in their attention to the welfare--and thus the morale, efficiency, and combat capability--of the army's enlisted men.


88 "One of the Seventh," "Fort Gibson," ANC 1 (November 19, 1835): 373.


Military Hierarchy, Social Inequality, and Portents of the American Future: Class Relations and Class Formation in Officers' Relations with Enlisted Men

"With good soldiers, and good music, officers possessing military pride, and feeling a proper interest in the public service, might make themselves happy almost anywhere," one officer wrote to another in 1832, but this idealistic sentiment does not seem to have characterized the feelings of the ordinary officer toward the troops under his care and command. Instead, the average officer regarded his troops as unruly laggards who had to be coerced into performing their duties, often by violence. Physical coercion was usually illegal or contrary to the Army Regulations and Articles of War, and senior commanders consistently tried to set policies protective of its enlisted men, but these rules were routinely ignored by their subordinates in the field. Indeed, the years of the Second Seminole War saw a virtual crisis in the relations between officers and enlisted men, during which brutal and illegal punishments escalated from the level of veiled threats underlying officers' authority to the forefront of military discipline in everyday practice. Winfield Scott attempted to crack down on these abuses after becoming commanding general in 1841, but he was repeatedly frustrated by the verdicts of court-martials which refused to convict fellow officers on charges of brutality and official oppression.¹

After examining the behaviour of officers toward the citizens entrusted to their care, one is forced to conclude that there was a substantial degree of truth to Jacksonian charges of an aristocratic officer corps unresponsive to the will of the American people and the spirit of American democracy and
culture. Because these derelictions violated official government policy, the Army Regulations and Articles of War enacted as law by Congress, and often the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishments, they also stand as the officer corps' most flagrant breach of professional standards of social responsibility and accountability to civilian political authority. (Insofar as military tribunals were composed entirely of officers, with a clear interest in preserving their authority and covering for each other, the court-martial system also violated the Sixth Amendment's guarantee to an impartial jury, and due process was a virtual non sequitur in courts-martial proceedings.)

More generally, the degrading treatment of working-class enlisted men by their middle-class officers suggests the inflexible limits to the officer corps' absorption of the some of the more democratic values of its society. In their daily work, officers shed the mannerisms of gentility they learned at West Point and practiced before civilians, in behaviour foreshadowing the stark inequality, brutalization, and dehumanization then only beginning to develop in class and labor relations in civilian society. With some exceptions (ultimately embodied in the "Soldiers' Asylum" for decrepit veterans established in 1851), official policy and practice supported dramatically different standards for officers and enlisted men, and the materially secure but rigidly subordinate lives of enlisted soldiers bore little resemblance to the security, prestige, and authority officers received in exchange for subordination to the commissioned rank hierarchy. While some officers like Robert Anderson proposed and worked toward humanitarian reforms in the treatment of enlisted men, their numbers were few in comparison with those officers who regularly assaulted the soldiers under their command. Similarly, romanticism and sentimentality were modes of expression only
applied to enlisted soldiers after the fact (meaning in combat after their deaths), usually as the anonymous underlings and obedient followers of gallant middle-class officers. In practice, working for their government in a paternalistic setting did not give enlisted men any more protection from their "supervisors" than civilian workers possessed; indeed, workplace relations in the army posed the class divisions and conflict of American society in the starkest form they took outside of slavery, a pattern that discouraged recruiting and supplied politicians with endless ammunition for rhetorical assaults against the officer corps.

The reasons behind this tension are fairly clear. In addition to class biases themselves, army officers allowed their sense of responsibility for function—for the demands of warfighting and national defense—to outweigh their sense of accountability to the society in whose service this function was performed. I have previously phrased this dialectic as one between the European origins of the professional officer and the American environment in which the United States Army was situated, because in no other realm was the impact of the European inheritance so clear—and so much in contrast to the expressed norms of American society—as in the officer corps' attitudes toward the maintenance of discipline among enlisted men. This pattern also demonstrates the limits to the French influence which so many scholars have observed in the American army, for its disciplinary attitudes and practices were drawn primarily from the rigid class-derived hierarchy and brutality of the eighteenth-century British army—themselves drawn in no small part from the example of the Prussian army under Frederick the Great—rather than the concern for individual motivation characteristic of the armies of the French Republic (and in a much more paternalistic way those of the Bourbon
and July Monarchies) and sought by Prussian reformers like Scharnhorst and Clausewitz.

The primary reason that this pattern was chosen and these attitudes sustained is equally clear: class. Although they were never explicitly instructed in such attitudes, at some point in their careers officers learned to regard their soldiers as "vile and miserable, men without character—the desperate, and the degraded, a reproach to the service and to the country." (This encomium was published in the Army and Navy Chronicle in 1840 for all the world to see.) Certainly many aspiring officers brought these attitudes with them from their relatively elite family origins, and recent historians like Stuart Blumin have shown that civilian attitudes toward manual laborers and the poor were hardening during the Jacksonian era, but many officers were from middling backgrounds where these attitudes would have been seen as thoroughly unRepublican and reprehensible, and we must therefore understand the officer's occupational socialization as a powerful mechanism of social distancing and differentiation and, in effect, both elite and working-class formation, through the operation of negative stereotyping and distinctions.

In other words, officers were socialized as and considered gentlemen, and vice-versa, while manual workers were relegated to an increasingly dependent and even servile status in both army and society—the military caste system both reflected and created social class in the officer's mind and the increasingly negative public image of the American enlisted man. The army officer was socialized as much in class attitudes of hierarchy and disdain for those beneath him as he was in the military virtues of duty, loyalty, and sacrifice. Indeed, these values and attitudes were two sides of the same coin, both products of the sense of gentility and social distance inherited from the
English aristocracy and shared by contemporary civilian professionals. As historian Richard Bushman has recently demonstrated, gentility supported class authority and helped to stabilize personal and occupational identity amid the social fluidity and confusion of the early nineteenth century, providing officers with a clear sense of difference between themselves and their soldiers which buttressed their self-confidence and encouraged their demands for prestige, authority, and autonomy from civilian oversight. This pattern of response was especially important for junior officers who--lacking the psychic and material security of rank and experience--felt the threat to social and military hierarchy and order most directly in civilian critiques and enlisted insubordination. Though proximity made these young officers the most likely to engage in semi-equitable personal relations with individual enlisted men, systemically it made them the most sensitive to perceived challenges to their authority, and the most willing to strike out violently to reassert it.²

Although American society was hardly classless, it did profess to be so, and officers did their nation and its republican principles a disservice when they recognized and acted upon principles of class hierarchy. Jacksonian America witnessed a growing disparity in the distribution of wealth that belied many of its ideals, but in no place outside Philip Hone's diaries was class a more pervasive--and in none a more violent--force than in the army officer corps. (On the other hand, with one exception the army was not employed in repressing civil disorders or labor unrest during the Jacksonian era, a significant example of the changes in the civilian social atmosphere between 1840 and 1870, nor did Jacksonian officers seek any role in doing so, an example of their accountability to civilian authority and their desire to remain neutral in overtly political conflicts.) Defining themselves as
gentlemen largely in antagonistic contrast to their "ignoble" soldiers (who in sociological terms played the role of a "negative reference group"), class served the officer's functional and organizational need for authoritarian labor discipline and his personal desire for the status, prestige, and authority of command. Indeed, historians who see an officer corps increasingly isolated from civilian society might do better to envision a corps mentally and emotionally isolated from its own soldiers (as civilian employers and employees of the period increasingly were), one whose class attitudes actually anticipated those of the middle and late nineteenth-century middle and upper classes. If there was an "Aristocracy in America" in 1840, its most typical representative was the army officer, and insofar as the enlisted soldier developed "the capability for independent action" in combat seen by military historian Ronald Spiller, he did so largely on his own, stimulated by the individualism of his parent society and in conjunction with fellow enlisted men, whose cohesion and esprit de corps--like those of many civilian workers in the changing artisanal and emerging industrial economies of this period--arose in large part in antagonism to their officers' mistreatment.³

Few officers had much good to say about the working class enlisted men under their command, for their attitudes were thoroughly conditioned by their class origins and aspirations and their occupational socialization in class values of gentility, honor, and respectability. We may distinguish these attitudes (which were of course constituents of class in themselves) from the concrete maintenance of class power--or more precisely, social distance, meaning the authority of the officer and the subordination of the enlisted within the army structure--by labelling them the cultural dimension of officers' antagonism toward enlisted men. Since working class enlisted men
were seen as manual laborers (they did the "dirty work" of fighting and killing, not gallantly "leading" and directing) who by definition could not aspire to these qualities, officers of all ranks believed that soldiers were driven primarily by mercenary desires, but they never explicitly connected the power of these pecuniary motives to the less attractive economic prospects of the men under their command—that is, officers recognized the growing instability and inequalities of the national economy but did not question its basic success, its ultimate justice, or the disparities in education and other cultural capital that made some men officers and gentlemen and others ignoble privates.4

Besides inculcating gentility as a means of sustaining collegiality between men of the same occupation and class, the seemingly relentless competition at West Point led many an officer to speak like contemporary civilians of "the race of life" as a natural process that was distorted only by the unnatural interference of artificial patronage and distinctions, and given these assumptions it is not surprising that officers seldom expressed much sympathy for those injured by the "fierce conflict of civil life" and forced to join their nation's army as enlisted men. Given their faith in the American economy it seemed logical to officers that men only chose to become subordinates in the army out of desperation, a state of affairs which most officers (like civilian employers of that era) attributed to personal flaws of character rather than the impersonal workings of the market economy. In 1846 Lieutenant George Meade—who resigned in 1836 to work as a railroad engineer but returned to the army in 1842 once these prospects seemed poorer—neatly summed up the officer corps' general conviction that soldiers "generally enter the service solely because they are unfit from bad habits or idleness to succeed in civil life." Officers thought it obvious that men who
could not make their own way amidst the boundlessness of American opportunities were flawed in some way, but they never saw or admitted the parallel with their own search for security and lack of entrepreneurial drive.\(^5\)

The vast majority of the army's enlisted men were drawn from the nation's urban working classes by the temporary hardship and necessity caused by intermittent employment in a rapidly fluctuating economy. Occasional remarks noting the presence of "respectable" men with liberal educations notwithstanding, officers knew that there were few incentives besides a desperate quest for basic economic security for joining or remaining in the army as an enlisted man, and they publicly characterized their recruits as "the cast-off of society—the morally degraded and wretched loafers of our larger cities." Restlessness and the prospect of adventure may have lured some recruits, but for most the army meant nothing more than a steady source of food, clothing, and shelter. Indeed, soldiers with skills or backgrounds above those of common laborers were doubly damned by the army's inability to match their expectations, for there was little in peacetime army life besides its security to attract men of enterprise and ambition, given the rigidly oppressive discipline they were subjected to as soldiers. (Their pay and compensation is examined at length in this and the following footnotes.)\(^6\)

Military pay was never allotted according to quantifiable indices of production like the piece-rates used in early factories and outwork, the day rates standard for farm and other manual labor, or the hourly wages used later in the century. Enlisted personnel were paid a sort of salary (a fixed base adjusted according to deductions and allowances) each month with the assurance of employment for a set term of years, but though equivalent to that for manual labor their pay was not based on the actual duties they
performed on a daily basis in garrison. It instead represented a sort of contingency fee, the amount the government was willing to pay to keep them in waiting for war. Indeed, one might say that the army's enlisted men were simply being warehoused in a prison which they chose semi-voluntarily under the pressure of the individual hardship exacerbated by the expansion of the market economy—a relationship perhaps analogous to a voluntary indenture. Writing at the beginning of the winter of 1838, Lieutenant James Duncan suggested that the officer corps understood the power of this pressure, if not its economic origins or operation:

The recruit[s] had no particular occupation, or rest assured, they would not have enlisted. I have put them down as laborers, believing that to be the custom... You are well aware that most of the recruits... are compelled to [enlist] through necessity, they are out of money, out of credit & out of employment, and in short, are in every way destitute.

Four years later Duncan, one of the army's most tactically proficient officers during the war with Mexico, was cleared by a court of inquiry into the death of an enlisted man from exposure. His critic, an enlisted man of Polish origin who had served in the Russian army, had written a letter to the president charging that he had never encountered "such treatment during my servitude," a damning indictment of an otherwise highly professional officer that recalls the remarkable rigidity and iniquities of class relations in the army. Indeed, Duncan had essentially engaged in official oppression by forcibly confiscating the letter and arresting his critic, who was then court-martialed for insubordination and "subversion of discipline" and dismissed from the army.
One might add ethnicity as a third primary reason for officers' disdain, but it was clearly less significant and certainly less pervasive than class attitudes, and probably acted primarily as a factor contributing to and reinforcing officers' existing class-based perceptions. The largely immigrant content of the antebellum enlisted corps is well known to historians. By the mid-1830s foreign-born soldiers comprised half of the army's enlisted men, primarily Irishmen and Germans, though there were a substantial number of Englishmen, Frenchmen, and French Canadians. This demographic shift provided nativist officers with another excuse to despise and mistreat enlisted men, but historian Dale Steinhauer has found that as a group immigrants were actually treated little differently from native-born soldiers, both positively (in promotions, for example), and negatively (in court-martial proceedings and punishments). Indeed, because immigrant soldiers had fewer civilian opportunities (and perhaps a less individualistic view of the world) than native ones they were less likely to desert and more likely to reenlist, so a number of officers actually preferred foreigners to American-born recruits.  

This statistical equality cloaks the impact of culture, language, and ethnicity, however, for it seems that the officer corps' general level of disdain for its subordinates grew as the proportion of foreign-born soldiers increased, which helps account for the growing tensions between officer and enlisted during the 1830s. The antagonistic relations between army officers and enlisted men therefore raise questions about the impact of the character and evolution of Jacksonian class structure on the way middle-class and genteel Americans understood citizenship (both in the formal legal sense and in the broader sense of legitimate membership in the political nation and community). The immigrant status and ethnicity of many soldiers was a
contributing or corollary factor in officers' disdain for their soldiers, but one distinctly secondary to the the class-derived meaning and valuation of manual labor and the structural and personal degradation of the army enlisted man. On the other hand, the negative linkage late nineteenth-century civilians made between industrial labor and foreign ethnicity was prefigured in the officer corps' identification of enlisted men and immigrants, an association which, given the subordination required of enlisted men, must have enhanced perceptions of foreigners as servile yet simultaneously disorderly and in need of paternalistic control, a paradox often evident in elite class (or caste) reactions to workers and other subordinated groups (like African-American slaves, for example). Class attitudes underpinned ethnic ones in the officer corps, but ethnic attributes then became universalized in officers' perceptions, reinforcing their negative stereotypes.9

Another reason for officers' disdain for their soldiers was the belief that "the rank and file of an army can be obtained at any time," as Inspector General John Wool (who should have known better) put it. This belief stemmed from the class-bound assumptions of eighteenth-century warfare embodied in the army's close-order tactical drill: soldiers would be maneuvered in tightly packed geometrical formations as if puppets by officers educated through the genteel pastime of reading military history. In this scheme the soldier was an interchangeable--and supposedly predictable--part in a larger mechanism, "a unit of continuous production" (of firepower) which pathbreaking military sociologist Maury Feld (speaking of the Dutch countermarch of the late sixteenth century, the first system of this sort) has labelled a forerunner of the industrial assembly line. Theoretically, "the variable of continuous firepower was made a function of a fixed relationship between the individual's use of his [weapon] and the commander's control of
his company," in a mathematical equation to which the range of answers (i.e., output, or firepower and lethality) could be predicted with reasonable certainty in advance. This rationalized system had permitted the relative decentralization of armies and battlefield formations from the phalanx-like masses of the Middle Ages and their rearticulation into small units operating independently of each other on the battlefield, but within the units (be they companies, platoons, or battalions composed of several companies operating in unison) each soldier remained a cog with one assigned position. Individual training (the "school of the soldier") in armies of this sort taught fixed routines for moving and firing as part of the unit according to its officers' commands. Under these circumstances the quality of individual recruits did not matter very much in the larger scheme, for they would be shaped to suit the system: some would prove incorrigible and be expelled, but most would become soldiers under the constant pressures of routine, learned habit, and the threat of coercion.10

The rigid mechanics of close order drill present us with another opportunity for comparison with the changing face of American civil society: the dehumanization of a highly routinized labor process carried out under direct and intense supervision was reflected on the military firing line long before it appeared in the industrial assembly line. Indeed, it was the difficulty (both individual and political) of shaping short-term volunteers into soldiers of this type that led regulars of the Jacksonian era to proclaim "the evident necessity of . . . well trained regulars:[.] Men selected from the laboring class . . . with strong constitutions [but apparently few constitutional rights]; disciplined to meet every emergency, and who know no alternative but to obey when an order is given." "Disciplining" a group of individuals to meet emergencies by unhesitatingly following the orders of a single man obviously
minimized the soldier's capacity for independent tactical initiative. and
officers would eventually find that the chaos and danger of the battlefield did
not permit such rigid tactics, especially when their soldiers were drawn from
a wider spectrum of society as volunteers during the Civil War. The
technology of rifled weapons undermined and that of machine guns
ultimately destroyed predemocratic class notions of gallantry and aristocratic
command, just as that of gunpowder employed by closed order infantry
formations had destroyed the tactical dominance of mounted aristocracies
during the late medieval and early modern periods.11

Rigid discipline was not the only model available for officers'
relationships with enlisted men, but it was certainly the dominant one. Chief
Engineer Macomb wrote in 1825 that the officer "should be the guardian of
his soldiers, the protector of their rights and their reliance in the hour of
peril," and Inspector General Croghan constantly stressed the benefits of
trusting soldiers as individuals, but Ronald Spiller has observed that "for
most . . . officers, leadership [meant] the process of enforcing discipline."
(Indeed, the term "leadership" did not appear in its present, fundamentally
consensual or democratic usage until after the Civil War.) Spiller also notes
that, like their British counterparts dealing with American volunteers nearly
a century before, army officers failed to appreciate the contractual mindset of
their soldiers—the officer corps saw enlisted men as mercenaries susceptible to
pecuniary incentives, but consequently most officers took their soldiers'
motives and needs for granted and failed to keep them informed of the
reasons for official decisions. This undemocratic mode of governance,
ultimately derived from the social attitudes of the eighteenth-century English
aristocracy, had the same pernicious consequences as the encounters historian
Fred Anderson describes between contractually minded American volunteers and authoritarian English officers during the Seven Years War: endemic distrust and tension between officers and enlisted men and between officers and civilians suspicious of the army's authoritarian basis.\textsuperscript{12}

Although frequently espoused as an ideal, in practice paternalism was a model of leadership and discipline that provided temporary relief from but in the final analysis played second fiddle to officers' elemental belief in the necessity of coercion. Officers wanted their soldiers to "rely on, fear, and religiously . . . obey" them, and to promote these responses they ultimately relied on physical force, which ranged from casual blows to extended beatings with whatever objects happened to be handy. Legally, the War Department warned that "an officer of the army has no more right to strike a soldier . . . than he has to strike a private citizen," but one enlisted man estimated in his diary that half of the army's officers routinely struck the soldiers under their command, and accounts of corporal punishment pervade the papers of officers and enlisted men alike. Indeed, flogging was outlawed by Congress in 1812 but officers resorted to it with relative frequency and impunity and even sentenced men to floggings by court-martial--an explicit acknowledgement of an illegal punishment in the context of a legal proceeding--prior to its reauthorization for cases of desertion in 1833.\textsuperscript{13}

Other forms of punishment were not substantially different from torture, including hanging men by their thumbs, ducking them in cold water, and forcing them to wear spiked iron collars (making it impossible to lie down).\textsuperscript{14} During the Second Seminole War the most common of the more severe punishments were "bucking and gagging," in which the soldier's wrists were tightly bound behind his back (sometimes to his ankles), while a thick wooden pin was inserted between his jaws in such a way as to jam them
open, and "riding the wooden horse," in which the soldier was forced to sit astride a sawhorse with the sides of its crossbar planed to make a point at the apex, both of which commonly lasted for a number of hours, and occasionally days. Soldiers could also be confined (and this was probably the most common form of punishment at established posts) or their pay reduced, but there were few guardhouses in the field and many officers saw confinement as something soldiers took as leisure, while there was little flexibility (and perhaps, given soldiers' miniscule salaries, little impact) in pecuniary sanctions, which required more precise calibration than officers thought worthwhile. Violence was quick and it gave officers a more immediate, physical sense of their authority—it was, or so it seemed to countless officers enraged by the acts of men they regarded as inferiors, the easy solution. To say that violence had an impact is not merely to make a pun—violent coercion seems to have served as a psychological crutch for many individual officers.

The army's most senior officers regularly inveighed against these abuses, and several field grade officers were dismissed for ordering or committing corporal punishments. As early as 1816, for example, Jacob Brown warned the officers at Detroit against flogging, and in 1819 Colonel William King of the 4th Infantry (in West Florida) was suspended for five years for having given orders to shoot deserters on the spot if captured, which General Gaines labelled "an extraordinary and unprecedented measure, repugnant to every sound principle of military law." (One man was indeed shot.) King justified his order by the frequent desertions of soldiers (often in groups) in an active theater of operations, but he was dropped from the rolls of the army in the force reduction of 1821, one of only four colonels to be discharged. (Generals Gaines and Jackson, King's superiors, both claimed to
have been ignorant of King's order, and Gaines, an advocate of legalizing flogging, later came to favor capital punishment as a deterrent to desertion in peacetime.) Another notable aggressor against enlisted men, Colonel Talbot Chambers of the 6th Infantry, was court-martialed and dismissed in 1826 for constant drunkenness, and three years later Lieutenant Colonel Abram Woolley, then the officer in command of the 6th Infantry, was dismissed after caning a soldier to that point that he was disabled for nine days. King and Woolley both appealed their cases to Congress but were refused reinstatement.15

Such examples of effective discipline against officers were few and far between, however, and the army was replete with physical brutality throughout this era, which court-martial boards commonly ignored. In 1822, for example, Lieutenant Edward Harding was tried for "illegal and unmilitary conduct" in causing three soldiers to receive a hundred lashes apiece. The court found him guilty of all specifications (i.e., the facts themselves) but not guilty of the charge, excusing his acts with the assertion that "forcible and exemplary and immediate measures were necessary to quell the spirit of insubordination then existing among the men, and for the good of the service." As department commander Scott disapproved the finding and ordered the court to reconsider it, remarking that the soldiers' mutinous conduct appeared after and was excited by the floggings themselves. The court refused to do so; Scott then realized that "illegal floggings . . . cannot be prevented or punished by the intervention of [inherently biased] courts martial," and recommended that the president of the court be dismissed from the army for "protecting . . . the illegal and unofficerlike conduct" of Harding. Scott urged that each member of the court in turn be ordered to revise its verdict or face dismissal, for no other course seemed "likely to suppress the
extensive and [growing] practice of flogging." Scott's recommendations were never carried out, and twenty years later he had to face the same problems all over again as commanding general two decades later.16

Historians often suggest that the regulars of this era were isolated from their society and alienated from its increasingly liberal values, but viewing officers as employers rather than simply commanders sheds light on their affinities with their society and its values and the practical accommodation of inherently authoritarian state bureaucracies to market systems and values, subjects of interest to historians of civil-military relations, labor, and the state and state organizations alike. Many regulars criticized the materialism of their culture, but given their training and mission, it is remarkable both how receptive they were to market-based systems of incentive and how little concern they expressed for the corrosive effects these might have had on unit cohesion and morale. Officers certainly had no intention of bargaining with workers collectively or as individuals, but they were entirely willing to use the market and its mentalités for their functional, organizational, and occupational ends as military leaders. Officers sometimes found that law and public opinion demanded that they rely on material incentives (or their denial) rather than overtly authoritarian discipline to shape their soldiers' behaviour. In 1846, for example, the adjutant general denied an arsenal commander's request to court-martial a soldier who had married in violation of a post order forbidding enlisted men to marry while serving at the arsenal: "there is no such prohibition in military law . . . the only way of decreasing [marriages] is by withholding indulgences from the married men."17

Indeed, commanders used cash incentives to turn soldiers against one another in order to enforce their contractually obligated presence in the army.
In 1818 Colonel Henry Atkinson wrote to the secretary of war asking permission to grant bounties to enlisted men who apprehended deserters: "Under the existing regulations there is no inducement for the parties sent in pursuit to exert themselves beyond the mere discharge of the order under which they act," he warned, and he did not believe that they would do this duty with the necessary energy unless given the extra compensation granted to civilians. In this case, the offer of market incentives was a product of class-defined understandings of individual motivation: Atkinson felt that, unlike genteel officers motivated by personal reputation and honor, working-class enlisted men were "very rarely . . . of that character, which will prompt [them] to honorable [but] unrewarded effort." A bounty "would have the most salutary effect, as it would be all important in [prompting] them to the greatest alacrity." 18

Indeed, virtually every incentive offered by the army was at some level intended to encourage more disciplined behaviour among the troops, which was the primary motive behind the conversion of the army's daily liquor ration to a cash allowance in 1830. (Unfortunately most of the existing narratives by enlisted soldiers are from after 1830, so we have no sense of enlisted reactions to the loss of this customary compensation save for their continued resort to civilians for liquor. This "commutation" had been permitted to individuals on a voluntary basis in 1820, but had failed to take hold.) Two years later the allowance was converted to a new ration of coffee, tea, and sugar, and sutlers were prohibited to sell liquor. Officers also used rations and allowances as a means of coercion and punishment: post commanders sometimes withheld rations from female servants who married enlisted men without consulting their officers. Indeed, most officers saw marriage as a distraction for enlisted men or recognized the difficulties of
supporting a family on enlisted pay, and they commonly discouraged marriage among soldiers. Refusing married men became standard though unlegislated recruiting policy, but enough exceptions occurred that the policy was explicitly reiterated by senior officers when new units were raised at the beginning of the Mexican War.19

Besides pay, the most significant material factor in the enlistment market was the contractual obligation to serve a set period of time. In hopes of attracting more capable recruits, the War Department reduced this term from five years to three between 1833 and 1838 to accommodate men with some skill and education who wanted to enter the army because they were temporarily down on their luck but had been deterred by the longer period of enlistment—in essence, the department altered its demands in order to circumvent the inelasticity of supply created by a booming yet still highly unstable economy. Better educated soldiers notwithstanding, the three year enlistment was deemed unsuccessful by many if not the majority of officers, who felt that this period was insufficient for men to become trained and habituated to military life—or in more explicit terms, to trade the independent habits of citizens for the subordination of soldiers—so that "a man has scarcely learned the mode of making himself useful before he is discharged." The problem of enlisted retention was aggravated by the army's move to Florida, a tortuous theater of operations that—like their officers—few soldiers were willing to remain in for a second enlistment., and officers felt that the consequent turnover exacerbated the problems of inexperience and poor unit cohesion that they blamed the three year term for creating.20

A number of officers attributed the shortage of experienced soldiers to the lack of incentives for reenlistment, a dilemma which became all the more urgent during active operations, and they responded by proposing a wide
array of market incentives intended to promote recruitment. Indeed, a
decade later Chief Engineer Totten expressed similar hopes in the
dehumanizing language of the marketplace when describing the commodity
exchange that led to the soldier’s subordination: "as their wages will be high,
we ought to be able to command the best materials." As this quotation
indicates, quantitative measures of economic security and well-being did not
account for the subordination required of enlisted men, and officers
themselves recognized this liability as the chief obstacle to recruitment
regardless of the compensation offered. Indeed, one *Military and Naval
Magazine* essay explicitly asserted that "the term of enlistment having been
diminished two-fifths, [this] diminishes in the same degree the impatience of
the soldier under his temporary vassalage, and consequently [his] motives to
desert." Of course, any soldier who was likely to desert if required to serve
more than three years was equally unlikely to reenlist and develop the habits
and esprit de corps that make a good soldier, a problem the army never
solved through institutional means during this era.21

However strong their belief in the mercenary motives of enlisted men,
officers’ relationships with soldiers after their enlistment were primarily
decorative or paternalistic, ideally consisting of a reciprocal exchange of
deference and obedience from the soldiers in return for the care and attention
manifested by their officers. Perhaps the closest thing to an intersection
between paternalism and the cash nexus came when soldiers’ pay went
undelivered for months at a time, for a common means of encouraging
obedience and forestalling desertion under these circumstances was to loan
money to soldiers in need or to pressure local merchants to grant them
extended credit. (Sympathetic officers also held money for their men and
carried it to designated relatives and friends as requested.) Because of the never-ending congressional demand for fiscal economy officers had few material resources available to use as inducements for good conduct, and most of those they had were made available to all the soldiers on a post as part of its communal amenities. Unable to raise (or decrease) soldiers' wages as civilian employers could for their workers, the council of administration at each post acted as a quasi-official local intermediary between soldiers and merchants, for it also regulated the maximum prices that could be charged by post sutlers, civilian merchants (though commonly ex-officers given the contract by friends) who received exclusive licenses to sell supplementary foods and various dry goods on post property. (Some larger posts had several sutlers, creating some potential for competition, but their prices were still regulated by the council.) The council also had the power to determine the terms of the credit sutlers granted to enlisted men, who their commanders feared would become indebted (as often occurred anyway) should credit be available too freely.22

Officers also promised furloughs for deserving men: in 1820 General Gaines remarked that enlisted men of good character had the same claim to furloughs as officers; indeed, he felt that the practice was more beneficial to the army in the former case than in the latter. (Gaines was defending a decision by Colonel William King, who had been suspended from rank and command for ordering the execution of deserters without trial, perhaps one of the most ironic examples of the simultaneous existence of paternalism and coercive attitudes among officers.) This opinion was not reflected in official practice, for army regulations permitted only two enlisted furloughs per company, when it was common for one or two of the three to five officers in a company to be on leave for months at a time, a contrast that clearly reflected
the different opportunities open to the leisured gentry and the manual working classes.²³

Examples like Gaines' notwithstanding, paternalism was an ideal, its reality effectively dependent on the temperament of individual officers. While some officers did favors for the men under their command and criticized arbitrary and oppressive conduct towards them, Lieutenant Henry Turner's broad verdict that the army should begin to devote more attention to French methods of treating soldiers than it was giving to their horses stands as a summation of the neglect enlisted men routinely faced. Ideologically, army officers exhibited little of the quasi- (or at least potentially) egalitarian ethos of Christian paternalism that historians have attributed to some civilian employers during the early stages of industrialization: officers had no desire to see individual mobility between the army's internal castes, and personal beliefs in the equality of Christians across these lines were expressed informally if at all. Officers appealed to their soldiers' manhood as something to live up to by obeying orders and emulating their commanders' courage, not as a connection between equals. Fair dealing was never a reciprocal exchange or an attitude that enlisted soldiers could reliably expect or appeal to, and whatever harmony of interests existed between officers and enlisted men had to await battle to be revealed.²⁴

Like its civilian counterparts, military paternalism was a complex mixture of emotion, incentive, and coercion that could show a violent face to civilians as well as enlisted men. The labor relationships between officers, enlisted men, and civilian workers on army posts (especially arsenals) were often complicated by the distinction between the military subordination of the enlisted men and the contractual or entrepreneurial circumstances of civilian employment. As noted in chapter two, these distinctions
occasionally blurred into violence when officers took their soldiers' parts in disputes with civilians working on post or used soldiers as private enforcers to intimidate or coerce obdurate civilians. Perhaps the most dramatic of these cases occurred early in the interwar period when Major Talbot Chambers paid a soldier at Green Bay, Wisconsin half a gallon of whiskey to give a mulatto youth employed by the post blacksmith fifty lashes for killing two of Chambers' pigs. Chambers told the soldier to give the blacksmith fifty lashes if he interfered, which he tried to do, leading to a fight. Chambers heard a rumor that his soldier had been killed, so he and a captain attacked the smith with their swords. Indian Agent John Bowyer, a colonel himself during the War of 1812, had to provide the smith with passage to Detroit and pay and rations for a month in order to quiet the affair, but he warned the secretary of war that "if this transaction is suffered to pass without investigation I shall not be able to employ either Blacksmith Interpreter or waiter." Nothing official came of Bowyer's warning, but the captain in question resigned in 1818. Chambers, who was accused of brutality and official oppression against numerous enlisted men, survived all these charges until he was court-martialed for drunkenness and dismissed from the army in 1826. This incident notwithstanding, however, it appears that army officers of the Jacksonian era were more responsible in their use of armed force against civilians than their early national predecessors, for they very rarely used enlisted men to intimidate civilians for private purposes, and were generally less violent in their relations with civilians than they had been during the wild years on the frontier before 1820.25

The paternalism of military life could play a significant role in the construction of new market relationships after the expiration of a soldier's enlistment, as officers frequently gave faithful soldiers testimonials for use in
civilian life, usually at the soldiers' request. These recommendations normally referred to moral qualities of honesty, thrift, and sobriety valued by officers as well as civilian employers: "I always found him obedient & attentive to his duty," as one put it, and these character references were probably much more valuable mediums of exchange in the civilian labor market than the twenty-five or fifty dollars worth of accumulated allowances paid out at the end of an enlistment, particularly given the difficulty the average soldier had saving much of his meager pay. This concern for the moral character of soldiers and recruits culminated in a push to note past conduct on soldiers' discharge papers to prevent men of bad character from reenlisting, the origin of the honorable and dishonorable discharge system of today. Indeed, officers sometimes made exceptions to the legal term of enlistment for men possessing these qualities: in 1845 Captain Charles F. Smith recommended the early discharge of Private John Lynch, "one of the best men in my comp[any] & a sober, excellent man . . . whom I have never had occasion to find fault with. . . . [he] [h]aving saved a respectable sum of money & seeing a desirable opening for his advancement." This example shows that paternalism and professional responsibility did not always reinforce one another, for Smith's endorsement implies that both officer and soldier saw individual opportunity as a more important priority than military service. (Presumably Lynch had already made it clear that he would not reenlist.)

As these examples of paternalism indicate, not all officers were content to treat their soldiers simply as mercenaries (or more charitably, as economic free agents), whatever their assessment of the soldiers' motives. Indeed, some officers (who may have been idealistic exceptions to the norm) hoping
for an army of devoted veterans questioned the use of short-term market incentives like higher pay and the withholding system because they felt that these benefits undermined the soldier's sense of himself as a member of an organization modeled after the patriarchal family. Indeed, one correspondent explicitly questioned the movement to provide soldiers with savings for their lives after service, because the proposal seemed intended "to benefit individuals when they leave the army . . . and not to improve their condition as soldiers." From this perspective the turn to market incentives had become counterproductive:

All seem to look on the army as a [place] from which it is the object of every soldier to get discharged as quickly as possible. . . . This is a wrong principle, radically wrong. What sort of soldiers will men make, who take up this honorable profession to turn storekeepers, farmers, or schoolmasters? The soldier's object should be the service; his future prospects, his hopes, his comforts, his ambition should be the service.

The object of an army is not to make useful citizens. . . . The men enlisted should be offered every inducement to remain. They are clothed, fed, taught, and paid, well enough for the time being, but not enough to support them in age. Here is where the system fails; we must take care of our old and infirm men, or we cannot get and keep first-rate soldiers in the service. . . . Money expended in this way would induce good men to enlist; it would give them a home for life; desertion would be rare, and the country would have a devoted army. 27

Unfortunately, neither officers nor men received pensions or other retirement benefits for peacetime service during this period. Protected by the
security of their commissions (which was ultimately based on the gentility and class status they were supposed to represent), officers did not retire, while enlisted soldiers were forced onto the streets when their commanding officers refused to reenlist them because of infirmity. Many commanders tried to provide for long-service veterans by maintaining them on the rolls in various clerical capacities or securing appointments for them as ordnance sergeants and military storekeepers, but this informal system of provision often became impossible to sustain during hard times when Congress put pressure on the army to reduce expenses. This tight-fisted lack of provision came under attack in the professional journals of the 1830s as "unwise, impolitic, and unjust" because of its effects on enlisted morale and future recruitment. The most significant innovation among the inducements proposed for long-term service was the "Soldier's Asylum," a group home for men discharged because of age and disability (or more precisely for infirmity after twenty years of "faithful" service), which was established in 1851 after nearly two decades of pressure from well-connected junior officers (led by Robert Anderson) and the senior commanders whom they convinced. Its first proponent seems to have been Captain John Stuart, one of the miniscule number of officers who had begun his career as an enlisted man, who wrote to the commanding general in 1833 proclaiming that old soldiers had "a just claim on the government" for subsistence in their waning years. Stuart remarked that "such a system would . . . show a very becoming degree of liberality on the part of the Government, & would be highly creditable to our Country," and he concluded that "common humanity calls loudly for the adoption of some such system."\textsuperscript{28}

The asylum concept attracted officers' support as a matter of both expediency and justice, and Stuart's ideas resonated widely within the officer
corps, whose members frequently felt sentimental (albeit fundamentally paternalistic) attachments towards faithful old soldiers (especially the NCOs who acted as their primary liaisons with the troops) under their command. Humanitarianism, paternalism, and considerations of discipline and public efficiency all supported the creation of the asylum: officers presented the same mixed range of arguments in its favor as they did for other incentives for enlisted men, and their arguments drew together each of the several dimensions of the reciprocal relationship between soldier and nation. Above all else, officers expected that the creation of a home for old soldiers would improve the image and raise the social status of soldiers and the army as an institution. "Such an institution," one author wrote in the Army and Navy Chronicle, "would do more to infuse a spirit of of life and animation into the ranks of the army, than civilians can form an idea of," while Lieutenant Philip Kearny wrote privately that the asylum would raise "the moral tone of the whole army, as the sober, the diligent, and the obedient will alone be entitled to its benefits" (presumably encouraging all soldiers to strive for these qualities). Another correspondent to the Chronicle asserted that the asylum would raise "the character of the army, by securing the enlistment of a better class of persons," and "the number of desertions would be greatly lessened" in consequence. The same officer drew a parallel to the soldiers of Napoleon, "who were in truth," he averred, "the children of France; and she, like a kind and grateful mother, requited their love" by rewarding service and merit with the Hospital of Invalids. This mutual exchange of loyalties had "rendered the soldiers of the French army ... perfectly happy, and proud of their profession," and elevated the character of the profession, in that country, above all others." As a result "it was an honor, not a reproach, to serve as a private in that army."29
Supporters of the asylum fused paternalist meanings with the language of the marketplace in their arguments. One officer warned that "without [such a] provision for old age and decrepitude, the contract of service is not a fair one," and he logically assumed that "this state of things . . . deter[s] many good, industrious young men from entering the army," but this concept of fairness was based on the mutuality of reciprocal obligation, not the quantitative calculation embodied in the cash nexus. Indeed, advocates frequently spoke in terms which imply that they saw the institution as a hedge against the corrosive effects of markets and market thinking. A number of officers recognized that men who had served in the army for long periods became accustomed to its institutional security, "and being often destitute of relations, they seem to view the members of the army, as one great and extensive family." This feeling had "a great tendency to induce reenlistment," but the same age and infirmity that finally led to their rejection for reenlistment made it difficult for old veterans to secure civilian work, a dilemma which many officers felt was exacerbated by the army's failure (somewhat exaggerated by these advocates) to teach skills which enlisted men could use outside the military. Officers expected the asylum to give the soldiers a stronger sense of the "permanency of our military establishment," which would aid recruiting, and they suggested that lobbyists and congressional supporters set forth the difficulty of getting recruits while discharged soldiers were walking the streets as beggars. Indeed, influential officers were certain that the faithful veteran would "perform his duty with more cheerfulness and alacrity" if given this assurance of future security.30

The asylum principle found general acceptance in the officer corps within a few years of its assertion and was recommended to Congress by the secretary of war as early as 1834, but implementation was delayed by
Congress's vise-like grip on military expenditures. Stuart suggested an intermediate solution in 1836, recommending that the old soldiers be employed at arsenals as casual laborers for food, housing, and a small cash allowance in lieu of more highly paid civilians. When no longer able to perform arsenal duties they would be sent to the asylum to "be supported at the expense of the government during the balance of their lives." This system of graduated welfarism would cost very little, "and the good and efficient soldiers of the army would more readily re-enlist." Indeed, another advocate was willing to assess a tax on every officer and soldier in order to pay for the benefits of an asylum. This proposal reflected the predominantly paternalistic motives behind the asylum plan--the army would take care of its own, taxing itself if necessary in order to attain self-sufficiency in its fulfillment of the mutual obligations which the more thoughtful officers felt to exist between the soldiers and themselves. (Needless to say, the vast majority of officers would do no such thing--many violently opposed a Provident Society that would tax them for the support of each others' widows and orphans, so doing so for enlisted men was out of the question.)

This commitment to support members of the army "family" would in turn attract more, and more importantly better, recruits, as men saw the security to be gained in the pursuance of an army career. Advocates of the Soldier's Asylum drew on commonplaces about economic incentive to gain congressional support, but their underlying concept was a visionary measure aimed less at improving the army's status in the short-term labor market than at fostering a sense of organizational loyalty and permanency through the assurance of long-term security to men who could not obtain that security anywhere else in Jacksonian America. Though too small in size to have a serious impact in itself, the asylum would have sent a signal to potential
recruits, and as such it provided a relatively inexpensive means of reshaping the contours of the labor market to suit the army's functional needs for discipline and experience. Officers hoped that soldiers would exchange loyal subordination in return for security, an organizing process that would enable them to transcend the chaotic tendencies of Jacksonian labor markets, and, more importantly in officers' eyes, those of Jacksonian laborers. Incessant wage competition was something to be feared by an organization devoted to stability and order, and officers hoped that the security offered by the asylum would attract a new type of recruit from "a better class of men": "the ranks of the army would [soon] be filled . . . with men of good habits, well educated, and who feel an attachment to their country; in lieu of those, many of whom can only be viewed as mercenaries." While not undertaken in isolation from or overt antagonism to the reigning orthodoxy of the market, the Soldier's Asylum was ultimately a paternalistic measure that proposed to transcend the atomism embodied in ever-fluctuating civilian wage rates by reconstituting communities of mutual incentive and reintegrating individual workers within secure but disciplined institutional confines. Such ideas, made possible by the officer corps' occupational position in a relatively advanced bureaucratic organization secured from market pressures by government funding, anticipated on a small scale the organizational reconstruction of American society later in the nineteenth century.32

As in so many other dimensions of professional responsibility, the crisis in officer-enlisted relations came during the Second Seminole War. Officers' commentary about enlisted life in Florida seems to have come primarily from dissenting officers with an axe to grind against the army in general. Among such men, Lieutenant John Phelps of the 4th Artillery
believed that "such a rank vegetation . . . could not but have an unfavorable moral effect upon the soldiery," while Lieutenant Nathaniel Hunter of the 2nd Dragoons observed several self-inflicted wounds among enlisted soldiers, a tactic used to avoid onerous duties. Illegal punishments and brutality towards enlisted men seem to have reached a peak during the Seminole conflict, while irregularities in courts-martial procedure became so common during these years that Secretary of War Joel Poinsett ordered the preparation of a new system of military law, which was published along with a new set of Army Regulations in 1841. In one of the most brutal of these incidents, Captain Marshall Howe of the 2nd Dragoons beat Private James Jones to death during a march. Howe was acquitted of manslaughter by a civilian court; the commanding general insisted upon a court-martial, but the captain was only convicted of cruelty and suspended for a year. Indeed, the seniority system allowed him to rise steadily to the rank of colonel and regimental commander before retiring twenty-five years later.33

The diary of Private Bartholomew Lynch gives us a glimpse at the officers of the 2nd Dragoons from the underside of the divide between officer and soldier: Lieutenant Charles May once struck and confined Lynch for obeying the orders of a superior officer (presumably in contradiction to May's); in another case May lectured Lynch for bothering him when the private came to complain that money had been stolen from his pack. (Indeed, May almost had a gunfight with a soldier who was waiting to ambush him.) Another officer knocked Lynch off his horse with a rifle butt, cutting his head with the blow. Lynch reported this to Colonel Zachary Taylor, then theater commander and the most senior officer in Florida, but Taylor, so often portrayed as a favorite of the soldiers, laughed and sent Lynch away without doing anything. Lynch had a spotless service record. Among the junior
officers of the 1st Dragoons, Lieutenant Philip Thompson was tried by a
civilian court in Carlisle for assault and battery on a soldier, but acquitted for
lack of jurisdiction. Thompson noted a similar case in the 2nd Dragoons; in
his opinion both incidents were due to the soldiers' "insolent" disobedience
on drill. In another instance, Captain Isaac P. Simonton of the 1st threatened
a Sergeant Hamilton with sabre and carbine, but Hamilton wrote to Colonel
Stephen Kearny resulting in the captain's arrest on charges of drunkenness
and conduct unbecoming an officer—a status shared by two other officers on
the same post at that time. Lieutenant Henry S. Turner alluded to Lieutenant
Abraham Johnston's apparent participation in an assault (perhaps by several
officers) upon an enlisted man "in the garret of the old Bachelors' block at
Leavenworth," and he noted a "difficulty" between Captain Burdett A. Terrett
and a soldier at Fort Scott in ominous terms: "[Terrett] may thank his stars if
the matter gets no farther than the Colonel."

The incidents in the 1st notwithstanding, the 2nd Dragoons was the
most infamous regiment in the army for brutality, in large part due to the
malign example set by its lieutenant colonel, William S. Harney, who went
beyond Talbot Chamber's habit of beating soldiers to force enlisted men to
fight each other, and in one case attempted to force an enlisted musician to
fight a slave. (Indeed, Harney had beaten one of his slave women to death in
St. Louis in 1834 but was acquitted by a civilian court.) On the other hand, it
is impossible to attribute this problem solely to Harney's influence, and the
case of the 2nd Dragoons suggests that the paternalism learned at West Point
was not the worst model of leadership enlisted men could labor under. The
2nd contained only four West Point graduates (though several of its officers
had withdrawn or been dismissed from the academy) when it was formed in
June 1836, and three of these men resigned before the Mexican War. (Indeed,
Harney himself was one of the half-dozen officers commissioned without passing through the academy between 1821 and 1835, and Nathaniel Hunter, the only one of the first four West Pointers to remain in the army until 1846, had actually resigned his commission months after graduation, returning only when the 2nd was formed.) The 2nd suffered under a high rate of officer attrition, and by 1841 only nine of its twenty-six original company officers remained, meaning that few of the 2nd's junior officers had much experience to ameliorate the friction and stress fostered by active service and poor leadership from their superiors.36

After the war Winfield Scott attempted to put an end to the reign of illegal punishments and abuse, maintaining that "the only case in which personal violence can be justified is that where extreme necessity requires it in self-defence, to prevent instant and immediate danger." Otherwise, Secretary of War John C. Spencer held that "an officer has no more right to inflict personal injury on a private than he has upon an officer." In 1842 Scott issued a general order that officers were to use their "self-control, respect for law and gentlemanly conduct" to restrain themselves, and over the next year at least eleven officers were subjected to court-martials or courts of inquiry for inflicting illegal punishments. None were seriously sanctioned, however, and the 1843 edition Army Regulations contained a strong denunciation of court-martial boards that expressed sympathy with officers charged with illegal punishments. (Indeed, the danger which officers' violence posed to their own employment is evident in Lieutenant William G. Freeman letter to Robert Anderson that Scott had delayed the general order until after the annual appropriations bill had been passed, "so as not to endanger the 2d drags. [Dragoons], who figure somewhat prominently in it.") Scott then put words into action by disapproving the sentences of a number of these court-
martial, one of which, that of Lieutenant Don Carlos Buell, became a cause celebre among many junior officers, in no small part because Ethan Allen Hitchcock decided to object to the legality of the proceedings, an act which may have been due as much to his fondness for pedantic legal argument as to his quarrel with Scott, both of which Hitchcock depicted as matters of defending the army's subalterns against an overbearing centralizer. (Hitchcock's efforts to defend the rights of officers in court-martial had begun as far back as 1827, while he was at West Point, and they appear to have proceeded from his own desire for autonomy as an officer.) As inspector general Sylvester Churchill asked all post commanders whether they had witnessed illegal blows or punishments, but he was met with a uniform denial that is utterly inconsistent with the documentary record.37

The officer corps' reliance on illegal violence continued unabated, if not intensified, during the Mexican War and the 1850s, leading to the following song as a fit epitaph for an officer corps which historian Dale Steinhauer (who uncovered the song) has labelled "completely out of control":

"Sergeant, buck him and gag him," our officers cry,
For each trifling offence which they happen to spy;
Till with bucking and gagging of Dick, Tom, and Bill,
Faith, the Mexican's ranks they have helped to fill.

The treatment they give us, as all of us know,
Is bucking and gagging for whipping the foe;
They buck us and gag us for malice or spite,
But they're glad to release us when going to fight.

A poor soldier's tied up in the sun or rain
With a gag in his mouth till he's tortured with pain;
Why I'm blessed if the eagle, we wear on our flag,
In its claws shouldn't carry a buck and a gag.38
Noncommissioned officers constituted a special case in officer-enlisted because they were indispensable as intermediaries and agents of discipline yet were still thought to lack the commissioned officer's motives of social status and prestige. Jacob Brown warned that

from their exertions, no less than from those of the commissioned [officers], will result the moral and physical efficiency of the rank and file. Indeed, there is no individual of a company, scarcely excepting the captain himself, on whom more depends for its discipline [first things first], police, instruction, and general well being, than on the first sergeant. . . . All experience demonstrates that the condition of each company will improve or deteriorate nearly in proportion to the ability and worth of its first sergeant.

Unfortunately, "the only inducement" Brown could envision motivating these men was "an adequate pecuniary emolument."39

Officers praised many of their sergeants individually but rarely put much trust in them as a group. On the whole the army's NCOs appear to have been as much a mixed bag as the officers and privates: in 1820 Daniel Bissell complained to the War Department that "it is almost impossible to find NonCommissioned Officers in service that can safely be trusted on [independent] commands," but exactly a year later, Lieutenant John Hills suggested a potential orderly sergeant for Captain Rufus Baker's artillery company: "you can place that dependence in him, that you dare not place in any of the sergeants that now belong to your Company--He would be of incalculable benefit to the service." Officers' opinions aside, a semi-
professional cadre of long-service veterans had developed by 1838, when the adjutant general's office estimated that 110 out of 735 NCOs (including corporals), or about eight per regiment, had first enlisted sometime before 1815, and one might therefore conjecture that a roughly equal proportion had seen combat prior to the outbreak of the Second Seminole War. Aside from the hard-earned experience gained therein, the number of NCOs increased as the postwar reduction in force law of 1842 actually added a sergeant to each infantry company, and just before the Mexican War about two in five noncoms were serving their second five-year enlistment, the highest such proportion during the years between 1815 and 1846. (These numbers notwithstanding, in 1830 half of the first-company- sergeants had not yet completed their first term of enlistment, and in 1840 this proportion was still nearly forty percent, both excessively high figures for the second highest enlisted rank then available.)  

The army's commissioned officers proposed a number of reforms to improve the status and ability of their noncommissioned subordinates. One of the most forward-looking of these came in the Military and Naval Magazine in 1833, which prefaced its suggestions with the encomiums that "this class of men are always the elite of the ranks" and that "all officers in command must concede that good discipline is dependent upon this grade."

The essayist then repeated Jacob Brown's maxim that "experience has proved, that companies are good or bad in proportion to the abilities of their noncommissioned officers." Satisfied with the progress of commissioned officer improvement achieved through the maturation of West Point, the author remarked that it now remained for the army to undertake the same task with its enlisted corps, without which "the original 'projet' of 1821" would be incomplete, for "the most essential thing" for the expansible army,
"next to having scientific regular officers, is to have an *elite* band of drill sergeants" to train the influx of new recruits at the outbreak of war. The presence of such men would enhance the army's cohesion, esprit de corps, and military capability, for as matters stood "the transition . . . from the highly cultivated mind of the officer, to the illiterate and ignoble state of the common soldier, is too great; and the inferiority of the latter is so apparent, as to disgust the officer with his proper company duties."

It therefore suited the commissioned officer's interest as well as the public's to establish a school or schools of instruction to train cadets to become NCOs. Lauing the new pay scales established that year as "excellent," the *Military and Naval Magazine* author averred that "the common schools of New England . . . abound with intelligent though poor individuals, who would gladly embrace such advantages, and become ornaments to the line of the army." Indeed, he suggested that this system would gradually replace the old one of promoting NCOs upward through the ranks, though he said nothing of the consequences for the ambition and quality of the army's privates, which would presumably decline as this avenue for advancement disappeared. The author was also confident--perhaps overly so given the mixed evidence of officers' professional qualities available to us--that commissioned officers could train NCOs so that they "[could not] fail to make proper soldiers," and even implied that the cadets might learn some of the duties of commissioned officers. In theory all classes of the army would benefit from this reform: the influence of these trained NCOs would sway the army's enlisted men from their vices of drunkenness and desertion, while officers would feel less cause to resign their commissions, for the attraction of a virtuous enlisted corps would stimulate participating officers to new efforts, "which would rescue their acquirements
[expertise] from oblivion." This proposal did not go uncontested, however, for another officer wrote to the *Military and Naval Magazine* that a NCO school would siphon off all the worthy recruits from the lowest enlisted ranks, as "no decent man would enlist, with a due impression . . . of remaining a private soldier [throughout] that enlistment."41

Similarly, in 1836 commanding general Macomb proposed a grade of sub-adjudants promoted from the ranks to act as a sort of warrant officer class between commissioned and noncommissioned officers in place of the army's sergeant majors, but Macomb did not make it clear whether the sub-adjudants would be able to break into the officer corps, without which there would have been little real change in the status quo. The ultimate solution to the recruiting problem would have been to open up opportunities for enlisted men to advance into the commissioned ranks, which under War Department policy were monopolized by West Pointers and politically connected civilians, but caste and class went hand-in-hand in occupational exclusion as well as formation. Many officers recognized that their sergeant majors were competent to perform the duties of lieutenants, but they also wanted to retain their monopoly over the authority and prestige of command, and promotions from the enlisted ranks remained an anomaly from the end of the War of 1812 until the Civil War. Indeed, the United States Army had the lowest proportion of "rankers" in its officer corps of any major Western power, including the autocratic Russians and Prussians and the aristocratic British, and most American officers would have agreed with the *Army and Navy Chronicle* editorialist who claimed that "although eminently respectable in the duties they are called on to fill with their companies, there are but few noncommissioned officers in our service who have made those acquirements which are now deemed essential in forming a good officer."42
The professional journals founded in the 1830s provided an anonymous platform for several authors who criticized this state of affairs, but their views were exceptions that do no more than show us the character of the problems involved. An 1838 article questioning the appointment of civilians to officer the 2nd Dragoon Regiment, an officer of the infantry asked whether it would not be more prudent, and . . . advance the interest of our army to a great degree, to bestow commissions on . . . non-commissioned officers . . . who may merit promotion by their conduct and ability? . . . Such promotion would at least prove an inducement for filling our ranks with respectable young men of education and ability, [who would] be far more appreciated by the officers, from being aware that confidence could be reposed in their knowledge and experience. He concluded that "there are many now serving . . . whose conduct and services merit . . . something more than empty thanks for the faithful discharge of the trust reposed in them."\cite{43}

The following February "An Observer" added that "the good of our army would be vastly promoted if the well learned and meritorious soldier should have guaranteed to him the chance of arriving at the distinction of a commission." Another officer suggested that a third of the army's officers be promoted from the enlisted ranks, and he believed that American noncoms would then excel their superb French and British counterparts. (Remember that a third of French subalterns were commissioned from the ranks of NCOs.) A fourth drew on French example to call for annual promotion examinations for enlisted men, to enable them to rise into the commissioned ranks through merit. Nothing of the sort was done, as the War Department finessed the potentially explosive issue by commissioning nine sergeants and
former enlisted men, only three of whom were still in service at the
beginning of the Mexican War. Three had died, one in action; two resigned;
and one was dismissed, proportions not much different from those among
West Point graduates and officers commissioned from civilian life, but the
army did not make another such experiment until the Mexican War, and
even then only on a small scale. Ultimately there was little room for upward
mobility between different castes in the army, a rigidity based not so much on
distinctions of expertise or other putatively "objective" criteria as on class
origins, values, and expectations. Unlike its French counterpart, the
American army was loth to admit anyone to the fraternity of officers who was
not first a gentleman.44
Chapter X

1 K.M. Gamble (or Samble) to Capt. Nathaniel Young, December 12, 1832, Young Papers, LC. Gamble may have been a marine rather than an army officer, since his letter was sent from the Marine Barracks at New York City. Coffman, The Old Army, ch. 4, remains the most accessible survey of the lives of enlisted men and their relationships with officers during this period. Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, ch. 14, stresses disciplinary relations and conflict between officers and enlisted men. These surveys provide abundant evidence of the endemic and virtually always extralegal violence by officers against enlisted men. See also Mark A. Vargas, "The Military Justice System and the Use of Illegal Punishments as Causes of Desertion in the U.S. Army, 1821-1835," IMH 55 (January 1991): 1-19.

2 Bushman, The Refinement of America, p. 404 and ch. 12 passim. In the terms applied to European class structures, we might refer to the junior officer corps as a sort of petite bourgeoisie, though my intent in doing so is nothing more than analogy. See Richard B. Morris, "Andrew Jackson: Strikebreaker," American Historical Review 55 (October 1949): 54-68, concerning the two companies sent to break up the riots among Irish laborers on the C&O canal in January 1834. They did not engage in combat. The commander on Governor's Island refused civilian requests for troops during the 1834 New York City election riot. In 1838 Henry Atkinson told Lt. Col. Richard Mason that he should furnish arms, ammunition, and "a Strong detachment" to the governor of Missouri in order to protect the Mormons, but no aid was actually given. That December Capt. E.V. Sumner refused a request for aid in an election dispute from the governor of Pennsylvania, "because it appears to proceed from political differences alone." Capt. George D. Ramsey, commander of Frankfort Arsenal near Philadelphia, did furnish ammunition to the state militia, but was rebuked by the secretary of war. Army units were sent to Rhode Island during the Dorr War in 1842, and Colonel James Bankhead suggested using 300 regulars to separate the factions, but the army did not engage in active service. See Coakley, The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders, 91, 103-109 (Atkinson quoted on 107 and Sumner on 108), and 121-24.

3 "Soldiers Asylum--No. IV," ANC 11 (July 2, 1840): 9; "The Soldier," "Non-Commissioned Officers of the Army," MNM 2 (October 1833): 72; Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 112. Ironically--yet quite significantly--the later of these letters was published as part of a reform campaign. Apparently the only way to reform enlisted men was to first degrade them until all admitted their deficiencies. The penultimate quotation refers, somewhat ironically given the conclusions involved, to the title of Francis J. Grund's 1839 commentary on American society (which, equally ironically, was not published in the
United States until 1959). (See Grund, Aristocracy in America: From the Sketch-Book of a German Nobleman, intro. by George E. Probst [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959].) See the bibliography for a number of works which have influenced my understanding of social and economic inequality in Jacksonian America.

4 See Stuart M. Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 121-33, concerning the evolution of class distinctions and their expression in spatial distancing and increasingly negative middle-class stereotypes about the working classes. See also John F. Kasson, Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-century Urban America (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990) and Bushman, The Refinement of America.


7 Duncan letterbook, December 10, 1838, James Duncan Papers, USMA; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 277. See "Regiment of Dragoons," MNM 3 (August 1834): 433 (a letter from a dragoon officer stationed at Fort Gibson) for a perspective that stressed romantic inclinations as a source of new recruits. Motives of this sort were often attributed to the initial recruits for the 1st Dragoon Regiment, but 150 years later it is difficult to separate fact from fiction and reality from promotion in the words of the officers and enlisted men who wrote about their expectations of or experiences with the dragoon recruits. See Cunliffe, Soldiers & Civilians, pp. 113-14, for references to stories of this sort.

   The balance of the material compensation provided to enlisted soldiers remains debatable. Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," p. 133, estimates that it was at least equal to that of comparative (basically semi-skilled) civilian occupations, and for all the limitations of army life, the leading historian of its enlisted soldiers has maintained that "the army was never desperate for men." The number of applicants rejected was always greater than the number accepted, and officers who enlisted too many men judged unfit for service were "certain to be reprimanded." The army was an all-volunteer force, and recruiters used few of the deceptive methods that are
stereotypically associated with military recruiting in Britain. See Steinhauer, "Sogers," pp. 66-67. Indeed, "the apparent majority of soldiers misrepresented their age in order to qualify" without parental permission (ibid.). I doubt that all this was because of the recruits' enthusiasm, however—I definitely believe that the "push" was the dominant force in recruit's decisions. Graham, p. 29, cites an estimate in ANC 8 (June 13, 1839) that perhaps a third of the army's recruits had been "materially comfortable" before enlistment, but the bases for this estimate and the meaning of "comfortable" were not explained, nor is this to say that the army was not acting as an escape for these men. See Steinhauer, ch. 1 (especially Tables 1.3 and 1.4, on pp. 31-32), for an extensive statistical portrait of the army's enlisted soldiers. About one in three recruits had been a laborer in civilian life, a proportion about double that of the total adult male population in the 1850 census. Nearly eighty percent of those inducted by the General Recruiting Service and the Mounted Recruiting Service were from the Mid-Atlantic or New England states, only seventeen percent from the west, and a mere four percent from the slave south exclusive of the border states (which I have factored into the other two categories), mostly from Virginia and Louisiana. Sixteen percent were from Pennsylvania, forty-four percent from New York state alone. Farm workers (a category which did not include laborers, which meant construction and dockworkers and the like), who made up forty-four percent of the civilian labor force that year, accounted for about one-third that (or one man in seven) among the army's recruits (Steinhauer, pp. 131-32 and Table 3.4). Lee Soltow has estimated that in the 1850s one-third of the adult population had only clothing and petty cash to their names, a situation common among young men (only one-fifth of whom owned any real property when in their twenties) and one which neatly corresponds to the proportion of laborers among the army's recruits (Steinhauer, p. 144).

Though paid in cash, military pay was often late, and poor even in comparison with that of day laborers. Privates were paid a mere six dollars a month until 1838, when that sum was raised to seven dollars. From 1833 onward a dollar was withheld each month until the soldier's enlistment had ended, as an inducement to serve faithfully and not desert, a measure first recommended by commanding general Jacob Brown in 1824 to bind "the soldier to the service by the powerful tie of interest." These measures were poor incentives. Despite the 1838 pay raise, an officer writing in 1840 remained "certain that the great difficulty lies in the small amount of pay the soldier receives, when compared with the usual price of labor in this country"—any potential recruits naturally preferred "to retain [their] independence" outside the confines of the army. While they rarely had to put up with twelve or fourteen hour work days, soldiers were forbidden to do private work to supplement their income, and they not were given pay or
reenlistment premiums for seniority until 1854. They were at least occasionally--line officers said frequently--subject to nonmilitary fatigue duties like road-building and post construction, for which they were usually paid a daily allowance of fifteen cents and (before 1854) a whiskey ration, but officers sometimes reported that they had saved the government money by not paying this allowance, and by the 1840s much of this work (particularly skilled tasks like carpentry) was being done by civilian laborers, who could receive up to two to three dollars a day working on fortifications. In-kind payments of food, clothing, and housing raised the soldier's standard of living to that of a farm laborer, but an enlisted correspondent to the *Military and Naval Magazine* estimated in 1834 that privates spent three-quarters of their pay on necessities not provided by the government. See Brown, November 9, 1824, file B-243, SW:LR-Reg.; "Soldier's Asylum--No. IV," *ANC* 11 (July 2, 1840): 9; Graham, pp. 157-59; Gamble, "Garrison Life at Western Frontier Posts," 154; Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 77; Cunliffe, *Soldiers & Civilians*, p. 112; "Wayne," "Pay of Soldiers," *MNM* 2 (January 1834): 294-96, cited in Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 76. The pay of sergeant majors was raised from ten to seventeen dollars a month in 1838, where it remained until 1860 (Gamble, p. 53).

8 Steinhauser, "Sogers," pp. 72, 87, 211, 238, and 348. See ibid., ch. 2, in general, and for numerous quotations for and against foreign-born enlisted men. Ethnicity was certainly a consideration among some recruiters, but ordinarily no distinctions were made in the incentives offered to native-born and immigrant recruits. (The recruiting laws excluded African-Americans from service in the nation's armed forces, a regulation enforced in the army but commonly flouted in the navy, which could draw on the experienced occupational community of African-American sailors while avoiding antagonistic civilian scrutiny.) The enlistment of immigrants "without special permission from General Headquarters" was forbidden for several years beginning in 1825, but the regulation failed when too few native-born Americans enlisted to fill the ranks, and even while it was in effect about five percent of the army's recruits were foreign-born. The legislation which authorized the creation of the 1st Dragoons Regiment in 1833 specifically restricted recruiting to the ranks of "native citizens," but officers made exceptions for a number of foreigners with previous military experience, several of whom became senior noncommissioned officers (sergeants-major and the like), and the unit quickly lost its "American" flavor as citizens failed to reenlist and their places were taken by immigrants with fewer opportunities outside the army. See Steinhauser, "Sogers," pp. 91-95 and 105-107. See Table 2.2 (p. 81) regarding the proportion of foreign-born recruits each year. See pp. 91 and 110 for examples of a nativist recruiting
superintendent in 1825 and inspector general (Sylvester Churchill) in 1851. See pp. 106-107, and Colonel Joseph G. Totten to Capt. Alexander J. Swift, May 19, 1846, extract in George B. McClellan Papers, LC, regarding the company of sappers and miners enlisted for service in the Mexican War—the law authorizing its recruitment did not prohibit the enlistment of immigrants, but Totten suggested that this should be the policy, and only five of the seventy-three men recruited for the company were born outside of the United States. See James E. Valle, *Rocks and Shoals: Order and Discipline in the Old Navy, 1800-1861* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1980), pp. 20-21, concerning the enlistment of African and African-American sailors.


12 Macomb to Major John DeBarth Walbach, September 30, 1825, Macomb Papers, USMA; Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," pp. 4, 81, 89 (quotation), and 266; Anderson, *A People's Army*.


Officers generally saw corporal punishment as their first line of defense against desertion, which they saw as a fault of the enlisted man rather than a consequence of poor conditions and their own irresponsibility and brutality. Between 1826 and 1860 nearly thirty percent of the army's enlisted men successfully deserted; there were 136 desertions per thousand men on average
each year. Senior officers saw this epidemic as the army's greatest problem and constantly phrased their reform proposals as means to stop it. Nevertheless, it seems that they had a difficult time perceiving the reasons which led men to desert, for their most widely shared proposal was to call for a crackdown by legalizing flogging as a punishment for the offense. Indeed, in his annual report for 1824 Jacob Brown wrote that the "inadequacy of punishment" was the only conceivable cause for the high desertion rate. (Not all senior officers agreed with Brown's assessment, although many agreed with his solution. Edmund Gaines once stated that desertion was first and foremost the product of "intemperate and injudicious conduct on the part of unqualified or inexperienced officers." On the other hand, Gaines also favored legalizing flogging.) Instead it seems clear that the patterns and prevalence of desertion should have put the lie to officers' beliefs in the laggardliness of soldiers, for the correlation between urban posts and desertion was surely too strong for them to miss: the artillery lost seventy-four men per regiment per year while the infantry lost only forty-five, while the army's most advanced permanent post in the 1820s, Fort Atkinson near present-day Council Bluffs, Iowa, lost only twenty-nine men between 1822 and 1825. (On the other hand, one might ask how even these men managed to escape given the remoteness of their location.) In a similar way, nearby borders always seemed to lead to higher desertion rates as enlisted men turned the tables of national sovereignty to their advantage by evading one sovereign on the territory of another. "It was supposed that the proximity of a foreign force would exert a beneficial influence on the character of our troops," Macomb wrote to the secretary of war, but it had not, and Fort Niagara had as high a proportion of deserters as any other post in the army. See Steinhauer, "Sagers," pp. 193, 205-207, and 210 (Table 5.3); Atkinson, October 18, 1820, file A-28, SW:LR-Reg.; Brown to Calhoun, annual report communicated to Congress by the president December 7, 1824, ASP:MA 2: 701-702; Gaines to Calhoun, October 1818, quoted in Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 54; Macomb to Eaton, January 7, 1831, HQA:LS.

Several senior officers who advocated the reinstitution of whipping as a punishment for desertion responded to criticism that it was not done in the French army by warning that its place was taken by execution. While Major James Bankhead felt that "the severity of their punishments . . . made the French army superior to every other," he refused (if only for rhetorical purposes, as a straw man to justify flogging in its stead) to advocate similar measures in the American army. Edmund Gaines was less hesitant, however, though he changed his views over time: in 1818 he advocated the imposition of capital punishment, while two years later he sought the reauthorization of flogging instead (perhaps after the King case--discussed below--had shown the resistance to capital punishment in peacetime cases of

14 One wonders where officers got these devices—the only source that comes to mind would be businesses catering to slaveholders, unless officers paid blacksmiths directly to make them.

15 Steinhauer, "Sogers," p. 246; Gaines, December 26, 1820, and King, September 19, 1818, file G-154 and enclosure, SW:LR-Reg; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 269. See "Trial of Colonel William King," communicated to the House of Representatives May 3, 1820, ASP:MA 2: 139-88, and "Application of Colonel William King to be Restored to His Rank in the Army," communicated to the Senate December 19, 1825, ASP:MA 3: 157; "Proceedings of a Court-Martial for the Trial of Colonel Talbot Chambers," communicated by the president to the Senate May 16, 1826, ASP:MA 3: 307-25; and "On an Appeal by an Officer of the Army from the Judgment of a Court-Martial," communicated to the House of Representatives February 4, 1832, ASP:MA 4: 850-55. In the latter Woolley attempted to claim through sophistry that flogging had not been outlawed; the House Committee on Military Affairs repudiated this outrageous assertion. See also "Executions and Other Punishments Illegally Inflicted in the Army since the Year 1815," communicated to the House January 10, 1820, ASP:MA 2: 38-41, and "Illegal Punishments Inflicted on Deserters and Other Delinquents," communicated to the House December 14, 1820, ASP:MA 2: 198-99 (in which Secretary of War Calhoun stated that there had been no deaths due to corporal punishment, and Andrew Jackson stated that he had been unaware of King's order to shoot deserters).

Nevertheless, usually responsible senior commanders sometimes excused these punishments if they were committed under circumstances held to be urgent. Thus the usually responsible Colonel Henry Atkinson justified Talbot Chambers' decision to crop the ears of two deserters in June 1819, for he "was placed in a critical situation.... Desertions had been numerous in the 6th Regt.,... the same spirit began to manifest itself in his command, threatening its annihilation. Prompt measures became indispensable" and appeared to have succeeded. Atkinson cautioned the War Department that this had been the only instance of such an egregious punishment during his tenure in command, and reported that he had had three junior officers arrested for striking soldiers or causing them to be struck by NCOs. The
colonel then muddied his sentiments by remarking that he was "uniformly averse to inflicting punishments, even for the highest offences, by either cropping, branding, or mutilating in any wise, not because many offenders do not deserve such treatment, but that I consider it rather an imposition on society to turn loose a maimed fellow man, who must stick upon them as a loathsome excrescence." See Atkinson, November 14 and October 18, 1820, files A-30 and A-28, SW:LR-Reg.

For comparative perspectives on the use of violence and humanitarian reform campaigns against it, see Valle, Rocks and Shoals, espec. pp. 47-49, 79, and 276-81; Harold D. Langley, Social Reform in the United States Navy, 1798-1862 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), chs. 6 and 7; Myra C. Glenn, Campaigns Against Corporal Punishment: Prisoners, Sailors, Women, and Children in Antebellum America (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); and more broadly Elizabeth B. Clark, "The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," IAH 82 (September 1995): 463-93. McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, pt. 5 ("Confided to Their Care"), presents a much gentler picture of naval discipline, but he agrees that the lash was often used and generally considered indispensable.

16 AGO Orders No. 81, November 15, 1822, Eastern Department Confidential Order, September 2, 1822, and Scott to the adjutant general, October 19, 1822, all printed in "Proceedings of the Court Martial, in the Case of Lieutenant Buell, 3d Infantry, &c. (Continued)," ANC & SR 3 (March 7, 1844): 293-97.

17 Jones to Capt. Rufus L. Baker, January 15, 1846, Rufus Lathrop Baker Papers, USMA.

18 Atkinson to Calhoun, September 18, 1818, file A-81, SW:LR-Reg. Commanders also took advantage of market incentives in their conduct of active military operations, particularly during the long and arduous Second Seminole War (1835-1842). The most common proposals of this sort were for some bounty to be given for each Indian captured or killed. In 1841 Winfield Scott suggested the formation of a special corps of volunteers on this model, but fiscal economy precluded it. The following year a bounty for captured Indians was established, although it was first offered to civilians. See Capt. William S. Henry to Lt. Col. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, November 23, 1842, and Colonel William J. Worth to Hitchcock, November 27, 1842, Hitchcock Papers, LC, and "Florida War," ANC 11 (October 1, 1840): 220.

19 Steinhauer, "'Sogers,'" pp. 52, 150, and 157; Lt. Henry S. Turner to Lt. Abraham Johnston, January 29, 1843, Johnston Papers, USMA; AGO Circular,
February 3, 1832, in Western Department: Letters Received, Records of Continental Army Commands, RG393, NA; Totten to Swift, May 19, 1846, extract in McClellan Papers, LC. See also Colonel James House (one of the army's leading temperance advocates), December 7, 1830, HQA:LR.


21 Totten to Swift, May 19, 1846, extract in McClellan Papers, LC (regarding the company of sappers and miners raised for the Mexican War); "School for the Rank and File of the Army," MNM 3 (March 1834): 14. "Who ever heard of . . . a soldier re-enlisting for Florida service, for six dollars a month?" sneered one critic ("Hiapas-Cha," "Artillery Captains," ANC 5 [November 9, 1837]: 281). Newly formed corps like the dragoons ordinarily received higher pay as a method of gaining better recruits, but even this paled besides the dollar a day that the dragoons' volunteer precursors had received (Prucha, Sword of the Republic, p. 241). Senior officers and recruiters sent numerous suggestions about ways to improve the number and quality of recruits during the 1830s, most of which show a recognition of the need to provide direct material incentives. In 1836 Lt. Col. John deBarth Walbach wrote to the commanding general recommending that enlisted pay and reenlistment bounties be increased and that prospective recruits be given some choice of regiments to serve in. Almost simultaneously, Henry Atkinson told a friend that he would write to Senator Thomas Hart Benton proposing a five year term of enlistment at eight dollars per month, as "we cannot keep the ranks full at the present pay." Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock recognized that market incentives applied to recruiters as well as recruits, and wrote to Lt. Colonel Enos Cutter, the head of the General Recruiting Service, suggesting the payment of a two dollar premium to recruiting sergeants and civilians for each man they brought in to sign up. The following year a dragoon officer wrote to the National Intelligencer cautioning that "the same men will not enlist for five years, that will for three, without greater inducements." None of these plans took account of the subordination required of enlisted men, which remained perhaps the chief obstacle to recruitment regardless of the compensation offered. Even in 1839, amidst a prolonged economic depression and after many of these officers' ideas had been put into effect, "An Observer" publically warned that "no pay that the Government will give its soldiery will induce good American citizens, of proper physique and morale, to join the army in time of peace." See Walbach, May 23, 1836, HQA:LR; Atkinson to Lt. Robert Anderson, March 28, 1836, Anderson Papers, LC; Hitchcock to Cutter, August 13, 1836, Hitchcock Papers, LC; "A Subscriber," letter reprinted from the National Intelligencer, ANC 4 (June 15,
In the depression years of the late 1830s and early 1840s recruiting officers had to observe harsher realities: in the fall of 1840 the adjutant general cautioned commanders at northern posts about winter enlistments, because the recruits often deserted after being issued their clothing, especially the warm army greatcoat. The commander at the recruiting depot at Carlisle, Pennsylvania was ordered to limit his issue of greatcoats to recruits being sent to northern posts. See Colonel Roger Jones to Lt. Col. Alexander C.W. Fanning, November 23, 1840, and Jones to Capt. Edwin V. Sumner, September 3, 1840, AGO, Letters Regarding Recruiting. Whatever the current policy, officers routinely tried to take advantage of economic fluctuations in order to improve the quality of their recruits. At the outset of the Panic of 1837, Colonel Henry Atkinson wrote from Philadelphia that

I have found here a strong disposition among many of the mechanics whom commercial distress has thrown out of employ & who cannot expect any business during the winter to volunteer for Florida they are a hardy class of men & . . . I know them to be bold & daring. . . . I should like to have permission to enroll some of them in my regiment. I think two or more companies might be raised [an extraordinary number of recruits at one time] (Atkinson to Capt. Samuel Cooper, September 15, 1837, HQA:LR).

What the army failed to offer in salary it attempted to compensate for with lump-sum inducements and in-kind payments of food, clothing, and housing. From 1819 until 1833 army posts were directed to provide for their own subsistence through farming and gardening, and during this period enlisted men received individual shares of the sometimes quite substantial annual profits from excess produce sold on the private market. Congressional control over these incentives sometimes proved counterproductive: the act of 1833 set a reenlistment bounty of two months pay but sought greater economy and accountability by prohibiting the practice of granting bounties for new recruits and noncommissioned officers who reenlisted, while ending the payment of premiums to officers for each enlistment they secured. Officers quickly recognized that this lack of incentive deterred prospective recruits, while noncommissioned officers actually sought demotions to private in order to secure the reenlistment bounties granted to that grade. In a sign of flexible adaptation to the labor market that ran counter to their usual attention to strict fiscal accountability, commanders commonly permitted this practice, recognizing that the incentive might serve as the critical inducement to keep valuable soldiers in service. These men were almost instantly promoted back to their previous
rank after reenlisting. Repromoting noncommissioned officers after their "resignation" was forbidden by general order in 1835, but the army law of 1838 corrected the problem and rationalized this inefficient state of affairs by reinstating the reenlistment bounty for noncommissioned officers. See Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," pp. 148, 160, and 133; "AN ACT to improve the condition of the noncommissioned officers and privates of the Army of the United States, and to prevent desertion," in MNM 1 (April 1833): 80-81. "A Subscriber" complained about the abolition of the recruiting premium, in "The Army," MNM 1 (June 1833): 253. Strangely, this premium was ended during boom years when it was harder to get recruits, re instituted in 1838 during the depression when recruiting was easy, and abolished once again in 1843 as the economy began to recover. (See Graham, p. 65.)

Attempts to give the enlisted soldier long-term incentives to surrender several years of their autonomy repeatedly foundered on the shoals of congressional economizing. The House army appropriations bill for 1838 initially contained a provision for pensions for soldiers with thirty years of good service, which Major Sylvanus Thayer praised for "its justice and humanity" and the example and motivation it would present for "the enlistment & reenlistment of the best class of men." A number of officers supported a provision in the Senate version of the bill for a bounty of 160 acres of public land for soldiers with ten years service. The pension provision was deleted in committee, but the land bounty survived, only to be removed from the statutebooks by an amendatory law passed two days after the first bill. In 1840 Congress debated the provision of public lands to volunteers for a proposed corps for service in Florida. Capt. Charles F. Smith found the offer of public land contained in the House version superior to that in the Senate bill because of "its greater liberality" and flexibility in giving the soldier the option of receiving a lump sum in lieu of the land. Smith mixed paternalistic concerns for the volunteers' welfare with his belief that this flexibility would attract more recruits: he feared that "unprincipled men will contrive to get [the land] out of the soldiers hands for a mere song" unless Congress provided for the alternative of an equivalent cash payment. See Thayer to Rep. Gouverneur Kemble, January 21, 1838, and Smith to Kemble, March 7, 1838 and February 13, 1840, Kemble Papers, USMA. See also "A Subscriber," letter reprinted from the National Intelligencer, ANC 4 (June 15, 1837): 381.

Recruiting was done on a regional scale by the individual regiments until 1825, when the General Recruiting Service was established and recruits were directed to companies in need of troops, a change in policy that reflected the army's general move from particularistic ways of organizing its internal operations to universalistic, standardized ones more conducive to overall efficiency. Perhaps as many as one in five officers served as recruiters at some
point in their careers, and post commanders were usually charged with persuading soldiers to reenlist. (See Graham, pp. 20-23.)


23 Gaines to Monroe, November 20, 1820, file G-147, SW:LR-Reg. See also Capt. Charles F. Smith to Private John Ryan, February 9, 1845, Charles F. Smith Papers, USMA, in which an officer reports to an old soldier on his enlisted son's performance and relates that he has persuaded the son to pay his father a debt. The Abraham Johnston Papers (USMA) contain frequent references to loans and other favors from officers to enlisted men, while Lt. Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana's letters to his wife contain a number of references to debts he owed to enlisted soldiers, in Monterrey is Ours!: The Mexican War Letters of Lieutenant Dana, 1845-1847, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990). Dana probably had to keep these secret for fear of charges of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. Senior officers also attempted to protect their soldiers' incomes from injury by official actions; Colonel Henry Atkinson sought compensation for losses sustained by his men due to changes in structure of the clothing allowance: "to prevent any dissatisfaction among the Troops, they have been made to understand that they will be promptly remunerated on a representation of the facts to the Department of War (April 23, 1818, file A-44, SW:LR-Reg.). In doing this, Atkinson was placing his sense of responsibility to his subordinates over that to his civilian superiors, of course.

Some officers recognized that the sutling system was prone to favoritism and wished to see it abandoned. "Were it not a post regulation, I would rather dispense with [a sutler] altogether as the men are enabled to obtain every comfort without a sutler, whose primary motive is to sell liquor to them," wrote Capt. Isaac Roach (August 18, 1821, file R-19, SW:LR-Reg.). See also Capt. Charles F. Smith to William Kendall, May 12, 1845, Charles F. Smith Papers, USMA. The principal source of discretionary funding for paternalistic (using this word in both its positive and negative senses) measures was the post or unit (company or regimental) fund, normally administered by a council of officers. This fund was drawn from small quasi-official deductions from the pay and allowances (commonly the clothing allowance) of officers and enlisted men, the charitable contributions of officers with private means, and a range of unofficial activities in the civilian economic sphere, most importantly the sale of excess flour made possible by the efficiency of central post bakeries when the flour ration was calibrated to accommodate the wastefulness of soldiers doing so individually. (The sale of manure to local farmers routinely financed additional food and clothing expenditures in cavalry units.) At larger posts these funds supported libraries
and schools which were open to enlisted men and their children. About half of the army's posts had libraries or reading rooms by 1842, and these were usually run or taught by well-educated enlisted men, who received a cash fee set by the post council in addition to removal from fatigue rosters. See Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," p. 169; Lt. James Duncan to Colonel Alexander C.W. Fanning, March 18, 1843, official letterbook, Duncan Papers, USMA; Steinhauser, "Sogers," p. 180. Officers also drew on proceeds from the sale of old uniforms to civilian workers on post; see e.g. Lt. Miner Knowlton to Major Levi Whiting, September 16, 1839, Knowlton Papers, USMA.

Commanders commonly granted informal incentives for reenlistment, usually furloughs of some length, although these were in theory restricted to two men per company at any time. In 1818 General Eleazar Wheelock Ripley reported to the secretary of war that "this practice has been very general in different armies on the frontier during the war and I believe was sanctioned expressly by the Government." There was substantial potential for abuse in this exchange, however, and some commanders were court-martialed for having permitted soldiers furloughs during the last months of their service without first securing their reenlistment. When this happened to Colonel William King in 1820, his superior General Gaines reported to President Monroe that he had authorized King to do so, because the discharged soldier would then speak favorably of the opportunities to earn "approved reputation" in the army. See Graham, p. 184; Ripley, March 17, 1818, file R-55, and Gaines to Monroe, November 20, 1820, file G-147, SW:LR-Reg.; Capt. Roger Jones to Lt. Col. George E. Mitchell, December 24, 1816, official letterbook in the Peter Force Collection, LC.

Bowyer, October 29, 1817, and Capt. John O'Fallon, deposition in the case of Ezra Youngblood, February 8, 1820, SW:LR-Reg.

Testimonial for (former drummer) John J. Eckasm, May 3, 1845, Smith to Capt. George D. Ramsay, August 7, 1845, and Smith to Adjutant General Roger Jones, January 12, 1845, in the official letterbook for Company K, 2nd Artillery, Charles Ferguson Smith Papers, USMA. See also Smith to (ex-private) Francis Sheerin, December 18, 1844, therein, and Capt. Roger Jones to Acting Secretary of War George Graham, November 15, 1816, official letterbook in the Peter Force Collection, LC. Jacksonian workers did not normally expect severance or separation pay from their employers, but men exchanging their freedom for three or five years of rigid subordination naturally wondered what they would be able to accumulate in preparation for their lives after the army. Of course, soldiers were not subject to discharge until their enlistments were up unless dismissed for misconduct, which occurred much less often than civilian workers were fired. The army was always short of men due to desertion and illness, and no reductions in force were made between 1821 and 1848. (The reduction of 1842 was carried out through attrition by not reenlisting men whose terms were up or filling their places, but unit commanders were commonly able to use their discretion to reenlist the better soldiers.) The pay withheld after 1833 was supplemented by money saved up from soldiers' unused clothing allowances, funds that in principle belonged to the individual soldier but in practice were kept to pay for new uniform issues. This policy gave the soldier an incentive to practice his own household economy by keeping his clothes in good repair in order to save his allowance, which was then given to him upon discharge. Unlike officers, however, the enlisted soldier could not convert his allowance for rations into a monetary equivalent paid directly to him. This difference in policy was never questioned by officers, who took it for granted that they would purchase their own food for cooking in their homes or the officers' mess, while enlisted men would be served cafeteria-style or issued their rations by the commissary officer for cooking in their squads. See Steinhauer, "Sogers," p. 29, and James J. Farley, Making Arms in the Machine Age: Philadelphia's Frankford Arsenal, 1816-1870 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 28.

"Rank and File of the Army," MNM 3 (July 1834): 383.

"Amicus," "Recruiting for the Army," ANC 13 (May 21, 1842): 280; Steinhauer, "Sogers," p. 51; Stuart, June 27, 1833, HQA:LR. There were
disability pensions and pensions for the widows and orphans of men killed in action. See Gamble, "Garrison Life at Western Frontier Posts," p. 264, regarding the appointment of elderly NCOs as chaplains.


30 "Soldier's Asylum--No. I," ANC 10 (June 4, 1840): 362; Kearny to Anderson, January 10, 1841, Anderson Papers, LC; "J.S.," "Asylum for Old Soldiers," ANC 2 (April 8, 1836): 219. Anderson (later the commander at Fort Sumpter) soon became the leading spirit behind this reform initiative, and his papers contain frequent references to its progress. The first ANC article cited was a slightly revised version of John Stuart's letter to the commanding general cited above.

31 "Asylum for Old Soldiers," ANC 2 (April 8, 1836): 219; "Soldier's Asylum--No. IV," ANC 11 (July 2, 1840): 9; Capt. Erasmus D. Keyes to Anderson, April 19, 1846, Anderson Papers, USMA.

Houghton Cone and Alfred Brunson (pp. 123-31 and 188-96). McFeely, Grant, and J. Mills Thornton, Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), are starkly powerful case studies that locate this mood in a sense of edgy, ultimately explosive, constraint. On the other hand, the most recent survey of this era, Daniel Feller's The Jacksonian Promise: America, 1815-1840 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) takes an optimistic perspective grounded in a wider range of sources than the pessimists (with the exception of Sellers' encyclopedic work) usually draw on. Wiebe, The Opening of American Society, and Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution, are also substantially optimistic in their assessments.


34 McGaughy, "The Squaw Kissing War," pp. 98, 101, and 179, cited in Steinhauer, "Sogers," pp. 234-35; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 279; Thompson, August 16, 1842, Lt. William Eustis, December 3, 1841, and Turner to Johnston, February 8, 1843, Abraham Johnston Papers, USMA. The officers of the 1st sometimes reported concern for their soldiers: Henry Turner criticized an officer who withheld rations from a sergeant's wife (who had previously been the officer's maid), while J.H.K. Burgwin transmitted soldiers' news and requests for Johnston to pass on to other enlisted men. When elements of the 1st Dragoons were sent on a winter march against the
Cherokee Lt. Philip Thompson blasted Colonel Matthew Arbuckle for "harassing" the soldiers. See Turner, January 29, 1843, Burgwin, July 27, 1843, and Thompson to Abraham Johnston, March 21, 1840 and February 20, 1841, Johnston Papers, USMA. (Burgwin was noted for his friendly feelings towards enlisted soldiers; see Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 274.) See Skelton, pp. 271-73 and 278-81, and Steinhauer, ch. 6, especially pp. 261-64, regarding army methods of discipline during the Seminole War. Skelton, p. 276, refers to another incident in the 1st Dragoons, involving Lt. Robert Chilton, whose conduct went unsanctioned. Despite these abuses only a single instance of enlisted resistance on a scale large enough to deserve the term mutiny was reported in the usually frank ANC, from Pilatka on the St. John's River in East Florida early in 1840. It apparently involved an entire company (probably understrength, and so only 30-40 men) and was reportedly led by a non-commissioned officer. Only a single commissioned officer was present, but a surgeon somehow restored order after the officer was assaulted. The article did not describe the origins of the assault, but given the remarkable forbearance which enlisted men ordinarily displayed in their reactions to arbitrary punishments and official oppression, we may assume that either the attack was brought by a long train of serious abuses or that the degree of cohesion it was reported to possess was much exaggerated, and given the lack of further commentary perhaps the latter provides a more likely explanation. See "Florida War--Mutiny at Pilatka," ANC 10 (May 21, 1840): 332.

35 George R. Adams, "General William Selby Harney: Frontier Soldier, 1800-1889" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1983), pp. 74-78 and 130-32. The initial West Pointers of the 2nd were Hunter; Lloyd J. Beall, who became a paymaster in 1844; a lieutenant who resigned in 1837; and Alexander S. Macomb, the commanding general's son, who transferred from the 1st Dragoons along with another officer who had not graduated from the academy. Macomb served as the 2nd's adjutant in 1836 and 1837, ADC to his father from 1837 to 1840, and resigned several months after giving up that post.


39 Brown to Barbour, annual report communicated to Congress by the president December 6, 1825, ASP:MA 3: 111.

40 Bissell, August 15, 1820, file B-36, SW:LR-Reg.; Hills to Baker, August 15, 1821, Rufus Baker Papers, USMA; Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," pp. 140-42; Steinhauer, "Sogers," p. 347. Promotion within the enlisted ranks brought greater pay and benefits, but it was a slow process in the antebellum army, which had only five enlisted grades. Only about one enlisted soldier out of eight was a sergeant or better during this period, compared to approximately two in five today. Soldiers were promoted by their regimental colonels upon the recommendation of their company commanders, a personal process that put a premium on the soldier's willingness to conform to his officers' expectations. To relieve some of the pressure for distinctions among enlisted soldiers, boards of company officers selected privates for promotion to the quasi-official rank of lance corporal, a largely honorary status that rewarded merit and good conduct. See Steinhauer, "Sogers," p. 356, and Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," pp. 143 and 140. Demotions required the sanction of the regimental colonel or a court-martial verdict (ibid., p. 147).

41 "The Soldier," "Non-Commissioned Officers of the Army," *MNM* 2 (October 1833): 65-72; "Remarks on the proposed plan for the Establishment of a School for the Non-commissioned Officers of the Army," *MNM* 2 (December 1833): 297. For similar but more wide-ranging proposals (which are less significant for my discussion because of their broader content), see commanding general Macomb to Rep. William Drayton (Chair, House Military Affairs Committee), February 26, 1832, printed as "Army--Enlistment of Minors, &c," House Executive Document (hereafter cited as H.E.D.) 16, 22nd Cong., 2nd sess.; "School for the Rank and File of the Army," *MNM* 3 (March 1834): 14-16; and Edmund Gaines, memorial proposing a system of national defence, communicated to Congress March 6, 1840, Senate Document (hereafter cited as Sen. Doc.) 256, 26th Cong., 1st sess.

"One of the 4th Infy.," "Appointments and Promotions in the Army," ANC 6 (June 28, 1838): 411.

Part V

The Army Officer Corps at Work in the Nation's Borderlands: Class, State, and Occupational Formation and the Growth of Accountability to the Federal Government
The single most fundamental problem for anyone attempting to plan or predict the American future in the nineteenth century was the growing extent of space over which its citizens traded and settled. The wide expanses of North American and Atlantic space, the desire to conquer the former, and the virtually free security provided by the latter, inescapably conditioned the army officer corps' perspectives on foreign relations and national strategy. The pacific implications of American geopolitical isolation from Europe were generally understood among men of affairs in both civil and military life. As such they needed little repetition, and officers composed few general analyses of the American geostrategic situation aside from the reports of the Fortification Board on coastal defense (which are examined in chapter twelve). On the other hand, military officers had both functional (professional) and organizational (careerist) imperatives for reminding the nation of the continuing possibility of war—by which they fundamentally meant conflict with European-style forces rather than the American Indians—and the need for preparation to meet it, however remote the actual probability of war with a European power. The words of an 1833 article in the Military and Naval Magazine—though amazingly enough the only wide-ranging general statement on the character and objectives of American foreign relations made by an army officer in the eleven year history of the army's professional journals—may stand as characteristic of these views:

The United States, from peculiar geographic situation, have undoubtedly less need of military establishments than any other government now existing. . . . yet there are circumstances or causes emanating from political relations with foreign powers [which] . . . will ever exist to make necessary the organization of such forces. The widely extended commerce of the United States
is alike the source of [its] wealth, and the most probable cause of war; claims of maritime supremacy, or of peculiar maritime rights on the part of other powers will ever be a ready means to open the temple of Janus . . . and from the experience of the last thirty-five years, it cannot be expected that international law will be so clearly expounded, or so religiously observed, as to protect the weak from aggression, or deter the strong from violence.¹

This language posed the United States in a defensive role and suggested little of the expansionist drive that actually characterized the new nation's foreign relations along its borders, a paradox constantly evident in American officers' thoughts (and in those of many civilians, especially prior to the late 1830s) on foreign affairs and in their attention to European rather than Amerindian modes of warfare. The nation's de facto "grand strategy" of defensive preparations to meet the maritime aggression of European powers and expansion across the American continent was a natural product of its geographic position and its exclusion of Amerindian polities from the legitimacy granted to recognized members of the European state system.

Army officers and civilians agreed on these fundamental points, but officers' emphasis differed in two important ways: regular soldiers looked to Europe as the primary source of danger to American security long after this had become unlikely, while a significant portion of the officer corps remained much less bellicose than civilian advocates of Indian removal and Manifest Destiny on the American continent during the 1830s and 40s.

Indeed, the comparatively limited horizons of nineteenth-century American military thought are best illustrated by the rarity of abstract analyses of the art of warfare, of detailed strategic and operational planning, or even of explicit commentary on national objectives and their implications for future
preparedness and conflict, all in sharp contrast to the state of affairs in the British and French armies. Even after the nation's strategic situation stabilized when its borders were secured in the aftermath of the War of 1812, officers and civilians alike expected to deduce strategic objectives along the nation's frontiers from well-known and essentially political principles that they considered universally applicable rather than through detailed long-range planning of the sort done in the more advanced of the European armies. Aside from the operations of diplomacy and naval affairs American defense policy was largely a matter of manpower decisions, fundamentally over the problem of crafting a balance within the parameters of the popular preference for a small regular army backed by a potentially massive militia and more select units of volunteers. Consequently, the largest amount of officers' "strategic" attention was devoted to the quest for an exclusive occupational monopoly over the direction of organized military force under the auspices of the nation-state, an effort which has been treated by a number of scholars and will therefore be mentioned only incidentally herein. Although there was a great deal of debate over the precise mix of amateur and professional elements to be involved, there was a de facto political and social consensus, which operated in every conflict, that both would be, but the officer corps successfully maintained control over the direction of these forces throughout the nineteenth century. Aside from those related to the provision of manpower the most significant issues concerning military preparedness were related to the quality of the nation's physical infrastructure—the means of mobilizing and employing military power—rather than the objectives of its policies themselves: its fortifications, roads, and production and supply depots, and the impact of westward expansion and
technological change (principally steam power) on American resources and the ability to mobilize them, not on the goals for which they would be used.

In other words, army officers saw American defense policy in the nineteenth century as a general deductive question of resources and their ratio to the growing expanse of American space rather than a series of specific inductive efforts planning the probable application of these forces toward distinct objectives. This abstract concept of national security policy--and policymaking--was derived from five factors: 1) geostrategic--the safety provided by the geographic isolation of the United States and the absence of alliances which would have introduced greater complexity through commitments to attend to the needs and demands of other nations; 2) economic--the confidence wrought by American economic and population growth, or more specifically by the development of a flourishing domestic market and the beginnings of significant industrial production; 3) political and ideological--republican and liberal antagonism toward large standing forces and expense, and the structural difficulties of long-range planning in a political environment where specific policy objectives and the appropriations necessary to meet them were debated on a case-by-case basis by a constantly changing Congress that was dedicated to limiting the social and economic burden of military expenditures; 4) intellectual--a Zeitgeist of intellectual generalism, equally prevalent in civil society during the early republican and Jacksonian eras, in which officers assumed that with the proper principles they could draw on the nation's growing resources to resolve crises as they arose without detailed advance planning. Under these circumstances detailed planning of the sort conducted by the British (burdened with the defense of a world empire) or the French (directly bordered by several powerful enemies) simply was not urgent, and its potential, like the military power of the United
States as a whole, remained latent throughout this period. Indeed, this was true even along the Canadian border, where officers believed that the dramatic growth of American population and communications links would sustain successful offensives in any future war with Britain without the need for extensive preparations in peacetime.

The next five chapters examine officers' views on foreign affairs and international relations and the advice they gave civilian leaders on defense and what we would today call national security policy. In scrutinizing policy on the landward frontiers these chapters provide a general narrative of the army's active operations and a more extended analysis of the civil-military conflicts engendered by these activities. My observations on military advice to civilian policymakers, including both general attitudes and specific recommendations regarding foreign affairs and policy, illustrate the officer corps' varying yet coherent conceptions of its mission, all of them centered around the elaboration of national sovereignty, and these observations are focused here as an investigation of one of the principal points at which professional responsibility and the application of professional expertise were linked.

Examining the interests, values, and perspectives which American officers brought to the conception and execution of defense policy along the nation's borders presents us with important implications for the study of nineteenth-century American military professionalism, for exploring officers' views on foreign policy and defense helps us to understand their complex cultural inheritance as American officers, and thence to see the some of the paradoxes present in their senses of professional mission and responsibility. In contrast to much of the professional activity discussed in chapters three to six, which was centered around the absorption and application of European
models and methods, officers' views on the wider questions of international relations and defense policy demonstrate a range of individual efforts to meld distinctively American beliefs and circumstances with the socially functional yet self-interested quest for preparedness we expect of any military body. Examining this awkward fusion between abstract model and social reality casts much-needed light on the influence of American beliefs in exceptionalism on a profession--and a historiography--founded on the example of European institutions and ideas, for those exceptional officers who gave conscious thought to wider policy issues often demonstrated a remarkable recognition and acceptance of the interdependence of military, political, economic, and even cultural resources and objectives and a socially responsible and politically accountable willingness to direct military policy and subordinate military goals to the service of objectives valued by the civilian polity. These patterns of thought and behaviour also suggest significant limits to the potential for mental isolation and alienation produced by military function and socialization in the midst of an increasingly liberal society, an important issue in assessing the evolution of politically accountable and socially responsible civil-military relations in the United States.

Most importantly, longer, more secure military careers and the desire to maintain them through a monopoly over the direction of organized military force spurred the growth of a sense of political and ideological neutrality within the officer corps--accountability to the national civilian political authority of constitutional government and the democracy of American citizens (however limited in ethnic and gender terms) which it ultimately expressed, which led in turn to an increasing reluctance to put forward expansionist views or to practice them in quasi- or extralegal
incursions against neighboring countries with the freedom that had characterized the less professionally committed officers before 1820. (Note that by neutrality I mean basically the narrow semi-institutional dimensions of nonpartisanship and a lack of explicit references to republican or other ideologies, not neutrality in the larger "political" sense of class and ethnoracial loyalties and prejudices, realms of social conflict in which officers obviously acted to sustain the status quo in most--but certainly not all--cases.)

This accountability notwithstanding, American officers ultimately--and in some respects irresponsible--chose European armies and methods for their underlying professional models, while neglecting the study of Amerindian opponents and warfare. While not attuned to their primary work in the "internal expansionism" or colonialism of Indian expropriation and removal, doing so served the efforts of career officers to monopolize the role of directing the employment of military force by drawing on the archetypal social and cultural authority of European example. Similarly, regular officers sought an exclusive occupational and organizational jurisdiction--or at least control over the militia and volunteers in wartime--by stressing the threats posed by European powers, which necessitated a trained force of regulars who could successfully emulate European tactics and discipline--a standing army--rather than the opportunities offered by expansion westward, which drew on popular enthusiasm and were often accompanied by disorderly mobilizations of the militia and volunteers. This preference for European models of military mobilization and warfighting reflected the military officer's commitment to order, stability, and the sovereignty of the nation-state over localities and individuals, a mindset founded in function, self-interest in individual and organizational employment by the nation-state, and the desire for status and--perhaps more significantly--security specific to an era of rapid
socio-economic change and tumult. As a result, Part Five (especially chapters thirteen and fourteen) also provides us with substantial evidence of the regulars' hostility toward the militia and volunteers, in the course not only of congressional debates (which I have not treated at any length) but in that of practical peacekeeping and Indian removal operations and the Second Seminole War.

Policy advice was considered a function of command and planning a responsibility for experienced senior men, so these were the professional responsibilities most directly centered in the hands of general and senior staff officers. Professional patronage and the role of the cadre are consequently less important themes than in previous chapters, and the sources used in Part Five are therefore somewhat different from those used in the preceding chapters. Limited records, irregular record-keeping, and the centralization of command in an active theater of operations force us to focus our assessment of officers' conduct in the southern borderlands during the 1810s around the perspective of the departmental and divisional commanders, principally Andrew Jackson and Edmund Gaines, while responsibility for planning the coastal fortifications, the most systematic effort at developing military policy during this era, lay in the hands of a Board of Fortifications composed of three permanent and two attached members, all but one of them (a naval captain) from the Corps of Engineers. Criticism of the fortification program was rare in the army until the 1840s (and even then came primarily from a few dissident engineers rather than the mass of line officers), and we must rely on Gaines' memorandums to Congress for most of the critiques raised before that decade.
The planning for the Canadian border examined in chapter thirteen involved a wider range of officers: senior line commanders, engineers, and other staff officers along with their junior assistants and one or two members of the expert junior cadre. Operations there during the crises of 1837 to 1842 were directed by line commanders ranging from the commanding general to colonels in charge of the major sectors, but the reactions of a small number of junior officers (including several members of the cadre) on and away from the scene are also available to us in personal correspondence. This range of reactions is also available for officers' occasional musings on American relations with Britain, France and other European states throughout the interwar period, and for the issues of Western defense and Indian relations explored in chapter fourteen. Finally, chapter fifteen expands on this use of the private papers of junior officers, particularly those stationed in the Army of Occupation on the Mexican border in 1845 and 1846, with an extensive discussion of their reactions to the likelihood and desirability of territorial expansion and war with Mexico or Britain during the last years of this era. Taken as a whole, this evidence demonstrates not self-interested bellicosity, but the self-interested accountability derived from the officer corps' quest for the personal, institutional, and occupational security of jurisdiction over the direction of organized military force through employment by the nation-state.

* * *

Attitudes Towards Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy:
An Overview of Sources and Change, 1815-1846

Tasked with acting as the nation's leading "Aagents of Empire" in an era of exuberant nationalism and territorial expansion, historians have naturally assumed that United States Army officers were ardent expansionists
themselves. Aside from the influence of their society's boisterous national and ideological chauvinism, expansionist wars provided army officers with rare chances for significant command responsibilities and martial glory in combat against "civilized" opponents—a possibility that was one of their primary psychological compensations for the boredom of peacetime routine on isolated frontier posts. Materially, the casualties of war promised promotion (and thus higher pay) for ambitious young regulars. (Note that this pay came with the promotion itself; there was no "combat pay." ) These attractions notwithstanding, the army officer corps was far from united in support of expansion, and the overall tenor of its reactions changed significantly, in some respects even dramatically, over the three decades of this study. Like the Jacksonian Democrats of the 1840s examined by historian Thomas Hietala, the officers of Andrew Jackson's post-War of 1812 Division of the South "expressed their sense of boundlessness primarily through their advocacy of territorial expansion," but twenty years later the officer corps had lost much of this enthusiasm just as it was reemerging in full force among civilians.4

This change suggests that territorial expansion was a more complex issue for army officers than has usually been thought. American officers policing the borderlands were forced to play multi-faceted diplomatic roles that often seemed to pit their substantive responsibilities for national defense (or, more subjectively, for national aggrandizement) against their formal procedural accountability to the institutions of the nation-state, creating dilemmas as well as opportunities for them and for the army as an organization. Consequently, their responses to the possibilities of territorial expansionism were far more nuanced than the existing explanatory models of self-interest and romantic nationalism imply. Indeed, no single factor can
explain officers' diverse reactions to the possibilities of territorial expansion and war, and military enthusiasm for expansion clearly varied from crisis to crisis and from officer to officer depending on the specific individuals and circumstances in question. Part Five pursues the sometimes paradoxical motives, trends, and meanings of army officers' reactions to the opportunities and dilemmas presented by the various foreign policy crises they encountered along the borderlands of the United States, and discovers a growing sense of accountability to the national government that often restrained their expansionist sentiments and bellicosity. (In addition, the army's efforts had the practical value of restraining filibusters whose actions might otherwise have drawn the United States into war with Britain.) This overview surveys the factors behind this development, while the next five chapters endeavour to explain why and how it occurred and what it suggests about the development of the officer corps' professionalism, its responsibility to the values of contemporary American society, and its accountability to national civilian political authority.

American military responses to international affairs changed significantly between 1815 and 1846. Aside from their attention to the borderlands and coastal fortifications, officers like civilian Americans turned their attention inward after 1815. Many senior officers gave rhetorical support to democratic revolutions in Europe and Latin America during the years before 1823, but like most civilians they eventually came to see the United States as a republican example to the world rather than an aggressive agent of international republicanism or liberal revolution. Like civilians, officers came to use the language of revolution as a rhetorical trope for application to distant lands; on the rare occasions it was applied to Florida or other areas contiguous to the United States it served as a cover for American
expansionism rather than the liberation of indigenous peoples. Officers advocated and led campaigns that secured Florida for the United States during the half-decade of nationalism that followed the War of 1812, but the corps had fairly little to do or say about expansion during the two decades thereafter, as the nation and its army both concentrated on consolidating their internal affairs in the absence of foreign threats or immediate opportunities for territorial aggrandizement.

Indeed, the friction which had drawn the United States into conflicts along its southern borders before 1821 declined into relative insignificance after the United States secured its objectives through the annexation of Florida and the delineation of the Sabine boundary, while Anglo-American tensions calmed and the danger of a European alliance against the American republics virtually disappeared after the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine and its British analogue. Operations connected with Indian removal within the supposed boundaries of the United States aside, American expansionism proceeded largely through the private paths of commerce and settlement during the 1820s and 30s, and the thinking of army officers followed suit: of the officers asked to submit reports on the 1821 reduction, only Winfield Scott referred directly to the potential for "another offensive war against Canada" in his projections, and expansionist sentiments are difficult to find in officers' papers from the years between 1821 and 1836. Military enthusiasm for expansion ultimately ebbed and flowed in time with and slightly behind civilian aggressiveness, not ahead of it, and in the 1830s it was the immediate threat filibustering posed to American peace and neutrality rather than latent hopes for expansion or war which principally drew the officer corps' attention to relations with Britain and Mexico.\textsuperscript{5}
Similarly, planning for defense against European attack received little attention after 1821 aside from the continuing work of the Fortification Board and an intermittent series of reports concerning Canada. The balance of power conditioned and permitted this lack of concern, for after 1823 European threats to the Western Hemisphere evaporated as the British navy barred the Atlantic, while the sensitivity of European monarchies to American events eased with the suppression and decline of organized revolutionary activity on the Continent. From the American side, officers frequently protested their limited budgets and called for a larger army, but the officer corps’ realistic assessment of the United States’ limited military capabilities (founded on its ideological and fiscal aversion to large peacetime establishments, during an era when general warfare was no more than a distant possibility) led the majority of experienced commanders to caution in advocating war or territorial expansion against opponents--like Britain--which were more powerful than Spain. This temporary sense of restraint was acceptable to officers because of their confidence in the latent power and future prospects of the United States: although they constantly--and responsibly, given their charge to defend the country--called for larger budgets and measures to improve the nation’s military capability, officers ultimately shared the confidence of civilian policymakers that the nation would be able to defend itself in case of attack and expand in case of opportunity regardless of the very limited effort put into advance military planning and preparation.

As we should expect, officers of different backgrounds and rank responded in distinct ways to the complex situations that confronted them along the nation’s borders, and the social, political, and institutional factors behind these responses were usually closely connected to each another.
Officers' views varied according to office and rank, posting and duties, and individual temperament and political affinity. Their attitudes also changed according to the nation's strength, the strategic situation and balance of military power in question during a particular crisis, and the army's public stature and evolution as an institution. The social and sectional composition and attitudes of the officer corps changed as American society became more economically and occupationally specialized, forcing part-time soldiers to make a choice of career and leading the officers who remained to serve for significantly longer periods of time.

This process was especially significant in the South among the planter class who had led the nation's expansion prior to 1820, for graduates of West Point held a virtual monopoly on commissions issued between 1821 and 1837. The rigid system of promotion by seniority and the de facto requirement that new officers pass through the academy excluded gentlemen-planter of the sort who had been appointed directly from civilian life to field and general command under the less rigid conditions prevailing before 1821, while inadequate academic preparation meant that proportionately fewer southerners (and westerners, though the definition of that region obviously changed somewhat as the Old Northwest was settled) were able to enter the corps through the academy than had done so between 1802 (when the academy was founded) and 1821. Besides fewer opportunities for high rank and command, the attractiveness of a part-time military career declined for these men as they concentrated their energies on territorial and economic opportunities in the Old Southwest that they had helped to conquer. With the growth of settlement (i.e., of competition) and export markets (i.e., opportunities for a more secure profit) after the War of 1812, the southwestern planter class turned from part-time activities like land
speculation toward the full-time cultivation of cotton as the primary basis of its wealth, and from occasional military leadership to success in civilian politics as the foundation of its social prestige and authority.6

A similar process of functional articulation and specialization occurred in the political realm: as population densities grew and communications improved, territories became states with elected civilian officeholders, while the federal government turned to prominent local civilians or ex-officers rather than serving commanders for its agents. These developments meant fewer opportunities for civilian office-holding among army officers, whose roles became less overtly political than they had been prior to 1820, contributing to the creation of an officer corps whose primary political loyalties and identity were national rather than sectional or local. Like Andrew Jackson, who resigned in 1821 to take up the governorship of Florida and was followed by a number of other well-connected officers (especially southerners, who had a concrete interest in the expansion of commercial cotton production into Florida and the Old Southwest), many socially or politically well-connected men left the corps in pursuit of civilian political and economic opportunities during the years surrounding the reduction in force of 1821, and those officers who remained increasingly saw themselves as career public servants dedicated to full-time employment in an established institution with distinctive objectives as an occupational interest group serving the nation-state, rather than simply gentlemen free to pursue personal or sectional interests like civilians or their predecessors before 1820. Reflecting these changes, officers began to respond to threats to slavery and policies and conflicts promoting its expansion as practical military questions (as in the Second Seminole War) or personal ones (as on the Rio Grande) rather than those of sectional defense and expansion (as in the first Seminole
War, or among southern civilians during the second). Unlike civilians, few if any officers of the 1830s and 40s advocated territorial aggrandizement in order to spread or defend the socioeconomic system of plantation slavery, a reluctance that led officers of the Jacksonian era into conflict with settlers in Florida where their predecessors had worked together in pursuit of the same goals.  

Changing attitudes towards foreign affairs were also connected to developments in the army's internal structure and the mentalité of the officer corps, and class, state, and occupational formation were closely linked phenomena in the officer corps' actions in the American borderlands. Institutionally, the army's internal chain of command and accountability was somewhat clearer by 1830 than it had been a decade before, leaving fewer opportunities for officers to engage in foreign adventurism, premeditated or otherwise. As the nation's borders were clarified and civilian officials took the place of military ones in their government, efforts to alter them became the province of national political decision-makers or private filibusters rather than army officers forced or given the opportunity to decide the course of American policy on the spot. Historian Robert May has recently argued that filibustering held some of the same material and psychological attractions for young American men as service in the military, while presenting greater opportunities for individuals that often drew them away from the hierarchically structured army. May refers primarily but not exclusively to enlisted men; from my perspective, filibustering also appears to have served as an alternative outlet for the more bellicose or opportunistic officers who were unwilling to accept the constraints of the army's rigid rank and promotion hierarchy. In this sense filibustering complemented the army's institutional appeal of personal and occupational security by siphoning off the
excessively ambitious, whose actions might otherwise have posed a threat to its support in Congress, perhaps leading to attacks on the officer corps' monopoly over the direction of organized military force a unsuccessful or even unnecessary.

Army officers were accountable to the central government for their jobs and budgets, and they generally considered the filibusters who challenged national sovereignty over foreign policy and military force to be disruptive criminals who posed a greater threat to domestic and international order and stability (and hence national security and the domestic social hierarchy) than the weak forces of America's southern neighbor. A similar process shaped officers' conceptions of national honor, which Jackson had viewed largely as an extension of his own aggressive will, for Winfield Scott and his subordinates on the Canadian frontier in the late 1830s saw faithfulness to international law as a matter of personal honor, which they attempted to affirm by dutifully securing the nation's border against all comers in support of federal sovereignty and the government's international treaty obligations. Indeed, these men often associated and cooperated with British counterparts during the crises of 1838 to 1842, while acting as strenuously as possible to maintain American national sovereignty and neutrality by guarding the borders against the illegal private aggression of American citizens as well as British or Canadian retaliation.8

Occupation, class, and culture were all linked in the evolution of the officer corps' attitudes toward foreign affairs. The growing cohesion and shared attitudes of the officer corps owed much to its quest for stability and order in all the interactions that affected it as an occupational group--within its units of working class, increasingly foreign-born enlisted men, in the decentralized civilian social order of the borderlands where it was stationed,
in federal sovereignty and regular army jurisdiction over the organized use of violence vis-a-vis the citizen-soldiers of the volunteers and militia, and in the systematized diplomatic relations between established nation-states which ultimately gave the army its employment and the officers their careers. Like other Americans among the nation's elites and aspirants to that status, officers sought authority and prestige by identifying their values with those of the Old World and its elites, including European military officers. In American society this meant a growing emphasis on gentility; in foreign relations American soldiers and diplomats sought respectability in the eyes of their European counterparts by adhering to the customs and formalities of international law which many had once denounced as tools of monarchy. Following these norms and enforcing them along the nation's borders also provided the sanction of European precedent and practical utility for the army's monopoly over the direction of organized military force in the eyes of its employers.

This pattern encouraged accountability to the authority of civilian political structures dominated by national elites. The officer corps as a whole grew more patient and less bellicose—though no less self-interested—as a result of these social and occupational developments, and a spirit of conservative legalism gradually replaced the aggressive republican internationalism of the 1810s as the basis of the officer corps' approach to foreign policy questions. Commanders seeking order and stability constantly reaffirmed the principles of international law, the inviolability of national borders, and the sovereignty of the federal nation-state over the application of organized violence, and their law enforcement and peacekeeping activities on the frontiers gave these abstractions a concrete reality they had frequently lacked in the turbulent southern borderlands before 1820. Indeed, this process
of attitudinal and behavioural change accelerated with experience as the dangers of a decentralized foreign policy and the demands and consequences of adherence to international law became more real to officers during the border crises of the 1830s and 40s, decades in which American society also became increasingly fluid and disorderly. Though the two were hardly contradictory, in practice, officers came to feel as much of an interest in stability along the borders as in military preparedness per se, because both were equally essential to its ongoing employment and jurisdiction as individuals, as a discrete occupation, and as members of an internally self-governing organization facing politically potent competition from the militia and volunteers. In this sense, the officer corps' quest for military preparedness was only the specifically military manifestation of a more general search for individual, organizational, and social security and stability, which encompassed personal, occupational, and ultimately class concerns.

As in other areas of professional activity, the officer corps' approach to foreign policy was necessarily one of individuals, especially those in command along the borders in question. Officers of different backgrounds and rank responded in distinct ways to the complex situations that confronted them, and personal and generational factors played significant roles in shaping these reactions. The army was small enough that the officer corps' impact on the practice of foreign relations was largely made by the decisions of individual commanders, and much of the aggressiveness of the officers of 1815-1820 can be traced to the influence of Andrew Jackson, major general in command of the army's Southern Division, whose unique willfulness and determination to expel Indians and "foreigners" from the borderlands of America are well-known to historians. (Indeed, Jackson had sought to lead a
march on Mexico City as early as 1802.9) Although Jackson was not a career officer, he was an energetic commander who took his responsibilities with deadly seriousness. No other officer's correspondence is as available to us as Jackson's, and it provides us with the most thorough glimpse of a theater commander engaged in active operations and strategic reflection during the era of this study. Certainly no other officer had as much influence over the course of events in the south (or indeed on the nation as a whole) during the decisive decade of the 1810s; and there is substantial evidence that other field- and general grade officers shared Jackson's expansionist views during this period. Indeed, the complexity and attraction of expansionism was expressed in individuals as well as the corps as a whole: Brigadier General Eleazar Wheelock Ripley, a prominent New Englander and the departmental commander of West Florida, who reacted to filibustering proposals with republican rhetoric but practical caution in 1816, resigned four years later to help lead a second wave of filibusters against Texas.10

This widely shared belief in expansionism notwithstanding, diplomatic considerations, rank, and the local balance of military force sometimes complicated matters and limited American military aggressiveness during the first interwar decade, for captains commanding single companies on the border with Spanish Texas had to be much more cautious than Jackson and his subordinates with their multi-regimental concentrations backed by thousands of state militia and volunteers. Enmeshed in the civil-military controversies occasioned by his invasions of Florida, Jackson supported the local commander on the Sabine frontier with Texas in a policy of mediation between aggressive American settlers and Spanish troops sent to expel them, while officers' proposals for an invasion of Cuba never approached fruition in the face of the necessity for naval cooperation and the diplomatic and
domestic racial disruption (British intervention and slave uprisings in Cuba) that such an enterprise would probably incur.

The most fundamental issue officers addressed in their thoughts about foreign affairs was the desirability of war, and the willingness of a Jackson, James Wilkinson, or Eleazar Ripley to use the army or recruit from it for ventures independent of government sanction was the greatest practical threat to military subordination and accountability to civilian authority during the period from 1800 to 1821. In the immediate aftermath of the War of 1812 there appears to have been little hesitation on the part of any substantial segment of the officer corps to advocate war in pursuit of the nation's interest or honor, and this belligerence combined with a confused situation and somewhat credible pretexts made it easy for Jackson to send the army into Florida as many times as necessary until Spain capitulated. By the middle of the 1830s this atmosphere had changed, and the experience of Indian removal (especially that of the Second Seminole War, which many officers found highly distasteful) and the growth of the Whig party during the decade before the war with Mexico pushed and pulled some officers toward a less aggressive stance than their predecessors. A decade later the most bellicose officers were young lieutenants and West Point cadets eager for glory and promotion, while the interest more experienced officers felt for war over Texas and Oregon varied significantly. Indeed, more officers wrote against the annexation of Texas than in favor of the conquest of California or central or southern Mexico, prominent objectives among civilian expansionists which was virtually invisible in officers' papers prior to the outbreak of war.

As a result of these changes commanders along the borders of Texas and Canada took much less belligerent and expansionist stances than their predecessors two decades before, while Oregon and California went virtually
unmentioned in officers' papers before the mid-1840s. Whatever his own intentions might have been, Edmund Gaines was as clearly Andrew Jackson's subordinate on the Texan frontier in 1836 as he had been on the Floridian one in 1818, and he obeyed the president's demand for restraint just as he had obeyed the general's demand for action. Two years later Winfield Scott was instrumental in breaking up private efforts to invade Canada and plunge the United States into war with Britain. Though Scott and some of his key subordinates initially welcomed the "Patriot" risings they quickly reverted to a dutiful stance that stressed the sovereignty of the nation-state and the inviolability of international borders by private parties rather than the possibility of American territorial or ideological expansion.

Although Gaines continued to exhibit the aggressiveness he learned under Jackson, Zachary Taylor and his subordinates in the Army of Occupation demonstrated less eagerness and belligerence toward Mexico than a practical (albeit equally self-interested) desire to end the uncertainty of their prolonged tenure on the border distant from their families and the amenities of their peacetime stations. The officer corps, which can fairly be said to have directed and led the American conquest of Florida during the 1810s (albeit in general agreement, and often cooperation, with those civilians, mostly southerners and filibusters, who took an interest in the subject), was content to follow the gradual trajectory of American public opinion in coming to imagine and accept that of the Mexican Southwest. Taylor himself was rumored to oppose annexation "in toto," and if he had any personal cause for aggressiveness it was to win laurels for the regular army before the volunteers arrived, a jurisdictional rather than ideologically expansionist motive that was not the source of the army's presence opposite Matamoros. Indeed, it is both remarkable and highly significant that in the highly partisan
context of Jacksonian America a Democratic president elected on a platform of expansionism should have chosen to entrust the command of the force he intended to occupy Texas (if not to precipitate war with Mexico) to a known Whig, and that Polk left the army under Taylor's command after the general's opposition to expansion became known. (Of course, Polk may have done so in part in order to avoid Whig criticism.) Indeed, Polk reprimanded Gaines for making a premature call for volunteers in the spring of 1845, and that fall Gaines was court-martialed and transferred to a quiet post in New York City because the administration wanted to restrain his overzealous belligerence. Though both men led the forces of the American nation-state in the conquest of territories private filibusters had been unable to secure, Taylor's impact on the nation's foreign policy and the course of its expansion was merely tactical, Jackson's both political and strategic, and there in a nutshell lies the difference in foreign policy activism, bellicosity, and accountability to national civilian political authority between the officer corps of 1818 and that of 1846.
Chapter XI

Tensions Between Aggrandizement and Accountability in the Conquest of the Southeastern Borderlands, 1815-1821

Loosely governed by a constantly weakening metropole that was preoccupied with the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath, the Spanish borderlands in North America were subjected to constant incursions by Anglo-Americans from the 1770s onwards. This situation was a mixed blessing for United States Army officers, who found themselves in complex situations as intermediaries between creole revolutionaries, American settlers and filibusters (often tacitly supported by American civil authorities), and the Spanish authorities. Army officers generally supported the anticolonial revolutions in Spanish America, but their official position made it inappropriate for them to speak out or commit themselves in favor of direct aid to the rebels. Although historians have usually downplayed the amount and intensity of American support for these revolutions, Lawrence Kaplan has recently reminded us that "the appeal of the ... revolutions was not confined to paranoids or romantics," motivational patterns which those inclined to stress a distinctly military mind might use to characterize officers. Like other Americans, early national army officers were opportunists who saw the chance for territorial expansion in the turmoil to the south, and they certainly had strong occupational motives for pressing southward. In the aftermath of the Treaty of Ghent, the heroes of New Orleans and America were the hunters of Kentucky, not the grey-clad regulars of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, and aggression against Spain offered a new opportunity for distinction against a much weaker opponent.12
Army officers ruminating on the Latin American revolutions were motivated by both national chauvinism and fear of the antagonism of Europe's monarchies to America's republican experiment. Indeed, several very senior commanders claimed to support the independence movements in Spain's Latin American colonies from idealistic republican motives, or what we might label republican internationalism. Less than a year after the end of the War of 1812 Winfield Scott wrote to Secretary of State Monroe from France expressing his hope that Congress would recognize the Patriots (the label the revolutionaries took for themselves throughout Latin America). Another extensive letter from England the following March predicted the revolutionaries' success: "The best friends of freedom in this country . . . regard the present moment as peculiarly favorable to the independence of our hemisphere." Unlike many civilian policymakers—or his own reactions to new crises several decades later—the future commanding general's analysis of the potential of British military intervention was positively, and rather irresponsibly, gleeful: "[I]f the contest is to be single-handed against us the odds are entirely on our side. Indeed I believe that our navy alone, would be fully adequate to ensure the independence of Spanish America and to indemnify us in our just demands."13

Scott went on to relate news of secret discussions he had held with liberal Spanish general Espoz y Mina concerning American material support for the revolutionaries, but this unauthorized support did not extend beyond rhetoric to promises of overt intervention. Scott carefully noted his reservation that American provisions would be supplied by purchase alone, and only if the United States itself were at war with Spain—essentially the conditions for aid to belligerents enshrined three years later in the Neutrality Act of 1818. (Thomas Jefferson interpreted Scott’s letter as a proposal for war
with Spain, however, an intimation of the officer corps' bellicose reputation in 1815, and perhaps of Jefferson's own aggressiveness as well.) Whether Scott's caution was directed towards protecting himself or the U.S. government is not clear, but he felt confident enough in the propriety of his actions as an intermediary that he gave Mina letters of introduction to American officials and met with him in New York later that year before his brother's expedition sailed for Texas. Francisco Javier Mina recruited about 250 men in the United States, Haiti, and Galveston, but he was defeated and executed by the Spanish in East Texas in October 1818.14

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I. The Southeastern Borderlands, 1815-1821: Florida and the First Seminole War

Central and South America were simply too distant to draw a great deal of attention from American army officers (unlike their British and naval counterparts), and the principal theater of operations for American forces in the half-decade immediately after the War of 1812 was Spanish Florida, which official and unofficial agents of the United States had been working to suborn since the days of the Jefferson administration. In 1817, faced with the ongoing confusion caused by Spanish rebels, American land pirates and slave traders, and filibusters and adventurers of all nationalities along the Florida border, Adjutant and Inspector General Daniel Parker felt required to prohibit intervention by officers on behalf of revolutionaries in Florida. Parker's words to acting departmental commander Colonel William King encapsulate the neutral stance officially taken by the United States government, as well as the sentiments of many army officers in favor of the revolutionaries:
It is the policy of our government to have nothing to do with the Patriots or the authorities of Florida. I have no doubt the Patriots will not only win possession of Florida but that all South America will soon be independent of old Spain. I wish success to the Patriots but it is determined that we shall do nothing in favor of either party.¹⁵

This official neutrality was largely a diplomatic veil worn in recognition of the European principle of nation-state sovereignty and its corollary of nonintervention in another sovereign's internal affairs. Indeed, it is doubtful that American officers would have been able to sustain much sympathy for viable Patriot movements in Florida and Texas, because if successful these groups might have formed governments that the United States could not absorb or suborn without violating its proclaimed devotion to the principle of popular self-determination. More importantly, the Old World rules of international law—often flouted in Europe itself, and routinely so by European powers in the areas they intended to colonize—quickly became moot as the United States continued its pressure on Spain to give up Florida, and few of the senior commanders on the borders had many scruples about initiating actions designed to accomplish this objective. The most powerful of these men was Andrew Jackson, major general in command of the Southern Division, who escalated ongoing skirmishes with the Creek and Seminole Indians¹⁶ into a full-scale invasion of Florida in 1818 without explicit constitutional authorization from Congress, the president, or the secretary of war. In doing so Jackson provides one of the best illustrations of the tensions between the demands of substantive responsibility and outcome—usually to the nation's general interest in increasing its power through expansion, but also to the interests of particular classes and sections within
the nation, in this case southern planters—and formal procedural accountability to the nation's constitutional system and institutions, which reflected the ideals of republicanism by demanding military subordination to civilian authority no matter what the material objectives at stake.

Jackson was determined to secure the southern borderlands for American landholders, of whom he was a leading and indeed characteristic example, by whatever means he considered necessary, and his iron will drove this bellicose approach to the defense and aggrandizement of American interests in the southwest from the War of 1812 until his death. Jackson pursued a belligerent path throughout his tenure on the Florida frontier, one which he self-righteously justified in a rhetorically rigid but practically flexible language of national sovereignty, self-defense, and honor that fellow officers easily identified with. Having first invaded West Florida in 1814, Jackson summed up his willingness to disregard Spanish sovereignty and the inviolability of international borders for putatively defensive purposes while he prepared to invade Florida three years later:

[I]f ever the Indians find out that the territorial boundary of Spain is to be a sanctuary, their murders will be multiplied to a degree that our citizens on the southern frontier cannot bear. Spain is bound by treaties to keep the Indians within her territory at peace with us. Having failed to do this, necessity will justify the measure, after giving her due notice, to follow the marauders and punish them in their retreat.17

Jackson's strategy during the Creek War of 1813-1814 was founded on his perceptive sense of the close connections between European influence and Indian resistance to American expansion. Jackson intended to cut the Creek territory in half by building a military road from Tennessee to Mobile, which
would provide an avenue for American settlement and the gradual dispossession of the Indians. He would then seize Pensacola to expel the Spanish and secure the southern frontier. Short-term defensive and long-range offensive considerations were intimately connected in the general’s plans: in the words of his most recent biographer, "there was no question in Jackson’s mind that the removal of [European] influence . . . was essential to the final solution of the Indian problem. . . . He intended to eliminate all foreigners along the southern frontier as a necessary prelude to the systematic destruction of the Indian menace and the territorial expansion of the American nation." Indeed, Robert Remini observes that "as no one of like determination and military skill had command on the northern frontier, the course of American expansion . . . was directed southward." This view downplays the strength of the resistance mounted by the British in Canada and the difficulties of supplying large forces along the frontier border as reasons for the failure of American expansion there, but Remini effectively points out the decisive significance of individual motivation and leadership in the early republic which we have seen already reflected in the army's commanders. Although Jackson was not a career officer, all these themes are all tied together by the fact that most of the decisive phase of Jackson’s actions occurred during his years as one of the regular army’s top-ranking generals between 1814 and 1821.18

The Creek War forced thousands of Indians from Georgia and Alabama into Florida, but the formal diplomatic situation along the southern border remained unchanged after the War of 1812. This illusory stasis was not the product of a lack of effort on either side. In 1815 Spanish minister Luis de Onis proposed that Britain receive Florida in return for military guarantees of Spanish rule over Cuba and Louisiana, but both the British and Spanish
governments rejected this plan as a clear prescription for continued war, which neither was in the fiscal shape to prosecute. From the American side, Albert Gallatin, one of the American peace commissioners at Ghent, confidently expected that the United States could seize Florida at any time and advised Monroe in 1813 that the issue should be kept out of the negotiations in order to preserve future American independence of action.19

On the ground in the borderlands, the English commanders sent against New Orleans had been instructed late in 1814 that Britain considered the Louisiana Purchase illegitimate and that Louisiana would probably be restored to Spain should the attack succeed. Although Jackson's victory defeated these plans, the Treaty of Ghent was widely regarded on both sides as (in John Quincy Adams' words) "a truce rather than a peace," which might evolve either into a permanent settlement or be swept away by the renewal of hostilities. Both sides sought the economic benefits of each others' markets, but Anglo-American relations remained fragile and constantly subject to irritation throughout the nineteenth century. Underlying antagonisms did not immediately disappear, and the experience of the past remained a cautionary guide to present and future conduct during the decade after the war. Although Foreign Minister Castlereagh quickly ordered an end to official contacts with the northwestern Indians (including the withdrawal of British troops from posts on American soil), the British continued their tacit efforts to contain American southward expansion through quasi-official military aid to the Indians and fugitive blacks of Florida. During the war the British had armed and trained perhaps as many as four thousand Indians and a thousand African-American maroons in Florida, and early in 1815 British Admiral Alexander Cochrane left Major Edward Nicolls and Lieutenant George Woodbine with a force of Royal Marines and black West Indian troops
at a fort near the mouth of the Appalachian River to protect the Creek refugees and Seminoles until they were restored to their lost territory under the provisions of Article Nine of the Treaty of Ghent, which stipulated that lands held by the Indians before 1811 would be returned to them. The fort's heavy cannon (though not its field pieces) were left in place by the British, and Nicolls was given discretion to leave substantial amounts of small arms and other supplies with the Indians upon his departure. Nicolls was ordered to withdraw on March 29 but delayed doing so until June, by which time American commanders like Edmund Gaines had begun to ponder an attack on his position.²⁰

By this point it was becoming increasingly clear that the United States did not intend to restore the Creek lands per Article Nine, on the grounds that the Treaty of Fort Jackson, which Jackson had made with some of the Red Stick (Creek militant) leaders the previous year, had concluded hostilities and removed the Creeks from the jurisdiction of the article. The acting secretary of war half-heartedly suggested that Jackson restore the land in question, but the willful general continued to enforce the treaty he had negotiated, which called for the cession of millions of acres of Creek land to the United States. The American government then went along with Jackson's tacit refusal to recognize the legitimacy of Article Nine by claiming that all the Indians in Florida were Seminoles rather than Creeks, and the article's provisions for the restoration of their lands in Alabama were never implemented. (Indeed, by 1817 most of the so-called Upper Creeks had moved southward to north-central Florida, where they were commonly though at first inaccurately labelled Seminoles.) Nicolls responded on his own initiative by organizing a government for the Florida Indians and making a treaty of recognition and military alliance with it as the legitimate Creek Nation, but senior officials in
Britain refused to sanction his actions or to meet with the Red Stick and Seminole representatives.21

The acquisition of Florida was the leading objective in American foreign policy between 1815 and 1821. Acting with the overt support of most state leaders in Georgia and Alabama and the tacit sanction of the Monroe administration, Jackson and his subordinates had a virtual blank check for belligerence. Broader institutional circumstances also account for some of the ease with which Jackson was able to conduct an (at least formally) unauthorized invasion involving several thousand men for three months. Letters from Washington commonly took two weeks to reach the border, so the rapidly changing operational situation required a degree of flexibility and gave commanders a fund of excuses to grant wide discretion to their subordinates, who they could expect to share similar views and carry them into action without conveying the appearance of premeditated aggression. Congress met for no more than a couple of months a year during this era; the War Department exercised no more than intermittent, and often merely token, oversight; and the specific goals and limitations of military operations were rarely delineated through a series of precise written orders passed down the official chain of command from president to secretary to field general.

As a result of these circumstances, the whole chain of command was covered by what government officials would today call "plausible deniability," and it was difficult if not impossible to hold an officer of Jackson's political stature accountable for his actions in the borderlands. Indeed, the administration simply cannot have failed to realize that if it intended to keep a tighter rein on a man of Jackson's demonstrated willfulness it would have to exercise control much more directly than it did,
but no diplomatic or other emissaries were ever sent to advise or constrain the general. Indeed, given Jackson's prestige in the borderlands and his influence in American politics it may have been difficult to change his course of action regardless of the mechanisms employed. Moreover, although the general deserved censure for his violations of peace and international law, his aggressive policy was in essential accord with the wishes of the American citizenry (to whom Jackson frequently adverted in correspondence justifying his actions) and their elected political representatives, whose desire for Florida was driven by the inexorable pressure exerted by land-hungry southern whites, poor and planter alike.22

Only British military power could have acted as an effective check on American expansion, and in the long view the Battle of New Orleans represented the failure of British containment policies in the southern borderlands of the United States. This effect was not immediately apparent to American policymakers faced with the continuing British military presence in Florida and the northwest, so in his initial instructions of May 1815 Acting Secretary of War Alexander J. Dallas directed Jackson to secure the Gulf and south Atlantic coasts before turning against Indian threats, a priority reiterated the following spring by Secretary William Crawford. Several months later (in August 1816) Jackson warned his subordinate at New Orleans to put his troops on alert and to exercise "the most cautious vigilance" at Mobile against the possibility of Spanish attack. The general also ordered "every exertion to acquire correct information" regarding Spanish intentions, but it is difficult to take these putatively defensive measures seriously save as cover for offensive preparations.23

In reality Spain posed little threat to American territories, but its formal sovereignty provided a cloak for Amerindian and Afro-maroon
opposition to American expansionism, and tensions continued throughout the years prior to the American annexation of Florida—and long after, of course—as Indians living in Florida, the United States, and the disputed Creek lands intermittently raided American settlements in Georgia and Alabama. (Indeed, they burned the barracks at Fort Scott on the Appalachicola River while American troops were absent during the winter of 1817.) The maroon presence in Florida was perhaps an even more significant threat to the slave society which Jackson represented, while American policymakers continually blamed malign European influences rather than Indian choices for this resistance. Jackson was therefore prepared to take the harshest of measures against maroons and Britons well before his execution of Robert Ambrister and Alexander Arbuthnot in 1818. In September 1815 he warned Brigadier General Gaines that British influence would be to blame if the Indians resisted the attempt to survey the new boundaries of the Creek nation; Jackson therefore directed that in "the event of war . . . every whitman or negroe found in arms with the enemy must be put to the sword." Gaines' response drew together the themes of Indian savagism, experience, and the necessity of force: he would mass a force of six thousand men (seven hundred of them regulars and the rest militia)—an army larger than those employed on the Canadian border against the British during the War of 1812—so as "to give the Seminola Indians that wholesome correction, by which alone, as long experience proves, savage enemies can ever be made friendly or harmless."24

Indeed, it was Jackson's concern over the presence of armed blacks in West Florida that led to the first significant American incursion there after the War of 1812, an expedition to break up the maroon community which had initially developed under the protection of the British major Nicolls in
1814—the largest concentration of refugees from chattel slavery in the history of North America. (Historian J. Leitch Wright points out that the links between African-American maroons and Seminole refugees become etymologically clear when we note that "Seminole" was probably derived from "Cimarron," Spanish for "wild and untamed" and the root of "maroon" as well.) Nicolls claimed to have trained at least five hundred Afro-Seminoles, free blacks, and maroons in close-order tactical drill during the war, and after his departure they took over the fort at Prospect Bluffs on the Appalachicola, from which they were in a position to obstruct the flow of American supplies (sanctioned by the Spanish under strong American pressure) to Fort Scott upriver. In turn, this tactic would have disrupted the American logistical base for operations designed to intimidate the Creeks and Seminoles in Florida, an important part of Jackson's unstated strategy.

Jackson's instructions to Brigadier General Gaines in April 1816 illustrate the flexibility available to American officers along the Florida border, and though framed as advice, whatever caution or indecision Jackson's words appeared to present was overshadowed by the flood of aggressive rhetoric and thinly veiled hints surrounding them. He proclaimed that "half peace half war is a state of things which must not exist" and instructed Gaines that "the growing hostile dispositions of the Indians must be checked by prompt and energetic movements... No retreat must provide an asylum for them. Any town or village" refusing to surrender Indian fugitives from American law "must be destroyed." "I... can only repeat that you possess the power of acting on your Discretion, which I hope you will exercise on this" Jackson hinted to his eager deputy.25

Turning to his specific objective, Jackson then laid out a series of vague conditions for action against the growing maroon population concentrated at
the so-called "Negroe Fort," each condition certain to be met when viewed from the perspective of ardent American expansionists and southern slaveholders like Gaines: "If the conduct of these people is such as to encourage the Indian war--if the fort harbours the Negroes of our citizens ... or hold[s] out inducements to the Slaves of our Citizens to desert from their owners' service--this fort must be destroyed." Jackson told Gaines to notify the Spanish governor of his entry into Spanish territory but was unwilling to wait for the results of diplomatic action, which both men assumed would be ineffectual given Spain's inability to control the inhabitants of the territory it claimed and its incentive to encourage them as allies against American encroachments. (Jackson had sent an emissary to the governor of Pensacola in May, but the governor's diplomatic refusal to sanction American intervention only added to Jackson's determination to go forward.) Jackson remarked that "if they profess to be the subjects of a power with whom we are at peace [Spain] then their acts are acts of war," but the general went on to vilify the maroons as "a band of outlaws," devoid of nationality and the protection of international law. Indeed, Jackson correctly envisioned Florida as a power vacuum apart from the Indians, and he cleared the way for American aggression by characterizing the maroon inhabitants of the "Negroe Fort" as "lawless banditti": "This fort has been established ... for the purpose of Murder rapine and plunder, and ... it ought to be blown up regardless of the ground it stands on." 26

Jackson later labelled the First Seminole War a "Savage and Negroe War," and his capitalization of "Slaves" and "Citizens" and his military metaphor of desertion demonstrate his recognition of the intimate ties between the military security of the frontier and the advance of plantation agriculture in the Lower South. He took it for granted that Gaines "should
have formed the same conclusion” regarding the maroon fort, and directed him to "destroy it and return the stolen negroes and property to their rightful owners" in the United States. Gaines, a fellow Tennessean and slaveholder, shared these concerns and had anticipated Jackson's reaction: "The Negro Establishment is, (I think justly) considered as likely to produce much evil among the blacks of Georgia and the Eastern part of the Mississippi Territory. Will you permit me to break it up[?]" he had written to Jackson a month prior to receiving his commander's instructions. As his reactions to the presence of the Negro Fort indicate, Gaines' rationales for invading Florida closely echoed Jackson's. Indeed, Gaines had sought permission to attack the maroon fort as early as May 1815—even before the departure of Nicolls and the British marines—advising the secretary of war that if "Spain permits our enemy to assemble forces, and [to] make military depots for our annoyance within her territory, surely she cannot make no reasonable objection to our visiting these depots." 27

In May Gaines supplied a group of Lower Creeks with corn on the understanding that they would capture the fort and turn over its occupants to the United States for a bounty of fifty dollars per head. They failed (or simply did not attempt) to do so, but maroon efforts to stop American use of the Appalachicola as a resupply route for Fort Scott soon gave Gaines the excuse he needed to order a direct attack by American forces. Jackson's goal was achieved three months after he wrote to Gaines, when cannon firing from American gunboats hit the fort's powder magazine and blew it up, killing 270 refugees from slavery. The remaining defenders were quickly massacred by Gaines' Lower Creek allies in the confusion. When Lieutenant Colonel Duncan Clinch of the 4th Infantry (another slaveholder, whose plantations were located close to the Florida frontier in southeastern Georgia) expressed
dismay at the civilian criticism he received for commanding this expedition, Jackson's adjutant responded that "public acts, if not publically censured, are tacitly approved." Jackson and Gaines placated the colonel with assurances that he had acted under their orders, and Jackson added that Clinch should "demand . . . an immediate surrender of the Negroes protected by [the Seminoles] and belonging to U.S. citizens" while holding his forces "in readiness to chastise them" should they (as expected) refuse. Indeed, Clinch had already attempted to engage a Seminole force rumored to be moving to the fort's rescue, but the Indians dispersed before he could find them.28

The next incident that aroused Jackson's ire came later in 1816, when several American citizens were imprisoned by the Spanish governor of Pensacola. As the commander of the 8th Military Department (encompassing New Orleans and Mobile), Major Thomas Sidney Jesup (the future quartermaster general) made preparations to liberate them by force. Although Jackson ordered Jesup "to permit no act to be done to provoke war with Spain," the general's rather informal standards of international intercourse were nevertheless clear: Jesup's incursion "would have been easily adjusted by the two governments, and taught Spain to know that the wanton infringement of our Rights by her Officers would be met by the same measure, and [would] thus confine them to proper conduct toward their peaceful neighbors," he wrote to the secretary of war. Jesup was not alone in his concern for the rights of Americans in Florida, whatever their auspices. In 1816 Gaines proposed a plan of invasion which was rejected by President Madison, and the brigadier's letter reporting Indian raids and belligerence in September 1817 must have assured Jackson of his support for future incursions: "I am convinced that nothing but the application of force, will be sufficient to ensure a permanent adjustment of this affair." Indeed, these
words can stand as an accurate statement of the views of the officer corps as a whole toward the Florida question in particular and Indian conflicts in general.29

Overt hostilities broke out seven weeks after Gaines wrote these words, when he forced the Indians to choose between subjection and war by ordering that the inhabitants of the Mikasuki Seminole village of Fowltown be removed from "American" soil under the provisions of the Treaty of Fort Jackson, using force if—as was sure to be the case—they resisted. This incident was initially a case of on-the-spot "Indian removal" in retaliation for raids against American settlements without explicit reference to Florida. The village was located twenty miles north of the international boundary, but American possession was disputed by the Indians per Article Nine of the Treaty of Ghent. In August the Mikasuki chief Neamathla had warned Captain David Twiggs of the 7th Infantry to stay west of the Flint River or face hostilities, and in response Gaines began to concentrate his forces at Scott on October 1. After some inconclusive skirmishing on November 21 the Mikasukis fled and Gaines burned the village. Jackson hoped "that this check to the Savages will incline them to peace," but he admonished the War Department that "unless [they] sue for peace, [the] frontier cannot be protected without entering their country," meaning Spanish Florida. The war widened nine days later when an American supply boat was ambushed on the Appalachicola a mile south of the boundary with the loss of thirty-five soldiers and seven of their wives. Gaines told Jackson that more than five hundred hostile warriors had been sighted, including those of "every town upon the Chattahoochee." The brigadier reported that he would position his force to keep the riverine line of communications open, entering Spanish
territory if necessary, for he had somehow persuaded himself that "the order of the President prohibiting an attack on the Indians below the line, has reference only to the past." As was often the case with aggressive officers operating along disputed boundaries during these years, Gaines had entered Florida even before he wrote, and the so-called "First Seminole War"--deceptively titled in number and name alike--had finally begun.30

Jackson's invasion soon became the subject of partisan controversy, and the specific form and character of his authorization for undertaking it remains unclear to this day. The congressional censure Jackson received has always clouded the fundamental congruity between Jackson's actions and the long-range interests in expansion felt by most contemporary Americans, and it is apparent that much (though not all) of the criticism was motivated by personal and factional political rivalry rather than opposition to the general's actions or objectives themselves. In particular, Jackson had gotten along poorly with Georgian William H. Crawford when the latter served as secretary of war in 1816, and Crawford was one of the nation's principal factional leaders and a prominent candidate to succeed Monroe in 1824. Although Crawford was the most traditionally republican of the candidates, his arguments hardly represented a major reaction against the conquest of Florida, the principal objective of American foreign policy and expansionism after the War of 1812, per se.

The War Department sent a constantly changing stream of directives to Jackson and Gaines, often phrased as advice rather than orders. At first the administration cautioned against violations of Spanish territory, but by the second week of December Secretary of War Calhoun had given Gaines discretion to pursue Indians into Florida. Meanwhile, in a confirmation of earlier expropriations that must have encouraged the planter-generals of the
southern army, Congress admitted Mississippi into the Union as its twentieth state on December 10. Knowing that Gaines would take advantage of any latitude, the War Department gave him more affirmative authorization within the week, with the sole caution that Gaines should not attack Spanish installations which sheltered the Indians. Ten days later Jackson was ordered to the border, a decision that virtually ensured that a full-scale invasion would take place. Indeed, Calhoun apparently wrote to Alabama governor William Bibb that Jackson was "authorized to conduct the war as he thought best, and given these statements and actions by the government, generals drawn from the southern planter class like Gaines and Jackson can hardly be blamed for seizing the initiative to achieve its well-known objectives by intimidating Spain militarily. Monroe wrote to his senior general on December 28 that "this is not a time for you to think of repose . . . until our course is carried through triumphantly & every species of danger . . . settled . . . you ought not to withdraw your active support from it." (Since 1815 Jackson had repeatedly spoken of retiring for health reasons.)

Jackson himself sought more direct authority to invade Florida by writing to Monroe on January 6 and urging the seizure of East Florida "as an indemnity for the outrages of Spain upon the property of our Citizens," an action which he expected to forestall future wars with Britain or Spain and her continental allies over the fate of Florida, and he proclaimed himself willing to accept the condemnation (and doubtlessly the acclamation) that leading such an invasion would incur: "This can be done without implicating the Government; let it be signified to me . . . and in sixty days it will be accomplished." The general then warned "that the arms of the United States must be carried to any point within the limits of East Florida, where an Enemy is permitted," and "if our troops enter the Territory of Spain . . . all
opposition that they meet with must be put down" lest the Indians, Spanish, and expatriate Britons combine to defeat some part of the American force. Monroe later claimed to have mislaid the letter, an almost laughable excuse which if nothing else suggests that the administration was not exercising the oversight obviously necessary to restrain its most aggressive general, who had already invaded Florida once before. On January 30 Monroe directed Secretary Calhoun to admonish Jackson against attacking posts occupied by the Spanish, but the secretary apparently failed to do so. In the meantime Jackson used his authority to call up militia to secure a reliable force of Tennessee volunteers, many of whom had already served under him during the Creek War: "if I can get 1200 mounted gunmen from Tennessee with my regular force—If [the] Georgians should mutiny, I can put [them] down, & drive into the Gulf all the Indians and [their] adherents[,] be them who they may."32

One of the most operationally experienced American generals despite his short career, Jackson did not lose sight of the need for tactical caution and operational readiness amidst his enthusiasm. He instructed Gaines to "have your Forces prepared to march at a moments warning," but "not to hazard a general engagement with the Seminoles unless with such a force as will ensure a decisive victory." Speed was of the essence and the army's supply was a consideration too important to be left to the caprices of civilian contractors and markets: "Let your supplies be abundant; I would not wish my movements retarded an hour on that account—If there is the least suspicion of the contractors failing, issue the necessary orders to the Q[uarter] Master to supply all deficiencies." (These orders had only limited success, and Jackson and his subordinates constantly complained about supply problems during the conflict.) Jackson then fired off a letter to Georgia governor
William Rabun demanding that he somehow prevent leaks to the press concerning the prospective operations, for "whatever is to be effected against the Seminoles must be done secretly & expeditiously . . . if all our movements and intentions are made public, we are ourselves defeating the very objects we wish to effect." These letters also demonstrated the general's socially responsible concern--the flipside to his usual paternalist rigidity--for the men under his command, so valuable (if not indeed necessary) in a democracy, especially during politically controversial operations like the invasion of Florida: "The lives of our citizens are too precious to be wantonly exposed in an unequal conflict with Savages."33

The logistical situation at Scott remained tenuous until Jackson's arrival with the main body of Tennesseans forced nearby Indians to cease their harassment of the supply lines. Indeed, until then it often seemed as though the post was under siege--in mid-February Lieutenant Colonel Mathew Arbuckle of the 3rd Infantry reported to Gaines that he would be forced to abandon it unless resupplied, while Lieutenant Colonel William Trimble of the 8th suggested to Jackson that he seize the Spanish post at St. Marks in order to relieve the pressure. By March 1818 Jackson had concentrated his forces at Fort Scott and advanced south into Spanish territory, where he built Fort Gadsden (named for his principal aide-de-camp) on the site of the old maroon fort. He seized St. Marks without combat on April 7 and continued southeast to attack and destroy the Alachua villages ("Bowlegs' Town")--by this time the chief refuge for maroons who had escaped the disaster in 1816--on the Suwanee River nine days later, after inconclusive exchanges of fire with a force that included two to three hundred maroons. (Indeed, blacks outnumbered Indians several times over in the population of Bowlegs Town.) The following day Jackson was
appointed one of the commissioners to negotiate a land treaty with (i.e., seizure from) the Chickasaw, an event which although done before his seizure of St. Marks was known in Washington points out the essential congruity between Jackson's objectives and those of his civilian superiors, who if they gave any thought to the message they were sending must have recognized that it appeared to give Jackson the green light for further aggression which would expand the realm of commercial cotton production and plantation slavery. Indeed, the future capital of the Confederate States of America was even then being erected in the old Creek heartland at Montgomery.\textsuperscript{34}

Jackson's ultimatum to the Spanish commander at St. Marks reiterated themes familiar from his justifications for the destruction of the maroon fort two years before: "Under existing treaties . . . The King of Spain is bound to preserve in peace . . . all Indian Tribes residing within his territory," but this obligation having gone unfulfilled, Jackson had advanced per "that universal principal of self defence," "to chastise a savage foe" and "a lawless band of Negro brigands" for their "[c]ruel and unprovoked war against the Citizens of the U[nited] States." (Jackson led the Spaniard to believe that President Monroe had ordered the incursion, as Jackson himself had good reason to believe.) Jackson then wrote to the secretary of war justifying his undiplomatic--or at least diplomatically inconvenient--conduct, claiming that St. Marks had served as a refuge and supply depot for the Indians and was necessary to meet his own logistical needs. The Spanish themselves continued to be virtually irrelevant in the general's eyes: he reported that their "personal rights and private property [have] been respected, & the commandant and garrison furnished with transportation to Pensacola."\textsuperscript{35}
Such propriety was available only to those Jackson deemed harmless. Several Englishmen—Indian traders and erstwhile military officers who the general suspected of aiding the Seminoles—were captured during the incursion, and Jackson had two of them tried by military court-martial and executed (along with two Red Stick chieftains) without reference to higher authority in Washington. One of the executed men, Alexander Arbuthnot, was a merchant innocent of supplying military aid to the Seminoles; the other, Robert Ambrister, a former British lieutenant associated with Nicolls and Woodbine (who was leading maroons near Tampa as a private citizen at the time of Jackson's invasion) was actively involved in the struggle for an independent Indian nation, and both Ambrister and Woodbine have been characterized by historians as "outspoken abolitionists." The impetuous general believed that "there is no room to doubt but that [the British] Government had a knowledge of their assumed character and was well advised of the measures which they had adopted to excite the Negroes & Indians in East Florida to war against the U[nite]d States," and Jackson intended to send a message that covert and semi-official British assistance to the Indians would not be permitted to retard the pace of American expansion: "the execution of these [t]wo unprincipled villains will prove an awful example to the world, and convince the Government of Great Britain as well as her subjects that certain . . . retribution awaits those unchristian wretches who by false promises delude & excite a[n] Indian tribe to all the horrid deeds of savage war." The executions were definitely an irresponsible act on Jackson's part, for they certainly gave England legitimate cause for war (as many British newspapers urged), but when the evidence Jackson had gathered against the two men was sent to Castlereagh the British foreign minister did not attempt to refute it. By 1818 the British government had
come to see men like Ambrister as inconvenient—and therefore stateless—adventurers or messianic cranks who were hindering the improvement of Anglo-American relations. Despite the fears held by American policymakers since 1814, Britain merely protested the American invasion and left the Indians and Spanish to shift for themselves.36

Diplomatic relations with Spain, though less significant in American calculations, were more directly threatened by Jackson's actions. Evidence found at St. Marks convinced the general (correctly) that the Spanish had (rationally enough, given their tactical weakness) given his opponents aid and refuge beyond that which the Indians were able to extort by threats of force. He therefore turned to advance against Pensacola, the capital of Spanish West Florida, disregarding its governor's protests and hinting to Secretary of War Calhoun that he might treat the Spanish official as he had the British interlopers. Jackson further justified his actions by the Spaniards' deceptive statements of hostility toward the Indians, which allowed the general to claim that Spain should have aided him while closing its posts to the Seminoles. Instead, the governor of Pensacola had refused permission for American supply vessels to pass up the Escambia River (beyond Pensacola Bay) to the American border post at Fort Crawford without toll. Jackson occupied Pensacola for the second time on May 24; Jackson warned the Spanish commander that he would "put to death every man found in arms"—a certain violation of international law and the rules of war—if American vessels were fired upon; and the garrison at Fort Barrancas surrendered four days later after a short blockade and artillery duel. (Jackson did not carry out his savage threat.) The triumphant general—who once again claimed that the president had authorized his invasion—proclaimed to the inhabitants that "the immutable laws of self-defense [have] compelled the American
Government to take possession of [those] parts of the Floridas in which the Spanish authority could not be maintained." He then appointed a subordinate as civil and military governor and declared American revenue laws in effect. Inasmuch as taxation is sovereignty, Jackson was declaring Florida an American possession.37

Jackson closed his campaign with letters to the president and secretary of war that encapsulate the language, objectives, and arguments employed by expansionist-minded officers on the southern frontier: "The Seminole War may now be considered at a close. Tranquility [is] again restored . . . and as long as a cordon of military posts is maintained along the Gulf of Mexico America has nothing to apprehend from either foreign or Indian hostilities." Jackson, the military commander, had represented "the American Government" with little input from his civilian superiors in pursuing the natural rights granted by an "immutable" system of laws, to maintain some degree of sovereignty, and thus order, in what he (correctly, given his assumption that Indian polities themselves had no legitimate sovereignty European nations or the United States were bound to respect) saw as an international power vacuum exploited by the Seminoles. Having done so he recurred to the officer's standard nostrum for future peace, a generous dose of military preparedness.38

Jackson's invasion of Florida illustrates the tension between a substantive (and consequently subjective) sense of functional responsibility for national defense and a formal--and in some ultimate sense objective, at least insofar as the wishes and beliefs of the military officer are considered irrelevant to the decision-making process--one of accountability to the authority of civilian political structures. Insofar as he was essentially carrying out policies pursued by the government since 1810, Jackson was acting
responsibly, but doing so carried significant danger of antagonizing Britain. More important in the long run, Jackson’s actions clearly violated the letter and spirit of the Constitution, demonstrating a lamentable lack of accountability to both the idea and process of civilian control over the military. In a practical sense it is difficult to judge Jackson simply by abstract constitutional standards, for the Monroe administration was clearly complicit in his actions, and they may in some respects be taken as an example of the sort of unrepugnant (and by previous standards unconstitutional) measures that Republican nationalists came to deem acceptable after the defeat of Federalism and necessary in order to counter British menaces to American independence. Nevertheless, Jackson had usurped the role of the democratically elected civilian legislature to declare war. However much they were motivated by political antagonism to the general, there were many contemporary Americans who understood the potential for military irresponsibility in Jackson’s actions, and we must acknowledge that American democracy is best served by generals who await explicit public orders from their constitutionally elected civilian superiors before launching wars.

Though the archetypal man of action, Jackson was in effect the nation’s foremost strategist for the southern borderlands during this era, and his strategic views were largely reinforced rather than altered by the experience of his second invasion of Florida. Indeed, the general drew a strategic parallel between the objectives of his performances in Florida and those during the Creek War of 1813-14, explaining that in each case he had acted to close avenues for potential British offensives from the Gulf Coast. The key remained isolating the Indians from European aid:
So long as the Indians within the territory of Spain are exposed to ... the poison of foreign intrigue; so long as they can receive am[m]unition ... from pretended Traders, or Spanish commandants it will be impossible to restrain their outrages ... Resupplied by Spanish Authorities they may concentrate or disperse at will, and keep up a lasting predatory warfare against the Frontiers of the U[nite]d States, as expensive as [it is] harassing to her Troops--The Savages must therefore be made dependent on us, & cannot be kept at peace without [being] persuaded of the certainty of chastisement ... [up]on the commission of the first offence.39

Enforcing this dependence required the presence of American troops in Florida: "so long as Spain has not the power, or will to enforce the treaties ... no security can be given to our Southern Frontier without occupying a cordon of Posts along the Sea Shore." Again and again Jackson pursued the theme of a power vacuum that endangered American settlement and demanded American action: Spanish "territory will always provide an asylum to the disaffected and restless savage, as well as to a more dangerous population [black maroons], unless some energetic government can be established to controul or exclude these Interlopers." (It is not clear whether Jackson was specifically referring to the Spanish, the Indians, or the maroons as interlopers; he probably had all three in mind.) He therefore sought the retention of St. Marks, Fort Gadsden, and Barrancas in summer 1818, as "so Es[s]ential to the peace & security of our frontier, and the future welfare of our country." Similarly, "the hords of negro Brigands" who had fled to Tampa Bay had to be captured or broken up, and once this were done, Jackson was certain that "sound national Policy will dictate holding Possession [of}
Florida] as long as we are a republik." The general asserted that "it is alone, by a just & a bold course of conduct that we can expect to obtain & ensure respect from Europe & not from a timid, temporizing policy . . . I therefore conclude that the [Florida] Posts will never be surrendered" unless on American terms, as "the security of the western States renders it necessary that they should be held--the voice of the people will demand it."40

Jackson obviously felt no qualms about his aggressive course of action, and he was quick to call on his acute perception of the popular will to justify it. In August he proclaimed his "belief that Government will never jeopa[r]dize the safety of the Union or the security of our frontier by surrendering th[e]se posts," and he responded to President Monroe's mild reproof by asserting that without instructions beyond those given to Gaines (to "penetrate the Seminole Towns through the floridas") he had been free to undertake any measures which he had seen fit in order to achieve the government's broad objectives. Three months later Jackson again defended his conduct in Florida: "My only apprehensions are that my operations were not sufficiently extensive to ensure permanent tranquility." Indeed, the general derided the possibility of Spanish action along the Sabine river boundary with Louisiana and went on to advocate decisive offensive measures to clear the remainder of the Florida peninsula of hostile forces while the moment was still ripe: "If unmolested they may acquire confidence . . . and prove a destructive Enemy to our Frontier settlers--They should be pursued, before they recover from the panic of our last operations." Jackson sought twin amphibious offensives the following spring against Tampa on the Gulf and from the Atlantic up the St. John's River to Picolata. These forces would establish bases and move inland to scour the Suwanee region from the east and to cross the middle of the peninsula from the west,
destroying "woodbynes negro establishment" but otherwise "deviating only where Indian villages or settlements . . . invite their attention."\textsuperscript{41}

Jackson wrote without the remotest sense of irony that these inviting detours--destroying the Indians' homes and food supplies in order to produce starvation among them--would "finally [crush] Savage hostilities in the south" while "affording active service to some of our Regiments who have grown sluggish from the inactivity of garrison duties." In a very real sense, American vigor would be gained at the expense of Indian hunger and decline. The expansionist thrust of Jackson's plans did not stop with Indians or blacks, however, for he also suggested the seizure of St. Augustine and Cuba, which he deemed "essential to the security of our southern frontier and to our commerce [during] a state of war." These points could "be taken by a Coup' de' Main whenever thought necessary"--a regiment of reinforcements with light naval support "would insure Ft St augusteen," "add another Regt. and one Frigate and I will insure you cuba in a few days." Indeed, the irresponsibility of Jackson's plans grew along with their scope, for he wrote nothing about the war with England that this disturbance of the balance of Caribbean power would probably have incurred--indeed it seems likely that he would have welcomed the opportunity for a clear decision against the hated British.\textsuperscript{42}

Jackson and Gaines continued to plan the conquest of Florida throughout their tenures on the southern frontier. In August Jackson ordered Gaines to seize St. Augustine, on the assumption that Gaines would have no difficulty finding evidence "that the hostile Indians have been fed and furnished from the garrison. . . . This evidence being obtained, you will . . . permit nothing to prevent you from reducing Fort St. Augustine except a positive order from the Dept. of War." Jackson justified this escalation "not
on the ground that we are at War with Spain," but "on the ground of self-
defence, bottomed on the broad basis of nature and of nations, and justified by
giving peace and security to our frontier." This order was countermanded by
the War Department almost immediately, but Gaines asked Secretary of War
Calhoun for permission to liberate three enlisted men taken prisoner by a
Spanish party late in 1818, and added that he would be happy to seize St.
Augustine where they were being held. (The men were released before
Gaines could take any action.) In West Florida, the Cabinet decided in May
1818 to retain St. Marks until sufficient Spanish forces arrived to secure it
against Indian control. Gaines waited eleven months to withdraw from the
town, and even then he continued to press Calhoun to let him seize Spain's
military posts. The general was not sanctioned for retaining St. Marks, which
sent another implicit message to Spain that her days on the North American
continent were numbered. Indeed, his eagerness can only have been
encouraged by the news from Lieutenant Colonel Duncan Clinch (Gaines'
subordinate in the command of the expedition against the Negroe Fort in
1816) that "the President speaks in the highest terms of the conduct of Gen'l
Jackson, and of the army of the South."43

The situation in Florida remained confused for the next two years as
Secretary of State Adams negotiated for the province's cession, but Jackson's
aggressiveness had served the administration well by breaking the impasse
between Spain and the United States. Indeed, the fundamental congruity
between Jackson's actions and the administration's goals was demonstrated
when Monroe directed Adams to consult the popular general on the
prospective treaty. Adams previously had justified Jackson's invasion in
much the same terms as the general himself, and in 1820 he and Jackson saw
each other as allies in the progress of American territorial expansion. The
two met personally to discuss the precise boundaries delineated by the treaty. Spain delayed ratifying the Adams-Onis Treaty signed in February 1819, and that November President Monroe decided to seek congressional authorization to seize Florida unless they did so. Once again Jackson's violence was to provide the hard edge of American expansionism behind Adam's forceful diplomacy—the following month Calhoun ordered Jackson to prepare for an invasion while the War Department requested and Chief Engineer Walker Armistead sent a report—rare in American military planning before the late 1830s, and indeed even in the preparations made for war with Mexico prior to 1846—on the strength of the Spanish forces and fortifications, the most opportune moment to begin operations, and the time that would be required to secure the province. Returning to a proper tactical caution, Jackson warned his superiors against investing or assaulting St. Augustine with insufficient forces, which might lead to a reverse that would damage public support for the conquest—a good example of Jackson's political thoughtfulness, solicited or not. The day before Christmas Calhoun asked Jackson for a plan of operations, and on the last day of the year the secretary outlined Jackson's course of action if Congress were to approve the occupation.44

Although the administration backed off after receiving French and Russian calls for restraint, Jackson wrote a month later that "if [Congress] will authorize the measure, the Floridas shall be in the possession of the United States in three months." Spain could hardly ignore the threat posed by the inexorable Jackson, and upon closer inspection the Spanish found their prospects for defense virtually impossible. Failing to secure the aid of a more powerful European ally, Spain finally ratified the Transcontinental Treaty in October 1820. This accession notwithstanding, just before taking formal
possession of the territory in 1821, Jackson cautioned Calhoun that the work of American expansionism in the southeast was not yet complete: "One thing is certain. As long as [the Indians] are permitted to remain . . . the Floridas . . . will be a receptacle for rogues, murderers, and runaway negroes." The cession of Florida eliminated Spain as a threat to American national security, but Jackson had always recognized that the Indians were the real obstacles to the expansion of American landholding and the commercial cotton economy then beginning to boom. Indeed, even as he dispatched the Spanish Jackson began to implement the policy of dispossession later known as Indian removal, and a decade and a half later this policy would force the army to fight its most difficult struggle of this era, the most protracted "Indian war" in American history, a conflict which produced a near-crisis in the army as officers resigned to avoid service in Florida and anonymously criticized government policy in their professional journals.45

Jackson’s strategy for securing southern borderlands integrated military operations, diplomacy (from the position of strength those operations had produced), and economic development. Even before the Seminole War, Jackson believed (and correctly so, within the limits imposed by his racial blinders) that the long-term solution to American security concerns in the south lay in the growth of white population and settlement. His justifications of the land cessions made by the southern Indians routinely included broad strategic considerations like those we shall see in the thinking of the board for coastal fortifications and the senior commanders on the northern frontier (where a similar wave of settlement was occurring, supported by military commanders for much the same reasons), with similar consequences for his strategic thinking. In March 1816 the administration made a treaty with the Cherokee ceding lands previously claimed by the
United States under the Treaty of Fort Jackson (with the Creeks) to which the Indians had held a claim. Recurring to the language of his plans for the Creek War, Jackson soon protested that the Territory ceded was of incalculable value to the U.S., as it opened a free communication to the lower country [the Gulf Coast] through our own soil . . . cut off all communication & intercourse between the southern and northwestern Indians, gave us roads unshakable by Indian claims, & supplies for our army on these roads from the certain industry of our citizens. Though phrased in the specialized idiom of military utility, Jackson's criticism of the new treaty accurately reflected the weight of white public opinion in the southwest, and six months later the general notified President Monroe that he had secured the cession of the Cherokee and Chickasaw claims which conflicted with the Creek cession of 1814, rejoicing that "we will now have good roads, kept up and supplied by the industry of our own citizens, and our frontier defended by a strong population."46

Jackson's motives were not simply military or defensive, however--he also wrote from his personal and civilian perspectives as a frontier land speculator and entrepreneur, and the following March he remarked that on strategic grounds "the sooner . . . that this country can be brought into market the better." This leading facilitator of the market revolution and the expansion of southern commercial agriculture and plantation slavery then added that "next to the completion of the Fortifications of defence, I would beg leave to call your attention to strengthening [this] Frontier by a permanent settlement of all the Lands acquired from the Creek Indians." Indeed, Jackson's words presaged the expansive public land policies he would carry out as president a decade and a half later:
Short sighted politicians may urge that by bringing too much land into market at once, it will reduce the price, and thereby injure the finances of the Country--others, still more blind, may contend that it will drain the old States of their population, to prevent which... the land ought not to be brought into market for twenty years... The lower country is of too great importance to the Union for its safety to be jeopardized, by such a short sighted policy--all the lands to be sold, are, in a national point of view, but as a drop in the bucket when brought into competition with the value of that Country to the Union, or when compared with the amount it would cost the United States to retake it, should it fall into the hands of an Enemy possessing a superiority on the Ocean [Britain].

Jackson then recurred to the logistical advantages of having "a permanent population, able to defend [the new territory], who will by their industry afford ample supplies for an Army, [build] good roads, & improve the navigation, so as to render the transportation of every thing necessary for an Army, easy and cheap." Territorial expansion provided buffers against foreign contagion and threat, while land and commerce went hand-in-hand in the booming market agriculture of the emerging cotton kingdom (which, though Jackson did not then note it, was the principal source of American exports and foreign exchange).47

Similar reasoning led Jackson to recommend public land purchases from Indians living along the banks of the Ohio and Mississippi. As in a number of other letters, he also reiterated the need for a western iron foundry and armory akin to those at Springfield, Massachusetts and Harper's Ferry, Virginia, which he characterized "as intimately connected with the
permanent defence of the South Western Frontier of our country." Jackson personally reconnoitered the proposed site in southern Tennessee (north of present-day Florence, Alabama), which would "produce a sufficient supply of metal for all purposes of defence . . . and at all seasons of the year a free communication to all points on the Mississippi." "Being perfectly secure from the approach of an enemy," in a war with Britain this site would serve as "a Depot of Arms and supplies, which could with ease be transported to the operating Army" along the Gulf Coast and relieve it of dependence on Atlantic (or worse still, foreign) depots and workshops.48

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II. The Southern Borderlands, 1815-1821: Spanish Patriots, American Filibusters, and Cuba and Texas

Recently historians of American foreign relations have begun to emphasize that a nation's foreign policy is not the creation of the state alone, especially under decentralized social and political conditions like those which prevailed in the early American republic. Under the federal territorial system the process of geographic expansion was one of nation-state formation as well as extending the existing pattern of local self-government; expansion therefore contained the potential for both social reproduction in the decentralized agrarian mode envisioned by Jefferson and the institutional elaboration and political consolidation of a more powerful nation-state. Even without the aggressiveness of an Andrew Jackson--and even with him at its head--the central government and its agents were forced to reckon with the expansive--and potentially explosive--actions and demands of a mushrooming frontier population which was virtually unregulated--and unregulable, given political and ideological constraints--by state institutions
and authority and therefore capable of effectively withholding its sanction and support from national policies or reshaping them in pursuit of local objectives.

Consequently, the United States had no opportunity to pursue a passive or isolationist foreign policy, and as the most visible and potent agents of state authority and power in the early republic, army officers constantly had to confront private initiatives along the nation's borders, often without the physical means or political sanction to enforce national laws and policy effectively. Indeed, viewed from the centralist (and often openly authoritarian) perspective of officers charged with enforcing federal sovereignty, the most immediate product of expansion often seemed to be social entropy and disorder. As the most visible and potent agents of national power, army officers repeatedly had to confront and constrain aggressive private initiatives along the borders, often against the opposition of congressmen from the frontier regions. Moreover, regular officers always had to compete with locally appointed militia and volunteer commanders for control over the direction of organized violence, a struggle over occupational jurisdiction that gave focus to the officer corps' growing sense of internal cohesion, professional identity, and, ultimately, accountability to its patrons and paymasters, the civilian authorities of the national government (and more specifically the executive branch).49

Army officers' attitudes toward territorial expansion were profoundly shaped by their experiences—usually antagonistic ones—with civilian borderers. Because they were bound to execute contested national policies, officers frequently became embroiled in conflicts with local civilian authorities and their representatives and allies in Congress. The experience of these conflicts eventually led many officers to advocate and where possible
to practice dual policies of domestic and international restraint for fear that
the "disorderly" borderers would get out of hand, responses which reflected a
quasi-Hamiltonian preference for the order and stability imposed by the
nation-state through the rules of international law. Indeed, contrary to the
beliefs held by most historians, regular officers' long-term material interests
as an occupation and a class—in secure employment and social status through
a political monopoly over the application of organized violence by the
nation-state—increasingly dictated caution in the pace and process of
expansion, and on the whole the officer corps was substantially less
enthusiastic about expansion in 1846 than it had been thirty years before.50

Filibusters and adventurers acknowledging no national sovereignty
were a secondary concern for officers focused on Indian threats and the
pretexts they presented for expansion, but in the years before the First
Seminole War they posed an equal threat to peace between the United States
and Spain. Brigadier General Eleazar Wheelock Ripley, commander of the
8th Military Department (which included New Orleans and Mobile) in 1816
and 1817, was a politically and socially well-connected officer who had
extensive dealings with filibusters from both sides of the legal divide. Late in
the former year he received a proposal from a French exile, General Jean
Joseph Amable Humbert, seeking American aid to seize Pensacola, an
American objective since before the War of 1812, for the "Patriots" who were
attempting to emulate revolutions farther south. Ripley's response the
following January (1817, a year prior to Jackson's campaign against Florida)
exuded republican enthusiasm for the revolutionary cause and a military
officer's dutiful determination to avoid compromising American neutrality:

I consider myself a soldier bound to support the Government
and Laws of my Country. . . . I view with the liveliest sympathy
the struggles of the American Spaniards for their Independence.
All the feelings of a man attached to free institutions prompt me
to wish them unlimited success, while my duty as a soldier
requires me to refrain from assisting them without the orders of
my Government.51

Not foreseeing Jackson's aggressiveness (or changes in his own interests
and circumstances), Ripley warned Humbert that only Congress could initiate
hostilities. Indeed, Ripley's actions on the southern frontier combined every
dimension of the officer corps' response to Spain's American collapse,
including intrigue, inaction, and calls for reinforcement and additional
military preparation. Ripley rebuffed Humbert's request on the grounds of
national integrity and honor, proclaiming that "it is one of our principles of
national policy to do nothing insidiously," but the general also wrote
mysteriously to the War Department that "I shall make the old man useful"
(though he did not say how, or in whose interests), noting that the Spanish
rebels and loyalists both had spy networks in New Orleans, but that he would
let them alone as long as they did not bother him. Ripley also wrote to the
secretary of war with his concern that the Patriots ("their privateers . . .
manned both officers and crews, very generally from this country--their [land]
force . . . made up of foreigners" French and American) might establish
themselves in West Florida, provoking a Spanish counterattack that he
professed--either falsely or very unrealistically--to fear might reach Mobile.

Responsible officers sought defensive preparedness, and Ripley
requested that two additional regiments of American troops be deployed in
the area between New Orleans and Mobile to preserve American neutrality by
deterring provocations from either side: "[T]here is no other way to preserve
ourselves quiet and tranquil (should such be our national policy) but to show
an efficient force . . . sufficient for any contingency." But even in this official letter to his civilian superior Ripley seemed compelled to declare his affinity for the insurrectionaries: "You will not believe that I feel indifferent to the success of the Patriot cause . . . on the contrary I wish them the utmost prosperity." Intrigue, national security, and an at least rhetorical republicanism were all present in the general's calculations. Aside from his ideological affinities, combining the rhetoric of republicanism with that of military preparedness also promised Ripley a significantly larger command and greater potential to intimidate the Spanish.

On the whole the "Spanish Patriots" in Florida were little more than a diffuse collection of international adventurers bound together by a desire for loot. The more serious dimension of filibustering was also a less overt one, the movement of American farmers westward across international boundaries. This migration, and its frequent manifestation in filibustering expeditions and declarations of local autonomy or independence from Spanish sovereignty, was a constant throughout the southern borderlands from 1774 onward, culminating in the conflicts in West Florida just before the War of 1812. During the years of tension and skirmishing between 1815 and 1819, American population pressure flowed into the new territories of Mississippi and Alabama being expropriated from the Indians rather than across the border into unsettled Middle Florida, and between 1810 and 1819 the population of Mississippi Territory and state increased fivefold, from forty to two hundred thousand, most of it during the four postwar years, while East Florida continued to receive an intermittent influx of Americans as it had before the war.
After the cession of Florida in 1821 the United States' sole remaining boundary with Spain and Mexico was that along the Sabine River with the province of Texas. The most overt example of American filibustering against Texas between the Gutierrez-Magee expedition of 1812 and the revolution of 1836 occurred during the summer and fall of 1819 on the Sabine border, where the Spanish captured part of a filibuster expedition led by James Long. This little-known incident and the ambiguous civil-military and diplomatic situations it produced is important to our study because it presaged in some respects the more extensive dilemmas and reactions of army officers along the Canadian border two decades later. Brevet captain William C. Beard, an officer of seven years experience, was the American commander at Cantonment Jesup, halfway between Natchitoches and the Sabine river frontier, during the incident. Beard's first reaction to the potential crisis was to offer military aid against the filibusters to the local magistrate per the Neutrality Act of 1818, in the hope that "as the subject is one in which the honor and interest of our country may be deeply involved I hope I shall receive the advice and aid of the civil authority." Beard explained his concerns more fully to the U.S. Marshal on the scene, warning that the expedition "may lead our country into war, and is at all events a disgrace to our citizenry." He then reported the situation to his departmental commander, Brigadier General Ripley, stressing legality as the measure of the national integrity he was bound by oath to protect: "Viewing . . . such conduct as a disgrace to the country and a violation of the laws and national faith, I have thought it my duty to make every exertion to put a stop to their proceedings." But the scope of Beard's dilemma had also increased, as the lukewarm response of the local civil authorities suggested to him that "they are more inclined to favour than to obstruct the measure."53
Beard's superiors responded cautiously to the delicate constitutional and political situation. "You will act in all cases in subordination to the civil authority . . . without their calls . . . make no military movement," read Ripley's order of July 9. The only exception would be in case of an invasion of United States territory, presumably by Spanish forces attempting to preempt the filibusters. Jackson approved these instructions, as "the military being subordinate to the civil power [they] cannot act in the present case, unless their services are required" by the appropriate civilian officials. The army was therefore unable to act against the invaders, although an attempt was made to arrest Long at his headquarters in Natchez. Threatened directly and without constituents to appease, the Spanish authorities reacted much more energetically and the Long expedition was dispersed.54

Beard then became an unofficial mediator between the Spanish commanders and the American civilian population on both sides of the river, providing food and shelter to refugee women and children while negotiating for the release and repatriation of American farm settlers whom he did not believe were involved in the invasion. (How he made this determination is unclear.) On October 31 he met the Spanish force on the banks of the Sabine, where it was in pursuit of the fleeing filibusters. The Spanish commander's report of the meeting suggests that Beard asked for the repatriation of all the American prisoners, "on the ground that they had been engaged in making a living [albeit in Spanish territory] and were innocent of aggression against the Spaniards." The Spanish colonel, Ignacio Perez, initially refused and responded with his own query as to the reason for Beard's presence on the Sabine, which was the western border of the so-called Neutral Ground between Texas and Louisiana negotiated by James Wilkinson in 1806, territory that was disputed and theoretically demilitarized though in
reality under American control. Beard replied that his orders were to arrest Long and to prevent the Spanish from pursuing him across the river into the Neutral Ground. Perez withdrew his forces westward and soon released eighteen of his thirty prisoners in return for guarantees that they would not reenter Spanish territory. Beard's ability to constrain these filibusters was limited, however—fifty-three men were charged with violations of the Neutrality Act as a consequence of the Long expedition, but only four were even tried, by the sympathetic civilian courts.55

Beard continued to try to draw a clear line separating filibusters from other American emigrants, disavowing the former and interceding solely "for the industrious and peaceable American settlers who are not blameable for the outrageous conduct of a set of desperate adventurers." Beard's choice of criteria for classifying the floating populace on the Sabine frontier was highly artificial, however, for the men he called peaceful farmers were squatting on Spanish land without proper legal title. Although the members of Long's expedition were mostly recruited in New Orleans and Natchez rather than East Texas and the Neutral Ground, their motives were similar to those of Americans already there. Anglo-Americans on the frontier had few scruples about how they gained their land, or wealth in general, and it would have been easy to confuse the soldiers in Long's force with other Americans—all of them armed—who had been hunting, trapping, and farming in East Texas for several years. For Perez this distinction had little meaning, because the American squatters had supported Long's secessionist government and they might well provide a pool of recruits for similar plots in the future. He was therefore prepared to drive them out of East Texas along with those Americans specifically identified as filibusters. Beard, on the other hand, had to enforce his nation's official policy of neutrality while remaining sensitive
to the strong popular pressures in support of American expansionism, pressures that might embarrass the government and cost him future advancement should he overreact.\textsuperscript{56}

The connections between professional responsibility, state formation, and the army's internal class and caste structure were manifested when Beard judged a third category of American by their failure to abide by law, asking that the Spanish commander deliver deserters from the U.S. Army found among the filibusters to his custody. (Filibusters since the Gutierrez-Magee and Mina expeditions had recruited at army posts like Natchitoches, where they undoubtedly targeted soldiers.) Indeed, this request was sought in accordance with an informal agreement made previously, which must have provided for a mutual exchange of deserters as an essential means of deterring and punishing such disruptive conduct in a loosely policed borderland where soldiers had ample incentive and opportunity to strike out on their own. Similar agreements were also made by American commanders with their British counterparts along the Canadian border, where linguistic similarity and a dense population made desertion even easier. These deals reflected not only the obvious need to maintain discipline within the army itself, but the similar mindsets and values of loyalty and hierarchical paternalism of military officers from different countries conditioned by the same organizational and occupational needs. Legalism therefore served the individual officer's desires for institutional, social, and international stability and order, conditions which in turn provided the bases for secure careers within the army.\textsuperscript{57}

Beard's unstated motives are unknown, and his success in resolving the contradictions of his position is not clear, but his reactions to the Long expedition are significant when compared to those of other American army
officers in this period. Beard's superiors showed few scruples about intervening in, or even initiating, actions designed to bring new territory to the United States, and Jackson's sudden emphasis on the supremacy of local civilian authority along the Sabine River undoubtably stemmed from political considerations in the aftermath of his invasion of Florida. In fact, he warned the War Department "that this expedition has been planned by designing men who from feelings of personal hostility are desirous of involving the [President] in political difficulty and furnishing matter for declamatory discussion at the next session of Congress." Needless to say, Jackson's own actions in Florida had done just that.58

General Ripley's actions toward the Sabine incidents were not limited to defensive reinforcements and official neutrality, however. His personal interests and connections in the southwest had evolved as he became more familiar with the opportunities available on the frontier, and Ripley resigned from the army (in which he was embroiled in a dispute with General Brown dating from the War of 1812) in February 1820. That June he was elected president of the so-called Republic of Texas by James Long's "Supreme Council." Ripley accepted the offer, which included a magnificent salary of $25,000 per year (albeit one he almost certainly never received), far in excess of that paid to any general in the army, and he subsequently worked to facilitate Long's second invasion of Texas, raising funds and gathering supplies through his extensive network of connections (developed as departmental commander, of course) in Louisiana and the Southwest. Indeed, in combination with Jackson, Ripley's motives and actions provide us with a glimpse of both dissension in the higher ranks of the officer corps and the continuing relationships between military commanders and factional politics in the first decade after the War of 1812. Writing to the War Department,
Jackson implied that Ripley had left the 8th Military Department "in its late state of disorganization, with a view of aiding those in [the] opposition, who are unfriendly to the Army." Though unsuccessful as a leader of filibusters, Ripley maintained his connections in the world of southwestern affairs and served as a United States representative from Louisiana between 1835 and 1837--the years of the Texas Revolution, which we can safely assume figured prominently among Ripley's concerns.  

The connections between army officers and filibusters could be even more complex because of the multi- and even extra-national composition of many such groups. Exiled Napoleonic officers and other adventurers from France were particularly active in the Gulf region, often in temporary alliance with privateers, freebooters, and pirates like Jean Lafitte, and the United States government was determined to excise these heterogeneous forces from the peripheries of the Gulf region lest they provide other nations with excuses for intervention in the American sphere of influence. Late in 1817 President Monroe ordered Gaines to seize Amelia Island (off the northeast coast of Florida) from Louis Aury, a Frenchman putatively in command of the Mexican revolutionary navy (by commission from the senior Mexican representative in the United States, Jose Manuel de Hererra) who styled himself the "civil and military governor of the province of Texas" and had joined forces with a variety of adventurers (including several erstwhile army officers), pirates, and slave smugglers on the island and formed a government of sorts as a base for extralegal ventures in Florida. (Aury, George Woodbine, Robert Ambrister, and the Spanish Patriots in Florida were all connected at various times by temporary alliances of convenience.) Gaines took the island without opposition but had to allow Aury to depart for lack of any sort of
evidence of wrongdoing that would stand up in court. (Aury was tried at Charleston in 1818 but the charges were dismissed.)

A year later Lieutenant Colonel William Trimble warned Secretary of War Calhoun that if the French émigrés associated with General Charles Lallemand (and possibly Humbert) were allowed to remain along the Trinity River in Texas they would pose an obstacle to American control over the Indian trade and provide a pretext for French intervention. Trimble recommended the introduction of American settlers into the region to preclude this possibility, but he made no mention of the legality of such a move, which would presumably be as much contrary to international law as any other state-inspired migration across an international boundary. The Spanish soon forced the Bonapartist colony to depart, and no action was taken by American forces. (Trimble resigned in March of the following year and became a United States senator from Ohio until his death at the end of 1821 from wounds received at the sortie from Fort Erie on the Niagara seven years before.) The United States also sought to end the use of Galveston Island by filibusters like Lallemand and Mina and pirates and privateers like Aury (who had been there in 1816 before moving to Amelia Island) and Lafitte (who replaced Aury as the chief figure on Galveston). An attack planned for the beginning of 1818 was apparently postponed, but American concern about and interaction with the French exiles and pirates concluded in 1821 when a naval vessel forced Lafitte to evacuate Galveston Island.

Texas itself was rarely much of a consideration in even the most expansionist officers’ minds, however. Jackson repeatedly pooh-poohed reports of Spanish activity along the Sabine, and he summed up the military reality of that frontier as early as 1820: “There cannot exist any serious apprehension of an invasion . . . in that quarter.” That December he
remarked to Calhoun that "if we do not possess the Floridas, I have supposed we would take possession of Texas and extend our Garrisons to our Territorial Limits; by which we would overawe the Indians under Spanish influence, and form a cordon of posts from the Mandan Villages south west to the Rio Grande or Del Norte, or at least as far West as Galvestown." Nevertheless, this foremost of American expansionists believed that Texas for the present we can do well without--But without the Floridas our lower country cannot be made secure, and our Navy cannot afford protection to it in time of war. The idea of invading our Territory through the province of Texas, is to me absurd. Should it be attempted, a vigilant General... could cut [off] the Invaders in the rear and destroy or capture the whole. No military man would hazard such a step with a view to conquer New Orleans.

Jackson therefore cautioned Secretary of State Adams against demanding Texas in the Transcontinental Treaty lest he jeopardize the primary strategic objective of securing Florida and the southern flank. Even this most forceful of American expansionists did not allow his eagerness to outweigh his responsible sense of strategic reality.62

Cuba was the most distant focal point for expansionist intrigue by army officers between 1815 and 1821. Some of these men were quite junior in both rank and time in service, and their ability to visualize themselves leading amphibious expeditionary forces of several thousand men against foreign nations gives us perhaps our most overt glimpse of gentry officers' almost boundless sense of opportunities for expansion along the nation's southern frontier in the early republic before 1820. As in Florida, these proposals were
superficially motivated by defensive considerations, in this case the widely shared fear that Spain would transfer Cuba to Britain, which would use the island as a base to bottle up American economic and territorial expansion in the Gulf of Mexico. Indeed, the perspicacious Major Thomas Jesup expressed the characteristic view that Cuba held the "key to all Western America" and under British control would be "so formidable as to menace" American independence, and he spent much of his energies as commander of the 8th Military Department in 1816 planning to take Cuba for the United States, writing to both Jackson and Secretary of State Monroe several times on the subject.63

Jesup, who had already shown outstanding initiative in reinforcing Gaines at Fort Scott, made his plans independently of direction or sanction from higher authority—the eight-year veteran contacted his Navy counterpart without orders to secure naval support for the three or four thousand men he expected to raise for the expedition. To accomplish this goal Jesup clearly would have had to rely on civilian volunteers, for the force of regulars under his command did not exceed several hundred, and to call up civilians without authorization from the president would have violated several statutes as well as the constitutional chain of command and accountability. Jesup initially assumed that he would command the invasion force himself, but he must have realized that this responsibility was a bit beyond his rank, for he amended his proposal to offer the position to Jackson. Nevertheless, Jesup's ambition remained strong, indeed potentially disruptive: "as the plan is my own, I would not be willing to yield to another [superior officer]."64

Jackson responded that the "project against Cuba is a good one," but warned that "you will be cautious . . . & by no means provoke offensive movements" by the Spanish. The precocious major then proposed that he be
sent on a reconnaissance mission to the island, for he feared "a secret negotiation" rumored to be occurring between Britain and Spain for the purpose of exchanging Florida and Cuba for British aid in recovering Spain's other Latin American colonies. Jesup also reported rumors that the Spanish were plotting to seize New Orleans, but Jackson routinely and correctly downplayed the Spanish activities and capabilities so often reported by the commanders of the 8th Military Department. Jesup's last letter on the subject of Cuba during his command concluded with an eleven page assessment and stressed that "the military policy of the country should be to secure every assailable point"—preclusive security like that sought by American commanders throughout the southern borderlands and by the Board of Engineers for Fortifications along the Atlantic maritime frontier. To achieve this objective Jesup therefore suggested an immediate invasion to seize the island without awaiting further "provocation." (Jesup demonstrated perhaps the most far-ranging expansionist sentiments in the officer corps during this early stage of his career. In February 1812 he had given thought to resigning in order to serve with the South American Patriots, and seven years later he drafted a letter advocating the seizure of the Spanish port of Ceuta in Morocco [opposite Gibraltar] as well as Mexico itself. Service as the quartermaster general seems to have gradually diminished Jesup's enthusiasm for such distant ventures, however.)

Brigadier General Ripley, Jesup's successor to the command of the 8th Military Department, echoed the future quartermaster general's earlier proposals the following year (1817), suggesting to the War Department that he could easily take Cuba with a force of three thousand American soldiers in the event of war, something he felt that the creole Patriots were unable to do on their own. Jackson's willingness to seize the island in 1818 has already
been noted, and he reiterated it two years later with the simple assertion that he would guarantee Cuba in six months "if the Congress should will it."
Despite his insouciance, Jackson's rationale closely echoed the nontransference doctrine espoused by Jefferson and Madison and presaged the bases of American policy toward Cuba during the 1820s: "Not with a view of Conquest, but to be held by the United States until Europe guarantees the possession to Spain, and that it shall not pass from her to any maritime power of Europe, without the full consent of America and the European powers." Jackson apparently did not consider European consent necessary in case the United States sought possession, but Jackson's primary concern, a responsible one given the experience of the past decade, was clearly to keep the strategically placed island out of the hands of the British.66

Some American officers were more ambivalent toward the rich opportunities presented by Cuba. Ex-colonel James R. Mullany, the quartermaster general from 1816 to 1818, wrote to the War Department in 1819 that "in a national point of view the Floridas are all important," and that in Cuba "the people are friendly to the United States and often express a wish of becoming an integral part of the Union" as a state. Mullany's attraction to Cuba was largely economic--"their commerce is of great importance to our citizens"--but he did not ignore the strategic issues--that Cuba's trade "would in all probability be totally lost to us should the Island be ceded to England . . . [and] Havana [would then] become an annoyance to us either in peace or in war." Strategy and economics notwithstanding, Mullany's belief that "the present situation of the Cubans would suit us best" presaged the consensus that evolved among American policymakers by the mid-1820s, that continued Spanish rule would best contain the threat of a black uprising and the establishment of maroon societies, while avoiding the Anglo-American crisis
that any change in the island's political status threatened to precipitate. Whatever the hopes of Jesup, Ripley, and Jackson, there was no chorus of military voices in favor of aggression against the Pearl of the Antilles before the Mexican War. Even Jackson was unwilling to actually attempt such an invasion without congressional sanction, however, permission that was extremely unlikely in the aftermath of his conquest of Florida, and aside from Jesup none of these officers attempted to secure the naval support that would have been necessary to ferry over and sustain the invasion force.67

Many American civilians continued to consider Cuba's status as the last of Spain's Latin American colonies an ideologically irksome geopolitical anomaly and worried that the island might become a tool of British aggression or constraint (which in the eyes of most Americans amounted to the same thing) against the United States, but very few army officers espoused possible resolutions to these irritants during the 1820s and 30s. Fear of Britain was the principal focus of officers' rare comments on the subject, which were expressed only in the context of possible British efforts to acquire the island, and in consequence the occasional commentators advocated wartime strikes to preempt British action rather than unprovoked territorial conquest and annexation initiated by the United States. (As in the case of Haiti and other Caribbean islands, many Americans feared unrest among the slave and mixed-race populations and worried that Cuba lacked a class capable of engendering stability in the absence of a colonial regime supposedly alien to American principles.) Officers do not seem to have left any comment on the possibility of intervention to forestall or defeat Mexican or Columbian invasions rumored in the mid-1820s; their fading ideological commitment to the cause of Latin American republicanism would undoubtedly have been
outweighed by their desire to serve the interests of the United States and their duty to obey the commands of their government.68

American military attention to the island did pick up toward the end of the 1830s as British and American relations soured during the Canadian border crises and officers became concerned over the growing commercial rivalry between the two nations. In 1839 Major William Chase, the engineer in charge of fortification construction at the navy's primary Gulf Coast base in Pensacola, worried (like many civilian policymakers) that "the indebtedness of Spain to Great Britain will afford a pretext for the transfer of Cuba," and he warned that sustaining the Monroe Doctrine would ultimately require the United States to fight "a great naval battle [against Britain] in the Gulf of Mexico or the Caribbean sea." Writing in the Pensacola Gazette, Chase appealed to southern sectional interests by warning that "the slave islands of the West Indies must, to suit the policy of England and the Abolitionists, be placed, in a very few years, on the same footing with their own free (Brigand) islands." This concern, reflective of the interdependence of American slavery and American freedom in the nation's southwestern expansion, was repeated six months later in the 1839 report of Inspector General John Ellis Wool, who warned against a threat of "servile insurrection" emanating from Cuba. Chase's letter and Wool's report were directed at influencing a skeptical Congress and public opinion rather than providing practical military planning, however.69

Though often irresponsible in its aggressiveness, the officer corps had served the underlying territorial and economic interests of the white American nation well during the decade after the War of 1812. The methods of a Jackson pose significant questions for the study of military
professionalism and civil-military relations, however, particularly that of balancing substantive responsibility (or an officer's sense thereof) with the demands of formal accountability (which in other contexts meant forcing localities on the nation's periphery to accede to the sovereign control of the center at the expense of their own interests). Diplomatic historian Ernest May has observed that "to a large extent . . . American foreign policy approximated whatever consensus obtained among a majority of the interested electorate"--an electorate defined by race and gender, of course--during the early republic, and in 1818 Andrew Jackson probably represented the views of that majority better than any civilian officeholder. On the other hand, the general blatantly disregarded the constitutional and democratic means established to consult the majority's wishes, bearing out criticisms (however politically motivated) that he was a potential Napoleon who was willing to substitute his own will for that of the people as expressed through their elected representatives. Fortunately for the future of American civil-military relations and democracy, Jackson was exceptional in both stature and will, and the undemocratic civil-military relations of plebiscitary Caesarism did not find fertile soil among Jackson's subordinates and counterparts.

Fortunately, Jackson's actions in Florida represent an end rather than a beginning in the development of civil-military relations along the borders and frontiers. Jackson's willfulness and his political stature made him difficult if not impossible to restrain, and he more than any other American officer of the nineteenth century felt himself in tune with the wishes of the American people he served. Though an officer of the national government the erstwhile Tennessee politician saw the white settlers of the southwest as his constituency--"the people" in republican terms--and these characteristics clearly distinguish Jackson from any other army officer of this era (and
perhaps from any other in American history), even Winfield Scott when that
general was rumored a candidate for the presidency while in command of the
Army of Mexico three decades later. Nevertheless, the military filibustering
discussed in this chapter (and in chapter two, on the officer corps before 1815)
demonstrates that Jackson was not unique in his belligerence, and he was
certainly widely admired among the officers of his division. However
beneficial their consequences for the farmers of the South, Jackson’s
reluctance to subordinate himself to the commands of the nation-state
represented by his civilian superiors was not uncommon among the officers
of the immediate postwar army, who also demonstrated a similar and closely
related resistance to the demands and constraints of an institutionalized
organizational hierarchy. These attitudes would change during the following
decade after many of these men had left the officer corps, and chapters
thirteen to fifteen will show us a less confidently aggressive group of
commanders who reacted much differently when faced with more complex
conflicts in the nation’s internal and external borderlands.
Part V


3 See Wiebe, *The Opening of American Society*, ch. 14 ("Democratic Culture"), regarding the search for universally applicable principles of behaviour throughout American society during the Jacksonian (or perhaps early Victorian) era.

Attitudes Towards Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy:
An Overview of Sources and Change, 1815-1846


5 Scott to Secretary of War Calhoun, August 20, 1820, file S-37, SW:LR-Reg.

6 Skelton, "High Army Leadership in the Era of the War of 1812," *Table II* (p. 258), surveys the geographic origins of the army's field and general officers appointed between 1808 and 1815. The proportion of appointments to these
grades from New England during this period was eighty-eight percent of that region's representation in the nation's free population in 1810, that from the Mid-Atlantic states eighty-two percent, and those from the South Atlantic and western states 120% of their proportions in the free population of the nation as a whole. In other words, though the figures for all of these regions save the west were relatively close (eighty-six to ninety-three percent) to their proportion of U.S. Representatives (i.e., to the population as adjusted by the three-fifths provision), the South Atlantic states enjoyed a proportionally dramatic advantage over their northern brethren in the allocation of senior officer appointments. (The disparity disappears in absolute terms when New England and the Mid-Atlantic states are combined as the North.) The West, meaning Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and the Indiana and Michigan territories, enjoyed the largest advantage, having 225% the proportion of its representation in the U.S. House. Even though the majority of these men would have come from nonslaveholding areas, they shared the aggressive expansionism of their southern counterparts; indeed, western support for expansion against Canada doubtlessly accounts for much of this imbalance in appointments.

Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, Table 9.1 (p. 155), provides an assessment of the geographical origins of the officers on the 1830 and 1860 army lists. By 1830 the number of northern officers was approximately 112% the proportion of the regions' representation in the U.S. House, while that of the South was eighty-four percent and that of the South Atlantic seventy-five percent. Both north and south were represented in proportions equal to their percentages of the white population, but this equality still demonstrates a decline in the figures for the South and the West from 1815. (Indeed, the west, both north and south was severely underrepresented on the 1830 list, with New England rather than the Mid-Atlantic taking up the slack in the northern numbers.) (Skelton uses the 1820 House of Representatives and the population categorized as white in the 1830 census for his calculations.)

Interestingly, in 1860 these relationships between east and west remained the same, but the proportions of officers relative to both the white population and the 1848 House of Representatives had changed dramatically: northern officers accounted for only eighty percent of their section's proportion of the white population and ninety-two percent of its share of U.S. Representatives, while for southern officers the figures are 139% and 110% respectively, with the South Atlantic states accounting for 210% of their share of the total white population. (New England was also disproportionately represented, though by a lesser degree relative to the white population.) These changes may not be as dramatic as they appear, for the South's proportion of officers relative to the system by which candidates were appointed to West Point (the total number of congressmen) was only 110%
(but 125% for the South Atlantic). On the other hand, the rigor of West Point no longer appears to have had as much effect on southerners, perhaps because that rigor declined somewhat after Thayer's departure. Since these registers list all the officers in commission during a certain year, these figures cannot account for sectionally disproportionate resignation rates, which might shed light on the resurgence of southern officers, but Skelton did not attempt to make this count, and I am dependent on his labor and statistics for my assessment here.

7 The following are a number of officers closely associated with Jackson who resigned or were discharged circa 1821 and became territorial officers in Florida: Robert Butler (Jackson's divisional AG, who was reduced to a lieutenant colonel in 1821 and resigned, becoming surveyor general of public lands in Florida for the quarter-century after 1824), James Gadsden (commissioner and negotiator for the Treaty of Fort Moultrie in 1823, which served as the "legal" basis for American claims of sovereignty over the Seminoles and the removal policy toward them, and member of the territorial council in 1824, after serving as Jackson's aide and divisional IG but being refused the post of army AG and resigning in 1821), and Gad Humphreys (Indian Agent, originally a major commissioned in 1808). Richard Keith Call (territorial governor and theater commander during the first year of the Second Seminole War) provides perhaps the closest connection between civil and military service in the cause of expansionism: he served as an aide-de-camp and acting inspector general to Jackson during the 1818 invasion, was rewarded with a captaincy that July, but resigned in 1822 to enter the territorial council and practice law in Pensacola. The following year Call was appointed general of the territorial militia; he then served two years as Florida's delegate to Congress and was appointed to a position as receiver in the public land office in West Florida in 1825. Besides 1836, he returned to the territorial governorship from 1841 to 1845.

Arkansas was another fertile field for officers who left the army or were discharged in 1815 and 1821, illustrating once again the civilian utility and prestige of army experience and the interpenetration between civil and military elites, both most significant on the thinly populated frontier where men with the skills learned by officers were hardest to come by. Major William Bradford ran twice for the position of territorial delegate to Congress while still in uniform before resigning in order to serve as brigadier general of the territorial militia. Bradford's second electoral campaign was fought against Henry Conway, a lieutenant from 1812 to 1815, while other ex-officers prominent in Arkansas territorial politics included Robert Crittenden (who served in 1814 and 1815) and William O. Allen, a captain from 1812 to 1818. (Allen had been appointed general of the territorial militia in 1820.) Both of
the territorial governors during this period were erstwhile officers: James Miller, an 1808 appointee who rose to colonel of the 5th Infantry and resigned in 1819 to take up the post when Arkansas was created, and George Izard, a senior general of the War of 1812 (commander on the Vermont front in 1813 and 1814) who left the army in 1815 and replaced Miller in 1825. Miller recommended David Brearley, a lieutenant colonel and colonel from 1812 until his resignation in 1820 to become Indian agent for the region we now label Oklahoma, as his successor, while Miller himself became U.S. Customs Collector for the Port of Salem until his death in 1851. See White, Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, especially pp. 41-43.

Other officers who sustained the army's expansionist efforts as civilians after 1821 include John Miller (colonel of the 3rd Infantry until 1818, who was elected governor of Missouri between 1828 and 1832 and representative to Congress from 1837 to 1843); James L. Smith (Miller's successor as colonel of the 3rd Infantry until he was disbanded in 1821), who was appointed to the Superior Court of East Florida in 1822; Thomas B. Smith (colonel of the Rifle Regiment and commander of the Ninth Military Department), appointed the receiver of money for the main federal Public Land Office in Missouri in 1818; R.C. Nicholas (colonel of the 8th Infantry until his 1819 resignation) and David Brearley (colonel of the 7th upon his resignation in 1820), who became Indian agents; and among more junior officers Peter Pelham, a captain disbanded in 1821 who became Indian subagent and sutler at Tampa Bay. Lt. Col. John Nicks of the 7th Infantry was disbanded in 1821 and became a sutler in Arkansas, where he was appointed general of militia in 1827. Although the total sample is too small to form the basis for a valid statistical judgment, these men represent a substantial portion of the field-grade officers who left the army between 1816 and 1821.

8 Robert E. May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny: The United States Army as a Cultural Mirror," JAH 78 (December 1991): 857-86. Army officers clearly lagged behind civilian society in their grudging acceptance of "self-made manhood." Those who wanted to participate in the market resigned in search of more lucrative remuneration and greater opportunities for upward mobility; many of those who stayed in found the army's ordered pace attractive, and felt themselves unsuited to the more demanding tempo of business life. (See e.g. Skelton, "The Army Officer as Organization Man," pp. 61-70, especially 62-64).

10 Moser, et al, eds., The Papers of Andrew Jackson, has been an indispensible resource and guide in the writing of this chapter, particularly vol. 4 (covering 1816-1820).

11 Lt. George Meade to his wife Margaretta, September 18, 1845, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, p. 26: "General Taylor... is a staunch Whig, and opposed in toto to the Texas annexation, and therefore does not enter heart and soul into his present duties." "He is said to be very tired of this country, and the duty assigned to him, and is supposed will return on the arrival of General Worth." Meade warned his wife not to repeat the rumor. Holman Hamilton, Zachary Taylor: Soldier of the Republic (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1941), p. 167, suggests that Taylor's thoughts of retirement were common gossip in the Army of Occupation.

Chapter XI

13 Elliott, Winfield Scott, pp. 203-204; Scott to Secretary of State James Monroe, March 19, 1816, from Liverpool, England, in the Scott Papers, USMA (originals in the State Department Archives in Washington, D.C.) (see also Scott to Monroe, November 18, 1815).

14 Ibid.; Jefferson to Monroe, February 4, 1816, in Paul L. Ford, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 10 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1892-99), 10: 19; Harris Gaylord Warren, The Sword Was Their Passport: A History of American Filibustering in the Mexican Revolution (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), pp. 149-51; Ines Murat, Napoleon and the American Dream, trans. Frances Frenaye (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), p. 114. See also Curtis A. Wilgus, "Some Notes on Spanish-American Patriot Activity Along the Atlantic Seaboard, 1816-1822," North Carolina Historical Review 4 (April 1927): 172-81, and idem., "Some Notes on Spanish American Patriot Activity Along the Gulf Coast of the United States, 1811-1822," Louisiana Historical Quarterly 8 (April 1925): 193-215. Only Americans and other foreign adventurers could provide the manpower and recklessness for significant filibusters against Florida or Texas, as the Mexican rebels and royalists were both drawn from small elites while the majority of the population were Indian or mestizo peasants unwilling to risk their lives for elite interests. In South America the British provided immensely more material aid than the United States or its citizens, including the largest proportions of Patriot naval crews and entire field forces of discharged troops and officers.

I. The Southeastern Borderlands, 1815-1821: Florida and the First Seminole War

15 Brigadier General Daniel Parker to Colonel William King (commander of the 7th Military Department, which included Georgia and most of Alabama), February 23, 1817, file P-32, SW:LR-Reg.

16 Ethnohistorians have recently begun to explore and disentangle the European practice of naming indigenous aboriginal groups for political purposes, usually to aid in their division, colonization, and subjugation. Recognizing the artificial construction, charged meaning, and ethnohistorically privileging inherent in the naming of Amerindian ethnocultural groups, I have varied my practice according to my intent and the perspective which I am adopting at the moment of labelling. As my work is written and documented from the perspective of American officers, I have accepted the American practice of naming our wars according to the nation's enemies—the Creek Wars, the
Seminole Wars, the Arikara War, the Winnebago War, the Black Hawk War, and the Mexican War—without sharing the prejudicial assignment of causation and blame that they imply. (It would also be extraordinarily cumbersome to repeatedly label these as "the American war against," which would also ignore the nuances of diplomacy in individual cases.) I have referred where appropriate to Muskogees and Muscogulges, to Upper and Lower Creeks, and to distinct *italwa* (square towns, the major religious and economic centers, which developed distinct ethnopoliitical identities within the larger moieties) among them. See especially Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, whose work on these complex issues has been both stimulating and enlightening.

17 Jackson, December 16, 1817, file J-1, SW:LR-Reg.

18 Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 191. See H.S. Halbert and T.H. Ball, *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1969) for general context. For another example of Jackson's advocacy of the strategic utility of military roads, see Remini, p. 331 (from Tennessee to Baton Rouge in 1816). For analyses of officers' attitudes toward Amerindians, see William B. Skelton, "Army Officers' Attitudes Towards Indians, 1830-1860," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 67 (July 1976): 113-24, and idem., *An American Profession of Arms*, ch. 16. Skelton's conclusion that "the army's relationship with Indians was intensely adversarial" through the War of 1812 (p. 306) can be applied to the Florida frontier during the next half-decade as well. Although Gaines and Jackson certainly tried to protect Indians from direct white violence, their attitudes and conduct on the whole were those of virulently racist partisans of white expansion. James W. Silver depicted a more benign Gaines in "A Counter-Proposal to the Indian Removal Policy of Andrew Jackson," *Journal of Mississippi History* 4 (October 1942): 207-215, but his evidence is primarily from the late 1820s and 1830s, after the Florida frontier had been secured for white settlement, and the evidence he gives for the period 1815-1821 seems to contradict his overall argument. It was not until the Second Seminole War of the 1830s that some members of a new generation of army officers became sympathetic to the plight of the Seminoles and other tribes under American aggression. See Thomas C. Leonard, "Red, White, and Army Blue: Empathy and Anger in the American West," *AQ* 26 (May 1974): 176-90, for a perceptive exploration of these attitudes after the Civil War, which demonstrates many parallels in a somewhat different context.


Campaign in the War of 1812 (New York: Putnam, 1974), pp. 174-75 and 342-43; Wilbur S. Brown, The Amphibious Campaign for West Florida and Louisiana, 1814-1815: A Critical Review of Strategy and Tactics at New Orleans (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1969), pp. 166-69; Gaines to Acting Secretary of War Alexander J. Dallas, May 14 and 22, 1815, cited in Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, p. 56, and ASP: Foreign Relations 4: 552. Nicolls (or Nicholls) is often cited as a colonel, which appears to have been a brevet rank. Indeed, Nicolls may have been a civilian, probably an Indian trader, brevetted specifically to act as the British military liaison to the southern Indians. Woodbine's rank is similarly given as captain in many sources. It is also unclear whether these men's rank were in the Royal Marines or a regiment of black West Indian troops.


21 Dallas to Jackson, June 12, 1815, SW:LS; Wright, Creeks and Seminoles, ch. 7; Gaines to Harry Toulmin (his father-in-law), undated, cited in Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, p. 55 (n. 6). Article Nine of the Treaty of Ghent can be read in ASP: Foreign Relations 4: 548. It was to apply to "all the tribes . . . with whom [the United States] may be at war at the time of such ratification"; the Treaty of Fort Jackson served as a convenient diplomatic fiction to exclude the Creeks from consideration under this provision.
22 I do not mean to justify American expansionism by suggesting that it was inevitable because of some superiority of culture or institutions, but rather that it is difficult to see how the government could have stopped it given its minimal powers and the understanding of society and its workings shared by early republican citizens and leaders. See Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935) for a harsh but thorough denunciation of American expansionism in general.

23 Dallas to Jackson, May 22, 1815, and Crawford to Jackson, March 8, 1816, in John Spencer Bassett, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, Volume II, May 1, 1814 to December 31, 1819 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1927), pp. 206 and 235; Jackson to Major Thomas Sidney Jesup, August 1, 1816, Jesup Papers, Box 2, LC.

24 Wright, Creeks and Seminoles, p. 181; Richard M. Sands to Gaines, February 2, 1817 (enclosed in Gaines to Jackson, February 14, 1817), Jackson to Gaines, September 30, 1815, and Gaines to Jackson, October 8, 1815, Jackson Papers, LC.

25 Wright, Creeks and Seminoles, p. 4; Jackson to Gaines, April 8, 1816, file J-94, SW:LR-Reg. See also Jackson to Crawford, April 24, 1816, PAI 4: 26, and Capt. Ferdinand Amelung to Jackson, June 4, 1816, Jackson Papers, LC.

26 Kevin Mulroy, Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas (Lubbock, Tx.: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), p. 16 (first Jackson quotation); Jackson to Gaines, April 8, 1816, file J-94, SW:LR-Reg.; Capt. Ferdinand Amelung to Jackson, June 4, 1816, and Governor Mauricio de Zuniga to Jackson, May 26, 1816, Jackson Papers, LC. Amelung reported that the governor had said that "he would be proud to be commanded by you, and that if the Captain General of Cuba could not furnish him with the necessary means [to destroy the fort], he might perhaps apply to you for assistance" against the maroon fort, but Zuniga's letter (translated by Amelung) said nothing of the sort. During the War of 1812 the Spanish had informed both Britain and the United States that they considered the Apalachicola settlements Creek territory rather than their own, a position they changed at the end of the war once it seemed possible that they might be able to restore a semblance of sovereignty over the region (Owsley, Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands, pp. 183-84).
27 Jackson to Gaines, April 8, 1816, file J-94, SW:LR-Reg.; Gaines to Jackson, March 20, 1816, enclosure to ibid; Gaines to Acting Secretary of War Dallas, May 14 and 22, 1815, AGO:LR.

28 Gaines to Jackson and Benjamin Hawkins to Jackson, May 14 and April 21, 1816, Jackson Papers, LC; Little Prince to Jackson, April 26, 1816, PAJ 4: 428; Capt. James M. Glassell to Clinch, December 26, 1816, Gaines to Clinch, May 6, 1817, and Jackson to Clinch, September 6, 1816, all reprinted in the Savannah Georgian, April 19, 1819 and cited in Rembert W. Patrick, Aristocrat in Uniform: General Duncan L. Clinch (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), pp. 35-36. (See also p. 33 therein.) See Clinch's reports to Major Robert Butler, July 28, 1817, Jackson Papers, LC, and August 2, PAJ 4: 440.

29 Jackson to Graham, December 11, 1816, file J-19, SW:LR-Reg.; Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, p. 64; Owsley, Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands, p. 184; Gaines to Jackson, October 1, 1817, Jackson Papers, LC. See also Gaines to Jackson, August 31, 1817, Jackson Papers, LC.

30 Ibid.; Twiggs to Gaines, August 11, 1817, and Gaines to Jackson, October 23, November 21 and 26, and December 2 (quotations), 1817, Jackson Papers, LC; Jackson to Secretary of War George Graham, December 16, 1817 (enclosing Gaines' of November 21), file J-1, SW:LR-Reg.


33 Jackson to Gaines, January 20, 1818, AGO:LR; Jackson to Rabun, February 10, 1818, Georgia State Archives, Atlanta.
34 Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border*, p. 16; Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, pp. 204-207. See Arbuckle to Jackson, December 19, 1817, January 12, February 15, and March 5, 1818, Commissary General George Gibson to Jackson, February 12, 1818, and Gaines to Jackson, February 22, 1818, Jackson Papers, LC, concerning Fort Scott; and Gibson to Jackson, February 2, and Trimble to Jackson, February 4 and 12, 1818, concerning the Appalachian supply route. Jackson summed up these problems in his letters to Calhoun, February 26, 1818, ASP:MA 1: 698, and John Coffee, March 26, 1818, Jackson Papers, THS. His later supply problems are mentioned in his letter to Calhoun of April 20, 1818, in the Tennessee Historical Society.


37 Jackson to Calhoun, May 5, 1818, in PAJ 4: 199-200; Jackson to Jose Masot, May 23, 1818, ASP:MA 1: 712-713, and May 25, 1818, PAJ 4: 211; Jackson to the Spanish officer commanding (Lt. Col. Luis Piernas), May 24, 1818, Jackson Papers, LC; Proclamation, May 29, 1818, in Bassett, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, 2: 375. See Lt. Trueman Cross (soon to be appointed assistant deputy quartermaster general) to Jackson, May 23, 1818, Jackson Papers, LC, concerning the use of the Escambia as a supply route. See also Jackson to Masot, March 25 and April 7 and 27, in PAJ 4: 201 and 491 and ASP:MA 1: 706-707, and ASP: Foreign Relations 4: 577-78, for Jackson's charges against the Spanish authorities. See Francisco Caso y Luengo to Jackson, April 7, 1818, Jackson Papers, LC, and Masot to Jackson, April 15 and May 18, 23, and 24, 1818, in PAJ 4: 203-206, 492, and 494, and Jackson Papers, LC (May 24) for Spanish protests.


42 Ibid. See Brig. Gen. Eleazar Wheelock Ripley (commander of the 8th Military Department, including the Sabine frontier) to Jackson, October 31, 1818, cited in *PAI* 4: 252 and 518, concerning Spanish movements in Texas.


45 Jackson to George Gibson, February 1, 1820, in PAI 4: 356; Griffin, *The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire*, pp. 218-24 and 231-41; Jackson, May 26, 1821, file J-307, SW:LR-Reg. See also Jackson to Calhoun, January 10, 1820, Jackson Papers, LC.

46 Jackson to Monroe, May 12 and October 23, 1816, Jackson Papers, LC.

47 Jackson to Monroe, March 4, 1817, Monroe Papers, NYPL.

48 Jackson to Calhoun, January 27, 1818, in PAI 3: 172. Like staff officers who made economic surveys in the northeast and west, Jackson paid close attention to the resources available at the site, which "in point of ore, water, timber, and appearance of stone coal, [could not] be surpassed." Fifteen years later the chief or ordnance reported "On the Expediency of Establishing Arsenals in Alabama and Florida" (communicated to the Senate January 20, 1832, ASP:MA 4: 829-30), employing similar arguments in favor of an arsenal on the Appalachicola, which was established several years later. (He also noted recent Seminole unrest, and that Augusta Arsenal was too far away for timely and efficient supply.)

II. The Southern Borderlands, 1815-1821: Spanish Patriots, American Filibusters and Cuba and Texas


50 See Reginald C. Stuart, "Special Interests and National Authority in Foreign Policy: American-British Provincial Links During the Embargo and the War of 1812," *Diplomatic History* 8 (Fall 1984): 311-28, and Richard J.

51 Ripley to Humbert, January 2, 1817, file R-28, SW:LR-Reg. Gaines also reported on Humbert’s plans to Jackson on February 14, 1817 (Jackson Papers, LC). Gaines emphasized the need for American neutrality.

52 Ibid.; Ripley, January 18, 1817, file R-73, SW:LR-Reg.

53 Beard to a Judge Ballard, June 14, 1819, to U.S. Marshal John C. Carr, June 18, 1819, and to Ripley, June 22, 1819, all enclosures to Jackson, July 24, 1819, file J-55, SW:LR-Reg.

54 Ripley to Beard, July 7, 1819, and Jackson to Ripley, July 24, 1819, both enclosures to Jackson, July 24, 1819, file J-55, SW:LR-Reg.

55 Beard to the Officer Commanding, 8th Military Department (Ripley), October 10, 1819, SW:LR-Reg.; quotations from Perez in Warren, *The Sword Was Their Passport*, pp. 244-45; Wilgus, "Some Notes on Spanish American Patriot Activity Along the Gulf Coast of the United States, 1811-1822," p. 214.

56 Beard to Perez, November 1819, SW:LR-Reg.

57 Ibid; Wilgus, "Some Notes on Spanish American Patriot Activity Along the Gulf Coast of the United States," p. 206. See Capt. Fabius Whiting to Adjutant General Roger Jones, November 21, 1825, SW:LR-Reg., regarding Lt. Matthew A. Patrick, who came under attack by local civilians for returning a British deserter; and Lt. (and acting assistant adjutant general) (hereafter cited as AAAG) James H. Prentiss to Capt. (Giles) Porter, February 4, 1839, in the official letterbook of Colonel William Jenkins Worth (as commander of the 8th Infantry Regiment), LC, who told Porter that Worth could not authorize exchanges (as Porter had already done) because the army lacked the legal authority to arrest British deserters.

58 Jackson, July 24, 1819, file J-55, SW:LR-Reg.

60 Wilgus, "Some Notes on Spanish American Patriot Activity Along the Gulf Coast of the United States," pp. 204-206 and 213; Calhoun to Gaines, December 16, 1817, Jackson Papers, LC; Wright, Creeks and Seminoles, p. 206; Gaines to Calhoun, December 30, 1817, cited in Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, pp. 73-74. See Murat, Napoleon and the American Dream, pp. 119-23, who suggests that Aury had seized Amelia Island from the Scots adventurer Gregor MacGregor, who was in turn acting as an American agent. Wilgus suggests rather that MacGregor and Aury were allied (however tenuously), although there was a Franco-American rivalry among their followers. In any case, the appearance of the United States army put their schemes for the island to rest. Monroe was acting under secret congressional authorization to seize Amelia should it fall into the hands of anyone besides the Spanish (Silver, p. 74).

61 Trimble, November 27, 1818, file T-45, SW:LR-Reg. Gaines also advised a group of French immigrants to whom Congress had granted land in Mississippi Territory; see Silver, p. 68. See Murat, Napoleon and the American Dream, pp. 122-24 and 143 regarding the activities of Aury, Lafitte, and Lallemand on Galveston Island, and 111-14 regarding Lallemand's plans against Mexico in Texas. See ibid., pp. 126-44, and Griffin, The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire, pp. 112-115, regarding the Bonapartist exiles on the Trinity. See Calhoun to Jackson, December 12, 1817, Jackson Papers, LC, for the proposed assault on Galveston.


63 Jesup to Monroe, September 8, 1816, in Jesup Papers, Box 2, LC.

64 Jesup to Commodore Daniel Patterson (USN), August 19, and to Jackson, August 21, 1816, in Jesup Papers, Box 2, LC.

65 Jackson to Jesup, September 6, 1816, Jackson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Duke University; Jesup to Jackson, August 21, and to Monroe, August 21 and September 3 (first quotation), 5, and 8 (second and third quotations), to Judge Ethan A. Brown, February 7, 1812, and to an unnamed
general (probably Jackson), November 7, 1819 (unsent draft), all in Jesup Papers, LC.

66 Ripley, January 18, 1817, file R-73, SW:LR-Reg.; Jackson to George Gibson, February 1, 1820, in PAJ 4: 356.

67 James R. Mullany, October 7, 1819, file M-128, SW:LR-Reg. Mullany, who had resigned in 1818, was on a supposedly private tour of Florida and Cuba at the time.


Chapter XII

Conflicts of Expertise and Responsibility in the Creation of the Coastal Fortification System

We turn now to plans to secure the nation's coastal frontiers, in which we shall see a foresight and range of vision equal to and a breadth of understanding much greater than Jackson's, combined with analogously irresponsible yet causally distinct willfulness based on the organizational self-interest of the Corps of Engineers. The engineers' self-aggrandizement was simultaneously more limited and less threatening but in some respects less democratically accountable to the citizenry (as they defined themselves, excluding Amerindians, slaves, and maroons) the army was supposed to serve than Jackson's had been, because the Corps of Engineers was acting within the constraints of the army's established institutional structure but lacked the very real popular sanction of Jackson's status as a national hero and regional representative. The irresponsibility of the engineers consisted in letting their vision of an appropriate technology outweigh their duty to examine alternatives in the face of congressional resistance, leading to misplaced priorities and unnecessary expense. Indeed, a more subtle theme herein—but one implicit in the writings of many officers at the time, especially those of the topographical engineers—is that the responsibility of the Corps of Engineers did not match its formidable expertise—the corps was a self-constituted elite that arrogated prestige and political influence at the expense of other staff departments and the remainder of the army.

The major concern of this chapter is to explore the form, character, and content—the jurisdiction and work, meaning both intent and practice—of the
expertise demonstrated in the conception and execution of the fortification program and the alternatives presented by a few dissenting officers, especially Brigadier General Gaines (the rough-hewn frontier commander of chapter eleven) during the quarter-century after the publication of the Fortification Board's principal reports. I have located this chapter in Part Five, rather than among the earlier sections that dealt with expertise, because the fortifications program was a matter of strategic planning and practice--policymaking for and the application of expertise on the nation's maritime frontier--rather than abstract expertise, and it is more appropriately located among others which deal with the character and evolution of professional responsibility along the borders. Chronologically, this chapter also bridges the gap between the conquest of the southern borderlands in the late 1810s and the operational crises the army faced along the northern and internal southern borders in the mid- and late 1830s with the Canadian rebellions and the Second Seminole War, and a short section at its end surveys the limited evidence of officers' attitudes toward Europe during the 1820s and 30s and their reactions to the French claims crisis of 1834 to 1836, the only nation's only really major foreign policy crisis between 1823 and 1838. In doing so we see an officer corps only marginally interested in the fate of European liberalism and republicanism, and one which displayed little interest in seeking war for self-aggrandizement.

* * *

I. Expertise, Accountability, and the Paradoxes of Professional Responsibility in Debates over American Coastal Defense Policy

The most important board of army officers organized after the War of 1812 was the Board of Engineers for Fortifications (also known as the Board of
authorized by Congress in 1816 to oversee the planning of America's coastal defenses on a continuous basis. The Fortifications Board was the first official body in United States history specifically dedicated to strategic planning, a major step toward the institutionalization of expert military advice to civilian policy-makers and therefore a major advance in the army's capacity for responsible service. The board was functionally specialized in jurisdiction, organizationally specialized in membership (both products of the technological means in question), and permanent rather than temporary or ad hoc—a comparatively advanced model of the organized application of specialized expertise to responsible public service and in that respect an outstanding though exceptional example of professionalism in miniature. Indeed, the board's activities went farther and more systematically toward the diagnosis, inference, prescription, and treatment of a major professional problem than those of any other organization in the nineteenth-century American military, and its members synthesized existing truisms about the American strategic situation to fashion an enduring—albeit flawed—paradigm for the purpose and location of the nation's defenses against threats from the sea.

Although it met only intermittently after 1826, the board served throughout the century as a skeleton organization for advising the Chief Engineer and the War Department, providing the intellectual authority and continuity that sustained its original paradigm against growing criticism. The fortifications built around its recommendations were not tested until the Civil War, by which time they had become obsolete against tactically and technologically sophisticated attackers. Even so, they still provided the basis for improvised defenses that at least deterred or complicated Union assaults.
on Confederate ports. The United States' geopolitical and strategic situation remained much the same after the Civil War as before, leading to the formation of new planning boards (particularly the Endicott Board of the 1880s) and the construction of a technologically more advanced but conceptually similar system.¹

The Board of Fortifications drew together the lessons of the War of 1812 and a recognition of American political, economic, and budgetary realities in expert analysis from leading American engineers--principally Major Joseph Totten, who became Chief Engineer in 1838--and the erstwhile French general Simon Bernard, an expert on fortifications and artillery appointed to the advisory position of Assistant Engineer specifically in order to serve on the board. Unlike many regulars, the half-dozen or so who eventually served on the Fortifications Board explicitly recognized and accepted the nation's antagonism towards large standing forces and its consequent reliance on the militia, which needed time for mobilization in case of war. These officers combined an acceptance of the pacific tendencies of American political ideology with an acute appreciation of the vast expanse of American shoreline and the dangerous threat posed by Britain, the only nation that had the fiscal and maritime means to do the young republic lasting harm.

Drawing on the experience of the preceding thirty years, Bernard warned that the clash of ideologies and the American threat to her future commercial dominance would cause Britain (perhaps in concert with some group of reactionary continental powers a la the Holy Alliance) to mount a drawn-out campaign of containment through intermittent harassment--something which many officers and civilian policy-makers believed had been going on since the Revolution--in order to keep the United States
economically weak and politically divided. Indeed, these threads were common enough in British actions and policy documents that we can attribute essential truth to the American suspicions, however much they exaggerated the coherence and malevolence of British policy. Bernard found convincing precedents for such a strategy in Britain's balance of power policies in Europe and her naval encirclement of France via the Mediterranean.²

Some system of constantly mobilized defense was clearly necessary to deter amphibious raids—an attritional strategy the British were already well-known for—but a navy capable of challenging Britain's was inconceivably expensive, a large standing army was politically unacceptable, and the land communications necessary to move the militia were poorly developed in 1820. Spurred by these anxieties yet bolstered by the postwar wave of national confidence and a sense of organizational mission based on the availability of technology which had been proven by centuries of European experience and that of the War of 1812 (in which only two significant American masonry fortifications had been taken by the British, in both cases by land bombardments and in one because of poor siting and a failure of nerve by the defenders), the engineers ultimately envisioned a system of static defenses so extensive as to be preclusive, a deterrent to invasion as well as harassment—a significant expansion in the scope and objectives of American strategic thinking that still remained firmly grounded in contemporary strategic commonplaces like the nation's republican example to the world (which implied isolation and a defensive posture rather than offensive preparations and aggression) and British hostility to American republicanism.

The board's initial report (presented in 1821) embodied the officer corps' growing affinity for system and order, criticizing the existing
fortifications because they had "not been planned with a view to the defence of the frontiers, considered as one great and combined system, whose several parts should . . . mutually support each other," but went beyond it to consciously articulate an understanding of the strategic interdependence between society, economy, and technology that was rarely evident among ordinary officers. System and interdependence between army, navy, militia, and fortifications were the key concepts in the board's planning: despite its congressionally mandated and organizationally sustained focus on fixed fortifications, the board asserted that the army and militia were "the vital principle of the system," observed that "these means must all be combined to form a complete system," and maintained that their "numerous reciprocal relations with each other and with the whole system constitute its excellence." Indeed, although the board was principally an army concern its members always put support for the navy's operational missions at the forefront of its priorities for wartime strategy: the slightly revised report made by Totten and Bernard in 1826 referred first to the support a system of fortifications would lend to the navy, permitting it a refuge from which to harass the enemy's fleets and commerce, to raid their colonies and even blockade the English Channel for short periods.3

For several years beginning in 1817, the three to five man board (which was normally supposed to include a naval captain, though this was only done occasionally) toured the nation's coasts to discover their weak points and choose sites for an integrated system of permanent fortifications to ward off attack, or (if that was impossible) to retard an invader's progress until the militia could mobilize and move to the scene. The board suggested possible scenarios of enemy attack, which were probably the most detailed American efforts to anticipate enemy operations in peacetime up to that date, and it
classified fortification projects according to priority, though it did not prepare strategic or operational defense plans or directly tie the scenarios to its choice of priorities, which were themselves left unstated but clearly accorded with the size and prosperity of the locations to be defended. In another calculation that illustrates their recognition of the militia's role, the reports estimated the number of militia that could be concentrated in defense of various points between one and ten days after an enemy landing, a timetable necessary for any further operational planning. The group also demonstrated the fiscal responsibility sought by civilian policy-makers accountable to the voters by going beyond estimating the cost of the fortifications themselves to account for the number and cost of the troops necessary to protect locations with and without the proposed fortifications, providing cost-conscious legislators with utilitarian reasons to vote for the program.

The board's strategic thinking (which Winfield Scott attributed primarily but perhaps incorrectly to Joseph Totten) was unoriginal but impressive in its scope, particularly in its consciousness of the operations of the economy and in the attention and respect it gave to the values and objectives of American civil society, and it articulated a smooth blend of republicanism, quasi-liberal political economy, and nineteenth-century optimism and logic well calculated to appeal to its audience of civilian policy-makers. The 1826 report summarized the economic dislocation caused by the War of 1812 and argued that war had become less costly in blood but more expensive in wealth than ever before. Drawing on the language of early political economists like Adam Smith and the French physiocrats, Totten and Bernard showed an incisive understanding of the effects of the commercial and industrial revolutions on warfare, observing that the greater material expenses of modern warfare could be sustained more easily because of "the
resources afforded by the creation of new wants and the development of new species of industry," while the proportionately lower rate of human casualties was "more severely felt, because of the great multiplication of the branches of productive labor" and the consequent employment of those who had once served the nation primarily as cannon-fodder. Totten did not expect American valor, republican virtue, military discipline, Napoleonic genius, or an extensive knowledge of military history and strategy to determine the outcome of future wars. Indeed, to Totten the modern division of labor suggested the advent of attritional warfare, implicitly total and industrial, a century before the First World War:

That nation, therefore, which consumes the smallest portion of its disposable population, and which is least likely to have the regular operations of its laboring classes disturbed by its quarrels, will enjoy a decided superiority over every other, and as the art of war is now carried among all civilized nations to the same degree of perfection, that nation must triumph which can longest keep the field, possessed of these means of warfare.⁴

Totten wanted the United States to be able to outlast Britain in the protracted war he expected to occur, but the board did not fail to point out the moral deterioration and political strife incident to a lengthy war in a sectionally divided country. Skillfully employing the ideologically based trope of republican distrust for military environments, the 1826 report reminded readers of the "demoralizing habits of a camp life" that the War of 1812 had brought to the United States, while an 1821 report implicitly harked back to the Hartford Convention by warning of the danger that extended wars would erode popular confidence in the government and stimulate party and sectional factionalism. (Indeed, the British themselves recognized that their
only prospect for decisive success in a war against the United States lay in popular and sectional demoralization and defection or secession.) However ahistorical, republican theory had long held--as nineteenth-century liberalism soon would come to proclaim--that republics (or in the latter case democracies) were less warlike than monarchicals, and Totten and Bernard had to conceive of some way to sustain the values and institutions of their society in the face of their anticipation of a form of warfare that would seriously compromise them. In doing so, the board articulated a vision of gradual social disintegration brought on by the collective psychic attrition wrought the need for a posture of constant alert against amphibious harassment and the larger threat of attritional warfare in general. Unlike Americans of the mid-twentieth century (who after two world wars and decades of progressivism were well-attuned to the presence of an expansive government), these early republican cold warriors feared not only the excesses of a fiscal-military garrison state--the dreaded standing army--but the disruption of civil society itself.⁵

To vitiate this apocalyptic prospect the Fortification Board warned that "the advantage must always rest . . . with the nation which . . . is most secure from invasion." The board therefore drew on the well-known and frequently lauded example of British geographic isolation and naval strength to support its recommendations for a preclusive defense: "It is this property of inaccessibility by land at which the United States should aim, and which it may attain by well contrived permanent works and by the gradual increase of the navy." Ironically--and perhaps quite self-interestedly--the board wrote next to nothing about the threat of attack from Canada, a significant and surprising--if not irresponsible--gap in its otherwise broad-ranging analysis given the experience of British campaigns from Lake Champlain in 1777 and
1814. It is unclear whether the board felt that the Canadian border was beyond its brief, a matter to be left to mobile field forces, or if it shared the confidence of American civil and military policymakers during the 1820s that the United States would easily conquer Canada in a future war because of the growth of American population and communications links in the border regions. (On the other hand, Totten was later tasked with reporting to Congress and the War Department on fortifications for the St. Lawrence frontier.) This isolation would have the social and economic advantages "that the destruction of men in naval conflicts being much less than in those between armies, a greater number is left to carry on the ordinary and profitable pursuits of civil life."6

This defensive quest for geostrategic isolation was founded and expressed in republican ideology as well as the imperatives of modern warfare. Following traditional republican doctrine, the 1826 report stressed that the navy, which the board relied upon as the first line of defense (though dependent on the fortifications for sanctuary from the British fleet), was "the only offensive force compatible with our political institutions." On the other hand, the board was clearly referring to the substantial ocean-going navy planned during the immediate postwar era rather than the more ideologically sound (in traditional republican terms)--but operationally discredited--Jeffersonian gunboat navy, and its preference for the guerre de course of commerce raiding (which was often a private though state-sponsored endeavour) reflects a liberal middle ground between the defensive isolationism (and republican localism) of Jefferson's program and the aggressive state-centered internationalism and expansionism of late nineteenth-century plans for a Mahanian high-seas battle fleet. Indeed, as late as 1836 Totten issued a report which implicitly contrasted the danger of
standing armies with the ideological safety of navies and fortifications when it rejoiced that if the program were adopted "no weapon for defense" would be forged "capable of being turned, under other circumstance, against the life of the state": "We shall find the war, and all its terrors, shut out from our territories by our fortresses . . . Our wars thus becoming maritime will be less costly . . . and more in unison with our institutions--leaving untouched our domestic relations [which may have meant federalism, family life, or slavery, threatened in wartime by British efforts to foment rebellion], our industry, and our internal financial resources."  

The board was only partially successful in implementing its proposals. Its first major report received widespread currency when published in Niles' Weekly Register in 1821, and the president and secretary of war used its recommendations to persuade Congress to grant the initial appropriations for the multi-year plan, but the board's paradigm was not without easily identifiable flaws, and its expense roused immediate objections in Congress. Indeed, the 1821 report was written in such a way as to obscure the program's long-term cost by about fifty percent, and the garrison requirements of 4600 men were totally unrealistic when the army was being reduced to a total force of 6000 the same year, facts obvious to cost-conscious congressmen. Under these circumstances it was easy for Old Republicans and other foes of federal expense to question the cost as well as the necessity of such an elaborate program, and Congress therefore responded with caution by appropriating funds for each fortification individually rather than in the more flexible lump sums sought by the engineers, an oversight mechanism that largely stifled the board's expansive program.
Over the next thirty years the board’s proposals evolved into such an extensive program that all points of any larger significance whatsoever would eventually have been covered, thus recreating the problem of attempting to defend every point subject to attack which the system was originally intended to overcome. This expense might have been acceptable if war was as imminent, indeed virtually inevitable, as the board (and many civilian policymakers) assumed during the years immediately after the War of 1812, but once it became clear—broadly speaking by the mid-1820s, though the Maine boundary crises and the Oregon question temporarily revived American fears—that Britain was no longer pursuing a systematic strategy of containment critics could see that it might well cost less to wait on contingency or rely on diplomacy, commercial ties, and the American threat to Canada to ward off British antagonism. In other words, the Fortification Board pursued its professional responsibility and self-interest in a strategic paradigm based on the precarious international balance of 1815 without adjusting to the changes in the international scene and domestic politics that made that paradigm irrelevant in congressional eyes five years later. (Similarly, the threat of an alliance of reactionary European powers raised by the Aix-la-Chapelle conference in 1818 had lost much of its steam by the time the Monroe Doctrine was proclaimed in 1823.) Lastly, the board presumed a permanence to the ship-to-shore gunnery equation of 1820 that made little allowance for the technological changes even then in the offing.⁹

Congressional reluctance notwithstanding, the fortification program quickly became a sacred cow within the Corps of Engineers charged with supervising its construction. A second lengthy report was written to sustain faltering congressional support in 1826; it proposed an even more extensive system and provided new cost calculations but essentially echoed the earlier
conclusions. Simon Bernard resigned and returned to France in 1831 and the board effectively went into hibernation as a unit, but Joseph Totten became Chief Engineer in 1838 and remained in that post until his death in 1864, providing unprecedented continuity, but ultimately stasis, in this realm of American strategy. Under Totten's commanding influence most officers, engineers or not, seem to have taken the program for granted; they wrote little about its underlying assumptions and the engineers came to expect that virtually every point of any significance on the coast would eventually be fortified. In reality, of course, the priority given to fortifications over the army (which the board ranked last in importance after the navy, fortifications, and internal communications) privileged the Corps of Engineers by providing it with a peacetime mission that gave it strong political support based on federal spending in coastal towns and cities, in contrast to and sometimes at the expense of the army as a whole, especially that portion stationed on the thinly populated frontier performing constabulary duties.

The fortification program therefore fostered conflict within the army itself, but surprisingly less than one might expect given the minimal role it presented to the majority of officers (who served in the combat arms) during peacetime. Critics tended to concentrate their fire not so much on the program's expense or the necessity for some form of permanent fortification (since they were of obvious tactical value, and would eventually be manned by the army) as on the inflexible character that reliance on a fixed system would give to American defense in the face of a mobile enemy. In theory the fortifications would render a position invulnerable to surprise attack and thus reduce the number of targets a weak enemy (or one engaged only in raiding) could choose from, circumscribing his initiative and allowing the defense to mass its mobile forces at more important or more vulnerable
points. Fortifications still had to be garrisoned, however, a task for which the regular army, already preoccupied with extensive duties on the inland frontiers, was clearly far too small, and the very expense of the fortification program precluded the significant expansion of the army that would have been necessary to do so. Constantly embodying militiamen provided no solution to this dilemma, because the fortification system was intended to defend the country against an imminent threat without a standing army, while any force routinely embodied for garrison service would have had the same economic and political liabilities as a regular standing army. The growing scale of the board's proposals was thus both militarily counterproductive and politically dangerous and irresponsible—indeed, had it been built the full fortification system would have been the closest approximation to the modern military-industrial complex in nineteenth-century America.¹⁰

As a result of these flaws the board's paradigm soon came under attack, sparking a debate that demonstrates the awareness of technological change and its social impact present among some of the army's officers. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how little criticism of the program is present in the letters, both official and private, of officers below general or senior staff rank, and even more surprisingly in the professional journals, which served in many other instances as active forums for intraservice controversy and debate. The artillery had an organizational interest in garrisoning the fortifications and the army's intellectual cadre supported virtually any proposal for military appropriations, so the institutional basis for criticism was left to the infantry, which remained largely inarticulate, whether in recognition of its role as a frontier constabulary or out of professional
isolation, apathy, and unfamiliarity with strategic and technical debate. As chapter nine noted, infantry officers attacked their exclusion from posts on the seaboard by artillery units, but they left little record of questioning the fortification ideal itself. (Despite his latter-day--and in many respects undeserved--reputation as a simple fighter rather than a thinker, Zachary Taylor was one exception: in 1820 the lieutenant colonel of the 8th Infantry remarked to his friend Quartermaster General Jesup that he thought movable supply depots preferable to fixed fortifications.11)

Like dissidents in the Corps of Engineers, the frontier army's principal (albeit self-proclaimed) spokesman, Edmund Gaines, stressed technological obsolescence--means--rather than geostrategic miscalculation--ends--in his critiques of the fortification program. Gaines was the most prominent critic of American defense policies (though not national strategy, insofar as it existed by an tacit consensus--which he shared--among policy-makers), indeed the only "strategic gadfly" in the American army comparable to those in the British and French ones, and his lengthy memorials to Congress, the secretary of war, the commanding general, and the public on the subject of national defense show him to have been a military thinker of substantial merit as well as a hard-bitten frontier commander. Indeed, though we now know him to have been premature in his assessment of the capabilities of contemporary technology, we can use the same hindsight to suggest that Gaines' ideas bridged the gap between the thinking of early republican officers who feared that the nation's weakness would invite intervention from Europe and their late nineteenth century counterparts, who devoted renewed attention to American national security because of the threat steam technology posed to American geostrategic isolation, while in a deeper sense Gaines' ideas reflect
the more general (yet gradual) shift from republican to liberal thinking during the Jacksonian era.

The first of Gaines' essays, written in 1826, was principally concerned with the militia but briefly asserted that roads and canals to convey troops from the interior to the coast were more efficient means of defense than fixed coastal fortifications. (This essay was discovered in Brown's office after his death in 1828, and it is unknown whether Brown had circulated its contents.) Gaines' principal argument was foreshadowed that year when Simon Bernard answered a query from Chief Engineer Alexander Macomb concerning the efficacy of steam-powered gunboats, usually referred to as "steam batteries," to assist the fortifications in defending the Mississippi estuary. (Gaines had first proposed "floating batteries"--immobile gun platforms moored in mid-river--for this purpose in 1823.) The Fortification Board, taking its lead from the Navy's oceanic heroics and the failures of the Jeffersonian gunboat navy in the War of 1812, had essentially ignored the use of gunboats for coastal defense, and Bernard noted that the Board of Fortifications had envisioned "that the main forces of our navy . . . should assume the offensive, and wage war on the high seas," although he admitted that fortifications alone would not suffice to prevent an enemy blockade of the Mississippi estuary because of the great number of outlets and their constantly shifting shorelines.12

During the 1830s the fortification program itself came under attack from advocates of steam batteries and railroads like Gaines, who believed that the advent of steam technology, "almighty in its birth," had revolutionized the pace of military operations and made fixed positions obsolete. The practical impetus behind this criticism came from a series of diplomatic crises with France and Britain beginning in 1834. The dispute with France over
American claims for Napoleonic-era shipping losses caused something of a hidden panic among the army's leaders and the believers in steam power, who were well aware of the incomplete state of the fortification system--Inspector General George Croghan warned several years later that due to unmounted guns and decayed material the defenses between New York and Maine were "in a most wretched condition--not a single post along the whole line [with one possible exception] . . . being able to protect itself against the attacks of even an armed brig" (a vessel carrying some ten or twenty small cannon). Writing in 1840, Gaines placed this dangerous situation in the larger strategic context even then being reshaped by rapid technological change: "hitherto the transition from peace to war . . . was usually preceded by some significant note of preparation not easily mistaken," and there had been ample time for defensive mobilization. Unhindered by winds or currents, steam power would speed up enemy naval concentrations, which could then surprise defenders by choosing their objectives with much more precise timing, reversing the existing operational balance between offense and defense in favor of the former.13

These changes in the tempo of operations might have been acceptable if the fortifications were still equal to their tactical mission, but Gaines saw a second revolution unfolding in the growing power of shipboard guns and the protection he expected naval vessels to receive from armor plating, which seemed bound to revolutionize the ship-to-shore gunnery equation in favor of attacking vessels. In 1839 a small French squadron using the new Paixhans shell guns--essentially the same weapon as the Columbiad invented by future ordnance chief George Bomford in 1811 but little used by American forces prior to the 1830s--reduced the Mexican fortress at Veracruz in six hours without loss to themselves. Aside from Gaines' fellow iconoclast William
Chase (an engineer major at the time) the officer corps remained utterly silent about the implications of this engagement, but to Gaines the experience portended certain disaster should the United States continue its building program without modification.

Indeed, the problem as Gaines saw it was not merely technological, for the devastating British assault on the Danish fleet at Copenhagen had demonstrated the futility of attempting to stop determined naval attacks on harbors with fortifications nearly forty years before he wrote, directly contrary to the engineers' certainty in the historical superiority of fortifications over ships. This example appeared to provide no hope for a defense—the Danes had had a fleet nearly equal to the British assault force (which would rarely be true here if the small American navy were dispersed for commerce raiding as planned) and extensive masonry fortifications of the type standard in American harbor defenses. What was more, the successful passage of an American flotilla along the St. Lawrence River in 1813 seemed to Gaines to show that fortifications posed no chance of stopping the passage of an invading force along navigable rivers like the Mississippi, lessons which the officers of the Corps of Engineers refused to recognize until they were hammered home at a hundred points from Mobile Bay to Island No. 10 during the Civil War. (Following the gospel of the engineers, Union officers began that war fearful of Confederate coastal and riverine fortifications, but they were soon proven ineffective under most circumstances if confronted by a resolute attacker.)

Gaines' solution to these technological dilemmas would be recognizable fifty years later as the battleship: huge ironclads carrying 120 to 200 heavy cannon and accommodating 600 to 1000 men with supplies for six to eight months. (The general recognized that these vessels would not be
ocean-going due to their weight.) Such giganticism was utterly unrealistic in
light of budgetary constraints, but Gaines had a higher object in mind: "the
first and only discovery known to man, whereby a nation situated as we are
[isolated by the oceans] . . . can, without any doubt . . . hold in their own
hands, forever, the incontestible issue of any possible war upon her seaboard
or domain, waged by any nation, or by any such combination of empires or
kingdoms"--a gross exaggeration but also a far more preclusive defense than
even that promised by the advocates of fortifications. Indeed, Gaines
explicitly appealed to the American tendency to seek absolute security from
foreign threat and contagion (including, Gaines warned, Britain's "organized
bands of spies and pioneers . . . more familiarly called 'abolitionists'":) the
United States might "if she be just and true to herself, safely assume the
attitude of honest defiance towards the armies of Europe, if not of every
corner of the globe." Gaines warned that the question was "not a matter of
choice, but a work of absolute necessity--a measure of self-preservation," for
any nation failing to take advantage of steam power would be "found wholly
unable to maintain [its] independence." Indeed, even if the fortification
system somehow succeeded, Gaines suggested that it would require such
extensive garrisons as to "rivet upon ourselves the tyranny of a large standing
army of idlers" and destroy the American experiment from within.15

Gaines' was by far the most visionary, if not quasi-millenial, plan for
American national defense in the Jacksonian era. The general envisioned
steam power as a revolution in warfare equal to those of missile weapons
(meaning the bow and arrow, but in Gaines' rhetoric one not much less
threatening than the "missile gap" of 1960), gunpowder, the compass, and
"the use of wheel-carriages on improved roads" (an illustration of his
understanding of the historical development of logistics). His ideas illustrate in exaggerated form the growing concern among responsible military men about the strategic impact of rapid technological change during the Industrial Revolution, as well as the more gradual cultural moves from republicanism to liberalism and from the corollary vision of the United States as a republican example to the corrupt world to the more liberal concept of the nation as an overseas actor, if only for commercial or philanthropic purposes. Early steamships were actually far less capable than Gaines and other advocates thought, but their fears must be reckoned responsible ones because of the lead time involved in planning comprehensive strategic systems. Even if Gaines was an alarmist voice in the wilderness, he possessed a much clearer recognition of future trends, which it is the strategist's responsibility to predict, than the engineer officers clinging on to an operationally suspect (i.e., inflexible) technology that many others could see becoming tactically outmoded in the near future. It certainly takes no hindsight to see that Gaines and his fellows were ultimately right, for they said so themselves at the time. Although very persistent, Gaines was not seen by fellow officers as a disruptive Billy Mitchell figure, but rather an eccentric (or in Winfield Scott's view an addled dotard). Nevertheless, it was Gaines rather than Scott who was making plans for American defense and national security policy, and his failure was first and foremost a matter of congressional resistance to expense rather than the deficiencies of his ideas themselves.  

Gaines was also the principal--indeed almost the sole--military advocate of railroads as a systematic means of national defense, an integrated cog in his system of national defense but a subject which received amazingly little attention from other officers, many of whom were resigning at this very time to supervise railroad construction. Corporate appeals for federal aid on
grounds of military utility began as early as 1829 and almost immediately became standard components in railroad promotions. Gaines was an energetic advocate for such aid from 1831 on, but the first substantive notice of railroads from the War Department does not appear to have come until 1836, in Secretary of War Lewis Cass's memorandum on national defense. In 1834 topographical engineer Stephen H. Long compared potential rail routes in the southeast at Gaines' urging, and four years later Totten responded to a congressional query with support for a route to Pensacola on the grounds that the port was otherwise isolated from resupply on its landward side, but in all other cases prior to the war with Mexico the senior engineers remained silent or even cautioned against the expense of railroads, a hesitation that can only be explained by institutional conservatism and fear of the railroads' potential effect on appropriations for the fortification system.\textsuperscript{17}

Gaines' thoughts on the railroads' utility are obvious enough--faster troop movements and larger concentrations geared toward a more rapid reinforcement of any threatened point on the coast, all at an ultimate savings to the government and the country. Instead, it is his pronounced awareness of the railroads' possibilities as a stimulus to civilian society, similar to Totten's earlier recognition of the need to avoid war but far more detailed and perceptive, that deserves attention. Indeed, Gaines' ideas and objectives represented the liberal or capitalist mindset that spread with and urged forward the expansion of the commercial market economy. Gaines expected that railroads would foster "an interior commerce, by which the privations of our foreign commerce would be remedied, and many of the evils of war removed"--the domestic market invulnerable to British blockade sought by American policymakers and economic thinkers since before the War of 1812. Gaines realized that railroads, like canals and turnpikes before them, would
accelerate the tempo of military operations and civilian economy alike: they would mean shorter campaigns and consequently less distraction for the militia from their civil pursuits; they would speed the circulation of money and create new industries and markets, multiply the number of skilled mechanics and foster full employment, and open the Transappalachian Basin for the inexpensive transport of its crops to the eastern cities. The transportation revolution would nurture an interdependent commercial economy, or in the words of modern historians a "market revolution."\(^{18}\)

Gaines, a plantation owner from Andrew Jackson's commercial frontier in Tennessee, felt a characteristically Jacksonian faith that this revolution in tempo and scale would sustain existing patterns of social organization rather than causing social dislocation, by "giving to all classes of the community profitable employment, calculated to render them independent in their domestic affairs." "We shall thus call into action and usefulness that class of American genius which would otherwise . . . languish and fall into the whirlpools of vice [and] imbecility, for want of employment and judicious direction," this venturesome conservative exclaimed--a project of veritable moral and social redemption for the working classes. Furthermore, for a nation divided by slavery the railroads would "form ligaments of union more powerful than bulwarks of adamant . . . to bind the States together in perpetual union." In a final millenial flourish, Gaines rejoiced that steam power would eventually make the resolution of this dilemma possible through African colonization, and would lead to "the attainment of 'peace on earth'" through mutual deterrence between nations.\(^{19}\)

Gaines concluded his 1840 memorial by warning that the army must change with the times and calling for a distinctly American military thought:
"We must lay down our old obsolete military books of the last century, such as we have borrowed from England and from France; and we must profit by the lights [of] the present age." Gaines was both *sui generis* and representative in the army, the virtual epitome of the practical frontier commander save for his occasional sympathy for Amerindians and his idiosyncratic visionary streak. Ironically, these qualities made him a sort of unofficial advocate for the large majority of officers who spent their lives on the frontiers essentially oblivious to all that scholars call professional activity, for though these men wrote little and are therefore hard to track, many observers have suggested that through their routine work they created a pragmatic adaptation to American conditions that was far more influential in the day-to-day life of the army than the more refined work done at West Point or among the boards of officers. (In this context it is notable that Gaines' headquarters while commanding the Eastern Department was in Augusta, Georgia, much closer to the scene of probable Indian conflict in the south than Scott's eastern headquarters in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, and the New York City area.)

Gaines also provides the most prominent example of one of the officer corps' two dominant conceptual approaches to the understanding of expertise as a cognitive and applied phenomenon. Despite his often grandiose ideas and rhetoric, Gaines saw himself as a prophet of the practical; he constantly referred to his extensive experience in the War of 1812 and warned that in no other field of endeavor are "the union of theory and practice . . . so much altogether necessary," while lamenting that "wonderful to tell, there is no trade or profession . . . in which theory is so much relied on, or practice so much neglected, as in the art of war." Gaines went on to place his feud with Winfield Scott in this implicitly political context—the Tennessean felt that he
had been unjustly denounced by "learned theorists" as an "eccentric visionary." (The feud probably did much to form the distinction in Gaines' mind; Scott was not opposed to steam power or railroads per se, but they were not among his "hobbies.")

The conflict was also one over institutional priorities and stability; as Ronald Spiller points out, Scott's constant tinkering with the army's tactics and regulations "foreshadowed an underlying theme in the history of the Army--the confrontation between men with specific professional and political agendas to be pursued through radical institutional modification or reform and men [like Gaines] who sought to make the existing organization work." Scott's "perspective," ironically really more of a mindset--that of order, precision, and regularity--than a consciously articulated set of cognitive precepts akin to Gaines' explicit reliance on experience, had great validity, and it is the one commonly adopted by modern historians seeking a progressive, "professionalizing" army on the European (usually Prussian) or Uptonian model, but we must recognize that Gaines represented a substantial body of American military opinion (albeit largely in the militia and volunteers) that, whether from apathy, jealousy, national feeling, or a different understanding of expertise and professionalism, paid little regard to the men often considered the army's leading professionalizers. Like the ideas asserted by Alden Partridge in his critique of the Thayer regime at West Point (a critique which we have seen was shared to some degree by both President Jackson and Chief Engineer Macomb), those proffered by Gaines represented an alternative to the army's "mainstream" that was closer to the ideals and realities of American life, and in Gaines' case much more aware of the revolutionary import of new technology, than the views of the men who usually star in narratives of the antebellum army.
Despite this affinity--and in significant contrast to the acceptance of the
dilemmas presented by steam power by British strategists and fortification
engineers--Gaire's ideas found little immediate support in policy, which was
dominated by the engineers and secretaries of war swayed by their cohesive
arguments and the patronage uses of federal spending in coastal localities.
During the French crisis of 1835 commanding general Macomb warned that
"steam batteries are essential in the defence of our harbors," and in 1836
Secretary of War Cass suggested that a less elaborate system of fortifications be
linked to these batteries, but the immediate expense of a naval building
program was simply too great and the commitment of Congress and army to
the existing system of national defense too strong. The coastal fortifications
were already being built, producing business and patronage and supporting
local political alliances. International considerations also seemed to militate
against diminishing the nation's coastal defenses, for Britain had been
devoting great expense to improving her already extensive naval facilities at
Halifax and Bermuda since the mid-1820s, and it was clear (and correctly so) to
American policymakers that the costly British naval program then in
progress was largely intended to counter potential American threats to
Canada through the threat of amphibious campaigns against the American
coast.23

Under the circumstances institutional conservatism was difficult to
challenge, and Chief Engineer Charles Gratiot presented the Corps of
Engineers' official line in 1838: "it would be highly injudicious, with our
present want of knowledge of the . . . final efficiency of steam batteries, to
derange a system of defence which has been the result of years of the fullest
and most careful consideration." Similarly, the Board of Naval
Commissioners (an advisory body of senior navy commanders which usually reflected conventional naval wisdom) panned Gaines' ideas because they distrusted steam power and opposed the infringement on their jurisdiction from his suggestion (seconded by Macomb) that army officers command the steam batteries. Totten himself turned increasingly to foreign examples as the board's ever more expansive recommendations diverged from American realities, warning that "there has been but one practice among nations"—"no nation omits covering the exposed points on her seaboard with fortifications, nor hesitates in confiding in them." Institutional and mental conservatism were simply too strong to permit "the substitution in a permanent system... of perishable for imperishable materials"—"a dangerous experiment, to be tried only after the most mature deliberation."[24]

The fortification program remained the subject of intermittent public debate during the 1840s and 1850s, especially over the ability of masonry fortifications to defeat new guns and shells, but intellectual conservatism, pork-barrel spending and organizational self-interest, and Congress's reluctance to accept larger short-term appropriations in anticipation of future savings eventually produced a sizeable but incomplete--and largely unmanned--system of masonry works that possessed little of the systematic quality of the board's initial proposals. The system constantly grew on paper but the construction funds appropriated by a cautious Congress never even remotely kept up with the projections of an ambitious Corps of Engineers: the 1826 report increased the number of suggested sites from fifty to over ninety, that in 1836 to 124 in four classifications of priority rather than three, and that in 1851 to 186 in six categories. By the latter year only fifty-nine planned works had actually been completed, and fully forty-two of these had in fact been constructed before 1821. (Fourteen more had completed between
Only ten of the remaining 127 were in an advanced stage of construction. Even more indicative of the system's essential conservatism, continental expansion had not significantly accelerated the program, for only twenty-eight of the proposed and not a single one of the serviceable fortifications was on the West Coast.25

The principal reason for these shortcomings was insufficient funding, the result of appropriate congressional caution. In 1816 Chief Engineer Swift sought but was refused a massive expansion of his corps—thirty officers for fortification inspections and ten apiece for fortification construction, frontier inspections, and the coastal survey. Similar proposals were turned down in 1821 and 1824, so engineer officers were routinely supplemented by the topographical engineers (save in fortification-building), and later by men detailed from the line (usually the artillery), but the inadequate number of engineer officers available to direct construction was also an obstacle partially created by the corps itself, for engineer leaders continued to resist any efforts that would have diminished the autonomy and elite character of their corps. When Congress and the War Department considered expanding the Corps of Engineers in 1818, Chief Engineer Walker Armistead warned the secretary of war that "I do not think it proper to transfer Artillery officers to the Corps of Engineers, because it will destroy that emulation which now exists among the Cadets of the Military Academy" due to the practice of assigning engineer slots to the top-ranked graduates, and five years later Superintendent Thayer advised Chief Engineer Macomb that any increase in the Corps of Engineers should be limited to numbers that the Military Academy could train without diluting standards.26

Between 1821 and 1838 the size of the Corps of Engineers remained legally stable at twenty-two, along with several supernumerary brevet
lieutenants awaiting permanent commissions. Proportionately—and indeed surprisingly—few engineers resigned during the railroad boom of the mid-1830s, and in 1838 Congress authorized the appointment of twenty-one new engineer officers, but Chief Engineer Totten continued to stress quality to such a degree that only the top two or three graduates of the Military Academy—the only institution the engineers considered capable of training new comrades—were permitted to join the corps each year. As a result, the complement authorized in 1838 was not actually in place until 1846, while the employment of topographical engineers and artillermen on fortification construction declined correspondingly during these years. Indeed, even though the corps nearly doubled in size between 1838 and 1846, it still faced an array of duties given higher priority than the fortifications: in 1853 fifteen engineers were assigned to the coastal survey or West Point and six more were on the west coast as surveyors and fortifications directors, leaving only fifteen men supervising forty ongoing projects along the eastern seaboard.27

The system’s armament lagged behind as well, principally because of limited appropriations and secondarily because the necessary ordnance was not standardized and brought to an acceptable level of modernity until the late 1840s. At the outset of the program in 1822 only 300 of the 1500 guns required under the previous year’s plan were available. Seven years later ordnance chief George Bomford advised the War Department that 2587 cannon would be needed to arm the system by 1832, but that at the current rate of acquisition this complement would not be procured until 1850. (These projections of need were as chimerical as those for the program as a whole, of course.) Recognizing that Congress was not going to accelerate funding, commanding general Macomb warned in his annual report for 1830 that "many years must elapse before a sufficient [artillery] supply can be furnished
for the defence of the seacoast." Indeed, those guns that were available deteriorated easily in casemates open to the effects of the coastal elements, so readiness was as much a problem as acquisition, though equally one of funding--during the crisis with France in 1836 inspectors found that only ten installations had guns "actually mounted" and combat-ready. (Wooden gun-carriages suffered as much as iron guns from the effects of moisture and humidity, and the guns were worthless without carriages to maneuver them on.) A decade later 2900 of the 4800 guns then required--a number more than three times that originally projected in 1821--had become available, but another 3500 were said to be necessary for works not yet begun. As of the year 1851 only 1864 of the 4572 cannon then deemed necessary were in place, and dilapidation was as common as ever.28

Indeed, tensions in relations with France had brought about a sense of near-crisis in 1834 and 1835, when the army discovered that the coastal fortification system was virtually incapable of self-defense, much less defending the nation's harbors, for lack of armament, but portents of this weakness had appeared several years earlier when Major Jacob Heileman reported the inadequacies of Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney to General Macomb during the Nullification Crisis. Efforts to remedy these problems had little success, and a decade later Inspector General Sylvester Churchill provided a series of reports on the dilemmas presented by fortification architecture. Fort Sullivan (Maine), for example, was not properly positioned to bar passage into the St. Croix River (or any other significant body of water), and was itself overlooked by a superior position from which an enemy could force its submission. At Newport, Rhode Island, Fort Adams lacked water wells or pipes "to ensure a supply . . . during a siege." (Churchill also suggested a similar system at Hancock Barracks, in Houlton, Maine, to save
money.) At Fort Macon, North Carolina, rain filtered through a salt marsh into the post cistern, while there were "no defenses of any importance" at Fort Johnston at the mouth of the Cape Fear River farther south. Churchill also criticized the location of several arsenals along the southern seaboard and coastal frontier: that at Appalachicola was geographically isolated, unhealthy, and had "no advantages . . . in water power, iron . . . cheapness of labor or subsistence," while the depot at St. Augustine was subject to damaging heat and humidity. (Churchill's reports also suggest the army's usually implicit role as a potential agent of racial and labor control in the south, as he warned that that both Appalachicola and Mt. Vernon Arsenal in Alabama were threatened by the nearby presence of large slave populations.)

Garrisoning the system was also a constant problem. In 1843 the adjutant general reported that the thirty-five permanently occupied forts required forty-eight companies for effective defense, twenty percent more than were then available. Indeed, the fourteen works constructed since 1821 were said to require as many men as had been provided for the entire system in 1821, and the total number of artillery officers and men authorized by the 1842 act reducing the army's enlisted strength amounted to a single man more than than this hypothetical figure. By 1851 the system's garrison demands were, doubtlessly for political purposes, reduced to a mere four and a half regiments, less than a third of the entire peacetime army but still larger than the entire artillery arm (four regiments) which garrisoned the fortifications. Indeed, the marginal significance of most of the planned works is clear when we note that this garrison plan would have produced a ratio of approximately one man per cannon throughout the system—heavy lifting for men on any diet, much less the army one. On the other hand, most of the
projected fortifications would be only manned in time of crisis, but this undermined the argument that they would defeat or deter the sudden descents which would probably announce the onset of war. Defense against raids aside, these works would hardly be able to prevent invasion, especially if unequipped with artillery.

These problems notwithstanding, by 1860 the system initially outlined in 1821 was substantially complete, and certain features of American fortifications (their gunshields and the construction of the gun embrasures, for example) were among the world's most technologically advanced. The question at issue was never the need for some form of fortification, but its extent, a question dependent on the system's intended mission and capabilities. The engineers increasingly referred to the program as a preclusive defense against invasion as well as raids in order to justify their requests for more extensive building, but few congressmen could envision a threat worthy of such substantial appropriations. The distances of American space seemed expansive enough to guarantee security on land as well as sea, for (echoing British assessments) Secretary of War Cass observed that even if an invasion were possible it would find no strategic center of gravity to strike at. Writing twenty years after the disasters of the War of 1812 when the survival of American independence was no longer in question, Cass was confident that even the loss of Washington would prove no more than a short-lived psychological setback, as no foreign army could expect to maintain itself on American shores for any length of time against the massed resources of a people roused to patriotic war (a recognition of the phenomena of strategic consumption and popular wars established in American military thought by experience long before they were articulated in theoretical form by Clausewitz). The theoretical potential for invasion did grow during the 1850s
when the Crimean War demonstrated the practicability of mounting and sustaining major amphibious invasions over distances of three thousand miles, but by that time the large-caliber rifled guns mounted aboard new warships and the looming prospect of ironclad construction had begun to bring the tactical superiority of fortifications over fleets into serious question, and under these circumstances it is fortunate that more of the masonry system was not built.31

In the meantime, the construction of small steamships more mobile and less expensive than those proposed by Gaines found growing acceptance for offensive as well as defensive missions. In 1834 Secretary Cass sought funding for two or three "steam batteries"; during the French crisis of 1836 Chief Engineer Gratiot advised the construction of thirty-six such vessels, but his previous opposition to steam vessels makes it likely that he did so self-interestedly (and rather irresponsibly), in the full knowledge that this number was utterly unrealistic and would be dismissed out of hand by a frugal Congress. All these abstractions became irrelevant when practical considerations took precedence during actual operations--small shallow-draft steamers were used extensively by all sides during the "Patriot War" along the Canadian border between late 1837 and 1839, and the United States and Britain both maintained small ad hoc flotillas of these vessels on the Great Lakes afterwards. Meanwhile, the ranks of steam advocates received a powerful ally in the person of expansionist Senator Thomas Hart Benton, longtime head of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, and in 1839 the navy laid down its first two sidewheel frigates. Three years later Congress appropriated funds for the world's first ironclad steamer, but the plans were cancelled within two years and no ironclads or "floating batteries" were built
in America until the Civil War, when we recognize the fusion of these concepts in the Monitor and Merrimac. (The first operational ironclad, the French La Gloire, was launched in 1859.) In the prewar army these trends toward support for steam-powered vessels culminated in Winfield Scott’s January 1846 appropriations request advising “the construction of from fifty to seventy light war steamers” with two to six guns each. His proposal, though phrased as a matter of defense, clearly referred to vessels more appropriate to offensive operations, and though the numbers he suggested—like those sought by most senior American military officers in force estimates throughout this period—were totally unrealistic, steamships became indispensable as a reliable means of transport and supply during the amphibious campaign he led against Veracruz a year later.32

As the accession of Senator Benton indicates, the growing support for armed steamers was closely related to the rise of a more aggressive, even extracontinental, expansionism, especially, as we shall see in chapter sixteen, in the navy. The army officers who worked closely with the fortifications program had always demonstrated an interest in naval warfare, and their interests sometimes followed the navy's into the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. By 1845 Major William Chase, an institutional iconoclast despite being the chief engineer on the fortifications at Pensacola, had become the leading advocate of steam (including railroads) in the Corps of Engineers and the fortification system's most persistent army critic besides Gaines. Like Gaines, Chase thought on a large scale, and he was even more disposed to suggest offensive strategies, urging that "the policy of our defense is that of attack. . . . the country would rest in security; but why not go farther? Why not threaten England with blockade and invasion? . . . Our means are ample." Like Totten and Gaines before him, Chase demonstrated that when army
officers thought about national strategy they gave substantial, though not always realistic, consideration to economic and political goals and constraints. Like them the major based his arguments principally on savings to the government and the economy; like Gaines he balanced his aggressive plans with conventional assurances that he believed in the steady progress of peace through free trade and intended "not conquest . . . but to disseminate our blessed institutions by peaceful means"; but like both Gaines and Totten, Chase's search for security, though not so preclusive as theirs, suffered from a desire for inclusiveness that led to gigantism and unsustainable expense.

Gaines was no advocate of a slave hemisphere, but the defense of sectional interests certainly influenced these expansive ideas, and the allocation of federal spending was always an issue, sometimes crucial to engineers who became tied to a local community by long employment on fortifications there: in 1839 Chase lauded "South Carolina, always true to southern rights and to the general interests of the country," in contrast to the northern congressmen who he claimed kept all the fortification funds for their states' ports. The most powerful sectional consideration was a more purely professional concern--and regrettably a socially responsible one these men shared with many naval officers and civilian policymakers of the Polk and Tyler administrations--"the incendiary fires" of slave rebellion, which always threatened to serve as a fifth column in aid of the British or other foreign aggressors.33

The army's internal discourse on coastal defense says a great deal about the complex state of military professionalism in pre-Civil War America. Although this chapter has not stressed it, the most significant aspect of these debates may simply be the miniscule number of officers who actually
participated in them and the almost complete absence--to which General Gaines was the principal exception--of substantive printed commentary from the combat arms branches of the army. As for the question of responsibility, neither side in the debates weighed the expense of its proposals realistically against the threats actually facing the nation, leaving Congress to make that evaluation by limiting appropriations through a process politicized by the opportunity to allocate contracts (and thus jobs), which certainly did not maximize the military effectiveness of the portions of the system that were built. Indeed, the policy options presented by the engineers were increasingly conditioned by institutional self-interest to the neglect of the wider social considerations that had characterized its initial proposals, while Gaines seems to have preferred grand plans to more practical experiments that might have garnered support for his farsighted ideas. In larger strategic terms, the defensive rhetoric of the Fortifications Board suggested little of the expansionist drive that actually characterized the new nation's foreign relations--because regular soldiers looked to Europe as the primary source of danger the engineers obdurately persisted in advocating an ever-larger system long after it became clear that much of the system was unnecessary and would never be funded.

Totten and Gaines demonstrated that when army officers thought about national strategy they gave substantial, and often fairly sophisticated, consideration to economic and political goals and constraints, and both sides were responsible enough to phrase their primary arguments in terms of broad societal objectives rather than technical minutiae, but both men suffered from a desire for comprehensiveness, not uncommon in American society at the time, that led them to propose unrealistically and unsustainably expensive plans that ignored the American fiscal-political setting. In
response, the civilian policymakers in Congress, who were directly rather than bureaucratically accountable to the nation's citizens, rightly exercised their oversight by rejecting both the technological hubris and self-interest of the Fortifications Board and the responsible yet grandiose visions of General Gaines. These officers brought an impressive, and sometimes even visionary, awareness of social, economic, and technological interdependence to American strategic planning, but the engineers' ability to recognize and adapt to technological and budgetary realities was irremediably retarded by their organizational interest in pushing an increasingly outmoded paradigm. These blinders produced an analysis responsibly based on a fledgling awareness of social and economic interdependence yet abstracted from the domestic and international realities that determined budgetary appropriations and practical implementation.

*     *     *

II. Officers' Attitudes Toward Relations with European Nations During the 1820s and 1830s

Army officers continued to raise the banner of international republicanism and its defense during the 1820s, but the vehemence and frequency of this rhetoric declined quickly as European threats to the New World receded. The reports presented by general officers and staff chiefs on the force reduction of 1821 provided an occasion for several expositions on the need for preparedness, but most of their recommendations and concerns were phrased in defensive terms that suited the increasingly isolationist temper of the nation as the postwar wave of nationalism dissipated in the aftermath of economic panic and sectional conflict. Republicanism remained one of the most overtly political tropes in their essays on the proposed
reduction, but a sense of defensiveness had replaced the abstract enthusiasm for international revolution that men like Scott had proclaimed before Metternich's formation of the reactionary Holy Alliance. Jacob Brown lamented the alliance's "determination . . . to resist the progress of free principles," and included a long-winded warning about "the pending struggle between free and despotic principles," which might culminate in "a further combination for the utter extinction of the flame of liberty," meaning an attack on the United States by the European monarchies.34

Brown was clearly writing for an ideologically attuned public audience, the cost-conscious congressmen (and especially the Old Republicans like Nathaniel Macon, who loomed large in these debates despite their small numbers) who seemed certain to slash army strength and appropriations unless convinced of the reality of a foreign threat. Edmund Gaines put the international situation in more abstract and less apocalyptic terms that nevertheless expressed the military professional's underlying sense of the need for preparedness in an unstable international system when he warned that "while the many armed Powers of Europe continue to hold themselves ready for War, and cherish their deep-rooted enmity towards Republics, we have little reason to expect a very long continuance of peace without demonstrating to our Neighbours our readiness and willingness to prefer War to insult." Writing a year after Brown, the more junior Zachary Taylor referred to the prospect of European attempts to recolonize the Western Hemisphere and claimed that the United States would soon be forced "to contend . . . on our own soil with them, for our very existence."35

Such fears notwithstanding, the tensions which had drawn the United States into conflicts along its borders before 1821 declined into relative insignificance after the annexation of Florida, and the danger of a European
alliance against the American republics virtually disappeared after the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine and its British analogue. In consequence, American territorial and economic expansionism proceeded largely through private paths of commerce and settlement during the 1820s and 30s. Of the officers asked to submit reports on the reduction, only Winfield Scott recurred directly to the potential for "another offensive war against Canada" in his projections, and expansionist statements are difficult to find in officers' papers from the years between 1821 and 1836. The evidence that they remained conscious of European revolutions and liberalism during these years is almost equally sparse, and the Greek struggle for independence did not cause nearly the excitement among officers that it did among civilians, probably because the officer corps knew that it was unlikely to have anything to do with the issue. Late in 1823, cadet Alfred Mordecai wrote to his sister Rachel that "the people of the north seem Greek-mad," but he said nothing about his own opinions, nor did he comment on the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine only days before.36

The most intriguing exception to this silence came at the beginning of 1822 from former engineer officer and inspector general James Gadsden in a letter to retired chief engineer Joseph Swift, who had assumed a leading role in an association soliciting contributions to "the cause of the suffering Greeks" (as well as acting as John C. Calhoun's principal political agent in New York City). Gadsden, one of Andrew Jackson's principal aides and proteges in the Division of the South between 1816 and his discharge in 1822, questioned whether private contributions could be used as a means to supply the Greeks while avoiding war with Turkey, asserting that since the "the People" were "the Sovereign power of the Republic" he saw no real difference "between pecuniary contributions, or expressions of opinion in one
individual, or [the] sovereign capacity" of the nation. He therefore considered the activities of Swift's private association "an imbecil & ineffectual mode of avoiding national responsibility; and as contributions direct by the nation would be more efficient; it would have been preferable that the citizens should have merely expressed their willingness to give their constitutional support to the Executive & Legislative branches of our Government."
Gadsden agreed that "the cause of the Greeks is the cause of humanity in which all Christendom is deeply interested--There is but one sentiment in this country on the subject, the only question therefore [should] be, if disposed at all to interfer[e], in what measure can the most effectual aid be given." 37

Whether Gadsden actually feared for peace or simply believed that foreign policy should be kept in the hands of government and out of those of citizens, his letter illustrates the intimate connections between calculations of national interest, motives of personal reputation, and the regular officer's psychic allegiance to the sovereignty of the nation-state among the genteel officers of the early republic. Although he began his missive cautiously, the former officer finally ceased his lecture on the constitutional principles of popular sovereignty and the need for public leadership by government to admit that "my object is to see some military service . . . as a volunteer in the cause." His principal motive for doing so was personal honor, which he couched in the rhetoric of ideological commitment. Gadsden's nomination as adjutant general had been rebuffed by the Senate in 1821 (leading to his discharge when the interim appointment expired the following May), and he told Swift that he could "never forget" the committee report that had led to his defeat. Sounding very Jacksonian in his search for personal vindication, Gadsden declared that "I owe it to myself however to remove the infamous imputations cast upon my reputation by that document," and as there was
"no prospect of immediate military service at home, I... will risque my life in a cause next to that of my country most dear to the Republican & Christian." Gadsden couched his communications with Swift in the genteel idiom of honor:

I rely on your delicacy & discretion to consult my wishes as will best conform to my feelings. Had I been disbanded: had the ordinary modes separated me from my profession I should have quietly retired to private life but under existing circumstances I cannot, & my effort through life must be to remove the impressions of the report of the Military Committee & to demonstrate to the world that injustice has been done me."38

Gadsden himself came to repudiate military "voluntarism" (or filibustering) once he was restored to official favor, for he declared himself opposed to such ventures while negotiating the territorial purchase bearing his name from Mexico thirty years later. (Indeed, he then argued that filibustering retarded expansion by alienating foreign nations and making negotiations more difficult.) Unlike the rhetoric of personal honor, the language of republican internationalism employed by Gadsden is rarely visible in the documents left by officers during the 1820s and 30s, and even the occasionally romantic atmosphere at West Point does not seem to have encouraged more ardent hopes. Cadet Charles Petigru's 1827 address to the cadet Dialectic Society on "the history of the rise and progress of literature and science" proclaimed that the United States stood as a beacon for "an enslaved world," but his discourse on the rise and fall of republican Rome and the Italian republics was an academic exercise in the nineteenth-century rhetoric of progress rather than a guide to future foreign relations. Sounding much like General Brown a decade before, Quartermaster General Jesup saw the
European revolutions of 1830 as evidence of the moral superiority of free
institutions but worried that their defeat would be followed by a reactionary
assault against their bastion in the United States. A more specific but less
categorical comment that illustrates some of the links between romanticism
and republican internationalism came three years later when cadet William
Frazier reported the Fourth of July toast he found most impressive: "Poland
the Sand where justice sleeps and liberty lies bleeding."\(^{39}\)

Although most officers probably agreed with its basic precepts, the
proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine had little impact on officers' lives or
presence in their letters before the 1840s. Early in 1824 Zachary Taylor
addressed an extensive commentary on the subject to his friend General
Jespur, flatly asserting that "the nation will be prepared to go any lengths" to
prevent the reimposition of Spanish rule in Latin America, but as a corollary
Taylor believed that the United States should avoid entanglement in
European conflicts (specifically the Greek revolt). (It is unclear whether
Taylor's apparent thoughtfulness on these issues is simply the product of the
availability of more extensive manuscript collections, for most scholars--
including Taylor's own biographers--tend to portray him as quite
unintellectual, but he in fact appears to have been more outspoken--right or
wrong--than most of his fellows in the field grades of the line.) Coming
several weeks after Monroe's proclamation, Taylor's views aligned him with
the Jacksonians who stressed the defense of American national interests
rather than pan-American cooperation. (Jackson himself favored a Pan-
American coalition only in response to an aggressive European one, and only
for the purpose of defending Cuba and Mexico.) Indeed, Taylor's changing
perspective provides an individual example of the transition reflected in the
Monroe Doctrine from the expansive revolutionary ideology and
internationalism of early republican officers and politicians like Scott and Jefferson to the more narrowly defined realism and national self-interest of Jacksonian diplomacy. The isolationist dimensions of Jefferson's "doctrine of the hemispheres" were echoed by the silence of officers on the internal squabbles of Europe, while its expansionist implications received little comment among army officers during the quiet of the late 1820s and the Indian-fighting of the 1830s.40

The most substantial, and indeed virtually the only serious, Euro-American diplomatic crisis between 1823 and 1838 was produced in 1834 and 1835 by President Jackson's demand that France pay American claims arising from seizures of shipping during the Napoleonic wars. The reactions of several well-connected junior officers were decidedly mixed, demonstrating both nationalistic and self-interested belligerence and a more responsible caution. In January 1835 engineer lieutenant George Washington Cullum noted that "the war with France seems to be the all-absorbing topic of conversation and to be expected by most folks sooner or later." The youthful Cullum linked personal and national honor in his reaction to this possibility—he would seek a post at the most vulnerable fortifications, he advised his cousin, but he felt "no relish for remaining so near Bladensburgh," the sight of a humiliating American defeat twenty years before. Indeed, Cullum asserted that a change of scene would benefit officer and nation alike: "If Johnny European comes to Fort Adams [Rhode Island] I'll ensure him a coarse reception."41

Several days later artillery lieutenant Morris Miller added that officers and soldiers alike were "unanimously" in favor of war, "and only fear that the Navy will reap all the laurels." Ordnance captain Alfred Mordecai was
the most experienced and least enthusiastic of these men, writing to his sister Ellen that he found editorials in the *National Intelligencer* "absurd and anti-national" in their support for what he regarded as an essentially unnecessary war: "I find it difficult to give up my confidence in the common sense of people so as to believe an open rupture practicable from such a cause." On the other hand, Mordecai agreed with Jackson's assertion of American rights and hoped that it would lead to bigger budgets from an administration he considered inattentive to military concerns: "if the French insist in their wrong[ful] position, something ought to be done, and preparation is never amiss--some such stimulus was required by our government, with regard to [mil][itary] affairs." Indeed, cautious officers like Mordecai hoped that preparation might lead to a favorable settlement without recourse to a war fought on insufficient, and under the international legal and ethical rule of proportionality unjustifiable, pretexts.42

The French crisis did lead to a spurt of much-needed but last-minute preparations and planning, as senior commanders and staff officers conducted emergency inspections to ascertain the state of readiness of the nation's coastal fortifications. Commanding general Macomb issued a confidential circular to the commanders of these posts asking them for inventories of all ordnance stores and detailed reports on the condition of all equipment and ordering them to position their cannon to best command the probable avenues from which an opposing fleet would approach. The limits to the system's readiness were clearly known to be substantial, as Macomb felt compelled to remind his officers of the potency of a single gun properly employed while warning them not to incur any additional expense in their preparations. These belated but professionally responsible efforts notwithstanding, two months later he was forced to report to the secretary of
war that there was "hardly a gun mounted in any part of the Country."
Indeed, three years later the Army and Navy Chronicle referred to the French crisis as a prime example of the dangers of unpreparedness that plagued the nation:

[J]udging from past observation, it requires something more than facts to convince men [that] there can be any real danger if there is no foe in sight. When a house is burnt, it is too late to effect insurance . . . As with individuals, so with communities and with nations, procrastination is often our worst enemy. Forgetting the counsels of prudence, and the admonitions of experience, preparations for defense and protection are postponed until resistance is almost vain.

The article concluded that "the naked condition of our fortresses should be a warning to us to be prepared for the worst, and the sooner we are thus prepared, the better for the country." Such fears notwithstanding, the 1835 appropriations bill for fortifications did not pass Congress, where opponents saw it as part of President Jackson's aggressive diplomacy towards France rather than a defensive measure.43

Army officers appear to have been roughly evenly divided in their partisan loyalties during the Jacksonian era, and some shared these congressional concerns about the president's belligerence. Captain James Ripley's response to the crisis suggests that army officers were neither united in favor of war nor completely neutral in their motives and reactions, yet his interest in the question was neither purely partisan (as a Whig) nor simply that of a careerist dedicated to his own self-advancement and the army's aggrandizement as an organization. Although there were numerous exceptions among both junior and senior officers, the preponderance of the
officer corps seems to have shared Whiggish attitudes and affinities (though not necessarily party loyalties), especially where issues related to public order and the rule of national or international law were concerned. Ripley's reaction to Jackson's bellicose message to Congress illustrates his temperamentally conservative effort to balance considerations of morality and the practical consequences of war with the pressure to conform to the nationalistic pressures aroused by the president: "I think that all decent men must regret the threat or menace contained in the message, as it places us in a position from which there is no retreat and however reluctant our party [the Whigs] may be to see the country involved in war there is not one among us who would but profess it to dishonor." Ripley believed that Jackson's will would drive that of his party from top to bottom and lead to war, since he felt sure that "the dirty shirts" who comprised its majority "have nothing to lose." Note that the captain felt that war was being forced on the nation by the trumped-up pressure for patriotic unity; he did not seek it as a means to advance his career, nor did he view the potential war as one justified by the moral criterion of proportionality. Ripley's words were equally informed by class perspectives and prejudices; his genteel concern for decency and international appearances was united with disdain for the Democrats' partisan uniformity and--literally--the great unwashed among the electorate.

Finally, in a statement that illustrates some of the paradoxes of professional responsibility and accountability, Ripley (a future chief of ordnance during the Civil War) warned his friend Robert Anderson of the personal career dangers of assignment to uncompleted fortifications which lacked the necessary resources to prepare for battle: "I should inevitably be disgraced for the whole scheme must and will fail" in combat if not sustained with adequate funding. Consequently, Ripley believed that any officer who
received such a task would be wise to take pains to delineate its difficulties in his reports, "so that when we are called upon to render a final accounting . . . the blame if any may be laid at the door of him to whom it belongs." These fears led Ripley to order Anderson "to keep an exact [count] of each man's time" and tasks on the fortifications. Ripley's intentions—to blame congressional economizing or presidential aggressiveness for defeat—may seem to imply a lack of subordination to civilian control, yet they also demonstrate a sense of substantive (or functional) responsibility and mission, the quest for material (or capability) sufficient to perform that task, and the growing awareness that fiscal accountability could serve the officer corps' desire for security.44

This motivation and the mentalité it expressed were simultaneously professional and careerist phenomena based ultimately on employment by the nation-state and an acceptance of the consequences thereof, value systems that connected individual, organizational, and occupational self-interest with values of professional responsibility and ultimately political accountability in a manner which was fundamentally more professional—meaning accountable or responsive to the demands of the society which the army served—than the increasingly bloated plans for the fortification program itself. Grandiose plans quickly became irrelevant in an era of budgetary constraints, but the individual officer's normative socialization at West Point and his material desire for career security and promotion in the face of continual congressional inquiries led to a potent sense of personal responsibility and fiscal accountability that ultimately served the larger cause of organizational and occupational responsiveness to civil authority despite the dissatisfaction and anxiety individual officers felt during crises at the time—a complex, sometimes contradictory, but fundamentally accountable pattern of response
that ultimately characterized both the staff and the line of the army. In other words, officers who came to view their responsibilities in terms of national defense were more likely to act in ways accountable to the constitutional structure of the American nation-state rather than the importunities of local or sectional interests as Jackson and his subordinates had during the 1810s. In the next three chapters we shall see the army officer corps acting as both leader in and restraint on American territorial expansion, advancing the interests of American frontiersmen in two of the three but doing so at the direction of the federal government rather than the behest of private individuals (with whom the corps often came into conflict).
Chapter XII

I. Expertise, Accountability, and the Paradoxes of Professional Responsibility in Debates over American Coastal Defense Policy

1 The principal reports are: "Summary of operations of the Board of Engineers," communicated to the House of Representatives February 12, 1821, NASP:MA 3: 142-56; "Fortifications," communicated to the House February 15, 1821, ASP:MA 2: 304-313; "System of Fortifications Recommended by the Board of Engineers," communicated to the House March 1, 1826, ASP:MA 3: 245-60; and "Revised Report of the Board of Engineers on the Defence of the Seaboard," communicated to the House April 12, 1826, ASP:MA 3: 283-301. The second and fourth of these were the principal policy statements; the first and third were more detailed and less abstract. I therefore refer to the second as the "initial report," though detailed analyses of the coastline had been done in each of the three years previous. President Jackson's message on "Means and Measures Necessary for the Military and Naval Defense of the Country," communicated to the Senate April 8, 1836, ASP:MA 6: 365-403, includes an update and reaffirmation from Totten to Chief Engineer Charles Gratiot dated March 29, 1836 (pp. 377-91). Other official documents (mostly routine reports of construction and expense) pertaining to the fortifications program are collected in NASP:MA 3.

See also Skelton, "The United States Army," pp. 105-114 and 389-401; Arthur P. Wade, "Artillerists and Engineers: The Beginnings of American Seacoast Fortification, 1794-1815" (Ph.D. dissertation, Kansas State University, 1977); Robert S. Browning, "Shielding the Republic: American Coastal Defense Policy in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1981); and idem., Two if by Sea: The Development of American Coastal Defense Policy (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983); Jamie W. Moore, The Fortifications Board 1816-1828 and the Definition of National Security (Charleston, S.C.: The Citadel, 1981); and Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 243-46. Naval dimensions are treated in Craig L. Symonds, Navalists and Antinavalists: The Naval Policy Debate in the United States, 1785-1827 (Newark, N.J.: University of Delaware Press, 1980), and chapter 16 herein. Partridge, Military Planning for the Defense of the United Kingdom, pp. 8-15 and ch. 5, shows that the British fortification debates were similar in content, form, and dynamics—including that of professional self-aggrandizement—to the American ones. Partridge terms the preoccupation with permanent fortifications "unwise" (p. 147). Aside from the obvious differences in strategic circumstances and objectives, the most significant differences between the British and American debates were the
sheer number of proposals made by British officers and the much more widespread--indeed official--recognition of the problems posed by steam power.


6 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 389; Browning, Two if by Sea, pp. 35-36.

9 I have not gone into any detail regarding the technology of the system itself, which is treated in Browning, Two if by Sea, chs. 2-3. Suffice it to say that naval fire was considered too inaccurate to create breaches in properly constructed masonry works because cannon fire from vessels constantly rolling in the sea currents (the effects of "pitch and yaw") could not be concentrated effectively against the same section of wall. Fortifications could also carry the weight of larger guns than ships, and would hold a larger supply of ammunition in case of extended duels. Even though masonry was easily shattered by iron shot, vertical wooden ship hulls were still more vulnerable. Ships were therefore much easier targets, too slow for their movement to cause misses at the close ranges they needed to reach in order to strike the embrasures and other vulnerable points in the fortifications and too weakly protected to require multiple hits against a single point to be penetrated in turn. The closer the range the fewer ships could be brought to bear against a fortification, cancelling much of the presumed superiority of an attacking fleet's numbers. In sum, close-range duels were deadly to ships, while long-range bombardments could not be expected to do any serious damage to fortifications. This equation was revolutionized by the development of rifled guns, which permitted several victories by Union flotillas bombarding Confederate fortifications at long range.

Just as significantly, coastal fortifications were primarily aligned against the seaward side, meaning that their defenses were weaker and they could bring fewer guns to bear against attacks from the landward one, and several Union victories occurred when the fortifications were unable to prevent amphibious landings outside their range and the Union brought rifled guns ashore where they could take advantage of stable ground for more accuracy and earthworks for counterbattery defense. The accuracy of some of these Union bombardments was truly amazing. (See ibid., ch. 4.)

10 American political culture precluded the use of the militia as a standing jobs program for the unemployed; some scholars have suggested that it served a similar function at the local level during the colonial period, but the expansive liberalism and individualism of the Jacksonian period precluded a reversion to the corporatist thinking of the earlier era. Regular officers certainly had little desire to do so, and they often complained that the militia was called up as a means of providing patronage to political aspirants and
federal pay to their constituents, a pattern they universally resisted and turned to their own self-interest to discredit the citizen-soldiers. These call-ups were short-term ones to meet specific emergencies, however, not the routine ones necessary to garrison an extensive system of fortifications year-round.

11 Taylor to Jesup, December 15, 1820, Taylor Papers, series 2, reel 1, LC.

12 Gaines to Jacob Brown, "General remarks concerning the militia of the United States," December 2, 1826, communicated to the House of Representatives January 31, 1829, NASP:MA 14: 244; Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, p. 223; Bernard to Macomb, communicated to the Senate May 8, 1826, ASP:MA 3: 305.

13 Gaines, memorial proposing a system of national defence, communicated to Congress March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 91-98 (quotations at 103 and 92); Croghan to Secretary of War Poinsett, March 2, 1838, NASP:MA 1: 308. Gaines printed this pamphlet for distribution to state officials, individual congressmen, and newspaper editors. An earlier version (essentially the same) appeared in 1838. (See Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, pp. 225, 230, and ch. 11 passim.) See also Major John L. Smith to Macomb, January 24, 1835, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Letters Received, RG77, NA; Gaines, February 20, 1835, AGO:LR; Cass to President Jackson, annual report communicated to Congress December 8, 1835, ASP:MA 5: 628; and Gaines, printed pamphlet, January 14, 1846, Army Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. Totten responded by reaffirming the board's paradigm in his report to Gratiot of March 29, 1836, in ASP:MA 6: 377-91. Piers Mackesy, The War for America, 1775-1783 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), provides detailed illustrations of the impact of wind and currents on strategic calculations in the age of sail. The first American steamship was Robert Fulton's Demologos, built in 1814 but never placed in active service.

14 Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 92-95. See also "Pro Patria," "Our Fortifications," ANC 6 (March 22, 1838): 188-89, for a similar reference to Copenhagen (as well as Navarino in 1827), but in a letter seeking attention to military preparedness rather than a critique of the fortification system per se. In addition to firing explosive shells, the Columbiad could fire 50 and later 100 pound solid shot, in an era when the largest cannon in service fired 32 lb. shot. Few were built and they seem to have disappeared from the United States' arsenal during the 1820s. The Paixhans gun was invented in 1832 and placed aboard French vessels from 1837 onwards. Columbiads reentered American service during the 1830s. In
1841 an eight inch model was approved as a standard caliber, and three years later a ten inch version was added. (See Browning, Two if by Sea, pp. 107-108.)

15 Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 93, 96, 106, and 110; Gaines to Secretary of War John C. Spencer, March 20, 1842, quoted in Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, p. 233. See also Major J[ohn] L. Smith to Gratiot, December 27, 1835, ASP:MA 6: 12, asserting his ability to build a small ironclad gunboat "which could not be sunk or set on fire" within two months. Gaines' sometimes called his proposed vessels "floating batteries," sometimes "steam batteries." Whether they would be towed or self-propelled varied, not necessarily in accordance with these designations.

16 Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 103.

17 See E.G. Campbell, "Railroads in National Defense, 1829-1848," MVHR 27 (December 1940): 361-78, especially 372 regarding Abert's report for 1840, and Hill, Roads, Rails, & Waterways, chs. 4-5. (The Long-Gaines connection is noted at p. 119.) Although Hill's analysis is not primarily concerned with the military uses of these technologies, he makes remarkably little mention of military commentary on railroads, particularly before the Mexican War, which supports my conclusion that there was not very much of it. The senior engineers remained skeptical even after several units of Pennsylvania volunteers were transported (primarily) by rail from Pittsburgh to Texas during the war (Campbell, pp. 375-77)--only Major William Chase (who we will soon note as a rare iconoclast and doubter of the fortifications program within the Corps of Engineers) is known to have actively asserted the utility of railroads as a defensive measure, and only he adverted to the Mexican War example (p. 375).

18 Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 98-103 and 108-109 (quotation at 102). See Stagg, Mr. Madison's War, passim, and Watts, War and the Making of Liberal America, pp. 224-39, regarding the search for economic independence through the development of a domestic market before and during the War of 1812, as seen through the lenses of national security policy and the development of liberal culture. This was of course one of Jefferson's long-range objectives in the Non-Importation and Embargo Acts as well as a theme dating to the pre-Revolutionary crisis of the 1760s. See Sellers, The Market Revolution, and Harry L. Watson, Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), for recent syntheses that stress the market revolution. Regin, Fathers and Children, espec. chs. 3 and 6-8, provided an earlier synthesis that stressed some of the same historical processes in the Old Southwest; see Andrew R.L.

19 Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2, quotations at 100-101, 111, and 113. See Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*, chs. 2-3, for the seminal explication of the Jacksonian trope of restoration and its use by "venturesome conservatives." Gaines wanted the locations of the railroads to be chosen by a board of officers (p. 100). His vision of the redemption of Africa (which at one point includes South America) reads like a philanthropic paternalist's version of the "Purple Dream" or a parody of British colonialism—the freed slaves would be accompanied by "a fleet of steam ships of war, with an army of missionaries [who would also serve as engineers] and United States volunteers, for the instruction and protection of the numerous savages." This would have to wait until the free white population had reached 200 million, however.

20 Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 102. See Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," pp. 50 and 245, for one intimation of this perspective on the professionalization of the officer corps. Tommy Young has related similar views in personal conversation with the author.

21 Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 98 and 105.

22 Spiller, "From Hero to Leader," p. 50. The distinction I am trying to make is a complex one. In one sense Scott and his kindred had a better understanding of the emerging division of labor, i.e. that the militia was dead because the average civilian did not have ten days a year, much less thirty, to spend being lectured when no war was really foreseeable (which is not how Scott and company would have put it, of course). When we come right down to it, Americans wanted, and probably want today, an unobtrusive and therefore isolated army that remains quietly hidden until the time comes to
die. On the other hand, America's wars since 1850 have been fought by mass armies, usually created through some version of the militia, whether draft or volunteer, a pattern which the frontiersman Gaines was clearly more comfortable with than was Scott. Gaines was a regular officer, of course; he frequently felt contempt for the frontier civilians he served; but he recognized that in a democracy expertise and control over realms as significant as warfare would not be left to an isolated elite. He was far more sympathetic to volunteer forces than Scott, and used language ("a standing army of idlers") that undoubtedly horrified and outraged those committed to a regular army to the effective exclusion of volunteers. Gaines did expect that regular officers would command forces composed of both types of troops, but as a westerner he was far more familiar and comfortable with volunteers than Scott, despite their service together on the Niagara front in 1814. Scott spent most of the interwar years in the northeast, and never really had to deal with frontier scenarios were the use of volunteers would be necessary or assumed. (His actual relations with the volunteers in the Creek War, Cherokee removal, and the early stages of the Second Seminole War, all in the years 1836 to 1838, were fairly cordial, doubtlessly because Scott could be extraordinarily politic when he wanted or needed to be.)

As to practicality, Gaines obviously had a fantastic side, but its elements and inspiration were common ones in Jacksonian America. The "Scott men" (a term not necessarily intended for precise identification but primarily as an indication of affinity or mentalité) lacked both this imaginative connection to American ideals—though from another perspective they were more likely to be Whigs or Whiggish reform advocates, whether of temperance, an end to abusive treatment of enlisted men, or a soldiers' asylum for disabled and infirm veterans—and the down-to-earth attitude of officers who spent their lives on the frontier and often became tied to local communities there. In either case the Gaines type was more attuned to the spirit and particulars of American life and society during the Jacksonian era.


24 Totten, "Report on the Defence of the Atlantic Frontier from the Passamaquoddy to the Sabine, April 24, 1840, House Executive Document (hereafter cited as House Exec. Doc.) 206, 26th Cong., 1st sess.; Gratiot to Secretary Poinsett, "Report on Fortifications and a Defense System of Armed Steamers," communicated to the Senate May 2, 1838, NASP:MA 2: 27. The role of the Board of Naval Commissioners, similar to but more influential
than that of the "Military Board" discussed in chapter 5, is examined in chapter 16.


26 Hill, Roads, Rails, and Waterways, p. 23; Armistead, undated, received December 1818, file A-31, SW:LR-Reg.; Thayer to Macomb, December 12, 1823, Thayer Papers, USMA.

27 Skelton, "The United States Army," p. 91; Totten to Poinsett, November 7, 1837, Letters and Reports of the Chief of Engineers; Browning, Two if by Sea, pp. 46-47. Five new graduates were appointed to the corps in 1839, but only one the following year. The annual number then fluctuated between three and five, except for 1843 and 1844, when no new officers entered the corps. Three of the top four graduates those two years became topographical engineers, though whether they chose this--perhaps motivated by romantic views of western exploration and Manifest Destiny--or were unacceptable to Totten is not known to me. The fourth became a dragoon, presumably because that branch was most congenial to him.

28 Ibid., pp. 42-46; Macomb to Secretary of War John Eaton, communicated to Congress by the president, December 7, 1830, ASP:MA 4: 589.

29 Heileman, "private," November 5 and 13, 1832, HQA:LR; Churchill, IRs, 1842, February 13 and 27, 1843 (the arsenals), and August 3, 1844 (Hancock Barracks).

31 Browning, *Two if by Sea*, pp. 47-49 and 71. The 1850s were a fecund period for American artillery technology: the Rodman guns (made by a process that increased the endurance of gun barrels, permitting larger calibers), Dahlgren guns (which were shaped like bottles with thicker breeches to achieve the same end), and Parrott rifles were all developed during the antebellum decade.

32 Gratiot to Cass, January 13, 1836, ASP:MA 6: 11-12; Browning, *Two if by Sea*, pp. 83-88; Scott to Secretary of War William L. Marcy, January 2, 1846, HQA:LS. Gaines himself believed (memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 96) that metallic armor was too heavy for ocean-going vessels, and none of the navy's pre-Civil War steamers were ironclads. See Bourne, *The Balance of Power in North America*, ch. 4 passim, and chapter 13 herein, on the use of steamships on the Lakes and St. Lawrence frontier.

33 Chase, March 10, 1845, article from unidentified newspaper in Henry Halleck's "Military Note Book," Halleck Papers, LC; Chase, "Harbor of Pensacola," *ANC* 8 (April 18, 1839): 244 (reprinted from the Pensacola *Gazette* of March 21, 1839); Gaines, memorial to Congress, March 6, 1840, NASP:MA 2: 110 ("incendiary fires"). Sectionalism and continental expansionism were equally if not more common in the navy.

34 Brown, October 6, 1820, file B-59, SW:LR-Reg.

35 Gaines, July 27, 1820, file G-144, SW:LR-Reg.; Taylor to Quartermaster General Jesup, June 18, 1821, Taylor Papers, LC.

36 Scott, August 20, 1820, file S-37, SW:LR-Reg.; Alfred Mordecai to Rachel Lazarus, December 28, 1823, Mordecai Papers, LC.

1-21, for a comparison of the different American policy responses to the
dilemmas posed by revolutionary upheaval in Greece in 1823 and 1947 that
centers on perceptions of American national security interests.

38 Gadsden to Swift, January 2, 1822, Thayer Papers, USMA. Ironically,
Gadsden replaced Simon Bernard as Assistant Engineer in 1831, but that post
was terminated by Congress two years later.

39 Gadsden's later views cited in Robert F. May, "Manifest Destiny's
Filibusters," keynote address at the Thirty-First Annual Walter Prescott Webb
Memorial Lectures, March 14, 1996; Taylor to Thomas Sidney Jesup, January
20, 1824, Taylor Papers, series 2, reel 1, LC; Petigru to the "Gentlemen of the
Dialectic," June 10, 1827, Charles Petigru Papers, USMA; Jesup to Secretary of
War Eaton, October 20, 1830, ASP:MA 4: 634; William Frazer to his brother
Reah, July 9, 1833, William Frazer Papers, USMA. See Richard C. Rohrs,
"American Critics and the French Revolution of 1848," JER 14 (Fall 1994): 359-
77, for an examination of conservative attitudes toward European democratic
revolutions that contains numerous parallels to the foreign policy attitudes of
Whiggish officers during the 1830s and 40s.

40 Taylor to Jesup, January 20, 1824, Taylor Papers, series 2, reel 1, LC;
Belohlavek, "Let the Eagle Soar," p. 20. See ibid., ch. 1, and Astolfi,
Foundations of Destiny, ch. 1, for the decline of expansive republican
internationalism among Jacksonians in the 1820s, especially concerning Latin
America and the Pan-American Congress. The cooling of relations between
the United States and Latin America is a commonplace of nearly all works on
American diplomacy of the period; see especially Johnson, A Hemisphere
Apart.

41 Cullum to Alfred Huidekoper, January 9, 1835, Cullum Papers, USMA.

42 Miller to his mother Maria Miller, January 13, 1835, Morris Smith Miller
Papers, USMA; Alfred Mordecai to Ellen Mordecai, December 19, 1835,
Mordecai Papers, LC. Colonel Henry Atkinson mentioned the possibility of
war without substantive comment, in a letter to Robert Anderson dated
January 8, 1836 (Anderson Papers, LC). See Henry Blumenthal, A Reappraisal
of Franco-American Relations, 1830-1871 (Chapel Hill: University of North
Carolina Press, 1959), chs. 2 and 3; idem., France and the United States: Their
Diplomatic Relations, 1789-1914 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina
Press, 1970), ch. 4; and Belohlavek, "Let the Eagle Soar," ch. 4, regarding
American relations with France during the period of my study.
43 Macomb, confidential circular, January 6, 1835, and to Secretary Cass, March 3, 1835, HQA:LS; "Our Means of Defense," ANC 6 (March 8, 1838): 153. See also Macomb to Scott, December 26, 1834, and to Gratiot, December 30, 1835, HQA:LS.

44 Ripley to Robert Anderson December 26, 1834 and January 21, 1835, Anderson Papers, LC.
Chapter XIII

Military Preparations and Peacekeeping along the Canadian Border: State Formation and the Limits of American Military Expansionism

The next two chapters tie together national security policy and the practice of civil-military relations in the nation's northern, western, and internal borderlands, through an examination of planning, recommendations, and operations along the Canadian border (primarily during the late 1830s), on the western frontier of white settlement (and beyond) throughout this era, and in the Second Seminole War of the late 1830s. Although spatial constraints have precluded the examination of Indian and squatter removal prior to that conflict, the combination of analyses of civil-military relations and diplomacy in peace-keeping operations intended to maintain national sovereignty against filibusters along the Canadian frontier and of attitudes toward settler and Indian during the most bitterly contested of the removal-era conflicts provides apt case studies of the army officer corps' growing sense of accountability to national civilian political authority, while illustrating the complex issues in question and the subtle distinctions between professional responsibility and accountability and the dilemmas these ideals posed for officers in practice.

Ultimately, these chapters illustrate the intimate connections between the officer corps' class values and its occupational interests and mentalité, its growing sense of accountability to the nation-state, and the elaboration of American national sovereignty (and indeed that of the international state system) in the borderlands of the early republic. Officers seeking to preserve the personal, organizational, and occupational security of their state-
sponsored monopoly over the direction of organized military force came to respond with increasing caution to the rabid demands of aggressive frontier settlers, preferring the stability and order produced by adherence to national and international law to the potential for self-aggrandizement posed by territorial expansion. In doing so, officers remained accountable to the dictates of the democratically elected government, and thus to the values of their society (even the segments many officers felt distaste for), while faithfully upholding that government's policies even when they were unpopular with expansionist frontiersmen and their congressional supporters. In other words, officers led the operations designed to effect Indian removal and the expulsion of Mexico from the Southwest, but they only did so when constitutionally ordered to, and (unlike their predecessors before 1820) they ardently suppressed filibustering by private forces. In contests between local and national interests and authority, army officers could be relied on to serve the nation-state which employed them, a loyalty which reduced the potential for constitutional conflict created by ventures like Jackson's invasion of Florida while helping to keep the nation out of potentially disastrous wars against the superior military power of Britain.

* * *

I. Plans for Canadian Border Defense during the 1820s and 30s

The laudable awareness of the economic and political factors involved in questions of national defense demonstrated by the staff officers of the Fortification Board was shared by the army's senior line officers in their approach to the defense of the nation's northern frontier, the only one directly abutted by a major military power. As chapter fourteen will show,
American policy-makers did continue to worry about British influence on the Great Plains south of the international boundary into the mid-1820s, but overt tensions over suspected military build-ups on the Great Lakes and the boundary to the west of them were defused by 1818 because of the political pressures for fiscal retrenchment in both countries amidst the postwar American economic boom and depression and social unrest in Britain. (Understood in this light, the Rush-Bagot Agreement becomes more of an economy measure than a reflection of deeper rapprochement. The Convention of 1818 did have broader diplomatic implications, however, because of shared Anglo-American concerns about the Holy Alliance and the Aix-la-Chapelle conference.) Historians of British North American policy have observed that "intensive" British planning and "enormous" expenditures continued in Canada east of Lake Superior during the 1820s and 30s, but these developments were generally ignored by Americans at the time, including the army hierarchy. Although officers were certainly cognizant of the general lessons of a half-century of conflict, few Americans military or civilian saw much reason for concern over the security of the northern border during the 1820s and the early to mid-1830s, and after 1821 senior officers gave little detailed consideration to this theater until forced to do so a decade and a half later.¹

¹ This confidence was made possible by the avalanche of American settlement along the Lakes that was permitted by the defeat and expulsion of the northwestern Indians during the war and the withdrawal of British forces from posts on American soil afterwards. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 dramatically accelerated this process while opening up an effective inland means of supply and communication from the Hudson to Buffalo,
providing a secure logistical avenue that could support powerful American offensives against Upper Canada from the Niagara frontier. (The canal also diverted frontier economic ties from Canada, limiting the evolution of a common borderlands consciousness that had been evident during the 1790s and 1800s.) In 1826 Jacob Brown—an upstate New Yorker himself—advised the War Department that it would not be necessary to fortify the edges of Lakes Huron and Superior any further because the American population (and consequently American economic resources and the ability to mobilize them militarily) was so rapidly outstripping the British one that naval competition could "never again arise" in that region.²

Indeed, Brown's concept of long-range security was much like Andrew Jackson's on the southern frontier; his primary objective was simply "to accelerate this settlement, and augment the physical resources of the country, chiefly by the establishment of roads" to facilitate communications and economic development. Doing so would supply the last strategic deficiency in American offensive capabilities, and the logistical problems which had crippled American efforts during the War of 1812 would no longer act to preclude the creation and execution of sophisticated plans for an invasion on a strategically decisive scale. Chief Engineer Macomb repeated Brown's recommendations, though he believed (and of course possessed an interest in doing so) that additional fortifications would probably be deemed necessary at crucial points. Joseph Totten echoed these assumptions of American economic strength in his report on the northern frontier a decade later, just prior to the outbreak of popular rebellions in Canada and Anglo-American tensions over the Maine boundary—even if the growth of American wealth were to invite preemptive British attack, "the growth in numbers and the increased facilities of intercommunication, the increased power of rendering
mutual succor, and of drawing aid from the interior, would, in a still greater degree, make aggression difficult and improbable." Totten wisely thought to ask whether the colonial status of Canada was likely to change, but he concluded that from the standpoint of American national security this did not ultimately matter very much.³

Though they probably did not know it at the time, these views were seconded by authorities whose analyses the Americans would have taken as the best measure of contemporary expertise, for British professionals shared much the same understanding of Canada's military position as their American counterparts. England retained considerably more troops in Canada after the war than before, but most British officials shared the Americans' doubts about their capacity to conduct a successful defense of the provinces, and the thoughts of British commanders provide an instructive contrast and numerous parallels to those of the American officers discussed herein. Like the engineers of the Fortification Board, senior British commanders saw warfare in the long view, mirroring American fears of a cold war of English containment with their own nightmare of unending American pressure against Canada under the pretext of trumped-up incidents. (Indeed, Monroe and Jefferson had proposed such a course as far back as 1784, when the Revolutionary campaign against Quebec was still fresh in the minds of American leaders.) Unlike the American engineers' organizational interest in fortifications, however, British commanders had no stake in Canada per se, and at least one wrote privately that Britain would be "well rid of it. It is certainly a fine country, but too distant for us to defend against so powerful a neighbour."⁴

British military thinking on national security and strategy was not limited to the work of a single board and a few senior officers and iconoclasts,
however. As befitting a worldwide empire, the British national security bureaucracy was far more fully developed than the American one, and reports on all aspects of Canadian defense constantly flowed into the war and colonial offices, the Admiralty, and the foreign ministry from officers of all ranks and both services, and these efforts were supplemented by the reports of agents covertly sent to spy out American military installations and preparedness. These organizational advantages notwithstanding, British prescriptions for the defense of Canada relied on much the same methods as the American strategists of the Fortification Board and their counterparts among the senior staff and line officers. Skeptical about the long-term prospects for improving Anglo-American relations, British decisionmakers hoped somehow to shift the balance of resources, population, and power on the North American continent in their favor by fostering economic growth.

Conditioned by geography and similar force structures, the two sides' tactical thinking and operational planning were also similar--despite their lamentations, British strategists hoped that the Canadian militia could harass the flanks and rear of an American offensive long enough to delay operations from a captured Montreal against Quebec while reinforcements were dispatched, a strategy not unlike the American ones in 1777 and 1813-14 and, as we shall see, that proposed for the defense of Maine in 1838 and 1839. As in the United States, British policymakers claimed to depend on the expansion of the transportation infrastructure and an active militia as the principal pillars of defense, and like the American fortification board in its initial stages, British strategists saw fortifications primarily as an effective means of delaying a more powerful attacker until the defense could recover and concentrate its forces. The fiscal considerations affecting British and American security policy were also similar, and cost--the leading concern of
an legislature responsible to public opinion in both countries (unlike Russia or Prussia, for example)--always remained the decisive factor--as a constant constraint--in British policy and preparations along the Canadian frontier, which was consistently forced to stress the strategic (and usually the operational) defensive. Efforts to improve the colonies' strategic infrastructure and militia therefore foundered for much the same reasons as in the United States: a frugality that was accountably based on the electorate's reluctance to finance extensive preparations for war in the absence of significant evidence that hostilities were likely. Preparedness for future contingencies always took a back seat to present fiscal and political realities.6

American military planning for the Canadian border followed the same trajectory of suspicion, quiescence, and revived tension as the diplomatic relations of the era. The Fortification Board's ideological bow to the notion that "we can only assume the offensive through our navy" was naturally ignored by the men who had led repeated invasions of Canada during the War of 1812, including Joseph Totten (who had served as chief engineer on the Niagara in 1812 and 1813 and on Lake Champlain in 1814) himself. American planning against Canada followed their well-trodden paths, stressing the need to cut off Upper Canada by seizing control of the St. Lawrence River at Montreal or Quebec. Fortifications were deemed unnecessary beyond providing secure depots, rallying points, and bases of operations for the growing American power that could be concentrated against this land frontier. As a result, only $200,000 out of the $8.25 million applied to fortifications between 1816 and 1829 were spent along the northern frontier, and most of the installations there were no more than wooden barracks. Several military roads and an arsenal were built in Maine during
the 1820s, but in 1832 commanding general Macomb recommended that no further works be erected there.7

Totten's 1836 report on fortifications therefore reiterated the common belief that Canada was unlikely to pose a substantial threat to the United States. Totten advised that only the outlet of Lake Champlain needed fortification, although "no effort necessary to secure and maintain this position should be spared, because it is only thus that the contest for naval superiority on the lakes . . . can be avoided." He expected that American victory would then follow the course mandated by overwhelming strength: "Without aid from abroad Canada cannot contest such an issue with the United States," and "active operations against Quebec" would follow "as a matter of course." Totten felt safe in assuring Congress that no further advance preparations were necessary, because policy-makers "may be certain that there will exist ample resources to create all such artificial military aids as the circumstances may call for." As these statements suggest, decisive offensive warfare combined with a strong appreciation of the importance of logistics (which had been so conspicuously absent during the early stages of the War of 1812) clearly marked American strategic thought regarding the Canadian frontier a quarter-century before the Civil War, even though little concrete preparation was made to implement this approach.8

*     *     *

II. Peacekeeping, Diplomacy, and the Growth of Accountable Civil-Military Relations on the Border: Army Officers and Filibusters, 1838-1839

After the crisis with France had passed Britain again became the army's most probable European opponent, and the northern frontier became the country's chief international flash-point with the advent of rebellion in
Upper Canada and the formation of the "Patriot" movement of exiles and their sympathizers in the United States in December 1837. After years of slowly building unrest, a series of armed rebellions broke out in the British provinces of Upper and Lower Canada that fall. The rebels were quickly dispersed, but many fled to the United States, where they immediately began to raise money and recruits to return to the fray. Their main force assembled at Buffalo and established a base on an island on the Canadian side of the Niagara River, but loyal Canadian militia responded by burning the rebel supply vessel Caroline anchored on the American shore. An American citizen was killed in the raid and American public opinion along the border erupted in anger and fear. President Martin Van Buren wanted to avoid war with Britain, so he immediately sent Winfield Scott and other army officers to reassure the restive borderers and to maintain American neutrality by securing the frontier against violation from either side, "manifesting to friends and foes," as Major William Worth wrote early in 1838, "the continued disposition of the Government to put forth every energy in maintenance of the laws and the National Faith." For the next four years army officers were the chief agents of federal policy along the northern border, battling a series of private attempts to precipitate a war between the United States and Britain by invading Canada. Given the delicate balance of American public opinion and the inadequacy of federal neutrality law, peacekeeping in the borderlands was as much a job for civil-military diplomacy as for the overt display of force, because the Patriot sympathies of many local civil officials and militiamen deprived army officers of the legal authority and manpower they needed to act as an effective barrier to Patriot expeditions.
By the mid-1830s traditional American fears that Canada would provide Britain with a base for aggression against the United States were seemingly in decline, as the growth of the American economy, the boom in Anglo-American trade and investment, the rise of Anglo-Saxon racialism, and the successful conclusion of a number of diplomatic agreements led to self-confidence and a faith in negotiation and coexistence among American policy-makers. Some historians have suggested that attitudes toward Britain hardened in the South and the West during the 1830s because of British support for abolitionism and the debts American banks incurred to their transatlantic counterparts, but hostility declined in the northeast, and these sectional feelings do not appear to have fundamentally shaped or reshaped official expectations regarding Canada. Indeed, southerners also feared the disruption of the cotton trade that a war would cause and the influx of free states and abolitionist voters that successful conquest would bring, while westerners valued Canadian markets as a duty-free outlet for their wheat prior to the repeal of the Corn Laws, while objecting to the potential for competition from Canadian farmers within an expanded United States, and I would argue that these considerations were more significant in the long run.

Historian Reginald Stuart has observed that "continentalism and self-determination were compatible, not contradictory, components of America's expansionist ideology" concerning Canada, because (as they did in the cases of Florida before 1820 and Texas before 1845) a growing number of Americans expected that Canada would gradually but inevitably move toward independence and possible union with the United States as American economic and political influence increased. Confident in the example of their free economy and republican institutions, most Americans were willing to bide their time rather than risking war and economic disruption by
subverting British rule directly, and the Van Buren administration refused to use the Patriot crises as grounds to do so. Given this context, many moderate and conservatively minded Americans viewed the Canadian rebels and American filibusters of the late 1830s as transgressors of international law and domestic order, as Jacksonian democrats gone mad rather than the advance guard of American republicanism. War with Britain and the Royal Navy was a dangerous gamble when American entrepreneurs believed that they could outpace their competition peacefully, and the financial problems created by the Panic of 1837 made it an even riskier option.¹⁰

These general or majority attitudes notwithstanding, many Americans, especially those in the border region, supported the so-called "Patriots" on ideological grounds as inheritors of the Revolutionary tradition or on nationalistic ones of Anglophobia. Matters were made worse by the Panic of 1837, which left thousands jobless, and in the border states many of these idle men joined "Hunter's Lodges" that raided into Canada. U.S. Army officers were caught in the middle between American filibusters and their civilian supporters (including many local civil officials) and the British authorities and loyal Canadians who wanted to pursue the Patriots into the United States to avenge their raids. The regulars' sympathies were largely with the British, and they believed that the most moral and efficient way to defend American sovereignty was to preempt conflict by preventing Patriot incursions against Canada, rather than trying to stop British forces pursuing the Patriots across the border after the fact. The army acted energetically against the Patriots despite the tacit resistance of local civil authorities, and military commanders successfully maintained federal authority and contained incidents that might otherwise have led to a disastrous war with Britain.¹¹
Besides its importance as a study in borderlands peacekeeping and diplomacy, a close examination of the opinions and operations of William Worth and his counterparts during the Patriot unrest provides a case study in Jacksonian civil-military relations and the changing social and political attitudes of army officers that can help illuminate the sources and limitations of their developing professionalism, especially the growth of a sense of nonpartisan accountability to the civilian authority of the nation-state. The concept of national sovereignty, particularly in the form of centralized control over the use of armed force, emerges as the key to understanding the vigor with which regular officers attempted to enforce domestic and international law. Their negative reactions to the Patriots were ultimately a product of the high value regulars placed on order and stability, a mindset that originated in the rules-bound world of the nation's first large bureaucratic hierarchy, among men who feared the effect disorder could have on their social status and their ability to command enlisted--working-class--subordinates.

The confidence of the previous decade notwithstanding, Totten's 1836 report warned that "the military consequences [of American population growth] . . . are so obvious that it [can]not be supposed [that] they are not perfectly understood by our neighbor." The British responded forcefully to the Patriot rebellions and filibusters by gradually massing up to twenty thousand regulars in their North American provinces, more than half of them in the Canadas. (The initial British strength had been approximately two thousand.) Regardless of the United States' long-term military potential along the border, American commanders on the spot never had more than three thousand troops available to them--"hardly enough to fire a shot in honor of our flag," as William Worth (by then colonel of the 8th Infantry) put
it in February 1839. Indeed, officers sent to the border region to restrain the Patriotic filibusters feared that there was no obstacle to prevent the British from sweeping southward in retaliation or pursuit, and the abstract confidence of the 1820s and early 1830s quickly evaporated as officers came to realize that the nation's long-term ability to mobilize overwhelming forces could do little to save the border region from catastrophic retaliation. The same lack of troops that hampered their law enforcement operations left officers feeling helpless before the possibility of large scale retaliation or war, and they hastened to absolve themselves of responsibility for the consequences.

"What can a Military Commander do with a mere handful of men, when compelled to act in subordination to civil officers, a majority of whom are notoriously favorable to what is misnamed the Patriot cause?" asked Colonel Hugh Brady in December 1838. "We are envied by Pirates, bold, reckless [and] unscrupulous on the one side, and by an injured people and indignant soldiery on the other with none to appreciate or ameliorate our position," Worth wrote to Winfield Scott in a moment of near panic. Worth responsibly went on to observe that "it is not for us as Soldiers to seek to penetrate the policy of the Government . . . but as a good citizen I cannot resist the belief that we are fast verging toward a contest, for which everything around us denotes total absence of decent preparation, & I can already in my mind's eye, see, for a time, the national honor, stricken to the dust."12

In practical terms the most important of the American officers serving along the border, Worth was especially worried that the consequences would damage the army's credibility and prestige, and he implicitly linked personal, occupational, and national honor to the preservation of the army's organizational jurisdiction over the employment of armed force along the Canadian frontier:
We... have no means of preventing the [British] force from overrunning our border fifty miles deep at any point! The thin curtain of Regulars would be pushed aside in an instant... if a contest ensues disgrace awaits us; and who amid the torrent of holy indignation will stop to inquire into our means—we may do and die but even that will not rescue our memories.

Junior officers distant from the scene echoed the excited colonel's despair: Zebina Kinsley warned New York congressman Gouverneur Kemble (a strong supporter of the army and its officers on the House Military Affairs Committee from 1837-1841) that "a war with any European power would show an awful deficiency in the means of defense." Given the unreliability of the militia, whom army officers considered more likely to precipitate war than to defeat British aggression, Colonel Worth and his compatriots felt that the best they could do was to set a good example—although his measures were fruitless in practical terms, they would "have the excellent effect to stimulate the civil authority to the assertion of its honor and dignity, and [to] convince our outraged neighbors, that... we [meaning the army's officers, as representatives of the federal government], at least perform our duties in good faith."13

Worth had real cause for concern, for the British reaction, public and official, was significantly more bellicose than the American one, and the British government gave this feeling a threatening substance through its moves to reinforce its army and navy in North America. Historian Kenneth Bourne notes that elite and official British opinion toward the United States had "seriously deteriorated" since the mid-1820s because of the growing disorder of American politics and life, and American support for the Patriot filibusters seemed to confirm the worst fears of British officials about anarchy
and chaos spreading from the south. The British government reacted to the Patriot movement and the consequent growth of tensions by reforming its squadron on the Great Lakes (in clear violation of the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817) and increasing its West Atlantic squadron from twenty-seven vessels to forty-one, including several large frigates and the steamers Edmund Gaines feared. In contrast, the United States was still just as vulnerable on the Atlantic frontier two years after the conclusion of the French war scare as it was on the Canadian border. In November 1837 commanding general Macomb reported to the secretary of war that not a single post on the former (i.e., in the fortification system so vaunted by the Corps of Engineers) held even a company's garrison of fifty men, and in January 1838 Secretary of War Poinsett officially stated to Congress that not a single coastal fortification was in defensible condition: "There is not a fortress on our long line of sea defences capable of resisting an armed brig [a small vessel of some ten to twenty guns], not one that may not be taken by a small force."14

Under these tense circumstances immediate dangers threatened to supplant confidence in long-term success in the minds of American policymakers, especially among the military men most directly responsible for the nation's security in case of war. The crucial stakes potentially at issue in the Anglo-American contest of the late 1830s and early 1840s were sketched out by Quartermaster General Jesup in a confidential letter to Secretary Poinsett early in 1839. (Jesup had to use his left hand, as the right had been permanently maimed during the battle of Lundy's Lane in 1814.) Jesup's assessment sounded much like Andrew Jackson's views of the southern borderlands twenty years before, but powerful Britain had replaced weak Spain as the source of foreign contagion and threats to American security:
[The Canadas bear] heavily on our flank and rear . . . the influence which [they] are capable of exercising over the Indians upon our western frontier and the Texan and Mexican states render their geographical position a most powerful check upon us . . . [Texas and Mexico will] never possess naval power; they must therefore rely on alliances with some great maritime power for the protection of their valuable and growing commerce.

The (supposed) American policy of leaving other countries to their own affairs would necessarily force these states to turn to Britain for aid; "her [Canadian] colonies, therefore . . . are a guarantee to her against our commercial, maritime, and political [meaning diplomatic] ascendancy, so long as she holds them." Could the United States seize Canada, on the other hand, "our maritime resources would be more than doubled. We should be forever freed from Indian difficulties; and Texas and Mexico . . . would be passive, if not powerless . . . our northern frontier [meaning both the Atlantic and Canadian ones] would be shortened by more than one half, and the resources for its protection augmented in a proportionate degree."15

Although exaggerated, Jesup's analysis demonstrates that a few American officers did think not only in the abstract terms of strategic interdependence like those employed by the Fortifications Board and General Gaines, but in specific geostrategic ones that still remained closely linked to an consciousness of the role of economics in national power. In this zero-sum view of the world whatever the United States gained Britain lost, and had they had their choice circa 1840 the British would have preferred the creation of a lasting balance of power on the North American continent through the disintegration of the United States. With perspectives like these widespread
among policymakers it might seem surprising that the tensions of the early '40s were not greater, but there were a number of powerful systemic reasons for the peaceful resolution of this ultimately localized crisis. American economic and British diplomatic problems limited the resources each side could devote to military preparations or actual war, and commercial and financial ties between the two countries remained strong, while British officials feared that a war would unify the United States and rouse up its latent potential in antagonism to the British presence in North America. To the degree that the crisis was a real one with explosive potential, however, the success of the conciliatory efforts of army officers along the Canadian border provides one of the principal explanations for the lack of escalation, and it is to their attitudes and practices that we now turn.16

The first direct involvement by an army officer in the Patriot crisis appears to have been on January 3, 1838 (before news of the Caroline incident had reached Washington), when Secretary Poinsett ordered Inspector General Wool to assume temporary command of the New York border in order to guard federal arsenals and prevent violations of American neutrality. Wool arrived in Buffalo the day before Scott and Worth, and he was ordered on to Lake Champlain four days later. The daily conduct of sensitive law enforcement operations along the Canadian border was charged to highly experienced but by modern standards rather junior officers, who had no civilian diplomats from Washington on the scene to advise them. Winfield Scott (who had directed the politically delicate reinforcement of Charleston during the Nullification Crisis five years before) travelled to Buffalo and Detroit in January and February 1838, visited the Vermont frontier in January 1839, and briefly returned to the Niagara during the final round of Patriot
activity that September, while commanding general Alexander Macomb was ordered to the border during the second surge of Patriot activity in June 1838 and remained throughout that summer while Scott was engaged in Georgia. Otherwise the delicate practice of international diplomacy and domestic civil-military relations along the border was left to colonels--Inspector General Wool and regimental commanders like Worth and Hugh Brady (brevet brigadier general and longtime commander of the 2nd Infantry, headquartered in Detroit). 17

Worth, a native New Yorker with twenty-four years of military experience when the rebellions broke out, served on the New York frontier during the winters of 1837-38 and 1838-39 when the Patriot agitation was at its height, and he was the American commander on the scene opposite Windmill Point and Prescott in November 1838 (the battle that broke the back of the Hunters' Lodges). Worth initially accompanied his mentor Scott on the general's first trip to Buffalo in January 1838 and was sent to reinforce Colonel Brady in Detroit later that month before returning to New York in late February to combat the Patriot advance from Watertown against Kingston. In April Scott requisitioned Worth's services during the removal of the Cherokees, and in July the major was promoted to full colonel (skipping the grade of lieutenant colonel entirely) and appointed to command the newly raised Eighth Infantry Regiment, which was then stationed along the New York and Vermont frontiers. The organized Patriot movement essentially collapsed after defeats at Windsor and Prescott at the end of 1838, and the Eighth Infantry was transferred to Florida in 1840 after tensions over the Maine boundary seemed to have calmed down. 18

Hopes for republicanism and possible American expansion characterized the very first responses of these men to the Canadian rebellions.
Winfield Scott's first reaction (in December 1837, before he was sent to Canada) was to write to Worth that "God grant them success! My heart is with the oppressed of both Canadas." Worth's initial reaction to the Patriots was also somewhat mixed, but it contained the values of law and order that would sustain his quest to enforce the neutrality laws throughout his tenure on the frontier. Writing to Scott from Detroit shortly after the battle of Malden (on the Canadian shore opposite the town) in January 1838, Worth was overcome by emotion: "The flower of the young men of this city have found a bloody grave!" he exclaimed sentimentally, including "a noble hearted friend of mine." Like Scott, Worth then felt sympathy for the filibusters: "They were firmly of the opinion that they would earn the proud title of liberators of Canada," he reported in tones that would soon be anathema to him. This romanticism aside, Worth was forced to conclude that the filibuster was "a sad affair, unquestionably a violation of law and good order," lamenting that "truly we are little better than a nation of pirates." Worth clearly sensed his own divided loyalties and the dilemmas they posed for his accountability to the neutrality policy he was supposed to serve, averring that "I can neither write nor speak coolly and hardly rationally," but he promised his superior "a rational letter"--i.e., one that would disregard his personal sentiments--as soon as he was able. By the time he did so Worth had overcome his sentimental empathy for the rebels and was prepared to assume the stern mantle of an agent charged with the enforcement of national sovereignty and international law.\(^{19}\)

Army officers respected patriotism of any origin, but unlike American civilians few believed that the Canadian population was sympathetic to the insurgents, and this assumption led officers to an almost uniform rejection of Patriot claims to legitimacy. At a banquet in Houlton, Maine in September
1838, Lieutenant Colonel Newman Clarke of the newly formed 8th Infantry followed a volunteer officer's bellicose reference to the American victory at Chippewa by proposing a toast to "our friends of the Province of New Brunswick . . . . the love of country belongs to them as to all other people." Several months later, Captain Robert Anderson (then an assistant adjutant general) wrote to Gouverneur Kemble (a personal friend from Anderson's service at West Point and on Winfield Scott's staff) that

instead of allowing the Canadians to work at the Altar of Liberty, forming and fashioning it to suit themselves--we have attempted to force our plan upon them . . . That many Canadians desire some change--there can be no doubt . . . but they desire reform not revolution--a reform brought about by the quiet, steady action of public sentiment and virtue--not revolution bathed in blood.

Anderson referred in particular to the French of Lower Canada: "a quiet, inoffensive people, they have none of that stirring love of liberty which warmed the hearts of our ancestors; it is folly to attempt to thrust liberty upon them." (Although they wrote very little about the French Canadians, officers --who were commonly Whiggish in mindset--probably shared the doubts common among civilian that this Catholic peasantry was ready for republicanism. A set of confidential reports written in 1839 agreed on their disaffection from British rule but assumed that an uprising would only occur in case of war and a significant American battlefield victory.) William Worth echoed Anderson's astute assessment of the Canadian political climate virtually to the letter, and on the whole officers' occasional complaints that the filibusters were "powerfully and numerously instigated from Canada"
appear to have been nervous or frustrated reactions to a difficult situation, probably exaggerated for effect in hopes of securing scarce reinforcements.  

Worth's antagonism towards the Patriots was almost uniformly shared by his fellow commanders along the border, and their language demonstrates once again the close links between social and political values and considerations that we observed when examining the links between state and class formation in the creation of the army officer's occupational identity. Neither officers nor civilian commentators seem to have made much distinction among the Patriot groups, and officers on different sections of the frontier used much the same derogatory terms to describe the filibusters, all of which resonated with stark contrasts of stability and instability, order and disorder. To begin with, these "Brigands" broke the law, federal and international, against intervening in the affairs of another nation with which the United States was at peace. Winfield Scott responded to borderers outraged by the destruction of the Caroline that "at no time, could any portion of our people usurp the right of retaliation and revenge; that such would not be in the manner and forms of a civilized people, but according to the practice of savage tribes." Indeed, illegitimate usurpation--the use of force outside the guidelines of federal law and professional direction--was also a prominent theme in Worth's dispatches: he warned one subordinate that "the view some of your [civilian] neighbors take of the neutrality law is the very ultraism of nullification." These sentiments were echoed by Colonel Brady on the Detroit frontier, who spoke of "these violators of our Laws" as "marauders" and "desperadoes."  

Scott's strictures against the Patriots' "savage" behavior reflected the officer corps' fear of instability and unguided self-interest, and officers
routinely characterized the rebels in socially and ethically loaded terms as "disorganizers," "agitators," and "miserable" and "unprincipled" "adventurers." Hugh Brady called these "disturbers of peace and good order" "the rabble," and Worth blamed "the floating population that infests the border of every country" for the unrest. Officers frequently denounced the insurgents as both "reckless and unscrupulous," and their rhetoric sometimes verged on the dehumanizing, implying psychological instability among the Patriots. Indeed, Worth demonized the filibusters as "these lawless and insane men," while Brady spoke of the "feverish state" of "desperate and uneasy spirits" along the frontier. The biological metaphors of Assistant Surgeon Henry Heiskell show that these sentiments were not confined to combat commanders alone, an indication of the affinity army medical officers felt for the military dimensions of their professional service, which we shall observe in further detail when we examine their reactions to the Second Seminole War—in January 1838 Heiskell wrote to a fellow surgeon from Buffalo that "as soon as the paroxysm subside, I am in hopes that the reason of the people will be restored once more." But blame for the unrest had to be placed somewhere, and the officer corps' suspicion of popular democracy and self-direction was apparent when they attempted to explain the origins of the raiding. To Brady the filibusters were "misguided" and "deluded" men, deceived by their leaders' "vile and mischievous fabrications," while Worth warned the secretary of war and reassured the local British commander that these "miserable youths" were mere "tools," "the unfortunate dupes of designing demagogues."

Army commandants also stigmatized the Patriots as greedy cowards, men who forsook their obligations to their country and each other in the self-interested pursuit of wealth and personal safety. "The eyes of needy [and]
unprincipled adventurers began to glisten with rabid hope" when "the
Brigand fever" caught them, claimed quartermaster colonel Henry Whiting,
while Robert Anderson labelled the filibuster leaders "cowardly scamps," who
preferred "the lights of the lecture rooms, and the sounds of silver falling into
the hats passed around for contributions . . . to the flame of the death dealing
gun, and the moans of the wounded [and] dying" at the battle of Windmill
Point. Worth, who had secured a tacit understanding with the British
commander to allow a rescue attempt there, blamed "cowardice and
treachery" for the invaders' "feeble effort" to save their fellows.26

Class-derived understandings of behaviour obviously played an
important part in the officer corps' reactions to the Patriot movements. The
officer corps' disdain for the Patriots was shared in "respectable" civilian
society, the press, and official circles outside the border region, and given the
clear distinctions they made between proper and irresponsible behaviour,
Worth and his fellows expected for a time that Patriot violations of social
norms would end their support among the local populace as well. Worth
wrote to Winfield Scott after the events of February 1838 that "the better, and I
trust the large portion of the people are greatly shocked at the development of
their plans," and he assured the governor of New York that "new agitation
will . . . be frowned down by a deceived and indignant people." Surgeon
Henry Heiskell also demonstrated the intimate connection between these
attitudes and hopes that the Patriot "paroxysm" was coming to an end because
of the refugees' disreputable behaviour. In January 1838 he wrote to fellow
army surgeon Benjamin King that the Canadian refugees were "living on
charity and by robbing . . . The people are heartily tired of their 'Liberator'
guests and would be glad to get rid of them." Later that month Heiskell
reported that their "army (if ever such a rabble merit the title) is entirely
disbanded--some returning to their homes (if any they have)“, and the rest pilfering from the local civilian populace, who had initially welcomed them as heroes. Indeed, Heiskell felt “very certain that the best cure for an exuberance of patriotic zeal is to send amongst them a score or two of modern ‘patriots.' Dr. Johnson’s definition of this abused word (patriot, 'the last resort of a scoundrel’) has been verified on this frontier.”

These socially weighted value judgments had important practical implications for the conduct of the army’s peacekeeping operations along the Canadian border. It appears based on circumstantial evidence that the socioeconomic status of the average Patriot declined over time, and this was probably an important factor swaying the minds of initially supportive officers like Robert Anderson against the movement. Moreover, while it was natural for military commanders to make a sharp distinction between Patriot rabblerousers and the “respectable” citizens whom they expected to uphold law and the social order, this artificial belief in the affinity between class standing and loyalty to the nation-state—an assumption that was predicated on officers’ own experience as individuals and a group—ultimately proved faulty, damaging their faith in the utility of civil-military diplomacy and efforts to influence local notables. When Patriot incursions continued long after their initial defeats, army officers were confronted with the unwelcome realization that support for the filibusters was not confined to the lower orders alone, a sharp blow to their hierarchically structured understandings of responsibility and social causation that forced these commanders to reassess their strategies for overcoming the Patriot movement and maintaining the sovereignty of the nation-state they continued to serve.
Indeed, the Jacksonian officer corps' commitment to the internal and
ternal sovereignty of the nation-state was never more evident than in its
activities along the Canadian border in 1838 and 1839. Unlike the civilian
inhabitants of a frontier region, who were willing to accept the proclamation
of a new government as an act of popular sovereignty and voluntary
association in the face of external--and thus artificial--oppression, army
officers shared the European and Whig emphasis (again, a matter ultimately
of class) on social and international order and stability secured by an
attachment to the forms and procedures of domestic and international law.
Indeed, the conflict between officers and filibusters along the Canadian border
illustrates in microcosm the more general contrast between Whig and
Jacksonian worldviews recently articulated by historians like Daniel Howe
and Lawrence Kohl. Agents of a highly articulated formal organization
serving the state, army officers trusted national and international laws and
institutions and viewed their form and boundaries as the expression of
substantive social and political order and authority, to be questioned only
with caution or in extremity.

Worth and his counterparts were forced to conduct the Patriot war on
internal and international fronts with at least four major groups--the Patriot
filibusters, the local civil authorities, local public opinion, and potentially the
British and Canadians. (On the whole, American national public opinion--
admittedly as measured by newspaper editorials, which at some level are
inherently an elite source--seems to have been against the rebels, and the
army enjoyed firm though quiet support from the Van Buren administration,
so these bases were covered as long as officers acted with moderation and did
not attempt to declare attack Canada or martial law.) The dynamics of this
two-front conflict were evident in Winfield Scott's praise for Worth's rapid
winter march to reinforce Detroit in February 1838, for its "excellent effect on our population between Buffalo and Detroit," which would "[satisfy] the British authorities that we are in earnest in our endeavours to maintain our neutral relations." Besides showing the flag in this way, army commanders deployed their limited forces "to inspire a sense of security in the People [and] to renew and cultivate (in as far as may be consistent with the dignity of the Country) kind and friendly feelings along the border" lest a spiral of escalation and retaliation begin.29

Though frequently frustrated by civilian apathy or support for the Patriots, army officers constantly solicited the cooperation of leading local citizens and civil officials, for they firmly believed that given "the impossibility on the part of the military authority of enforcing the laws while the mass of the people are so regardless of their obligations ... the only course which remains, is to endeavour by the exertion of moral influence to bring about a more wholesome state of public opinion, and [to] stimulate the civil authorities to a more vigorous execution of their duties." When this prodding failed, Worth and his counterparts seized arms, arrested leaders, intercepted Patriot advances and arranged their meager forces along the American shore to catch filibusters retreating from the British. In the meantime Worth assured the British authorities of his determination "to recall such of our own citizens as have strayed from the path of national honour and duty, and to admonish those who have sought the hospitality of our country [the Patriot exiles] of the danger of violating the laws," and he frequently sent officers to confer with the British command about Patriot plans and operations.30

American officers recognized that the disorganized Patriots stood little chance against the disciplined forces, regular and volunteer, of Britain and
the loyalist Canadians. The Patriot Hunters were rumored to have enrolled as many as 200,000 men into their ranks, but the principal Patriot expeditionary forces usually numbered only two to three hundred or five to six hundred men, and the largest was probably the initial assemblage at Navy Island of perhaps a thousand. The forces that were actually mobilized were clearly incapable of defeating the British by themselves, and the filibusters had to count on stirring up a general rebellion among the Canadians or drawing the United States into war by provoking British retaliation.

Lieutenant Morris Miller (a socially well-connected aide to General Macomb who was temporarily serving as one of Inspector General Wool's aides-de-camp along the frontier) wrote to his mother from Sackett's Harbor that "the patriots are quiet, as yet, & the British are well prepared to give them a warm reception on the other side," and Colonel Hugh Brady (commander of the 2nd Infantry) echoed this estimate in a letter to the adjutant general from Detroit. Indeed, Winfield Scott emphasized these practical considerations as much as the ethical obligations of national faith in his talks with the Patriot leader Rensselaer Van Rensselaer, stressing "that his men wanted the necessary organization and discipline; that his means of water transportation, for a descent, were totally inadequate, that if, by chance, he were to effect a landing, he would probably be cut to pieces." Scott succeeded in persuading the filibusters massed at Navy Island to disperse and enlisted some of them into the United States army, solving the army's "Patriot problem" by bringing the erstwhile filibusters under the immediate sovereignty of the nation-state and the discipline of its officers.31

Army officers may have expected that the British would have little difficulty rebuffing the invaders, but they could not ignore the chance that British forces would pursue the filibusters across the border onto American
soil—indeed, Worth and Brady both feared that this was the Patriots' strategy for ensnaring the United States in war. These concerns were not entirely unfounded. Canadian irregulars, some of whom were certainly organized militiamen, did raid across the border on a number of occasions, while in October 1838 the United States government felt compelled to warn the British that it could not prevent the invasion known to be planned for the following month. On November 3 Britain's ambassador responded by proposing that the United States should give advance sanction to any violation of its territory which might result from pursuit or reprisals, a suggestion that Secretary of State John Forsyth rejected out of hand. From Detroit Colonel Brady warned Winfield Scott that a formal British declaration that incursions would be considered an act of war would certainly precipitate a conflict because of the Patriots' ability to play on the economic advantages borderers expected from war: "I fear that they will be encouraged by many of our citizens, who have heretofore taken no part with the patriots... money is scarce, almost every one is in debt, and they know that war would bring money into this part of the Country, besides giving many of them an opportunity of coming into the service as Generals & Colonels of Militia."

These fears were not limited to American officers: the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada expected war even after the Patriots' initial rebuff, and by February 1839 he believed that it "could scarcely be avoided." (This was also the period when Worth's fears peaked.) Writing confidentially to his American ambassador in the midst of the Windmill Point incursion of November 1838, Colonel George Arthur felt certain that "this Canadian contest... cannot end without an American war," which he therefore termed "inevitable."
Enforcing national sovereignty and neutrality was a complex matter that posed a number of dilemmas for officers, conflicts of objective and allegiance that illustrate the nuanced distinctions between the concepts of accountability and responsibility and the sometimes contradictory meanings of those values. Officers felt a strong attachment to the national government and loyalty to the dictates of law, but in practice the law proved a malleable abstraction that contained room for a wide variety of interpretations, and the central government gave few instructions as to its objectives. Army officers had great difficulty enforcing the neutrality policy through the formal legal process, because little recourse could be had against the private assembly of men in arms on American soil. The delicate balance of local American public opinion and the inadequacy of federal neutrality law meant that preserving American neutrality—and thus peace with Britain—was a task for civil-military and international diplomacy as much as one for force, and Worth warned his subordinates to exercise their "prudence and judgement," for he recognized that "as much delicacy and forbearance as firmness will be necessary."33

Contemporary readings of the Neutrality Act of 1818 provided only for the punishment of filibustering, not its prevention, and Secretary of War Poinsett initially instructed Scott that "the Executive possesses no legal authority to employ the military force to restrain persons [from] making incursions" across the international boundary. This interpretation appears to have underestimated the government's authority under both the Neutrality Act of 1818 and previous measures from the 1790s, but under the implications of Jacksonian doctrine these actions were expressions of the free association of private individuals, a natural reflection of popular sovereignty and the love of freedom unrestrained by the artificial hand of the state and international
law, and political and ideological factors apparently militated against the employment of the government's potential authority. In other words, though the administration did not overtly or even tacitly support the rebels and filibusters, it does seem to have essentially handed off the problem to military commanders while providing them with little guidance beyond the charge to maintain American sovereignty and international peace. Indeed, the different officers, ethnicities, and balances of power notwithstanding, the officer corps' reactions to the crisis on the Canadian border provides even more evidence of an evolving sense of accountability to national civilian authority when we contrast it to the way Jackson and Gaines had responded to Washington's inattention to the Florida frontier a generation before.34

The neutrality law was soon changed, and Washington gave the regulars great latitude in their operations, but army officers remained constrained by their politically cautious but professionally accountable belief that any substantive action required the legal sanction of approval by representatives of civilian authority. Military commanders had no formal or official doctrine to go by under these circumstances, for the government does not appear to have gone beyond confidential instructions--basically for officers to use their discretion--to craft "rules of engagement" for peacekeeping or to issue legal opinions on the powers of military officers acting on American soil. Indeed, army officers received little more assistance from federal legal counsel than from diplomatic personnel, and neither the Attorney General's office nor the State and Justice departments sent representatives from Washington to the border, which doubtlessly increased the army's caution in dealing with local civilians. (Remember that the local U.S. district attorneys were often sympathetic to the filibusters.) Under these circumstances, the three theater commanders had to exercise much the same
autonomy as their counterparts on the southern and western frontiers: under orders from Washington to send troops to the village of Big Sodus, Worth instead took the initiative to deploy them to Ogdensburgh (which seemed under greater threat of Canadian retaliation), acting "with a knowledge of facts unknown to the [Adjutant General], to assume a proper and officerlike responsibility until on accurate advice he could review the subject."35

The neutrality law of March 10, 1838 permitted preemptive property seizures (usually of arms and ammunition) when officials had probable cause to suspect that neutrality violations would occur, and it explicitly authorized the use of military force to aid the civil authorities, but the latter still had to provide warrants in order for the army to conduct constitutional searches, seizures, and arrests. In one sense, army officers might have been acted more "responsibly" to prevent a disastrous war with Britain by imposing martial law and using force to round up the filibusters and their sympathizers, but this was politically and indeed ideologically inconceivable even to these officials socialized in authoritarian hierarchy and discipline, and their private papers simply do not mention the taboo subject of martial law, whatever their personal wishes may have been. Early in 1839 Worth implied that he would have liked to detain Canadian refugees en masse as a precaution against further filibusters, but he did so by way of noting the impossibility of such a measure "without further legal enactments," for the colonel believed that "they are equally protected by [the laws] with our citizens." (Some junior officers far from the scene shared Worth's dissatisfaction with the weak neutrality laws: in 1841 West Point cadet James Wall Schureman admonished his sister that "the McLeod affair has shown that a more extended federal jurisprudence is necessary for maintaining good faith toward
other nations," a good example of the practical implications of the informal socialization in nationalism at the academy.) This frustration notwithstanding, Worth and his counterparts demonstrated scrupulous respect for civil rights throughout the Patriot crises, another illustration of their accountability to civilian authority and the fundamental liberties it prescribed. The officer corps' desire for international harmony and local social order both had to give way before allegiance to the national government and the "free institutions" that it represented, and functional capability and efficiency took a back seat to political (and effectively ideological) accountability in the practical construction of officers' professional responsibility on the Canadian border. Officers may have become emotionally frustrated by their peacekeeping duties, but they did not become substantively alienated from the government and society they served.\textsuperscript{36}

Unable to round up suspected Patriots, American commanders resorted to blockading operations along the border, which became the most common of their active tactics. Brady and Worth purchased several steamers in order to patrol the Detroit, Niagara, and St. Lawrence rivers and used them to block Patriot movements and intercept retreating filibusters, while Inspector General Wool undertook probably the most tactically sophisticated operation, using patrols by sleds and mounted volunteers against the Patriots when they crossed the Vermont line in February 1838. Wool seized the filibusters' Vermont arms depots after they had entered Canada and thus clearly violated the law; then he concentrated his forces along the border and halted all movement across it. He then gave the Patriots the choice of returning peacefully, handing over their arms, and surrendering their leaders, or facing his troops' fire when the British forced them to retreat.
(At that point the filibusters would have been entering the United States under arms without permission, a clear violation of American sovereignty--in effect an invasion--that would have given Wool adequate legal justification to resist them by force.) Six hundred filibusters then surrendered to Wool's forces, but the followers were allowed to disperse because of the difficulties and expense that would have been encountered in successfully feeding and prosecuting them. It appears that the Patriot leaders escaped through the lines of sympathetic local volunteers, but this incursion was the first and last important filibustering expedition on the Vermont frontier.37

Army officers felt overwhelmed by the problems of policing a long wooded frontier with a handful of men, and blockading operations to seal off the border could only work on the rare occasions when the Patriots concentrated and the army had been warned in sufficient time to move to the scene. Most of the army was busy in Florida, and the Patriot sympathies of the majority of civil officials and the militia deprived the regulars of the manpower and legal authority they needed to act as an effective physical barrier to filibustering expeditions. Indeed, there were no organized Regular Army units on the northern frontier west of the Maine coast when the Canadian rebellions broke out late in 1837. Winfield Scott had no troops whatsoever during his initial tour of the border, and at first Worth and his counterparts Brady and Wool had to rely on civilian volunteers and recruits called up from depots to the south. Indeed, Brady complained constantly about the lack of reliable troops: despite two rounds of filibuster activity, as late as November 1838 he had only "four companies averaging about eighteen men for duty to a company"--seventy regulars with which to guard the Detroit frontier.38
The officer corps' best alternative to incarcerating the Patriots was to recruit them into the army, where they could be disciplined in the service of national goals. Winfield Scott did so in Buffalo after the filibusters' retreat from Navy Island in January 1838 and in Detroit after their defeat at Fighting Island that February. Canadians usually made up about one percent of the army's annual recruiting intake, but this percentage jumped sixfold in 1838 and 1839, and a British officer travelling in the United States on leave estimated that in one group of a hundred recruits virtually every man had been associated with the rebels. This local influx was insufficient to satisfy the army's manpower needs, however, and during a quiet moment in June 1838 Inspector General Wool left his post in Vermont to go to Washington in person to request more troops and lobby congressmen voting on the annual army bill. The Army Act of July 5, 1838 authorized an increase in the army of 4650 men, including the new Eighth Infantry Regiment, which Worth was appointed to command, skipping a grade to colonel over many of his seniors. Eventually the bulk of three regiments (out of the army's fourteen), or approximately two thousand regulars, were concentrated along the Canadian border, but many of these had to be sent to Maine during the Aroostook crisis and the ratio of soldiers to space was never sufficient to halt the Patriot raids through solely military means.39

The small size of the officer corps was another constraint on operations against the Patriots, because army commanders on the border relied on fellow regulars—who were imbued with similar centralist values and subject to the constraints of military hierarchy and the sanctions of its discipline—for any task that involved leading volunteers or militiamen or negotiating with civil authorities or the British. Between Canada, Florida, the beginnings of the Maine boundary crisis, and ongoing Indian removal and constabulary
activities on the western frontier, the officer corps was seriously
overburdened in early and mid-1838, and the preference of many officers for
easier duty meant that border commanders faced a constant shortage of
regimental officers. Worth felt that "we are crippled at all points for want of
officers," and he frequently took the initiative to requisition those outside his
formal command for duty on the border.40

Like commanders in Florida during these years, Worth had a difficult
time keeping some of his subordinates in the line of duty: several of his
letters contain injunctions to officers to remain with their units at all times,
while one to Adjutant General Roger Jones conveyed Captain St. Clair
Denny's resignation, submitted by that officer because Worth felt unable to
grant his application for leave, since he was the only officer then available at
an exposed point. The Secretary of War denied Denny's resignation but
granted him a one month leave in which to reconsider; Denny resigned at the
end of the month anyway. Border service was unattractive to senior officers
as well as junior ones: in 1840 Worth's superior, Colonel (brevet brigadier
general) Abraham Eustis (then commander of the army's Northern
Department), wrote to Robert Anderson of his satisfaction with the then-quiet
state of the border, "inasmuch as it insures my prolonged absence from those
frozen regions." (Though born in Massachusetts, Eustis owned a plantation
in North Carolina and had done most of his service in Virginia and the
South.) Faced with socially and politically well-connected employees and
doubtlessly fearing another wave of resignations like that in 1835 and 1836,
the War Department never energetically exercised its authority to force
officers on leave to return to their units, while those on detached service
were thought to be (and in the long-term perspective of hindsight were)
performing more important duties in the army bureaucracy, at West Point, or on the nation's infrastructure. Under these difficult circumstances Worth very quickly came to see regular communication with the British as his best means of deterring retaliation against American soil. Indeed, "having in view the peculiar character and extent of our frontier . . . the public and private obligations of every good citizen--the sincerity of the Government . . . and above all a proper regard for the character of our country for honour and good faith," Worth believed that it was his duty to inform the British ("our neighbors") of potential incursions. He was certainly prepared to interpose his forces to oppose any violations of American sovereignty from Canada, but he was satisfied that his talks with the British had "been characterized by high courtesy" and he felt certain that they would "act in a corresponding spirit" to restrain retaliation. (Indeed, "the rigid discipline . . . & the excellent disposition of the [British and their] commanders" later caused Worth to dispute civilian rumors that the British had struck across the border.) Moreover, the colonel was willing to take responsibility for any political embarrassment his cooperation with Britain might cause: "Should I have exceeded the bounds of my duty, so far from permitting any act of mine to be regarded as embarrassing the superior [Scott] militarily or compromising the interest or honour of the country . . . [let it] promptly be disavowed and all the error and the blame rest . . . with me." Winfield Scott had initiated this unofficial policy of cooperation, and he reconfirmed it in a confidential circular distributed in April 1839:

should you, at any time, doubt your means of prevention, under the neutrality laws, you will (as heretofore instructed) not for a
moment hesitate to give immediate information . . . to the nearest British commander, in part acquittance of our obligations of good faith towards friendly neighbors.

Indeed, Worth's aide Lieutenant James Prentiss equated adherence to this policy with upholding "the national faith [and] the honour of the service" as well as obeying Scott's order. Professional accountability and military discipline thus became matters of personal, occupational, and national honor, giving a deeper psychological force to institutional influences.42

Worth also acted to reduce tensions by easing barriers to civilian movement during moments of calm and by limiting the chance that his officers might become involved in incidents with angry Canadians during periods of crisis. After the first winter's crisis had passed he ordered a Captain Tuthill of the "New York Volunteers" to Niagara Falls to ensure that "there will be no interference with the passing and repassing from both sides of persons on business or pleasure." He wrote to a British colonel at Chippewa (ironically the site of the battle in which Worth had first distinguished himself nearly a quarter-century before) the following day, asking that restrictions on ferry crossings at Niagara be eased in order to foster "a tranquillizing effect" on relations. In the immediate aftermath of the incursion at Windmill Point that fall Worth instructed his subordinates to "employ civil agents" "to communicate officially with the opposite side" while forbidding army personnel to cross the border, and Worth's personal aide directed Captain William Montgomery to prohibit officers from crossing at points "where [Canadian] irregular forces are stationed" unless on duty and in uniform. (The first of these measures may have been intended to ward off local civilian criticism of Worth's cooperation with the British.)43
Army officers actively facilitated better relations between influential New Yorkers and the British. In March 1839 Worth provided a citizens' committee investigating arsons on American soil with a letter of introduction to a British lieutenant colonel, and another British officer wrote to Major Nathaniel Young thanking him for the "kindly feeling expressed" in Young's earlier letter, which was carried by army assistant surgeon Henry Heiskell and transmitted the names of the members of an American grand jury. Major Richard Webb concluded by asking Young to "convey . . . my most cordial thanks" to the jury for its determination to maintain the peace. Webb and Young apparently socialized privately as well, as an earlier letter asked the condition of Young's daughter, who was ill. Young was a successful diplomat in more than one respect: he had been elected "an Honorary Member of the Albany Military Association" in September 1837, and was elected to the Delaware legislature in the fall of 1838 (after resigning from the army effective October 31). (He had obviously done his campaigning, if any, for the latter position while still on the army payroll.) Indeed, Allan Macdonald, adjutant general of the New York militia, wrote to Young after the Delaware election to ask if he was truly a Democrat.44

Worth's communication with the British reached a peak during the incursion and battle at Windmill Point (November 11-17, 1838), a diplomatic collaboration that demonstrates the colonel's personal sympathy for the Americans trapped by the British forces as well as his devotion to the sovereignty of the nation-state and the rule of international law. Despite his informal efforts to mediate, Worth deployed his forces to prevent British pursuit or Canadian retaliation. On November 14 he reported to Colonel Abraham Eustis that "I have been applied to by citizens of Ogdensburg to intercede with the commanding officer on the other side to allow these
intruders to surrender to me. . . However disposed to offer personal offices of humanity I could not reconcile it to a sense of duty to my country to comply," though he recognized that "in all human probability" the coming British attack would result "in the annihilation of the invaders." Worth changed his mind the following day after a Patriot sortie was repulsed, and for a short time his feelings of national identity and humanity overcame his strict sense of duty. (Indeed, Worth's occasional expressions of sympathy for the Patriots provide us with rare glimpses of emotion in a man otherwise widely known as a rigid martinet.) He wrote secretly to the British commander on the opposite shore:

I hesitate to make any suggestion and officially I am not at liberty to do so; but sh[oul]d you desire to avoid subjecting any valuable lives to sacrifice in an assault . . . I will . . . without authority . . . interpose any offices of humanity you may suggest. . . . [The Patriots] would of course on reaching the jurisdiction of the U.S. States become prisoners in the hands of the civil authority.

Worth expressed "much doubt whether I should write at all," but his overtures were rewarded. Worth later reported that Colonel Young, who he recognized "had no authority to allow [the filibusters] to withdraw"

expressed a hope they might escape--we parted perfectly understanding each other. The partisans of these miserable men in Ogdensburgh were urged to take off the remnant that night--Every avenue was left unguarded . . . From my note to Col.

Young you will perceive how reluctantly and guardedly I approached the subject; but as an American officer I did not feel at liberty to disregard such an exhibition of the symbol of Hope
and Mercy [the white flag of truce and surrender], from Our
Countrymen, Guilty though they were.

Worth had commandeered all the vessels in Ogdensburg per the common practice among American commanders on the border; he allowed one to try a rescue, but it failed, whether from "cowardice and treachery" (as the frustrated colonel supposed) or because the British land and sea commanders did not communicate and the British steamer on hand prevented any landing.45

A week later Worth sent the British commander in Kingston a petition for clemency from "gentlemen of the highest intelligence respectability among our citizens," which he believed to "truly [set] forth the circumstances of fraud and delusion practised upon the miserable youths who have, thus acted upon, forfeited their lives." Worth again expressed great uncertainty about the propriety of his role as an intermediary:

This appeal places me in a painful & embarrassing position; on the one hand any effort to stay or divert the free course of justice . . . would justly subject me to the censure of Government, so on the other, I could hardly excuse myself to my countrymen nay to my own heart, were I totally to disregard the humane designs and wishes [of the petitioners].

Worth endorsed the petition for reasons of both humanity and policy:

Thus circumstanced, I approach you with the frankness that belongs to our profession. . . . I can only add, Sir, the firm conviction that clemency extended to the wretched victims of baseness and duplicity will while illustrating the humane and merciful policy of her Majesty's Government, have the happiest effect in restoring, as we all desire, friendly relations along the entire border [and would] . . . hold up to scorn, contempt, and
punishment the great villains in this most unparalleled assault upon a friendly power.

Worth also sought clemency for filibusters on behalf of individuals who he felt deserving because of their past and present services to the United States. The day before sending this petition Worth had written to Captain Williams Sandom of the Royal Navy (the commander of the British flotilla on the Great Lakes) in favor of the captured son of one W. Vaughn, a retired American naval officer and a volunteer under Worth's command during the crisis, remarking that "respect for the misfortunes of this old man and for the zeal . . . in which he performed his Duties, reconcile me to giving him this private note," and recommending whatever "can be done consistent with the stern principles of justice."46

Worth's actions during the Windmill Point crisis illustrate the moral, ethical, and diplomatic dilemmas in which an officer charged with peacekeeping could find himself, as the colonel attempted to satisfy all sides by cooperating with the British while trying to prevent a bloody battle or the imposition of British justice so rigid as to spur a backlash in the United States. Worth encapsulated these diplomatic sentiments in a letter to U.S. Customs Collector George McWhorter, his go-between with the filibusters, avowing that "when time is blood, action first and reflection after." The colonel hoped that his efforts for clemency would be rewarded by renewed allegiance to the sovereignty of the nation-state and the obligations of national and international law, "that every rescued victim would come forth from his prison an apostle of honor, justice, and correct principles, instead of the doctrines of marauders." Indeed, Worth seems to have leaked his letter to McWhorter to the Kingston Chronicle as evidence of his good faith, which many Canadians had questioned. Worth was rewarded by public praise and
sympathy (as well as his usual share of criticism) on both sides of the St. Lawrence, but he had much less influence on the higher levels of British policy than as a diplomat on the scene, and eventually nine of the prisoners were hung.47

"Professionalism" could not provide specific policy answers for complex situations like these, for the individual commander had multiple motives and allegiances which he was forced to balance against each other during a moment of great pressure while operating without any immediate guidance from higher authority. Under these circumstances professionalism meant a method and approach rather than an inflexible adherence to abstract principles or specific guidelines, and it is in this operational autonomy--ironically, given the bureaucratic authoritarianism and state-centeredness I have so often emphasized herein--that the military officer came closest to the civilian "free professional" in using his experience and his knowledge of abstract principles to guide his diagnosis and inferences about a specific problem and its origins, to choose a prescription and to carry it into action (the four steps in professional practice outlined by sociologist Andrew Abbott). Whatever the number and intensity of congressional inquiries and the impact of budgetary constraints, army officers possessed as much autonomy operating in the contested borderlands as they did in their daily interactions with each other and their enlisted men in garrison. Having used the state to carve out a rather exclusive jurisdiction, they were then granted substantial de facto autonomy in the conduct of their professional practice, not only in the daily routines which maintained the army as a functioning organization, but in the more complex interactions which sustained American national sovereignty and the authority of the nation-state in dangerous crises along its boundaries.
Ironically, while many military men today long for the autonomy Worth and his counterparts possessed, these nineteenth-century soldiers felt great anxiety and constraint because of the lack of guidance they received from their civilian superiors. Indeed, although this lack of supervision was largely a product of irremediable constraints like technological inadequacy and distance, it can easily be suggested that Worth and his compatriots were substantially more professional in their responsibility to both state and society than the politicians to whom they reported. When civilian government was cautious or paralyzed by partisan considerations and conflict, the army effectively took its place along the nation's borders, and it is remarkable how little anger or alienation officers displayed toward the government that repeatedly placed them in complex situations fraught with personal and professional danger and uncertainty. Indeed, this faithful performance of duty stands as a testimony to the officer's sense of professional obligation and accountability to the nation-state which employed him, and by the late 1830s this sense had become the product of that institutional employment and jurisdiction rather than the personal idiosyncrasies and sectional interests of an Andrew Jackson or his subordinates in the Division of the South.

Worth's successful cooperation with the British did not mean that their relationship was free of conflict, for several potentially dangerous clashes occurred between British commanders frustrated by the Americans' inability to stop the filibusters and American officers determined to defend their nation's sovereignty and the rights of its citizens. The most significant examples were the *Barcelona* and *Weeks* incidents, involving American steamers. Winfield Scott hired the *Barcelona* in February 1838 to prevent the Patriots from doing so first. Scott informed the British that he had done so
and not to fire on the previously suspect vessel as she moved up the Niagara River. He placed cannon opposite Chippewa aimed at the British vessels and batteries to back this warning up in case of confusion, and there was no trouble. In a more serious confrontation, a British customs collector seized the American civilian vessel *Weeks* at the Canadian riverport of Brockville in May 1839. The previous June the American steamer *Telegraph* had been fired on and ransacked at this port, and to prevent similar transgressions Worth raced to the Canadian harbor aboard the steamer *Oneida* and demanded that the *Weeks* be released. When ignored, he aimed his guns at the town, which quickly brought the result he sought. The affair produced a great deal of diplomatic recrimination, but General Eustis praised Worth's "prompt and energetic course."48

Another source of tension between British and American commanders was Worth's fear that his troops would be suborned by the British or Canadian loyalists. Worth wrote to the British colonel Young that an American civilian would provide an affidavit "that efforts are frequently made by persons from Prescott to entice the men from their duty by the promise of high wages." What was worse, the British recruiter "appeared here in uniform" and was said to be a Royal Army officer. Perhaps in response, Worth told Captain Giles Porter two days later that he had to refuse a British proposal to exchange deserters, as he was "well satisfied that the power does not rest with us, either to arrest or to deliver up theirs," despite Porter's initial agreement to do so. Such exchanges were fairly common along the United States' borders with Canada, but Worth had to be sensitive to civilian distaste for measures in which the American army appeared to be acting as Britain's police force.49
Perhaps in large part because of the officer corps' very success in peacekeeping, the Patriot crises ultimately did little to spur efforts to increase American military preparedness. The 8th Infantry was raised as much to prevent the diversion of troops from Florida—where they were engaged quite directly in furthering the process of American territorial expansion—as to protect the northern frontier, and aside from the local initiatives of commanders on the lakes the United States made no effective naval preparations to counter the British concentrations, for the strained American financial situation in the aftermath of the Panic of 1837 clearly precluded the sort of build-ups advocated by Secretary Poinsett and his naval counterparts. These economic difficulties also circumscribed attempts to practice independent foreign policies by the individual American states—Palmerston doubted "whether it is likely that Maine would undertake an expensive war, when she cannot pay even the cost of a short Demonstration," and the Van Buren administration assumed Maine's unpaid militia expenses from the Aroostook War in return for the state's agreement to cede authority over the future negotiation and defense of its boundaries. Consequently, the British squadron in the western Atlantic had returned to its former establishment of twenty-eight vessels, none of them ships of the line, by early 1840.50

Diplomatic tensions continued throughout the Patriot crises and those which followed them, but nothing truly serious seems to have come of such friction, either on the local level or between the two governments. Despite the frequent suspicions of officers on both sides, the military men on the spot got along just as well as, if not better than, their civilian diplomatic counterparts in Washington. Indeed, despite his acerbic comments about Winfield Scott and Americans in general, British ambassador Henry Fox considered the American regulars "so usefully employed" in restraining the
Patriots that he sought and received a tacit understanding that they would be kept on the border to do so until the Aroostook boundary crisis was resolved. The senior levels of the British government were impressed by the efforts of the United States (meaning in practice those of its army officers) to curb filibustering, and after February 1838 the ministry resisted further calls for reinforcements as an unnecessary threat to good relations. British public opinion, though occasionally stirred up by media reporting (particularly during the McLeod trial in 1841), generally followed this path as well, and there was little sustained outcry for action against the United States from any significant group. (Besides the Opium War, the First Afghan War, and the Egyptian crisis with France, these were also the years of greatest Chartist militancy, all of which undoubtedly diverted a great deal of attention and spleen from Canadian affairs and Anglo-American relations.) Even the usually bellicose Palmerston was reassured by American efforts, and—in language remarkably like that used by American officers like William Worth—he opined that "even in the state of Maine the outcry is a factitious [both factional and fictional, apparently] one raised by a few land jobbers & speculators."51

Recognizing the limits of their capability to coerce obedience to the nation's neutrality laws, army officers consistently tried to influence local public opinion, especially that of the "respectable" citizens who they expected to support the national government's policy of restraint. Their observations on this score reinforce the picture of an occupational group obsessed with social as well as international order. At a banquet held for him in Burlington, Vermont in February 1838, Inspector General Wool proposed a toast to the citizens of that town, "ever faithful to the principles of liberty, law, and
order," while Winfield Scott spent most of his initial tour of the border speaking to large crowds about respect for law and order and the role these values played in sustaining republican institutions. (It is worth noting that "a number of respectable gentlemen from abroad"--obviously from Canada--attended the banquet in Wool's honor, evidence both of international diplomacy and the solidarity of the genteel classes of both countries in pursuit of stability and order.) In March Hugh Brady reported "a meeting of the most respectable citizens of Detroit" called to investigate Patriot charges of British oppression in Canada, and that July Major Sylvester Churchill, a native of Vermont and later Wool's successor as inspector general, noted in his journal that "Gen. Macomb seems well pleased with my traveling much among, [and becoming] acquainted with the principal inhabitants, as the best means of exerting an influence in preserving order and quiet." Worth's correspondence illustrates the reasons for these activities, for he initially feared that the filibusters were "nourished and urged on by persons of high standing in society." Worth and his counterparts believed that social hierarchy and respect for law went go hand in hand, and he commented with a certain relish that "many, too late indeed for their reputation and standing in society, are getting heartily ashamed of their part in the affair." In November 1838 Worth acknowledged that "many [Patriots] are young men of good family all decent and of the higher order of Yeomanry," but he continued to blame disaffection among his soldiers upon "the lower classes here," which caused him to proclaim to the "Gentlemen of Ogdensburg" that "if the good citizens should be pleased to exercise their just influence in society I cannot doubt that very shortly the former relations of good neighborhood will be restored with the opposite border."52
As the last quotation suggests, the most serious obstacle the regulars faced in their work as federal border police was the reluctance of politically appointed civil officials (including minor federal ones) to enforce the law. Army officers accountable to the national government which commissioned them had little sympathy for civilian officials' sense of accountability to their local constituents, which they saw in this instance as little more than an obstacle to the maintenance of peaceful international relations. Winfield Scott warned the War Department that "in general they are either luke warm [and] inefficient or the open [and] zealous abettors of the violators of law [and] order," and Worth suggested that a suspect customs collector was "but one of many, very many civil officers along the border equally criminal of participation [and] shameful neglect of duty. . . . Many are notoriously active members of the secret societies." 53

Army officers frequently appealed to the War Department for support against refractory civil officials, but the federal government had little (or was unwilling to exert much) effective control over its local appointees under these delicate political circumstances, so army officers were forced to bear the burden of what was essentially a federal-local conflict. Consequently, Worth and his fellows were often forced to mediate or choose between competing imperatives of professional responsibility, for they took the fundamental principle of civilian supremacy over the military seriously even when that adherence clearly hampered their immediate ability to sustain the sovereignty of the nation-state they served. At first Worth was strongly committed to acting in support of the responsible civilian authorities, feeling "anxious that every energy of the civil arm should first have been put forth and exhausted before our Country should be subjected to this deplorable and humiliating exhibition." The colonel reminded civil officials that "I have
constant occasion for the advice [and] cooperation of the United States Civil Officers," and he ordered his subordinates to act in conjunction with the civil authorities "to yield them every aid and support which may be lawfully rendered," but he soon warned Scott that "unsustained and deserted by the civil authorities it will be difficult for the military to render any efficient service by way of prevention, or to convince foreign governments of the sincere desire of our own to do so."54

Scott's private report to the Secretary of War in January 1839 drew these themes of attitude and action together in a statement that suggests the officer corps' frustration with the very civilians they were charged with protecting:

I have thrown every possible legal obstacle in the way of the mad [and] wicked people called American Canadian patriots . . . I have denounced their movements [and] purposes as a stain upon our national honour [and] faith; as dangerous to liberty at home, [and] destructive of all law [and] order. I have laboured to convince them that their projects were absurd [and] impracticable, [and] that every life taken in their unauthorized [and] unlawful enterprizes, would be an atrocious murder--deserving an ignominious execution.

Scott went on to contrast the willful demeanor of the border populace and its civil authorities with that of the long-suffering regulars ordered to police them--"we poor ignorant soldiers [who] only profess to be the creatures [and] servants of the law, by which we live [and] are ready to die."55

As the crisis continued Worth reacted to the obstructions posed by civil officials by ordering his subordinates to send their correspondence with the civil authorities to headquarters for transmission to the War Department and
Congress, "as ample evidence that the Military has not been remiss in the performance of its duties." Worth always remained diplomatic with those on his side, assuring Governor William Marcy of New York (a Democrat who followed President Van Buren's lead in denouncing the filibusters) that "I am ready to yield prompt obedience to your Excellency's requisition [to guard a state arsenal] . . . & in all other respects to exert in all lawful manner the forces entrusted to my command in aid of such efforts as your Excellency may order." His diplomacy notwithstanding, the colonel's actions were always guided by his occupation's principles of personal and national duty and honor. These values would eventually force him to make a difficult choice between his immediate and ultimate responsibilities and the different loci of accountability they represented, but Worth grasped this responsibility without hesitation: "In my own judgement my course of Duty is plain, and this duty I shall endeavour to perform regardless of [the] consequences." 56

A series of events in February 1838 illustrates the mixed cooperation and dual allegiances Worth and his fellow officers met among local civil authorities. Though legally federal officers, these men were dependent on their local political standing to gain and retain their appointments, and diplomacy was necessary to secure their aid in controversial actions. Indeed, Worth often had to resort to persuading subordinate legal officers to act when their superiors would not. Acting contrary to Secretary Poinsett's initial interpretation of the limits of the 1818 Neutrality Act, Worth asked A.W. Rogers, whom he had persuaded to act as U.S. District Attorney, for a legal opinion to support his intention to "disarm and disperse [the filibusters] by force if necessary, the civil authority failing to do so." He then reported to Scott that upon hearing of an arms cache at Fredonia, "I gave W. Leonard [a deputy U.S. Marshal] the necessary militia force . . . and said to him ' . . . if you
don't seize it, I shall." Apparently Worth's efforts had some effect, for he went on to praise Leonard's zeal, and later gave the civil authorities primary credit for thwarting the Patriot advance against Hickory Island and Kingston.57

On the other hand, Worth reproved U.S. District Attorney Nathaniel Benton for "publicly and officially" repudiating Leonard's actions, remarking that "it was with infinite surprise [that] I further learned that you had caused an order to be issued for the re-delivery of arms seized from persons in open violation of the law . . . who no doubt will feel very grateful . . . [that] their arms have been transported to the desired point for unlawful use." Worth then warned Benton that "I have deemed it my duty to present the whole subject . . . to the consideration of the War Department." He sent the same letter to U.S. Marshal H.N. Garrow, as the circumstances made "it indispensable to the public good that I should be enabled to confer and cooperate with an U. States Marshal or his deputy." Garrow, on the other hand, had "publicly repudiated and pronounced [Leonard's] acts . . . unlawful," rendering it "necessary, as a matter of self-defence" for Worth to alert the secretary of war to Garrow's obstructiveness. The colonel also appealed to the War Department regarding a U.S. Customs Collector Stillman at Ogdensburg, though he conceded that "ordinarily I should be regarded as travelling beyond my duty in presenting to your notice the conduct of a civil functionary." Worth was certainly not alone in his appeals to the capital: Scott urged the removal of the U.S. marshal for Michigan, and Inspector General Wool criticized a deputy customs collector for his Patriot loyalties and threatened Vermont officials that he would inform the President of their misdeeds unless corrected.58
National and personal honor, defined as good faith and integrity in the fulfillment of one’s duties and obligations, was one of the core values of the army officer corps, and one which its representatives applied to all of the actors in the Patriot drama. Worth reminded Lieutenant Colonel Newman Clarke to tell Captain Sandom of the Royal Navy of "our sincere desire to do all that we might be expected from the most fastidious sense of national and personal honour to guard against every event that might . . . interrupt the friendship of the two countries," while Worth, Scott, and Wool frequently castigated uncooperative civil officials in the idiom of personal and national honor common among regular officers. Wool admonished Captain James Platt of the Vermont militia that "your standing and character as an officer" demanded that a stolen box of ammunition should be returned: "If it is not you will be suspected of having connived at theft. If I was in your place, I would not for a thousand boxes of ammunition ever have the world suspect me or my company capable of such an act of villainy." When Platt responded with excuses, Wool reiterated his caustic threat: "Sir. The mere cost of the ammunition is nothing compared with the loss of reputation and the suspicion that must ever attach itself to you and your company. I repeat that if you have any regard for your own character and future standing in society you will have the box returned." He had no success with Platt, but similar aspersions directed at civil officers brought in several hundred weapons. Scott summed up the army officer’s disdain for officials who placed their Patriot loyalties ahead of their oaths of office, reporting to Secretary Poinsett that "I have scornfully refused, & shall continue so to refuse, to receive or to salute, one of those traitors to a special trust . . . because I am the natural guardian of my own personal honour, & do not choose that that shall be defiled by fellowship with such men."59
These values and attitudes were also expressed by more junior army officers. Captain James Duncan, for example, wrote from Cleveland about the difficulty of Neutrality Law prosecutions there: "two of the three magistrates of the city are most violent patriots, men of but little character, & I doubt if the most solemn obligations of their oaths of office would influence them to give a decisive counter to their avowed prejudices." For army officers, honor was as much a matter of performing one's obligations within a hierarchy of masters as of the individualism we usually associate with the concept. Professionally, duty and honor were much the same thing--faithful service--and the class characteristics of individual character and honor buttressed the officer's desire to support the authority of the nation-state and the inviolability of its borders, an authority expressed in the officer corps' occupational jurisdiction over direction of organized force. As their language shows, class, state, and occupation were closely linked in officers' reactions to borderlands crisis.60

Regular officers encountered the same sort of disaffection and unreliability in the state militia, which they routinely tried to exclude from participation in the conflict, and their calls for deploying regulars in place of the militia displayed the officer corps' affinity for centralization, as Worth came to doubt that the Patriot unrest could be quelled "in the absence of all reliable force . . . enforce the just authority of the Government, and [the] supremacy of the Law." As in so many other areas, officers' reactions to the borders changed with bitter experience--Worth initially thought the militia "the more appropriate aid to the civil functionaries" given the delicate circumstances, but he almost immediately began to blame militia officers for allowing the filibusters to steal weapons from arsenals. Indeed, a year later he apparently seized New York state artillery from one such arsenal in order to
prevent the Patriots from doing so. In Vermont some militiamen at Plattsburgh refused to serve under federal authorities, and Inspector General Wool hoped to avoid calling up the militia. Though he felt forced to do so late in February 1838, Wool disbanded units called up by their commanders without proper authorization during the Patriot expedition from Vermont at the end of the month. He then requested a company of regulars to replace the militia he had called, and after a theft of arms in March he directed his aides to supervise all shipments to and from local arsenals.61

Indeed, the Patriots seem to have been dependent on government arsenals for their supply of weapons, and controlling the distribution of arms was a basic dilemma facing the regulars. On the Detroit frontier General Brady withdrew a requisition for militia "from want of Confidence" in their reliability after their officers somehow "lost" a store of arms to the filibusters, while General Scott believed that as a general principle the militia "would almost certainly give their arms to the patriots, if not personally unite with them." In 1838 Worth directed a subordinate to refuse District Attorney Benton's order to return the arms seized to their possessors (the Patriots), and a year later he refused to allow an auction of condemned arms (which would certainly have been purchased by the Patriots or their sympathizers) without orders from higher up the chain of federal authority. Indeed, by 1839 Worth felt certain that the pervasiveness of Patriot sympathies had rendered the militia useless, and he feared that a move to call it to arms that March was driven by Patriot supporters who hoped to precipitate clashes with the British. Worth was able to prevent that call-up, and he successfully asked the governor of New York to keep any arms sent for the militia under army guard. Wool, who had at first considered it unwise to seize any weapons that his men discovered because of the political uproar that this would cause,
warned Scott and Poinsett against issuing arms to citizens in northern Vermont, and he refused to honor a writ of attachment for captured weapons presented to him by the sheriff of Clinton County, Vermont. By the end of 1838 it had become clear to the regulars that without centralized control over the use of force the country would soon be plunged into war with Britain by the very men supposedly relied on to protect it. Indeed, Worth became concerned that the border arsenals had been so thoroughly stripped of arms by the Patriots that there would be few weapons available to arm the militia should the British attack in force across the border.62

Regular officers conscious of limited appropriations also criticized the militia for its wasteful expense. Worth felt sure that local civilians sought militia duty solely for the scarce cash wages it paid, and he did his best to assure that the government's money would not be wasted on men he considered unreliable mercenaries. In February 1838 he wrote to the adjutant general that "no time has been lost in reducing the force, & lopping off useless members not provided [for] by law," particularly excess officers (who were paid more, of course). A year later he noted that a Vermont company was "inclined to disband . . . provided they are [first] mustered for pay," which "would have the effect of flooding the frontier with Militia," so he sent a detachment of regulars to take their place and remove the pretext for their mobilization. Popular mobilization played no part in Worth's strategy for defending American—or more precisely federal—sovereignty—indeed, he was sure that a "flood" of disorderly militiamen would do far more harm than good.63

On the other hand, Worth and Brady both made a clear distinction between the generally prosperous volunteers who could be trusted with arms and the "popular" militia, just as they did between the filibusters and the
"respectable Citizens--[the] staunch friends of Law and Order" (as Worth put it) and they often did so in the same language of social hierarchy and order. Short of regular troops, Wool relied mostly on civilian volunteers in his operations against the Patriots in Vermont in February 1838, while Brady repeatedly praised a company named after him as "the most respectable young men of Detroit," and Worth praised a New York battalion for its "zeal, fidelity, and discipline." Indeed, Worth was a strong believer in the civic and military benefits of training under professional guidance: "[The volunteers] are in a course of instruction . . . which will increase their efficiency as soldiers, keep them out of idleness & send them home better citizens," no doubt after being lectured on their duty to observe the neutrality laws.64

Worth's characteristic sense of class and occupation came together in an official order praising both the volunteers and regulars provides telling contrasts in the virtues Worth expected from the two groups, and in those that he felt they would expect from him:

The conduct of the Battalion of Volunteers . . . was precisely what was expected from a proud, high minded citizen soldiery, as well acquainted with the law as [with] the manner of enforcing it. The discipline exhibited by these companies reflects the highest credit upon their commanders.

The Battalion of regulars . . . submitted to fatigue and privations with a patience, steadiness, and forbearance, under vexatious circumstances, which would have done credit to veterans [these men were virtually all recent recruits] and does honor to their Officers.

Note how regular officers received "honor" (prestige, status, respect) while enlisted men and volunteer officers get "credit" (a market metaphor suitable
to businessmen and workers that also implies delay in payment); regulars "submit" patiently (with the implication that they behaved well towards the citizenry that was creating vexing circumstances for them), while volunteers remain "proud" and "high minded" "citizens" (in contrast of course to the many immigrant regulars who were not citizens) aware of the law (and presumably of their rights under it). But these distinctions notwithstanding, the concrete criteria of Worth's praise for volunteers and regulars alike lay in their good discipline, though one senses that among the volunteers this was more a discipline within the unit among men unused to such subordination than one which restrained external aggression under "vexatious circumstances" by regular soldiers used to subordination within their units but not to the "high minded" good citizenship demanded when enforcing civil laws. The discipline of volunteers therefore "reflected credit" on their leaders less directly than that of the regulars did upon their officers' "honor."65

Surrounded by uncooperative and duplicitous officials, the tension between accountability to local civil authorities and the principle of civil supremacy and responsibility to enforce the neutrality policy frustrated Worth, and by the end of 1838 he adopted an unofficial policy of avoiding association with the local civil authorities whenever possible. Indeed, Worth's new approach was directed at the civil authorities as much as it was at identifiable Patriots—he ordered his officers to find evidence of negligence and criminal acts by civil officials and he was able to secure the arrest of a deputy U.S. Marshal. Worth also refused orders from civil officers to return or auction captured weapons. The always diplomatic colonel remained cautious: he warned subordinates that any arrest would be "a painful and
delicate duty to be performed with great discretion and judgement and under the clearest evidence of criminal design," and that they must "deliver the person arrested to the civil authority" "with all possible diligence." Worth knew that his confrontational methods might prove counterproductive, so he stressed the importance of organizing evidence so that witnesses could not deny it, "for a failure to substantiate the charges . . . would only encourage [the civil officials] to greater exertions in the violation of [their] duty."66

The colonel was careful to appear at least superficially obedient to civilian control, but in doing so he actually abandoned the civil populace to its own devices in hopes that a rash of Patriot violence and thievery would cure them of support for the filibusters. When a suspect U.S. District Attorney complained about an officer's order to guards to stop an assault on an official messenger, Worth defended his subordinate's conduct but responded that he would give "specific orders . . . under no circumstances to permit any interference in any brawls or civil difficulties, unless on the written request of a Magistrate." Worth's new approach coincided with the Patriots' turn to arsonism and banditry while attempting to recover from their battlefield defeats at Windsor and Prescott the previous fall. He decided to classify such incidents as "civil difficulties," as he felt that "the Magistracy and people . . . are alone competent to the correction of such evils as now disgrace and afflict our border." By the beginning of 1839 Worth believed that responsibility for the Patriot problem and its resolution rested with the American citizenry alone: "Should it please our good citizens to withdraw their countenance [and] support there is not a doubt tranquillity will be restored." Indeed, his biting letter to Customs Collector George McWhorter sounded as if it had been written by a British rather than an American officer: "I feel quite assured that your neighborhood is in no danger of being
disturbed from Can[ada] and as certain that any further aggressions by your citizens will be duly punished by the offended party. . . . I have neither authority nor inclination to employ the troops in quelling civil brawls."67

By this time Worth had also begun to worry that disturbances in the social order would infect the army itself, that "the thoroughly corrupt character of a large portion of the frontier inhabitants is fatal to the discipline [and] fidelity of the troops, placed in garrisons in the open towns." "You will have to guard against efforts to seduce your men from their duties, and it is desirable that there should be the least practicable association between them and the citizens," he warned subordinates, and he cautioned Captain Joseph Bonnell that "the constant presence of your officers with the men is indispensable . . . to keep up the discipline and instruction of the company." To isolate his soldiers from social contagion while employing them against the Patriots, Worth first tried concentrating his detachments on steamers, which would conserve "men [and] money--keep the troops from contact with the citizens; cause by their movements less excitement, . . . [and] in a manner less obnoxious to . . . the people . . . allow us to concentrate and mature the discipline of the men." (Steamers would also obviate civilian complaints about the British naval presence along the St. Lawrence.) Although the plan was eventually carried out, Worth was still forced to remove his detachments from Ogdensburg to Madison Barracks in Sackett's Harbor fifty miles to the south, as he felt that "a systematic plan to debauch and seduce them from their duty, has already been too successfully practiced."68

Worth finally came to believe that only the fear of chaos would foster public adherence to the norms of law and order. "[T]he scandalous excesses . . . will produce a very decisive, and fortunate, reaction in public feeling. . . . [They] have made all true men hug closer to the laws," he wrote early in 1838.
This optimism was premature, and a year later Worth ordered Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Pierce that if incidents continued "you will not hesitate to withdraw the troops, and [to] try, as a last expedient, the effects of a due sense of insecurity." Not only had Worth ceased to cooperate with the civil authorities, he had by this point decided to quell the unrest by relying on their fear--by withdrawing the protection he was supposed to provide. The borderers began "to look with seriousness to these matters, as the brand of the incendiary approaches their own dwellings, and there is reason to hope that in a few days they will compel the refugees to retire," he reported to Scott: "I am firm in the belief that perseverance in keeping the troops back from the line will in a short time bring our people to their senses [and] induce the Magistrates to do their duty." Accountability to the national government ultimately meant abandoning its citizens if they persisted in pursuing their local objectives without regard to the decisions made for them by their representatives in Washington.69

Worth was able to undertake this apparently irresponsible course of action because he had come to the conclusion that retaliation was unlikely, and he was careful to assure concerned civilians of this. (Hugh Brady also came to doubt the likelihood of retaliation.) Worth’s certainty was based on his excellent relations with his counterparts on the opposite shore and his belief that they could and would restrain Canadian retaliation--Worth’s diplomacy paid off by allowing the United States to defend itself on the cheap. His status as an apolitical agent of the nation-state enabled him to ignore local political pressure and to demonstrate to the British the federal government’s commitment to the principles of international law and national sovereignty. Though there were certainly more significant reasons why the British exercised forbearance, the good faith and energetic diplomacy of Worth and
his fellow commanders substantially reduced the possibility of incidents that could have made the process of accommodation much more difficult.  

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III. Military Planning and Preparation during the Maine Boundary Crises and Beyond, 1837-1846

The Maine frontier became a second source of concern when the long-standing boundary dispute there erupted into the bloodless "Aroostook War" between state and provincial militias and law enforcement officers in 1838. As tensions simmered, the army quickly conducted several strategic reconnaissances to evaluate American defenses and the vulnerabilities of Canada. The first of these had actually been put in motion at the initiative of Secretary Poinsett before either Canadian crisis began, when Scott and Inspector General Wool were ordered to inspect the northern borders in October 1837. Scott and Wool then became the principal commanders on the New York and Vermont frontiers early in 1838, and Poinsett directed Wool and the topographical engineers to reconnoiter the Maine boundaries that fall. (Macomb transmitted this order with the caution that Wool avoid "the appearance of making a military reconnaissance within the territory in dispute.") Wool promptly conferred with the state governor and selected a position to secure the northwestern border against British or Canadian incursions, but the general maintained that there was little need for extensive military preparations along that portion of the frontier, because he felt certain that Britain "would not waste her resources by contending for [the disputed territory] in the wilds or dense forests of Maine" itself.  

In doing so, Wool implicitly recognized the lessons of Saratoga and the War of 1812 (in which Britain undertook no strategic offensives along the
border until 1814, when it mounted a campaign on Lake Champlain): "No
general who understood his profession would invade Maine by any route [so]
destitute of forage, provisions, and the means of transportation" as those in
the disputed region. If they did Wool believed that "it is probable they would
not return," so he expected that Britain would do no more than "carry on a
predatory warfare" there while attacking the coastline as in 1814. Any future
war would be decided on the lakes and oceans where the two sides could
bring their resources to bear more effectively. The inspector general therefore
reiterated the need for an effective system of coastal fortifications to prevent a
British lodgement and the economic and political dislocation it would cause.
Like Totten's thoughts a decade before, Wool's recognition that war would be
decided by a lengthy process of attrition on both land and sea rather than a
single (and comparatively simple) land campaign alone (per the Napoleonic
ideal) represents yet another facet of the growing understanding of military
and economic interdependence among some of the army's senior officers.72

As in Totten's 1836 report, a desire to secure the operational initiative
combined with an appreciation of the logistics necessary to do so marked the
work of Wool's subordinates. His principal assistant, Major James D. Graham
of the topographical engineers (aided by Lieutenant Joseph E. Johnston) urged
the construction of a depot at the forks of the Kennebec River (near present-
day West Forks, on U.S. 201 some forty miles south of the border) that would
allow the defenders to quickly concentrate the state's resources and militia
near the disputed region. Graham suggested that this post would also "insure
us a valuable point d'’appui, from whence to attack our enemy within his
own territory, and even to aid in conducting a siege against his strong fortress
at Quebec," and he advised that there would then be "no reason why we
should not be enabled to sustain and constantly supply . . . an army advancing
on Quebec." The character and objectives of American strategy thus remained unchanged despite the British build-up in Canada: "Our aim should be to cripple our enemy by cutting off his line of communications between Canada and his important supply depots in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia." (Graham's experience with these military surveys also proved useful for diplomatic purposes, for he later served as one of the American commissioners for the boundary survey after the Webster-Ashburton Treaty had been signed.)

The eastern frontier of Maine was a more sensitive point because of the proximity of sizeable British establishments in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Wool suggested improving the installations at Calais and Houlton (Hancock Barracks) and augmenting the garrison of the latter in order to counter the chance of a British offensive, cautioning that "no military commander would hazard an enterprise against . . . the disputed territory if by such a movement he could possibly lose . . . the finest part of New Brunswick" (which Houlton's position dominated strategically).

Unfortunately, Wool advised that thirty-one companies--three regiments--and earthworks were necessary to secure the initial defense of these positions, another example of the extravagant requests that demonstrate officers' rapid mental shifts--so useful when seeking larger forces and increased appropriations--from the quiescence of peacetime routine to envisioning worst-case scenarios during periods of crisis.

Several other reconnaissances were conducted on the initiative of individual staff bureaus and officers. In December 1838 Totten (who had finally become chief engineer earlier that year after Charles Gratiot was dismissed for financial irregularities) submitted detailed proposals for operations in case of war. The following January Totten and Sylvanus Thayer
reported to the House and Senate Military Affairs committees on the location of military installations on the frontier west of Maine, recommending the construction of permanent works at Ogdensburg, Plattsburg, and the outlet of Lake Champlain along with improvements in lateral communications and the preparation of an area for concentrating as many as 35,000 militiamen near Albany. In February the two engineers sent a report to the secretary of war regarding the Maine frontier, and in March Totten submitted another analysis of possible operations.75

Planning for the Maine border entered a new stage of urgency that month after news of the Aroostook "war" (demonstrations by the Maine militia in the disputed territory, countered by similar actions from the Canadian side, without violence on the part of either) reached the capital. Secretary Poinsett immediately called the staff bureau chiefs together to postulate scenarios and operational responses to them. Local and departmental commanders like Edmund Gaines and John Fenwick warned that despite the twenty year old fortification program the coast remained virtually defenseless, but most of the staff chiefs' recommendations amounted to little more than raising and training masses of volunteers and militia under the army's supervision. In keeping with his usual thoughtfulness, Quartermaster General Jesup proposed the most specific and far-ranging measures in case of war, including the establishment of steam batteries on the St. Lawrence to cut communications between Quebec and Montreal and a land advance on the British naval base at Halifax to counter its expected use as the jumping-off point for amphibious operations against the American coast, an offensive Jesup had first suggested more than a quarter-century before in a memo he wrote as a junior lieutenant on the eve of the War of 1812.76
Concrete preparations to meet the Aroostook and McLeod crises lagged sorely behind this planning, however. Warning orders were issued to naval vessels and shore establishments in March 1839, but the navy remained scattered in small packets across the globe protecting American commerce. Congress authorized the construction of three ocean-going steamers, but this action was far too little and much too late to affect the naval balance if war had broken out. The Navy Department’s grand plan of construction was not issued until January 1840, and its projections for forty coastal steamers and the maximum number of sailing vessels for which sailors could be found were as fantastic as calls by army officers for hundreds of thousands of militia to invade Canada, or for an army double its current size to garrison coastal fortifications and patrol the west. Indeed, the programs proposed for naval and fortification construction each amounted to $56 million, an ironic synchronicity that doubtlessly amused skeptical congressmen. (Only $8.25 million had been applied to fortifications during the first wave of building between 1816 and 1829.) Poinsett drew these recommendations together in his own report on national defense, which also called for promoting an offensive capability through the erection of several new barracks on the Canadian frontier and forts at the head of Lake Champlain. The practical effects of these proposals were minimal, however: only in March 1841 did a new Congress appropriate funds for three of the forty steamers sought by the navy, and only then was work begun on the third of the ocean-going steamers authorized two years earlier. The 1841 fortification bill authorized spending $2.25 million, only $260,000 of which was allocated to the northern border.77

American strategic reconnaissance efforts also continued during this period. In March 1840 Winfield Scott reported on the British forces in Canada, and that fall Lieutenant Minor Knowlton (the West Point artillery
instructor from 1837 to 1844 and perhaps the army's most active professional at so junior a rank) visited and undertook a covert reconnaissance of the defenses of Quebec. Knowlton then reported on "the condition and efficiency of the British troops in Canada," commenting extensively on British cavalry equipment, artillery drill, infantry formations, and the capabilities of volunteer units. He also assessed the strength of the fortifications at Quebec and the strength of Quebec's fortifications and lines of communication, explicitly noting "that Quebec may still be taken without any very extraordinary interposition of providence or fortune." The following spring President Harrison, Secretary of War John Bell and soon-to-be commanding general Winfield Scott sent ex-Chief Engineer Joseph G. Swift on a similar mission which produced similar conclusions. Finally, the Topographical Engineers also got in on the act, sending Captain William G. Williams on a similar though less well-documented mission a year later.  

Wool was certainly correct that the 1838 garrison of three companies (118 officers and men) at Houlton--the only regular force in Maine during the initial crisis, and only half that present before the outbreak of the Seminole War--was insufficient to do anything more than deter Canadian militia raids against its immediate vicinity, but the increase in American strength along the Maine frontier hardly deserves the name of a build-up. The minor surge in spending on installations during 1840-41 receded quickly with the general retrenchment in military expenditures in 1842; a post established at Presque Isle in 1841 was closed two years later, and Houlton itself was abandoned in 1845. The only Anglo-American strife along the Maine border that actually involved army personnel took place in March 1843 near Fort Kent on the northern St. John's River boundary, when several soldiers were sent by their commander to aid Maine civil officers in resisting a hotheaded Canadian
constable's efforts to arrest an American citizen on territory granted to the United States under the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. The incident was resolved without bodily harm to any of the parties involved, and the northern frontier remained essentially as unfortified as before, testifying to the long-held belief of Congress—shared by most officers—that American population growth and consequent economic power made war there an unlikely struggle that the United States could meet and win without difficulty or need for preparation.79

The Maine boundary was the principal issue in the negotiations leading to the Webster-Ashburton Treaty in 1842, and the primary British objective was to gain a secure line of overland communications between New Brunswick and Quebec. Senior American officers felt that the in question territory was strategically irrelevant since the St. John's river line was still open to interdiction by American forces advancing north from Houlton. Their principal goal was possession of Rouses Point at the head of Lake Champlain, which would secure the lakefront from British incursions. They were willing to give up the Madawaska highlands north of the St. John, but each of the primary commentators brought a functionally distinct perspective to this issue. As a field commander, Winfield Scott wanted to keep the line as far north as possible, so as to preserve a line of operations up the Chaudiere River to Quebec, which would divert that city's garrison from assisting in the defense of Montreal. Chief Engineer Totten thought more defensively but was willing to sacrifice the highland crest because he felt that a few forts (which he would have charge of the siting and construction for) could always be relied on to counter British advances southward. Colonel John Abert, chief of the topographical engineers, also viewed the Maine boundary from a defensive perspective, but he assumed that the British could do nothing in
Maine without securing their vulnerable Lake Champlain flank first. In
effect, the treaty split the difference by granting Britain the northern bank of
the St. John from the point of its eastward bend but securing a buffer for the
United States west of that point. More importantly, the Americans received
Rouses Point, where fortifications were begun two years later. (Palmerston
rightly considered this exchange a strategic retreat, "weakening our measures
of defence . . . and thus affording the United States greater power of
annoyance, and giving them greater temptation to annoy."\textsuperscript{80})

American strategic intelligence-gathering and planning did not end
after the crises had passed, indicating a new continuity to defense planning
led by Joseph Totten. In 1842 the chief engineer provided the secretary of war
with written comments on the strategic implications of the settlement
proposed in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, and that spring the quartermaster
general wrote to Rep. W. O. Butler of the House Military Affairs Committee
in response to a query on the use of Newport, Kentucky (opposite Cincinnati),
as a depot for "the Kentucky troops, required for the Northern frontier" in
wartime. Jesup added that "from that point the frontier on the upper lakes
might be supplied, through the canals of Ohio and Indiana, should an enemy
obtain the command of those lakes." Minor Knowlton repeated his Canadian
mission in Bermuda in 1843 and 1849, though it is unclear whether or how
he managed to evade British scrutiny. Totten sent Dennis Hart Mahan on a
summer tour of American coastal defenses and public works in 1844, and a
board of senior engineers inspected the Atlantic and Canadian frontiers in
1845, while in the latter year Totten sent two officers into Canada to discover
vulnerable points on the St. Lawrence River and related canals. (The defense
tour was not Mahan's first choice: as in his preference for the French school
of roads and bridges over that of military engineering in 1826, Mahan initially
sought to make a tour of civil works alone, and Totten had to pressure him to examine military ones as well.)

While these official missions were conducted Henry Wager Halleck gave extensive private study to the Canadian border and its defenses, filling much of the "Military Note Book" he used to collect information for Elements of the Art and Science of War with scraps about past and present Canadian military affairs. These included a five page piece on the Quebec campaign of 1759, some "Military Notes on Canada in 1840" (perhaps Knowlton's), Wool's report on Maine, and an article that suggested Quebec as the most desirable target for an American offensive but warned that the cession of northern Maine would change the balance of power by enabling the British to supplement the St. Lawrence with new railroad lines of communication. Halleck also collected a series of articles on unsuccessful proposals for federally funded western canals. One, entitled "Defenses of the Lakes," asserted the ease of cutting riverine lines of communication (like that along the St. Lawrence) with shore batteries and recommended that the United States aim its initial offensive at Montreal to prevent British reinforcements from reaching Upper Canada. Another, on the Western commercial convention at Memphis in 1845, advocated a canal between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi to counter the British canal system in Canada. Still a third cautioned that, while an effective way of spreading government contracts to the west, canals were strategically irrelevant since the British would send their navy against New Orleans and New York rather than Chicago. Halleck's information-gathering was as exceptional as his writing, however, and the practical limits to the army's concern over Canada, and the wartime strategy of gradual mass mobilization that this inattention implied, were demonstrated when a number of northern border posts including
Buffalo and Houlton, the principal installations on the Niagara and Maine frontiers, were abandoned in 1845 as the army concentrated against its next opponent in Texas.82

* * *

IV. Conclusions: Military Attitudes toward Britain and the Limits of American Military Expansionism

On the whole few officers sought war with Britain during the Patriot and Aroostook crises. The nationalism and underlying self-interest of soldiers dedicated to the service of the state during an era of growing sectional friction did lead some officers to favor war as a means of unifying American public opinion or spurring efforts toward military preparedness against a foreign threat, but this trope rarely appeared in their letters during the Patriot crises. The idea appeared with increasing but always relatively rare frequency in officers' letters during the antebellum period in parallel with the growth of sectional tensions, but its expression was tightly constrained by the officer corps' predilection for international as well as domestic law and order. In 1840 the usually responsible Robert Anderson wanted to fight the British in order to sustain American national unity (presumably against sectional conflict), but Abraham Eustis cautioned him that this was unlikely to occur, much less succeed: "Doubtless you would profit by it, & gain more honour & glory, than can be found among the laurels of Florida. But I think we shall not be united; & abolitionism, states rights & other hobbies will not 'be sunk to old nick.'"83

The following year Lieutenant Philip Kearny linked national unity to hatred for Britain during the McLeod crisis, writing to Anderson that "I am
proud to see that that bitterness which the English so unjustly have nurtured towards us for years, has at length kindled as strong a feeling of resentment in the hearts of all our people, & that on this one question of hatred to England all parties will unite to a man." In 1842 Kearny's uncle (the colonel of the 1st Dragoons) wrote with regret that war between the two countries seemed less likely than before, "because I think war must ensue before our difficulties [with Britain] are settled, and I therefore think the sooner it comes the better!"

(Noting the American unpreparedness demonstrated above, it seems that Kearny must have been either uninformed or overcome with confidence to assert this.) Indeed, Colonel Kearny spoke for many junior officers who looked to war as the only spur to military preparedness when he declared that "a war would tend to unite the feelings of our people and the public men would then . . . put the country in a state of defense[,] which they will not do in times of peace."84

The Anglophobic nationalism of a Philip Kearny came after several years of tension over the Maine boundary and the McLeod incident, from a hot-tempered young officer who had just spent a year in France, and was of course unlikely to have any impact on American policy. Of potentially more serious import, Winfield Scott had asserted in 1838 "that [only] a good hot foreign war . . . could save the Union & our free institutions" from the disorder caused by partisanship and cultural radicalism. Like his sympathy for the Patriots, Scott's desire for war quickly evaporated, and he responded angrily--albeit somewhat disingenuously--to later insinuations by British ambassador Fox that he was "not disinclined to a war" with England: "I have always earnestly & solemnly protested against being plunged into war by our borderers, wrong end foremost." Scott, who was beginning to be considered as a potential Whig candidate for the presidency after his successes (apparent
or real) against Black Hawk, the Nullifiers, the Creeks, and the Patriots, had made the serious political misstep of writing and talking to influential friends in Washington "in express reference to the Canadian excitement" about his belief "that if a good & sufficient cause of foreign war . . . should be presented, every American patriot ought to fall upon his knees & return thanks to Providence for the blessing," because this conflict would "cure" Americans of the "moral distempers" of "peace societies, antimasonry, nullification, Mormon difficulties & abolitionism"--all of which he characterized as "cankers of a long peace & a calm world." 85

Note Scott’s distaste for anything smacking of ideological "enthusiasm" or suspicion of and resistance to the established authority of the nation-state, which he expressed in a fear of division, sectional, social, political, or religious. Operating from these mental assumptions, Scott and his subordinates quickly came to see the Patriots as yet another set of undisciplined fanatics rather than the proper agents of American nationalism. Anderson, for example, initially sympathized with the Patriots' motives, but as the rebellions disintegrated into banditry he came to the conclusion--like Worth and Scott--that "the spirit of patriotism has fallen from its high and honorable designs into the contemptible, cowardly desire to burn & plunder the houses of the defenseless." On the whole officers were conservative realists, and military Anglophobia was not an irrationally belligerent phenomenon. Officers' attitudes were conditioned by both circumstances and worldview, particularly the overall balance of power and the ethical requisites of international law (that the United States should be--or at least appear to be--the aggrieved rather than the aggressor), and when Anderson, Scott, and Kearny wrote about war with Britain they did so as
military officers who expected to lead organized national forces against the British, not as advocates or supporters of private aggression.  

Officers' beliefs in the value and necessity of national sovereignty and centralized control over the application of armed force appear to be the keys to understanding the emphasis that they put on enforcing domestic and international law. Officers feared that if these restraints failed there would be social chaos and a war the United States was unprepared for and had no need to fight, and the officer corps' quest for social, institutional, and international stability was the most significant restraint on whatever enthusiasm its members may have initially entertained for territorial expansion against Canada or war with Britain. Consequently, Worth and his fellows were noticeably better disposed towards the rule of international law on the Canadian border than their predecessors had been on that of Florida twenty years before, and references to the possibility of American expansion against Canada are notable only by their extreme rarity in officers' correspondence of this period. Indeed, territorial expansion only became acceptable to the officer corps when it followed the orderly processes provided for by national and international law and the direction of officers acting as agents of the American nation-state, so officers who would soon be eager for war over Oregon or Texas withheld their support from a Manifest Destiny of private individuals acting beyond the restraints of congressional sanction and professional military command. Explaining his initial bellicosity to Poinsett, Scott stressed that he had always "argued that war could only be legitimately made under a declaration of Congress; that if otherwise brought about, we would probably find our population divided & distracted, which would superadd the disgrace of failure to the taint of breach of treaty & the disorder of its commencement." "In short," he excused himself, "in all that I have
said & done I have kept strictly in view the constitution, national responsibilities & the high obligations of morality." (It clearly paid to be an "American" patriot rather than a Canadian patriote.)

Note Scott's stress on order and good faith, along with his experienced and politically conscious assessment of the likelihood of success or failure. All of the senior commanders on the Canadian frontier had fought the British there in 1814, where Brady, Worth, and Scott were all wounded at Lundy's Lane, while Worth showed an interest in filibustering against Cuba after the Mexican War, but any bellicose sympathy he and his comrades might have felt for the Canadian rebels was curbed by the officer corps' pervasive fear of lawlessness and social disorder, mixed with a vague class-derived Anglophilia and practical considerations about the disadvantageous balance of forces available for immediate action. Indeed, Worth's very ethnocentricity justified expansionism against Mexico but contributed to his cooperation with British officers in Canada, while in chapter fifteen we will see that the same ethnocentricity—in this case expressed as Anglophobia—encouraged junior officers to think of (if not prefer) Britain as an opponent and to expect that Mexico (deemed an inferior and unworthy opponent by such men) would back down.

The nuanced intersection of these attitudes and affiliations suggests the impossibility of attempting to assign uniform motives and attitudes to officers of varied backgrounds and careers. Although many officers spoke belligerently of Britain during the early and mid-1840s, those who did so were mostly young junior officers as eager for promotion as they were lacking in the experience to warrant it. Moreover, the military Anglophobia of the 1840s lacked the concrete material dimension provided to its predecessor a quarter-century before by plans for the fortification system and the northwestern
expeditions to counter British influence over the Indians. (This influence was a minor consideration in some of the dragoon expeditions of the early and mid-1840s, but it lacked the immediate urgency expressed by a substantial number of senior civil and military officials during the decade after 1815.) In consequence their words have an abstract air, ardent but without practical or substantive content or advice.

Many if not most of these bellicose officers sympathized with the Democratic party, while the majority of officers tended toward Whiggery in their values, attitudes, and mentalité. Like Scott, Worth was a Whig at this time despite his later support for expansion--albeit that sponsored by the nation-state--against Mexico. Jesup was a Democrat but carefully avoided partisan activism, while Wool and Gaines had been Jacksonian Democrats until they quarrelled with the president during the mid-1830s, Gaines over control over the pace and methods of expansionism in Texas--which he sought--and Wool over the same issues in Indian removal, which he enforced too half-heartedly for Jackson's taste. The junior officers of the 1840s grew up amidst the vivid partisan conflict of Jacksonian America and felt much the same urge to assume partisan affiliations as the majority of civilians, although these divisive affiliations rarely seem to have become as central to officers' identities as they did among civilians.

Junior officers also had the strongest career motives to support expansionist policies, but their actual duties in the borderlands were usually controversial ones of law enforcement, in which officers were charged with acting in as nonpartisan a way as possible. Indeed, the differences between the attitudes of experienced field and general grade officers and those of their more aggressive junior subordinates (most of whom were lieutenants who graduated from the Military Academy during the early 1840s) suggest that
Anglophobia, expansionism, and the desire for war declined (up to a point, of course) as officers gained experience and became more thoroughly socialized in the occupational mentalité of the corps. In other words, the ideology of expansionism was first and foremost a civilian phenomenon, not a military one, in origin, and military interest in expansion rose and fell with civilian support. From the other side of the coin, however, we must remember that the large proportion of officers who hesitated over expansionism had plenty of civilian company. As in so many other respects, the army was not isolated from American society as a whole in its reluctance to engage in expansion—it displayed a Whiggish worldview which was entirely compatible with its own occupational mindset and value system, as a nonpartisan instrument subordinate to duly constituted national authority playing a specialized functional role.

It should be clear that no single factor can explain officers' diverse reactions to the possibilities of territorial expansion and war. Virtually all the historians who have touched on this question have maintained that (to use William Skelton's words) "the great majority of the officer corps" eagerly "embraced an aggressively expansionist policy in North America," but this was certainly not the case regarding Canada, nor is the picture as clear as historians have often suggested regarding Texas. Instead, army officers' enthusiasm for expansion varied from crisis to crisis and from officer to officer depending on the specific circumstances and the individual officers in question. These cycles did not follow a linear chronological pattern, and we shall see in chapter fifteen that officers of the early and mid-1840s seem to have been much more enthusiastic for war with Britain than they were vis-à-vis Mexico in 1845 and 1846 or than they had been during the Patriot crisis of the late 30s. Indeed, even in the army gathered to occupy Texas this
expansionist sentiment was substantially less widespread and enthusiastic than most historians have assumed, because war with Mexico seemed so unlikely that the most important consideration for many of its officers was the lengthy separation from their families and the dangers to their health posed by service along the Texan border.  

Military expansionism and Anglophobia were situationally dependent phenomena, and the officers on the spot saw both the disorderliness of filibustering and the power Britain was capable of mobilizing, forcing them to suppress or discard whatever abstract beliefs in American power and the desirability of expansion they may have possessed. An officer's individual status within the army was a very important factor in determining his stance toward foreign threats and opportunities—many of the more jingoistic officers in the 1840s were young (and often unmarried) men just starting their careers, for whom war was particularly attractive as a means of rapid promotion, which was less likely for field and general grade officers given the limited number of high command slots available and the lower incidence of deaths in combat—and thus promotions—among them. All things considered, experienced officers had little need for the aggressive nationalism of the sort which led to Anglophobia (or to Anglo-Saxon racialism before the outbreak of war with Mexico) as a basis for national identity, for their nationalism was founded on their existing occupational allegiances and socialization rather than racial romanticism, and their national orientation was as often focused around the maintenance of federal sovereignty within the United States—which we have seen threatened by this Anglophobia—as on potential conflicts with adjoining nation-states.

On the whole, the officers actually placed in crisis situations along the Canadian border were the ones who exercised the most restraint in their
words and actions, a responsible delicacy derived from the intersection of their occupational mission and values with the practical demands of international diplomacy and civil-military relations in borderlands regions contested by multiple interests. American expansionism hardly looked like manifest—or even desirable—destiny to the men watching it unfold on the Canadian borders in 1838. The officer corps' calm and restraint reflected military subordination to the peaceful policies of the national civilian authority and helped to sustain peace between Britain and the United States without doing significant injury to the "free institutions" of Americans along the Canadian border. Though the officer corps may be judged quarrelsome and inexpert in other contexts, its faithful performance of the duties assigned to it on the nation's borders fully merits the label professional.
Chapter XIII

I. Plans for Canadian Border Defense during the 1820s and 30s

1 "Extensive" and "intensive" quoted from Bourne, The Balance of Power in North America (hereafter cited as "Bourne" within this chapter), p. 53. See ch. 2 therein regarding British preparations for war during the period of my study. See Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy, ch. 14, and Burt, The United States, Great Britain, and British North America, chs. 16 and 17, regarding postwar tensions on the Great Lakes and the Rush-Bagot agreement and the Convention of 1818 that diplomatically resolved them.

2 Stuart, "Special Interests and National Authority in Foreign Policy," p. 327 and passim; Brown to Secretary of War Barbour, January 11, 1826, ASP:MA 216-17.


4 Indeed, as early as 1816 Admiral David Milne (later the commander at Halifax) suggested that the best policy might be to "quit . . . Canada altogether," but withdrawal was not a serious option for the strategists of a world empire. Milne, who had hoped the previous year that the European powers might join Algiers against the United States to curb American maritime ambitions, understood that in the long run the expense involved in securing Canada would be "so enormous that the country cannot afford it." See Milne to George Home, June 1 and 13, 1816, quoted in Bourne, p. 16 (Milne cited on the United States, Europe, and Algeria on p. 10).

Similarly, the commander of the British squadron on the Great Lakes warned his government that "these Lakes will be a millstone around our necks and . . . the colony is scarcely worth the expense." Ships of the line could not pass up the St. Lawrence past Quebec, nor frigates past Montreal, leaving naval construction and the defense of the lakes a totally local question subject to the overwhelming preponderance of American resources and population along the shores. A comprehensive report on Canadian defense in 1818 therefore stated that the situation on the Great Lakes was "manifestly hopeless" for Britain, and projected that the line of communications between Montreal and Quebec (or Upper and Lower Canada) would be cut within three days of the opening of hostilities. The most that the British could hope for was to mount preemptive strikes at the very outset of a war to damage exposed American installations like those at Sacketts Harbor and Erie. Ten years later the Duke of Wellington stated in Parliament that "I should say that the defence of Canada would be
impossible" against sustained American attack—only unpreparedness and incompetence on the scale manifested by the United States and its commanders in 1812 could save British Canada from the American juggernaut. See Capt. Robert Hall (R.N.) to Admiral Thomas Byam Martin (deputy comptroller of the navy), September 27, 1816, Charles Richmond (Governor-General of Canada) to Henry Bathurst (Secretary for War and the Colonies), November 10, 1818, and Wellington, testimony before Parliament April 15, 1828, all quoted in Bourne, pp. 23-24, 35, 42, and 45. See Stuart, "Special Interests and National Authority in Foreign Policy," pp. 318-19, concerning Jefferson (who wrote to Adams) and Monroe (who first suggested the idea to Jefferson).

On the other hand, British policymakers viewed their North American possessions as a necessary long term hedge against the growth of American world power. The Canadas (which then encompassed only what we recognize today as Quebec and Ontario) were secondary to the naval resources of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and the deep water harbor at Halifax from this perspective, and rougher terrain, closer attachments to the homeland, and the ease of naval supply and reinforcement made British officials much more sanguine about the defense of the Maritime Provinces. Nevertheless, as prime minister Wellington testified that "the abandonment of Canada would occasion the loss of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia," and the home government had to demonstrate its commitment to Canadian security lest the colonials follow the course Americans anticipated for them and seek closer ties to the expanding economic giant to the south, for it was clear to British officials that without firm assurances of support the Canadians would be more likely to join the Americans than to resist them in the event of war. See Bourne, pp. 40 (Wellington [then Master-General of Ordnance] to Bathurst, December 6, 1825, on sustaining Canadian loyalties), 54, and 57 (quotation from Wellington's testimony before Parliament, April 15, 1828). See also Peter Burroughs, British Attitudes Towards Canada, 1822-1844 (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall, 1971), and idem., The Canadian Crisis and British Colonial Policy, 1828-1841 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972).

5 England therefore went ahead and built several significant defensive works during the 1820s: the Rideau canal between Kingston and Ottawa (completed in 1832), the Welland canal across the neck between Lakes Ontario and Superior, opening up an alternative to the Niagara River (completed in 1829), and fortifications at Kingston, Quebec, and Isle aux Noix (north of Rouses Point on the Richelieu River route to Montreal). (Like those of the American Fortification Board these projects were classed according to their priority). See Bourne, pp. 29, 33, 35, 41-44, 57, 95, and passim. See also G.S. Graham, "Views

6 During the late 1820s and early 30s Britain undertook an economy drive which severely curtailed planned building and virtually ended naval preparations, and as in the United States, the Canadian militia was never adequately trained or organized for the active role it was expected to play. It did serve rather effectively during the rebellions of 1837-38, however, and it provided a nucleus for organizing invaluable volunteer auxiliaries. In both cases its success was probably due to the greater military discipline possible in a society less libertarian than the United States. As prime minister Wellington sought to mass two field armies of five thousand regulars apiece in the Canadas (along with garrisons containing thirty-five hundred more), but in the autumn of 1837 there were only five thousand regulars present in all of British North America, and only two thousand in the Canadas. See Bourne, pp. 31-32, 43, 45-46, and 118.


II. Peacekeeping, Diplomacy, and the Growth of Accountable Civil-Military Relations on the Border: Army Officers and Filibusters, 1838-1839

9 Worth to Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett, February 12, 1838, in Worth's official letterbook, LC (Worth hereafter cited as simply "Worth to x," unless another source has been used).

University of Kentucky Press, 1960) regarding expansionist views later in the century.


12 Totten to Gratiot, March 29, 1836, ASP:MA 6: 391; Bourne, pp. 79 and 118; Worth to Winfield Scott, February 9, 1839, in Worth's official letterbook, LC; Brady to Jones, December 6, 1838, in Francis Paul Prucha, ed., "Reports of General Brady on the Patriot War," Canadian Historical Review 31 (March 1950): 56-68 (hereafter cited only as "Brady to x," unless a different source has been used).

13 Ibid.; Kinsley to Kemble, February 2, 1838, Kemble Papers, USMA; Worth to Lt. Col. Benjamin K. Pierce, February 14, 1839, Worth letterbook, LC. Kinsley was seeking reappointment to the army at this time. Worth's letterbooks are extant only for February 1838 to April 1839, but they provide the most detailed information available on officer's reactions to the Patriot conflicts. I will simply cite "Worth to x" and a date in this section unless the document was found in another source.
On the eve of the rebellions Ambassador Henry Fox cautioned the governor of New Brunswick that he saw no intent by the American government to support or promote unrest, but two months later he believed that the administration had "both wished and expected [that] the Canadian rebellion would succeed." See Bourne, pp. 69, 79, and 89 (Fox to Sir John Harvey, November 30, 1837, and Lt. Gen. John Colborne, January 19, 1838, quoted on p. 81); Macomb to Poinsett, annual report communicated to Congress by the president December 4, 1837, House Executive Document 3, 25th Cong., 2nd sess.; Poinsett, "Report on the Protection of the Frontiers," January 9, 1838, Sen. Doc. 88, 25th Cong., 2nd sess.

Jesp to Poinsett, March 21, 1839, SW:LR-Confidential, RG107, NA. Remember that Jesup had also authored a plan for the seizure of Halifax in 1812 (Jesp to Rep. Charles J. Ingersoll, May 20, 1845, Jesup Papers, LC).

An ex-Canadian official pointed out this zero-sum equation in absolute terms much like those used by senior American policymakers afraid of British domination in Texas: the United States "would exclude British manufactures ... take the cotton of the Southern States [for domestic production] ... seduce to their shores English artisans, and soon ... supplant many English fabrics in other Countries ... In fifty years, perhaps half that time, the United States would thus cause the downfall of Great Britain." See James Fitzgibbon, memorandum to the War Office, June 18, 1838, quoted in Bourne, pp. 56-57 and 70. See also Lt. H.D. Fanshawe's reports to the Admiralty in late 1841, and Colonel George Arthur (lieutenant governor of Upper Canada), "Memorandum upon the Defence of Canada" (circa September 1841), cited in ibid., pp. 95 and 113. Ironically, Sylvanus Thayer allowed Fanshawe to inspect the works at Boston Harbor (forts Independence and Warren) at the behest of a letter of introduction from a T.C. Graham (October 7, 1841, Thayer Papers, USMA). (See also topographical major James D. Graham to Thayer, October 15, 1841, introducing a Capt. Wentworth of the Royal Engineers.)

Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," pp. 139-40. Both Corey, The Crisis of 1830-1842, and Stevens, Border Diplomacy, believe that American officials were totally unprepared for the onset of border strife or war. Corey, pp. 36 and 46-47, states that "it is an open question ... whether [Van Buren] or any of his advisers were acutely aware of the possible implications of the border troubles, or of the vast discontent there, or of the deep-lying sympathy of the border people for the Canadian rebel cause" in late 1837. However, the first of several strategic reconnaissances to evaluate American defenses and the vulnerabilities of Canada was actually put in
motion at the initiative of Secretary of War Poinsett before the crisis began, when Macomb ordered Scott and Wool to inspect the northern borders in October 1837 (Macomb to Scott, October 18, 1837, HQA:LS).

18 Worth was one of the most professionally qualified officers in the army at his or any other rank; see chapter 4 herein for a resume of his services. Brady had more than twenty-five years of continual service as a regimental commander in 1837 (twenty-two commanding the Second Infantry), but his first military service dated to a lieutenantcy in Anthony Wayne's Legion in 1792. He died an officer in 1851. Wool began his military career as a captain in 1812; he was brevetted for gallantry during the war and emerged as an inspector general in 1816, a post which he held until his promotion to brigadier general in 1841 after a tightly contested struggle with Worth. (Both were New Yorkers, Wool a politically active Democrat and Worth a Whig, but Wool was the senior in rank, responsibility, and date of commission. Nevertheless it was Worth who was made theater commander in Florida, perhaps because Wool wanted to avoid a difficult assignment which had already frustrated many of the army's senior officers.) He commanded a division under Taylor and was brevetted to major general for gallantry at Buena Vista, but did not participate in the drive on Mexico City. Wool remained in the army until forced to retire in 1863; he died in 1869. See Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," passim.

19 Scott to Worth, December 12, 1837, as cited in Elliott, Winfield Scott, p. 336, n. 14; Worth to Scott, January 11, 1838, Scott Papers, LC.

20 Clarke's toast quoted in "Tribute of Respect," article reprinted from the Bangor Republican in ANC 7 (October 4, 1838): 214; Anderson to Kemble, January 12, 1839, Anderson Papers, LC; Bourne, p. 97; Worth to Secretary of War Poinsett, February 12, 1838. Stuart, United States Expansionism and British North America, and Gordon Stewart, The American Response to Canada since 1776 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), pp. 42-44, suggest the confusion of American attitudes and responses to the Patriot rebellions, which were commonly based on the American experiences of political revolution and independence rather than an understanding or acceptance of distinct Canadian perspectives. See Allan Greer, The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada (Toronto: Univewrsity of Toronto Press, 1993), and Joseph Schull, Rebellion: The Rising in French Canada, 1837 (Toronto: Macmillian, 1971) or discussions of the French Canadian rebels. I have not found any other comments about the French Canadians or the possibility of expansion into Canada in officers' correspondence of this period. Stuart, United States Expansionism and
British North America, pp. 140-41, observes that "the French seemed unlikely recruits for republicanism" to anti-Catholic Anglo-Americans. (See my discussion of officers' reactions to Mexicans in chapter 15 for an analysis of their views on Catholicism, which depended largely on class rather than religious factors.) See also Sydney F. Wise and Robert C. Brown, Canada Views the United States: Nineteenth Century Political Attitudes (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962).


22 "Disorganizers": Brady to Adjutant General Jones, February 26, 1838, and Anderson to Kemble, January 12, 1839, Anderson Papers, LC; "agitators": Worth to Scott, February 13, 1838 and March 21, 1839; "adventurers": Worth to Jones, February 23, 1838, Worth to Poinsett, March 3, 1838, (in Stacey, p. 408) ("miserable"), and Lt. Col. (deputy quartermaster general) Henry Whiting to Robert Anderson, March 14, 1840, Anderson Papers, LC ("unprincipled").

23 Brady to Jones, June 8, 1838, (see also Brady to Scott, December 8, 1838, and Worth to Colonel John Wool, February 14, 1838, regarding "disturbance of the peace"); Brady to Scott, January 14, 1838; Worth to Lt. Col. Newman Clarke, November 1, 1838.

24 Worth to Scott, February 9, 1839, and Poinsett, February 12, 1838; Brady to Jones, June 27 and June 8, 1838; Heiskell to Assistant Surgeon Benjamin King, January 18, 1838, Benjamin King Papers, LC. Robert Anderson also wrote of "the patriot fever" (Anderson to Kemble, January 12, 1839, Anderson Papers, LC).

25 Brady to Scott, February 2 and 15, January 14 (see also Larmed to Robert Anderson, April 23, 1839, Anderson Papers, LC), and March 14, 1838; Worth to Poinsett, November 15, 1838 (in accusing U.S. Customs Collector Stillwell as "one of the great offenders"), and the British Officer Commanding at Kingston, November 23, 1838 (transmitting a petition from "gentlemen of the highest intelligence and respectability among our citizens" for clemency for some of the filibusters taken prisoner at the battle of Windmill Point).
Whiting to Robert Anderson, March 14, 1840, and Anderson to Kemble, January 12, 1839, both in the Anderson Papers, LC; Worth to Abraham Eustis, November 20, 1838.

Worth to Scott, February 20, 1838, and Gov. William Marcy, March 5, 1838; Heiskell to Assistant Surgeon King, January 18, 26, and 31, 1838, King Papers, LC.

Corey, The Crisis of 1830-1842, p. 70, suggests that "economic conditions" during the Panic of 1837 and its aftermath "give us the key to the discontent" among American borderers, and he notes that of the 140 filibusters taken prisoner by the British near Windmill Point in November 1838 whose names are listed, "practically every man was a laborer, dependent for the most part upon seasonal employment" (p. 78). Sixty-five actually described themselves as "laborers," and only one as a "gentleman." Interestingly, the wages they were offered by the Patriot leaders were eight dollars a month, virtually the same as those of a private in the U.S. Army at the time. Robert May has made some intriguing connections between these wage rates and other forms of compensation in his "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny" (pp. 874 and 880) which argues that filibustering held the same emotional attractions that service in the army sometimes did, with greater material opportunities that often drew deserters and discharged soldiers. (See also Chaffin, "Sons of Washington," p. 82.) John J. Duffy and H. Nicholas Muller stress the social and psychological dimensions of the Patriot movement in An Anxious Democracy: Aspects of the 1830s (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1982), which observes that Vermont professionals almost uniformly opposed the movement from fear of disorder, while many businessmen supported it, even against their own financial interests (p. 50). David A. Gerber, The Making of American Pluralism: Buffalo, New York, 1825-1860 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), provides an excellent history of Buffalo during this period but does not discuss the border crises.

Scott to Worth, February 12, 1838, Scott Papers, LC; Worth to Capt. (assistant commissary of subsistence) Giles Porter, February 17, 1839.

Worth to Scott, December 12, 1838, and to Capt. Williams Sandom of the Royal Navy, November 1, 1838.

Corey, The Crisis of 1830-1842, p. 98; Morris Miller to Mrs. Maria Miller, October 30, 1838, in the Morris Smith Miller Papers, USMA; Brady to Adjutant General Roger Jones, November 22, 1838; Scott to Poinsett, February
3, 1838, as cited in Elliott, Winfield Scott, p. 339. Corey, pp. 75-76, suggests that estimates of 40-50,000 are more accurate than that of 200,000. I would doubt the lower numbers as well, following the military historian's accustomed scepticism about reported troop strengths.

32 Corey, The Crisis of 1830-1842, p. 107; Brady to Scott, December 25, 1839; Arthur to Lt. Gen. John Colborne (commander and governor-in-chief of Canada), April 5, 1838, J.F. Love, February 14, 1839, and Ambassador Henry S. Fox, confidential, November 15, 1838, quoted in Bourne, p. 80. See Stevens, Border Diplomacy, pp. 58 and 138-40, and Scott to Poinsett, January 12, 1839, as cited in Stacey, pp. 412-14, for examples of retaliatory actions by the Canadians and British. See Worth to Scott, February 13, 1838, A.W. Rogers (recently acting U.S. District Attorney), February 14, 1838 (marked "confidential"), and Lt. Col. Benjamin K. Pierce, March 20, 1839, for his fears that the filibuster raids were intended to and would succeed in precipitating a conflict. (See also Major Benjamin F. Larned, paymaster and volunteer aide-de-camp, to Robert Anderson, April 23, 1839, Anderson Papers, LC.) Worth's letters to J.D. Vaux (a civilian, position unknown) March 3, Scott, December 12, Eustis (undated, between December 12 and 19, 1838), and John Hine, December 27, all from 1838, note his deployments to prevent retaliation or pursuit by British forces. A letter to the Adjutant General (January 8, 1839) notes his dispositions to meet the threat of Canadian irregulars, and one sent to Lt. Horace B. Sawyer, U.S. Navy, by Worth's AAAG (February 19, 1839) implies that any retaliation would come from them rather than regular "Troops."


34 See Corey, The Crisis of 1830-1842, p. 49 (n. 17) for Poinsett's instructions to Scott, which were relayed to the British.

35 Worth to Eustis, December 1838.

36 Worth to Capt. Giles Porter, February 17, 1839; James Schureman to Mary Schureman, December 15, 1841, in the James Wall Schureman Papers, LC.


38 Brady to Scott, January 14, Adjutant General Jones, February 10, June 27 and 29, and November 22, and Poinsett, November 22 and 23, all in 1838.
39 Coakley, *The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders*, p. 117; Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," pp. 36-37; Henry Heiskell to Benjamin King, January 26, 1838, Benjamin King Papers, LC; Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic*, p. 318. See May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny" for the opposite side of the coin, in which filibusters drew on army soldiers discharged after the Mexican War or in California during the 1850s.

40 Worth to Scott, February 15, Jones, February 9, Brady, February 9, and Lt. Homans, U.S. Navy, February 26, all in 1838; from AAAG Lt. James H. Prentiss, to Lt. Horace Sawyer, USN, February 19, 1839, in Worth letterbooks, LC (as are all communications from Worth's AAAG's cited herein).

41 Worth to Capt. William Montgomery, November 4, 1838, Capt. Joseph Bonnell, December 30, 1838, Jones, March 21, 1839, and Denny, April 9, 1839; Eustis to Anderson, January 21, 1840, Anderson Papers, LC.

42 Worth to Scott, February 25, 1838 (first and last quotations), Eustis, November 14 and 16, 1838, and Scott, April 10, 1839; Scott's circular dated April 15, 1839, in the Robert Anderson Papers, LC. See also Worth to Wool, February 14, Scott, March 5, and John Hine, December 27, 1838. On January 23, 1839 Prentiss transmitted Worth's instructions to communicate with the British to Lt. Col. Benjamin Pierce, noting an earlier order from Scott. For other examples of Worth's cooperation with the British military authorities, see his letters to Scott, February 25 and March 5, a British colonel Cameron, March 5, Capt. Charles Thomas, March 9, and Lt. Col. Newman Clarke, November 1, all in 1838.

43 Lt. H. (probably either Francis or George) Taylor, Adjutant, to a Capt. Tuthill of the New York volunteers, March 4, 1838, Worth letterbooks, LC; Worth to British Colonel Cameron, March 5, 1838, and Capt. Joseph Bonnell, December 30, 1838; AAAG to Montgomery, February 21, 1839.

44 Worth to a British Lt. Col. Taylor, March 19, 1839; British Major Richard P. Webb to Young, June 14 and May 1, 1838, J.B. Van Schaick to Young, September 18, 1837, and Macdonald to Young, November 24, 1838, in the Nathaniel Young Papers, LC.

45 Worth to Eustis, November 14 and 16, British Colonel Young, November 15, and Eustis, November 20, all in 1838.
Worth to British Officer Commanding at Kingston, November 23, 1838, and to Sandom, November 22, 1838.

Worth to McWhorter, November 23, 1838; Stevens, *Border Diplomacy*, p. 40. Worth's letter to McWhorter was published in *ANC* 8 (January 3, 1839): 6, along with the editorial from the Kingston *Chronicle* in his favor.


Worth to Young, February 2, and Porter, February 4, 1839. British and American soldiers both used the proximity of the international border as an easy escape route: in one year one out of three British enlisted men in Canada deserted (Steinhauer, "Sogers," p. 218). British deserters often have entered the American army, which presumably says something about its reputation for better living conditions and less rigid discipline, whatever the reality. Army General Order 38 of September 18, 1838 directed recruiters to avoid British deserters and ordered commanding officers to prevent their soldiers from encouraging defections (Graham, "Enlisted Life on the Western Frontier," p. 35).

Palmerston to Landsdowne, April 25, 1840, quoted in Bourne, p. 85. See pp. 88-89 and 115 therein regarding British naval preparations on the Lakes.

Corey, *The Crisis of 1830-1842*, p. 115; Bourne, pp. 82, 85, and 88-89 (Palmerston to Lord Landsdowne, April 25, 1840, on p. 85).

Wool's toast reported in "Respect to Gen. Wool," article reprinted from the Burlington *Free Press* in *ANC* 6, (March 1, 1838): 131; Brady to Scott, March 14, 1838; Churchill diary entry, July 26, 1838, in Journal 2, Sylvester Churchill Papers, LC; Worth to Scott, February 26, 1838, Poinsett, March 3, 1838 (in Stacey, p. 408), Eustis, November 10, 1838, Scott, March 10, 1839, and "A. Bacon and other Gentlemen of Ogdensburg," November 17, 1838.

Scott to Poinsett, January 12, 1839, and Worth to Poinsett (private), December 25, 1838, in Stacey, pp. 411 and 409.

Worth to Scott, February 19, Nathaniel Benton, February 17, Capt. William Montgomery, November 4, Scott, February 17, all in 1838.

Scott to Poinsett, January 12, 1839, in Stacey, p. 411. Brady also denounced the filibusters' "wicked threats" (Brady to Jones, February 22, 1839). See Corey,
The Crisis of 1830-1842, ch. 6. and Stuart, United States Expansionism and British North America, p. 143.

56 Worth to Capt. Giles Porter, February 17, 1839, Marcy, November 3, 1838, and A.W. Rogers, February 14, 1838. "Duty faithfully performed" are the words of historian Tommy R. Young, related to the author in personal conversation.

57 Corey, The Crisis of 1830-1842, p. 49 (n. 17); Worth to Rogers, "Confidential," February 14 (see also Worth to Scott, February 19), and Scott, February 17 and 26, all in 1838.

58 Worth to Benton, February 17, Garrow, February 17, and Poinsett, November 15 and December 25, all in 1838; Scott to Poinsett, December 16, 1838, in Stacey, p. 409; Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," p. 160. Other examples of Worth's criticism of civil officials may be found in his letters to Scott, February 17, 1838, concerning the postmaster at Erie; the Adjutant General of New York, January 7, 1839, concerning a state militia colonel; U.S. Customs Collector George McWhorter, January 7, 1839, concerning that officer's own collusion with the Patriots in permitting them to retake a cannon that Worth had seized; and to Capt. Porter, January 24, 1839, from Worth's AAAG, concerning Deputy U.S. Customs Collector Whitmore. Brady was more general in his comments; see his letters to Scott, March 14, 1838, and Jones, November 22 and December 6, 1838.


60 Duncan (unaddressed), January 2, 1839, official letterbook, James Duncan Papers, USMA.


Worth to Jones, February 8, 1838, and Scott, April 10 and 17, 1839. Wool was also concerned with the militia's expense; see Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," p. 145.

Worth to a Brig. Gen. King (the Adjutant General of New York), January 30, 1839 (asking that the volunteers be permitted to retain their arms as the municipal guard of Ogdensburg); Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," pp. 150-55; Brady to Scott, January 6 and February 15, 1838, and Poinsett, November 23, 1838; Worth to Gov. William Marcy, March 5, 1838, and to Scott, February 15, 1838.

Worth, Order No. 12, March 3, 1838, Nathaniel Young Papers, LC.

Worth to Capt. William Montgomery, November 4, 1838, and Nathaniel Benton, November 14, 1838 (concerning a Deputy Marshal Malcolm).

Worth to Bishop Perkins, February 21, Lt. Col. Benjamin Pierce, April 10 and March 20, and George McWhorter, January 7, all in 1839.

Worth to Poinsett, March 8, 1839, Capt. Montgomery, November 4, 1838, Bonnell, December 30, 1838, Scott, February 14, 1839, and Messrs. Bacon, Hill, and Sherman (the Trustees of Ogdensburg), March 9, 1839. His letter to Scott of March 10, 1839 repeated his concern for the discipline of the troops. Letters to Lt. Col. Pierce (March 20 and 21, 1839) order the troop withdrawals, though the latter gave Pierce discretion in deciding to do so.

Worth to Jones, February 23, 1838 (see also Worth to Scott, February 20, and to Gov. Marcy, March 5, 1838), Pierce, March 21, 1839, and Scott, March 21 and April 10, 1839. Worth also expressed this belief in a letter to Governor Jenison of Vermont (April 17, 1839). The army's relations with local civilians had improved by 1841, albeit under a less rigid commander. At a banquet held in his honor, Colonel James Bankhead of the Second Artillery praised "the kind and friendly feelings that had subsisted between the citizens of Buffalo and the officers of the regiment under his command." See "Dinner to Col. J. Bankhead, U.S.A.," correspondence and article reprinted from the Buffalo Journal in ANC 12 September 2, 1841): 273. Worth displayed a similar impatience in Florida, where he ordered that civilians "who have made themselves obnoxious to the military" (for reasons unstated) be removed from the military reservation at Ft. Brooke. See James M. Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles: Violence and Disorder Among Soldiers and Settlers in the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842," Florida Historical Quarterly 70 (July

Worth to John Hine, December 27, 1838, and Messrs. Bacon, Hill, and Sherman (the Trustees of Ogdensburg), March 9, 1839; Brady to Jones, June 8, 1838.

III. Military Planning and Preparation during the Maine Boundary Crises and Beyond, 1837-1846

Macomb to Scott, October 18, 1837, HQA:LS; Wool to John J. Abert (colonel and chief, topographical engineers), October 30, 1838, NASP:MA 2: 36-38 (quotations from 37). See Varg. New England and Foreign Relations, ch. 8, for the reactions of civilian borderers to this crisis.

Wool to Abert, October 30, 1838, NASP:MA 2: 36-38 (quotations from 37).

Graham to Wool, November 16, 1838, NASP:MA 2: 38-48 (quotations at 45 and 47). Graham also noted the ethnic composition of settlers on the northwestern border (Irish and French), though he left any implications for their wartime allegiances unstated (p. 44). Excerpts from Graham's report were published in ANC 8 (February 28, 1839): 132-35. Graham was frequently called upon to provide technical assistance in resolving boundary disputes: he also surveyed the Texan-American boundary in 1839-40, the Mexican-American one in 1851, and a section of the Mason-Dixon Line in 1850.

Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," pp. 163-65 (quotation at 165). Several years later British officials sought similar construction at Woodstock opposite Houlton in order to counter a potential American advance. See Bourne, p. 88.

Totten to Poinsett, December 27, 1838, Totten Papers, USMA; Totten and Thayer to Sen. Thomas Hart Benton and Rep. J.J. McKay, January 4, 1839, NASP:MA 2: 49; Totten and Thayer to Poinsett, February 20, 1839, Thayer Papers, USMA; Totten to Poinsett, March 21, 1839, Letters and Reports of the Chief of Engineers.

See SW:LR-Confidential for these reports. Macomb's of March 20, which is characteristic in its concentration on force levels and organization rather than prospective operations or strategy, is also available in HQA:LS and NASP:MA 2: 57-59.
Bourne, pp. 100-102; Poinsett's report of May 12, 1840 in House Doc. 206, 26th Cong., 1st sess. The British reacted more aggressively to the McLeod crisis of 1841 than they had to the Patriot incursions several years before. Poinsett's proposals for the concentration and training of the American militia led the British commander-in-chief in Canada to press for immediate spending on fortifications at Montreal and along the Richelieu River invasion route in 1840, but the British Ordnance Board (the closest counterpart of the American Board of Fortifications) responded that its hands were full and that works closer to the border would be preferable to ones in the immediate vicinity of the points to be defended. By September 1841 the prime minister felt forced to envision offensive operations against the American coast, and an officer was quickly sent to spy out the American defenses. He reported that they were generally unready for war (those at Boston had no guns mounted for action, and at Peel's suggestion powerful naval forces were concentrated at Gibraltar and Plymouth for possible action against the coastline of the United States. British officials also repeated the debate over forward or defensive policies for the Canadian frontier that they had engaged in between 1815 and 1825. Some sought naval supremacy on the lakes and hoped to use a well-organized militia to seize the Michigan territory, while others realized that these goals were fiscally if not operationally impossible to achieve and devoted their attention to the defense of vital points like Quebec, Montreal, and Kingston through permanent fortifications. The more realistically minded advocates of this course wanted to protect the lines of communication between these points with barracks, blockhouses, and mobile militia forces rather than expensive permanent works which would never be built. Their attention to economy won the debate just as it had during the 1820s, and British strategy along the land frontier remained fundamentally defensive. See the reports of Lt. H.D. Fanshawe to the Admiralty, October 21, November 30, and December 14, 1841; Peel to Stanley, September 20, 1841; Colonel George Arthur (lieutenant governor of Upper Canada), "Memorandum upon the Defence of Canada" (circa September 1841); and General George Murray (Master-General of Ordnance) to Edward Stanley (colonial secretary), January 8 and 10, 1842, all cited in Bourne, pp. 95 and 113-15.

Received; Williams to Abert, March 18, 1842, Records of the Topographical Bureau, 1818-1867, RG77, NA.


80 Bourne, pp. 105-109 (Abert to Spencer, August 15, 1842, Jesup to Spencer, August 11, 1842, and Palmerston to John Russell [leader of the opposition in Parliament], September 24, 1842, cited on pp. 106 and 108); Scott, July 13, 1842, SW:LR-Unreg.

81 Totten to Secretary of War John C. Spencer, August 20, 1842, to Delafield, March 31, 1843, to Capt. William D. Fraser and Lt. John L. Mason, November 11, 1845, and to Knowlton, January 10, 1849, Letters and Reports of Totten; Jesup to Butler, April 8, 1842, House Doc. 188, 27th Cong., 2nd sess.; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 246; Mahan to Delafield, July 6, 1843, Delafield to Totten, June 25, 1844, and Totten to Delafield, June 26, 1844, Mahan Papers, USMA.


IV. Conclusions: Military Attitudes toward Britain and the Limits of American Military Expansionism

83 Eustis to Anderson, March 14, 1840, Anderson Papers, LC.

84 Philip Kearny to Anderson, January 10, 1841, Anderson Papers, LC; Stephen Kearny to a nephew (possibly Philip) in February 1842, quoted in Clarke, Stephen Watts Kearny, pp. 82-83.

85 Scott to Poinsett, January 12, 1839, and Fox as worded in Poinsett's letter to Scott, December 15, 1838, both in Stacey, p. 411. See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 301-304, concerning officers' hostility to the Mormons and their autonomous government in Utah. Philip Kearny served as Macomb's aide-de-camp in November 1840, and Scott's between December 1841 and April 1844. It is unclear when Scott made the remarks he referred to
in his letter to Poinsett; the general spoke of doing so "last winter," which may have meant as far back as December 1837. Several senior officers noted Scott's rise to political prominence with interest. Lt. Col. Henry Whiting observed that there was a "Scott meeting" in Detroit (Whiting to Anderson, March 14, 1840, Anderson Papers, LC), and Eustis asked Anderson (then acting as Scott's aide) to "present me to him cordially, with the assurance that I am quite as much his friend now as I ever can be when he is President; as please God, he shall be one of these days" (Eustis to Anderson, January 21, 1840, Anderson Papers, LC).

86 Anderson to Kemble, January 12, 1839, Anderson Papers, LC. See Richard P. McCormick, "The Jacksonian Strategy," JER 10 (Spring 1990): 1-17, for a proposed synthesis of Jacksonian-era politics that stresses the parties' avoidance of sectional controversy as a means of preserving the Union.

87 Scott to Poinsett, January 12, 1839, in Stacey, p. 411.

Chapter XIV

Civil-Military Tensions and State Formation in Western Expansion and the Second Seminole War

The crises of the late 30s and early 40s notwithstanding, the army's principal operational concern along the nation's landward frontiers lay with the western zone of contact with the Amerindians being displaced by white settlement. Although the officer corps preferred preparing for European opponents whose defeat would bring public acclaim, its actual antagonists were usually southern and western Indians resisting the westward movement of whites and the government's policy of forcible removal. This process began long before the official proclamation of this policy in 1832, which was prefaced by a decade of tension and violence between white squatters and the Five Civilized Tribes of the Southeast, while in the Northwest the Winnebago and Black Hawk Wars of 1827 and 1832 were only the most overtly coercive stages in a de facto policy of removal that forced Amerindians from the rich Illinois prairies ever deeper into Wisconsin and Iowa in order to make room for Anglo-American farmers. Although the Black Hawk War gave the army its only significant experience of combat between 1818 and 1835, the endemic potential for hostilities due to tension between whites and Indians forced the frontier army to remain operationally ready to a degree unknown in the east, and both the Winnebago and the Black Hawk conflicts shared a good deal in common with many more routine expeditions and shows of force intended to intimidate the Indians. As these parallels suggest, the intensity of military activities in the west varied widely, though organized bloodshed was remarkably and perhaps surprisingly rare. Indeed, the largest single portion of the army's energies were spent enforcing
the non-intercourse laws passed in the immediate aftermath of the War of 1812 to restrain contact and friction between Anglos and Indians by regulating and restricting trade, especially that in whiskey, while squatter removal was a related responsibility that occupied substantial military forces in the southeast (and to a lesser extent the northwest) during the 1820s. Finally, army officers were frequently called upon to keep peace among different Indian groups who recognized and tried to draw support from the hegemonic military and economic power of the United States in their intra- and inter-ethnic squabbles, and this task was exacerbated when the removal policy forced the concentration of large and diverse Indian populations in the resource-poor terrain of present-day Oklahoma.\(^1\)

This chapter begins with a brief narrative of the army's westward movement during the four decades between the end of the War of 1812 and the beginning of that with Mexico. Distance and the low ratio of forces to space were the primary material determinants of American strategic policy in the west as well as the other frontiers, and the principal issue in western defense strategy was the degree of mobility to be sought by American forces. Mobile forces based at temporary posts played the dominant role in western frontier defense because large masonry works were an unnecessary expense against the cannon-less Indians, while no position was likely to remain permanent on the moving frontier. Thus when generals wrote about "a chain of forts" like the one Andrew Jackson recommended between Mobile and the Georgia border in 1815, they meant a temporary screen to ensure the secure advance of white settlement via the separation of Anglo and Indian.\(^2\) The rebirth of American cavalry has already been examined, so my principal intent in examining this question is to assess the outlines of policy and operations and the intellectual contributions officers made to their
formulation and execution. Doing so occupies the first section of the chapter, in which I examine American military expansion into the Upper Missouri Valley and the edges of the Great Plains in the late 1810s and early 1820s, a thrust that ultimately had little effect and was withdrawn in the mid-1820s, and the second, which explores the army's turn to the central and southwestern plains in the late 1820s and early '30s and the planning done during the mid- and late 1830s in reaction to the concentration of Indians removed from the southeast.

Attitudes towards white frontiersmen and Indians and the constant civil-military conflicts engendered during the implementation of the removal policy are the focus of the chapter's third and fourth sections, particularly those concerning Florida, where the officer corps' full range of ambivalent attitudes towards Indians and frontiersmen came to a head in a remarkable degree of frustration, tension, and disdain for the white citizens it was supposed to serve. The officer corps devoted little attention to the actual practice of warfare with Indians prior to the Second Seminole War (and little outside the debates in the *Army and Navy Chronicle* even then), but the combination of this Eurocentric inattention with the corps' nonpartisan (i.e., despite the reluctance of Whigs in and out of the corps) execution of the removal policy and the hostility between officers and local civilians suggests the officer corps' mental orientation toward and loyalty to the nation-state which paid and employed it and its preference for the "cleaner" duties of international warfare, regardless of Indians, settlers, or party pressures in favor of one or the other.

As such, occupational security, and that of individual careers within the army organization, clearly becomes evident as a more powerful motivating force in the officer corps' worldview than the desire for territorial
expansionism, internal and external, which had been so pervasive among the commanders in Jackson's Division of the South in the 1810s. Indeed, service along the western frontier engendered as much disdain for white settlers as for the Indians, resentment that turned to outright disgust and near alienation as the army became bogged down executing the removal policy in Florida. The distaste officers felt for this dangerous yet thankless work multiplied their distrust for expansion, especially as social and cultural distinctions grew between West Pointers socialized in the allied values of nationalism and gentility (especially in the form of disinterested service) and rough-hewn local settlers pursuing material self-interest at the expense of social hierarchy and national sovereignty. Indeed, by the late 1830s many officers saw themselves as the nation's policemen, preserving law and order among unruly whites rather than facilitating the westward movement.

Nevertheless, the resignations by officers who entered the burgeoning field of civil engineering during the boom of the mid-1830s combined with the difficult experiences of the Seminole War and the economic depression of the late 1830s and early 1840s to temper the loyalties of the officer corps--over a hundred and fifty resignations between 1835 and 1837 left behind a group that was willing to give political accountability in return for secure careers regardless of the nature of the service, and although some officers resigned when sent to Texas, their numbers were far fewer than a decade earlier.
Distribution of Regular Army Troops, 1839

From Francis Paul Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, p. 335.

PEACEKEEPING AND CONQUEST: ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY ALONG THE BORDERS AND FRONTIERS, 1839
From Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic* (frontispiece).

**Key:** I have numbered the posts erected after 1815 according to the stage of westward expansion in which they were established, per pp. 1142-46 herein. One inch equals approximately one hundred miles.
I. Military Expansion Westward: Chronology and Initial Operations

Prompted largely by the initiative of the secretaries of war, the army advanced its posts westward in four identifiable stages between 1815 and 1846, each roughly corresponding with a decade of that era. The first such phase, occurring in the years immediately after the War of 1812, focused on securing the upper Mississippi and combatting British influence over the Indians, a project given immediate urgency by a series of raids against the frontier during the spring and summer of 1815. The new installations were Forts Edwards (replacing Fort Madison, abandoned in 1813, at the juncture of the Des Moines and the Mississippi), Armstrong (at Rock Island near modern Davenport, which was named after Henry Atkinson's successor as colonel of the 6th Infantry), and Crawford (at the juncture of the Wisconsin and the Mississippi), all established in 1816, along with Fort Howard at Green Bay. Major Stephen H. Long of the Topographical Engineers then reconnoitered the Wisconsin region in 1817 to assist the War Department's planning.

The following year Jacob Brown recommended the retention of posts at Detroit, Chicago, Green Bay, and the outlet of Lake Superior, which would have been sufficient to secure principal ports and chokepoints on the Lakes against the British, but the War Department demanded a more extensive network of inland posts between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi to protect and enlarge American trade with the Indians while excluding British political influence and economic competition. Brown was forced to undertake a tour of inspection in 1819 to investigate, and Fort Snelling (so named in 1825, after the colonel of the 5th Infantry Regiment) added the most advanced post to the northwestern chain at the juncture of the Minnesota (then known as the
St. Peter's) and Mississippi rivers near present-day Minneapolis that year. (Budgetary constraints precluded the establishment of Secretary Calhoun's other proposed posts at the heads of the St. Croix and Minnesota rivers.) These movements successfully intimidated the prairie and woodland Indians, and by the end of 1818 all the tribes in the Old Northwest had signed peace treaties with the United States. Posts in the Wabash and Ohio river valleys to the rear of the new line, like Forts Wayne, Harrison, and Knox in Indiana and Clark and Massac in Illinois, were abandoned once the Upper Mississippi region was secured.³

The next major thrust of American western expansion was intended to achieve similar objectives (influence over the Indians and exclusion of the British, for both military and commercial purposes) in the Northern Great Plains region through the establishment of a strong military presence in the Upper Missouri Valley. A multi-year series of expeditions up the Missouri began in 1818, and the following year a major post (later named Fort Atkinson after the expedition's commander) was built at Council Bluffs on the junction of the Missouri and the Platte rivers (near present-day Omaha), replacing the intermittently occupied Fort Osage (east of present-day Kansas City). A similar process also occurred in the Old Southwest during the immediate postwar period, where Forts Stoddert (near Mobile at the fork of the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers) and Hampton (west of Huntsville on the Tennessee bend) in Alabama were abandoned in 1814 and 1817 along with Hiwassee Garrison in southeast Tennessee and Fort Hawkins in central Georgia. They were replaced by more advanced posts at Fort Mitchell on the Chattahoochee (in the heart of Creek country) in 1813 and Fort Scott on the Appalachicola River in 1816. (Scott was in turn abandoned in 1821 after the cession of Florida, while Mitchell was abandoned after the War of 1812 but
reoccupied from 1828 until the final removal of the Creeks began in 1837.)  
Farther to the southwest the army began moving up the Arkansas River to 
the edge of the Southern Plains in 1817 with the establishment of Fort Smith 
on the western border of the Arkansas Territory.

In the second major chronological phase of expansion Forts Jesup, 
Towson, and Gibson (named after the quartermaster, paymaster, and 
commissary generals, and initially designated cantonments, or temporary 
camps) were built along the southwestern frontier in the early to mid-1820s to 
watch the southeastern Indians who were forced to emigrate west of the 
Arkansas Territory under the terms of treaties negotiated in the 1810s. Jesup 
replaced Natchitoches in western Louisiana in 1822; Towson brought the 
army up the Red River into the future Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in 1824; 
and Gibson was established northwest of Smith on the Arkansas River near 
modern-day Tulsa the same year. A similar wave of building in the central 
region of the frontier was intended to mass the army's forces for use as 
theater reserves, which led to withdrawals from several forward positions 
occupied during the advance of the preceding decade. The expected troop 
concentration near the juncture of the Missouri and Mississippi (which took 
form as Jefferson Barracks in 1826) quickly led to the closure of Fort Edwards 
at that of the Mississippi and Des Moines (opposite present-day Keokuk) in 
1824. Initially the army's leaders hoped to retain Fort Atkinson on the upper 
Missouri, but its relative inefficacy and the need for a more central location 
from which to move against the growing threat of intertribal conflicts in the 
Oklahoma territory or by river against the Winnebagoes on the Illinois 
prairie led to the post's abandonment in 1827. Atkinson's 6th Infantry was 
then withdrawn southward down the Missouri to the new Fort Leavenworth 
(named for Colonel and brevet brigadier general Henry Leavenworth of the
3rd Infantry), while Jefferson Barracks replaced Fort Belle Fontaine near St. Louis.⁴

Farther to the north, Fort Brady (named for the colonel of the 2nd Infantry) was built at the juncture of Lakes Huron and Superior (Sault Ste. Marie) in 1822 to close that potential avenue for British aid to the Indians in Michigan Territory. Five years later the so-called Winnebago War caused the army to establish a post named after that tribe between Forts Crawford (which like Fort Dearborn at Chicago had to be remanned after its garrison had been prematurely sent forward to Snelling before the conflict) and Howard on the Wisconsin River north of present-day Madison. By November 1828 General Macomb felt confident in asserting that "there is a complete cordon from Green Bay to the Mississippi," which would contain the Winnebagoes and like-minded tribes such as the Sac and Fox. The forts established in these first two phases of the army's westward expansion during the 1810s and 20s then formed the basis of the line of western defense for the rest of the period before the Mexican War.⁵

Western military deployments naturally continued to change according to diplomatic, strategic, and operational circumstances, however. Several temporary posts were established during the third phase of military expansion in the 1830s and 1840s as the dragoon regiments created during the former decade moved out to cover more territory on the edges of the Great Plains. Fort Des Moines was built near the former site of Fort Edwards in 1834 in reaction to the Black Hawk War fought nearby; it was closed three years later during the redeployments necessitated by the Creek and Seminole Wars. Fort Coffee, established just west of Fort Smith in 1834, never became more than a temporary dragoon post to enforce the intercourse laws and aid in the peaceful resettlement of emigrated southeastern Indians amidst tribes native
to the area. Its garrison was shifted to the new Fort Wayne (sixty miles northeast of Gibson on the Arkansas state line) in 1838 to restrain conflict between rival Cherokee factions and to counter the rumored formation of a pan-Indian confederation.

The construction of temporary dragoon posts continued in the fourth phase of military expansion during the 1840s. Fort Wayne lasted until 1842, when Cherokee complaints about its presence (which were supported by Zachary Taylor of the 1st Infantry and Lieutenant Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock of the 3rd, whom the War Department had sent to tour the Indian territory to investigate frauds against the Indians) caused the removal of its garrison to the new Fort Scott, half way between Wayne and Leavenworth along the Missouri line. (Scott was closed in 1853 but reoccupied after the Civil War.) That year Fort Washita was built on the Red River about a hundred miles west of Towson to protect the Chickasaw from Anglo-Texans and other Indians, and Fort Croghan was erected near the site of old Fort Atkinson at Council Bluffs. Croghan lasted only a year before the War Department decided to shorten the western defense perimeter by shifting its garrison to a new Fort Des Moines on the site of the modern city of that name. Meanwhile, a new Fort Atkinson had been built to watch the Winnebagoes resettled on the Iowa prairie west of Fort Crawford in 1840. To the north, Fort Wilkins was built on Lake Superior four years later to protect the mines and ore trade of the Upper Northwest amidst tensions with Britain, but most of the northern posts were abandoned as the frontier moved out onto the Plains and the army redeployed against Mexico: Fort Des Moines in 1846, Atkinson in 1849, and the Wisconsin and Fox River line established in the 1810s and 20s between 1845 and 1856 (Winnebago in 1845, Crawford effectively in 1849, and Howard from 1841 to 1848 and a final time in 1852).
(Even Fort Brady, the key to the entrance of Lake Superior, was temporarily closed in 1857.) Of all the posts established in this fourth phase only Washita and Wilkins survived until the Civil War.  

Most senior commanders saw these posts as static points at best, useful principally as bases of operations to house and supply the troops, and if located in proximity to Indian encampment areas to impress them with the fixed presence of American power ready to punish transgressions against white settlers and American law. This fundamental strategic objective was more commonly sought through the use of mobile expeditionary forces, and Colonel (brevet brigadier general) Henry Atkinson, the commander of the 9th Military Department (the frontier north of Louisiana) from 1819 to 1821 and of the "Right Wing" (the northern half) of the Western Department after that, was the army's leading exponent of this idea during the 1810s and 20s. Atkinson appealed to a variety of reasons for his insistence, principally the need to demonstrate American power and protect American fur traders so that they could establish commercial relations with the Indians and woo them away from allegiance to the British, warning in 1820 that "if our traders do not make establishments among [the Indians] . . . they will be so far drawn away by British influence that it may be impossible to recall them." In doing so Atkinson demonstrated another dimension of the officer corps' recognition of the gradual, attritional, and substantially economic character of international conflict and its intimate links to political objectives.

Atkinson's fear of British influence over the northwestern Indians was shared by most senior commanders and civilian decision-makers, who recognized it as a method of cold war and containment waged against the United States ever since 1783. Depredations encouraged by the British had
been a principal cause of the War of 1812 in the northwest, and the British had unsuccessfully demanded the creation of an Indian buffer state in the Northwest during the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Ghent. American policy-makers had no intention of allowing this situation to be repeated after the war. "This intercourse," Secretary of War Calhoun warned in 1819, "is the great source of danger to our peace; and until [it] is stopped our frontiers cannot be safe." Almost simultaneously, Inspector General Arthur P. Hayne warned that there were "not less than 15,000 "well armed and mounted" Amerindian warriors in the Upper Missouri region, "completely under the control of the British Companies," who were "incessantly Cabaling to induce" them to oppose American settlement.8

Hayne considered the British "our implacable enemies," and he feared that "if a respectable & well appointed force is not kept in that country [the Indians] will be induced to become hostile." Early the following year Andrew Jackson advised Atkinson to arrest any "foreign"--meaning non-American--citizens found among the Indians on territory claimed by the United States, but he cautioned the colonel to follow the instructions sent from Washington in order to avoid the sort of controversy caused by his own actions in Florida. (In May 1819 Jackson had observed to Atkinson that "the British Traders . . . ought in my opinion to be hung where ever they are found among the Indian Tribes within our Territory[. A] few examples would be sufficient . . . but the overly cautious policy of the Executive has directed that they only be arrested . . . This instead of put[t]ing down the[ir] influence . . . will have a different effect.") Secretary Calhoun and President Monroe were both advocates of American expansion in the northwest, and Calhoun intended that the dual movements up the Mississippi and Missouri would extend American power
so far north and west that British influence would be permanently excluded from American territory.  

Calhoun hoped to establish a line of outer posts at the head of the St. Croix River (near present-day Duluth), the mouth of the Minnesota River (which soon became Fort Snelling), the Mandan villages on the Missouri near present-day Bismarck, and the head of the Minnesota River between the Mississippi and Missouri (near modern-day Fargo) in order to create an interlocking system that would dominate "the most valuable fur trade in the world." Calhoun ordered the first movement in March 1818: 250 men to move to the mouth of the Yellowstone River, about 1200 miles beyond the most advanced post existing. The secretary expected "every opposition" from the British and directed that "no pains must be spared to counteract them."

Colonel Thomas Smith of the Rifle Regiment (Atkinson's predecessor as departmental commander) responded two months later by suggesting the immediate erection of a post at the Mandan villages to anticipate and forestall any British opposition, but in the interim Smith had been appointed the receiver of money for the public land office in Missouri, a lucrative post that led him to resign from the army that November, forcing a mere captain to take command of the army's principal field operation. Supply problems (doubtlessly exacerbated by Smith's divided attention and resignation) delayed the advance, and by the end of the year 1818 the first detachment had been forced to make its winter camp just past the Missouri's northward bend, about a hundred miles upriver from Fort Osage.

The following spring Jacob Brown directed the 5th Infantry Regiment to move from Detroit west to Forts Crawford, Armstrong, and the future Snelling, which was done without significant difficulty, while Major Stephen H. Long of the topographical engineers prepared for an extensive scientific
and exploratory trip over the plains west of the Missouri. Meanwhile Major General Jackson had selected Atkinson as the officer best qualified to lead the full-scale Missouri Expedition, but its story became one of logistical and ultimately diplomatic failure rather than the bold advance of American power into the wilderness that these officers sought. Calhoun sought an advance all the way to the Yellowstone that year, but transportation problems and delays in supplying the expedition prevented it from going past Council Bluffs, the first point intended as an intermediary post, where Fort Atkinson was built a thousand miles short of the expedition's objective. After the previous year's difficulties Quartermaster General Jesup had been sent to St. Louis to direct the expedition's logistical support, but the contracts for its food were held by the brother of Richard M. Johnson, the chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, and Calhoun felt it politically necessary to order Jesup to work with him despite constant cost overruns and failures to deliver necessary quantities of supplies on time.

Calhoun's visionary plan was defeated by the operational friction (the accumulating delays) caused by this greed and inefficiency. The troops got fed, but the supply controversy resulted in a congressional investigation and gave congressmen hostile to the administration and its expansionist plans the excuse they needed to cancel funding for the advance beyond Council Bluffs as part of a general retrenchment the following April. Fort Atkinson became an established post, while the proposed forts at the Mandan villages and the head of the St. Croix were never built. A House committee later recommended that the government go to court to recover its costs from the contractor, but by then the outcome was irrelevant to the failure of the expedition, and in the meantime the Indians harassed the unmounted expedition with relative impunity. The budget cuts also curtailed Stephen
Long's exploratory plans, forcing an abbreviated trip directly over the western plains along the Platte River to the foot of the Rockies and back via the Arkansas and Canadian rivers in 1820, which resulted in Long's famous map labelling the area the "Great American Desert" and discouraging settlement.\textsuperscript{11}

Failure did not discourage Atkinson and similarly minded officers, who continued to call for further expeditions in pursuit of the same objectives. In October 1819 Inspector General Arthur P. Hayne used his report on Atkinson's department to press for the establishment of posts at the Mandan villages and the mouth of the Yellowstone along with regular mounted expeditions from them in order to "promptly . . . punish any Depredations." Each of these bases would mount three such expeditions at any time, with one hundred men apiece. Anticipating Atkinson's later success with farming by the troops, Hayne suggested that hunting by the patrols combined with gardening by the hundred man base force would enable the posts to subsist without any need for long-range supply lines down the Missouri (which were easily interdicted by Indians or the weather), enabling the American forces to maintain "our respectable standing" and sustain the authority of the United States in the eyes of the Indians. In effect, Hayne was proposing base camps for cavalry patrolling and reconnaissances in force like those conducted from the central Plains posts during the 1830s and 40s, but on a somewhat smaller scale and at a more routine tempo akin to those conducted on the northern and southwestern plains during the 1870s and 80s. (The idea of routine patrolling from a central base also resurfaced in Secretary of War Cass's project for a western road network protected by small posts and in Zachary Taylor's "square plan" of operations during the Second Seminole War, albeit within smaller geographic areas better suited to the difficult terrain and the limited mobility of foot soldiers.) Strategically, Hayne
intended that the Mandan post would watch the Hudson Bay Company's establishments to the north, while the Yellowstone force would somehow communicate with Fort Smith and posts proposed on the Arkansas River in order to "detect any insidious attempt from that Quarter by the Spaniards."\textsuperscript{12}

In November 1820 Atkinson suggested a substitute for both major expeditions and routine patrol bases in the form of smaller expeditions to travel up the Missouri each year, remarking that "it will not cost more to subsist the troops . . . than it would if they were to remain in quarters" near St. Louis. Indeed, he felt that "such trips would become rather excursions of pleasure to the soldiery," much as Hayne expected that the troops would be "rendered expert, by attending solely to the duties of Soldiers," duties which clearly included their own logistical support. Aggressive commanders always faced the burden of demonstrating their fiscal economy to Congress, and Atkinson showed a keen appreciation of logistics and expense in all of his expeditionary plans, promising that "no additional expenses [will] be incurred" in the Yellowstone expedition. Indeed, not a single soldier died on the expedition, a remarkable rarity given the constant potential for accidents on the river, and the health and efficiency of Atkinson and his veteran troops can be instructively compared with the crippling epidemic of disease which halved the strength of Henry Dodge's first dragoon expedition over the Central Plains in 1834, which was prosecuted by raw recruits and officers largely appointed directly from civilian life only a year of two before. (Drowning was a routine source of casualties for military expeditions on the Plains, including that against the Arikaras in 1823, which employed many of the same troops as Atkinson's campaign.) As early as 1820, Atkinson spotlighted his logistical and administrative wisdom as well as the army officer's usual penchant for system and order by suggesting that using a single
regiment to garrison all posts on the Upper Missouri would ease supply, communications, and the coordination of mutual support, which had to be efficient to impress the Indians that the United States could promptly replace any troops withdrawn down the river.¹³

Atkinson refused the premier staff post of adjutant general (at the rank of colonel rather than his brevet of brigadier general) in 1821 in order to remain in field command of the Missouri project, which was in effect the principal field command in the Western Department, and, after the cession of Florida, in the army as a whole. (Atkinson was also allowed to retain his brevet, since he was forced to sacrifice his regular lineal rank as brigadier in favor of Quartermaster General Jesup.) The Arikara War of 1823, though little more than a bloodless (and ineffective) show of force in which 220 troops were sent to the aid of American trappers under siege several hundred miles north of Council Bluffs, spurred Atkinson to resubmit his now-routine proposal for a northern expedition early in 1824, asserting that the primary rationale for expeditions rather than fixed posts was simply their greater effectiveness:

[I]t will prove to the Indians our ability to traverse their country at pleasure and punish them for offences at any point however remote. Establishing a permanent post at once would diminish this belief and lessen their idea of our capacity to move with celerity . . . The plan will moreover greatly benefit the troops as it will render them highly efficient and make the duty not only pleasant to both officers and men, but envious. And again it will require a much smaller force.¹⁴

In July 1824 Atkinson warned that "I deem it of the highest importance that an imposing force should in the first instance be shown to the upper
Tribes [meaning those beyond the Mandan bend in the future Montana country, like the Blackfeet], who know nothing of our character or strength, that a favorable and lasting impression may be made on their minds."

Calhoun then took the opportunity to reassert his desire for a post at the Mandan villages which would control the fur trade, and Atkinson's arguments became the basis for the Yellowstone Expedition of 1825, which he personally led upriver. This expedition actually went 120 miles beyond its official objective, the farthest western advance by a substantial body of American troops to that date, and Atkinson and a civilian peace commissioner signed treaties with sixteen Indian bands, but no permanent posts were established. Indeed, Atkinson came to doubt that a permanent post in the Yellowstone country was necessary, because the tribes were at peace (however temporarily) and British influence had proven weaker than he had expected. Indeed, where protection was actually necessary forts could not provide it because their distance would make the cost of supplies prohibitive. Atkinson then came close to articulating a general principle of western strategy and operations, maintaining that "an occasional show of an imposing military force in an Indian country produces . . . a better effect than a permanent location of troops among them." He therefore urged a scaled-back version of his standard proposal, recommending an expedition of three to four hundred troops (roughly a regiment in the usually understrength army of that era) to the falls of the Missouri every three or four years—essentially a regular repetition of the Yellowstone expedition.15

Neither Calhoun's nor Atkinson's plans were carried out. Another wave of congressional retrenchment brought the Missouri project to an end in 1826, and the following year the forces at Council Bluffs were withdrawn south to establish Fort Leavenworth as a stepping-stone toward Santa Fe and
the southwest. It would be another seven years before major expeditions were sent into Indian country in peacetime, this time principally to the west and southwest, and none before the 1850s would last as long or involve as many troops. In the meantime, the forces in Atkinson’s department remained as much concerned with operations on the Illinois-Wisconsin-Iowa prairie as with those on the southwestern plains, and Atkinson drew on his extensive operational experience by demonstrating great celerity and adroitness in his use of the reserve at Jefferson Barracks to quell unrest among the Winnebago with minimal bloodshed in 1827 and to pursue and trap the Sac and Fox Indians under Black Hawk five years later.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal from Fort Atkinson represented a retreat from the Upper Missouri Valley. Evaluating the significance of this withdrawal depends largely on one’s expectations of the army’s potential impact in the region, however. Atkinson’s force had subsisted itself effectively, proving the army’s ability to sustain itself far from its logistical depots, but without mounted troops it was unable to catch the Indians and conduct the routine patrols and peacekeeping operations necessary to establish an effective American presence in the region. In other words, the army possessed the capability to project power at the strategic level but lacked the forces and tactics necessary to give that strategy practical force. More importantly, none of the army’s strategic missions in the Upper Missouri Valley remained priorities by the mid-1820s. British influence declined because the 1821 merger of their two principal fur-trading companies reduced the need for competition in marginal areas of beaver pelt production, leading Atkinson to report that the British and the Indians of the Upper Missouri no longer visited one another. Protecting American traders and trappers became irrelevant after the Arikara attack on William Ashley’s party, followed by a
similar massacre by the Blackfeet farther west drove the mountain men to overland routes to the south during the mid-1820s, while keeping peace among the Indians themselves was really never more than a means to the other ends in American calculations. (Indeed, it was usually to the Americans' advantage to stir up simmering resentments between different tribes in order to keep them divided against each other.) Ultimately, the failure of the Missouri expeditions indicates the limits to the utility of military force in western expansion prior to the advent of large-scale white settlement in a region. As one authority has concluded, "by 1830 the valley had reverted to the Indians, who retained most of it until settlers began moving into the region in large numbers several decades later." The army could lead, but it could not secure, American territorial expansion in the Trans-Mississippi West, and it spent most of the 1820s and 30s waiting for settlement to catch up with its posts.\(^\text{16}\)

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II. The Quest for Mobility in Plans for Western Defense, 1826-1846

Atkinson was hardly alone in advocating expeditionary plans to intimidate the Amerindians. Besides Atkinson's superior Andrew Jackson, commanding general Brown espoused similar--though less far-reaching--arguments during the 1820s. Brown was especially interested in the value of expeditions as a remedy for the army's dispersion and laxity in garrison, one of his principal concerns as commanding general:

It is always a consideration of the highest moment to keep the troops as much embodied and as constantly occupied as possible for the purposes of instruction and discipline; and it is equally
important, in order to produce a proper restraint upon the
savages, to show a respectable force where we show any at all.
To insure this end . . . I know of no policy so effectual, as to send
forth from these strong posts . . . well organized parties of troops
to penetrate the retirements of the savages, and awe them by a
salutary exhibition of our power.
Brown had no doubt whatsoever that with the proper sort of troops the army
could command the Great Plains, where the army's attention was beginning
to turn:

The country between the Missouri and the Rocky Mountains is
of such a nature that large bodies of savages cannot find a secure
retreat within its limits. . . . It would not require a large
command of well trained mounted infantry, with a few pieces of
light or flying artillery, to disperse any force of savages which
might be collected to oppose them.17

Whether a strategy of dispersing the Plains Indians would have advanced
American policy is of course another question—it would have ended the overt
but ultimately insignificant threat to American national sovereignty but
probably at the cost of bringing the Plains nomads more directly under that
sovereignty, as the reservation or concentration policy of the 1870s later did.
The aim of dispersal also reflected the officer corps' Eurocentric and state-
centered belief that without concentrated forces an enemy could do no real
harm, a flawed assumption in thinly populated frontier areas vulnerable to
raids and guerrilla warfare that took little account of the citizen-settlers the
army was supposed to protect. In both respects Brown's proposal was
irresponsible in its impact on local citizens, a paradox born of allegiance to the
centralized institutional structure of the nation-state (rather than the
citizenry themselves) that frequently characterized the officer corps' efforts along the nation's borderlands.

With the halt of the Yellowstone Expedition the focus of the army's attention on the frontier began to shift to the southwest, where it would remain until the Sioux wars of the 1860s and 70s. Officers do not seem to have given overt consideration to the implications of Mexico's independence until the Texas Revolution a decade later. Instead, the impetus behind the change of focus was rather the expansion of settlement in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri, then more rapid than that in northwestern Illinois, and the growing trade with Santa Fe from the Mississippi Valley via St. Louis. Once the initial line of western posts was established army leaders turned their attention to the communications between them, supporting proposals for military roads lest lack of supplies force the withdrawal of the garrisons, while the caravan trade with Santa Fe led to congressional calls for military protection beyond the newly established line of posts.18

Army commanders responded by advising the use of mounted troops, "to let the natives see our force and if necessary feel our power," as commanding general Macomb put it. As usual, Edmund Gaines was the most thorough in his proposals. Responding to a request for information from the head of the House Military Affairs Committee, Gaines warned that the Indians' "superior knowledge of the country they inhabit, with their unequalled celerity of movement, enables them . . . to select the time and place for battle." Gaines' recommendations reflect both an understanding of specialization and a concern for numerical sufficiency and the existing army force structure: he agreed that one mounted company was certainly worth more than three dismounted ones but rejected a congressional proposal that a regiment of regular infantry be disbanded to make room for one of mounted
volunteers. Instead, Gaines argued that creating a regiment of dragoons would free two of infantry for duty on the undergarrisoned Atlantic and Canadian frontiers. The harassment encountered by Major Bennet Riley's infantry escorting traders to the Mexican border on the Arkansas River (at the Hundredth Meridian) in 1829 gave concrete evidence of the impotence of infantry on the Plains, but appropriations were not forthcoming until the need became more urgent. Mounted forces were ultimately authorized in 1832 due to the impetus of the Black Hawk War, first as one-year volunteers and in 1833 as the 1st Dragoon Regiment in the regular army.¹⁹

There was little debate within the officer corps over the obvious need for mounted forces on the Plains frontier. Officers recognized that without them the Indians' "habitual alertness and rapidity of movement would render our efforts in pursuit of them useless" and would yield the initiative, which Gaines warned was the key to Indian military success. Similarly, an essay in the second issue of the Military and Naval Magazine cautioned that "it is worse than useless to think of acting against the powerful tribes of the west and southwest with any other description of force." Instead, the major debate on western defense policy arose in the mid-1830s as a result of large-scale Indian removal from the southeast. This policy led to increasingly dense Indian population concentrations and friction among them over inadequate resources. Moreover, the southeastern Indians were often given rifles as an incentive to emigrate, and by 1837 approximately 10,000 warriors (about half of the emigrants) had been so armed.²⁰

In addition to the disruptive consequences of potential intertribal wars, army officers soon began to fear the massive force a pan-Indian confederation might muster against the white frontier. In February 1836 Quartermaster General Jesup warned that "the Indians north of the Red river, if united,
might bring into the field perhaps twenty thousand warriors; and their numbers are daily increasing by the emigrating tribes . . . even were [they] inclined to preserve peace with us [which Jesup doubted], danger is to be apprehended from the collisions among themselves." Like General Gaines, Jesup also feared that the conflict in Texas (which Jesup labelled a civil war) would spill over into American territory through Indian raids sponsored by the Mexican government against the Texans. A year later Gaines provided his own version of Jesup's warning and recommended massing "a disposable force of six thousand men," half mounted, to prevent a repetition of the devastation wrought by the Seminoles' sudden uprising in 1835. Rumors of an intertribal council and confederation led by the Cherokee spurred the impetuous Gaines to call for as many as 10,000 Tennessee and Kentucky volunteers and to move the garrison of Jefferson Barracks forward to Fort Leavenworth in 1838, though as usual the crisis never materialized. Lower-ranking officers do not seem to have articulated these dangers so concretely, but an essayist writing about the Seminole War in the Army and Navy Chronicle envisioned the consequences of the removal policy in much more vivid terms, comparing its "crowding and condensing disaffected Indian tribes" in the West to "congesting thunderous clouds" that would "[lavish] their fury on the earth" and bring desolation to "our now happy country."

Indeed, this sense of helpless anxiety was shared by Inspector General Croghan, who reported in 1838 that the "entire frontier . . . can be laid waste whenever the restless tribes . . . may choose."21

Comment on western defense strategy was not limited to senior line commanders or the inspectors general. Because of the need for extensive construction and long-range supply, western security policy was the most active arena for strategic comment from the Quartermaster General's
Department. Jesup shared the views of theater and field commanders like Gaines and Atkinson that "to compel [the Indian] to respect us we must make him feel our power, or . . . convince him that he can have no security in flight," and he therefore supported the recruitment of mounted troops as well as Secretary Cass's 1836 proposal for the construction of a military road network along the western frontier. "The only way to preserve peace among them, to protect them and ourselves," Jesup advised, "is to establish a strong cordon of posts along the whole line, with one or more advance posts, . . . with good roads communicating between them, and from them to the interior." Indeed, the first detailed report on Cass's plan for a military turnpike running from Fort Des Moines to Fort Gibson via Leavenworth came from quartermaster captain Thomas Hunt (Jesup's chief assistant, then acting as quartermaster general) in January 1836. Some of Hunt's praise for the measure can be dismissed as hyperbole intended for political purposes or personal or organizational aggrandizement, but his vision of a chain of small posts sending out daily mounted patrols "to keep up a continual surveillance over the road" represented a less grandiose means of achieving the preclusive defense the engineers were seeking on the seaboard. Like the Fortification Board, the quartermasters also demonstrated a growing understanding of the value of system in security planning, for Hunt urged connecting forts Gibson and Towson in order to link the central front to the southern one. (Indeed, forts Towson and Jesup were connected by road that year per previous plans.)\(^{22}\)

Writing to Cass a month after Hunt's report, Jesup agreed with his subordinate on the necessity for routine mounted patrols and added that Council Bluffs (Henry Atkinson's old post on the Upper Missouri) should be reoccupied. (This was not done until 1842, and then only temporarily.) These
ideas aside, Jesup's remarks are most interesting for his attack on the parsimony that limited the army's size. Jesup believed that five thousand men were necessary to defend the line, and he therefore chose to ignore the army's actual strength in his recommendations, "for experience has shown that it is entirely inadequate to the defence of the country." Retreating from that statement in search of a feasible solution, he advocated placing the army's companies on a war footing (i.e., doubling their strength) and equipping one regiment as mounted riflemen. "The expense may perhaps be objected to," he thundered, "but I have yet to learn that the blood of American citizens is to be estimated in dollars and cents." Jesup then alleged that "the ill-judged economy which arrested the measures projected for the defence of the frontier in 1819 [the Missouri Expedition, whose supply had been so frustrating for the young quartermaster], and broke down the army in 1821, has caused all the difficulties which have occurred with the Indians since," which demonstrates the strain officers felt themselves under as well as the exaggerated significance they sometimes placed on their deterrent value.23

Such worst-case thinking, unrealistic to the point of irrelevance for civilian policy-makers elected by reluctant taxpayers, was best represented by Chief Engineer Gratiot in his report to Secretary of War Poinsett in October 1837. (Gratiot supported the Cass plan, as one would expect from the man in charge of the coastal fortification program and its fixed positions.) Having stated that the force in Louisiana "should be limited to what seems to be absolutely wanted to maintain [American] neutrality" in the face of continued conflict between Texas and Mexico, he then recommended stationing three regiments of infantry and another of dragoons there--nearly a third of the army, an obviously impossible basis for policy. This force was certainly not necessary to defend the American border against direct onslaught, so perhaps
Gratiot saw it as a means of preventing the entry of Americans into Texas in support of the new republic, a mission that was unlikely to find a warm reception in Washington. It is also possible that Gratiot—and Gaines before him—feared Mexican incursions across the American border, but given the general balance of power this seems less likely than that the American forces would have served to intimidate Mexico, as Gaines used his to do at Nacogdoches in 1836. Finally, there was a real threat of Indian raids spilling back and forth across the border, but this occurred primarily along the Red River boundary, not the more settled Sabine, where the balance of white and Indian population was much more favorable to the former.

Gratiot's most pressing fear was a union of 26,000 warriors opposite Arkansas and Missouri, which he claimed to foresee "at no very distant day." This vision led him to seek the equivalent of eleven regiments (the army then had thirteen) to deter their onslaught. The situation seemed potentially far worse in the area between the Mississippi and Lake Superior, where Gratiot estimated 40,000 warriors, but he rejoiced that the United States could always count on the enmity between the Sioux and their neighbors to divide this horde against itself with a little encouragement from Washington. This diplomatic alternative meant that only one regiment would be needed in the north, making a total of thirteen needed for the system of western defense as a whole (given some overlap), or about 13,000 men—several thousand more than the entire army's strength at the time, at least half of which was already fighting Indians in Florida.24

Poinsett dismissed Cass's plan for a great road lined by small posts parallel to the frontier in favor of the traditional pattern of larger forts plus a more ample central reserve at Leavenworth or Jefferson Barracks (which had become little more than a casual post after the departure of the 1st Infantry for
Florida in July 1837, averaging a garrison of only forty-seven men—a single company—between 1838 and 1841. Clearly drawing on the experience of the Second Seminole War and the Dade Massacre, Poinsett feared that the small garrisons proposed by the Cass plan would be surprised and wiped out in detail during the opening phase of an uprising, without being able to reinforce one another or to concentrate without being ambushed on the lateral road. It is unclear how much the army's officers influenced Poinsett's thinking or vice-versa, but in November 1837 acting quartermaster general Trueman Cross echoed the new secretary's concern that his predecessor's plan was founded on "a very erroneous estimate" because of the road's exposure "to constant interruption by the enemy." (It is instructive to compare the political acuity of the Quartermaster Department's flexibility with Chief Engineer Gratiot's contemporaneous support for the Cass plan; it is of course no more than speculative to note Gratiot's dismissal a year later for financial defalcations.) Cross reminded readers that this situation would "violate a fundamental principle of military science"—not to expose one's flanks and lines of communication—and pointed to the Dade Massacre as evidence of the "mournful" consequences of doing so. Cross considered improved roads unnecessary on the open plains; they would only serve to alert the Indians as to American whereabouts, so patrols or reinforcements travelling the western road would have had to be so large as to constitute offensive field forces in themselves, while most of the western posts could already be reached more easily by rivers from the east.25

Cross also derided the concept of small garrisons strung out along the road; like most other military commentators, he emphasized that "posts on the frontier, without a disposable force that may be detached in rapid pursuit when occasions require, are of very little utility. It is impossible that they can
inspire the neighboring Indians tribes with a respect for our power." Cross wisely closed his critique of the Cass plan by observing that "the great element in an efficient plan of defense for the Western frontier consists of men. Fixed positions have far less influence in Indian warfare than in that of civilized nations." The quartermaster suggested that at least thirty thousand men were needed to do this job properly, but he was responsible enough to accept that "political expediency . . . would not tolerate it, however it might be justified by military considerations." Such political caution notwithstanding, the force Cross did recommend was still nearly as large as the entire army. To make up for the inevitable shortfall he relied on diplomacy and disunity among the Indians to obviate the possibility of an Indian alliance: "it will always be in our power to control a portion of [the] tribes, and make them auxiliaries in our cause." Operationally, the army's advance forces would delay attacks "until the neighboring militia could be embodied, and reinforcements drawn from the reserve"—a demonstration of his implicit understanding of the use of "skillfully directed" mobility as a force multiplier.26

Poinsett ordered several surveys of the frontier in order to gain the local knowledge necessary to implement his plan. In October 1837 commanding general Macomb (who does not appear to have been very much involved in any of this strategic planning) instructed Gaines to undertake an inspection tour of the West with Inspector General Croghan and the topographical engineers, contemporaneous with those he ordered from Scott and Wool on the northern border. Indeed, this tour was the first general reconnaissance of the frontier for planning (rather than simple inspection) purposes since that by General Brown (which had encompassed only the northwestern region, principally the Great Lakes frontier) during the initial postwar expansion westward under Calhoun twenty years before. Gaines had
included extensive recommendations in his lengthy inspection report for 1826, largely on the lines of his usual desire to integrate the militia and volunteers more closely into the system of national defense, and a board of officers led by Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny of the 1st Dragoons had examined the proposed route for Cass's road in 1836, but the group was principally concerned with infrastructural questions of construction and supply rather than prospective operational uses. Zachary Taylor, the initial candidate to lead the survey, had preferred a system of temporary posts to Cass's more elaborate plan, just as he had preferred mobile forces and field fortifications to permanent masonry works for the coastal defense system a decade and a half before. Gaines, who had already called for a line of advanced posts in 1833 and in August 1837, submitted a characteristically thorough analysis and plan of defense, but Poinsett ignored his innovative (and of course expensive) call for basing the system on troops transported by railroad from central points. (Like the other officers who pondered these issues, Gaines sought an expanded army, and the posts he selected were pretty much those agreed on by everyone concerned, because they commanded river junctions in close proximity to the Indian settlements and the Arkansas-Missouri border.)

Three years later a board composed of Totten, Cross, Sylvanus Thayer, and Lieutenant Colonel George Talcott of the ordnance repeated Poinsett's proposals for a double line of posts in the southwest, the outer one to protect and restrain the Indians, the inner one to support it and restrain whites by enforcing the nonintercourse laws, positing large garrisons at Forts Towson and Gibson as the external anchors of the system but dismissing the locations which had been proposed along Cass's road as too far advanced for mutual support and reinforcement. The board also sought posts at the mouth of the
Platte (which temporarily appeared as Fort Croghan in 1842-1843) and the head of the Kansas near present-day Manhattan (which became Fort Riley, but was not actually established for another decade and a half). Forts Smith Wayne, and Leavenworth would serve as the inner line, along with two posts in the intervals between them and one or two between Smith and Towson, but none of these were built. (Fort Scott effectively took the place of those between Leavenworth and Smith when it replaced Fort Wayne in 1842.) The board was satisfied to maintain the existing line of posts in the northwest because it expected that the Indians of that region would soon be driven westward by American settlement, so it recommended nothing more than the erection of forts on the Des Moines River, which led to the establishment of the post of that name between 1843 and 1846, and at the western end of Lake Superior, which took form as Fort Wilkins in 1844.28

The board also examined the southern extremity of the frontier, suggesting the erection of two small posts on the Sabine River frontier of Louisiana to supplement Fort Jesup farther to the east, a modest concession to concerns about the instability caused by Mexican support for the Indians in Texas, but neither fort was built. Indeed, the validity of this concern had been questioned by an officer on the spot three years before in a letter to a Missouri senator. Major Bennet Riley (commander of the Santa Fe escort in 1829) wrote that Camp Sabine did nothing to deter Indian raids or slave uprisings. Shrugging aside the unlikely possibility of an invasion from Mexico, Riley opined that "we could be of more use . . . on the frontier of Missouri or Arkansas" as "a check on the Indians" being concentrated by removal from the east. To accomplish this he called for an army almost exactly the size of that adopted in 1846, warning that "the sooner it is done, the less it will cost the government, and the less blood will be spilt." Despite this perspicacity
regarding Texas, Riley like other officers was unwilling to recognize—and certainly had no interest in stating—that these costs were less likely to be imposed by Indian attacks on the frontier than by the expansionist acts of the United States and its citizens. 29

Neither of the secretaries’ plans ever served as more than blueprints. Cass’s road was authorized by Congress in 1836 but shortages of manpower and funds (limited in part by Poinsett’s different priorities, which did not preclude Congressional appropriations for the road) delayed its completion until 1845, just before the army began its jump westward—which made the road militarily irrelevant—and the projected chain of posts was never established. Similarly, Poinsett’s plan for a central reserve was obviously impossible to implement while the majority of the army was tied down in Florida. The 6th Infantry was sent from Jefferson Barracks to Fort Towson to serve in this capacity during a period of Texas border troubles and Indian unrest in 1842, and the 3rd and 4th Infantry Regiments were concentrated at Jefferson Barracks in 1843. The following year events made the reserve concept temporarily obsolete, as the latter units were committed to form the core of the Army of Observation along the border between Louisiana and Texas. 30

As in the plans for coastal defense, none of the proposals for western defense contained actual plans of operations, even on a contingent basis, doubtlessly because of the wide variety of circumstances that might affect any individual scenario. Indeed, Colonel Stephen W. Kearny went farther than most officers by simply suggesting that plans (presumably in some detail) be made for future expansion up the Mississippi à la the Missouri Expedition. Advanced posts, mobility, and reserves were the general principles underlying virtually all planning for western defense. Should the tribes
unite army leaders expected to rely on the militia, who would rally at the existing posts on the interior or reserve line, to reinforce the army and provide for the local defense of white settlements. Cross and Poinsett intended that the regular units stationed in Indian territory would then move to fall on the rear of Indians attacking the frontier. Cross expected that this maneuver would force the Indians' immediate withdrawal, as "no people look better to the security of their retreat."31

There was little controversy or comment within the army itself over the choice of plans. (Cross did not directly critique Hunt's arguments in favor of the Cass plan.) Dragoon lieutenant Henry Turner mentioned the issue to his comrade Abraham Johnston in 1837 without any further comment, and four years later the perspicacious cadet James Wall Schureman inferred that presidential talk of a chain of western posts was a hint about increasing the army, but he did not discuss the plans themselves, and these were virtually the only notices of western defense policy I have found or other scholars have noted among the papers of junior officers. As in the case of coastal defense, but in surprising contrast to their extensive comment on operations in Florida, the professional journals were almost equally silent, although an 1837 letter from the National Intelligencer reprinted in the Army and Navy Chronicle provided a unique mention of the "grand line of operations" proposed by Cass, praising the dispositions but urging the need for a reserve in case some Indian genius should "stumble upon the great manoeuvre of Napoleon, of forcing a weak point of the line."32

As this silence suggests, junior officers wrote little about western strategy, operations, or tactics during this era. Strategy was the province of more senior officers; tactics were usually learned as drill or by oral transmission—though as noted in chapter four these discussions were rarely
recorded, limiting their efficacy as a potential base for more extensive future discussion and analysis or learning over time—and both of these limitations acted to discourage the written study of operations. Two rare exceptions and examples of junior initiative came from Lieutenant William S. Harney and Lieutenant Reuben Holmes in letters to Andrew Jackson in 1825 and Alexander Macomb in 1832 urging military reconnaissances to the Rocky Mountains. Holmes gave three reasons for such an enterprise: to deter "Russian Claims, British interest, Claims and influence and [to ascertain] Indian locations and operations." The discovery of natural resources would be one side benefit, but Holmes was principally concerned with the possible threat of "one great consolidated nation" of Plains Indians and emigres from the eastern states. The lieutenant may have spoken out because his political connections made it possible to do so effectively and with reward to himself: he had already found a congressman to sponsor a bill to carry out his project, doubtlessly to the commanding general's surprise and quite probably to his dismay. Holmes' career was soon advanced when he was appointed to a captaincy in the newly forming 1st Dragoons the following year (1833), but he died before he could participate in Henry Dodge's expedition to the Rockies two years later.33

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III. Officers' Attitudes Toward Indians and the Practice of Indian Policy in the West, 1815-1846

Officers held ambiguous attitudes towards Amerindians and the Jacksonian removal policy, but we must begin by citing their fundamental and almost universally held belief, as Brigadier General Henry Atkinson put
it in one case in 1820, that "if a suitable punishment is not inflicted on the offenders [Indians] . . . we may expect similar occurrences" until this were done. These were not racially based attitudes in themselves, but the ethnoculturally based denial of Indian national sovereignty encouraged officers to apply them far more extensively than they ever would or could toward disorderly whites (like squatters on Indian land), who were assured the protection of citizenship in the polity to which officers were held accountable. Although he left the army soon thereafter, Andrew Jackson's views in the sovereignty of Indian polities accurately reflected those of most white Americans, civilian and military alike:

There can be no question but congress has the right to Legislation on this subject--The policy of treating with Indian tribes within the Jurisdiction of the United States and acknowledging its sovereignty, could only have arisen at a time when the arm of Government was too weak to execute any law passed for the regulation of the Indian tribes within our Territorial limits--To treat with the Indians acknowledging our sovereignty, and situate[d] within our declared Territorial limits as a nation has allways appeared very absurd to me . . . It appears to me that it is high time to do away the farce of treating with Indian tribes.34

Writing in the same year, Colonel Joseph Smith of the 3rd Infantry expected "great evils" from the Indians "unless kept in constant check by a display of force." Smith did not attempt to understand the particular reasons behind Indian attacks; to him they were simply "evidence of the mischievous character of savages generally." Conversely, Atkinson, who was a strong believer in the use of force as a deterrent, also observed of an 1829 incident that "as some doubts exist who were the aggressors . . . it is necessary to a fair
understanding of the matter that the whites as well as the Indians should be prosecuted. Justice as well as policy demands this course." Though founded more on antipathy toward disorderly white frontiersmen than on empathy for the Indians, Atkinson's comparatively moderate understanding of Anglo-Indian relations was widely shared in the army and exerted a strong influence on its operations in the field, particularly in the west where Atkinson was the de facto theater commander during most of the period covered in this work. Sympathies of this sort notwithstanding, however, the indispensability of force predicated on paternalist racial assumptions always remained at the core of official thinking, civil or military, on Indian relations.35

On the whole, the officer corps viewed Amerindians and policy towards them through the lens of paternalism, often in forms strikingly akin to that found by scholars investigating the attitudes of Andrew Jackson and contemporary civilians. Characteristically, few officers wrote very extensively on the underpinnings of American Indian policy, though many either questioned the removal concept or stressed its supposed benefits to the Indians rather than whites. These views were largely derived from the distaste officers felt for white aggression against the Indians, not from romanticization or unadulterated admiration for the latter--officers generally blamed landhungry whites for frontier conflicts, and they repeatedly stressed that the government had "pledged its faith" to protect the Indians. Indeed, the Oklahoma territory was essentially an American internal protectorate policed by the army--having forced dissimilar ethnocultural groups with incompatible economic systems (agriculture and hunting) into close proximity with one another by the removal policy, one of the principal objectives of military policy in the Southwest was to prevent war between the southeastern agricultural tribes being resettled west of Arkansas and the
Plains nomads already present there. The 1834 intercourse law asserted American responsibility for and sovereignty over the Indians by authorizing the use of military force to prevent or stop "hostilities" among the Indians, and the 1840 report by Totten proclaimed that "the government has . . . contracted the twofold obligation of intervention among, and protection of, the emigrant tribes," a responsibility the army took very seriously as a matter of federal sovereignty and national honor. Forts Towson (1824) and Washita (1842) were established in large part to protect the Choctaw and Chickasaw from the Plains tribes (and in 1842 from Texan raiders), the latter post at the suggestion of Colonel (brevet brigadier general) Mathew Arbuckle of the 7th Infantry seconded by Zachary Taylor of the 1st, who had to argue against the commanding general's desire to abandon the post. Indeed, Arbuckle had first recommended such a post in 1833 in response to a query from Macomb during the early stages of Chickasaw removal from the southeast.36

Like their predecessors on the early national frontier, officers--men of comparatively extensive administrative and command experience with organized armed power at their back--were often employed as Indian agents and negotiators between rival tribes in the Oklahoma region. For many years the most volatile of these conflicts was that between Cherokee immigrants and the Osage plainsmen--as early as 1819 Major William Bradford warned of probable war between the two and tried to begin negotiations to avert it, in the knowledge that the government wanted to encourage further Cherokee emigration from the southeast. Indeed, one of the principal reasons for the establishment of Fort Gibson five years later was to intimidate the Osage (who turned over the perpetrators of several crimes against the Cherokee after the post was built), and two years after that Fort Leavenworth was intended to act as a forward base in case of war between the Osage and Delaware. Tensions
between the plainsmen and their new neighbors continued throughout this period as the Plains nomads first preyed on the immigrants and were then overwhelmed by the seemingly endless wave of well-organized newcomers. Indeed, as late as 1842 Osage depredations led to the construction of Fort Scott, but the army successfully avoided the full-fledged war its officers expected throughout this period.\textsuperscript{37}

Doing so required commanders to walk a fine line in order to appear neutral and conciliate both sides. In 1826 Edmund Gaines admonished the Osage and Cherokee that force could not be applied against "supposed offenders" by the United States "unless it should be first clearly proven... that the complainant or party aggrieved... had been faithful in its observance of the Treaty" regulating Indian conduct in the territory—in other words, that the Indians seeking American aid had conformed to American norms of peaceful behaviour. This proclamation notwithstanding, Gaines had already instructed his subordinates to prevent war between the Indians by force if it proved necessary, "a precaution which (to say nothing of what is due from the United States upon principles of natural law towards our untutored neighbours...) appeared to me absolutely essential to the security of our slender frontier settlements."\textsuperscript{38}

This sense of obligation stemmed from feelings of superiority and the desire for control as well as guilt or sympathy, because they reflected officers' belief that the Indians were treacherous or, at best, easily drawn into conflicts by childlike impulsiveness that ultimately could be restrained only by force or intimidation. The coercive foundation of American relations with the Indians was evident in instructions commanding general Macomb gave to Colonel (brevet brigadier general) Henry Leavenworth, to seize Indian hostages when whites were killed or plundered "until acceptable satisfaction
shall have been made by the offending tribe." Leavenworth needed no reminder of this—after two soldiers were murdered in 1820 he seized Winnebago hostages and wrote that "it would have been better to have executed them" before trial, as "if they are tried they must be executed [to set an example of American determination] or we shall feel the weight of the Winnebago Tomahawk." Leavenworth's fear of civilian leniency was quite misplaced, and the Indians were sentenced to death. When Secretary Calhoun asked his opinion about granting them pardon, the colonel maintained that Amerindians knew "no other motives but want and fear," and that they would attribute a pardon to fear on the part of the government. Just as significantly, Leavenworth also worried that if the law was not enforced by the government the frontiersmen would "take the sword of justice into their own hands & thereby jeopardize the peace of the country." Leavenworth warned that as long as "a mischievous spirit prevails amongst the Rock River band," "it may . . . be well to make an example of [the convicted Indians]," for he was convinced that "the certainty of punishment is the best preventative of crime."39

Leavenworth's conduct as commander of the expeditionary force sent to the aid of the traders attacked by the Arikara in 1823 shows the dilemmas of military diplomacy with the Indians in more complex detail. The colonel acted on his own initiative to order the move, but upon his arrival at the Arikara villages more than three hundred miles north of Fort Atkinson he was forced to adopt a much more cautious posture. Supply difficulties and the desertion of his Sioux allies led the colonel to call off the attack after two days of inconclusive skirmishing and artillery bombardment, in which eleven Arikara, two Sioux, and no Americans had been killed, while wasting much of the expedition's supply of cannon shot, for fear that his force might.
be become the isolated target of a temporary Indian coalition. Leavenworth's calculations during this crisis illustrate the mixture of personal and diplomatic considerations he felt compelled to address: eager for combat and under pressure by both white civilians and his own soldiers to assault the villages, Leavenworth felt that "my reputation and the honor . . . of the expedition required that I should gratify my troops and make a charge, but I also thought that sound policy and the interest of my Country required that I should not." In other words, once the balance of forces appeared to shift Leavenworth was faced with the possibility of a humiliating defeat. Isolated far from reinforcement, the colonel had to abandon his efforts to punish the Arikaras lest they lead to disaster. The most Leavenworth then thought he could hope for was to conciliate the Arikaras through a policy of clemency:

If we succeeded in our charge, all that we could expect was to drive the Indians from their villages and perhaps kill a few more of them. The remainder would be left in the Country in a confirmed state of hostility to every white man. We could not expect to overtake them nor had we provisions sufficient to enable us to pursue them.  

The dilemmas faced by Leavenworth were not uncommon, and the emotional and diplomatic balancing act between paternalistic obligation and sympathy and stern parental discipline—or to be blunt, coercion by violence or the threat of violence—was apparent to some degree in the treatment most officers accorded to the Indians: Henry Atkinson, though usually an advocate of diplomacy and forbearance, was like many self-interested civilians unhappy with Leavenworth's lenient handling of the Arikaras in 1823, because he expected that they would recommence hostilities at the first opportunity. On the other hand, after maneuvering the Winnebagoes into
an unsustainable position in 1827, Atkinson proclaimed with satisfaction that "having surrendered up all the offenders in the late transgressions that have been demanded of them, and showing an entire submission to the authority of the United States, I have granted them peace." Civilian criticism of Atkinson's leniency notwithstanding, commanding general Brown lauded the colonel's efforts in forceful language that illustrates the psychic violence beneath such paternalism: "By a prompt and imposing display of military force in the very heart of their country, those savages have been awed into perfect subjection"--rendered child-like by the threat of death. This underlying coerciveness did not prevent officers from making careful diplomatic calculations of ends and means, and five years later Atkinson delayed going in pursuit of Black Hawk until militia aggressiveness made hostilities unavoidable, because he felt the need for a larger force in case of battle--a mixed policy of diplomatically waiting on events while preparing for the worst case that irritated many civilian frontiersmen and not a few subordinates like Zachary Taylor, who considered Atkinson too sympathetic with or timid towards the Indians. These questions were ultimately only differences of opinion and degree over the means to be employed, however. Indian submission was the goal sought by white soldiers trained in hierarchy and inured to subordination to the sovereignty of the nation-state, and paternalism was the best that their victims could expect.  

This paternalism was repeated in officers' relations with Indian groups resettled on the Central and Southern Plains. During the controversy over the location of Fort Gibson in 1837, after removal had become general policy throughout the west, Lieutenant Colonel William Whistler of the 7th Infantry reported that he was "decidedly of the opinion that a large body of troops should be kept in the immediate vicinity" of the post, "or even farther
west," in order to "keep in check" the Creeks, who were usually considered the most embittered and warlike of the Five Civilized Nations. Whistler's report illustrates many of the social and cultural prejudices that army officers applied in the context of policy, for he clearly saw himself as a policeman of sorts, and like most Americans he took the paternalist and coercive subtexts to his words as a given, justified by ethnic and cultural superiority. The colonel proclaimed without irony that "the United States has guaranteed . . . a military protection [to the tribes] which they confidently expect, and which should be given to them." A garrison near Gibson would be able to prevent war between the eastern Indians and the Osage, "which will assuredly occur just as soon as the troops are removed.," and Whistler therefore selected as central a position as possible for the post intended to replace the old fort, as "from this point the troops could be thrown" into any of the emigre nations to promptly put down unrest:

The presence of a large body of troops in the centre of the Indian country will have a very salutary effect . . . in keeping down local feuds which might arise among them, and in giving a timely check to any hostile movements toward the whites . . . The presence of even a small military force has a powerful effect in keeping down disaffection among the Indians.42

Whistler declared himself satisfied that the allegiance of the Cherokee and Choctaw could be relied upon because of their location between Arkansas and the Plains tribes. Thrust suddenly into the limited hunting grounds of the angered nomads, the eastern agriculturalists could not remain neutral, and Whistler believed that "those two tribes alone" would afford the white Arkansans, who wanted the fort placed within the state, "more protection than two or three military posts." On the other hand, Whistler felt that there
was "scarcely anything that would tend to alienate the feelings of the Indians from our government more than the withdrawal of military protection from them" once they had been placed at the nomads' mercy. Intentionally or not, the government had effectively divided, conquered, and made dependent the Indians of the southeast and southwest by forcing them together, and under these circumstances, one correspondent to the *Army and Navy Chronicle* warned that "it will be the fault of the Government entirely if the present quiet is disturbed." The process of American territorial expansion and state formation (or the assertion of American national sovereignty) clearly led to obligations and dilemmas as well as opportunities and power, and army officers usually saw more of the former than the latter.43

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IV. "Daily more dissatisfied": Disenchantment and Dissent Among U.S. Army Officers During the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842

The most complex dilemmas faced by army officers were not those produced by conflicts between Indians but by those between Indians and whites. While spatial constraints preclude an adequate assessment of the army's involvement in squatter removal during the 1820s, the reactions of officers to white settlers need to surveyed before we turn to the crisis of Indian removal and local civil-military relations on the nation's internal frontier during the Second Seminole War. These reactions were conditioned as much by the officer's allegiance to the law and sovereignty of the nation-state as by ethnocultural prejudice and the desire to further American settlement. The presence of antagonism and distrust for white settlers can first be seen in the correspondence of some of the most senior army officers on the southeastern frontier, particularly since these men were largely
southerners with strong personal and class interests in supporting American expansion.

Indeed, even as he was preparing to assault the Seminoles in 1817, Edmund Gaines reported to Jackson that he had referred settler complaints against the southeastern Indians to the civilian authorities, "because I have in no case during the present year been informed of any thing like an assemblage of force among the Indians in this quarter of the Territory. Nor could I see any reason why persons who had obtruded themselves upon the public land, contrary to law, should be allowed military protection against the petty offences of which they complained." Though Gaines proved an ardent participant in the conquest of Florida, the intricate confluence of operational and logistical considerations with the officer corps' ethnocentrism and its simultaneous distaste for the white settler population is more fully displayed in Edmund Gaines' view of the corrosive impact whites had on Indians and the need for force to restrain the latter. Warning against the removal of Atkinson's force from the Upper Missouri in 1826, he suggested that this withdrawal would produce "the most unfavorable impressions on the minds of the Indians . . . they may suppose us . . . unable to sustain the . . . the requisite force to keep them in check." The Indians would then "become more licentious from the entire removal of all restraints than if they had never existed, for those Indians like most others in the incipient stages of civilization have learned many of the vices but few of the virtues of their white neighbours."44

The disruptive influence of white traders was equally resented by senior officers on the Plains frontier. Reacting to the arsons committed by his civilian auxiliaries against the Arikara villages at the conclusion of his 1823 expedition, Henry Leavenworth reported that "it will be impossible for the
military force of our Country to preserve peace between the Indians and our Citizens (and there is nothing else to do it) if traders or citizens can with impunity burn the villages and towns of Indians whenever they choose to do so." Indeed, Leavenworth displayed an authoritarian streak toward whites as well as Indians, suggesting that it was only the knowledge that no law would sanction it that "prevented me from taking such measures on the subject as would readily have occurred to the mind of every military man"—a reference to summary court-martials and executions. Two decades later Colonel Stephen Kearny, Atkinson and Leavenworth's successor as the leading advocate and commander of western expeditions, denounced the sale of liquor to the Plains Indians via Bent's Fort and other locations on the Oregon Trail, as "the good of the Indians would be much advanced and the peace of the country much more effectively secured if Congress would pass a law declaring the whole of the Indian country under martial law." Commanding general Scott agreed with Kearny's proposition, though it was never implemented on the scale he sought.45

Indeed, officers' reactions to the impact of white traders and settlers on the enlisted men under their command neatly illustrates the confluence of class and ethnic biases in their minds. William Whistler expected that the location of posts in Indian territory (rather than Arkansas) would have a steadying effect on its enlisted men, reducing local civil-military conflict and enhancing discipline: "One strong reason why the troops should be placed in the Indian country . . . is, that the government of the civil and military is so different that the two cannot well exist in the same vicinity. . . . The influence exercised . . . by the civilians over the soldiery often tends to produce acts of insubordination." Like William Worth speaking of the Canadian border, the genteel Whistler felt certain that this malign influence was only "exerted by
the lower order of citizens." He thought these degraded whites as much in need of control as the Indians, and like Worth he hoped that insecurity would instill a sense of anxiety, dependence, and order among them: if troops were placed inside Arkansas, "the people would consider themselves safe and secure from the Indians. The abandoned and disorderly portion of them would at once commence their lawless aggressions on the persons and property of the Indians." His views were seconded from the junior officer ranks by Lieutenant Richard Stoddard Ewell, who considered the Cherokee "very well disposed . . . towards the whites," and felt that "it would be much better to have the post in Arkansas where the people are cutting each others throats ad libitum." Officers like these felt that it was better for the army and the peace it was supposed to enforce to keep whites and Indians separated and dependent on its aid, subject to the sovereignty of the nation-state which employed the officer corps.46

These attitudes affected the officer corps' response to the removal policy of the 1830s in contradictory and often paradoxical ways, and military dissent was not limited to the Seminole War alone. As these examples indicate, army officers liked the idea of separating whites and Indians, but they were fearful of the disorder that would attend wholesale ethnic removal (and which they would then have to police, inevitably drawing criticism from local whites), and the genesis of the removal policy was wholly civilian. Indeed, officers like Gaines routinely assumed that the advance of white settlement would drive the Indians westward and solve whatever security problems existed, and at the beginning of 1832 Gaines recommended to a subordinate that the United States should interfere in Indian affairs only so far as was necessary to protect its own citizens. Nevertheless, the army was the only organization with the size and administrative experience necessary
to carry out the government's removal policy, a precondition to the consolidation of white settlement and commercial agricultural production in the lands previously held by the southeastern (and northwestern) Indians. Although the process of white settlement had begun long before the army was tasked with conducting and if need be enforcing the removals, it is necessary to remember that in Florida the army did expel the Indians prior to the explosion of white settlement—while it would be a causal exaggeration to assert that the army "conquered" the Plains West, this was not true of Florida, where resolute Seminole resistance led the American government to employ overt coercion on a scale previously unprecedented in the Anglo-American conquest of the Amerindians.47

Five years later the scene was Florida, the author an anonymous junior officer, his public medium the Army and Navy Chronicle. The army had just won its largest battlefield victory of the war, but something still troubled this veteran, and he did not hesitate in expressing his disenchantment:

The present state of affairs cannot exist much longer; the army is becoming daily more dissatisfied, and justly so; and if some hope of receiving justice... is not shortly held out to them, the country will find... that it must look elsewhere for the courage, energy, and devotion, heretofore so repeatedly displayed in contending against a foe, whose defeat brings with it neither honor nor reward.48

The southern borderlands were an arena not only for conflicts between whites and Indians, but for that between different groups of whites with different interests and values, and monolithic historiographical conceptions of southern whites, Jacksonian Americans, and contemporary government
officials and policies quickly become suspect when viewed through the example of the regular army officer corps in Florida and its reactions to enforcing the removal policy. This section examines the sources of the officer corps' dissatisfaction with the Seminole conflict and the policies which led to the war, the forms and circumstances in which this disenchantment was expressed, and the meaning of this dynamic for American civil-military relations and a more nuanced understanding of the contested terrain of United States policy toward the southeastern Indians in the era of Jacksonian democracy and Manifest Destiny. While no army officers joined the Seminoles in their resistance to American aggression, many questioned the war's motivation and virtually all of those who wrote on the subject questioned its desirability and the effectiveness of the methods used to fight it. As noted in chapter seven, the onset of war in 1835 helped catalyze an unprecedented wave of resignations, and throughout the war commanders maneuvered to procure leaves of absence to avoid or escape service in Florida, and while in Florida they constantly quarreled with civilians, politicians, and citizen-soldiers, often to the point that, as one scholar has recently suggested, the officer corps seemed to prefer the Seminoles to the whites they were supposed to be serving.49

Officers expressed a wide range of reasons for their disenchantment with the war, but personal inconvenience rather than politics or ideology was the primary source of aggravation and dissent for most regulars. The "war" was not a simple matter of meeting and defeating an enemy army in a set-piece battle--indeed, the government's policy (and the easiest road to success) was to seek the Seminoles peaceful removal by "voluntary" (however intimidated or bribed) emigration, and the conflict therefore proceeded
through a series of short-lived truces which temporarily raised hopes of a resolution that were repeatedly dashed. On the more general level of officers’ expectations, guerrilla skirmishes in a humid, disease-ridden climate did not fit the quasi-scientific image of warfare they had learned at West Point or the romantic Napoleonic ideal they (like other Americans) fantasized about. Moreover, service in the Florida swamps was much lonelier than peacetime routine at established posts: because of the climate few officers brought their families with them, and there were no established provisions for rotating veterans back to the United States after a set period.

In short, the Seminole war seemed "arduous, irksome, and thankless," "inglorious and disagreeable" to men who expected public acclaim in return for risking their lives. As the war ground on without success, commanders charged with the disposition of Afro-Seminoles and African-American maroons became targets in the debate over slavery and removal; civilian criticism mounted from northern reformers and southern settlers and slaveholders; and the officer corps became contemptuous of its attackers and their "silly wailings," be they of sympathy for or fear of the Seminoles. As might be expected, the impasse led many regulars to advocate striking out with harsher measures in order to achieve a decision, but the treacheries and atrocities that were carried out proved counterproductive to the goal of persuading the Seminoles to emigrate and led to further denunciations from northern politicians and a spiral of alienation among soldiers who felt unappreciated and misunderstood by civilians North and South. Few of these officers were willing to commit genocide, for tactics based on treachery and atrocity stirred moral qualms among many of their practitioners, while the rapacious greed of white settlers spurred the majority of articulate veterans to question the value of their sacrifices in Florida. This dialectic of
alienation gradually led many officers--and ultimately the majority, including several of the army's theater commanders, highly experienced and respected officers like Quartermaster General Jesup--to advocate peace short of the government's announced goal of Indian removal. Indeed, some of these career government servants suggested that the United States should simply quit and leave Florida (or some substantial part of it) to the Seminoles, whom many officers had come to respect and even admire as patriots--to withdraw from Florida altogether, and even to declare martial law in order to force white settlers to leave--the utter antithesis of the government's policy.  

Though none of them appear to have resigned because of their moral qualms, these soldiers were not amoral automatons; rather, their interest in a just peace was as ambiguous as their dedication to the government's war aims. The point is certainly not that U.S. Army officers were moral paragons ahead of their time, but that the particular circumstances their mission placed them in produced a remarkable degree of alienation from the government and society that they were paid to serve. The Seminole war brought previously suppressed grievances to the forefront of American civil-military relations by casting a spotlight on the officer corps' distinctive values as an occupation and on the contested meanings of public service in Jacksonian America. Indeed, the collision between the corps' occupational ethos of social order and the thankless circumstances of its service in Florida led a surprisingly large number of officers to question where their duties and responsibilities as public servants lay. Complaints continued throughout the conflict, and the Army and Navy Chronicle faithfully mirrored this process in the most extensive debate ever published in its pages. Indeed, the war was ultimately halted before a complete victory had been won (before all the Seminoles could be removed), in large part because military commanders like
William Worth were in charge of the negotiations, and they convinced the president and the secretary of war that such a victory was not worth its probable cost.

On the other hand, this alienation was exceptional both in degree and in incidence—it was an exception to the normal pattern of civil-military relations caused by the potential inherent in a particular situation rather than a harbinger of things to come, and a compound of political neutrality, group cohesion, and self-interested careerism sustained the officer corps' allegiance to the policy and practice of Seminole removal. The early flood of resignations receded as economic opportunities dried up amidst the Panic of 1837, and the officer corps did not become permanently disillusioned or alienated from the society that it served. Rather than emphasizing the anger that many commanders felt toward the Seminoles, which might be expected, this section concentrates on their mixed feelings toward their civilian employers, especially those among the local citizenry, and the policies the army was ordered to carry out. What were the sources and limitations of such disenchantment? What sort of conflicts fostered regular officers' antagonism toward civilian settlers and volunteer soldiers, so often in contrast to their admiration for the Seminoles? How much of their dissatisfaction was with the circumstances, how much with the methods, and how much with the ends for which the war was fought? Most importantly, how did embittered regulars balance their feelings of alienation and political subordination, and why was this unrest virtually absent during the Mexican War several years later? In other words, what did the officer corps learn from the Seminole conflict, not in the realm of tactics or strategy, but in that of civil-military relations—what role did the experience of this crucible play in the development of the corps' sense of accountability to civilian authority?
On the whole we shall see that the officer corps learned patience and remained a dutiful servant of the civil power, but the road was a frustrating, and in some respects a perilous, one.

The Second Seminole War was the longest continuous "Indian war" in American history. Over nearly seven years, the regular army suffered 1466 deaths, 328 of them in combat, a fourteen percent mortality rate among the regular forces stationed there. One hundred and seven of these men were killed in the ambush that opened the war in December 1835, but it was the long years of attrition and frustration that wore the army and its officers down. The situation was all the more frustrating because the army's commanders knew from the outset that the war would be a difficult one--after his unsuccessful campaign in 1836, Brigadier General Winfield Scott, later to become commanding general of the army and the conqueror of Mexico City, warned the public that "it [will] continue . . . to be the policy of the enemy to remain scattered in small parties and to avoid a general battle--thereby protracting the war almost indefinitely." A more junior soldier believed that chasing after the Indians "to capture or give them battle [is] useless and absurd."52

Veteran officers repeatedly warned that because of this difficulty it would take anywhere from 20,000 to 100,000 troops to bring the war to a successful conclusion. Most officers quickly realized that there was no way that the nation was going to raise forces of this size. Winfield Scott was more politically realistic, but he seriously underestimated the Seminoles in his support for a relatively minimal troop increase in mid-1836: "although I believe that 800 or fewer regulars might easily beat the whole of the Seminole warriors, if they would but stand, yet at least 3000 of the best troops are
required to finish this war." A year later theater commander and
quartermaster general Thomas Jesup estimated a need for 6000 soldiers, but
regular strength peaked at about 5000 early in 1841. The logical corollary that
officers drew from such conclusions was a pervasive doubt that the
government would be ever able to accomplish its objectives. "Should they
[stand and] fight the result cannot be doubted," one army surgeon Thomas
Henderson asserted early in 1838, shortly after the war's largest battle had
been fought at Lake Okeechobee, but after Okeechobee the Seminoles
dispersed into small bands that avoided pitched confrontations with the
army. Only 200 hostile warriors were then said to remain, but a week after his
first letter Henderson wrote that the Seminoles were unbeaten, that "no
human mind can discern the probable termination of this war." (Jesup
thought similarly, and had declared a truce during the intervening week
while he asked the War Department to consider allowing the Indians to
remain in southern Florida.) The following year one of the surgeon's
comrades estimated that the war would take five to ten more years to finish,
even with larger forces and better tactics.53

Amid a yearly cycle of fruitless advances and pursuits, occasionally
catching a Seminole or two and burning their villages and crops but never
fighting decisive battles, one patrol or operation came to seem much the same
as any other to field commanders, fostering a resurgence of frustration,
disillusionment, and ultimately dissent. Indeed, even in 1841 Captain John
Clark asserted that the war would go on "so long as there [are] one hundred
warriors in this country," and as late as the following February--only months
before the war's conclusion--Captain Michael Clark feared that "there appears
to be no end to it," while theater commander William Worth reported that
"every diminution of [the Seminole] numbers adds to the difficulty of taking
the remainder." In fact, the army never fully completed its assigned task in Florida, for the efforts of seven different theater commanders and the adoption of several new strategic plans and tactical systems notwithstanding, the war did not end until the army was allowed to cease its operations with several hundred Seminoles still unremoved in June 1842. Indeed, several theater commanders, and probably the majority of the officer corps as a whole, had advocated such an armistice since 1838, when one veteran had concluded that:

We are . . . really 'licked' and that's the long and short of it . . .
God and nature have interposed such obstacles as man cannot surmount. I for one feel humiliated at this confession and would rather have perished than live to make it--but it is true--we cannot [beat] these Indians.

One of the most frequently mentioned reasons commanders gave for their dissatisfaction was the humid climate and the pervasiveness of disease in Florida, which killed far more soldiers than the Seminoles did. The army had made some significant progress in improving the health of its soldiers during the early 1830s, and the struggle against malaria and dysentery in Florida came as a shocking setback that left its officers feeling helpless. Some established posts in the South were equally if not more deadly in proportional terms, but the sheer scale of sickness in Florida, made glaringly obvious by the large numbers of troops concentrated there, lent an epidemic atmosphere to the army's camps that precipitated demoralization among officers and enlisted men alike. Indeed, Thomas Jesup recognized that the Seminoles were well aware of the debilitating effects of the climate on the Americans, reporting to Secretary Poinsett in mid-December 1837 that "it is extremely doubtful whether the Indians will fight--their policy is to fly, knowing as they
do that on the approach of summer the climate will fight their battles for
them, and drive us from the country."56

Every summer the war came to a virtual halt as toiling soldiers
collapsed from heatstroke while officers fled "the inglorious field" on leaves
of absence to their homes in the east. (In July 1841, for example, 2428 of the
5000 regular soldiers in Florida were on the sick list, even as William Worth
fought an unprecedented summer campaign.) Those who could not escape
became demoralized as well as debilitated: after a five month bout of
sickness, Lieutenant Nathaniel Wyche Hunter of the 2nd Dragoons
considered himself "a wreck in both mind and body." Soldier-satirists writing
in the Army and Navy Chronicle mocked "the absurd idea of removing an
army from pestilence," using Seminole characters like "Sam Jones" to voice
their bemusement at the policy that kept the army in Florida during the
summer, supposedly in order to secure and maintain the gains made during
the previous winter. Parody aside, the war's duration combined with the
malarial climate caused George Pegram to joke uneasily with Robert
Anderson: "Think not, my dear Capt., that we shall leave nothing undone
for you. There will be plenty of game left to hunt up, for years yet to come . . .
and the bones of many will yet bleach upon these unhealthy shores, before it
is ended." Indeed, the army command prohibited furloughs that year (1841), a
measure that filled Captain William McClintock with foreboding: "This
prohibition . . . seems to squint at a summer campaign . . . The experience of
the last five years is lost with the old Administration . . . much use is made of
the words vigour and energy, in a manner that convinces me they don't
know the meaning of those words as applied to Florida . . . Our sick list next
fall, will be sure to furnish them a definition."57
The danger and discomfort officers experienced were not ameliorated by the consolations of family, to which officers had become accustomed in their static posts before the war. (Most officers married, and did so in their late twenties, usually at about the time they were promoted to captain.) Between the Seminoles, the heat, and the malaria, few officers would bring their wives to Florida, and many therefore regarded it as "banishment." Indeed, Captain George Pegram advised Robert Anderson to "put off your thoughts of love or marriage until after this Florida war is ended," and Pegram's wife later persuaded him to resign when he was not given a leave of absence to visit her. Unmarried regulars also felt this sense of isolation in the Florida wilderness—even before the war Lieutenant Morris Smith Miller wrote to his sister Sarah that "I would prefer any other post, as far as society is concerned," as he felt himself "entirely out of the world," while Nathaniel Wyche Hunter sounded the doleful refrain of the universal soldier in a place few Americans would expect to hear it today: "Here we are on Christmas night 26 miles from Tampa with the eternal forest around us and nothing but Indians and wolves . . . what a holiday it has been. I doubt that I will ever forget it."58

The most important spur to officers' frustration was a potentially more political one, the "ignominy" of what several publically labelled "this inglorious war." Such discontent proceeded from two sources: the officer corps' distaste for what Lieutenant Thomas Boylston Adams labelled the "drudgery" of Indian-fighting, and the realization that there was little public acclaim to be won in return for their sacrifices. Jungle skirmishes did not fit not the conventional image of Napoleonic battle that permeated American ideals of warfare; daily patrols and convoy escorts were hardly likely to
provide opportunities to win the fame and reputation that these military emulators of gentry values sought. Most regular soldiers soon came to respect the Seminoles as determined (though savage and treacherous) fighters, but they remained disenchanted with their work, because ethnocentric American public opinion remained unwilling to accept their "savage" opponents' valor (or, on the part of many northerners and Whigs, the morality of the removal policy and war), and thus of their own. As a result, many officers reacted by belittling their assigned task. "Very little [glory] could have been gained in the best possible issue of the war, against so small and miserable a race of Indians," as one veteran remarked in an 1837 letter to the Army and Navy Chronicle, while to Assistant Surgeon Lewis Birdsall Florida seemed the embodiment of "a howling wilderness, the proper abode of Owls and bats and Snakes . . . savage things all, in a savage land"—hardly a place worth the sacrifices of gentlemen. Another officer watched as the sweating troops swung pick and shovel to build roads and fortifications in 1839 and looked ahead with distaste to tending the sick that summer, exclaiming sarcastically that "this is warfare! glorious, noble, chivalrous warfare!"59

Glory and reputation were rewards that could only come from civilian society, a society that at this time was only beginning to develop a literature which romanticized the Indians as noble or worthy opponents. Officers praised each others' gallantry at every turn, but it was public recognition they craved, and this was hard to come by amid a guerrilla war against Indians considered savages. (Civilian accounts of the Seminoles gave them little credit for the "civilization" which many whites attributed to the agricultural tribes of the southeast.) The army officer corps faced constant criticism from opponents of West Point and supporters of the volunteers and militia during
the 1830s and 1840s, a period when many new officers were appointed directly from civilian life, undercutting the West Point monopoly and the seniority system that guaranteed officers a slow but ultimately secure climb up the promotion ladder. The rash of resignations in 1835 and 1836 reinforced a popular belief that regular officers were lazy place-seekers, while the army's duties in Florida brought it into frequent conflict with local settlers, who sought military protection without accepting the need for any sort of self-discipline or external constraint, which they considered aristocratic and "unrepublican." In turn, the regulars considered most white Floridians greedy cowards unworthy of their sacrifices. This attitude reflected views which had developed long before the war, and it quickly became evident the very top of the army hierarchy: after the panic that followed the Dade Massacre and the outbreak of war, Winfield Scott excoriated the planters of Florida for their "infinitely humiliating" exodus to the towns and neighboring states. "The inhabitants could see nothing but an Indian under every bush," he asserted in Order No. 48, where he contrasted their behaviour with that of the army. Scott warned that "no General . . . can cure a disease in the public mind, so general and so degrading, without some little effort on the part of the people themselves," but he observed that "instead of adopting "the simple and manly course" of self-defense, they threw "execrations upon the general [Scott] who has the misfortune to command a handful of brave troops in the midst of such a population."60

Civil-military strife was always common in frontier regions, where commanders often had to restrain white squatters and enforce regulations against liquor sales to Indians and soldiers, and historian James Denham has recently shown that the friction between settlers and regulars in Florida antedated the war by at least a decade. Civilians considered army enlisted
men the scum of the cities and army officers effete aristocrats or petty tyrants, while soldiers and officers alike returned the civilians' contempt in full measure. The duration of the war exacerbated this acrimony just as it did every other irritant, and there were several clashes between regular enlisted men and armed civilians when one group felt threatened by the other or sought revenge for earlier injuries. Indeed, in 1837 Lieutenant Robert Wainwright reported to his comrade William Chapman that he had been forced to take "the law into my own hands by arming two of my men, and going in pursuit" of an Alabamian who had murdered one of his soldiers: "Unless I push this matter nothing will be done . . . So much for the laws of Alabama." At a more general level of conflict, officers up to and including Brigadier General Jesup (then the theater commander) had begun to complain that whites were supplying the Seminoles and fomenting or taking advantage of the chaos in order to enrich themselves, and one captain privately asserted that whites "are doing more to keep it up than the Indians . . . I believe that two-thirds of the recent murders have [been] committed by the whites themselves." Three years later another officer wrote anonymously to the Army and Navy Chronicle with an astonishingly impolitic remedy that demonstrates the danger these clashes posed to professionally accountable civil-military relations:

The war can never be ended until the savages are cut off from supplies; they will be joined by whites, and I only wonder that more do not join the marauders. There never was a better theatre for land piracy than Florida is now. . . . I would advise that an appropriation be made for hemp, to hang a squad of pale-faces, who infest the country much more to its detriment than [any] troop of red-skins.
He concluded with a telling reference to Andrew Jackson's drumhead court-martials in Florida nearly twenty years before: "It would have a good effect to Ambristerize a few of them." Indeed, this officer's perspective was in some respects even more irresponsible than Jackson's, for in 1840 the supposed traitors were American citizens the army was charged with protecting, not British infiltrators stirring up the Indians.61

Some junior commanders took such matters into their own hands and had civilians imprisoned or whipped, while others looked on with tacit approval when soldiers under their command retaliated against civilian attackers. (This somewhat paternalistic sympathy, which sometimes amounted to obstruction of justice, was not unknown before or after the Second Seminole War, in the environs of army posts elsewhere in the country, or indeed in the twentieth century.) At least one officer who did so was somehow able to ignore a grand jury indictment against him, while another simply (and successfully) disclaimed responsibility for retaliation by his men against a brutal sheriff. Indeed, regular forces were actually withdrawn from southern Georgia in early 1841 after a civilian was killed in such an incident. These assumptions of legal authority, relatively rare during the 1820s and on the Canadian border at this time, were not limited solely to junior officers, private citizens, or minor law enforcement officers: Major George Wright was accused of ordering a deputy U.S. Marshal to expel the local civil officials, including the judiciary, from the environs of Tampa Bay after the war had ended, apparently in execution of William Worth's order that civilians "who have made themselves obnoxious to the military" (for reasons unstated) be removed from the military reservation at Ft. Brooke. It is unclear whether Worth instructed his subordinate to include the magistrates; Wright may well have exceeded his instructions, as Worth (the
theater commander at the time he ordered the "obnoxious" civilians expelled) was a sensible though aggressive commander. Such orders were not unusual, but were normally limited to unlicensed liquor salesmen and petty troublemakers, not civil magistrates—perhaps Worth had finally tired of the frustrating civil-military diplomacy he had excelled at along the Canadian border. On the other hand, we have observed Worth's impatience with persistent Patriot depredations there, and the frontier atmosphere and distance from Washington was more pronounced in Florida, where officers had already exerted broad civilian powers for nearly a decade by 1842, so it may be that these conditions offered Worth the opportunity to attempt a more authoritarian resolution to his problems with what he regarded as civilian indiscipline than had been politically possible on the Canadian border.62

From the civilian side, county grand juries constantly brought in "findings" of what they considered military incompetence, and theater commanders Thomas Jesup and Zachary Taylor both sought but were refused relief from their posts due to civilian criticism. Indeed, when ordered to assume the command in Jesup's place, Taylor wrote to his friend and superior that "I . . . will at any moment with great pleasure, yield [command] to anyone who the [War] Department may . . . designate to supercede me." (Lieutenant Colonel William Davenport made the same plea a year and a half later, when he referred to territorial governor Richard Keith Call as "an evil genius.") Such antagonism came to a perversely logical conclusion in September 1842, when Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Vose, the acting theater commander, refused to execute War Department orders to resume operations against the Seminoles, blaming "vagabond classes" among the whites for any ongoing unrest. (Remember that Zachary Taylor and Ethan Allen Hitchcock
were displaying similar doubts about civilian rumors of a Cherokee
confederation and uprising at about the same time.) The federal government
ultimately sympathized with the army in such conflicts, probably because it
had to perform the same sort of delicate balancing act between local and
national considerations, and discrediting the army would have brought
discredit to the national government as a whole. The War Department not
only agreed with Vose (who had warned four years before that whites were
always the aggressors in conflicts with Indians), but ordered him to defend the
Seminoles against white attacks.⁶³

As in other Indian wars in the South, large numbers of volunteers
were called into service to supplement the small number of regulars
available, and this led to constant conflict. Floridians routinely sought to
raise new militia companies, whether for protection or employment (the
federal government paid in scarce specie, a motivating factor regular officers
were quick to point out), while army commanders argued that the amateurs
were a hindrance to operations and an unjustifiable expense to the federal
treasury. Controversies over the conduct of the volunteers arose after every
battle or campaign, as both sides criticized one another for indecisiveness or
lack of courage. Colonel (brevet brigadier general) Duncan Clinch, the senior
army officer in Florida at the outbreak of the war, almost immediately became
embroiled in a dispute with territorial governor Richard K. Call over the
volunteers' performance at the Withlacoochee River on December 31, 1835
(the first major engagement after the Dade Massacre), where Clinch felt that
they had hesitated in crossing the river to aid the embattled regulars. Call
responded with militarily sound arguments that Clinch had exercised
insufficient caution by placing his troops in an isolated position, but this
made little difference to regular commanders when fifty-two of the fifty-nine
wounded and all four of the dead soldiers had been regulars. Two years later, discussing the battle of Wahoo Swamp, Lieutenant John W. Phelps told his father that General Armstrong of the volunteers "refused to charge the hummock with his command because it embraced a large number of young men of the choicest families of Tennessee." The greatest of these controversies came when Colonel Zachary Taylor drew the ire of Missouri Senators Thomas Hart Benton and Lewis Linn for his public letter damning the inaction of that state's volunteers at the Battle of Okeechobee in December 1837, an exchange that drew extensive commentary in the *Army and Navy Chronicle* and officers' private correspondence.64

This debate masked much harsher realities: regular officers feared that the volunteers would be given what little credit could be gained in the war, while many also believed that the volunteers had left the regulars to do the fighting and dying, showing "a decided preference [for] the post of safety, rather than the post of honor." One anonymous correspondent contrasted the "manful" stand of the regulars with the volunteers' "base" retreat at Okeechobee, and another veteran even told a friend that "it is said that the Genl put his pistol to the head of an officer of the Missipians [sic] and told him he would blow his brains out if he did not force his men over" a creek in support of the regulars already engaged. Thomas Henderson summed up this critique in a letter to his comrade Benjamin King: "In all [the battles] the regulars have done the fighting--in all the irregulars have been false--leaving the honor and the loss chiefly to the army." Writing three years later, another officer believed that General Jesup faced more opposition in his own camp than from the enemy. The political (though not overtly partisan or ideological) dimensions of the regulars' uneasy relations with the volunteers were evident in their repeated calls for an enlargement of the army in order
to dispense with the militia and volunteers altogether, which would enable it to prosecute the war alone (all of which would produce faster promotions and higher pay). "Sheer Justice" went farther than most officers, blaming Congress's failure to expand the army for the dire consequences produced by mixing regulars and militia, maintaining that "the blood that has flowed so freely is to be charged to their account." Another junior correspondent to the Army and Navy Chronicle sneered that the Seminoles could never be subdued by "volunteers, whose lives are so valuable," and he lambasted the citizen-soldiers as "fit subjects to take up arms for political effect, at the expense of the nation."65

The always politically astute Winfield Scott attempted to ease this bad blood by establishing a clear chain of command based on the principles of rank and seniority, but he had only mixed success. His "Order No. 1" to the Army of Florida emphasized that "every junior will obey any senior . . . whether the parties belong to the militia, or to the Marines and Regular Army," but regular officers frequently refused orders from higher-ranking volunteers, and Lieutenant Colonel William Foster threatened to resign if forced to serve for a second time under volunteer colonel Leigh Read. In another instance, Duncan Clinch failed to act on an order by Winfield Scott to relieve a besieged blockhouse containing fifty Florida militiamen, later citing a lack of troops as a justification. Clinch may well have believed that the "siege" was a figment of jumpy civilian imaginations, or that they could break it on their own with a little initiative and aggressiveness, but the siege lasted for forty-eight days before Leigh Read led a volunteer force to its relief. Clinch resigned that fall and later served for two years as a congressman from Georgia. Most disturbingly, an anonymous group proclaiming themselves "Many Officers of the Army" appealed publically to the Attorney General in
opposition to territorial governor Call's unofficial appointment as theater commander in November 1836, on the legal grounds that Call was a civilian without either regular or militia rank. These regulars questioned whether Call's appointment was "a lawful order," and asked if he could "be held amenable to any military tribunal" (i.e., a court-martial, like those in which Gaines and Scott were embroiled after the failure of their campaigns) if accused of misconduct. Call was relieved from his military post by President Jackson within the month and replaced by Quartermaster General Jesup, who had been offered the command by Call in September while he was in Alabama commanding against the Creeks, but had chosen to serve under Call until the governor had had the chance to prove himself. Indeed, the friction between Call and army commanders over raising and commanding militia units eventually became so great that President Van Buren (the father of an army officer himself) dismissed the governor in 1839, but he was replaced by Judge Leigh Reid. Even then the army tried (with mixed success) to diminish the new governor's influence by requesting that he be required to route all his communications to its officers through the War Department.66

Much of the antagonism between regulars, volunteers, and civilians originated in the stereotypes they held about each other and about the proper character of American soldiers. Regular officers found volunteers, like the settler population they came from, "mercenary" and self-centered, "rapacious men who come for plunder [and] negroes, and run as soon as an Indian fires a rifle at them." These officers were certain that citizen-soldiers lacked the discipline, cohesion, and moral stamina necessary for either attritional guerrilla warfare or decisive battlefield victories. "Mentor" agreed with the civilian critics that "from the facility with which every industrious man in America can get a living, and become independent, the material of the ranks
of the army is vastly inferior to that which compose the militia," but he also reminded readers of militia defeats at Washington and Detroit during the War of 1812 and warned that "in time of war we should suspend the song" of militia superiority. In this representative view, volunteers lacked "military discipline and subordination" and had "no confidence in each other or in themselves," unlike the esprit de corps and stability that regular soldiers developed over long periods of mutual service under military discipline. As Thomas Henderson suggested after the battle of Okeechobee, "if the Missouri men had done their duty, that battle... would have produced results. As it is it shews the difference between volunteers and regulars."67

Another veteran lamented the American romance with citizen-soldiers because he thought that it bred "disappointment and despair in the ranks of our own ill-fated troops." The usually diplomatic Winfield Scott was careful to praise the militia, but the regular officer's division of military labor was implicit in his disclaimer that "it would be unreasonable to call on the gallant and patriotic to volunteer... where nothing but hardship and suffering can be expected, unrelieved by the hope of battle and the glory consequent upon victory." (Scott's letter was basically a political covering action, written after his criticism of the volunteers became public.) "Quasi-Major" proposed a compromise, similar to a number of other proposals from officers at the time, to enlist native-born backwoodsmen as riflemen and light infantry under regular command, the frontiersmen to provide the speed, stealth, and hunting skills foreign-born enlisted men from the cities were said to lack, the officers to inculcate the discipline necessary for sustained warfare. Indeed, this veteran proposed a new level of adaptation to the exigencies of Indian warfare, not only to abandon "all formal 'plans of campaign,'" but to dress the new corps like the Seminoles. The officer corps wanted glory too,
but it proved willing to do society's dirty work in order to maintain its monopoly over the direction of organized violence (and the attendant potential for glory). Ultimately, only fifty-five of the 30,000 volunteers who served in the war were killed in action (as opposed to 328 out of 10,000 regulars), which suggests both the power of the regular monopoly and that the volunteers were willing to grant the officers' wish.68

Officers' attitudes toward the Seminoles appear at least superficially more favorable than those toward white settlers and citizen-soldiers, and given the officer corps' antagonism to the Florida whites we can see its attitudes toward the Indians as a reflection of their disenchantment as well as some of their occupational values. In other words, though the officer corps certainly shared the common ethnocultural prejudices of the day, its members routinely used comparisons between the Indians and settlers as vehicles to illustrate their grievances. The Indians were clearly more capable fighters than the frontiersmen, and although they commonly labelled the Seminoles treacherous savages, many regular officers contrasted their opponents' laudable "spirit of freedom and daring" with "the vampyre-like pioneers of civilization who have been fast crowding upon them."

"Agricola" numbered among the Seminoles' advantages "the justice of his cause, and his abiding consciousness of moral right," while an anonymous "Subaltern" condemned the relentless pursuit of men who would "live on roots rather than . . . desert the home of their fathers."69

Army officers found such determination both admirable and daunting. Lieutenant William Warren Chapman (a quartermaster officer at first ardent in his pursuit of combat) reported to his fiancée Helen Blair that he had met the Seminole chiefs Jumper and Powell (Osceola). Chapman called Jumper "a
brave, devoted patriot, and an injured, unhappy Indian," and he spoke of Osceola in similar terms as "a brave warrior and a patriot," concluding that "future generations will honor his memory." Firsthand experience led Chapman to believe that "anyone who has ever visited their beautiful villages . . . would not be surprised at [their] . . . reluctance to exchange Florida for the cold country of Arkansas." Another veteran felt certain that "they will never leave this land while there is a swamp or a palmetto in Florida. They are as devoted to die on the soil that gave them birth as ever a martyr was to die for his religion." Whatever Chapman's true feelings, this sort of praise bolstered the image of the Seminoles as worthy opponents, both for officers themselves and the civilians they hoped to persuade, and thus served to excuse the length and inconclusiveness of the war.70

Regular commanders correctly blamed white settlers (and their representatives and allies among local and federal civil officials) for the causes—land hunger and greed—as well as the duration of the conflict. "[T]he source of all the failures that have happened, is to be attributed to the misrepresentations of the [local] Governmental agents," asserted Lieutenant John Phelps, a thorough critic of the removal policy (and later an abolitionist, who resigned from the Union army when not permitted to enlist escaped slaves during the Civil War) who believed that the Seminoles were tricked into signing the treaty of emigration "by the fawning machinations of unprincipled agents upon whose probity the government was wrong in relying." Army officers were well aware of the fraudulent claims commonly put forward by local civilians but could do little to stop them given the divided federal structure of political authority in the territory, and one angry officer wrote to Captain Samuel P. Heintzelman that "the iniquity of the people in this country is a frightful thing and indeed their code of morals is
sunk [extremely] low." As usual, the excitable Nathaniel Hunter went farther rhetorically and in substance, privately labelling the treaty of removal "a compact begot in fraud" by "a government that incites you to the commission of a crime." Lieutenant J.K.F. Mansfield, son of West Point professor Jared Mansfield, chief engineer for Zachary Taylor in northern Mexico, and inspector general of the army in the 1850s, wrote to his brother Edward, an academy graduate and civilian professor of constitutional law, that "I hope they will require no engineers":

[I]t would be a satisfaction to risk my life where honor is to be gained & not in an unjust war on a few miserable savages, goaded to the fighting point with a view to drive them from soil no rational man would live upon. Alas! [M]y country, I blush for your principles of freedom, your justice and your honor!

Heaven will reward thee according to thy deserts.

Mansfield went on to condemn "this money making, money loving, hypocritical community," and he envisioned the consequences of such degeneracy and dishonor in a nightmare of civil war, "the glitter of thousands of bayonets in deadly strife [--] Father against son & brother against brother."71

"An Officer of the 4th Artillery"--probably Phelps--praised the Seminoles' "integrity" and adherence to the treaties made in the 1820s. In one letter to the Army and Navy Chronicle he labelled the war "our great injustice," ominously invoking Christianity and republicanism against it:

Can any Christian in this Republic . . . still pray for the continuance of blessings[?] . . . Can a people who boast the freest institutions, so far forget themselves as to assume the blackest attributes of tyranny[?] . . . [N]ot with impunity. An equilibrium
will ever be maintained in the moral world as well as in the physical—retribution will inevitably follow dereliction.

He then attacked the wisdom of the removal policy in general, comparing its "crowding and condensing disaffected Indian tribes" in the West to "congesting thunderous clouds" that would "[lavish] their fury on the earth" and bring desolation to "our now happy country."72

Such apocalyptic imagery was rare among the pragmatists of the army officer corps. Products of extensive socialization in a personal style modeled on the image of the English gentleman, most career officers were unreflective, unimaginative, and nonideological in temperament. Lieutenant William Wall agreed with the war's critics that the dispossessior of the Seminoles "will be injustice in our view of it, and will result from selfishness and depravity," but like many officers he placed the origins of the removal policy in the context of a cultural determinism that assumed that the ultimate outcome of Indian-white conflict was inevitable because of the presumed superiority of white society. "Who will call to account the majestic oak because his lofty and extended limbs prevent the mature growth of other trees in the forest?" Wall asked, an assertion that illustrates the ease with which many officers reconciled their doubts and duty without pondering their ethical implications.73

Nevertheless, qualms about the war began to have an effect among the officer corps at both the individual and policy-making levels. The officer of the 4th called on "the people" to "crush" the war by instructing their representatives "not to make the necessary appropriation" if they agreed with him, while other public correspondents called for Congress to investigate and force negotiations. Nathaniel Hunter observed in his diary that he had decided to ignore an order to stop taking prisoners, which he termed
"wringing [my] hands in innocent blood." (The origins and scope of this order are unclear from Hunter's entry. There was no theater-wide policy to this effect, however.) This sort of moral unease was not confined to company commanders in the field: Surgeon General Thomas Lawson, who had commanded volunteers during Scott's 1836 campaign, finally came to advocate "acknowledging their independence, and yielding up to them the country for which they have so gallantly and so successfully fought, and so nobly won. It will be manifest then that the Almighty is in their favor, and God's will should be done." Frustrated by the difficulties of command in Florida, Quartermaster General Jesup asked to be relieved once he came to the conclusion that only extermination would displace the Seminoles from their homeland, but his request was rejected on the grounds that the administration wanted to retain his energy and experience (and doubtlessly to avoid a new opening for partisan attacks on its policy and competence). Indeed, Van Buren refused both Gaines' and Scott's requests to return to Florida, a sign that the administration wanted a commander who would devote his full attention to prosecuting the removal effort rather than his fellow officers.\textsuperscript{74}

Another focal point for officers' qualms and frustration (and one more specific to the Seminole war than to Indian conflicts in general, or those after the Civil War) was the conflict with white settlers and Creek Indian allies over ex-slaves and their descendants captured from among the Seminoles. Slaveholding was so central to plantation agriculture and white expectations for prosperity in Florida that a committee of prominent local whites warned Jesup and the War Department that reenslaving escapees was "an object of scarcely less moment than that of peace in the country." White speculators scrambled to purchase or otherwise obtain as many captured maroons and
Afro-Seminole as possible, along with any other African-Americans who could be caught in that wide net of these categorizations, and the Creeks who served with the army in 1836 and 1837 received various quasi-official promises that they could seize and enslave Seminole blacks or maroons taken captive, theoretically on the grounds that these men had once been slaves of the Creeks. (Note that the army's Creek auxiliaries were Upper Creeks; its opponents in the "Creek War" of 1836 were Lower Creeks ethnically and in some respects culturally akin to the Seminoles.) The army had long served as an instrument of racial control in the South by strategically placing troops in locations thought vulnerable to insurrection and occasionally deploying them during actual uprisings, and commanding general Macomb had done so actively during the scares of the early 1830s, both before and after Nat Turner's rebellion in Virginia. The physical suppression of these insurrections was carried out by local volunteers and militia, however, and most of the officers involved had viewed these roles as police matters rather than integral parts of a more general mission. (In other words, they shared the racial prejudices of the planters but did not go to great lengths expounding a mission or ideology of racial control.\textsuperscript{75}

Officers could muster little sympathy for the selfish demands of planters amidst the more pressing exigencies of war, and the army hierarchy pursued a de facto policy of refusing these supposed "property rights" and conveying blacks found among the Seminoles to the west along with them. Jesup did offer captured blacks to his troops--both volunteer and regular--as booty in the summer of 1837, but he quickly abandoned the policy when it became clear that it was deterring Afro-Seminole from turning themselves in for emigration. Indeed, commanders like Jesup soon realized that the Afro-Seminole were among "the most active and determined" of their
opponents, and in March 1837 the general declared that the conflict was actually "a negro, not an Indian war." Similarly, several officers including Jesup made analogies between the Seminole conflict and maroon wars in the Caribbean in letters to the Army and Navy Chronicle, citing the difficulty of earlier conflicts in Jamaica as justification for the duration of the American war. In the mouths of men like Andrew Jackson or Edmund Gaines twenty years before these words had manifested the interest of the planter class in obliterating maroon resistance from the southern borderlands, but in Jesup's case they simply represented the professional officer's desire to accomplish his assigned task by neutralizing the focal points of Seminole opposition, without regard for the sectional interests of southern civilians. Jesup manipulated the theme of maroonage to secure larger calls for volunteers from southern governors, but he had no intention of launching a slave hunt through Florida.76

Instead, Jesup's initial agreement with the Seminoles in March 1837 allowed blacks to emigrate west along with the Indians, and his General Order 79 of the following month was in large part intended to end the "interference of unprincipled white men with the Negroe property of the Seminoles." (This language may indicate that Jesup still had difficulty envisioning the maroons distinct from masters, but it seems more probable that he realized that phrasing the issue in this manner would be the easiest way to deflect white criticism.) Though he doubted the legal authority for demanding escapees from the Seminoles, criticism from Florida whites (who saw recently escaped slaves and those seized or rescued by the Indians slipping away under cover of an assumed ethnicity) quickly pressured the general into revising the truce to restrict this provision to blacks present among the Seminoles before the war. Jesup was promptly rebuked by antislavery forces in the North, but
more importantly, Osceola and a large proportion of the Seminoles who had turned themselves in for removal promptly returned to the wilds and resumed the war, a reaction that led the frustrated general to warn the secretary of war that the blacks and Indians were "rapidly approximating—they are identified in interests and feelings."  

Spurred by criticism and frustration, Jesup's distaste for the slavers' rabid materialism then returned to the fore: "I will not make negro-catchers of the army," the Kentuckian exclaimed to Secretary of War Poinsett in disgust, and he later wrote that "I was apprised of the order to surrender the negroes, but protested against the measure and probably had some influence in preventing it from being carried out." This distaste did not distract Jesup from his duty to carry out the removal policy, and he suggested several measures to divide the African and Indian elements of the Seminoles, including colonizing the Afro-Seminoles in Africa. Indeed, Jesup wanted to ship the Afro-Seminoles west even if the Indians remained in Florida, and in his truce proposal of February 1838 he offered the African Indians freedom so long as they turned themselves in for deportation westward, a tactic that successfully divided the Seminoles along ethnorracial lines and secured the allegiance of the blacks among them.  

Indeed, black Seminoles routinely sought "freedom papers" based on Jesup's promises and agreements, and they used these as legal protection and evidence of free status upon arrival in the Oklahoma region. His tactically motivated manipulativeness notwithstanding, Jesup's sense of honor did not allow him to let the maroons be reenslaved once they were out of sight in Oklahoma, for once set on this path the general continued to follow the fortunes of those he had deported west, writing to President Tyler and the secretary of war in 1844 that he had pledged that they would not be sold to
whites: "I cannot remain passive and witness the illegal interference with the rights of these people. . . . I earnestly hope that the Executive will not permit the national faith . . . to be violated . . . and that measures [will] be taken to recover all who have been separated from their families and sold." Indeed, Jesup's language is remarkably (but certainly not surprisingly) reminiscent of that of Worth and Scott on the northern frontier—law and national honor were the central values, the pursuit of which officers identified with their own honor and conduct.  

Jesup was not a humanitarian reformer or a crypto-abolitionist, but a pragmatist and a man who upheld the officer corps' distinctive occupational conception of honor: hunting escaped slaves was even less glorious than chasing Indians, and if giving blacks their freedom from thankless, grasping civilians meant shortening the war, achieving the federal government's objectives, and reducing the army's sacrifices, Jesup would not hesitate to do so. A number of other commanders seem to have shared these attitudes, although outside of the correspondence of senior officers it is evident only in passing references. Major Sylvester Churchill (the acting inspector general in Florida, who was extensively involved in providing logistical support for prisoners and emigrant Indians) and other officers consistently referred to captured African-Americans as "negro prisoners"—their military (though racially tinged) status—rather than "escaped slaves"—their civil one—or the like. Upon taking Jesup's place, Zachary Taylor declared to the adjutant general that he would do nothing to reduce the Afro-Seminole "from a comparative state of freedom to that of slavery." Taylor refused to separate the Indians and blacks and effectively left the handling of policy toward them in the hands of a junior subordinate, who refused to turn over seventy captive blacks despite a lawsuit by their putative "owner." The War
Department supported the plaintiff, but Generals Edmund P. Gaines and Mathew Arbuckle (both slaveholders themselves) managed to avoid executing its orders to seize them, and that group arrived safely in Arkansas. Indeed, Gaines believed that the claim was fraudulent, and made an unsuccessful motion in court to formally declare the Afro-Seminole prisoners of war under army jurisdiction. In March 1841 the War Department ordered the Seminoles emigrants and their military captors to surrender all runaways, unless doing so would inhibit the successful prosecution of the removal policy, which is precisely how officers continued to interpret it, rendering the order effectively void. (Given the experience of the four previous years it is indeed difficult to see how the War Department could have expected anything else, and perhaps it did not.)

Apart from Jesup and perhaps Taylor, a bureaucratic desire to avoid responsibility for the disposition of the Seminole maroons appears to have been the most common response of officers, and it was not until August 1841 William Worth finally established a policy for military handling of Afro-Seminole maroons, declaring that he would guarantee the Indians possession of all blacks found among them regardless of the "mode or time" by which the maroons had joined or been obtained by the Seminoles. White claimants would be compensated after a board of officers determined the value of their losses, placing the officer corps directly at the heart of this mediated emancipation, but the degree of officers' participation in (and their reactions to) this process remain unclear. Officers charged with settling the Seminoles in Oklahoma continued the policies of Jesup and his successors, however: in 1840 Mathew Arbuckle pressured the Creeks not to act as slavecatchers for white claimants, while three years later Taylor ordered a subordinate not to surrender one of the black Seminoles to the Creeks, on the
ground that Jesup's promises were still binding. Indeed, the following year Taylor warned a prominent Creek that Taylor would imprison him if he seized Seminole blacks, and pressured him into releasing those he had already taken captive.81

Regular soldiers began recommending peace after less than two years of war, and their proposals often involved restraining whites as much as Indians. When Congress debated a strategy of colonization under the Armed Occupation Act in 1839, "Mentor" suggested to the readers of the Army and Navy Chronicle that because of the Seminoles' hatred and contempt for white settlers the war would end much sooner if all whites left East Florida. In other words, he preferred to give that territory up to the Seminoles rather than defend the citizens he supposedly served. "[D]rop that feature in the arrangement that requires their emigration; that done they will instantly make a treaty, and abide by it," another veteran suggested in 1837. In fact, officers like this one actually sought martial law throughout Florida in order to remove the white settlers and their property from areas controlled by the Indians, and the officer corps' concern for maintaining law and order on all sides was evident in his expectation that the Seminoles would then cease providing a refuge to "the vagabond white man." (He also suggested that the Seminoles would then return escaped slaves and maroons from across the South.) Indeed, General Jesup warned whites that he would declare martial law and deport them from the territory if they tried to seize Seminoles as debtors or criminals during a truce period, and his Order No. 79 of April 1837 actually forbade white civilians to enter southern Florida, but their storm of outrage forced him first to modify and then to effectively rescind the order.82
Convinced that early removal had no purpose worth its cost, Jesup first sought a truce and negotiations in February 1837, but the peace agreement he fashioned fell through because of the resistance of Seminole hardliners (particularly the Afro-Seminoles and maroons, who feared reenslavement if they surrendered). A year later, after the stalemated battles of Okeechobee and Lockahatchee (in which the Seminole force was about equally divided between Indians and blacks), Jesup declared another truce and wrote directly to the President (i.e., bypassing the secretary of war, through whom communications were normally routed), recommending that the Seminoles be allowed to remain in Florida for the time being, asserting that "we exhibit in our present contest, the first instance, perhaps since the commencement of authentic history, of a nation employing an army to explore a country (for we can do little more than explore it), or attempting to remove a band of savages from one unexplored wilderness to another." This was also Major General Alexander Macomb's plan in 1839, undertaken at the recommendation of Zachary Taylor (then theater field commander) and his council of officers. Artillery colonel (brevet brigadier general) Walker Armistead (the least experienced of the theater commanders) deviated from the norm by seeking an aggressive campaign in 1841, but William Worth (Armistead's senior field officer) seems to have avoided acting in earnest, as he reportedly "could not tolerate the idea." Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock then wrote directly to the secretary of war to counsel peace, feeling that "sooner or later the government would be compelled" to do so, and he found that "several officers rejoiced in the prospect of my being able to convince the Secretary . . . that a pacific policy was the only one that could succeed in Florida." Indeed, veteran Captain William McClintock even went so far as to assert that "the white flag" was "the most successful . . . of any commander" the army could have. These
concerns notwithstanding, Worth switched to a policy of aggressive patrolling and relentless pursuit after he assumed the theater command, before finally returning to his earlier inaction and declaring victory a year later. Hitchcock thought that Worth's short-lived aggressiveness was intended to secure his promotion; Worth portrayed it as a last push to drive the Seminoles to submission.83

These reactions proceeded from a pervasive sense of unappreciated sacrifice and isolation. "How little the country knows of the army when they prate about the danger of increasing our force. The intelligence, patriotism, and valour of our officers is not exceeded by any class of citizens in the republic--and this war tries those qualities severely," surgeon Thomas Henderson wrote. "When they gain a victory it is over a gang of negroes and savages, the whole of whom are not worth a finger of such a man as Thompson" (a lieutenant colonel killed at the battle of Okeechobee). Similarly, assistant surgeon Jacob Rhett Motte condemned "the abusive comments of some civilians, who reclining on cushioned chairs in their comfortable and secure homes vomited forth reproaches, sneers, and condemnation, wantonly assailing the characters of those who, alienated from home and kindred and all the comforts of life, were compelled to remain in this inglorious war." "They give us but little credit at the north for our sufferings and privations here; no one, out of Florida, knows what they are," asserted another veteran, calling for the removal of his regiment: "We are worn out and disheartened . . . a regiment of victims." A third surgeon publically rebuked "citizens who sit at home and smoke their cigars in the quiet enjoyment of ease and luxury, who have never seen the Territory of Florida, and are perfectly ignorant of the difficulties which embarrass our military operations on every side." This correspondent to the Army and
Navy Chronicle went on to proclaim that "the army does not need the advice of citizens to teach it how to do this duty."84

This sort of vitriol was directed at superior officers and politicians as well as civilians. Sounding much like the officers of the 1st Dragoons writing about his own commander several years later (or about Mathew Arbuckle at the time he wrote) Nathaniel Hunter opined that chasing the Indians in large bodies was "damned foolishness," and he confided in his diary that "General Armistead assumes command... to the surprise of all, the mortification of many, and the distrust of not a few. What does the grey-bearded and imbecile dotard imagine he can do?" Hunter, who felt great qualms over the removal policy, considered the army's work "the vilest machinations man or demon could invent" and compared its executors to Lady Macbeth, though like other dissenters he remained in uniform. (Indeed, Hunter was later suspected of authoring an anti-army petition circulated in Georgia). An anonymous officer accused highly placed civilian critics of having "the lowest minds" and labelled Senator Linn of Missouri "an intoxicated man or a falsifier" for his speeches against Zachary Taylor, while "Sheer Justice" reproached "those who have not possessed the courage to face boldly and openly the enemies of their common country." Writing from Fort Brooke, "Canard" faulted the government as a whole, which "followed on, step by step, its own views until lives after lives have been lost, and the country disgraced." He concluded that the army was being "sacrificed by bad management": "This war has, with all its tragic scenes, been a farce from the beginning."85

Like their counterparts on the Canadian border, disenchanted veterans identified their sullied honor with that of the nation as a whole in their rhetorical appeals for peace. One supporter of Macomb's peace plan asked Chronicle readers
What honor is there to be gained by the extermination of a nation of aboriginal inhabitants, a brave but simple people, who, if they had been treated with less cruelty and injustice by their immediate neighbors, might before this, have ceased to be their deadly foes, and would probably have left the country of their forefathers . . . peaceably yielding [it] to the harpies.86

One officer felt that the war had led his comrades to feel "alienated from home, kindred, and friends . . . compelled to remain in this inglorious war, defending a domain which can never be densely populated, and protecting some . . . who would suffer much in comparison with the savages." "A Subaltern" proclaimed that "there is but one thing in which it resembles a war, and that is, in its loathsome.ness. In a regular war, there is something noble, something inspiring . . . It makes me sick to read the accounts of these things . . . [and it is] No wonder [that] the army should have become disgusted with this thankless, and . . . unholy war."87

These feeling spurred officers' eagerness for an end to the war. "I trust that the war will soon be closed, for I am heartily sick of this country," wrote Lieutenant R.A. Wainwright, who was embroiled in a civil-military dispute over the murder of one of his men in Alabama. (Wainwright was detailed to teach at West Point shortly thereafter, defusing the dispute, but his assignment to the academy was the one that aroused Jesup's ire.) Like many of his comrades, Major Sylvester Churchill was "cheered with the favorable prospects of speedy peace" during the negotiations in early 1837, but he could do no more than give thanks for "life, health and for exit from Florida" when granted leave two years later. Colonel Abraham Eustis, commander of several expeditions in Florida, wrote to his son in 1838 that "I shall feel devoutly thankful, when I can be permitted to turn my back upon this hateful
territory." Indeed, Eustis had temporarily acted as theater commander two years before, but he had warned the adjutant general that he did not want that post any longer than was absolutely necessary. Like Jesup, Taylor, and Worth, these men were not green lieutenants or malcontents, and Churchill was appointed inspector general of the army when John Wool was promoted in 1841.88

The officer corps' alienation was most obvious in the occasional (but by no means rare) use or advocacy of what scholars today might call "rituals of inversion"—taking on Seminole dress or persona in order to attack opponents, be they white or Indian, more effectively. Before the war officers had often joined the Seminoles in dancing and other festivities (albeit with mutual suspicion), and they continued to did so during wartime truces. Lieutenant Morris Miller was one of several soldiers who wrote about the affection he developed for an Seminole child while serving in Florida, and he found at least one young Seminole woman "fascinating." Humorously, but more significantly, several satirists and critics signed their editorials in the Army and Navy Chronicle with the names of Seminole chiefs or used Indian characters to express their amusement and disdain for the army's methods. Ultimately "Sam Jones" even left Florida to defend the Military Academy, while "Junius" pretended to visit the Seminole chief's camp, only to be told that his speech was "as long as a white President's message, except mine has this advantage, it has some sense in it." ("Junius" also managed to imagine a "Miss Jones [the General's Daughter by a former wife], between whom and myself there had sprung up a sort of sentimental friendship.") In the ultimate instance of inversion, Nathaniel Hunter asked himself whether "every act of the Indians [is not] sanctioned by the practice of civilized nations?"89
Tactically, this unorganized effort to understand the enemy underlay repeated proposals that the army dress like the Seminoles, a change that would also ease the tortures of sawgrass, heat, and damp. Indeed, "Canard" (who took this pseudonym to characterize civilian critics of the army's performance) gave public voice to the thoughts of a number of officers who believed that only "when the whites will consent to live as the Indians do . . . may these ruthless bands of savages be [defeated] . . . and not before." Such attitudes might well justify unrestrained aggression, which would threaten the army's internal discipline and public image, and senior officers knew it: when Lieutenant Colonel William S. Harney initially asked permission to dress his force as Seminoles he was refused, and when he finally did gain authorization to do so he promptly hunted down an Indian band and hung five of its members, one after shooting him as he tried to surrender. This was only the most notorious of a number of atrocities perpetrated by the army in Florida, and Harney was also reported to have interrogated Seminole women by threatening to hang their children. (As noted in chapter ten, Harney seems to have had a cruel streak which he displayed toward anyone who came within his power, and fifteen years later he refused to take male prisoners among the Brule Sioux and his troops killed their women and children.) This incident brought the army sustained applause from white Floridians for perhaps the only time during the war, but northern civilians condemned the action, and army officers were divided in their responses. The majority who put their opinions on paper seem to have supported Harney out of expediency, but it is a testament to their disenchantment that they could repress their usual values of gentility and honor in order to do so.90

Nevertheless, it was hardly necessary for officers to adopt the disguise of inversion in order to carry out what they would otherwise label barbarous
practices, for their use was easily sanctioned by the assumption that the "savage" Indians—whose presumed racial and cultural inferiority and putative statelessness denied them the protection of the laws of war that European nations applied to each others' combatants—deserved no better. Departures from the norms of "civilized" warfare began as early as the spring of 1836, when Major Francis S. Belton had pits with stakes in them dug and concealed outside Fort Brooke to trap attacking warriors, and Fort Alabama was booby-trapped to explode when it was abandoned in April that year. Measures like these were exceptions rather than the rule, but General Jesup began a highly mixed record of dealings with the Seminoles early in 1837, when he ordered blacks hung if taken prisoner in combat. Jesup soon rescinded the order—it is not known if it was ever carried out—but gave Harney a free hand and threatened to hang prisoners if they refused to give him information (something he never actually did). Indeed, once Jesup began his policy of seizing Indians under flags of truce he extended it to hostage-taking and threatening the hostages with death if other Seminoles did not to surrender. Jesup seized hundreds of Seminoles and prominent leaders like Osceola under truce flags, while William Worth briefly tried the same tactics in 1841. (Worth also offered a bounty for Seminoles captured or killed.)

The official death threats against Indian prisoners concentrated for removal were never carried out; the contrast with Harney may simply have lain in the dragoon commander's personality, or in the fact that he was actually in the field and had just chased the Seminoles down, whereas Jesup and Worth were sitting at headquarters and talking about Indians who had come into white camps and surrendered. Nevertheless, Harney's actions aside, military qualms and sympathy for the Seminoles had a very direct
humanitarian effect, for army officers do not appear to have resorted to the use of torture that characterized many counterinsurgency operations during the Philippine War for Independence (the army's next major experience in tropical guerilla warfare) sixty years later. However much officers may have sought to resolve the psychic tensions of their duty by punishing or eliminating the intractable enemy whose persistence brought civilian criticism against the army, they continued to fight the war in a remarkably Europeanized way that illustrates their personal, institutional, and occupational commitment to ideals of gentility and order. Indeed, harsher measures would only have raised further qualms among disenchanted soldiers by undermining their carefully cultivated sense of identity as regular officers and gentlemen practicing a civilized profession, and they ultimately found it necessary to stay the course in order to retain the security they sought.

"Omicron"'s letter to the Army and Navy Chronicle denouncing Jesup's seizure of Osceola under cover of a white flag manifested the uneasiness produced by departures from the traditional norms of genteeel warfare. The author maintained that "it is impossible that the army can improve while officers can employ themselves in introducing such novel and barbarian methods of warfare," and he avowed that "the old-fashioned and civilized . . . forms of intercourse, which should obtain with a savage foe, are the only ones which can be upheld by good policy, propriety, or the voice of the people." Jesup himself attempted to first justify his conduct and later to make amends by pressing the government to honor promises made to various Indians who had supported the removal effort, particularly the Creeks who had served with the army in 1836 and 1837, and to the Seminoles whom he had sent west, writing in 1844 that "as the Commander of the Army
in Florida I assured them in good faith that the country [in the Oklahoma region] set apart by the treaty was ready for their reception. I consider it due to my honour, as well as that of the Country . . . to urge upon the government the prompt fulfillment of the treaty." Once again Jesup conflated personal and national faith and honor in the execution of his duties to the nation-state.92

The army drove forward despite all these irritants and controversies. Regular officers continued to serve for three basic reasons: the security of their jobs, the comparatively neutral attitude most of them had toward civilian politics, and their cohesion as a group, tempered by the collective misery of an "unpleasant and horrendous service." These factors came together in the same sense of nonpartisan, politically neutral accountability to the dictates of the national government which was then evident along the Canadian border (and reappeared on that with Mexico a half-decade later), a position commonly phrased in a similar language of duty and honor, service and obligation. Put in practical terms, Lieutenant William Warren Chapman resented the "cold ingratitude" of the government, but he assured his fiancee that "I remain in Florida because it is my duty to do so." Another factor that moderated the officer corps' dissent was the availability of a public forum for its pride and frustration in the form of the Army and Navy Chronicle, which served as the principal sounding board for this occupational culture at a critical moment in its development. The Chronicle had no set editorial policy regarding the war; it was the army's platform, open to any officer's opinions. One of them wrote there that only "the consciousness 'I have done my duty'" allayed "the stigma of ingratitude," while another veteran sought vindication by demanding a new campaign for victory, asserting that "it is
due the army, to Florida, and the United States generally, that this protracted war should be closed! It is due the army because it has already spent too much of its time here for its own comfort and advantage."93

At a fundamental institutional level, dissent was possible in the army officer corps for institutional and external political reasons, because the seniority system of promotion meant that officers could not be held directly accountable for their statements without using the cumbersome public instrument of a court-martial for "unofficerlike conduct" or other vague charges. Doing so was too obviously a political move and would have been countered by congressional inquiries from friends of the accused, particularly if they were northerners with ties to opponents of the removal policy. Even charges of direct disobedience of orders or disrespect to a superior officer could usually be avoided through technicalities related to the language involved. Ultimately, the army's personnel policies towards officers were founded on the model of the independent gentleman asserting his rights in an eighteenth century rhetoric of personal honor and integrity rather than that of the officeholder in a bureaucratic hierarchy. As noted below, however, this "independence" and dissent did much to ameliorate civil-military tensions, a dynamic that officers of the British army emphasized when they argued in favor of impersonal promotion by seniority against promotion determined by merit, which they (like their American counterparts) feared would become a cover for patronage and personal favoritism.

The army officer corps eventually became a force for peace in Florida, though by that time it was too late for hundreds of dead Indians and soldiers and the thousands who had been expelled and deported from their homes. Faced with the unyielding determination and stubborn battlefield resistance of the Seminoles, by 1838 few officers believed that the war—executing the
removal policy—was worth its cost in lives, political capital, or, perhaps most importantly, personal inconvenience. This disenchantment notwithstanding, those regulars who resigned (primarily in 1836 and 1837, before the war had clearly become a stalemate) did so for essentially personal reasons, be they health, isolation from wife and family, or more attractive economic opportunities in civilian life. The onset of the Second Seminole War gave added impetus to all these traditional reasons for resignation, for the conflict began amidst a commercial boom and a sustained political assault on West Point and the army. On the other hand, civilian reactions to military dissent were dramatic in tone but had little bite. The army was simply too small to be any serious threat to American democracy, but it could serve as a partisan hobby-horse, so periods of relative calm and neglect were succeeded by backlashes against its centralizing character, particularly in the form of campaigns for retrenchment and against West Point. The early 1840s were one of the latter times, when the size of units was cut, the 2nd Dragoons were dismounted, and various supplements to officers’ pay were curtailed. But despite endless fulminations and several appointments from civilian life, the Military Academy’s monopoly on commissions remained virtually intact, and only a single officer were dismissed in the retrenchment that followed the war.

The officer corps as a whole supported the Jacksonian removal policy, but many commanders felt qualms while executing their duties, especially amidst an influx of disorderly, apparently rapacious white settlers. Inspector General John Wool came into repeated conflict with civilian settlers and authorities up to and including Andrew Jackson himself during his superintendence of the initial stages of Cherokee removal in 1836, while Ethan Allen Hitchcock expressed some of the same antipathy toward removal
service that he had displayed toward the Texan revolutionaries. Wool was echoed by a number of more junior officers during the conclusion of that process two years later, and in the 1850s he criticized white settlers warring on Indians in Oregon in terms much like those officers used in Florida. Northern origins seem to account for much of this unease—comparatively rare though it was among officers—in those of men like John Phelps and Ethan Allen Hitchcock, both born in Vermont, and the New Yorker Wool. (In keeping with the officer corps’ general lack of religiosity, evangelical religion does not seem to have been a statistically prominent source of unease or dissent among these men, much less the corps as a whole, although it was a powerful factor in some individual cases, like Phelps’.) Nathaniel Wyche Hunter was a Georgian, however, and Thomas Sidney Jesup and Zachary Taylor were Virginia-born Kentuckians (and in Taylor’s case a planter), men for whom inner moral qualms appear to have been less influential than their sense of mission, duty, and honor (personal and occupational) as military commanders representing the nation in the midst of complex and frustrating circumstances.94

Inner qualms and civilian attacks notwithstanding, political or explicitly ideological dissent does not appear to have been the primary factor influencing any of the resignations for which information is available, and the wave of resignations peaked in 1836 and declined to normal levels (i.e., an annual rate of about four percent) within two years. One must remember that pensions did not exist at the time, so the pecuniary deterrents to resignation were minimal, especially for staff officers, who could readily put their experience to use building railroads or managing businesses. Army officers were constrained by a highly structured bureaucratic hierarchy, probably the most rigid in the United States at the time, and junior officers
had few opportunities to pursue independent success and autonomy within their profession. The army offered a fixed salary that was not subject to the erratic fluctuations of the business world, and officers did not go "out of business"--barring dismissal for misconduct it was virtually impossible for a regular officer to lose his job during the quarter century between the reductions of 1821 and 1848. Superiors had to resign or die in order for promotion to occur, but officers above the rank of captain had a great deal to lose by quitting the army, and only seven field officers resigned in 1836, only six percent of the total number who did so that year. Soldiers who sought greater opportunities for upward mobility resigned to participate in the market economy; those who remained in the service often felt themselves unsuited to the more demanding tempo of business life.95

Besides security, the primary psychological stimulus for officers to serve would normally have been the promise of glory and public acclaim. This support was denied to officers in the Seminole conflict, so many felt disenchantment and turned to an attitude of complaint and dissent, while some even went so far as to assume masks of martyrdom and alienation. But most officers--the silent majority who wrote nothing of their views and cannot be noticed in quotations--simply carried on with their jobs, drawing their secure salaries amid a turbulent economy and waiting for the passage of time to bring promotion and an end to the war. For some this was too slow--one officer with over thirty years service was still a captain when he asked

Will Congress do anything to improve our condition? If not, I think this campaign will nearly use us up, and when it shall have terminated, the army (at least the Florida portion of it) will disband itself; for it cannot much longer endure the privations
to which it is subjected here, and the neglect of our country at home.

He went on with a plea for promotion: "I have been waiting for it thirty-one years, and if it do[es] not come shortly, I shall die outright, either of poverty or despair."96

On the whole, few army officers died of either, nor during the Seminole War. Officers had secure incomes, social respectability (in Washington and most non-frontier posts, if not in Florida, where the respect accorded to officers depended largely on individuals and the tenor of local civil-military relations at a particular stage in the war), and the power to command. The frustrations and dilemmas of civil-military relations on the frontiers aside, the societal prestige enjoyed by European officers and embodied in concepts like glory was really the only element that was truly lacking. American army officers felt unappreciated and put upon in 1840, but they were already used to enduring frustration and criticism, and they had been deliberately socialized in an ethos of service, sacrifice, and duty to the nation that upheld cohesion, service, and disinterestedness as norms.

Psychologically, such attitudes were highly functional for army officers, for they developed an occupational community (and to a certain extent an occupational culture) based on shared values (however subject to interpretation in practice, as the example of the 1st Dragoons demonstrated) and the day to day details of their mutual tasks. Regular officers longed for the opportunity to distinguish themselves in combat, and courage and decisiveness were certainly two of their core values, but the competitiveness and individualism that might seem to go hand in hand with such values (especially in the Jacksonian social milieu) were restrained by the same battlefield imperatives of command, discipline, and cohesion that encouraged
them in the first place. The American officer's sense of himself as a gentleman in the English mode meant that command was ideally exercised through the display of dispassionate rationality: a cool, decorous touch, calm, steady and reassuring to the supposedly unreliable working class soldiers under their command. Officers despised "rabblerousers"; they had to overcome impulses toward ideological fervor or sentimental romanticism if they were to maintain the order and predictability necessary for a functioning bureaucracy and success in battle. This meant not only that regular commanders felt a strong distaste for the anarchic individualism of frontier settlers, but that this distaste was moderated by a temperamental commitment to political neutrality embodied in the institutional structure of the nation-state. Army officers were not isolated from their society, though its values sometimes irritated and even alienated them, for their sense of accountability to external civilian political processes was enhanced not by an ideological faith in the glories of republicanism and democracy but by their occupational position as members of an organization dependent on those same processes for its survival—in other words, by the implicit threat of sanction and the human desire for career security rather than by positive ideological allegiance. Army officers had a good thing going, and its material and psychological benefits clearly outweighed its frustrations.

In the meantime, officers showered each other with praise and developed internal rituals to cope with the losses they suffered. Foremost among these was the custom of group memorials in the Army and Navy Chronicle paying tribute to dead comrades. Besides a brief and usually stylized (though varying) epitaph, the men involved normally resolved to "wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days, as a memento of respect for our brother officer." More permanently, officers of the regiments
involved in the Dade Massacre formed a committee to collect subscriptions for a monument "in gratitude to the memories of men who have done such honor to their corps [meaning their regiments] and profession." Fourth of July celebrations at army posts included toasts to the troops in Florida, and Lieutenant Benjamin Alvord's address to the "Dialectic Society" at West Point commemorated Major Dade's "gallant band," "determined to defend their unfortunate comrades until the last drop of blood [was] shed upon that consecrated ground." 

"How solemn, religious and impressive was that scene!" Alvord exclaimed. Despite all the backbiting between different generals and their supporters, he could easily have been speaking for the officer corps as a whole in his admiration for the self-sacrifice that "so faithfully preserved the integrity of its members, adhering to each other up to their dying gasp." Although this image was more mythic than real, it stands as an apt metaphor for the officer's sense of solidarity with his fellows. The officer corps was satisfied with its own performance, and for the time being that had to be enough. "The army has done well what was given it to do, and is unwilling to take any of the responsibility of failure," proclaimed "An Officer of the Line." These words demonstrate a neutral dedication to perform the tasks assigned by the nation-state as much as an unwillingness to be held responsible for their consequences, and in this way, a sense of martyrdom and alienation actually served to shore up rather than undermine officers' support for the war they were charged with prosecuting. Indeed, outside of Florida, the potential strain in civil-military relations may actually have been eased by officers' ability to express their dissent in public forums without fear of reprisal, for (although refusing the full burden of accountability for their beliefs, which would have often implied resignation) officers received a
hearing without being forced to choose between fighting in Florida and leaving the army.  

Indeed, the frustration and antagonism that characterized civil-military relations during the Second Seminole War was ultimately both exceptional (in incidence and degree) and deceptive. Many of the same attitudes found among officers during the Seminole conflict were present among their compatriots on the Mexican border five or ten years later, but in that instance a quick war with decisive victories and the promise of glory and promotion in a stand-up fight was sufficient to allay most regulars' doubts, and dissent never became prominent. Although regular officers were not the ardent proponents of Manifest Destiny that many historians have portrayed them as, the Mexican War was fought against a nation for whom the officer corps had no sympathies, whether romantic or by contrast with Anglo settlers. Officers serving with the Army of Occupation in Corpus Christi found the Anglo-Texans (and specifically the Texan secretary of war) "rascals," "the best of [whom] looked as if they could steal sheep," but the army's stay was relatively short and its civilian contacts limited enough that this image did not become fixed in officers' minds as it had in Florida. The war was fought against enemy regulars by unitary field armies, there were no politically troublesome American settlers to deal with, and the volunteers were more firmly under the centralized command of regular officers. Disease and the climate were threats that inhibited the enthusiasm of officers in the Army of Occupation before the war began, but the army never became bogged down and exposed to these dangers for long periods as it did in Florida. The Seminole War was a "dirty" guerrilla war; the Mexican War seemed the closest American approximation to the romantic Napoleonic ideal of nineteenth-century warfare prior to 1861.
There was a brief swell of resignations as the war with Mexico approached, but like those a decade before, most of these were motivated by separation from family, dangers to health, and other questions of personal inconvenience. (The principal distinction in the motives behind resignations was that the economy was no longer booming as it had been before the Panic of 1837, leaving fewer alternatives for officers who resigned.) Indeed, some commanders waiting for active operations to begin came to wish that they were back in Florida on established posts with their families. The differences between the officer corps' responses to these wars lay in the forms of warfare and the groups that commanders had to deal with--principally the pervasive presence of civilian settlers in Florida--not in their individual responses to personal inconvenience. Nevertheless, the officer corps learned something more than tactics in Florida. The specific circumstances of the Second Seminole War exacerbated officers' individual dilemmas and civil-military disputes, but this conflict may have served as a testing ground, a place where soldiers gained valuable experience dealing with frustration and allies they disapproved of. "Unhappy Florida! Thy soil has drunk the heart's blood of the army!" lamented one veteran, but hard-won experience provided officers with a valuable lesson in patience and accountability to civilian authority, a crucible that separated military wheat from chaff and left behind a corps essentially inured to civilian criticism and willing to lead the nation's armies wherever they were sent.100

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V. Mounted Expeditions on the Western Plains and Prairies, 1833-1846: Operations, Intentions, and Intimations of American Expansion
From the mid-1830s onward the army's principal operational tool on the western frontier was the mounted expedition, which Colonel Stephen Kearny recommended "to keep the Indians perfectly quiet, reminding them of . . . the facility and rapidity with which our dragoons can march through any part of their country, and that there is no place where they can go but the dragoons can follow." These reconnaissances in force were conducted almost every summer on the central and southwestern portions of the frontier, though there was a hiatus between long-range or large-scale expeditions in 1835 (when Dodge took two companies all the way to the Rockies) and 1843, a period when most of the infantry post garrisons were sent to Florida. Indeed, elements of all but one of the northwestern infantry regiments served there, forcing the 1st Dragoons to garrison most of the posts west of the Wisconsin River line. Escorts to Santa Fe, one of the primary rationales for mounted troops in the 1820s, came to be considered unnecessary while the southwestern tribes were at peace, and they were only undertaken on a small scale in 1835, 1839, and 1843.101

The 1st Dragoons also patrolled the region between the Missouri and Mississippi, first in 1835-36 under their colonel Henry Dodge and then, after a hiatus of several years, on a smaller scale under subordinate officers (particularly Captain Edwin Vose Sumner, after he had returned from commanding the cavalry school at Carlisle). These expeditions were used to establish both Forts Des Moines and to help garrison the new Fort Atkinson in order to protect the Indians in Iowa from white encroachment during the 1840s. In 1844 one company was sent to traverse the country between the Minnesota and Missouri rivers, as part of what commanding general Scott was by then labelling the "standing policy, to prevent Indian hostilities by the exhibition of military force on and beyond our frontiers." Captain James
Allen, commanding this company, saw very few Indians (doubtlessly since they were avoiding him) but felt that his force was having "a great moral effect upon these wild Indians, as showing them conclusively that we can easily throw cavalry enough into the heart of their country to chastise them for any wrong they may do to our people and government." (Note Allen's mention of the U.S. government in the same breath, yet distinct from, the people of the nation, another indication of the state-centered mentality which pervaded the officer corps.)

It is important to remember that junior officers did not necessarily share these strategic motives for expeditionary action, though they would doubtlessly have presented them for public consumption. Captain and assistant quartermaster Thomas Swords, for one, was well pleased with the rarity of expeditions to Santa Fe, fearing that otherwise "the Dragoons have a fine prospect before them, of escorting every caravan of traders, that may ask for protection between this and Santa Fe--the only relief will be, the possibility of sometimes getting as far as Santa Fe itself--it will be horrid, if they always have to turn back at the Arkansas." Henry Turner, ironically one of the most professionally thoughtful of the junior dragoon officers, found the summer expedition to the Rockies in 1845 "monotonous and laborous enough." Turner's reactions to the prospect and reality of this movement seem representative of the corps' dual aggressiveness (the product of their desire for fame, glory, and promotion) and passivity (the consequence of their comfortable security). In February of that year he looked forward to the camaraderie of a large expedition towards Oregon, though he ambivalently labelled it "banishment": "I really do long for motion, and would be the happiest man alive could I look forward with certainty to going on camping this summer with a large portion of the Regt." (Turner was particularly eager
for an opportunity to return his weight "to reasonable dimensions." This initial enthusiasm waned with experience--after returning that fall, Turner recognized that "the expedition may be regarded as a profitable one" because of the soil samples taken, but he was disappointed that there had been no "stirring incidents": "we trudged along our weary way from day to day thinking of nothing but the close of the expedition, which to everyone . . . was highly agreeable." Recognizing the army's contributions to westward expansion and economic development was not the same thing as enthusing over them, and few officers would feel truly satisfied or fulfilled by their work until the "stirring incidents" of combat in Mexico.103

The 1st Dragoons were sent on two major expeditions in 1845, to explore and show the American flag as far as the Rocky Mountains and the Red River of the North (in modern-day eastern North Dakota). Colonel Kearny led half of the regiment up the Oregon Trail to South Pass (on the Continental Divide in western Wyoming) to intimidate the Sioux, while Sumner led two companies to the Pembina region on a similar mission. Sumner was also to scout out and impress the metis, a very loosely organized nomadic group of mixed French and Amerindian ethnicities, living primarily in Canada but without national loyalties, from hunting on American soil--a prime example of the assertion of nation-state sovereignty over the previously unorganized--and less constrained--geographic and cultural terrain in the newly "American" West. On the other hand, it is notable that these expeditions do not appear to have been directed at countering British influence in the way that their predecessors two or three decades before had been, probably because the American presence was so strongly established by the 1840s that only Oregon itself was at issue. These expeditions did not penetrate the Rocky Mountains, however, so it seems
unlikely that they were seriously intended to impress the British with the American ability to move forces overland to Oregon, which had been repeatedly demonstrated--albeit on a small scale--ever since the Lewis and Clark expedition. Doubtless the British had already taken this into account by 1845, particularly given the opening of the Oregon Trail two years before.

Kearny returned via the route of Dodge's 1835 expedition, south past Pike's Peak through present-day eastern Colorado and east along the Arkansas River before turning for Fort Leavenworth. His force had marched 2200 miles in ninety-nine days, leading to Henry Turner's quip that the march was "unprecedented in point of time, rapidity . . . [and] unimportant sacrifices made." On the other hand, the expedition undoubtedly served as excellent preparation for the march of the Army of the West to New Mexico the following summer, and not a single soldier died, a stark contrast to the disastrous 1834 expedition by Dodge which demonstrates the practical logistical value of veteran officers and soldiers. Sumner meanwhile reached Devil's Lake, where he and Captain Allen talked with the metis and determined that they presented no military threat to the United States. Kearny concluded by reaffirming Atkinson's principles from twenty years before, that occasional mobile expeditions were preferable to static permanent posts on grounds of both economy and effectiveness.

The experience of the officer corps along the nation's internal and external Indian frontiers was a complex one which says a great deal about the character of American territorial expansion. The army's success as an instrument of expansion was mixed, for it conquered Florida and carried out the removal of the southeastern and northwestern tribes but was unable (and after 1826 did not attempt) to maintain an effective presence in the farther
reaches of the Missouri and Mississippi valleys prior to the onset of substantial white settlement. Indeed, the army rarely operated in a civil-military vacuum during this process, and it was more often responding to pressure from local civilians than to Indian aggression per se. Encounters with white civilians had a paradoxical effect, however, for they seem likely to have moderated if not inhibited the process of what we might call "ethnic formation," or the articulation of a more conscious racialism among officers by presenting the officer corps with a point of negative comparison that drew from their class prejudices and their institutional occupational predilections for centralization, stability, and order.

Indeed, aside from the very fact of employment relations with frontier settlers probably provided the most powerful practical impetus behind officers' conservative, state-centered worldview. The tensions which had been accumulating since the squatter removal of the 1820s finally erupted into full public view during the following decade, when disenchantment threatened to verge into outright dissent and alienation. The cohesion of the officer corps survived the Seminole conflict, however, a testament to the power of its occupational socialization and the potency of fundamentally class-based understandings of civil-military interaction (the ability to ignore or dismiss the complaints of settlers because of their disorderliness and their distance from the nation's genteel "center" on the East Coast) as well as to the more basic quest for security embodied in the institutional and occupational jurisdiction officers were granted by the nation-state. In other words, occupation, class, and state allied to sustain the corps' professional cohesion and identity despite civilian criticism, and thus, perhaps somewhat ironically, to condition officers to play a politically accountable role as the nonpartisan instruments of national expansion. Officers reconciled their unease about
morally dubious policies like Indian removal by shifting responsibility to the nation-state, but in doing so they accepted the responsibility of serving that state without interjecting their own subjective views for the democratically chosen ones of elected civilian officials. They sublimated the tensions between their substantive responsibilities to citizen-settlers and formal procedural accountability to the institutions of the nation-state by privileging the latter, which both secured the army's employment and provided its officers with guidelines for action amidst the complex circumstances of borderlands conflicts.
The dragoon expeditions of 1845 penetrated to the farthest points north and west yet reached by substantial American combat forces, presaging and in effect training for Kearny's trek to California the following year. The army's western mission, which since the end of the Missouri Expedition had been centered on the coerced resettlement of eastern tribes and the protection of resettled Indians from further white aggression, then shifted to the outright pursuit of territorial expansion against Mexico and the direct suppression of Indian (and in the 1850s Mormon) polities--the assertion of Anglo-American cultural dominance and its consolidation through the expanding sovereignty of its nation-state. Presented with these potentially significant opportunities for professional advancement, men like Swords and Turner temporarily changed their tunes: Swords began reading every work related to Mexico that he could get hold of, as "I would like very well to revel in the halis [of Montezuma] for a short time" before returning to sedentary staff life. In May 1846 the newly promoted Turner rushed to warn his friend Abraham Johnston that Colonel Kearny "is very anxious to have you with him" in the expedition to New Mexico and California, avowing that "tis important that we should acquit ourselves properly. The eyes of the country will be upon us." Johnston was promoted to captain, joined Kearny as an aide-de-camp, and was killed in action by Californio lance thrusts while leading a charge that December.¹⁰⁴
Chapter XIV

1 There was no actual combat in the Winnebago War, nor any significant regular army casualties in the Arikara expedition (sometimes labelled a war) in 1823. Similarly, there were no engagements in the Creek War of 1836. The Missouri, Yellowstone, and dragoon expeditions discussed below were all acts of intimidation without physical combat, as were the operations mounted to remove the Cherokee and Choctaw and those mounted to sustain American sovereignty along the Mexican border in 1819 and 1836-37. There were several small firefights during the Santa Fe expedition of 1829 and the operations against the Patriot filibusters along the Canadian border during the late 30s, but the rarity of actual combat during this period is remarkable, whether in contrast to the eras before or afterwards.

2 Jackson, December 17, 1815, file J-366, SW:LR-Reg. See Wool to Cass, February 29, 1836, ASP:MA 6: 184, for characteristic arguments against the establishment of permanent posts.


5 Macomb to Secretary Porter, November 1828, quoted in Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, p. 167.
6 See ibid., pp. 357-60, regarding the missions of the southwestern posts. This book contains thorough citations to older secondary works, particularly journal literature and reprinted contemporary accounts, that I have not cited herein. See Hitchcock to Secretary of War John C. Spencer, January 9, 1842, cited in Brainerd Dyer, Zachary Taylor (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), pp. 137-38, regarding Forts Wayne and Scott.


8 Calhoun to Rep. Alexander Smyth (chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee and a general in the War of 1812), December 29, 1819, ASP:MA 2: 33-34; Hayne, Confidential IR, October 1819.


10 Calhoun to Colonel Thomas A. Smith, March 16, 1818, in PICC 2: 194-95; Smith, May 16, 1818, file S-139, SW:LR-Reg.; Calhoun to Atkinson, March 27, 1819, in PICC 3: 695-96.


12 Hayne, Confidential IR, October 1819.


14 Atkinson, January 6, 1824, file A-116, SW:LR-Reg. See also Atkinson, April 12, 1821, file A-87, and January 25, 1822, file A-78, SW:LR-Reg. Atkinson was promoted to brigadier general in 1820 but forced to accept a reduction to colonel with the brevet of brigadier in the general reduction if force of 1821. He tended to exercise his brevet rank for most of the next twenty years as de facto theater commander of the Missouri and upper Mississippi valleys, with several regiments under his command. Atkinson's arguments for the benefits of annual campaigning were echoed a decade later in "Nothing to Do," "The Army," MNM 6 (December 1835): 305. See Reese, "The United States Army and the Indian," pp. 139-143 regarding the Arikara War. Gaines proclaimed himself pleased with the expedition's bloodless outcome but wanted six or seven hundred troops sent to the Yellowstone against the Blackfeet, who had been involved in similar attacks on the traders. Jacob Brown vetoed the idea. (See Gaines to Calhoun, October 16, 1823, ASP:MA 2: 596.)


16 Atkinson to Brown, November 23, 1825, ASP: Indian Affairs 2: 607-608 and 656; Nichols, "The Army and the Indians," p. 167. See pp. 159-63 therein for a discussion of these considerations and objectives. Nichols sees peacekeeping among the Indians as a major objective in itself, which I do not.

II. The Quest for Mobility in Plans for Western Defense, 1826-1846


26 Ibid. See also Poinsett to Congress, December 30, 1837, NASP:MA 1: 259. Cross suggested 7000 men; Poinsett reduced this figure to 5000.


29 Riley to Sen. Lewis F. Linn, August 27, 1837, ASP:MA 7:957. Interestingly, two towns about fifty miles southwest of Wilkins are named Hancock and Houlton, which were respectively the names of the barracks and town where the army's primary garrison in Maine was stationed until 1845.


32 Turner to Johnston, November 30, 1837, Johnston Papers, USMA; Schureman to his sister Mary Schureman, December 15, 1841, Schureman Papers, LC; "A Subscriber," ANC 4 (June 15, 1837): 381 (reprinted from the *National Intelligencer* of May 10, 1837). Lt. Philip Thompson worried in a letter to Johnston that the number of troops then at Fort Leavenworth (ninety, due to detachments southward) was inadequate (April 23, 1840, Johnston Papers, USMA). This concern was probably so common among officers as to be implicitly understood among them, thus accounting for the rarity of its expression.

33 Harney to Jackson, January 3, 1825, Jackson Papers, LC, cited in Adams, "General William Selby Harney," p. 37; Holmes to Macomb, March 10, 1832, HQA:LR.
III. Officers' Attitudes Toward Indians and the Practice of Indian Policy
in the West, 1815-1846

34 Atkinson, November 24, 1820, file A-38, SW:LR-Reg.; Jackson to Secretary
Calhoun, September 2, 1820, Jackson Papers, LC.

35 Colonel John L. Smith, January 5, 1820, file S-167, SW:LR-Reg.; Atkinson
to Macomb, October 25, 1829, HQA:LR.

36 Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, Capt. T.F. Smith, and Capt. Nathan Boone
(the commission to select the route of the western military road) to Cass,
December 11, 1836, communicated to the House of Representatives March 24,
1838, NASP:MA 2: 12-13; 1834 law quoted in Prucha, The Sword of the
Republic, p. 209; Totten, Thayer, Talcott, and Cross to Poinsett, March 14,
1840, NASP:MA 2: 136; Taylor to Adjutant General Jones, June 21, 1841,
AGO:LR; Bauer, Zachary Taylor, pp. 100-101; Jones to Taylor, March 9, 1843,
and Taylor to Jones, March 29, 1843, cited in Dyer, Zachary Taylor, p. 137;
Arbuckle to Macomb, June 6, 1833, ASP:MA 7: 984.

37 Bradford, February 4 and March 28, 1819, files B-7 and B-286, and March 4,
1820, file B-178, SW:LR-Reg.; Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock to Secretary of
War John C. Spencer, January 9, 1842, cited in Dyer, Zachary Taylor, pp. 137-38;

38 Gaines to Brown, July 20, 1826, file G-131, SW:LR-Reg. Half a decade later
Gaines repeated his noninterference doctrine to Colonel Willoughby Morgan;
see Reese, "The United States Army and the Indian," p. 182. See also Macomb
to Colonel Henry Leavenworth, February 19, 1834, HQA:LS, and Poinsett to
Congress, December 30, 1837, NASP:MA 1: 259.

39 Macomb to Colonel Henry Leavenworth, February 19, 1834, HQA:LS; Lt.
Col. Leavenworth to Brigadier General Daniel Parker, June 10, 1820, quoted in
Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, p. 208; Leavenworth, June 27, 1821, file L-
174, SW:LR-Reg.

40 Leavenworth to Atkinson, October 20, 1823, in Doane Robinson, ed.,
"Official Correspondence of the Leavenworth Expedition of 1823 into South
Dakota for the Conquest of the Ree [Arikara] Indians," South Dakota
Historical Collections 1 (1902): 197, 199, 213, 218, 220-23, and 230. See Nichols,
"The Army and the Indians," pp. 163 and 165, regarding Leavenworth's
calculations, and Wesley, "A Still Larger View of the So-called Yellowstone
Expedition," p. 234, for casualty statistics.


Coffman, The Old Army, p. 52, and Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 216. The number of resignations only exceeded forty in one other year between 1820 and 1860.


See Leonard, "Red, White, and the Army Blue," for a superb depiction of these tensions (especially the psychological ones) in the post-Civil War era. Leonard also suggests that officers used the Indian to represent virtues disappearing in industrial America, a motif that should be apparent (but is not immediately so) in the papers of officers engaged in building the nation's largest bureaucracy before the Civil War. See also Sherry L. Smith, The View from Officers' Row: Army Perceptions of Western Indians (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), whose attention to the nuances of military views of the Indians has no parallel for the antebellum era. Leonard notes (p. 184) that he was unable to find an officer who had resigned because of moral qualms.


Note that only eighteen regular officers were actually killed in action or mortally wounded during the war, and seven of these died in its opening engagement, the "Dade Massacre" of December 28, 1835 (Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 214 and 409 [n. 86]). Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, p. 321, gives the number as 74, but this is an aggregate figure that includes ten surgeons (one killed in action in the Dade Massacre)
and all others who died in Florida or of diseases contracted there. One Marine lieutenant died (killed in action), and three naval officers (of disease) (one a surgeon). Two regular army officers committed suicide while in Florida, but were said to be suffering from heat- or fever-induced delirium at the time (Mahon, pp. 174 and 182). Another "drowned himself during temporary insanity caused by wounds received in Florida" while in Charleston harbor (Sprague, The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War, p. 532).

53 Scott, official letter published in the Washington Globe and reprinted in ANC 2 (June 2, 1836): 346; Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 207, 293, 238, and 235; Assistant Surgeon Thomas Henderson to Assistant Surgeon Benjamin King, February 6 and 13, 1838, Benjamin King Papers, LC; "On the Florida War," (reprinted from the National Intelligencer) ANC 9 (November 7, 1839): 291; Jesup to Secretary of War Poinsett, February 11, 1838, in Sprague, The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War, pp. 199-201. I will refer to the senior commander in Florida as the "theater commander," although this was an ad hoc temporary post created by the president's choice rather than a permanent one in the army's regular hierarchy of command. For troop strength estimates see Assistant Surgeon John B. Wells to King, February 10, 1840, King Papers, LC (20,000); Capt. Robert Anderson to Colonel Abraham Eustis, June 11, 1840, Robert Anderson Papers, USMA (30,000); "Sam Jones," "Florida War," ANC 9 (October 31, 1839): 285 (50-60,000); untitled anonymous correspondence to the ANC 11 (August 27, 1840): 137 (100,000).

54 Captains J[ohn B.] Clark (who signed himself as a major, though this is not given as his rank in army bibliographical sources) and M[ichael]. M. Clark to Benjamin King, May 18, 1841 and February 17, 1842, King Papers, LC; Worth to Scott, February 14, 1842, quoted in Sprague, The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War, pp. 441-45.

55 Letter to Benjamin King, February 10, 1838, King Papers, LC (author's name illegible, perhaps anonymous).

56 Jesup to Poinsett, December 15, 1837, HQA:LR.

57 Dr. (Assistant Surgeon) L[ewis].A. Birdsell to Benjamin King, July 17, 1841, King Papers, LC ("inglorious field"); Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, p. 300; Hunter, Diary, I, p. 130 (no dates given), in Reynold M. Wik, "Captain Nathaniel Wyche Hunter and the Florida Indian Campaigns, 1837-1841," Florida Historical Quarterly (hereafter cited as FHQ) 39 (July 1960): 71;
"Junius," "A Visitor to Sam Jones's Camp" (Parts III and IV), ANC 10, nos. 21 and 22 (May 21 and 28, 1840): 331-32 (third quotation) and 347; Pegram to Anderson (a brevet captain), February 3, 1841, and McClintock to Anderson, May 1, 1841, Robert Anderson Papers, LC. Birdsall had just left Florida and was in a fever; he apologized for sending "such a crazy letter." Lt. William Chapman used language much like Hunter's in a letter to his future wife Helen Blair, May 17, 1838, in "A West Point Graduate in the Second Seminole War: William Warren Chapman and the View from Fort Foster," FHQ 68 (April 1990): 473. See Gillett, The Army Medical Department, 1818-1865, chs. 2-3, regarding the army's health and efforts to improve it during the 1820s and the Seminole War.

58 Lt. Charles E. Woodruff (who was unmarried) to James Banks (a purser in the U.S. Navy), June 25, 1839, Woodruff Papers, USAMHI (first quotation); George Pegram to Robert Anderson, January 18, 1841, Anderson Papers, LC; Morris Miller to Sarah Miller, April 29, 1835, Miller Papers, USMA; Hunter, Diary, I, p. 126, in "Captain Nathaniel Wyche Hunter and the Florida Indian Campaigns, 1837-1841," p. 69 (n. 30). See also Lt. William Chapman to Helen Blair, May 17, 1838, in "A West Point Graduate in the Second Seminole War," p. 473, and Assistant Surgeon John B. Wells to Assistant Surgeon Benjamin King, February 10, 1840, King Papers, LC.

One soldier-editorialist realized that the war was not going to end soon, so he suggested that officers should bring their families south, which he apparently thought would make service there "comparatively easy, pleasant, and agreeable" ("On the Florida War," ANC 9 [November 7, 1839]: 290). This was never done on any large scale, because officers did not want to subject their families to disease and isolation, although some wives came to St. Augustine for several months at a time, often to find that their husbands were in the field and could not reach them.

The Old Army, p. 77, regarding the officer corps' general lack of interest in (if not disdain for) Indian-fighting.

Scott, Order No. 48, May 17, 1836, in ANC 2 (June 16, 1836): 379. See Mhaon, Wright, Covington, on white attitudes toward the Creeks and Seminoles.


Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles," pp. 43 and 45-47, with quotation from Worth, apparently published in the Tallahassee Florida Sentinel (October 31, 1843); Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 259, 298, and 316-17 ("vagabond classes"). Denham, pp. 42-43 and 48, gives examples of officers' tacit support for acts of revenge undertaken by soldiers under their command. Capt. James Glassell of the Fourth Infantry was transferred from his command at Key West in 1831 when a group of soldiers (including several noncommissioned officers) beat a civilian who had aided a deserter, after the soldier was whipped by a sheriff's posse. They pursued the sheriff as well, but did not catch him, and Glassell disclaimed responsibility for possible retaliation against the sheriff in the future. Glassell also sought charges against the Monroe County militia commander, who he accused of bludgeoning one of Glassell's sergeants "to such a degree that his life was much endangered." A similar sequence of events seems to have taken place on Black Creek near Ft. Heilman and Gorey's Ferry late in 1839; see "Florida War (subtitled 'Affairs at Black Creek')," ANC 9 (October 24, 1839): 266.

Taylor to Jesup, April 26, 1838, Taylor Papers, LC, series 2, reel 1; Davenport to Taylor, September 2, 1839, AGO:LR; Vose, September 26, 1842, AGO:LR, and to Adjutant General Jones, April 13, 1838, H.E.D. 434, 25th Cong., 2nd sess., p. 3. The War Department issued frequent, albeit largely ineffectual, orders during periods of truce that the army protect the Seminoles. See e.g. Kieffer, Maligned General, p. 169. The Seminole War was not the first instance in which Taylor had attempted to avoid Indian service: in 1835 he wrote to Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark that "I have in no way sought the duties of Indian agent, on the contrary I have entered upon them with great reluctance, with a fear of not being able to discharge them without neglecting those of my proper profession, in a
manner [calculated] . . . to do justice to those poor miserable and degraded creatures" (July 2, 1835, quoted in Prucha, Broadax and Bayonet, p. 95).


66 Scott, "Order No. 1," ANC 2 (March 17, 1836): 168; Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 113, 159-60, 171, 179, and 264; "Many Officers of the Army," (reprinted from the National Intelligencer without date) ANC 3 (November 3, 1836): 285. The letter's intent is unclear—it takes the form of a request for guidance, and is phrased in terms of great propriety, but its implications were plain for all to see. Scott's order to the Army of Florida also reminded the volunteers that "valor and patriotism alone, are not sufficient . . . Some tactical instruction and an exact obedience to commands, are also necessary." See also Herbert J. Doherty, Richard Keith Call, Southern Unionist (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961), ch. 7; and Tom Knotts, "History of the Blockhouse on the Withlacoochee," FHQ 49 (January 1971): 245-55.

President Van Buren's son Abraham was a captain in the First Dragoons until he resigned to serve as his father's private secretary during the president's term. He was reappointed as a paymaster (a choice staff post without lineal rank) in 1846.

67 Thomas Henderson to Benjamin King, February 6 and 13, 1838, King Papers, LC; "Mentor," ANC 9 (October 17, 1839): 246.

68 "Florida War," ANC 11 (October 1, 1840): 220; Scott, letter to Capt. F.M. Robertson of the Augusta (Ga.) Volunteers, May 26, 1836, published in ANC 2

It is intriguing that the only volunteer for whom many regulars seem to have felt esteem was Brigadier General Joseph M. Hernandez, a Floridian of Spanish descent who was praised for military effectiveness and a dignified personal bearing. (See e.g. Jesup's opinion, in Kieffer, *Maligned General*, p. 197.)


70 Chapman to Blair, November 19, 1837 and February 28, 1838, in "A West Point Graduate in the Second Seminole War," pp. 458-59 and 470-71; anonymous letter published in the ANC 6 (April 5, 1838): 216-17. See also Thomas Henderson to Benjamin King, February 6, 1838, King Papers, LC. For examples of these attitudes from the post-Civil War era, see Leonard, "Red, White, and the Army Blue," pp. 182-83.

Phelps resigned when refused permission to do so. Intriguingly, one white enlisted soldier wrote that "General Phelps is very much liked here by the men and hated professionally by the officers. He . . . seems to think as much of a private as an officer" (p. 13, n. 3).


73 Wall to Robert Anderson, August 19, 1836, Anderson Papers, LC.

74 "An Officer of the 4th Artillery," p. 56; letter in ANC ("not intended to be published," according to the editor) 6 (April 5, 1838): 216-17; Hunter, Diary, I, p. 28, in "Captain Nathaniel Wyche Hunter and the Florida Indian Campaigns, 1837-1841," pp. 73-74; Thomas Lawson to Benjamin King, August 18, 1837, King Papers, LC; Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 204-205. See also "Gen. Macomb's Arrangement," ANC 9 July 11, 1839): 25. See "A Lieutenant of the 2d Artillery," "Seminole War--Treaty of Payne's Landing," ANC 6 May 1, 1838): 344-46, for an answer to Phelps that invoked duty and the "inevitability" of "progress" and "destiny" in favor of prosecuting the war.

Antislavery forces in Congress made numerous attempts to cut military appropriations during the war years, but the Jackson, Van Buren, and Tyler administrations all supported the war effort. Jesup began to disagree with the removal policy (at least in this instance) and he believed that it was inappropriate for him to remain in command once he had come to this conclusion. See Kieffer, Maligned General, pp. 159 and 173. The voice of northern dissent against the removal of the Seminoles is best represented by Joshua Giddings, The Exiles of Florida (Columbus: Follett, Foster, 1858), published in the aftermath of the Third Seminole War. See also George Klos, "Blacks and the Seminole Removal Debate, 1821-1835," PHQ 68 (July 1989): 55-78.

75 Quotation from citizens' petition to Secretary of War Poinsett, March 18, 1837, House Doc. 225, 25th Cong., 3rd sess. See Young, "The United States Army in the South," for by far the most thorough account of the army's role in supporting slavery, and idem., "The United States Army and the Institution of Slavery in Louisiana, 1803-1835," Louisiana Studies 13 (Fall 1974): 201-222. Macomb wrote to a wide range of officers between 1829 and 1831 about troop deployments to forestall rebellions, though in a couple of cases he refused civilian requests for troop deployments due to the excessive dispersal and disciplinary difficulties they produced. Gaines was also active in correspondence with civilian leaders on this subject.

77 Order No. 79, April 5, 1837, Jesup Papers, AGO, Orders File; Jesup to Poinsett, June 16, 1837, Jesup Papers, Letters Sent, AGO.


81 Worth, August 19, 1841, quoted in Porter, "Negroes and the Seminole War," p. 446; Littlefield, *Africans and Seminoles*, pp. 71, 82, and 85. Many officers were slaveholders themselves, and some colonels and generals owned large plantations worked by numerous slaves. The officer corps was generally racist, and did abet a number of attempts to recover ex-slaves, but I find it more remarkable that senior commanders sometimes refused to do so. I would attribute this reluctance primarily to their sense of honor and good faith rather than beliefs about the morality of slavery—they had made agreements with the Seminoles, and would not break them simply to help some greedy planters make money. See also Jane F. Lancaster, *Removal Aftershock: The Seminoles' Struggles to Survive in the West, 1836-1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994).

the "respectability" of Middle Florida planters, who he considered "most anxious for the termination of this war" (246).

83 Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 199-202, 207, 235, and 257; Porter, "Negros and the Seminole War," p. 443; Jesup to Poinsett, Fberuary 11, 1838, quoted from Sprague, The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War, p. 200; Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock to his brother Samuel, August 22, 1842, Hitchcock Papers, LC (all quotations save the last); Capt. William L. McClintock to Robert Anderson, May 1, 1841, Anderson Papers, LC. Jesup tried again in February 1838 and was again rebuffed by the War Department (Mahon, pp. 235 and 237). Hitchcock's letter recounts his efforts to persuade the War Department to adopt a pacific policy, against Armistead's wishes. Hitchcock sent his letter to the War Department after receiving Worth's approval, though it is not clear whether he did so while Armistead was still in command. (Given Hitchcock's vanity and his lack of respect for senior officers and the chain of command, it is probable that he did so.)


85 Hunter, Diary, I, pp. 28 and 78-80, in "Captain Nathaniel Wyche Hunter and the Florida Indian Campaigns, 1837-1841," pp. 68, 73-74, and n. 47; Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, p. 315; "Gen. Taylor, and the Missouri Volunteers," ANC 8 (April 11, 1839): 236; "Sheer Justice," "Battle of the Okee-Chobee--The Army," ANC 6 (March 8, 1838): 154; "Canard," "Florida War," ANC 11 (July 23, 1840): 62. Hunter felt that his immediate superior was recklessly exposing the troops to ambush (Diary, I, pp. 78-80, cited on 68). The army was not Hunter's first choice of career--he had resigned shortly after graduating from West Point in 1833, but was reappointed in the Second Dragoons three years later. He died in 1849.

Lt. J.K.F. Mansfield wrote from outside the theater that "Scott & Jesup are pretty lightly spoken of & in justice too. Jesup by his letter to Blair has made himself [odious] as a man." Mansfield also denounced Edmund Gaines and another unidentified general, robably either Armistead or Matthew Arbuckle (both brigadiers by brevet) (Lt. John King Fenno Mansfield to Edward Deering Mansfield, September 18, 1836, J.K.F. Mansfield Papers, USMA). "Jesup's letter to Blair" refered to an attack on Scott published in Francis Preston Blair's Washington Globe, in which Jesup reproached his
superior for delays during the Creek War of 1836. See Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 191-92, and Kieffer, Maligned General, pp. 133-38 and 160, for additional information on this controversy.


88 R[obert] A[uchmuty] Wainwright to William Chapman, March 17, 1837, Chapman Papers, USMA; Sylvester Churchill, journal entries, February 23, 1837 and May 7, 1839, Journals 1 and 3, Churchill Papers, LC; Abraham Eustis to Frederic Eustis, April 6, 1838, Abraham Eustis Papers, USAMHI; Eustis, May 22, 1836, AGO:LR. Criticism of Jesup can be found in "West Point," "Gen. Jesup and the Military Academy," ANC 6 (February 8, 1838): 93, and in three letters to ANC 6 (March 1, 1838). Jesup was not a West Pointer, and many graduates felt that he was aiding and abetting (however unconsciously) attacks on the institution they considered the core of the army. ANC 9 (August 22, 1839) alone contained three letters defending units and their officers or appealing for regimental relief (from soldiers of the 2nd and 7th Infantry and the 3rd Artillery).

89 Miller to his mother Maria and his sister Sarah, ? and April 29, 1835, Miller Papers, USMA; "Sam Jones," "United States Military Academy," ANC 8 (January 24 and February 21, 1838): 50-51 and 122-24; "Junius," "A Visit to Sam Jones's Camp, Part II," ANC 10 (May 7, 1840): 301, and "Part VII," ANC 11 (July 23, 1840): 59; Hunter, Diary, I, p. 28, in "Captain Nathaniel Wyche Hunter and the Florida Indian Campaigns, 1837-1841," p. 74. See also Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 236-37. See Sylvester Churchill, journal entry, March 8, 1837, Journal 1, Churchill Papers, LC; and "Mentor," ANC 9, no. 16 ental attitudes towards Seminole families and children. Mahon, pp. 303-304, notes a bit of doggerel that humorously retailed the army's efforts to catch Sam Jones, whose character "Junius" used to parody army policies of all sorts in his seven-part series in the ANC. ("Sam Jones" was one of the staunchest Seminole hold-outs.)

90 "Canard," "Florida War," ANC 11 (July 30, 1840): 67; Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 278 and 283-84. See Leonard, "Red, White, and the Army Blue," pp. 182-83 and 188, for statements of role inversion from the post-Civil War era. See Colonel Abraham Eustis and Capt. William L. McClintock to Robert Anderson, February 8, 1841 and December 31, 1840 (Anderson Papers, LC) for examples of approval of Harney's actions. See also
Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 321-22. Harney forged a reputation that followed him throughout his controversial career—his brutality toward the Seminoles seems to have been a reflection of a brutal man, though a tough and effective fighter, and officers split in their opinions of him depending on whether they emphasized decorum or decisiveness.

91 Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, pp. 135, 160, 209, 204, 209-217, 225, 237, and 299. Repeated proposals were made to employ bloodhounds and offer bounties to catch the Seminoles. The former garnered great opprobrium in the North, at least in part due to the parallels with the techniques of slave-catchers. In 1837 Jesup sought War Department advice on the probable public reaction to the use of bloodhounds, and seems to have doubted that it would be favorable. Both Jesup and Zachary Taylor suggested the year for the following year, and in 1839 thirty-three were imported from Cuba by the state of Florida. In response to congressional questioning, the Secretary of War ordered that they be leashed and muzzled. Only two saw duty and only two Indians were captured as a result. They were apparently judged ineffective. Soldiers were offered a $100 bounty for Seminole warriors in 1842. See Kieffer, Malign General, p. 172; Bauer, Zachary Taylor, p. 87; Mahon, pp. 204, 239, 265-67, and 307; and James W. Covington, "Cuban Bloodhounds and the Seminoles," FHO 33 (October 1954): 111-19.

92 "Omicron," "General Jesup, the Secretary of War, and the Military Academy," ANC 6 (March 1, 1838): 138; Jesup to Secretary of War William Wilkins, May 22, 1844, quoted in Kieffer, Malign General, p. 233.

93 Diary entry, Lt. Joseph R. Smith, November 11, 1837, in "Letters from the Second Seminole War," p. 332 (first quotation); Chapman to Helen Blair, February 27, 1838, in "A West Point Graduate in the Second Seminole War," 468; "Battle of the Kissimmee--The Army" (subtitled "honor to whom honor is due"), ANC 6 (March 1, 1838): 141; "Sam Jones," "Florida War," ANC 9 (October 31, 1839): 285. Another example of humor used in gentle dissent was "Puffing," by "Anti-Puff," in ANC 7 (November 29, 1838): 348, which chided Winfield Scott for his pretentions to the presidency.

94 See e.g., Hinton, "The Military Career of John Ellis Wool," ch. 3; Wool to Mrs. N. Warren, November 11, 1836, Wool Papers, LC; Wool's official correspondence as commander of the Department of the Pacific in the 1850s, in H.E.D. 93 and 118, 34th Cong., 1st sess.; Hitchcock to the Rev. William G. Eliot, March 1, 1841, Hitchcock Papers, LC; Capt. Lucien B. Webster to his unnamed wife, June 9, 1838, Smith-Kirby-Webster-King Papers, USAMHI; Lt.

95 See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, Tables 11.1 to 11.4, pp. 182-83, 194, and 213, for median career lengths, promotion rates (time in grade), and means of attrition.


97 "Major Dade's Battleground," ANC 3 (September 8, 1836): 156; "Celebration of Independence at Fort Towson [Indian Territory]," ANC 7 (August 16, 1838): 109; Alvord, address delivered December 29, 1838 and partially reprinted in ANC 8 (April 18, 1839): 249. Alvord's full text was published in New York in 1839 and is available in the Library of Congress. One of the earliest examples of the epitaphs was by the officers of the 1st Dragoons at Ft. Des Moines for "The Late Lieutenant J.F. Izard," ANC 2 (May 19, 1836): 316-17, slain during Edmund Gaines's attempted crossing of the Withlacoochee February 28 of that year. (Izard's colleagues at Ft. Leavenworth published a memorial to him several weeks later.) Other examples include that of officers at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis ("Battle of the Okee-Chobee," ANC 6 [March 15, 1838]: 172). See Frank Laumer, Dade's Last Command (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1995), for an intensive examination of the Dade Massacre.


99 Quotations from Lt. Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana to his wife Sue Dana, September 22, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!: The Mexican War Letters of Lieutenant Dana, 1845-1847, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (Lexington, 1990), pp. 13-14. A good example of an officer in the Army of Occupation pining for the good life in Florida is Lt. John Porter Hatch's letter to his sister Eliza, September 10, 1845, Hatch Papers, LC. Hatch had just graduated from West Point that July, which illustrates the way in which Florida had already gained a reputation as a desirable post. Hatch added that "promotions from resignations are quite rapid," and that "it is a good thing to get rid of them if they cant stay away from their wives." Hatch considered the Mexicans of Corpus Christi "much the most respectabe portion of the inhabitants" (letter to Eliza, October 28, 1845). All these attitudes are discussed in my forthcoming article "Careerism and Professionalism, Interest and Disinterest."

V. Mounted Expeditions on the Western Plains and Prairies, 1833-1846:
Operations, Intentions, and Intimations of American Expansion


Swords, August 7, 1843, Turner, February 11, 1845, and Turner, October 30, 1845 (second quotation), to Lt. Abraham Johnston, Johnston Papers, USMA. See also Turner to Johnston, February 2, 1845.

through lower Wisconsin and upper Illinois, during the period when whites still feared a recurrence of the Black Hawk War. The 2nd Dragoons (established in 1836) did not participate in any of these expeditions, because it was sent to Florida as soon as it was organized and lost its mounted status after the war as part of a congressional reenactment drive. Its horses were reauthorized in 1844 and it served as dragoons in all the major campaigns in Mexico. William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) is the standard treatment on scientific and cartographic surveying expeditions, which do not concern me aside from their implications for American territorial expansion. See also idem., "The Corps of Topographical Engineers in the Exploration and Development of the Trans-Mississippi West" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1957) and *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the West* (New York: Knopf, 1966); Edgar S. Wallace, *The Great Reconnaissance: Soldiers, Artists, and Scientists on the Frontier* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955) (which deals only with the period 1848-1861); Forrest R. Blackburn, "The Army in Western Exploration," *Military Review* 51 (September 1971): 75-90; Milford F. Allen, "United States Government Exploring Expeditions and Natural History, 1800-1840" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1958); Philip D. Thomas, "The United States Army as the Early Patron of Naturalists in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1803-1820."

Chapter XV

Oregon, Texas, and the Limits of Military Enthusiasm for Manifest Destiny

Neither the American quest for empire nor tensions with Britain ended with the Patriot rebellions and the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. Indeed, American foreign relations became increasingly complex in the early 1840s as Presidents Tyler and Polk moved to incorporate Texas and the Pacific coast into the United States, and the demands of American expansionists led to the potential for a two-front conflict, with Britain over Oregon and with Mexico over Texas. This chapter therefore returns to probing the officer corps' complex and often unenthusiastic responses to American territorial expansionism, including that unofficial version (halfway between filibustering and international war and conquest) embodied by the Texas Revolution and civil war of 1836, and to the likelihood and consequences of war with both Britain and Mexico, starting with the attitudes toward Britain in the 1840s and turning to an exploration of officers' actions along the Texas borders between 1821 and 1846.

These reactions present us with a number of apparent paradoxes and ironies, for the Oregon crisis was defused through diplomacy and army officers led the occupation of Texas and the invasion of Mexico, but until the spring of 1846 most of the officers who commented on these issues seem to have expected to fight Britain rather than Mexico if war were to occur. Indeed, insofar as officers actually hoped for war during the 1840s they did so primarily with Britain, another irony given the contrast between the ethnocultural affinity between Americans and Britons and American antagonism toward Mexicans, and the corollary distinction between the
traditional southward orientation of American expansion and the informal Anglo-American rapprochement along the Canadian border. These attitudes and expectations notwithstanding, regular officers devoted surprisingly little attention to the military balance of power and American objectives in the Oregon crisis, and virtually none at all to California, while those stationed with the Army of Occupation in Texas seem to have been equally unimpressed (and often apparently uninterested) in their seemingly more immediate prospects for combat and glory. Indeed, many officers opposed annexation and expansionism during the 1840s, as they had in Florida and on the Canadian border. These reactions present us with a paradox for our judgments of professional responsibility, for in some respects their attitudes reflect the same limitations and deficiencies of expertise and cohesion (and thus capability) demonstrated in chapters four, five, seven, and nine, while in other ways they illustrate the growing sense of partisan neutrality and accountability to the institutions and policies of the nation-state explored in chapters thirteen and fourteen. Indeed, the portions of this chapter which deal with the motives and cohesion (or lack thereof) of the officers of the Army of Occupation provide a brief look back at the themes of chapters seven and nine, particularly the potent but usually neglected influence of family considerations on officers' attitudes and decisions, and more generally at the the dialectic between ambition (for glory and promotion) and security (from instability and disorder). In effect, the third section of this chapter draws together assessments of the expertise, cohesion, and, most importantly, the responsibility of the army's junior officers as they awaited their chance to participate in the bloody meridian of Manifest Destiny.¹

This chapter concludes my assessment of the officer corps' practical application of professionalism on the nation's borderlands by explaining how
officers came to serve the nation-state not as individual free agents and loose cannon like Andrew Jackson, nor as ad hoc law enforcement officers and diplomats like William Worth, but as the politically accountable military agents of an empire many of them (like Zachary Taylor, commander of the Army of Occupation in Texas) were privately reluctant to see absorbed into the United States. In the process of explaining this transition I also examine Edmund Gaines' career on the borders of Texas between 1823 and 1846, where he impetuously attempted to practice the bellicose expansionism he had learned at Jackson's knee but was repeatedly disavowed by the national government, including both Jackson and Polk, until he was finally passed over in favor of Taylor and relegated to a desk job at the outset of the Mexican War. By moving from Jackson through Worth to Gaines and Taylor and the junior officers who served under them, we can follow the officer corps' gradual evolution into a socially, politically, and professionally accountable instrument of American foreign and national security policy. Army officers served the cause of national expansion in 1846, but they did so as members of a bureaucratically structured and accountable organization under national control, not as individuals or representatives of a single sectional and economic interest (slaveholding southerners or landhungry yeoman farmers), and they did so without the ardent enthusiasm that characterized their predecessors during the 1810s or the civilian expansionists of their own decade. The personal material security guaranteed by stable careers in large-scale organizations ultimately led officers to restraint rather than belligerence in their responses to foreign policy crises.

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I. Continuing Tensions With Britain, 1842-1846
As the ideas expressed by Totten and Gaines suggest, the nation's general ideological shift from eighteenth-century republicanism to nineteenth-century liberalism was quietly reflected in the way articulate officers saw potential European threats, particularly those from Britain. By the 1840s officers' fears of British encirclement, largely forgotten or suppressed during the 20s but revived during the decade of Anglo-American tension and Texan independence that concluded with the Oregon crisis and the Mexican War, were increasingly expressed like those of civilian commentators, in the language of a zero-sum commercial competition—the fear of worldwide British trade monopolies—rather than that of a millenial conflict of political ideologies between monarchy and republicanism. The beginnings of this shift were first apparent in the reports of the Fortification Board, particularly as Totten took over the principal responsibility for their formulation from Bernard, and in the quest for economic growth stressed by Gaines in his memorials to Congress.

Nevertheless, this shift gained only very momentary public expression in officers' papers during the 1830s, and officers apparently felt too little direct interest in fears of British commercial competition to comment on them at any length. Indeed, aside from reports and correspondence on the Patriot and Aroostook crises, there were still remarkably few comments by officers on foreign affairs or international relations, and their frequency did not significantly increase during the decade. Among the exceptions, an 1833 letter to the Military and Naval Magazine noted the two nations' commercial success and warned that it could not continue without conflict: "This competition . . . must end in inequality; then comes the reign of commercial monopoly, which . . . is not to be endured in friendship, or with safety." Like
Totten or Jacob Brown, most American military commentators believed that the United States was fortunate in possessing a guaranty against British aggression (or in more concrete material terms, against their exploitation of commercial monopolies) through the proximity of Canada, but this author disclaimed any ambition for territorial conquest, content that "the stake thus to be ventured by [British] violation of [international law . . . is a wholesome restraint upon [that country's] commercial cupidity and national jealousy."

Amazingly, aside from reprinted reports (and a couple of officers' letters reprinted from civilian newspapers) this article was the only broad-ranging commentary on the subject of foreign relations and the international state system published by an army officer in the decade-long run of the army's professional journals, and it was primarily directed at encouraging military preparedness rather than analyzing the international relations of the United States. (Naval officers appear to have been more prolific authors, probably because their duties took them into more direct contact with foreign powers.)

The republican internationalism of the 1810s (and in some officers' language even the 1820s) notwithstanding, "conservative realism" was the order of the day in officers' attitudes toward foreign affairs long before the nation took on a more active role overseas in the late nineteenth century. Some officers envisioned the growth of international trade in liberal terms akin to those of civilian commentators (i.e., as a force for international peace), but their principal objective was to justify military preparedness and spending by pointing to the uncertainty and tumult of a world of competing nation-states. Indeed, officers felt that competition was an unalterable fact of international life, and the specific circumstances of American relations with particular European nations ultimately meant little in their calculus of military preparation and necessity. Facing congressional pressure for budget
cuts in 1839, engineer major Chase acknowledged that "there is certainly less disposition for war throughout the civilized world now than twenty years ago." Chase conceded that "the multiplication and extension of commercial relations" between Britain, France, and the United States afforded "strong guarantees for the maintenance of peace," but like Edmund Gaines he took this tack in large part in order to appeal to a civilian audience that was unwilling to accept the expense demanded by arguments derived from conservative assumptions about human nature and the competitive operations of the European state system. 3

That fall Inspector General Wool struck a fatalistic tone more characteristic of the officer corps' true feelings about international relations by asserting that "it must be obvious to all who reflect on the subject that the [relations] of nations must be that of alternate peace and war. It therefore follows as a self-evident truth, that a long continuance of peace indicates the nearer approach of war." Wool's cyclical view of international relations impelled him to call for new military expenditures: "the disturbances in Europe [tensions between Britain and France over Egypt] at the present moment furnish . . . a strong additional argument for keeping our military organization as perfect as possible, and for increasing rather than diminishing our military force. Our peaceable relations with the nations of Europe are always endangered when ever those nations are belligerent and the United States neutral." Wool believed it "impossible to foresee all the consequences which may follow the revolutions in Europe. One thing, however, is certain; the chances of hostilities are everywhere increased." The hard lessons of history taught officers caution in the face of liberal hopes for international peace and progress, and the corollary of American isolation was that "in the
event of hostilities there is not a nation in the world on whose friendship we could rely."\textsuperscript{4}

As we have seen along in their reactions to crises along the borders, officers whose employment by the state made them acutely aware of the interdependence of politics and the social order were also highly conscious of the relationship between domestic and international stability, and a perspicacious few observed this connection in foreign nations as well as the United States. Senior officers like Wool were not alone in their concern over the unsettled state of European politics and its potential impact on American interests, though more junior officers expressed their concerns privately, as beffited their subordinate place in the civil-military hierarchy. (Their naval counterparts were more outspoken, as I shall discuss in the next chapter.) Writing a year after the inspector general's report, when tensions between France and Britain still ran high, Lieutenant Alexander Swift informed his father that the bellicose language of the French press demonstrated "the ticklish condition" of that country's society and politics.\textsuperscript{5}

Some of these men, especially ardent junior officers eager for promotion, found portents of a brighter international future in this instability--five and a half years later Lieutenant James Wall Schureman referred to France as "a volcano" ready to erupt on the death of Louis Philippe, and Schureman foresaw that "the thrones of Europe will receive a shock which if it does not entirely destroy them will shake them to their very foundations." Indeed, the young officer was much pleased with the prospective damage to English power, which he mistakenly considered "the fountain head and upholder of the monarchical institutions of the old continent." Schureman had been making insightful connections like these (correctly or not) since his West Point days several years before, when he
edited a short-lived cadet newspaper. In its April 1842 edition Schureman reported the successful progress of the Webster-Ashburton negotiations and linked it to the demands of British preoccupations elsewhere: "The defeats she has experienced in the east [in the Opium War], and [the] vexatious refusal of France to assent to the articles submitted for the suppression of the slave trade, have without doubt been instrumental" in securing her cooperation on Anglo-American issues.6

As with France, domestic turmoil (the Chartist movement, then at a peak) figured prominently in Schureman's assessment of the English political and strategic situation: "Queen Vic. appears to have her crown suspended by a hair, and unless something transpires to mitigate the sufferings of the poor in England and Ireland a revolution must obtain." Schureman's words show that even junior army officers followed the progress of European affairs, but such outspoken and insightful expression was certainly the exception rather than the rule, and few officers left evidence that they shared the faith of civilian expansionists (or the fears of some Canadian officials) in the ability of American economic power (specifically in the export of grain and the monopoly on cotton) to influence or coerce a Britain weakened by the social ills of industrialization. It was not at all difficult for officers to become reasonably well-informed about public issues, especially when one had ready access to gossip from Washington, but junior officers normally kept silent on paper and in public, a tendency that points toward the officer corps' growing sense of political neutrality (embodied in accountability to the nation-state) as well as the limits of their intellectual and professional curiosity. Such belligerent ideas doubtlessly seemed too outspoken and political in nature for officers (even junior ones frustrated by sluggish promotion prospects) to feel secure in espousing them publically.7
Anglophobia like Schureman's had militarily rational roots produced by a decade of tension with the most powerful nation in the world, but in most cases officers' awareness of British power shaped their views in ways different from more confident civilians. However belligerent the words of men like Schureman or George McClellan, proclamations of European weakness and decrepitude like those made by some civilian expansionists during the 1840s remained significantly less common in the minds of military commentators than fears of British aggressiveness and power, another dimension of the conservative realism of the men charged with the nation's defense (particularly, as we would expect, among those with Whiggish rather than Democratic tendencies). Indeed, this conservative occupational mindset probably helps to account for the lack of ideological republicanism or emotional Anglophobia in the officer corps as a whole, for officers saw the world as a competitive system in which monarchical Britain ultimately appeared as simply one opponent (though by far the strongest and most dangerous) among many. The bellicosity of British policy under Lord Palmerston did not escape the notice of junior officers, but they had to first view Britain's power from a defensive perspective, knowing that this belligerence proceeded from strength. Late in 1841 Cadet Schureman lauded President Tyler's request for a larger navy, as "at no time have we been in such need of it as we are now—suppose a war to break out between this country and England . . . what an amount of property would we lose by our negligence" in failing to protect American trade. (Schureman cited the Mediterranean as a region of particular consequence, something few officers of his grade had the perspicacity or foresight to point out.) In a similar example of officers' concerns, Lieutenant Henry Lee Scott, the commanding general's son and aide-de-camp, narrated Senate debates over provisions for
English searches of American vessels to Robert Anderson two years later: "It is thought that this question . . . has been revived by G.B.'s prime minister because he now thinks that Her Majesty's Kingdom having got rid of the China War may turn her attention to us."\(^8\)

That October (of 1843) James Schureman told his sister that "not one nor two, but a dozen or twenty regiments should be sent" to Oregon, lest the British redeploy their forces from China to forestall the American occupation: "Let the English lion but once plant a firm foot on the Territory, and millions of dollars and perhaps as many lives would not redeem it, while at present as many thousands would secure it." (Consciously or not, Schureman was virtually parroting the language of Secretary of the Navy Abel Upshur's report of 1841.) Schureman's letters reflect both the connections between European affairs and American expansionism and the diffuse and often vague way in which officers understood them: two years later Schureman came to conclude that it was French political instability and the consequent likelihood of a European war rather than tensions over Oregon that lay behind the British military build-up then occurring, but being stationed on the Canadian border had also tempered his earlier aggressiveness, and he worried that his post (Fort Gratiot, north of Detroit) "would be one of the first points aimed at" in a conflict. (This danger notwithstanding, Schureman's letter to his mother suggested that his concern was ultimately less for the defense of the United States than for the army's logistical ability to mount an offensive northward: the loss of Fort Gratiot "would force us to throw back and very inconveniently extend our base of operations" on the Detroit frontier. Like senior officers since Jacob Brown, Schureman clearly expected that if war came the United States would mount decisive offensives once it
gained the ascendancy provided by the proximity of its population and resources.)

Indeed, their consciousness of British power caused officers in search of an opponent and an arena for war to cite Britain and Oregon far more often than they did Mexico and Texas throughout the half-decade before the outbreak of the Mexican War. The reason for this attention was simple—the consensus of most officers (explored at greater length in the third section of this chapter) was that Mexico would cave in without a fight, but Oregon seemed a much chancer game in the face of the known determination of the British lion and the power of the Royal Navy. In other words, British power made that nation more likely to resist American expansion, a probability that doubtlessly seemed all the greater to men who were predisposed by ethnic pride to see fellow Anglo-Saxons as the most potent of enemies. Indeed, writing only a month before Palo Alto, Lieutenant William Barry told Captain James Duncan of the Army of Occupation that "I have no idea that you will burn a cartridge [in Texas]—you may possibly see the enemy, but I fancy no more." On the other hand, Barry warned his friend that "54 40 won't go down," and asked whether "you in your heart think we are any nearer Oregon now, or [are] likely to be, than a year ago?"

As this statement suggests, officers were politically divided over the desirability of annexing Oregon (particularly to the 54 40 line), much as they were over war with Mexico or as they had been over the French claims issue a decade before, but they expressed these divisions, like their party affiliations, privately. Barry was a Whig; the substantial number of officers (like Duncan) inclined to the Democrats were much less sceptical of the prospects and desirability of expansion, north or south. Sometimes Whiggery and belligerence were united, however, usually in the careerist pursuit of
promotion—Lieutenant Henry Turner considered Polk's election "a disappointment to all [the] intelligent people of the country" but proved eager enough for war once it came. Indeed, the war fulfilled Turner's careerist expectations—he was promoted to captain during the expansion of 1846 and brevetted to major for battlefield gallantry, thus advancing through both of the primary means by which officers expected to benefit from war.\textsuperscript{11}

Among non-Whigs, several officers' sentiments were expressed in remarkably hostile language that illustrates the persistent survival of Anglophobia in American society (particularly where occupational interests like those of the officer corps were at stake) during the mid-1840s—two years before Barry's letter, Lieutenant Henry Hunt had written to Duncan that "we are getting into a fever here about the Oregon question. I hope it may lead to a war that will drive the d[amne]d inveterate mercenaries from our continent. I . . . hope that once engaged it may be continued . . . until England loses not only Oregon but the Canadas." Even Anglophobic junior officers displayed comparatively little of the ardent republican internationalism of their early national predecessors and contemporary civilian expansionists, however. More characteristic of their reactions were careerist motives closely linked to the prospect of promotion, and secondarily the desire for the societal approval (embodied in martial glory) that had been denied to them in the Seminole conflict.\textsuperscript{12}

The diversity and ultimate coherence of these motives is evident in the belligerence shown by men like George McClellan, whose well-known enthusiasm for war with Mexico was prefigured three years earlier by his hopes that a rumor of war with Britain was true. Harking all the way back to the Chesapeake incident of 1807, the bellicose young cadet seemed less concerned about American policy and interest than with displaying national
virility and pursuing personal thrills and glory, exclaiming irresponsibly that "if we do have war, we'll give the English the tallest kind of thrashing they ever dreamed of." Indeed, amidst such excitement and opportunities McClellan was willing to let military training go by the wayside—if war occurred, this first-year cadet wanted his father to use his political influence to secure an immediate commission for him in the combat arms. Whatever the outcome, McClellan proclaimed that "I must get into the Army if I have to go as a private dragoon."13

A year later (in 1844) McClellan had become more circumspect in his enthusiasm, which now reflected a more realistic assessment of the balance of military power not unlike that offered by more senior officers considering the Canadian border. In a letter to his mother McClellan expressed pleasure with the results of a senatorial election and hoped that Oregon would be made a territory so "we might have a breeze with old England. She'd whip us like the deuce for about a year or so, but I reckon we'd give it to her after that!" Once again the cadet’s self-interest and ambition was on full display—indeed, he proclaimed himself "very interested" in the passage of a bill limiting the number of West Pointers who would receive army commissions, as "I will be certain to get in the army if this bill passes." This aggressiveness notwithstanding, McClellan’s interests in foreign relations seem to have been limited to those crises which enhanced his immediate prospects for self-advancement—like a number of politically aware officers McClellan expected that the treaty for Texas annexation would be defeated, but he had no comment on that apparently peripheral question.14

There were both positive and negative reasons for these bellicose assessments of Anglo-American relations. Regular officers considered Britain both a more dangerous and a more "worthy" opponent than Mexico; most
regulars expected Mexico to back down, whereas Britain was the world's greatest power, with a long record of aggression in North America and elsewhere. Ironically, the very ethnic and cultural familiarity of Britain made many officers more eager to win the societal sanction of glory by defeating fellow Anglo-Saxons. In deeper psychological terms, it takes no great acuity to speculate that a number of younger officers saw the British lion as an oppressive father figure whose defeat would elevate the grandsons of the Revolutionary generation to a place along with their illustrious forebears in a manner that commercial success could not equal. (Indeed, this entire outlook was ultimately derived from English class values themselves, for martial glory was intimately connected with the ideals of fame and reputation that motivated gentlemen.) The generation of the 1840s was the first which did not fight a war of independence from the parent country, and perhaps Manifest Destiny might be seen in some respects as this generation's own quest for glory, a means to resolve what historian George Forgie called "the problem of ambition in the post-heroic age." Many junior (and some field grade) officers seem to have resented or been jealous of British power and hoped to confound it in combat. Some longed to avenge the defeats of the War of 1812 and to regain the public esteem and internal cohesiveness that they believed that conflict had brought to the army, while others thought that war with Britain was inevitable at some point because of the clash of commercial interests. National, occupational, and individual interest and honor could all furnish intertwined reasons for officers to favor war, although republicanism (anxious or optimistic) of the sort commonly espoused by civilian expansionists was virtually invisible in their ruminations.15

Indeed, belligerence and Anglophobia alike were much more common among inexperienced younger officers like Schureman and McClellan, who
were eager for promotion and frustrated by public criticism of the army during the early 1840s, than among more established senior commanders like Worth, Scott, Brady, and Wool, who though veterans of the War of 1812 sometimes felt a strong kinship with the British born of mutual service in the name of international law and order during the "Patriot War." Indeed, the Anglophilia of more experienced officers survived the Oregon crisis as it had those of the late 30s: in the spring of 1845 Captain W.W.S. Bliss (soon to become Zachary Taylor's assistant adjutant general and de facto chief of staff) related his pleasure that "the Oregon question does not excite as much angry remark as at first," and a year later Sylvanus Thayer proclaimed himself "happy to find the Oregon question settled" upon his return from Europe.16

The best examples of this fellow-feeling came over several years in a series of anniversaries organized by civilians on the northern border to commemorate battles of the War of 1812. In the summer of 1843 a ceremony at Plattsburgh dedicated a group of monuments over the graves of British and American officers who had been killed at the battle there in September 1814. Ex-colonel John McNeil, a distinguished regimental commander at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane (battles in which he won brevets to lieutenant colonel and colonel, while receiving a wound that lamed him for life) during the Niagara campaign, introduced Inspector General Wool, commander of the American regulars during the battle (and on the Vermont border during the Patriot War), who was to dedicate a monument to a British colonel who had "gallantly" fallen at the head of his men while invading the United States. (The colonel's remains had been transferred from an unmarked grave several years before at the initiative of William Worth.) McNeil, federal surveyor of the Port of Boston since his resignation from the command of the 1st Infantry Regiment in 1830, found it "a pleasing spectacle to see the living brave doing
honor to the memory of the illustrious dead," and Wool responded that "the duty assigned me ... is no less gratifying ... than it is honorable." The inspector general then proclaimed that the monument "will furnish themes of praise to the end of time." On the whole, aggressive nationalism of the sort which led to Anglophobia (or to Anglo-Saxon racialism before the outbreak of war with Mexico) was unnecessary for experienced officers either psychologically or as a basis for national identity--international antagonism might be but was not necessarily a product of their nationalism, which was founded on their existing occupational allegiances and socialization rather than competitive or belligerent racial romanticism.17

These friendly (if not quite pacific) tendencies notwithstanding, the diplomatic situation meant that rumors of war with Britain were a much more common topic in officers' letters of the early and mid-1840s than those concerning Mexico, and as late as the beginning of 1846 junior officers rested their hopes for an expansion of the army (and the consequent promotions) primarily on the Oregon crisis. (Unfortunately for them, the regiment of mounted riflemen organized to secure the new territory was officered primarily by appointments directly from civilian life.) In 1841 dragoon captain John H. Burgwin wrote to his friend Abraham Johnston that "I had an edge immediately put on my sabre, & commenced practicing the six cuts, movements, etc etc," when he heard rumors of war over the McLeod crisis, and two years later Henry Turner reported his colonel's correspondence with Senator Thomas Hart Benton on "the description of troops to be employed in the occupation of Oregon." Turner was unhappy because Colonel Kearny (usually Turner's patron) had not recommended the lieutenant's chief rival and immediate superior for an appointment in the prospective volunteer regiments, as that would speed his promotion within the 1st Dragoons.
Turner then drew a connection between events in Oregon and California and tensions with Britain, noting Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones' unauthorized conquest of Monterey and an incident in which an American sloop fired on a British steam packet, concluding that "we must have an explosion e'er [ere] long." Indeed, Burgwin and his comrades represented the sharp end of American territorial expansion, but it later turned out that Burgwin had grasped a double-edged sword, for he was mortally wounded leading a storming party at Taos in February 1847.18

Diplomatic historians since Norman Graebner have often characterized the Mexican War as a "war for California, rather than a war over Texas," suggesting that the real enemy being aimed at was Britain and her maritime power rather than Mexico, but Turner's momentary interest in events on the Pacific Coast proved an anomaly among army officers. Indeed, however true of the Polk administration and American intentions in general, this thesis does not hold up when applied to the army officer corps, the majority of whose members were eventually concentrated in Texas and (aside from the Corps of Topographical Engineers and some members of the 1st Dragoons, who later comprised the core of Kearny's Army of the West) wrote virtually nothing about California. On the whole, officers' expectations regarding Britain—and indeed the possibility of war in general—appear to have been more defensive than offensive during this era: as late as January 1846 Winfield Scott was urging defensive preparations to guard the coastline against British attack (lamenting that Mobile and the Potomac were completely ungarrisoned, while Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charleston and New Orleans averaged less than a hundred regulars apiece), while the cadets of the Dialectic Society debated over whether the United States should intervene to protect American republics against European interference, not
on the advisability or desirability of American territorial expansion and war. (The cadet who reported this made no comment on the countries or events in question or the cadets' views and conclusions.)

Amidst these tensions British actions and methods were closely scrutinized by officers who anticipated hostilities with Mexico. The attention they gave to British methods and actions illustrates the ever-connected offensive and defensive motives of American officers, policy, and public opinion—American expansionists objected to British efforts to prevent the annexation of Texas and California while sometimes admiring Britain's skill and success at empire-building, though they would certainly have rejected any assertions of moral equivalence between British and American imperialism. Indeed, army officers occasionally seemed irritated by, or perhaps jealous of, Britain's imperial prowess, which led them to some morally dubious conclusions at odds with the proclaimed values of their nation: Lieutenant Robert Allen asserted that "we can afford to take all of Oregon and California, and still not be as well versed as John Bull in the game of theft."

Similarly, engineer lieutenant P.G.T. Beauregard believed that "if our government would only adopt the British policy 'to conquer by spreading the brand of discord amongst our enemies' . . . in a very short time [they] would be very anxious to have Mexico itself annexed to our 'Glorious Republic.'" Indeed, once the war began Beauregard and other officers expected it to end quickly unless Mexico received foreign support. Several junior officers mentioned the possibility that this would occur, and like civilian policymakers most expected such aid to come from the British. Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman reported rumors in the fall of 1844 that England was supplying Mexico with arms to retake Texas, and the following summer
he wrote that "I have no doubt that there is some underhanded work between the British government and that of Mexico to secure the independence of Texas, provided she will abolish slavery." England's international power and influence led topographer George Meade and his fellow captain Ephraim Kirby Smith to believe that the solutions to the Oregon and Texas disputes were dependent on one another, but unlike some civilian expansionists few officers were unrealistic enough about the balance of power to expect to force Britain's hand by a demonstration of military strength against Mexico.21

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II. Edmund Gaines and the Balance of Territorial Expansionism and Professional Responsibility: The Dilemmas of Peacekeeping and Law Enforcement along the Texas Border, 1821-1846

During the 1820s military comment related to Texas concentrated on the protection of the Santa Fe trade (which may be seen as a form of American economic expansion, of course) rather than territorial aggrandizement per se, and officers who acted as ardent expansionists during the 1810s, 30s, and 40s cooperated with their Mexican counterparts in pursuit of law and order along the borders. As was the case with international relations and foreign affairs in general, the army's concerns with Indian relations, internal discipline and the schools of practice, and internal improvements and the fortifications program seem to have drawn away whatever attention might otherwise have been devoted to Texas during the decade, and few officers wrote anything about Texas during the 20s outside of official reports concerning cooperation with the Mexican authorities and the
protection of the Santa Fe trade. Indeed, the possibility of territorial expansion against Mexico received little if any written consideration by officers during the mid-1820s—in 1824 Andrew Jackson was rumored to have assumed the leadership of an expedition against the province, but by this time the erstwhile general was a civilian (and a senator and presidential candidate), not an army officer, and the closest officers got to filibustering in this era was resigning to serve with the Texas revolutionaries a decade later.22

The evidence we have comes largely from occasional reports by Edmund Gaines (the commander of the army's Western Department during most of this era, and the best example of an expansionist officer in the southwestern borderlands), who wrote to Secretary Calhoun in 1823 that he believed Mexican reports of banditry in East Texas to be true and advised American action to prevent marauders from using the border as a sanctuary. Gaines cautioned that "I should not willingly permit any officer of a Foreign Government to charge citizens of the United States" without more proof than had been presented, a responsible balancing of rights, interests, and law from a man not always known for nuanced judgments, but his penchant for order was clearly evident in his recommendations. "[B]elieving that much good . . . will result from proper efforts on the part of our commandants on the Texas frontier to preserve harmony with [the] new Governor," Gaines asked whether he might alert the Mexicans that officers "pursuing offenders to the Sabine will find [aid] at our military posts; and on application to the civil authority (with proper evidence) may recover the stolen property if found within our limits."23

Military commanders paid renewed attention to Texas as American settlement accelerated, but the problems behind this concern continued to be matters of law enforcement and peacekeeping rather than omens of military
expansionism. Gaines called for reinforcements along the border during the Edwards rebellion in 1827, and he directed Zachary Taylor, then commandant at New Orleans, to "cooperate with the revenue officers and other civil authorities, to prevent violations and evasions of the law; and to suppress any disorders which may grow out of the recent or future disturbances in Texas." (Gaines did not suggest whether this suppression would involve crossing the international boundary in pursuit of violators.) Indeed, American filibusters and marauders—who were often almost indistinguishable from the turbulent frontier populace—posed as much of a problem for military officers as Indians or foreign military forces. A plot to raid and plunder the Comanche from American territory was rumored in 1827, and two years later commissary lieutenant William Colquohoun warned his superior that the "Spaniard" posts near Fort Towson needed watching, but the lieutenant's principal concern lay with the "desperate and violent" whites who had threatened public officers and property to the point that he suggested abandoning the post. Indeed, some soldiers were attacked by civilians but rescued by a force dispatched by the post commander, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Cummings, who was transferred to another post after he proved unable to secure the cooperation of the local district attorney, and the fort was temporarily closed (ostensibly for reasons of economy). These incidents notwithstanding, the chief threat to the security of the army and its officers in the environs of Fort Towson may well have been their own quarrelsomeness, for nine months later Colquohoun was dismissed from the army for striking a superior.24

Gaines' sympathy for Mexican law enforcement efforts did not mean that he had foregone the desire for American territorial expansion that he had shown on the southeastern borders in the 1810s. As commander of the
Western Department Gaines was the officer most appropriately concerned with scenarios involving Texas, and as Andrew Jackson's protege from the First Seminole War it is not surprising that he favored an expansionist foreign policy. In 1830 he wrote to Jackson implying that Texas belonged to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase, asserting that the renunciation of American claims under the terms of the Transcontinental Treaty of 1821 had been unconstitutional. The region "must and will be restored to us," Gaines proclaimed: "when the people of Texas ... demand admission into the union ... they cannot -- [and] will not be refused."

Gaines' anticipation notwithstanding, army officers seem to have given little consideration to the growing unrest in Texas during the early 1830s, even as Mexico increased its garrisons and the United States bound itself by treaty in 1831 to restrain the Indians it was concentrating north of the Red River boundary. President Jackson, who favored annexation, sought to do so by purchase rather than war and ordered American officials to keep a close watch on his friend Sam Houston, who secretly made plans to conquer the region with Indian support in 1832. (Houston had risen from the ranks during the War of 1812, in which he received a severe wound at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend under Jackson's command, and was retained as a lieutenant after the war but resigned in 1818--ultimately one of the best examples of the sort of aggressive expansionist who left the officer corps during the decade after the War of 1812.)

After a decade and a half of near silence, the officer corps' latent occupational interest in the southwestern border was revived in 1836 by the disorder of the Texas Revolution, and this attention did not entirely subside at any point during the following decade. Only in 1835 did the region become an area of significant concern to army officers, as the emergence of open
hostilities aroused extensive American civilian sentiment in favor of the
Anglo-Texans and threatened to unleash Indian raids along the southwestern
frontier of the United States. Even then, few officers committed their
thoughts on the subject to paper, but those who did so provide us with a
plethora of perspectives from which to understand the issues and values at
stake in American expansionism and the responses of army officers to its
opportunities and dilemmas. Two contrasting views of the Texas
Revolution, both exemplifying and prefiguring differences in officers'
attitudes toward annexation and war a decade later, were presented by Captain
Ethan Allen Hitchcock (who continued to oppose annexation and the war
with Mexico on moral grounds even in 1847, though he led troops in every
battle on the way to Mexico City) and Military Academy cadet Jubal Anderson
Early. Early, then in his third year at West Point, wrote home to his father in
a furor over the Mexican attempt to suppress the rebellion. His views
exemplified many attitudes commonly held among American civilians
toward the rulers and institutions of Mexico, as well as a republican
consciousness rarely found in so explicit and thoroughly articulated a form
among army officers. As such his letter provides us with an artifact of general
cultural value of the sort rarely found in officers' papers, and it is worthy of
extensive quotation simply in contrast to the views of all the other officers
cited herein, as a reminder of the distance between officers' generally
Whiggish values and the more Democratic (or Jacksonian) ones of American
society as a whole.

"Santa Anna, aided by the Priests and the Military, has usurped the
Government, overturned the constitution, and established an almost
unbounded despotism," Early began. Indeed, the cadet saw Texas as a future
stronghold for republican liberty: "many of our enterprising . . . young men
have given up all the luxuries and comforts of their homes and emigrated to Texas . . . in order to . . . perpetuate the principles of liberty in this new land." A southerner and future Confederate general, Early felt certain that Mexico had "palpably violated the promises [she] made" to the Anglo-Texans, who "had the right and sovereignty of a State secured to [them] by the Constitution" of that nation. The young cadet drew directly upon American xenophobia and racial fears when he warned that Santa Anna was "determined to exterminate" the Texans and was "exciting the murderous savages . . . to act over again the barbarous scenes with which our [own] early history is filled." The Texans were therefore "bound by every principle of self preservation" and "justified by the natural law of rights, as well as by precedent, to declare their Independence, and to resist the attempt which is being made to annihilate them." Early then proclaimed the propriety of American intervention in tones of fervent republicanism and internationalism:

[W]e of the United States are called upon by every principle of humanity, by our love of liberty and our detestation of oppression; and by the duty which we owe both to God and men, to go to the succour of our Countrymen . . . Shall we shed tears over the fate of Greece and Poland and yet see our own COUNTRYMEN barbarously slaughtered[?] . . . Sanity forbids it. The respect which we entertain for our forefathers of the Revolution forbids it.

Early even drew upon the example of French intervention in the American Revolution to sanction his plea for action: "The gratitude which we owe to another country for espousing our cause imperiously commands us to espouse that of the oppressed." The ardent cadet went on to maintain that
the cause of the Texans is even more justifiable than ours was.

We resisted the usurpation of our lawful government. They are resisting the Tyranny and barbarous cruelty of an usurped government. . . . Their cause is the cause of Liberty . . . Can an American hesitate to take up arms in the cause of Liberty? . . .

Liberty has been driven from the old world and the only asylum for it is in the new. . . . It is the imperious duty of every one who in this fair land has received it and its principles unsullied from his ancestors, to extend its dominion and to perpetuate its glorious light to posterity.

Like the civilian expansionists examined by historian Thomas Hietala, Early felt certain that Texas would revivify as well as extend the empire of liberty, allowing future Americans to enjoy the same unbounded freedoms and opportunities as their forefathers despite the social ills and divisions caused by a growing interdependent commercial society in the cities of the east. The future of republican liberty demanded the expulsion of homegrown as well as European tyranny from the New World:

In succouring the Texans, . . . we should consider that we extend the sway of the goddess of our worship, that we shall secure to their numerous progeny the benefits of which we are so tenacious, and that we secure to oppressed freemen of other countries an Asylum which our own Country ere long will not be able to afford them.

Early's hopes for himself demonstrated the same sense of boundlessness and the same fear of constraint as his expectations for the future of liberty. Texas could serve as a panacea for the limits of American society, allowing sons to escape the dominion of their fathers while repeating
the glorious deeds of the Revolution. Early wanted to quit West Point and go
to Texas, where

there will be no established characters to contend with; all will be
new and the road to civil distinction will be open and easy. I
will not have to wait until others have passed off the stage . . .
What is more calculated to expand the mind than espousing and
working in the cause of Liberty? . . . What better book in which
to study human nature[?] . . . He who never aspires, never rises.

Early was commissioned in 1837 and promoted to first lieutenant with
extraordinary rapidity the following year, but he resigned within a month of
his promotion to pursue the less circumscribed opportunities open to
civilians. His rhetorical skills served him well as a lawyer, and he was elected
for one term to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1841 and appointed major
of a volunteer regiment in the Mexican War. As his impatient rhetoric and
rapid resignation indicate, Early did not take to the slow-paced routines and
hierarchical subordination of peacetime army life and bureaucracy, and his
ideologically outspoken views were not characteristic of the majority of
officers, particularly those with more experience and those from the North.
Indeed, Early's attitudes toward the Texans and his ardent espousal of their
cause provide virtual studies in counterpoint to those of most other officers,
whether in 1836 or a decade later. Unlike William Worth and his comrades
on the Canadian border, or officers then stationed on the Florida frontier,
Early (who was after all nowhere near Texas) characterized the "Texians" as
"respectable adventurers" and took pains to warn his father that they were
not "land speculators and fugitives from justice" as opinion in the north
often charged. Nor did the young cadet believe that the Texans were
"attempting to subvert the laws, and overturn their lawful government," as so many Whigs proclaimed. 26

Aside from Albert Sidney Johnston, it is unknown how many officers entered Texan service in the mid-1830s. Given the mass of resignations during these years the number could certainly have been substantial, but secondary sources on the army and the Texas Revolution provide little evidence of such an influx. Though he was both exceptional and idiosyncratic as an articulate intellectual and a moral logician, Ethan Allen Hitchcock proved more characteristic of the temper of experienced officers in the 1830s and 40s. Then serving as an aide to General Gaines on the frontier, the Whiggish Vermonter wrote to his mother that "the Texas cause looks much better at a distance than it does upon a near approach":

The people of Texas made no opposition to Santa Anna or the Mexican government as long as they were not required to comply with the revenue laws & were permitted to keep slaves (which the Mexican constitution prohibits). [When these conditions changed] the people saw at once an end to their dream of wealth, and accusing the Mexican government of tyranny assailed, abused, and drove off the custom house officers & prepared for defenses . . . They were immediately joined by a large band of land speculators (who are always prowling around new countries), and this war of independence as it is called is in fact a rebellion.

Hitchcock reported the Texans' efforts "to induce General Gaines to take some step which they can represent as an indication" of American support for "their cause, [for] above all they would be glad to involve him directly in it."

Indeed (and not unlike Worth, Wool, Jesup, and Brady on the northern and
southeastern frontiers), the nineteen-year veteran felt that "there are men among them bad enough to provoke the Indians to commit depredations even upon themselves" as a pretext for seeking American aid and protection. The highly capable Hitchcock was sent by Gaines to warn Santa Anna "not to violate our neutrality" or supply the Indians, but his view of the crisis was exactly the opposite of Early's: "if [Santa Anna] abstains from enticing the Indians he . . . will deserve success." Although Hitchcock (who tended to take his moral stances to logical extremes that had little effect on policy) was as uncharacteristically outspoken in his own way as Early, on the whole his suspicion of aggressive expansionism was more widely shared among those members of the officer corps who have left records of their opinions.27

Edmund Gaines plays a complex part in this story, for he was an ardent expansionist and eager aggressor, a sometime advocate of leniency (however paternalistic) toward Indians, and (like his counterparts on the Canadian frontier) a stern enforcer of national and international law against banditry, marauding, and filibustering. His belligerence and impetuosity repeatedly led him to the verge of irresponsibility, a line he nevertheless refused to cross into filibustering or quasi-official aggression like Jackson's--or his own--twenty years before. As a thirty-year veteran of southwestern service and Andrew Jackson's principal subordinate along the Florida border during the years after the War of 1812, Gaines was sympathetic to most frontier causes, including expansionism, and as commander of the Western Department he was the most important American actor on the Texas border in 1836. Gaines was ordered from Florida to the southwestern border on January 23 but did not receive this news until March 28 because of slow communications and his own interim movements. The following day he wrote to Secretary of
War Cass, belligerently proposing to anticipate "any disposition of the Mexicans or their red allies to menace our frontier" "by crossing our supposed or imaginary national boundary, and meeting the savage marauders [wherever they] are to be found in their approach towards our frontier"--in effect to establish a buffer zone in Mexican territory in East Texas. This proposal encapsulates the different circumstances in which Gaines and the officers stationed on the Canadian frontier found themselves (and some extent the different values they expressed), for it is inconceivable that William Worth or Winfield Scott would have proposed such a measure in the face of British military power and their sense of the legitimacy of the international boundary there.28

Gaines estimated the number of potential enemies (whether Indian, Mexican, or both) at between 8000 and 12,000 and suggested that an equal force of mounted troops would be necessary to counter them. Gaines' exaggerated delineation of the potential threat was couched in language so vague as to justify virtually any measure he took. On April 5 he properly ordered the commanders at Forts Towson and Gibson to secure the southern border of the Indian Territory against crossings by the armed forces of either side, and three days later he precipitously called on the governors of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana for volunteers, a measure backed by precedent yet strictly speaking illegal coming from a military officer without authorization from the president. In these public proclamations Gaines followed a more responsible tack than his initial letter to the War Department had suggested, observing simply that "nothing can be more evident than that an Indian war commencing on either side of the line, will as surely extend to both sides," requiring military preparations for the defense of the frontier.29
Gaines received numerous urgent appeals for assistance from Anglo-Texans residing near Nacogdoches and the Sabine, and on April 13 he was informed that said town was probably in Indian hands. He promptly ordered thirteen companies (four hundred men) to the eastern bank of the Sabine (where they took up positions at the site used by James Wilkinson in 1806) and sent an officer to sound out the Caddo Indians, who proved largely peaceful. Gaines nevertheless recommended continuing preparations in order to intimidate the nearby Indians and strike quickly if required. The secretary of war responded by giving Gaines the authority to cross the boundary if he felt that doing so was necessary to restrain the Indians, but the general was forbidden to cooperate with either of the belligerents no matter what the circumstances, and he was instructed to withdraw from Texas as soon as the safety of the frontier was secured. The general anticipated these orders by warning Santa Anna and Sam Houston that he intended to preserve American neutrality and would interpret the military employment of Indians living under American sovereignty as an act of war against the United States.30

The Texan victory at San Jacinto ended the immediate crisis (such as it was), and Gaines withdrew his call for volunteers. (None had yet been mustered.) The renewal of hostilities in June led Gaines to call for volunteers a second time, but he initially refused Texan appeals to occupy Nacogdoches. On July 10 he changed his mind and ordered Lieutenant Colonel William Whistler of the 7th Infantry to move south from Fort Towson with seven companies (originally drawn from Gibson) to secure the town, but to avoid battle unless attacked. A month later Gaines alerted Colonel Mathew Arbuckle to hold the dragoons at Towson in readiness for active operations. By this time as many as eleven hundred soldiers had been concentrated on or
near the Sabine border, along with 155,000 rations, enough to feed them for two to three months without any resupply, but in the meantime President Jackson disapproved of Gaines' request for volunteers from Tennessee on the grounds that the state's quota was already committed in Florida. (Additional call-ups would therefore disturb the balance of payments made to the states and their citizens for volunteer services, leading to embarrassing questions about federal patronage and favoritism.) The president later declared privately that he had done so in order to prevent Gaines from orchestrating a mass desertion to the Texan side, but there is no evidence that Gaines intended or attempted to do so. Whether Gaines had embarrassed the administration or it had chosen to disavow his actions when they became politically controversial is unclear, but the friction between Gaines and Jackson that followed was more a clash of strong-willed individuals than of substantive policy differences.31

Gaines responded to Jackson's restraints in a letter to his subordinate Arbuckle, asserting his "duty to afford the frontier inhabitants . . . [the] protection guaranteed by the constitution of the United States" and claiming that his call for volunteers had been legally sound. In a letter to Tennessee governor Newton Cannon (an old enemy of Jackson's from the 1820s) that relied heavily on quasi-Jacksonian rhetoric, the general maintained that he considered "the poorest frontier family . . . entitled to the same . . . protection as the most fashionable of our interior citizens. If I were capable of making an invidious distinction . . . between the rich and the poor--the lordly politician and the humble pioneer . . . I should prove myself unworthy of the trust reposed in me." Although Gaines thereby displayed a healthy sense of responsibility to the society he served, his constitutionally elected superiors were not asking him to make class distinctions or to interpret the
Constitution. The magnitude of the crisis in East Texas had been much exaggerated by Texans and Gaines alike, and on September 4 Colonel Whistler reported his opinion that the Texan Indians had no intention of attacking the American frontier. In early October Gaines left the Sabine to attend the court of inquiry being held into his and Winfield Scott's conduct of operations in the first stages of the Second Seminole War the previous winter, and in November President Jackson ordered the forces at Nacogdoches to withdraw, bringing the American intervention (such as it was) to an end without combat or casualties. The 7th Infantry returned to its normal station at Fort Gibson and most of the 6th was sent on to Florida.\textsuperscript{32}

Gaines acted aggressively but not really belligerently in 1836, for he did not initiate the move to Nacogdoches independently of civilian authority, nor did he depart from basic government policy to seize pretexts or opportunities to intervene. Indeed, given his past experience and the frontier sociopolitical context in which he actually moved, it might well be said that Gaines exercised laudable caution and responsibility in both preparation and execution. His repeated calls for volunteers, a case in which military considerations were found incompatible with political and diplomatic ones, demonstrate the difficulty of ascertaining the practical content and meaning of professional military responsibility in complex borderlands situations--as on the Florida frontier between 1816 and 1818, Gaines was acting in accord with and providing protection for what both he and Jackson believed to be the irreversible (if not divinely sanctioned) flow of American population, but (also like Jackson twenty years before) Gaines was doing so without explicit legal and constitutional authorization from the system of government he was commissioned to serve and bound to obey. Jackson, on the other hand, had secured a new job, one much more exposed to partisan attack, and he was in a
much better position to appreciate the dangers of unauthorized military adventurism (both to the nation's foreign relations and the election of his successor).

Neither Gaines nor Jackson acted effectively to stop the flow of American volunteers and supplies to Texas, but Gaines did not actively support the Texan forces (except in possibly releasing East Texan volunteers or militiamen to move to the primary battlefront), nor did he attack the Mexican ones, as Jackson and Ripley had done two decades before. Gaines was certainly excitable, often impetuous, and occasionally petulant when he felt his pride injured by superiors, but his preparations were responsible ones given his past experience and his sense of ultimate moral accountability to the citizens of the southwestern frontier, and Jackson's criticism of his former protege concealed the reality that Gaines had acted appropriately given general American policy objectives and the circumstances on the spot. Like many of the other actions of the officer corps, Gaines' proactive measures had the potential to cause political and diplomatic embarrassment to the national government to which he was institutionally accountable, but they were not substantially irresponsible in impact. Given the difficulty of communication and the need to grant local commanders substantial operational discretion prior to the advent of the telegraph, it is hardly remarkable that Gaines should have used his initiative as he did. Indeed, if anything it is surprising that officers did not use their discretion to exceed their often (and often purposefully) vague instructions and engage in unauthorized yet politically popular expansionism more frequently. Their growing reluctance to do so displays the sense of politically neutral accountability to national civilian authority that became the hallmark of the officer corps' professionalism.
The success of the Texas Revolution led to continued tensions on the southwestern border throughout the period of this study. In May 1837 Gaines reiterated his concerns for the protection of American citizens after hearing rumors that Mexico had seized American vessels and imprisoned their crews: "should it prove to be true" he urged military preparations in order to "facilitate ... whatever effective military remedy the President of the United States may be pleased to apply." Although he couched his letter in respectfully hesitant language, Gaines clearly assumed that Van Buren would take forceful action. (The general also wrote directly to Secretary of War Poinsett, bypassing commanding general Macomb, another example of his sense that substantive responsibility was more important than the formal procedures of institutional accountability.) As became his custom during this era, Gaines quickly called for a vast force of mounted volunteers (very few of whom were ever mustered), and in seeking to provide for them he demonstrated the same logistical acuity that marked his views on the coastal fortification program and the military uses of railroads, a broadly social responsibility for citizen-soldiers similar to Jackson's in his preparations for the conquest of Florida. "The United States [would] ... supply each Battalion with a ... Regular officer for each branch of the General Staff," which "would contribute to ... the prompt instruction, health, comfort, and immediate efficiency of each Battalion." Doing so would "win the confidence and lasting gratitude of every well disposed officer and soldier," though Gaines did not say whether he expected or intended this gratitude to go to the United States or its army. The general concluded by proposing locations for recruiting and supply depots, and noted the necessity of an adequate naval force. Gaines then explicitly proposed to invade Mexico by land and sea with an army of 50-100,000 men "until we find them disposed to respect us," but it is not clear
whether this immense force was intended for conquest or was a more innocuous consequence of the officer corps' tendency toward exaggerated projections exacerbated by the general's grandiose vision as an individual. As in so many other instances, Gaines was ignored, and after his experience of the previous year he did not attempt to take the initiative himself, a sign that he was not irredeemably wedded to the pursuit of American expansion at the expense of his career in the army of the United States.33

Another potential crisis appeared in August 1838 when a rebellion by Mexicans and Indians near Nacogdoches led Sam Houston to call for American assistance from Colonel James Many of the 3rd Infantry, a forty-year veteran. Unlike Gaines two years before, Many properly refused this request from a foreign nation, and in November he took a force of 165 troops and cannon to Shreveport to drive back a group of Texans who had crossed the border and attacked the Caddo Indians in American territory. (The Texans' authority for this act is unclear.) Orders promulgated that December gave American commanders a pretext to build up forces along the Texan border in order to prevent Indians under American jurisdiction from participating in conflicts in Texas, but there was no military policy of "hot pursuit" into Texas as there had been against Spanish Florida (or as was practiced from Texas against Indians raiding from Mexico after the Civil War.)34

Indeed, the focus of army officers' attention did not return to the southwest until 1842, when tensions between Texas and Mexico reached a new peak during the Mier and Somervell expeditions. In March of that year Ethan Allen Hitchcock reported widespread rumors of a council among "certain Indians of the Cherokee, Shawnee, and Delaware tribes" "on the subject of [making] war upon Texas" from the north in conjunction with a
Mexican invasion, and Zachary Taylor (who had been granted a brevet to brigadier general by virtue of his performance as theater and battlefield commander in the Second Seminole War) was ordered to prevent any efforts of the sort. Taylor urged the secretary of war to ignore these rumors as unsubstantiated fabrications from self-interested frontiersmen, but he received fifteen companies of reinforcements (the 6th Infantry from Jefferson Barracks and half of the soon-to-be dismounted 2nd Dragoons from Leavenworth) at Fort Towson, swelling his force from less than seven hundred men to about two thousand. This move represented the first large-scale commitment of forces to the southwestern border since 1836, and in some respects it can be considered the origin of Taylor's Armies of Observation and Occupation.\textsuperscript{35}

Nothing beyond the usual marauding occurred, but the raids gave unscrupulous Texans and men claiming to represent that republic excuses to retaliate and opportunities for plunder by raiding into the Indian Territory. Texas also issued warrants to her citizens authorizing them to attack Mexican caravans on the Santa Fe trail, leading to protests by American businessmen and the Mexican government, and a dragoon expedition under the command of Captain Philip St. George Cooke was sent to escort a trade caravan along the trail in the summer of 1843. Cooke met and disarmed a group of a hundred Texan privateers in American territory, arousing diplomatic protests from Texas. General Gaines strongly supported Cooke's decision, which was criticized in some civilian quarters as a threat to American relations with Texas (and implicitly to the likelihood of annexation), as part of the army's ongoing effort to suppress lawlessness and filibustering along the nation's borders:
It is our bounden duty to put down all predatory movements of this sort of land privateering, such as have too long contributed to mark the character of men calling themselves members of American Republics towards each other. We must destroy, arrest, or disarm all such lawless combinations, whenever found within or near our unmarked boundary.

Gaines warned that "no such movements . . . can take place any where upon the Santa Fe road without jeopardizing the lives and property of many of our good citizens." He maintained that Cooke had the discretionary power to decide whether the bandit party was within American jurisdiction for the purposes of executing his duty, which included the protection of Mexican citizens engaged in trade along the route, declaring that the very fact of army officers' employment under the auspices of the nation-state invested them with the necessary disinterestedness and authority to make diplomatically important decisions on the spot:

The sacred character of this duty required perfect impartiality on the part of the United States' commander to whom it is confided, and naturally constitutes him, while acting under the authority of the Government, a fit and proper judge . . . to decide how far he can go . . . consistently with the well-known principles of the law of nations.

Indeed, Gaines was entirely willing to extend the protective attributes of American sovereignty over the length of the Santa Fe road, warning that the social and economic benefits of liberalism (the free trade and commercialism he otherwise expected to foster through railroad construction) were ultimately dependent upon an adherence to international law that could only be enforced by the military agents of the nation-state:
I have long acted upon the principle that, for the purposes of protection . . . against predatory bands . . . disposed to violate the known laws of war, or to violate the long-cherished principles of that free trade and social intercourse which have done so much for the great cause of civilization and free government throughout the civilized world, we should not hesitate to consider every foot of land and water near our unmarked boundary . . . as neutral ground, and within the reach of our authority.

The cantankerous general could not conclude without a self-justifying reference to past controversies: "I acted upon this principle upon the Sabine frontier in the year 1836, much to the dissatisfaction of certain self-esteemed abolitionists . . . but I am never so well satisfied with my own conduct as when I feel myself abused by political intriguers and land privateers." Less idiosyncratically, Captain John Burgwin of Cooke's regiment used the occasion to draw out the link between officers' aspirations for personal prestige and their public services, hoping that "he will get some credit for his service, which I think will be most beneficial in its results." Indeed, the State Department rebuffed Texan protests and Cooke was promptly sent back out in command of a second escort. The support of his fellow officers was further made manifest when he was cleared of all charges of misconduct in a military court of inquiry held the following year. Whatever their personal and professional differences, Edmund Gaines and Winfield Scott certainly agreed on the army's law enforcement obligations in the borderlands, and their language in that capacity demonstrates a similar allegiance to the institutions and authority of the nation-state which promulgated those laws.
By the end of 1843 two thousand regulars had been concentrated in the vicinity of the Texas border. On April 12, 1844 representatives of the United States and Texas signed a treaty of annexation providing military protection for Texas against Mexico; the western strategic reserve at Jefferson Barracks had been ordered to Fort Jesup twenty miles east of the Sabine boundary in anticipation of this the day before. On April 23 the "Corps of Observation" was officially created as an independent command under brevet brigadier general Zachary Taylor, who was instructed to open confidential communications with Sam Houston without informing his nominal superior Edmund Gaines. Taylor arrived at Jesup June 17 to find a thousand men in twenty-three companies from the 2nd Dragoons and the 3rd and 4th Infantry awaiting him. He immediately dispatched an officer to contact President Houston while making a reconnaissance of the country's geography, logistical resources, and attitudes toward annexation en route. The Senate rejected the annexation treaty that month and Taylor was promptly ordered to cease communications with Houston, but congressional disapproval notwithstanding, the Tyler administration gave Texan officials an informal (and probably unconstitutional) guarantee of assistance in case of Mexican attack, and in October Taylor received orders to prepare for a move into Texas on short notice, "in order to restrain any hostile incursions on the part of the border Indians" into Texas, "as required by the provisions of existing treaties." Taylor wrote to his brother (the assistant commissary general) that he considered this directive "a mere pretext for our troops to cross the Sabine," and he did not attempt to put it to the test.37

Finally facing an expansionist majority in Congress, President Tyler proclaimed the United States ready for war and sought a congressional joint resolution for annexation, which he signed three days before Polk's
inauguration in March 1845. Later that month the Mexican minister to the United States was withdrawn after presenting a warning that annexation would be considered an act of war. The American minister to Mexico was then expelled, formally breaking diplomatic relations between the two countries. Expecting Texan consent to annexation, Secretary of War William L. Marcy directed Taylor to prepare to move to the defense of Texas on May 28, and on June 15 acting Secretary of War George Bancroft ordered Taylor to move to Texas. (American naval squadrons had been stationed off Mazatlan and Veracruz since 1844, and Bancroft directed Commodore John Sloat of the Pacific Squadron to seize California if war should break out, while Commodore David B. Conner was to seize Tampico and Veracruz.) The general received these instructions two weeks later and promptly put his infantry in motion for New Orleans. (The dragoons went overland to San Antonio.) A Texan convention agreed to annexation on July 4 and the first elements of the Army of Observation embarked three weeks later, arriving at Corpus Christi on the last day of July under the command of Ethan Allen Hitchcock. On August 6 Taylor renamed the force the Army of Occupation, a politically infelicitous phrase that probably suggests Taylor's practical mindset more than the possibility that he was expressing his Whiggish view of the annexation.38

On August 30 the Polk administration issued Taylor's instructions, allowing the general to use his discretion in choosing his camp with the proviso that he leave the Mexican outposts between the Rio Grande and the Nueces undisturbed. Polk directed Taylor to regard "the crossing of the Del Norte [the Rio Grande] by a Mexican army in force . . . as an act of War," and authorized him to take the offensive to drive the Mexicans south of the river should this occur, "with discretionary authority to pursue" them "to the West
of the Del Norte, and [to] take Matamoras or any other Spanish Post West of that River, but not to penetrate any great distance into the interior." Though no expansionist, the general soon suggested measures intended to secure the administration's objectives. Taylor felt certain that a settlement would "be greatly facilitated and hastened by our taking possession at once of one or two points" along the boundary claimed by the United States, and early in October he recommended that the army move south to the Rio Grande, as he believed that Corpus Christi was much too far from the disputed boundary to "impress the government of Mexico with our readiness to vindicate . . . our title" "by force of arms, if [it were found] necessary." Taylor advised Adjutant General Jones that "our strength and state of preparation should be displayed in a manner not be mistaken," but he felt that he could not move forward without specific orders unless the Mexicans did so first, examples of both his sense of military responsibility and his accountability to diplomatic considerations and political authority. Secretary of War Marcy responded by telling Taylor to establish his winter quarters as close to the Rio Grande as possible given the logistical situation and the balance of military force, but the army had only two-thirds of the supply train it needed to sustain such a move and the general decided to wait when he heard news that Mexico might agree to negotiations. (The army was also undergoing its first bout of disease at the time of this exchange.) Texas formally became the twenty-eighth state in the union on December 29, 1845; American efforts to attain the territories west of Texas by purchase (the Slidell mission) failed two weeks later and Polk immediately ordered Taylor to the Rio Grande with instructions to take the offensive if Mexico began hostilities.39

Though no longer in charge of the Regular Army forces along the Texan borders, Edmund Gaines reacted as precipitously to these events as he
had a decade before. Like Jackson a quarter-century before, Gaines felt capable of interpreting the government's policy himself, assuming responsibility as the senior officer in the region in reaction to fluid conditions in accordance with the general tone of national policy. Taylor's army had been created as a mission-specific taskforce independent of Gaines' geographically based command (the Western Division, reestablished at the same time after two years in which the territorial commands had been divided into nine smaller departments), yet the old general immediately felt it necessary to go to Taylor's aid by calling on the governor of Louisiana for volunteers, hoping once again to create an army of 50,000 men to march on Mexico City. As in 1836 and 1837 Gaines had no legal authority to do this, and he was immediately rebuked by the adjutant general. (As in 1836, Gaines also violated the commanding general's orders against writing outside the chain of command directly to the president or secretary of war.) Nevertheless, Gaines promptly repeated his request, aroused to a sense of urgency by the potential of the "vast geographical limits . . . over which [the United States] cannot but extend very soon if we do our duty," and claiming the leadership of the expedition "to the city of Mexico; and thence, if necessary, to California" "as a right" earned by his preeminence as a western commander. Secretary Marcy responded by ordering the general to end his interference in Taylor's area of responsibility. Gaines then remained silent until May 1, 1846, when his fears for Taylor's army led to a third request to lead an invasion followed by a series of twelve requisitions for state volunteers and a number of letters authorizing private civilians to raise them.40

The exchange that followed demonstrated a general conflict of visions over the professional responsibilities and autonomy of a departmental commander as well as Gaines' personal impetuosity and pride. Marcy
ordered Gaines to countermand his requisitions, and Polk ordered the general to Washington for a court of inquiry. Both civilians were worried that Gaines' actions would lead to a surplus of troops who could not be fed, thus imperiling Taylor's operations. (Indeed, Gaines himself shared this concern, and he therefore refused the services of the first division of Louisiana volunteers organized.) In this instance, Gaines' often grandiose range of vision blinded him to more immediate realities: he justified his efforts by "the probability of a war with England, or active operations toward the city of Mexico" but he ignored the limitations of the army's logistical infrastructure and the political pressures that a large-scale call for volunteers would create. (Indeed, the eight thousand troops that he sent forward were virtually useless militarily because they had enlisted for only six months, and under the terms of a 1795 law they could only be kept in service only three months.)

The administration had long since tired of Gaines' reckless enthusiasm, and the command of the Army of Occupation was probably entrusted to Taylor precisely in order to have a steady, unexcitable general who could and would devote his attention to the mission at hand. The command of the Army of Occupation was entrusted to Taylor in part because he was the senior officer on the spot when President Tyler ordered the first concentration in 1842, in part because of Winfield Scott's endless feud with Gaines, and in part because Taylor was clearly the sort of general who would devote his energies to executing the administration's policy regardless of his own political beliefs. (Although Scott was commanding general, that position had evolved largely as one of administration rather than field command--Jacob Brown had not led any of the western expeditions during his tenure, while Macomb had only briefly appeared in Florida and on the Canadian border--and Scott was already well-known as a probable Whig presidential
candidate.) Indeed, one could hypothesize that Polk chose Taylor rather than Gaines in part because he feared that the latter's eagerness for expansion might precipitate hostilities unnecessarily or in advance of the administration's timetable. Gaines, on the other hand, considered his actions justified by the urgency of the moment and demanded the professional autonomy his experience taught him was necessary for frontier command:

The War Department seems to be of the opinion that there is no discretionary power lodged in me to act without positive instructions. I therefore ask, for information, if a servile insurrection should occur; if an irruption should be made by large tribes of Indians... would it be my duty to refuse all aid until I should have received orders from Washington?42

Gaines, the officer who had arrested Aaron Burr forty years before, pridefully and "carelessly submit[ted]" to "the reprimands with which you have honored me," proclaiming that he did not "wish to have the place of any general or other officer... I... was born at a time, and reared among men who had not learned the art of marching to distinction by trampling under foot the claims of their dearest friends or brother soldiers." (Gaines and Taylor were good friends.) The court of inquiry found that Gaines had exceeded his authority but recommended leniency because of his services and patriotism, so Polk ended the controversy by ordering Gaines to the command of the Eastern Department in New York, noting in his diary that this would "put it out of his power to further embarrass the Government." To the administration's chagrin Gaines later published a private letter from Taylor vindicating that commander's performance in northern Mexico, and the old general continued to seek permission to command the expedition to Mexico City but was ignored. Edmund Gaines resumed command of the
Western Department in December 1848 (after Taylor's election to the presidency), and he died of cholera the following June after more than fifty years of distinguished if controversial service, having provided ample evidence of the paradoxes and dilemmas of professional responsibility and accountability to civilian political control.43

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III. The Army of Occupation on the Borders of Mexico, Summer 1845 to Spring 1846: Paradoxes of Expertise and Cohesion and the Growth of Professional Responsibility

The army's most obvious mission, the one which gave its officers their strongest sense of professional identity, was the prospect of wartime command, but it is remarkable how little eagerness for, or even interest in, war and territorial expansion is expressed in the letters and diaries of the junior officers stationed along the Mexican border in 1845 and 1846. Indeed, such quietude stands in sharp contrast to the belief almost universally held expressed by historians that (in William Skelton's words) "the officer corps greeted the outbreak of fighting in 1846 with an enthusiasm bordering on mania." The ten month interlude between annexation and the onset of hostilities gave army officers plenty of time to reflect on the probable consequences of war, but they wrote surprisingly little about their expectations of battle and its consequences, nor did they give much attention to more technical professional subjects like the strength, organization, and capabilities of the Mexican army. Once they arrived in Texas most regulars mentioned the Army of Occupation's intensified regimen of training and drills only briefly and soon came to find them boring, "the dull routine of a life of military instruction," to quote one lieutenant. Most of their letters and
diary entries are descriptions of camp life and the flora, fauna, and climate of Texas not unlike those in the documents left by civilian Americans. Their most prominent concerns--all sources of dissatisfaction rather than belligerence--appear to have been personal health and their separation from wives and families back east. Nevertheless, even after we take family and health considerations into account officers' quietude concerning the important questions of annexation and war is nothing short of amazing unless we connect their reactions to the imperatives of employment by the nation-state and the consequent desire to maintain orderly international relations conducive to direction and monopoly by that state structure and its military agents.44

This inattention was certainly not new--the army's professional periodicals mirrored this apparent lack of interest in the broad issues of war and peace, and aside from reprinted reports to Congress by general officers and staff bureau chiefs, I have found only a single article (quoted at length in the first section of this chapter) by an officer during the eleven year run of the Military and Naval Magazine of the United States and the Army and Navy Chronicle from 1833 to 1844 that contains any sort of broad philosophical analysis of American foreign policy. It, like the only other public statement of this sort by an officer below general grade that I have found (a clipping of an article by engineer major William Chase in Henry Halleck's "Military Note Book"), professed a policy of peace and nonintervention while warning of the necessity of preparation, standard but vague themes in the official reports and correspondence of senior officers throughout this era. The corollary to this lack of assertiveness was a lack of explicit attention to military planning for specific contingencies (to which the reports made on the Maine boundary in 1838 and 1839 form the principal exceptions)--official reports said little about
the possibility of war with Mexico, much less its ramifications for the army, and nothing remotely akin to a detailed "threat assessment" regarding Mexico was done under official auspices until early in 1846, when commanding general Winfield Scott submitted several strategic plans to the War Department.45

By 1844 the Army and Navy Chronicle, which had survived the depression of the late 1830s, had shut down for lack of circulation, leaving the officer corps without a forum for public debate on professional issues. This fact cannot be dismissed as an anomaly, because it illustrates the officer corps' failure to sustain a professional journal even as the nation moved toward war and the army toward probable expansion—precisely the time when one would expect officers to have taken an increased interest in their profession and its prospects, if only through the access to news of transfers, postings, and promotions that the journals had provided. Halleck's Elements of the Art and Science of War, which contained extensive discussions about international relations and has been celebrated by historians as the first general treatise on warfare by an American, was not published until 1846, though Halleck had delivered much of its contents as lectures in Boston the previous year. Though (like several articles in civilian journals at this time) a prescriptive work intended to alert the public to the need for preparedness (and thereby improve the army's status), it dealt in abstractions rather than the real diplomatic crises then before the American public.

In the very broadest sense, the consensus of historians that "the great majority of officers ... supported the expansionist surge" is probably correct at the level of the unspoken assumptions conditioned by officers' nationalism and ethnocentricity—i.e., few officers would actually object to the growth of American wealth and power represented by the acquisition of additional
territory—but they did so quietly and nonideologically, with properly professional respect for the doctrine of civilian control over the military, rather than putting pressure on the administration to move more quickly or extensively. In contrast to the corps' record of support for aggression against Spanish Florida before 1820, the regulars of the 1840s made no effort to initiate or justify action independent of the civil government, nor did Taylor or other Whigs seek to undermine its policies, despite President Polk's fears. John C. Fremont's expedition to California in 1845-46 was a partial exception to the midcentury officer corps' pattern of subordination to civilian authority, but both Fremont and the Corps of Topographical Engineers to which he belonged were unusual in the degree of their political activism and support for expansionism due to the mentalité of romantic nationalism fostered by their duties as explorers. Fremont himself was court-martialed after he refused to turn over the military governorship of California to his superior (the governor designated by President Polk), Brigadier General Stephen Kearny, and the explorer then demonstrated his limited commitment to the army and its professional identity by resigning to become a politician himself. (Indeed, exploration and semi-authorized conquest aside, Fremont's career as an army officer, including that as a general during the Civil War, was the least successful of his endeavours.) In comparison with other educated Americans working in the public sphere, few officers put the slogans of Manifest Destiny and Young America in their writings, be they official, unofficial and anonymous but public (as in the service journals), or private. Insofar as this silence reflected a politically neutral dedication to national service it was in fact a laudable example of professional accountability, even though the officer corps may be judged less than fully responsible in its
apparent neglect of the professional knowledge that would enable it to do its job once policy had been decided.\textsuperscript{46}

We find a similarly mixed picture of ambitious enthusiasm and responsible disinterestedness when we turn to the specific responses of officers stationed in Texas in 1845 and 1846. Many officers enthusiastically sought posts in Texas in the hope of distinguishing themselves in combat, and most expected a rapid American victory in any conflict that might occur, but their overwhelming consensus (much like Polk's own expectation) was that Mexico would back down and nothing would happen, and they were far from united on the desirability of annexation and war. Some certainly thought territorial expansion an inherent good; a larger number stressed the benefits for the officer corps of professional success and an increase in the army's size (which would mean more command slots and promotions); and a substantial minority expressed opposition to annexation and expansion, whether from principle or personal convenience, but--as in the Seminole War a decade earlier--none appear to have resigned as a result of these qualms, a strong indication of their dedication to national military service and army careers. As a group, officers were certainly national and ethnic chauvinists, but they did not express expansionist sentiments ardently, articulately, or often, contrary to the assumptions made by most scholars. Perhaps self-interest and the professional soldier's belief in the necessity for military preparation should have logically predisposed army officers to hope for war, but their response to the possibility of war was far from unified, and the principal determinants of officers' reactions to being posted in Texas were personal considerations of family, health, and career opportunities rather than partisan or ideological factors. Uncertainty rather than enthusiasm dominated their emotions, for humid, isolated Texas was an unattractive post
unless there was actually a war to be fought, and the officer corps had learned a great deal about patience during its Seminole ordeal.

There are a number of explanations for this surprising lassitude in the face of what William Worth described as the first opportunity in thirty years to seriously practice his profession. Practically speaking, the slow, uncertain timing of the army's advance through Texas was the most concrete factor that inhibited military enthusiasm for annexation and war. Despite several years of diplomatic maneuvering the army was not directed to advance to the Rio Grande until mid-January 1846. The order arrived February 4, but delays caused by heavy rains and inadequate naval and logistical support kept the army in Corpus Christi until March 6, and it did not arrive opposite Matamoros until March 28. Even then, nearly six weeks of tension passed before the battle of Palo Alto, though intermittent skirmishing had begun even before the army reached the Rio Grande. Few regulars actually expected war until that final month because they assumed that at some point Mexico would cave in to American demands, and in the meantime they waited, impatiently but impotently, for news of movement, diplomatic or military. The junior commanders of the Army of Occupation faced the worst of all worlds: neither the glory and promotion of combat nor the comforts of family and home. Professional camaraderie had its limits, and the officers' social isolation went unrelieved by the presence of wives or kin, so perhaps it was only natural that the primary "foreign policy" concern for most regulars became the effect that their deployment would have on their family lives.

Army officers also limited their discussion of war and its potentialities because of their political and occupational position as employees of the national government, an important professional consideration that was not
dependent on the specific circumstances of their service in Texas. The growth of accountability to civilian authority was both the most successful and the most important dimension of the army's professional development during the Jacksonian era. By the mid-1830s most officers had come to believe that they should avoid active involvement in partisan politics, and the disinterest with which the officer corps reacted to the vigorous public debates surrounding the annexation of Texas illustrates the pervasiveness of this mindset a decade later. Junior officers (an increasing number of whom commented on elections and expressed partisan preferences as the Second Party System developed) often mentioned the possibility of annexation in a casual way, but simply as another rumor in the world of public affairs. This silence was certainly due in some part to the education officers received at the Military Academy, which stressed engineering and mathematics to the virtual exclusion of government and the liberal arts, but they did leave enough private commentary on politics and public policy issues to lead the historian to expect more analysis of issues which affected them as directly as the questions of war and peace.

Many regulars possessed Whig loyalties and affinities, and some of them privately opposed the Polk administration's policy of expansion and annexation, but few espoused such views in writing, much less in public. In September 1845 Captain George Meade reported a widespread rumor to his wife that "General Taylor . . . is a staunch Whig, and opposed in toto to the Texas annexation, and therefore does not enter heart and soul into his present duties." "He is said to be very tired of this country, and the duty assigned to him, and is supposed will return [to the east] on the arrival of [brevet] General Worth." But Meade was careful to warn his spouse that "all this, however, is mere rumor and is entre nous." Ethan Allen Hitchcock, on
the other hand, a confidant of Taylor's who also opposed annexation on moral grounds, suspected that the general wanted a fight in order to make himself famous. Hitchcock had suggested the same of William Worth in Florida (where Worth's success had won him the brevet to brigadier general), however, and he demonstrated similar contradictions in his own actions: he commanded a regiment in the Army of Occupation, secured a sick leave a month before the first battles, and returned to the theater of operations at the end of 1846 with enough vigor to win two brevet promotions for battlefield gallantry during the advance on Mexico City. Indeed, virtually the only public objection to the war's morality by an army officer came from an engineer who never served in Mexico—in the August 1846 edition of the American Whig Review lieutenant Edward Hunt labelled the conflict "a war of sheer aggression," though he defended the army as an institution from criticism of its role in the conflict, portraying it as a neutral instrument of national policy.48

Though he later portrayed himself as "bitterly opposed" to the war (a position which is not much in evidence in his letters from Texas, though Grant was clearly not an expansionist), Ulysses Grant opined that "generally the officers of the army were indifferent" to the question of annexation. Unlike the civilian editors and politicians studied by Thomas Hietala, army officers junior and senior wrote virtually nothing about the costs or benefits of annexation and war for the United States as a whole—few spoke of the war as a means of national unification or as a moral good in itself, nor did they debate the impact of imperialism and colonialism on American society and its institutions. Though from one perspective irresponsible, this quiescence also manifested the reality—reflective of officers' growing sense of accountability to the nation-state which employed them—that they would not
refuse to serve in the execution of an expansionist policy many personally opposed. The corps' self-image as a nonpartisan group dedicated to national goals led to a similar silence—again in significant contrast to the outspokenness of men of affairs in the civilian world—on the potential for sectional gain or conflict inherent in annexation. There were exceptions to this quietude, of course, usually among Whiggish officers (who feared the divisive impact of sectional quarrels over expansion) and couched in tones of irreverence or irony. Captain William C. DeHart (a socially well-connected officer who had served for eight years as Winfield Scott's aide-de-camp) observed that southern Democrats in Congress were substantially less enthusiastic over Oregon than Texas, but he remarked derisively that "politicians are like eels, slimy enough to slip by any thing, or through any place." 49

Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman of the 3rd Artillery, whose brother was a prominent Ohio politician, showed an awareness, however inaccurate, of the domestic political implications of war unusual in the correspondence of junior officers. In September 1844 the young officer wrote to his future wife that "we are never to have a war that costs money. Our government talks and bullies a good deal, but when they talk of money they are frightened [and w]ithout it war cannot be carried on." Despite his personal Whiggery, Sherman dismissed abolitionist fears that annexation was a project to extend slavery and opined that Texas would become a free state, though his personal enthusiasm for "so fortunate a war" seems to have had little to do with extending what he rather ironically labelled "the Area of Freedom." Indeed, the sometimes naïve lieutenant "much doubted" that Texas "will be received into our confederacy if she is impudent [enough] to advance her frontier to the Rio Grande," presumably because he expected that
the Whigs would vote it down. Aside from Sherman, few officers commented on slavery as an issue in the annexation crisis or shared the hopes proclaimed by civilian expansionists that Texas would serve as a racial safety valve and an alternative to emancipation. Lieutenant Napoleon Dana of the 7th Infantry and Captain Philip Barbour of the 3rd noted that several officers' slaves had fled across the Rio Grande to freedom, and Barbour felt that officers would have to resort to white servants as a result, but the two officers viewed these losses as personal rather than political affairs. In Texas itself, Lieutenant William S. Henry of the 3rd Infantry referred briefly to the extension of the "area of freedom" and "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," when the America flag was raised on the banks of the Rio Grande, but he did not go any further to comment on the meaning of these potent ideological tropes.\textsuperscript{50}

Much of this inarticulateness can be attributed to the officer corps' nascent professional ethic, which stressed national service in the politically and ideologically neutral form of "duty" rather than "mission." Recent historians have re-envisioned the impetus for Manifest Destiny in fears for the survival of the Jeffersonian social order amidst growing urbanization and industrialization, but army officers rarely expressed republican sentiments in any detail or in any form save that of antipartisanship, a Whiggish rather than Jacksonian trope more often than not (though not exclusively so), and one which suited their sense of nationalism and complemented their desire for career security regardless of electoral change. In other words, American officers aspired to (or at least acted out) a sort of "objective" "professional" responsibility to the nation-state rather than a subjective emotional or ideological loyalty to the ideals of agrarian republicanism, "free institutions" and Jacksonian Democracy, or the romanticized ethnocultural community of
the Anglo-Saxon race. Their concept of civilian control can perhaps best be encapsulated in the phrase "careerist neutrality," implying not political passivity, isolation, or alienation, nor simple self-interestedness, but public nonpartisanship and a focus on the internal bureaucratic politics of promotions, postings, and the allocation of resources and power among different branches of the service. Regular officers did not lack ties to political elites, but their demands on the external society were usually limited to increases in compensation, attempts to limit entry into the officer corps via specialized training at West Point, the hope for faster promotions due to expansions of the army, and a longing for public recognition and acclaim. Officers left analyses of the war's costs and benefits to different sectors of society to the growing political and editorial professions.51

Most regular officers understood that the American annexation of Texas was the principal cause of the war, and a fair number recognized that the United States was ultimately the aggressor, but the conclusions they drew from this judgment depended primarily on self-interest, personal and national. For James Wall Schureman annexation was an opportunity that the nation should have taken advantage of sooner: "[W]e were in hopes for some time that Texas would be annexed to the Union, in which case a [war] with Mexico would have followed." "Our swords are getting rusty in their scabbards, and we want something to do to brighten them," he wrote to his sister in 1844, but the defeat of the annexation bill meant that "the Oregon question is for the present our only chance." A different form of self-interest led West Point cadet William Dutton to hope that Texas would choose independence instead of annexation, for "I presume that their climate will be the death of many [soldiers] . . . if they should be stationed there." Like most
officers, George Meade expected that the United States would wait for Mexico to initiate hostilities, but he felt that "we [meaning the U.S.] would like nothing better than some excuse to pounce upon them." Lieutenant Robert Allen accepted American responsibility for the crisis without any qualms or anxiety, for like most officers he expected Mexico to back down when confronted by manifestly superior American power: "Mexico may bluster and we may bully but there will be no fight. We have stolen Texas--no doubt of that." The desire for war and doubts that it would occur were both echoed in cadet Samuel Raymond's letter to his sister Mary, which succinctly sums up the average officer's attitude toward the career opportunities presented by crisis: "Since the treaty for the annexation . . . is signed we may have a little brush but no great things need be expected . . . in case there should be I should like to be . . . one who would go."52

As noted above, experienced officers had little need of Anglophobia or Anglo-Saxon racialism as a basis for national identity, because their nationalism was founded on existing occupational socialization and allegiances rather than racial romanticism, and (as on the Canadian frontier) officers' conscious attitudes towards their likely adversaries were conditioned primarily by class sensibilities rather than ethnicity prior to the outbreak of the war. Growing exposure to Mexicans and their culture aroused increasingly racist attitudes among army officers during the war itself, but they showed relatively little interest in or racialist antagonism towards Mexico and its inhabitants before the war began, just as they had little interest in its capabilities, in foreign policy and international affairs, the issues involved in war, or their own professional preparation. Aside from the views of the Anglophile expansionist William Worth, I have found only one statement explicitly supporting the view that the officer corps "had come to
accept the idea of a distinct Anglo-Saxon race" as described by historian Reginald Horsman, in a letter from Lieutenant Richard Stoddard Ewell (who applied such distinctions to every ethnic and religious group he encountered) to his sister Rebecca several years before the war where he briefly compared the "ignorant French & Spanish" with "the more enlightened Anglo-Saxon race." Consequently, the issue of whether the United States could absorb large populations of non-whites did not appear in officers' papers before the war. Regular officers certainly shared much the same ethnocentric and racist assumptions as other mid-nineteenth century Americans, but they can hardly be considered articulate racialists determined to advance the cause of Anglo-Saxon civilization and progress through an American Manifest Destiny, a mental restraint which was entirely in keeping with their general lack of ideological fervor and introspection in other realms.53

Similarly, while some officers expressed disdain for Catholicism, others admired the beauty and hierarchy of its liturgy. Nativism in the officer corps seems to have been primarily a matter of class and ethnicity (especially as these characteristics were associated with the army's increasing percentage of foreign-born enlisted men, an enduring source of complaint from many officers) rather than religion per se. The Mexicans that officers noted their contact with before the war were usually of a higher social class and a more European ethnic background than those of the Mexican population as a whole, and officers applied their social concepts of gentility and respectability to Tejanos as well as Anglos. Indeed, the latter were often found more wanting in this calculus—soldiers like Lieutenant John Porter Hatch of the 3rd Infantry considered the Mexicans of Corpus Christi "much the most respectable portion of the inhabitants," in sharp contrast to the Anglo-Texans, who were mostly smugglers or camp followers of one form or another—in
Lieutenant Napoleon Dana's words "rascals," "the best of [whom] looked as if they could steal sheep." (Dana was referring specifically to the Texan secretary of war.) Other regulars commented favorably on Mexican officers and their treatment of American prisoners of war, and American officers' views of Mexican women were usually positive, however sexist. Class biases prevented officers from commenting at any length about Mexicans from the working classes, though they sometimes praised the opposing troops for their precision—a perspective not unlike that which most officers took toward American enlisted men, who they praised principally for discipline and loyalty rather than the more independent qualities they expected from one another.54

From the officer corps' perspective the most important fact about the Mexicans was that they were not (or were not yet viewed as before the war) Indians—officers eager for glory could hope that victories against them would be respected and acknowledged by the American people, unlike those in the recent Seminole War. In this sense it was counterproductive for officers to emphasize the mestizo quality of the Mexican population, and although the bitterness of war spurred a growing racialization of officers' attitudes, they initially saw Mexican officers, their professional counterparts and opponents, as gentlemen of European blood, however tainted by the cruelty most Anglo-Americans associated with Spanish descent. Army officers could be counted on to stress the character of Mexican officers rather than that of their enlisted men, because officers led and commanded troops, and this military hierarchy of rank and discipline reflected longstanding civilian class relationships in which members of the gentry led the peasants and working classes. Whatever the officers' true feelings toward Mexicans, they had little incentive to portray their adversaries as degraded barbarians, because they
knew from the Seminole War that there was no glory to be won in defeating enemies whom the public considered uncivilized savages. (This dynamic may well have changed once officers entered Mexico and began to win public acclaim for their battlefield victories, but too little attention has been focused on the specific question of regular army officers' attitudes to discern the trend of their views and the connection with the war's growing racialization.)

Regardless of the diplomatic situation, army officers took it for granted that Mexico was no match for the United States, and this confidence led most of them to assume that war was out of the question. As early as August 1843, Winfield Scott warned Adjutant General Roger Jones that

we are but in the beginning of Texas rumours & fancies. . . . In less than a month we shall have fresh rumours from that quarter requiring the remainder of our army . . . but I am absolutely certain that either Genl. T[aylor] or W[orth], at the head of 2,000 men would be an overmatch for any Mexican army that can pass the Rio Bravo in the next 6 or 12 months. . . . I am equally confident that there will be no land battle in that period . . . unless England should aid Mexico.

Scott was worried about the health of American troops stationed in Texas or along its borders and implied that the force deployed there might be reduced by half given the absence of military danger and the possibility of British aggression elsewhere. Two years later most officers expected the advance to the Rio Grande to go uncontested, and at first most regulars believed that this intimidation would compel Mexico to submit to American dictates. "I do not think they can be so insane as to provoke a war by an act of hostilities," George Meade remarked. "[T]here are many ridiculous reports . . . of our being cut to pieces by the Mexicans," Napoleon Dana wrote. "We will have
no fight. This is almost a certainty. . . . we are too strong for her and are
growing stronger and stronger every day. She cannot fight us . . . She cannot
raise the means."

Few officers said much about the sources of their self-confidence, but
one of Dana's letters to his wife contains an assessment of Mexican
capabilities rare in both detail and acuity among those written by the army's
junior leaders. In addition to numbers, Dana listed the American advantages
of artillery, morale, and logistics, in that Mexican reinforcements would have
to cross the desert from Monterrey and would suffer devastating attrition in
doing so (as indeed occurred to Santa Anna's army in January and February
1847 during its advance on Buena Vista). Indeed, Dana thought that Mexico
would surrender her claims to Texas for nothing more than the security of
being promised protection from Indian attacks across the new border. Ulysses
S. Grant of the 4th Infantry, also a lieutenant at the time, went a good deal
further in his optimism, contending that "the poorer and less ambitious and
. . . most numerous class of Mexicans are much better pleased with our form
of government than their own; infact [sic] they would be willing to see us
push our claims past the Rio Grande if we would promise not to molest them
in their homes and possessions." Although Grant's assessment of Mexican
nationalism proved inaccurate, he later identified the distinction between the
Mexican army and his own in terms that illustrate (albeit with the benefit of
hindsight and in the changed cultural context of the 1880s when he wrote) the
values of specialization and accountability American officers absorbed as they
became more professional: "The Mexican army of that day was hardly an
organization," and Mexican defeat was due to the irresponsibility and "lack of
experience among the[ir] officers . . . [who] simply quit" when the tide of battle
turned against them.
Political instability in Mexico accounted for much of the officer corps' assurance, but it also fostered uncertainty and discontent with the sluggish progress of negotiations. Like Grant, who mentioned the rebellion in Yucatan, William Tecumseh Sherman believed that Mexico "is unable to carry on war, her government is hardly secure, their provinces are rebelling." Other officers emphasized that instability in Mexico would lengthen their stay in Texas without producing a battle. Meade was upset that the "infernal revolution" led by General Mariano Paredes in December 1845 might derail negotiations and keep the army concentrated in Texas far from its home stations. Lieutenant Dana felt the same way, and as he became more aggravated by the delay he actually came to hope that Mexico could "quiet her internal disturbances and form a permanent government" before Congress met again in order that affairs would "approach a crisis much more rapidly."

Other soldiers were pleased with the coup because it seemed to augur peace: Cadet William Dutton attributed Mexico's refusal to yield to the personal ambition of Santa Anna, and in February 1846 he reported to his fiance that "now that Santa Anna is shut up at Perote no one thinks of any difficulty" (meaning that there would be no war).57

This sort of arrogance did not prevent regular officers from feeling some initial anxiety over the exposed position of their small army. With each new advance some officer could be found worrying that "we certainly ought not with so small a force [to] be left here to face the whole Mexican nation," as Captain Ephraim Kirby Smith of the 5th Infantry put it on March 29. Upon their arrival at Corpus Christi the preceding fall both Napoleon Dana and U.S. Grant had wondered whether "we will . . . get a whipping" from the larger Mexican forces feared to be nearby, and a similar concern was felt by officers in the United States. Like Smith, George McClellan thought
that "the Government has placed Genl Taylor in a very dangerous situation. McClellan, finishing his last year at West Point and often cited as a examplar of the officer corps' war fever, doubted the steadiness of the army's foreign-born enlisted men and expected heavy casualties among the officers as a result. The future commander of the Army of the Potomac observed with ambiguous irony that "if so many officers are killed the whole of our class will be ordered down there at once to supply the vacancies," while his less-illustrious classmate William Dutton (whose romanticism was dedicated to his fiancee rather than Manifest Destiny) remained completely pessimistic about the prospects for glory "in such a cause and in such a place." (Dutton graduated but was forced to resign that November, apparently by a life-threatening illness.)

The prospect of war also threatened to disrupt the orderly relations between officers and enlisted men built up in times of peace, and the attitudes of some officers toward the enlisted men under their command reflected this uncertainty. McClellan's pessimistic appraisal of the army's enlisted men was a compound of ethnic and class prejudice toward "these wretched Dutch and Irish immigrants" and concern over their lack of combat experience. His dour estimate was shared by fellow West Pointer William Dutton, but officers serving in the Army of Occupation were confident of their men's elan and contempt for the enemy. Indeed, Ephraim Kirby Smith noted the soldiers' "disappointment" when the Mexicans retreated from the Arroyo Colorado on March 20, and Napoleon Dana boasted that "our men are anxious for the fray" and "in just the humor for the business." Desertion was a much more urgent concern than demoralization, but officers felt that they had the problem under control. Nevertheless, enlisted men (like officers) talked with their Mexican counterparts and women washing clothes across the narrow
Rio Grande, and several soldiers were shot in the act of swimming to the other side. Dana reassured his wife Sue that "the good men are highly incensed by it. The whole army are said to behave admirably . . . Good men are always placed on the picket guard and show the deserters no mercy." The ardent lieutenant concluded that "the severity has put a stop to desertion" when the good will of the troops proved insufficient to so.\textsuperscript{59}

These fears of defeat and desertion were short-lived, however. Upon arriving opposite Matamoros in March Captain Philip Norbourne Barbour noted in his diary that from "a military point of view General Taylor has committed a blunder . . . in coming here with so small a force," but he believed that "considering this, it is truly surprising to see with what indifference, not to say contempt, our Officers and men look upon the Mexican batteries frowning upon us. No one seems to think a disaster . . . possible, and most of the Army are disappointed that General Taylor does not create a pretext for taking [Matamoros]." The previous November Ephraim Kirby Smith had described the Comanches as "a much more formidable enemy than the Mexicans," while Lieutenant John Porter Hatch laughed at the three to one odds his troops faced in April. "We would not ask to fight a smaller number than this and I have not the slightest doubt that we would then thrash them so that they would never again dare look an American in the face," he boasted to his sister. (Hatch transferred to the Regiment of Mounted Rifles that July and was brevetted twice for gallantry on the road to Mexico City. He stuck with the army through the 1850s and the Civil War, earning brevets to brigadier general and lineal rank to colonel during a career that spanned more than four decades.)\textsuperscript{60}
Few of the junior officers mentioned in this section had seen combat service, despite the close of the Second Seminole War only four years before. Combat command meant the chance to show one's courage and win public acclaim, and given the era's romantic notions of warfare it is not surprising that they looked forward to glory and promotion—commonly united in the form of largely honorary brevet promotions for battlefield gallantry—rather than the deaths that would make such benefits possible. Camaraderie and the opportunity to command troops were also major inducements for officers to welcome the concentration brought on by the prospect of war, for many field grade officers were past middle age, and their incapacity for active service meant that many younger men would command units larger than they would ever be responsible for in peacetime. (Indeed, less than a third of the regimental field officers served with their units in Mexico, and in the artillery only one out of twelve did so. Aside from the effects of age, a large proportion of field grade officers held senior staff positions, and a disproportionate number of these men remained in the United States during the war to handle administrative duties.) The Army of Occupation was the largest single concentration of regular troops since the Revolutionary War, and the influx of recruits forwarded from stateside depots led soldiers like Ephraim Kirby Smith to declare that "I shall have a pretty good command for a captain, and if there is anything to be done, I think I shall have a chance." (Smith—who had been dismissed from the army for brutality towards enlisted men in 1829 but was recommissioned in 1831—later took command of an elite battalion of light infantry at Churubusco and Molino del Rey, where he was slain at the head of an assault.)

Examining life in the Army of Occupation gives us a final glimpse of cohesion and dissension in the army officer corps, evidence which suggests
that professionalization remained mixed in the spring of 1846. The opportunity for command and service with old friends initially encouraged the growth of camaraderie and regimental esprit de corps among the officers of the Army of Occupation. This cohesion was evident in a letter from John Porter Hatch to his sister Eliza:

I consider myself very fortunate in being sent here for it is very probable that I may not see so many regulars together in many years. Many old officers have never before seen so many troops at one time. . . . My regiment is one of the best in the service . . . and there is a great deal of regimental pride in it. There is a very good feeling among the officers [and] most of us mess together.

Such esprit and cohesion was competitive as well as comradely: Napoleon Dana felt that his own regiment was "decidedly" superior to Hatch's. Indeed, regimental pride had direct consequences for individual officers' employment during the war, and ultimately in the glory and promotion they received, for proud units fight better. The effect could be a perverse one, however. In 1845 William Tecumseh Sherman was stationed in South Carolina with the 2nd Artillery Regiment. He thought of exchanging posts with an infantry officer in Louisiana before the move to Corpus Christi but Sherman's loyalty to his unit and preference for the artillery as a combat arm disposed him against doing so. He ended up going to California by sea instead, and got nothing more from the war than a generic brevet for "meritorious service."62

This crisis-induced cohesion was not universally felt, and it waned as months passed without combat. While a substantial majority of the officer corps initially sought duty in Texas, significant numbers tried to avoid it, and promotion-minded officers on the scene did not altogether mind this
disruption of the army's command structure: in September 1845 Hatch noted that "promotions from resignations are quite rapid," though he felt that "it is a good thing to get rid of them if they can't stay away from their wives . . . There are plenty of good men glad to fill their place." On the other hand, the unmarried Hatch also implied that he would not mind a transfer to Florida to escape his isolation, because "I find myself already wishing we were not quite so much out of the world." Even more characteristically, Ulysses Grant and George Meade (who had resigned from the army after a year's service in 1836 to become a railroad surveyor but reentered it in 1842) wrote constantly about securing leaves of absence with which to visit their loved ones, and both commented extensively on the efforts of other officers to do so.63

The concerns most commonly expressed by regular officers awaiting the war were highly parochial, centered around its probable impact on the officer corps, the army (which they usually identified with the officer corps), and above all their own personal happiness and advancement. "A camp where there is no active service is a dull and stupid place," reported Meade. "[I]t seems we are not even to have the consolation of a little glory, but are to remain here rusting in idleness, or rather in drilling and parading." (Meade later received a brevet promotion for gallantry at Monterrey.) At first officers volunteered eagerly for reconnaissance detachments, but this option ceased to provide much relief from boredom once the weather worsened and sickness began to spread through the army. The stalemate between the United States and Mexico appeared interminable to officers caught in this aggravating situation, and between the intermittent negotiations and ongoing political turmoil in Mexico itself, the consensus among regulars was that they would probably end up sitting on the border for several years, separated from their families in conditions even less hospitable than many were used to from
garrisons in Florida and the prairie states, without the compensations of public acclaim that actual combat would bring. In turn, this dismal prospect was the most compelling factor behind officers' constant attention to the weather and the disease climate.64

Under the circumstances, the most urgent concern for most officers seems to have been separation from their loved ones, a natural source of uneasiness that was exacerbated by the long wait spent in uncertainty. George Meade and Napoleon Dana both thought it out of the question for wives to join the army's encampment due to the poor living conditions and lack of privacy there. (Indeed, under the circumstances Dana found the presence of women in camp "very annoying," probably because of the jealousy and frustration he felt at his own family separation.) Most officers seem to have discouraged their wives from attempting to join them, and from their letters it appears that only two to four actually did so. Indeed, the need for masculine cohesion amidst feminine scarcity apparently prevented some officers from taking comfort in campfire talk of home. "I suppose you know that, in a camp like this, where we are supposed to be awaiting active service, allusions to wives and children are considered in bad taste, and one who is always talking about his wife is an object of ridicule," Meade wrote to his spouse, but other officers were unable to restrain their obsession with domestic comforts: Lieutenant John J. Peck of the 2nd Artillery quipped that "we have so many married officers . . . who are crazy to get back to their families [that] their continued grumbling renders the rest of us nervous." Indeed, Zachary Taylor confirmed in a letter to his daughter that "one of the principal diseases now among the officers . . . is homesickness," and the aging general (then sixty-one years old) typified the officer corps in this as well as his lack of enthusiasm for expansion: "All the pomp & parade of [the Army
of Occupation is] lost on me; I now sigh for peace & quiet with my family around me."  

Frustrated officers blamed Mexican intransigence for the interminable negotiations that kept them "at a dead standstill, doing nothing, which we could be doing as well anywhere else." "There will not be a hostile gun fired, but we shall have to drag through a hot and tedious summer here without our families, infinitely worse than all the horrors of war. It is nonsense for our government to temporize any longer with the Mexico," Philip Barbour wrote impatiently, and this largely personal anxiety spurred officers' eagerness to do their duty by seeking battle as soon as Congress would authorize it. Napoleon Dana's words reflected the thoughts of many officers irritated by the inactivity:

Our government cannot in honor hold out the olive branch to Mexico when she is making so many brags and trying to borrow money to fight us. . . . if Mexico, in her ignorance, is not overawed . . . we must wait until Congress . . . can declare war . . . if [Mexico's] answer is not satisfactory, she will soon be driven to terms. . . . Then and not until then can we be happy. All depends on treacherous Mexico.  

Officers found it difficult to sustain their initial elation as the months dragged by, and restlessness bred demoralization, dissension, and talk of resignation. In January 1846 James Wall Schureman relayed the news that "the excitement of the contemplated campaign, the ardor for distinction, and all the soldier's incentives have one by one vanished and left them sad and gloomy. . . . The state of the Army of Occupation is the prostration of a patient after the fever has subsided; our Regiment has cause to be thankful that it is not there." As was so often the case, George Meade's attitudes probably
typified the officer corps' feelings after several months of encampment. Meade was consumed with longing for his wife but hoped to draw some prestige out of his sacrifice: he wrote to her that "I hope for a war and a speedy battle, and I think that one good fight will settle the business; and really, after coming so far and staying so long, it would hardly be the thing to come back without some laurels." John Peck, a lieutenant who had always expected a fight, enjoyed the excitement of the advance but grew restless when it did not seem to produce the battle he wanted: "unless we have some fighting soon I shall get wholly dissatisfied and wish to return. If we could [just] have one good battle and then return!" Sherman shared these sentiments, but as late as the end of January 1846 he continued to doubt that the opportunity would arise to secure them. Unwilling to wait much longer, he seems to have decided that he had no other worthy mission to perform as an officer: "[T]he proposed invasion of Mexico . . . holds out but a slim prospect to the military aspirant," and "as the prospect of a peaceful year is strong . . . it therefore becomes me to make all possible preparation to leave the service." (Sherman ultimately resigned in 1853.) Similarly, when it appeared that war with Britain had been avoided in January, a number of officers in the 1st Dragoon Regiment (soon to lead the conquest of New Mexico) prepared for or spoke of resignation, though none actually did so, doubtlessly because their attention was soon turned on a new, and more easily defeated, adversary.67

As fighting became imminent this tone again changed, at least for the short term. "I could not in honor leave now," Meade remarked, "no one could leave . . . with reputation" intact. Grant echoed Meade, but he also reassured his fiance (who saw the army as a poor career choice) that his interest in the military was a temporary one, subject to abandonment if there
were no laurels to be won: "I could not think of such a thing now . . . but I do not think that I will stand another year of idleness in camp." Grant was brevetted twice for gallantry during the battles around Mexico City but resigned in 1854. (Indeed, George McClellan's career followed a similar path, though he was much more highly regarded by his fellow officers at the time.) Napoleon Dana suggested both the depths of depression wrought by isolation and the officer's need to withstand its pressure in order to do his duty when he wrote of an officer's suicide en route from Galveston to New Orleans: "He was desponding when he left here and his mind was evidently diseased, but if he was determined to kill himself, it is well enough that he went." (Dana was severely wounded and brevetted to captain at Cerro Gordo in 1847. He resigned in 1855.)

The close quarters and tedium of camp life diminished the corps' enthusiasm even further, and the combination of renewed acquaintances and boredom also encouraged the reemergence of the ills which had characterized the peacetime army throughout this era, providing further evidence of the officer corps' limited concentration on the task before it. Colonel William Whistler (now of the 4th Infantry, to which he had been promoted from the 7th after Colonel Josiah H. Vose, a thirty-three year veteran, died of a heart attack or stroke after drilling his men for the first time in several years in July 1845) was arrested and sent home for appearing drunk on parade, while old enemies resurrected their feuds. The most notorious of these was between the brigade commanders, colonels Daniel Twiggs and William Worth, who quarrelled over guard postings. The papers of Ethan Allen Hitchcock, acting colonel of the 3rd Infantry at the time, contain an exchange of letters that suggest that Worth issued a challenge to Twiggs which was quickly resolved without bloodshed. Their otherwise rather trivial dispute ultimately
centered on the authority of Worth's brevet rank as a brigadier general versus Twiggs' seniority in permanent rank as a colonel. The army's officers split into two factions over this issue, already a long-standing subject of controversy in the army, prompting the ever-litigious Hitchcock to send a memorial against brevet rank (and thus against his enemies Worth and Scott) to the president of the Senate with the signatures of 158 officers, nearly half of those in the Army of Occupation. Winfield Scott supported his protege Worth's claims for the authority of brevet rank (which Scott had upheld for decades against Edmund Gaines) but the president decided to the contrary, spurring Worth to submit his resignation and leave for Washington to argue his case.69

Worth was one of the army's most skilled and distinguished commanders and has been one of the most prominent characters in this work; his record stretched from brevets for gallantry at both Chippewa and Lundy's Lane in 1814 (when he was only twenty) to suppressing "Patriot" filibusters in upstate New York in 1838 and bringing the Second Seminole War to a conclusion in 1842. Worth was also an ardent expansionist who wrote articulately about his desire for war and expansion and his belief that Mexicans were culturally and ethically inferior. He must therefore have doubted that anything momentous was going to happen while he was absent, but most officers thought that he had exceeded the bounds of professional propriety: Philip Barbour remarked that "his resigning at this time is considered by nearly the whole army a false step from which he can never recover and, should we have an engagement, [it] will dim forever the luster he has thrown around his name." Worth returned to the army as soon as he heard of the Mexican advance, but he was too late to command his troops at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. The officer corps resumed quarrelling as
soon as the shooting stopped; see for example the controversy between Captain James Duncan, supported by Worth, and Winfield Scott (who had once been Worth's patron, as Worth had been Hitchcock's) during the occupation of Mexico City. (Ironically, Duncan and Worth--two of the army's most professional and proficient soldiers--were supporting volunteer general and military incompetent Gideon Pillow.) Scott had his subordinates arrested; Worth sought a court-martial against Scott, who was relieved of command by an already jealous president driven to distraction by the army's quarrels. Ironically--but not too surprisingly--the officer corps was consumed throughout the early 1850s by disputes over the brevets awarded (or not awarded) for service in it.70

Taylor was sent to the border without any substantial guidance beyond his initial instructions to take up defensive positions opposite Matamoros. The previously close cooperation between Taylor and American charge d'affaires Andrew Jackson Donelson apparently ceased once the army moved south, leaving Taylor, who his most recent biographer has characterized as "one of the least [diplomatically] sensitive senior officers in the army," alone to handle the tensions exacerbated by the American advance into territory claimed by Mexico. While this decision may indicate that Polk hoped to precipitate a war through Taylor's agency, the general's performance may equally suggest that his very stolidity reflected a sense of dutiful accountability to civilian political direction that calls his alleged diplomatic incapacity into question. Taylor was certainly not the diplomat Worth or Scott was, but he could be counted on to act coolly, unlike the rash Gaines or the politically active Scott. (Indeed, despite their 1836 quarrel Gaines was probably the most "Jacksonian" of the army's senior officers, for Scott was widely spoken of as a
Whig presidential candidate as early as 1840. Worth was also a known Whig, though he favored expansionism to the south, while General Wool—by this time Scott' successor as the commander of the Eastern Department—had fallen out with Jackson during his supervision of Cherokee removal in 1836, which the then-president considered insufficiently aggressive. Quartermaster General Jesup was a Democrat who actively sought field command, but the administration could hardly use its chief logistician when an officer of greater frontier experience was available in Taylor.)71

As in President Monroe's handling of Andrew Jackson in 1818, this laxity was a clear prescription for war, although Taylor showed surprising patience under the circumstances (again perhaps because of his Whiggery). Upon his arrival opposite Matamoros on March 28 Taylor sent William Worth with a dispatch for Mexican commander Francisco Mejia, whose representative, General Romolo de la Vega, informed Worth that Mexico considered the American army's march across the Neuces to the Rio Grande an act of war but had not yet declared war formally. He refused Worth's request to see the American consul. Harassed by guerrillas and bandits since the army's arrival in late March, Taylor ordered the Rio Grande blockaded on April 14 after receiving General Pedro de Ampudia's ultimatum to withdraw behind the Nueces. Taylor thereby expected to complicate the resupply of Matamoros in order to force the Mexicans' hands by requiring them to choose between withdrawing to Monterrey or advancing to attempt to expel the Army of Occupation, which would give the United States a pretext for resolving the boundary dispute through war. Although Taylor may have thereby precipitated war, he did not exceed Polk's instructions in doing so.72

On April 23 Mexican president Paredes formally declared a "defensive war" against the United States based on the American occupation of the
disputed territory. The following day General Ampudia notified Taylor that hostilities had begun (which was actually the fourth time that a Mexican commander had done so), and 1600 Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande in order to cut the American line of communication to the sea. On the 25th an American patrol was ambushed by Mexican regulars, leading Taylor to notify the War Department that war had begun while calling for eight regiments of volunteers from Texas and Louisiana per previous War Department authorization. On April 30 the main Mexican army began to cross the Rio Grande, and the following day Taylor took the majority of his army to reopen his supply line to Port Isabel. On May 3 Mexican artillery began a bombardment of Fort Texas opposite Matamoros, and four days later Taylor began the return march from Port Isabel in a wagon driven by a slave. The first major battle of the war was fought at Palo Alto the following day, four days before the formal American declaration of war.73

The final reactions of officers awaiting combat were anxiety, confidence, a sense of duty, and a desire for vengeance. Many (though none of the principal junior officers quoted in this section) had already experienced battle in the Seminole War. For others, the first simulcrum of combat came on March 20 during Worth's crossing of the Arroyo Colorado thirty miles north of Matamoros. A sizable Mexican force was deployed on the opposite bank and Worth prepared to cross under fire, but the Mexicans withdrew before he did so. Despite some "anxious faces," Captain Ephraim Kirby Smith watched "in breathless silence" and "saw no one who was not cheerful and apparently eager for the game to begin." Smith termed the crossing "perhaps one of the most exciting hours of my life," while the usually eager lieutenant John Peck referred to "long faces" and felt "all the painful and breathless expectancy of battle" as he watched "the two hundred doomed men" cross. A
month later, when Captain Seth Thornton escaped from a Mexican ambush but did not return to camp, Philip Barbour wrote that "I very much fear that he has . . . taken his own life . . . He has often told me that he would blow his own brains out before he would surrender." Several days later Barbour remarked that "we are all anxious to avenge the death of our gallant companions," and he reflected on the mysterious workings of providence and reaffirmed his faithfulness to his wife Isabella. Barbour's words show neither elation nor alienation from the task at hand: "I go to meet the enemy with my feelings all schooled to do my duty regardless of personal consequences." (Barbour was killed in action at Monterrey that September after earning a brevet promotion at Palo Alto.) Despite the reluctance and indifference that pervaded the Army of Occupation, this mindset of dutiful service ultimately characterized American army officers' attitudes toward the coming of war with Mexico. Very few of these men put their ideas of what combat might be like on paper, but they generally accepted it as the soldier's lot and expected each other to perform courageously regardless of their opinion of the morality of their nation's policies.74

This dutiful neutrality was also present in the reactions of the army's commander. Taylor's response to the Mexican crossing of the Rio Grande was in full accord with his instructions and the intent of President Polk's policy, to annex Texas to the boundary claimed by the United States and to force Mexico to go to war to take it back. Though the choice not to await volunteer reinforcements was potentially rash, Taylor's confident decision to overrule the consensus of his senior officers and pursue the Mexicans after the stalemate at Palo Alto paid off with victory at Resaca de la Palma and national acclaim for the embattled army and its officers. Although many civilians were (inevitably given the army's small size) appointed to the new
regiments authorized by Congress, the regulars received unprecedented credit for their skill and bravery, and the war was fought primarily under their direction.

The interplay between officers' personal frustration and the development of their politically neutral accountability as an occupation was dialectical. The growth of the antiexpansionist Whig party and its criticism of the army during the Second Seminole War combined with constant Democratic criticism of the army and its officers during the early 1840s may have made the officer corps more hesitant to draw congressional fire by taking overt positions on the desirability of expansion, while the irritation which officers stored up waiting for war to begin seems to have reinforced the desire to prove themselves that was spurred by congressional attacks. The officer corps remained properly quiescent until events provided them with the opportunity to unleash their energies against Mexico. Morale suffered during the wait, but by the time the war began there was no questioning the officer corps' willingness to fight. Until then the hopes army officers held for promotion seemed to lie more in resignations by those dismayed by poor conditions and the slow climb up the organizational career ladder than in deaths in a war they did not expect to have to fight.

The officer corps' overwhelming reaction to service in the Army of Occupation was sheer boredom, and few regulars found any relief in close attention to their professional duties or in analyses of the political and diplomatic context they were performed in. When the war came the officer corps fought skillfully, courageously, and successfully, but conflict seemed so unlikely that few officers could sustain much enthusiasm for it until hostilities had actually begun. Until then, the attitude that characterized the corps best was George Meade's hope "that the whole affair will be settled
before spring, [to] enable me and many other victims to rejoin our
disconsolate wives." Military command was a job and a career for these men,
beyond the freelancing of filibustering but perhaps not yet deserving the
socially empowering and politically legitimizing label of a profession. These
caveats notwithstanding, the army's officers served their nation responsibly
and effectively when the time came, as they were paid to do.75

Army officers had not always displayed the restraint toward border
crises detailed in this chapter. Indeed, the penchant for (quasi-)independent
action displayed by Andrew Jackson in Florida had been characteristic of
many senior and middle-ranking army officers before 1820. These men
usually came from well-connected families, and they owed their high
appointments and rapid promotions (mostly but not exclusively during the
War of 1812 and the expansions which preceded it) to the primacy of political
influence in a society structured by webs of personal patronage. Their
interests naturally extended beyond military affairs to the political arena, and
their income came more from private resources as landholders than from
their salaries as public servants. The army elite was part of the national elite;
officers were gentlemen trained to the art of command as much by experience
in the household as by that on the parade ground or battlefield, and
independence, and with it the potential for irresponsibility, came as naturally
to their actions as to their rhetoric.

Army officers' increasingly unenthusiastic responses to the very real
opportunities for aggrandizement presented by expansion demonstrate the
close links between institutional maturity, occupational monopoly, class and
nation-state formation, and the growth of a sense of professional
accountability in the development of the commissioned officer corps during
the period between 1815 and 1846. The officers who came to dominate the
army's lower commissioned ranks once West Point began to provide the
majority of the army's new lieutenants could not pursue their dreams of
foreign conquest as independently as their predecessors on the southern
frontiers, for they lacked the social, political, and regional prominence that
officers like Andrew Jackson or James Wilkinson (the commanding general
from 1796 to 1808, and a notorious intriguer) had used to bypass the legal and
constitutional channels of national civilian authority in quest of personal,
sectional, and national aggrandizement. Though appointed through political
influence, the junior officers of the 1830s and 40s were not gentry leaders or
party politicians themselves (unlike Jackson and many of his subordinates
before, after, and in many respects during their commands). By the 1830s,
unrestrained individualism seemed an unlikely mode of action and personal
advancement to men from middling social origins who aspired to genteel
status and prestige in the more fluid and less deferential society of Jacksonian
America.

Personal and class anxiety and the corollary quest for security were
powerful motivating forces among army officers of the Jacksonian period. I
would suggest that as American society became more fluid and democratic,
many officers felt a growing uncertainty, and ultimately a threat, to their
economic prospects and their (related) ability to command social respect, but
rather than resigning their commissions to pursue uncertain opportunities in
the rapidly growing yet highly competitive (and thus insecure) civilian
marketplace army officers responded with a strong distaste for disorder and a
pursuit of structured advancement through a bureaucratic hierarchy—in
short, through careerism in its organizational form—to combat this sense of
constraint. For the army officer corps, the answer to personal uncertainty and
the means of social ascent lay in the availability of a fledgling bureaucracy, sponsored and given legitimacy by the sovereign sanction of the nation-state, that could fuse officers' material needs for security at a socially "respectable" level with their pretensions to disinterested social service, authority, and legitimacy.

The West Point motto "duty, honor, country" came to mean that officers won personal and occupational honor, glory, and reputation by dutifully serving the policies formulated by the elected civilian officials of their country, whether as peacekeepers and law enforcers or directors of conquest, without regard to immediate self-interest (the desire to gain glory and promotion by fomenting expansion and war) or personal moral or ideological qualms about these policies. More generally, the army's self-conception (and its dependent position) as an instrument of the state and its functional organization as a translocal bureaucratic hierarchy led officers to accept, articulate, and elaborate many of the leading characteristics of late nineteenth-century corporate thought and organization well before the Civil War, foreshadowing the postbellum reintegration of individual ambition and the locus of community obligation into the functionally and institutionally rather than geographically based forms of social organization that characterize modern America. In effect, the growth of army bureaucracy and the officer corps' allegiance to the nation-state that gave it employment led to the creation of the first national managerial class, an elite whose claim to authority was ultimately based on state sponsorship and power rather than individual or collective wealth, education and intellectual attainments, partisan affiliation, or claims to social status grounded in local prestige. (The officer corps did see itself as part of the national gentry, of course, but this association was increasingly phrased as a matter of center and periphery,
nation and locality, in which officers who shared the genteel values of the social, cultural, and political elite derived their status and authority from state sponsorship based on functional jurisdiction, rather than from local or family wealth and prestige.)

The professional rhetoric of neutral duty, service, and responsibility proved materially and psychologically attractive for such men. Historian Thomas Hietala has discovered that in the 1840s "many Democratic expansionists viewed the acquisition of land and markets as essential to their program for sustaining the unique character American social and political life." While neither insensible to these desiderata nor incapable of profiting from their pursuit, army officers no longer lived within the Jeffersonian world the civilian expansionists were attempting to preserve and restore. Their service within increasingly formalized bureaucratic institutions led them to a broadly Whiggish perspective (though not necessarily Whig partisanship) which valued order, restraint, and stability in all aspects of personal, national, and international life, and as the putatively neutral servants of the nation-state army officers essentially sat out what Hietala calls the central cultural debate of the decade.76

Hietala suggests that mid-century American expansionism grew as much from a domestic sense of malaise as from the boundlessness previous historians have discovered in the 1840s. From this perspective, both "ambitious and anxious policy makers welcomed war and expansion as alternatives to basic structural changes in American economics and politics" brought on by the emergence and prospect of urbanization, industrialization, and the commercial market revolution.77 For army officers this potentially disruptive response was unnecessary, because they derived their material and psychological security from essentially permanent service in an organization
that suffered little from the downturns historically inherent in the capitalist economy (a phenomenon which was becoming increasingly apparent by 1840). On the other hand, we should not underestimate the degree to which this occupational security was linked to the territorial expansion that so many officers opposed. The Whigs opposed expansion but favored an effective military establishment because of their conservative temperament, while the Democrats' policies gave the army active employment and a practical raison d'être despite the nation's generally peaceful relations with Europe and the Democrats' populist antagonism toward standing armies and professional monopolies. All things considered, the officer corps acted accountably in following civilian America in the pursuit of expansion, yet it did so with a responsible caution and hesitation.

This mindset, which might be labelled careerist more accurately than professional, was an important reason behind the otherwise surprising rarity of warlike or expansionist sentiments in the officer corps. Though usually given a negative connotation, the word "careerist" acquires a much more positive meaning than usual when viewed from this perspective. The personal and occupational security provided by a national bureaucracy encouraged accountability and responsibility as well as laxity, and in an era of simple military technology political accountability (or at least partisan neutrality) was a more important professional quality than technical or tactical expertise or capability per se. This occupational accountability was especially evident in officers' lack of extended substantive comment on controversial political questions while stationed in Texas (and Florida a decade before), in significant contrast to their constant individual preoccupation with separation from their wives and the prospect of disease. Ultimately, men with careers as secure as those of army officers did not need
Manifest Destiny to advance themselves—they had a definite stake in orderly national expansion, but they did not need to take the potential risks of urging or precipitating it, and the adjective "orderly" was as important a consideration as the fact of expansion itself. Though certainly patriots and nationalists, army officers would not have benefitted from, and indeed might have found their status threatened by, a war led by private enterprisers like filibusters, or a disastrous defeat (like that William Worth feared along the Canadian border) for which the Regular Army would be blamed despite the nation's unpreparedness. In officers' minds national success required national direction, and local settlers and filibusters could not be allowed to dictate the American foreign policy through actions unrestrained by allegiance to the state structure. Finally, though it is something of a counterfactual point, we should remember (as Hietala observes) that the sectional issues and allegiances brought to the forefront of American life by expansionism eventually destroyed the First Republic which the army served—although army officers were no more visionary or perceptive in foreseeing this than civilians, in hindsight they deserve credit for their responsible restraint in advocating the expansion that helped splinter their profession and nation.78

Changing occupational circumstances exerted a profound influence on the trend and nuances of officers' responses to the complex foreign policy problems they confronted. The Army was the first public sector employer on a national scale in the United States, and its officers espoused centralist values that served, but were also shaped by, their duties and interests. Like civilian bureaucrats facing change, career military men often find war unattractive because of the likelihood that it will disrupt the organizational stability built
up in times of peace. This consideration naturally grows in strength as an army becomes more institutionally mature, and the anxiety it produces is perhaps strongest when such an army is reaching the point of occupational and organizational monopoly but its officers still feel some uncertainty over the outcome of their efforts (or in the words of some theorists their "professionalization project") to secure this jurisdiction. Commanders before and after 1820 both spoke in the cautious idiom of "conservative realism" and sought to defend American sovereignty along the frontiers, but officers who were committed to army careers and increasingly sensitive to the fragility of social order and their place within it commonly came to fear that native filibusters posed a more immediate danger to American national honor and security than the supposed "insults" of European powers. The officer corps' practical function as the principal defender and enforcer of national and federal sovereignty along the nation's borders fostered a strong personal and institutional interest in increasing the federal government's power and legitimacy, and the officer corps' ongoing search for personal and organizational security bred a yearning for order and stability that regularly routinely expressed in the conservative idiom of legalism and national sovereignty. Their vocation challenged by Americans' fondness for the locally controlled militia and its extralegal counterpart, the filibustering expedition, regular officers increasingly responded by stressing the necessity for centralized national control over the organized use of military force against foreign states and Indian polities.

These biases were clearly present in officers' disdain for the Canadian and Texan rebels and squatters and settlers in Indian lands, all of whom elevated doctrines of natural right (or Manifest Destiny) and popular democracy (within the ethnocentric strictures of their concepts of citizenship)
over the rule of domestic and international law while attempting to usurp the regulars' social role and occupational function as the only legitimate managers of organized violence. Filibusters were a danger to international peace, a threat to law and order within the United States, and a socially disruptive demonstration of the limits of the government's sovereignty over its own people, while foreign aggression could be deterred by military preparation, which provided employment, prestige, and promotion for officers and posed less danger of conflict with local civilians and their representatives in Congress. Surprising as it may seem this careerist self-interest made the regular officers of the Jacksonian era less likely to seek expansion and war or to willfully violate foreign borders than their Jeffersonian predecessors. The army's accountability to civilian political control--to the Constitution and the democratic values which it ultimately represented--and its reluctance to press for expansion flowed both directly and ironically from its employment by the nation-state--the officer corps' role as the principal defenders of national sovereignty meshed smoothly with their individual and organizational searches for security, authority, and legitimacy, but not in the monolithic form of enthusiasm for Manifest Destiny and empire.
Chapter XV

The phrase "bloody meridian" is drawn from the title of novelist Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian, or, The Evening Redness in the West* (New York: Random House, 1985).

I. Continuing Tensions With Britain, 1842-1846


Chase, "Harbor of Pensacola," *The Pensacola Gazette*, March 21, 1839, *ANC* 8 (April 18, 1839): 244. See also Chase, March 10, 1845, article from unidentified newspaper in Henry Halleck's "Military Note Book," Halleck Papers, LC.

Wool's report reprinted in *ANC* 13 (February 12, 1842): 49.

Alexander Swift to Joseph Swift, November 12, 1840, Alexander Swift Papers, USMA.

Schureman to his mother Susan, January 26, 1846, and in the "West Pointer" 1 (April 1842), Schureman Papers, USMA. Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, p. 57, states that there was little American reaction to the French attack on Veracruz (and Tampico).

Ibid. See editor John Jones, in the *Daily Madisonian* (President Tyler's house organ), March 14, 1842, and Rep. Chesselden Ellis, in the *Congressional Globe*, January 25, 1845, 28th Cong., 2nd sess., cited in Hietala, *Manifest Design*, pp. 64 and 67, for examples of civilian expansionists who expected to
coerce Britain by threatening to withhold American exports, and p. 98 for an example of expansionist beliefs that Britain had been weakened by the social turmoil of industrialization. The Polk administration apparently shared some of this confidence; see ibid., p. 75.

8 Schureman to his sister (Mary Schureman), December 15, 1841, Schureman Papers, LC; Scott to Anderson, February 24, 1843, Anderson Papers, LC. See Charles K. Webster, The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830-1841: Britain, the Liberal Movement, and the Eastern Question (London: G. Bell, 1951); Hugh G. Soulsby, The Right of Search and the Slave Trade in Anglo-American Relations (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933) regarding the issue of neutral rights in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. See also Capt. M[ichael] M. Clark to Assistant Surgeon Benjamin King, February 17, 1842, King Papers, LC, who suggested that the issue of state debts would afford Britain with a pretext for seizing American shipping, which would then lead to war.

9 Schureman to Mary, October 17, 1843, and to his mother, January 26, 1846, Schureman Papers, USMA; Upshur, annual report of the secretary of the navy, December 4, 1841, Sen. Doc. 1, 27th Cong., 2nd sess. Large-scale military reinforcement was indeed pondered by British policy-makers--see Bourne, Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, ch. 5, regarding British preparations for war over Oregon (and under some unlikely circumstances Texas) between 1843 and 1846. Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, emphasizes the expansionists' confidence; Hietala, Manifest Design, their anxiety. Since few army officers were "expansionists" in the sense in which the term is usually applied neither of these categories seems entirely appropriate. (See ibid., p. 81, for the Whig view of Anglo-American trade and British military power.)

10 Stuart, United States Expansionism and British North America, pp. 92-93; Barry to Duncan, April 3, 1846, Duncan Papers, USMA.

11 Turner to Lt. Abraham Johnston, October 30, 1844 (quotation) and May 1846, Johnston Papers, USMA.

12 Hunt to Duncan, March 17, 1844, Duncan Papers, USMA.


14 McClellan to his mother, February 1, 1844, McClellan Papers, LC.

15 See Forgie, Patricide in the House Divided. Although Thomas Hietala provides intimations of such an approach in Manifest Design, historians do not appear to have examined the psychohistory of American expansionism even amidst the short-lived heyday of that approach during the 1970s, and I believe that it remains a fruitful field for investigation. See also Fred Somkin, Unquiet Eagle: Memory and Desire in the Idea of American Freedom, 1815-1860 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

16 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 328-29 and 339; Bliss to Lt. Col. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, May 18, 1845, Hitchcock Papers, LC; Thayer to J.R. Chadbourne, June 28, 1846, Thayer Papers, USMA.

18 Burgwin to Johnston, August 8, 1841, and Turner to Johnston, January 29, 1843, Johnston Papers, USMA.


20 Allen to Thomas Berryman (a civilian friend), August 3, 1845, Robert Allen Papers, USMA.

21 Lt. P.G.T. Beauregard to Webster (? , probably Capt. Lucien B. Webster), September 15, 1845, and to Colonel Joseph Totten, May 14, 1846, Beauregard Papers, LC; Sherman to his future wife Ellen Ewing, September 17, 1844 and June 9 1845, in Home Letters of General Sherman, ed. M.A. DeWolfe Howe (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), pp. 26 and 29; Meade to his wife Margaretta, January 10 and February 24, 1846, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, pp. 44 and 49; Capt. Ephraim Kirby Smith (brother of Edmund Kirby Smith) to his wife, April 19, 1846, in To Mexico With Scott: Letters of Captain E. Kirby Smith to His Wife, ed. Emma Jerome Blackwood, with an introduction by R.M. Johnson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1917), p. 37. (The name of Smith's wife is not given therein.) See Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, chs. 2-3, regarding European efforts to keep the United States and Texas apart, and ch. 7 concerning the possibility of European intervention during the war, which Merk shows to have been minimal. See also Langley, Struggle for the American Mediterranean, ch. 3, concerning the Anglo-American diplomatic rivalry over Texas. Van Alstyne, "Empire in Mid-Passage," p. 101, notes that Mexican confidence did increase as tensions over Oregon grew, and suggests that the Mexican invasion threat of fall 1844 was intended to force Texas into the arms of Britain to prevent its annexation by the United States (p. 103). See Hietala, Manifest Design, pp. 205-207, for expansionist hopes that Britain would be intimidated by the American performance in Mexico; army officers had a more realistic appreciation of the extent of British power.
II. Edmund Gaines and the Balance of Territorial Expansionism and Professional Responsibility: The Dilemmas of Peacekeeping and Law Enforcement along the Texas Border, 1821-1846


24 Gaines to Taylor, March 1, 1827, quoted in Bauer, Zachary Taylor, p. 46; Reese, "The United States Army and the Indian," pp. 149-53 and 317-18; Colquhoun to Major James Hook, February 24, 1829, HQA:LS.


28 Gaines to Cass, March 29, 1836, AGO:LR.

29 Gaines' appeals to the governors quoted in Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, p. 196.

30 Ibid., pp. 196-99; Gaines to Cass, April 20, 1836, H.E.D. 351, 25th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 771-73; Cass to Gaines, April 25, 1836, AGO:LS, and May 12, 1836, H.E.D. 256, 24th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 54-55; Gaines to Santa Anna, April 25, 1836, Gaines Papers, THS.

31 Gaines to Tennessee governor Newton Cannon, June 28, 1836, Gaines Papers, THS; Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, pp. 204-210.

32 Gaines to Arbuckle, August 10 (first quotation), and Cannon, August 28 (second quotation), 1836, Gaines Papers, THS; Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, pp. 211-13; Jackson's order of November 12, 1836 noted in ASP:MA 6: 807. See Reese, "The United States Army and the Indian," pp. 328-334, and Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, pp. 307-311, for summaries of these operations.

33 Gaines to Secretary Poinsett, May 22, 1837, HQA:LR. It is not clear whether Gaines sent this letter to Macomb for transmission to Poinsett first, but it was addressed to the secretary.


Robert Wooster provides material for comparisons with the post-Civil War officer corps in "The Army and the Politics of Expansion: Texas and the Southwestern Borderlands, 1870-1886," SWHC 93 (October 1989): 151-67. The army's primary mission during that period was policing the border against Indian raiders who fled to Mexico (something that did not yet concern the officers of 1845), rather than territorial expansion per se. Wooster demonstrates that the aggressiveness of some junior and field-grade officers was condoned and even encouraged by their departmental commander
(Brigadier General E.O.C. Ord), who bargained for political support from Texas congressmen to take advantage of mixed signals from the president and the secretary of war in pursuit of his own agenda. Nevertheless, while few officers at any rank felt much sympathy for Mexico, but more senior commanders, particularly Sherman (the commanding general), opposed actions that might precipitate war, and they gradually reined in their more bellicose subordinates. Wooster also demonstrates that many junior officers felt uneasy over the bellicosity of their comrades and "resigned themselves to the slow peacetime system of promotion" (p. 163). Army officers of this period were much more actively interested in the professional considerations involved in border strife--probably because active operations were constantly in progress, as the army had known little peace since the advance to the Rio Grande several decades before--but their motives apparently remained occupational or careerist rather than ideological. The primary issue appears to have been one of tactics (the use of hot pursuit into Mexico) rather than a desire to annex larger chunks of Mexico. The army had become more politically active as a result of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and some of its officers were willing to use their power to barter for congressional support in ways that their antebellum counterparts would not have dreamed of, but Sherman drew on his past experience to demand that subordinates acknowledge civilian control over policy decisions. (Nothing akin to Ord's personal lobbying with the Texan legislators occurred during the annexation crisis, and I have noted the disdain many regulars felt for the Texans and their leaders.) Officers like Ord were exceptions, and Wooster points out that civilians were frequently more eager for war than officers. The officer corps "reached no consensus" on war in 1875 (p. 166); expansionism remained a potential opportunity that required civilian sanction to become a reality. Although the later officer corps was more professional in its attention to military considerations, Wooster's broader conclusions support those of this essay, that the army officer corps as a whole restrained itself out of a sense of professional neutrality.

37 Taylor to Houston and Taylor to Capt. Lloyd Beall, both June 17, 1844, enclosed in Taylor to Adjutant General Jones, June 18 and July 15, 1844, AGO:LR; Major Lorenzo Thomas (Assistant Adjutant General, hereafter cited as AAG) to Taylor, September 17, 1844, cited in Dyer, Zachary Taylor, pp. 148 and 150; Taylor to Assistant Commissary General Joseph P. Taylor, January 29, 1845, Taylor Papers, LC.


39 Marcy to Taylor, July 8, 1845, SW:LS; Polk, diary entry, August 29, 1845, in Milo M. Quaife, ed., The Diary of James K. Polk, During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849 (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1910), 1: 8-9; Taylor to Jones, October 4, 1845, H.E.D. 196, 29th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 93-95; Marcy to Taylor, October 16, 1845, in ibid., pp. 76-77; Assistant Quartermaster General Trueman Cross to Assistant Quartermaster General Henry Stanton, September 10, 1845, cited in Bauer, Zachary Taylor, p. 121; Taylor to Jones, November 7, 1845, and Marcy to Taylor, January 13, 1846, in H.E.D. 196, 29th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 97 and 77-78.

40 Gaines to Marcy, August 15, 1845, in Sen. Doc. 378, 29th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 22-23; Adjutant General Jones to Gaines, August 27, 1845, AGO:LS; Gaines to Jones, September 2, 1845, Sen. Doc. 378, 29th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 27-31; Marcy to Gaines, September 13, 1845, AGO:LS; Gaines to Marcy, May 1, 1846, Sen. Doc. 378, 29th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 56-57. See Jones to Gaines, May 29, 1844, AGO:LS, for Scott's order on communications through the chain of command. General Order No. 40 of July 11, 1842 (Orders File, AGO) had eliminated the Eastern and Western Divisions, retaining the nine departments established in 1841. This had essentially reduced Gaines' command to that of a colonel without a regiment, clearly a move on Scott's part against his enemy, though one which promised easier communications without the irascible Gaines acting as an intermediary. Gaines was popular in the southwest, and the divisions were probably reestablished in order to give Gaines a command suitable to his rank so that he could not complain of being passed over by his junior Taylor for command of the Corps of Observation.

41 Marcy to Gaines, May 18 and June 2, 1846, Sen. Doc. 378, 29th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 51 and 61; Gaines to Marcy, May 21, 1846, AGO:LR.

42 Gaines to Marcy, June 7, 1846, AGO:LR.
III. The Army of Occupation on the Borders of Mexico, Summer 1845 to Spring 1846: The Paradoxes of Expertise and Cohesion and the Growth of Professional Responsibility


44 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 294; Lt. Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana to his wife Sue Dana, November 1, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, p. 29. The only exception to this historiographical consensus seems to be Ronald Spiller, in "From Hero to Leader," pp. 44 and 129.

45 Ibid., p. 131. The article in question is "Of Popular Prejudices Against Military Establishments," MNM 1 (July 1833): 292-303. See also Major William Chase, March 10, 1845, article from unidentified newspaper in Halleck, "Military Note Book," Halleck Papers, LC. The outstanding exception to this lack of discussion was in [Brevet Second Lt. Daniel H. Hill], "The Army in Texas," Southern Quarterly Review 9 (April 1846): 434-57, later supplemented by [Hill], "The Army in Texas--No. 2," Southern Quarterly Review 14 (July 1848): 183-97, but these articles were devoted almost exclusively to attacking the staff bureaus and the government for providing inadequate logistical support to the Army of Occupation. Hill's primary theme was that parsimony had precluded preparedness, but neither American aims nor the enemy were discussed.

46 Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, p. 330. Such support was hardly expressed "enthusiastically" (ibid.) by the officer corps as a whole, however. A similar example of scholarly opinion on this subject is in Goetzmann, Army Exploration in the American West, p. 68: "Almost to a man, for example, the officers of the Corps [of Topographical Engineers] were in accord with the policy of Manifest Destiny." See Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, pp. 121-23, and Andrew Rolle, John Charles Fremont: Character as Destiny (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), ch. 8 for brief discussions of Fremont's court-martial. My forthcoming article "Manifest Destiny and Military Professionalism: A New Perspective on Junior U.S. Army Officers' Attitudes Toward War With Mexico, 1844-1846," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 99 (April 1996): 466-98, elaborates on the analysis in this section of the chapter. For general surveys

47 Worth to Surgeon General Thomas Lawson, November 1, 1845, Thomas Lawson Papers, LC. Note that Lawson had come to oppose the expropriation of the Seminoles, so it is possible that he opposed expansion and was engaged in an argument with Worth. See Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, pp. 50-51, on the lack of naval support, which Taylor felt necessary to escort his unarmed supply and reconnaissance vessels. Taylor had 285 supply wagons in September and 307 six months later, for a force of 3550 men. The siege train and staff travelled by sea to Port Isabel. See Assistant Quartermaster General Cross to Assistant Quartermaster General Stanton, September 10, 1845, cited in Bauer, *Zachary Taylor*, p. 121, and Taylor to Adjutant General Jones, March 8, 1846, H.E.D. 60, 30th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 118-19.

48 George Meade to Margaretta Meade, September 18, 1845, in *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade*, p. 26; Hitchcock, diary entries for September 8 and 20 and November 2, 1845, in Croffut, ed., *Fifty Years in Camp and Field*, pp. 200-203; Hunt, "Army Attack and National Defense," p. 147. Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor*, p. 167, reports that Taylor's thoughts of retirement were common gossip in the Army of Occupation. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 330 and 332, gives several examples of officers who opposed the war on moral grounds, including Meade, Hitchcock, and Ephraim Kirby Smith, though he rightly points out that these were exceptions, and that each of these officers hoped to see combat once war was certain. See William Tecumseh Sherman to Ellen Ewing, September 17, 1844 and June 9 1845, in *Home Letters of General Sherman*, p. 27, for an explicit statement of (Whiggish) partisan preference combined with dedication to public neutrality.

49 Grant, *Memoirs*, p. 41; DeHart to Capt. Charles F. Smith, January 6, 1846, Charles Ferguson Smith Papers, USMA. See Hietala, *Manifest Design*, p. 205, for examples of congressional Democrats who spoke of war as a moral good (at least in the context of opportunities for territorial expansion) which war would reenergize a society grown soft. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms* offers only one citation (on p. 340) of an officer from the Mexican War era directly advocating war as a means of national unification, from Lt. John J. Peck, October 31, 1845, in *The Sign of the Eagle: A View of Mexico—1830 to 1855*, ed. Richard F. Pourade (San Diego: Union-Tribune Publishing, 1970), pp. 7-9, and I was unable to find any others from that period, though there are some dramatic statements of the theme from earlier years. See Charles


See Frederick Merk (with the collaboration of Lois Bannister Merk), Slavery and the Annexation of Texas (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), and Hietala, Manifest Design, chs. 2 and 6, regarding civilian expansionists' expectations for sectional and national gain and their belief that annexation might hold the nation together by acting as an alternative to abolition. In contrast, see Ernest M. Lander, Reluctant Imperialists: Calhoun, the South Carolinians, and the Mexican War (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979) for a view of the sectional, and indeed intrasectional dimensions of opposition to the war in the United States, and Varg, New England and Foreign Relations, chs. 10-11, for a discussion of the primary center of dissent against Manifest Destiny. May, The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, provides a thorough examination of attempts at pro-slavery expansionism during the 1850s.

51 See Hietala, Manifest Design (especially ch. 4), and Wilson, Space, Time, and Freedom, ch. 5, concerning Democratic anxieties over urbanization and industrialization, and more generally Drew R. McCoy, The Elusive Republic:

52 James Schureman to Mary Schureman, April 10, 1844, Schureman Papers, LC (the word for which I have substituted "war" was illegible); Dutton to Lucy Matthews, March 6, 1845, Dutton Papers, USMA; George Meade to Margaretta Meade, September 4 and October 10, 1845, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, pp. 23 and 30; Allen to Thomas Berryman (a civilian friend), August 3, 1845, Robert Allen Papers, USMA; Samuel H. Raymond to Mary Raymond, May 5, 1844, Raymond Papers, USMA.

53 Worth to Surgeon General Thomas Lawson, November 1, 1845, Lawson Papers, LC; Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 330-31; Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny; Richard Stoddard Ewell to Rebecca Ewell, July 30, 1844, Ewell Papers, LC. Worth provides Skelton's only citation to racial Anglo-Saxonism before the outbreak of war and the advance into Mexico. This is not to say that there are no others, but the trope is far rarer than Skelton implies or than a scholar familiar with civilian attitudes might expect. Interestingly, about half of the citations Skelton presents for officers' opposition to the war (those on p. 332) are from the period after it had begun. James M. McCaffrey, Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846-1848 (New York: New York University Press, 1992), ch. 5, describes the predominantly negative reactions to Mexicans and their culture found among American regular and volunteer troops during the invasion. See Hietala, Manifest Design, ch. 5, regarding the restraining influence of American racial attitudes on expansionism into the Mexican heartland. For general context, see Takaki, Iron Cages.
54 Hatch to his sister Eliza, October 28, 1845, Hatch Papers, LC; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, September 22, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, pp. 13-14. See also William S. Henry, diary entry, April 3, 1846, in To Mexico with Taylor and Scott, p. 19. See Skelton, An American Profession of Arms, pp. 162-63, for a brief summary of officers' religious preferences; I would suggest that the relatively high proportion (13.4%, of a sample size of 67 in 1830) of officers professing Catholicism may not be as illusory as he considers it, due to the more varied social demographics of Catholicism before the beginning of large scale Irish immigration. See also Ted C. Hinckley, "American Anti-Catholicism During the Mexican War," Pacific Historical Quarterly 31 (May 1962): 121-38, who argues that the war did not take the form of a religious jihad. About forty to fifty percent of regular army enlisted men were foreign-born, the largest proportions in Ireland and Germany. Both groups were largely Catholic. (See Steinhauer, "Sojers," ch. 2.)

55 Scott to Jones, August 25, 1843, HQA:LS; George Meade to Margaretta Meade, December 17, 1845 and February 24 and March 2, 1846, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, pp. 39, 48, and 50; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, September 16, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, p. 12.

56 Ibid., and Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, September 22, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, p. 14; Grant to his fiancee and future wife Julia Dent, October 10, 1845 and March 3, 1846, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Volume I: 1837-1861, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), pp. 56-57 and 75; Grant, Memoirs and Selected Letters, pp. 114-15. (All citations to Grant herein are from the former volume unless otherwise noted.) See George Meade to Margaretta Meade, April 15, 1846, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, pp. 58-59, and Lt. John J. Peck, February 6, 1846, in The Sign of the Eagle, pp. 11-12, for additional examples of confidence. Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, p. 149, observes that editorial opinion in the United States was divided over whether the advance to the Rio Grande would preserve peace or precipitate war.

57 Sherman to Ellen Ewing, June 9, 1845, in Home Letters of General Sherman, p. 29; George Meade to Margaretta Meade, January 10 and 20, 1846, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, pp. 44-45; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, October 24 and 26, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, p. 28; Dutton to Lucy Matthews, February 26, 1845, Dutton Papers, USMA. See also Peck, November 1, 1845, in The Sign of the Eagle, p. 9; Capt. William C. DeHart to Capt. Charles F. Smith, January 6, 1846, Charles Ferguson Smith Papers, USMA; Lt. James B. Dyer (listed as Alexander B. Dyer in all army biographical sources), journal entry, February 17, 1845, Dyer Papers, LC.
Smith to his wife, March 29, 1846 and August 28, 1845, in *To Mexico With Scott*, pp. 35 and 14; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, August 29, 1845, in *Monterrey is Ours!*, p. 3; Grant to Julia Dent, October 1845, in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 59; George B. McClellan to his sister Frederica McClellan, May 3 and 13, 1846, McClellan Papers, Series A, LC; Dutton to Lucy Matthews, May 18, 1846, Dutton Papers, USMA. See also Peck, February 10, 1846, in *The Sign of the Eagle*, p. 12.

George McClellan to Frederica McClellan, May 3, 1846, McClellan Papers, Series A, LC; Dutton to Lucy Matthews, May 18, 1846, Dutton Papers, USMA; Smith to his wife, March 17, 1846, in *To Mexico With Scott*, pp. 30-31; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, April 21, 22, and 11, 1846, in *Monterrey is Ours!*, pp. 46, 48, and 41. See Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 69, for a classic discussion of the internal institutional constraints on professional military aggressiveness.


Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 57; Smith to his wife, August 28, 1845, in *To Mexico With Scott*, p. 14. See Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, pp. 277-78, regarding Smith's dismissal. The initial concentration in Louisiana was to total about 2000 men; the force that finally advanced from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande was approximately 3500 strong. The additional recruits were not members of organized volunteer or militia units. The first volunteers recruited outside routine army auspices arrived at Port Isabel on May 11, 1846, two days after the initial battles.

John Hatch to Eliza Hatch, October 14 and 28, 1845, Hatch Papers, LC; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, September 23, 1845, in *Monterrey is Ours!*, p. 15; and Sherman to Ellen Ewing, June 9, 1845, in *Home Letters of General Sherman*, pp. 29-30. See also Peck, February 10, 1846, in *The Sign of the Eagle*, p. 12.

Hatch to Eliza, September 10, 1845, Hatch Papers, LC.
George Meade to Margareta Meade, November 3 and October 21, 1845, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, pp. 35 and 33.

George Meade to Margareta Meade, December 18, 1845, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, p. 40; Naopleon Dana to Sue Dana, September 26 and 30 (quotation) and October 15 and 19, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, pp. 16, 25, and 27; Peck, October 31, 1845, in The Sign of the Eagle, pp. 10-11; Taylor to his daughter Mary Elizabeth Taylor, December 15, 1845, quoted in Hamilton, Zachary Taylor, p. 168.

Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, October 26, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, pp. 28-29; Barbour, journal entry, April 15, 1846, in Journals of the Late Brevet Major Philip Norbourne Barbour, p. 37; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, October 24, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, p. 28. See also Peck, April 20, 1846, in The Sign of the Eagle, p. 20.

Schureman to his mother, January 26, 1846, Schureman Papers, USMA; George Meade to Margareta Meade, February 18, 1846, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, p. 48; Peck, April 16, 1846, in The Sign of the Eagle, p. 19; Sherman to Ellen Ewing, January 31, 1846, in Home Letters of General Sherman, p. 31; Capt. Thomas Swords to Lt. Abraham Johnston, January 26, 1846, Johnston Papers, USMA.

George Meade to Margareta Meade, February 24, 1846, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, p. 49; Grant to Julia, March 3, 1846, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, p. 75; Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, November 7, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, p. 32. Meade was the only one of these men who did not resign during the 1850s, probably having had enough of the insecurity of civilian life during the depression at the end of the 1830s.

Bauer, Zachary Taylor, p. 148; Wallace, General William Jenkins Worth, p. 71. See Worth to Twiggs, December 25, 1845; Twiggs to Worth, December 26 and 27; Lt. H[enry]. H. Sibley to Twiggs, December 28; Capt. C[harles]. A. May to Major W[illiam]. G[oldsmith]. Belknap, December 28; and Belknap to Twiggs, two letters dated December 28. Belknap and May spoke as "the authorized friend[s]" of Worth and Twiggs respectively; this term was commonly used to designate go-betweens and seconds in duels and the negotiations leading to them. The two colonels did not so "meet," but Belknap (vice Worth) did call upon Twiggs to withdraw his note of the 27th, "with the view of making such explanations as may be satisfactory." This was done, and Belknap's second note excused Worth's conduct as overhasty. (All of these letters are in the Hitchcock Papers, LC.)

71 Bauer, Zachary Taylor, p. 129.

72 Minutes of Worth-Vega meeting, March 28, Ampudia to Taylor, April 12, and Taylor to Ampudia, April 12, 1846, H.E.D. 60, 30th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 134-40; Taylor to Adjutant General Jones, April 15 and 26, 1846, H.E.D. 196, 29th Cong., 1st sess., p. 118, and H.E.D. 60, 30th Cong., 1st sess., p. 141.


74 Smith to his wife, March 17, 1846, in To Mexico With Scott, pp. 30-31; Peck, March 27, 1846, in The Sign of the Eagle, p. 15; journal entries, April 22, 27, and May 1, in Journals of the Late Brevet Major Philip Norbourne Barbour, pp. 42, 47, and 50-51. These officers expected that the Mexicans could have made the crossing a costly one, though the Americans would have forced the position. See also William S. Henry, diary entry, March 28, 1846, in To Mexico with Taylor and Scott, pp. 12-13. See Napoleon Dana to Sue Dana, September 15, 1845, in Monterrey is Ours!, p. 12, and George Meade to Margaretta Meade, April 22, 1846, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, p. 68, for other examples of an officer swearing vengeance.

75 George Meade to Margaretta Meade, November 12, 1845, in The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, p. 36. See Dutton to Lucy Matthews, May 18, 1846, Dutton Papers, USMA, for an extensive example of this dutiful attitude, so similar to the corps' neutrality on political questions. But Dutton, like Grant, was willing to resign if his fiance wished.

76 Hietala, Manifest Design, pp. 7-8.
Ibid., p. 270.

See McCormick, "The Jacksonian Strategy," for a perspective on Jacksonian politics that stresses efforts to maintain the Union by avoiding sectional controversy, a pattern of behaviour the officer corps' neutrality fit well.
Part VI

Further Comparisons: The United States Navy and the American Civilian Professions
Chapter XVI

The United States' Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1861: The Growth and Decline of Professional Cohesion and Accountability

The experience of the United States Navy's officer corps during the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth centuries illustrates the close connections between personal, class, occupation, and state formation, and, as both a military and an American occupation, it provides us with the most direct basis for comparison and contrast with the composition, values, and behaviour of the American army's officer corps. The army and navy shared the same fundamental factors of tightly constrained funding, geographic dispersal, and constabulary rather than warfighting missions (contrasted with identities built on the preference for the latter), which often operated in opposing directions when judged in relation to the corps' quests for occupational autonomy. Historian Christopher McKee has recently provided scholars with strong evidence that the naval officer corps became highly professional by 1815, but the evidence for the postwar era indicates that this status was short-lived in a number of respects. Like the experience of the Prussian army during the post-Napoleonic period, the trajectory of professionalism in the naval officer corps presents an example of partial deprofessionalization and overall declension, in significant contrast to that in the army.

Indeed, the picture we receive of the naval officer corps in 1845 is much like that of the army officer corps before 1815. Lacking the institutionalized exclusiveness and occupational socialization provided by the Military Academy at West Point, the personnel base of the naval officer corps was
never as fully stabilized as that of the army, and its administrative procedures
suffered from even greater personalism and politicization, resulting in
endemic patronage and claims or suspicions of favoritism and discrimination
that disrupted all aspects of naval life and careers. These administrative
problems stemmed in large part from the fact that the navy was substantially
less successful than the army at socializing its officers in an accountable sense
of duty and responsibility, and the effects were apparent in constant internal
strife (and a greater number of military court proceedings, both absolutely and
in proportion to the size of the officer corps), a higher rate of resignation (and
dismissal) than in the army, insubordination directed at both civil and
military superiors, and stubborn resistance by junior and senior officers alike
to reform efforts initiated by the Navy Department.

Professionalism was not sustained from within the naval officer corps
either, for it never successfully articulated and inculcated a coherent
collective sense of mission or professional ideology to serve as the basis for
internal cohesion, cognitive standardization (or doctrine), and occupational
responsibility and jurisdiction. Navy officers definitely had esprit de corps,
but it was an excess rather than a deficiency of pride that plagued the navy as
an institution, for the romantic image of the dashing captain drawn from the
successful ship-to-ship duels of the War of 1812 became the normative ideal
to which all officers aspired, and this rigidly competitive standard encouraged
conflict with the comrades officers came into daily contact with as much as
with foreign enemies. The navy had none of the internal discipline and
administrative regularity provided to the army by repeated revisions of its
regulations, which were changed significantly only one time between 1802
and 1833, largely because senior officers feared encroachments on their power.
Indeed, on the whole the navy's occupational culture was a dysfunctional one
that encouraged rampant individualism rather than cooperation. While the postwar (meaning post-1815 in this chapter) naval officer corps achieved a very substantial degree of autonomy from external control, it did so as a mass of competing individuals each dependent on personal and political patronage and connections, not as a cohesive occupational entity working to develop an ethos of responsible service and accountable behaviour. On the whole, the story of the postwar naval officer corps is one of persistent and dysfunctional individualism and the failure of bureaucracy.¹

The story of the early republican naval officer corps is predominantly a story of individuals and their personal qualities and relationships rather than specialized institutions and the standardized bureaucratic routines that make these institutions a more efficient and accountable form of functional organization. Naval officers thought in highly personalistic terms, a product of their self-conception as gentlemen, each with a distinctive character, reputation, and honor, a mindset that encouraged aggressive combat leadership but retarded the conscious articulation and elaboration of a more general professional ethos. Indeed, Christopher McKee credits individual secretaries of the navy with the greatest influence in shaping the corps and its behaviour, just as individual captains set the tone for its ardent belligerence against friend and foe alike through their combat performances and their high-strung sense of personal honor. Presidential interest in the navy waxed and waned, while the secretaries of the navy ultimately set--or attempted to set--the tone for naval professionalism, and these men were strong administrators and supporters of the Navy until after the end of the War of 1812. While McKee considers the Jeffersonian navy highly professional, this quality dissipated after 1815 and showed few signs of reemerging even as late
the eve of the Civil War. Less decisive civilian direction and an officer corps of young captains made prideful to the point of arrogance by the fame of their wartime exploits led to endemic internal conflict and insubordination that continued until the Civil War. Several Jacksonian era secretaries sought to restrain the anarchic independence of the naval officer corps, but with little success. Taking the success of the military academy at West Point as their example, these officials also attempted to formalize and institutionalize naval education, which ultimately bore fruit in the establishment of an academy at Annapolis in 1845. The academy's immediate impact was far from self-evident, however, as the most prominent institutional development of the following decade, a board convened to dismiss those officers judged unfit for active service, ignited the most widespread controversy in the navy to that date, and many of its rulings were overturned after appeals to political patrons.

The Revolution left little institutional or material legacy of any substance for the American navy, which actually ceased to exist for a decade after the Treaty of Paris. While it looked to Britain for models of officership and administration, the United States Navy established in 1794 was a consciously national force, in deliberate contrast to that of the Revolution, which had been a combination of state forces, privateers, and erstwhile Britons like John Paul Jones (whose ships and crews were predominantly English). Indeed, the most significant contribution to the Revolution on the high seas had been made by privateers, and under the Confederation individual states maintained their own navies as they had done during the war. The Constitution remanded this authority to the national government, and the legislation that created the War Department in 1789 authorized that agency to administer naval forces, which were first raised in 1794 during a
period of Anglo-American tensions in which the North African nation of Algiers declared war on the United States and began depredations against American merchant shipping. The Navy Department was created in 1798 in response to growing tensions with France, but otherwise the basic structure of the civilian administration of the navy changed little between 1794 and 1861. The first significant development in American naval organization after the Navy Department was created in 1798 was the dramatic expansion during the Quasi-War with France. The naval officer corps grew more than tenfold (from fifty-nine to over seven hundred men) between 1798 and 1800 and had to be pruned afterwards, but by 1800 the ranks above midshipman were being filled by promotion alone rather than appointment directly from civilian life, and the secretary of the navy had established basic procedures to govern appointments and promotion that endured with relatively little change until the breakdown in civilian leadership after the War of 1812. Indeed, Jefferson's navy secretary (Robert Smith) oversaw the institution of limited but formal shipboard training mechanisms and successfully fostered norms of both character and merit through his choice of senior officers and his constant communications with them. This efficient system of administration broke down in 1811 under Secretary Paul Hamilton's less decisive hand, and in the latter years of the War of 1812 his successor dismantled the naval education system and alienated his officers by failing to seek their opinions as often as they had come to expect.

Congress cut the number of ships authorized drastically after the conclusion of the Quasi-War, and Jeffersonian legislation passed in 1801 required that the officer corps be cut back by two-thirds, but the numbers and organization of naval crews were not set by law during this era, and aside from the reduction of 1801 Congress rarely set precise statutory limits on the
number of naval officers as it did for the army. (Several more captains were retained than were allowed by the statute, but Congress seems to have accepted Secretary Smith's practice of waiting for attrition to reduce their number to the authorized level, a decision doubtlessly driven by political convenience and the influential patronage these men were able to call upon.) Despite the cuts, Christopher McKee labels this legislation "the true foundation of the fully professional officer corps": officers were retained according to merit, services rendered during the Quasi-War, and a broad effort to maintain equity in the distribution of officers by state of origin. Centralized yet nonpartisan national control over the manning of the corps was also secured during this process, for no foreign citizens or acting officers not yet confirmed by the secretary were retained, and partisan politics were not referred to on paper as a reason for dismissal during this process. The American navy came into frequent contact with its British counterpart and emulated many of its customs, but it did not hire foreign officers as teachers or consultants in the way that a shortage of trained engineers forced the army to do for West Point and the Fortifications Board. (Of course, the navy simply had no institution like the Military Academy, and American naval officers depended on British works for most of their professional reading.)

Given the exigencies of service overseas, where additional officers could not be dispatched with the speed necessary to replace casualties or supply new operational needs, the appointment of new officers was not completely or immediately centralized or formalized through a standard set of procedures, and captains retained substantial though exceptional authority to appoint temporary officers on their own initiative. Indeed, captains were given the right to nominate and employ their own candidates for midshipmen during the Quasi-War expansion, but this civilian tradition
(derived from the proprietary interest which merchant and privateer captains often held in their vessels) proved no more than a temporary expedient to handle the sudden build-up. Midshipman itself was legally no more than a probationary (or "warrant," rather than commissioned) rank without statutory command authority, but shipboard conditions far from home created opportunities for advancement rarely available to their army counterparts (brevet second lieutenants, or third lieutenants and ensigns before 1821). In 1805, for example, nine midshipmen who had passed their commissioning exam (also known as 'passed midshipmen,' who were invested with legal powers of command) held posts as acting lieutenants while awaiting Senate confirmation for their promotion to the higher grade. The practice appears to have occasioned few problems of rank or hierarchy, but this apparent serenity may have been an illusion, for in 1816 Secretary Benjamin Crowninshield forbade commanders to appoint regular officers to higher ranks on an acting basis. (The measure was probably intended to still junior officers' complaints about favoritism and discrimination on the part of their superiors.) Captains were also authorized to appoint civilians to "acting" posts (usually at midshipman rank), but this was done only rarely or in extremity, and anyone appointed in this way had to be confirmed by the navy secretary at the conclusion of their first cruise when the vessel returned to the United States.

Like its army counterpart, the structure and hierarchy of the naval officer corps illustrates the social and cultural construction of what otherwise appears to be functional authority and jurisdiction. The naval officer corps included chaplains and men with purely logistical responsibilities like the pursers (who disbursed pay), but as noncombat personnel (and in cultural terms, as moneyhandlers) these men were not eligible for command, which
ultimately meant the leadership and direction of men in combat. Gunners and other artisanal specialists were theoretically considered officers, but their manual work barred them from command as effectively as if by statute—no man was accepted as a full-fledged naval officer if he did not also possess the basic social attributes of a gentleman. This informal prerequisite also barred most of the so-called sailing masters (expert mariners whose background was usually in merchant shipping) from command, for their practical experience at sea was considered an inadequate substitute for the qualities thought innate in a gentleman.

Indeed, experienced midshipmen were often appointed as acting sailing masters on major vessels where it was felt that ex-merchant mariners would be inadequate because of their supposed lack of fighting spirit and command presence. In these cases cultural assumptions about military virtues and prerequisites were as important as civilian class (though they were also drawn from class-related values of gentility) in determining an individual's naval status, for many of the merchant officers appointed as naval sailing masters actually came from the same genteel social strata as the average midshipman. Secretary Hamilton ended the practice of promoting sailing masters to lieutenant in 1809, and only forty-three out of 505 sailing masters were promoted to lieutenant between 1798 and 1815, mostly during the officer shortages of the Quasi-War and the middle stages of the War of 1812. (This policy probably denied the navy access to valuable talent, for McKee judges the sailing masters’ chances of promotion excellent once elevated to lieutenant.) The navy's midshipmen certainly shared these attitudes, though they cloaked their self-interest in the rhetoric of public service: in 1815 ninety-nine midshipmen submitted a memorial to the Senate protesting the promotion of sailing masters to the post of lieutenant
on the grounds that they often returned to the merchant marine as soon as
the opportunity to serve as a ship's captain presented itself. Some masters
were promoted to lieutenant just after the war, but by 1828 the post of sailing
master was often filled on an acting basis by a senior midshipman rather than
a permanent officer. Ironically, secretary of the navy Bancroft (a Democrat of
ardent Jacksonian principles in his writing as a historian) formalized this
procedure in 1846, ordering that the midshipmen in question remain in the
normal line of promotion, thus cutting off one of the principal avenues for
mariners with civilian experience to contribute to their nation's defense, an
example in which institutional articulation and the movement for
professionalism served a clearly exclusive—yet not so clearly justified—
purpose.6

There were no statutory requirements involved in the initial selections
for midshipmen's berths, which were made by the secretary of the navy from
a pool of applicants who sent in personal recommendations from their
influential friends and relatives. The principal criteria of selection were
citizenship, sectional balance, and 'the honorable and manly feelings of a
gentleman,' which were taken to indicate a probability of aggressive
leadership. Contrary to stereotype, the number of New Englanders in the
early national officer corps was disproportionately small (though only slightly
so) once the Federalist surplus from the Quasi-War expansion was weeded
out, while Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia provided forty-
three percent of the applicants for midshipman warrants before 1815, more
than three times their share of the nation's populace. (Indeed, Maryland
alone supplied ten to fifteen percent of the naval officer corps during this
period, illustrating the growth of Baltimore as a seaport and privateering
center.) Indeed, between 1800 and 1814 nearly two out of three midshipmen
came from the seaboard states between Virginia and New York inclusively, a proportion about one-third greater than those states' representation in the total population.\textsuperscript{7}

Although the evidence presented by Theodore Crackel for the Jeffersonian army officer corps calls the nonpartisan nature of these appointments into question, McKee suggests that these disparities were not so much the result of conscious government policy as of physical and psychological proximity to or distance from the center of national government. The navy secretaries do not seem to have selected many Federalist partisans after 1800, but these men were increasingly unlikely to apply for federal positions anyway, doubtlessly put off by their own expectations of Republican partisanship. If they did apply, it was still likely that the secretary would be more familiar with the men who wrote recommendations for Republican candidates, and would therefore feel more confident in the reliability of these applicants, both politically and as gentlemen. Whatever role partisan considerations may have played, the proportion of New Englanders selected equalled their representation in the pool of applicants, while a lower percentage of new appointments went to men from the Chesapeake region than made up their fraction of the applicant pool. Indeed, the secretaries made a conscious effort to accept larger numbers of New Englanders during the War of 1812, an effort made easier by a spurt in applications from those states (in contrast to problems the War Department had in securing New England officers for the army). On the whole, McKee believes that partisan politics had very little influence on naval officer appointments between 1800 and 1815, and indeed in the life of the officer corps as a whole. His assertion that party affiliation never harmed an officer's career may be somewhat exaggerated, but it seems clear that the Jeffersonian
navy identified primarily with the U.S. government as an institution rather than with the Republican party or the sections which supported it. McKee's evidence shows that early national naval officers rarely wrote on political affairs, and that when they did their concern was with the interests of the navy to the virtual exclusion of all else. Like army officers of the Jacksonian period and naval officers during "the golden age of navalism" later in the century, their political activity was institutionally and occupationally self-interested rather than ideological or partisan in motivation and character--rank, pay, and the size (and to some extent the mission) of the naval establishment were the issues that drew them from their genteel 'independence' into the political arena.8

On the other hand, Jeffersonian naval officers came from relatively elite backgrounds much like their army counterparts, and we cannot dismiss the larger "political" implications--those related to the class structure of opportunity and power--of their elite, often politically active or connected, origins and the national political orientation displayed by their decisions to seek careers in the service of the nation-state. Successful applicants for naval commissions naturally tended to be from urban areas, usually ports, and one-third were from maritime backgrounds. Much like army officers, one out of five of their fathers were Revolutionary veterans, but a truly amazing one in four were or had been officers of the United States government, half of them military--rates fifty or a hundred times those in the populace as a whole. (Most of the civil officials were or had been executive branch appointees, providing an even closer illustration of the connection between federal patronage and national orientation that led to midshipmen's warrants.) Nearly one in ten of the midshipmen's fathers in McKee's sample had held state or local office, usually in the courts, and one father in eight was a
professional man, again statistics far in excess of those for the American
population as a whole. One out of three of the applicant's fathers was dead at
the time of their nomination, but this was probably not an exceptional figure
given the shorter life spans of that era.

The overall picture, rather similar to that we encountered in our
examination of the army officer corps, is of a corps drawn from the
"respectable" social elite--urban, genteel, and socially and politically
connected--but not necessarily from affluent circumstances. Geography and
occupational background were linked in both maritime and governmental
backgrounds, tying individual identification with the navy to both military
function--service to the nation-state--and politics broadly conceived. As we
might expect, these men were young--the appointees themselves ranged in
age from the early teens to the late twenties, but the mean and median ages
were both seventeen--half were aged fifteen to eighteen, and about two-fifths
eighteen to twenty-three, mature ages for American males in the early
republic. From a smaller sample, almost sixty percent had seen service in the
merchant marine, while only six percent had been professional students,
indicating that (as we would expect) these men were not from the very top of
the social ladder where leisure was a plentiful commodity. In some respects
the naval officer corps was even more exclusive than its army counterpart,
however, for of McKee's sample of 855, only ten enlisted sailors received
midshipmen's warrants. (Four of these were the black sheep of elite families,
and only three remained long in the service.) The actual finances of these
families were fairly modest and certainly subject to the same instability that
affected other Americans during this volatile era of trade wars, inflation, and
commercialization. Career economic security and maintaining genteel status
were clearly important motives for youthful applicants from the genteel and
office-holding classes, while the opportunity to enter the ranks of the socially respectable attracted men from maritime--and doubtlessly other commercial--environments, who were just as exposed to economic instability and attracted to the security of careers in state-sponsored organization.9

Indeed, the selection of naval officers occurred at the meeting-point between politics, culture, and social considerations, for the criteria of selection obviously combined influential patronage with financial need, occupational aptitude in the guise of maritime experience, and most salient of all, the cultural merit (or, from the applicant's standpoint, the cultural capital) of "character." How well-known or developed a fifteen year-old's character could be does not seem to have been pondered very closely, however. The secretaries sought, and recommendations stressed, zeal, activity, energy, and enterprise, all values that we have seen repeatedly in army officers' personal letters and the officer reports of 1821. These were qualities with multiple social and cultural meanings, denoting both industrious work and, more importantly in the reading of the secretaries, a 'passion for glory'--the ardent desire to achieve fame and distinction by placing the power of one's ego in the service of the public (or, more specifically, in that of the nation-state). Taken as a whole, these considerations illustrate the close, often intimate, personal connections between class, state, and occupational formation and identities.10

Why did men seek naval commissions? Material, cultural, and psychological motives were intertwined, and class-derived expectations were clearly central factors. Given their obvious political connections (which tend to correlate to "respectable" if not affluent economic status) McKee certainly goes too far in characterizing their social background as "the marginal middle class," except insofar as most Americans were economically insecure in an era
when the market revolution had just begun and there were few large-scale
economic organizations to provide stability, but a naval warrant did offer
genteel security: a fixed salary in an age when these were rare, and the
prestige and respectability (among civilians) and authority (over working-
class sailors within the navy) of a gentleman. "Marginality" here expresses
status anxiety and the economic insecurity which exacerbated it among
families with social reputations to uphold, not marginal status relative to the
nation's general population and its government. Given that so many of the
aspirants' families were urban, it may well be that they felt the lack of security
that was thought to come with landholding, but McKee does not have the
information necessary to examine the landholdings of these families, and
their status was hardly any more insecure than that of the majority of
Americans during this era.

In other words, applicants for naval commissions definitely sought
economic security, but, as Burton Bledstein observes of the American middle
class later in the nineteenth century, "from the beginning the ego-satisfying
pretensions of professionalism have been closer to the heart of the middle-
class American than the raw profits of capitalism." Officers' aspirations for
economic security ultimately reflected class-derived expectations of gentility
and material independence rather than the fact of material deprivation. Even
the many families in debt had encountered that problem because of their own
attempts at refinement and social display, or their involvement in the
commercial market economy of trade and business enterprises, not because of
poverty per se. Similarly, officers' complaints about pay and compensation,
whether in the United States Army, the navy, or the European armed forces,
were products of genteel expectations, not real material impoverishment. All
these men traded institutional security for material opportunity when they
entered the officer corps, and ultimately few of them resigned to seek prosperity in private enterprise. Men who wanted to be businessmen or landholders sought to do so in private life; military officers could hardly expect to secure material prosperity without enduring the insecurity attendant upon involvement in the market economy.\textsuperscript{11}

Service in the navy also promised mobility, excitement, and adventure. In psychological terms, these attractions added up to experience and identity. All of these benefits would have been especially inviting to the one in three midshipmen who had lost their fathers before their appointments, and it is not unreasonable to speculate that the navy provided these youths with a strong male authority structure lacking in their civilian lives. Indeed, many families and relatives urged their sons' appointments on just these grounds, claiming that they needed the discipline unavailable in homes without male patriarchs and unenforceable in ones that practiced genteel methods of child-rearing. (The navy's social function as a discipline for the "wild youth" of the early republic does not appear to have been commonly sought by the parents of candidates for army commissions after 1820, because these were not normally received until aspirant graduated from West Point at about twenty-one years of age. These men and their parents sometimes viewed West Point as a force that would give them "direction" in life, but this seems to have been primarily a vocational motive—to gain a useful education, if not a career—rather than an effort to curb irresponsible or insubordinate behaviours. On the other hand, some of the unrest at the Military Academy can be attributed to similar influences in American society as a whole.) This paradoxical motivational mix of discipline, security, and a search for personal authenticity naturally leads us to ask how these youthful aspirants reconciled their romantic urges and their attention to personal
'independence,' reputation, and honor with the practical realities of naval hierarchy and subordination. In the pre-1815 navy the solution occurred through shipboard socialization, which appears to have been fairly effective given the cultural dilemmas it had to surmount.12

McKee's account indicates that most aspiring officers came to share similar values, though these were certainly not much unlike those embodied in more civilian ideals of gentility which officers brought with them from home. Indeed, on the whole naval culture attempted to coopt the social values of the gentry elite rather than constrain them through bureaucracy, a tendency which is not surprising given the social origins of most officers and the civilian secretaries who supervised them. One of the most important of these military and gentry values was courage, a functional military virtue that directed the romantic individualism of the gentry value system into the service of collective organizational goals and "national honor." Bravery served individual, organizational, and national ambition; it produced fame and reputation for all three levels of society. As in any military organization, however, the navy's priorities were expressed in obligations to the group--obedience and attention to one's duty as it was defined by superior officers. Other values constraining excessive and dysfunctional individualism included the ideal of resolution (or determination) and the acceptance of individual discretion (as long as it demonstrated consistency)--all of which were aspects of responsibility and accountability in the form of patience, a capacity to follow standard procedures without disruptive deviation from the norms of the institutional culture. These values and norms were familiar to the gentry because of their more general need to maintain self-control--and thereby social and political leadership--rather than admitting vulnerability and losing control over their supposed subordinates.13
On the other hand, an officer's sense of obligation and subordination could not be allowed to become so oppressive as to be stultifying—individual initiative had to be preserved because close central control was both technologically impossible and functionally undesirable given the wide range of possible mutations in a specific combat situation, especially on ships operating alone thousands of miles from home. The positive or proactive side of the officer corps' value system was therefore an appreciation of zeal, energy, ambition, and independence. Naval service was a 'sacred trust' that required 'officers of independent principles'—men who would take responsibility for those initiatives they deemed necessary. The balance of responsibility was embodied in the ideal of the gentleman, a man who directed or commanded work. The words of Jefferson's secretary of the navy express this fundamentally patriarchal model: "The honorable and manly feelings of a gentleman are essentials in the character of an officer of the navy of the United States." Manhood meant giving commands; honor and manhood both meant taking responsibility for them; doing so was one of the core components of both officer and gentry status.¹⁴

The organizational emblem of responsibility and successful performance was rank, attained by promotion through the institutional hierarchy. Because the pay differentials between grades were not large, McKee aptly observes that the "search for the psychic rewards of rank became the primary incentive to accomplishment." As in other military forces of the era, most American naval officers supported the seniority system out of fear that favoritism would dominate promotion under any procedure. On the other hand, navy secretary Robert Smith normally decided promotions on his own subjective evaluation of merit and experience (including seniority, but also combat performance and especially difficult assignments or those undertaken
independent of close supervision). In 1802 he attempted to institute the use of merit-based criteria by ordering formal commissioning exams that would qualify midshipmen for promotion to lieutenant. During the Tripolitanian War of 1803-1805 he initially intended seniority to be assigned to acting lieutenants on the basis of merit, as tested by these exams, but most of the men in question seem to have taken advantage of an easy-going commodore to avoid sitting for the exams, and by the time the war was over Smith had been forced by operational needs and fear of disruptive disputes between officers to grant them their commissions purely on the basis of their prior seniority as midshipmen.\textsuperscript{15}

Naval officers (and the navy as an institution) missed the professional socialization provided to their army counterparts by the Military Academy at West Point, but since the mean age at entry was seventeen they gained a four or five year head start in the race for promotion, which was comparatively quite rapid in the navy of 1800-1815. Indeed, the average age of promotion to lieutenant was twenty-two, and that for captain--two grades above, the equivalent of an army colonel, and the navy's highest permanent rank until the Civil War--only thirty-two, roughly the age at which Jacksonian-era army officers were promoted to captain, which was only the military equivalent of a naval lieutenant. (Master commandant was something of an intermediate rank, as officers stayed there an average of only three years before promotion to captain.) Indeed, army officers had to wait another decade or two--until they were in their forties or fifties--before they could expect to reach field-grade rank and the equivalent command responsibility. On the other hand, McKee observes that "the army was a popular alternative career with many [junior] officers who resigned from the navy" in hopes of even more rapid promotion in that larger service, presumably during the army force
expansions of 1808 and 1812. The desire to move directly to commissioned 
rank also played an important role in these decisions, but it ceased to do so 
once graduation from the Military Academy—meaning a four year 
apprenticeship like that passed by midshipmen—became a de facto 
prerequisite for army commissions after 1821, and during the 1820s West 
Point cadets frustrated with the academy’s discipline often spoke of resigning 
to seek midshipmen’s warrants.16

The navy secretaries sought and usually found at least five years of 
experience in midshipmen to be promoted to lieutenant, though age itself 
does not appear to have been a criterion. The navy’s geographic 
decentralization imposed significant restraints on the operation of the 
seniority system, for in normal circumstances, the ship’s captain’s 
recommendation was taken as decisive, and few men were promoted when 
their commanders objected. (Indeed, to do so would have been 
counterproductive given the close working relations necessary on shipboard.) Several navy secretaries tried to employ this tendency in order to rationalize 
the process by seeking officer efficiency reports from every commander after 
each cruise, but the success of this effort remained dependent on the 
voluntary cooperation of individual captains, whose evaluations were based 
on their often idiosyncratic personal judgments rather than uniform 
standards of measurement instituted from above. While more formal 
reports were made in 1801 and 1809 as a basis for the force reductions in those 
years, an 1813 proposal to institute yearly officer efficiency reports went 
nowhere in the face of commanders’ reluctance to take measures 
circumscribing their own discretionary authority, and personal patronage 
remained a common, and often decisive, feature of naval personnel policies 
throughout the early republican era.17
The ultimate reference point for promotion was combat performance. This was the paradigm of merit, stimulated during the wars with France and Tripoli by the example of senior commodores Thomas Truxton and Edward Preble while several other senior commanders were dismissed for indecision in the face of the enemy during this period. (Truxton was an exemplar of the officer corps' prickly sense of honor: he threatened to resign when another captain was given precedence over him on the 1799 seniority list, and for three months no American frigate was available for service in the Caribbean because of the dispute.) "Honor" meant duels with friend and foe alike, and the heroic example of men like Stephen Decatur—the most renowned of "Preble's boys," who as a postwar commodore was the most senior naval officer to die in a duel—lay at the very foundation of the naval officer corps' romantic self-image. Indeed, so strong was the naval tradition of seeking battle that in 1814 Secretary William Jones had to formally order his bellicose captains to avoid battle with enemy ships of equal or larger size, explaining that merit would henceforth be judged principally in terms of damage done to the enemy economy through seizures of merchant vessels. This temporary operational criterion notwithstanding, officers who distinguished themselves in combat with enemy vessels could reliably look forward to promotion over the heads of senior men in their grade. Indeed, if a victorious commander already held the rank of captain his first lieutenant (an office rather than a rank per se, usually held by the most senior lieutenant) was normally promoted in recognition of the ship's success.

Elevation for combat success notwithstanding, the attention to seniority entailed by the need to minimize favoritism in the interests of cohesion remained the fundamental consideration involved in naval promotions. Only once was an officer promoted two ranks for a single
combat, and that decision occasioned so much controversy that the Senate (which was and is considered the final arbiter of all military promotions under the authority of Article One, Section Eight and Article Two, Section Two of the Constitution) formally cautioned the secretary of the navy against doing so again. Indeed, the political nature of their appointments notwithstanding, naval officers rarely appealed to congressional patrons for assistance in securing promotions before 1815 (a practice that flourished after the war, however). The most significant dispute over promotion policies and the seniority system prior to that date came in 1813 when the Secretary Jones reverted to a system of near-pure merit promotion, bypassing numerous officers and throwing the seniority system into disarray when he arbitrarily rearranged his nominees' seniority status to suit his judgments of their merit. These adjustments aroused a storm of criticism and opposition in the Senate, effectively cementing the authority of the seniority rule for the next forty years.18

On the whole naval socialization seems to have been successful before 1815, but it failed afterwards, and formal naval training and education was never solidly established before the Civil War. This was not for want of trying: McKee suggests that "one could hardly overestimate the importance that the corps attached to its educational effort during the pre-1815 years," and education became perhaps the only facet of naval life more organized after the war than before. Whether this effort amounted to a "conscious and sustained educational program" is another question. The historian can easily recite a litany of temporary (and somewhat more enduring) schools founded in the navy from this period through 1845, but it was not until the latter date that these were consolidated into a naval academy at all akin to the military
one at West Point. (Proposals to effect this object from the secretary of the
navy were rebuffed in Congress in 1814, 1827, and the late 1830s.) It might
certainly be said that the navy's combat performance before 1815 (and its
success as a violent agent of American commercial expansion thereafter) is
evidence of its expertise, but performance is not necessarily the product of
expertise in the doctrinal or institutional sense. Indeed, the naval officer
corps' success in combat seems to have been more the product of on-the-job
training and observing and emulating successful superiors than of any formal
"system." How could it have been otherwise, when (to quote McKee), "a clear
theme in all of the navy's writing about its educational program [was] that
this program merely cultivated attributes and aptitudes that were innate"? This
very quality suggests that these abilities required little elaboration.19

The technical and cultural limitations of the concept of military
expertise were particularly evident in this training process, for tactics and
combat success in the age of sail were largely matters of quality ships and
crews led by inspiring officers with long years of sailing experience and
intangible personal qualities like determination and aggressiveness. Judging
the wind and motivating men were the early nineteenth-century American
naval commander's primary duties, skills occupationally and conceptually
akin to the character and coup d'oeill European armies sought in their
officers. Naval officers were directors of technology to a degree unknown in
the army, yet American ships rarely sailed in squadrons that would
maneuver as units, and American naval combat partook much more of the
character of a duel than of the organized movements of units, which limited
the necessity for a standard doctrine to coordinate their moves in battle.
(Naval officers had more to think about than most army ones regarding
gunnery, but this was still basically a question of calculating trajectories.)
Indeed, even the most senior American naval commanders seem to have thought little about naval strategy, which really amounted to little more than the general principle of a guerre de course (commerce raiding) with occasional amphibious or combined (land-sea) operations against Barbary or Canadian harbors and in the Caribbean and Gulf Mexico after the War of 1812. Indeed, aside from the campaigns on the Great Lakes during the war, American naval warfare was almost exclusively tactical and operational in aim, impact, and execution—the efforts of individual units (usually of single ships) conducting campaigns independent of central control or direction. When the war of 1812 began, the navy's only strategic "plan" was based on Secretary Hamilton's queries to the two senior commodores a month before the declaration of war, and personal honor and reputation rather than strategic rationality or the calculation of American national interests and objectives dictated their answers: each responded primarily according to the likelihood that he would be in a position to gain glorious victories against the British. The plan, to sail from New York in two separate squadrons and cross paths several hundred miles to the southeast in order to balance commerce raiding and the need for mutual support in case of a running engagement with superior British squadrons, quickly evaporated as one commodore gave chase to a British convoy. In the meantime, other captains left port as soon as possible, not only to escape British blockade but to avoid orders from Hamilton that they feared might constrain them to remain in or close to the ports rather than sallying out for combat and glory. In national strategic terms, the navy failed to protect American shipping and the coast during the War of 1812, but this was certainly unavoidable due to its numerical weakness versus the Royal Navy. The navy was successful with what it had, and this was due in large part to inspired leadership, but for ineluctable
political and economic reasons (the Republican demand for fiscal economy, founded on ideological objections to standing forces capable of involving the United States in overseas conflicts) it had little to be successful with.20

Motivated by their agonistic valuation of combat between major surface vessels, American naval officers showed little interest in Jefferson's gunboat navy. They believed that experience gained on these small coastal vessels was the wrong sort for ship-to-ship combat, and that with only a single (or at most two) midshipman per gunboat these junior officers would not be effectively socialized in naval customs or learn the habits of command (or in more general terms, social) distance and subordination appropriate to an officer. This was probably quite true given the extremely close quarters aboard those vessels, and officers aboard them probably socialized much more than usual with ordinary sailors, eroding the class boundaries that most officers felt were essential to maintaining discipline and subordination among their crews. The officer corps also seems to have been disdained blockade duty before the war despite the opportunity to earn prize money by seizing ships in violation of Jefferson's embargo, because doing so meant chasing civilian vessels, often small craft and often in gunboats, duty that could enmesh an officer in lawsuits and was not considered useful preparation for the international naval combat that the naval establishment saw as its primary mission. As in the case of the army officer corps, service on the Gulf Coast combined the worst of all these dilemmas, in addition to humidity and a poor disease climate. Officers serving there were distant from the centers of power and promotion in Washington, and their careers suffered in consequence, confirming the hierarchy of desirable duties and posts officers created through their own values.21
These self-interested (though in some sense quite realistic) blinders aside, most naval officers (like their army counterparts) agreed that experience was the best teacher, and McKee believes that the naval officer corps "possessed a powerful ethos of ongoing self-improvement." Between a quarter and a fifth of American naval officers received unpaid furloughs between 1800 and 1812 to serve aboard merchant vessels, although this may have been seen primarily a means of increasing one's income. (McKee suggests that this sort of service allowed officers to learn seamanship from veteran working sailors they could not associate with in the class and rank-conscious navy, but few of these officers served as common sailors in the merchant marine, and it seems unlikely that they dropped their quasi-aristocratic code of hierarchy and social distance when they took off their navy uniforms.) Inside the navy itself, experience meant the attention of captains like Edward Preble and Thomas Truxton, who saw themselves as teachers and mentors to the midshipmen under their command, men who would instruct their juniors in naval customs over dinner and permit them the time to study grammar and mathematics under the chaplains. Not all captains assumed this role, however, and chaplains were hardly equipped to teach naval history or tactics. Midshipmen were both novitiates and serving officers, and on short-handed vessels the latter was usually the role more highly stressed. Under the circumstances, the most important training captains could give was by personal example.22

These practices illustrate the errors of envisioning military training and organization as a matter simply of classroom instruction. Indeed, McKee observes that this "was a role that the pre-1815 navy had trouble performing as well as it desired. [Naval education] also proved to be an educational effort with a limited mission"—almost entirely aimed at teaching navigation, and
thus highly mathematical in focus. Indeed, the great weaknesses of American naval education were its technicism and its lack of coordination and uniformity, for there never was any central authority charged with standardizing what midshipmen were taught. Indeed, the weight of opinion in the officer corps was actually against the foundation of a centralized naval academy. This was a fault both of the navy and its civilian superiors, who never clearly delineated the navy's strategic purpose or operational doctrine, and both omissions were reflections of the personalism and generalism that permeated life, thought, and society in the navy, the government, and early national American society as a whole.

The Marine Rules and Regulations of 1798 were the outstanding exception to the navy's lack of a formal cognitive base for operational standardization. These prescribed the operational obligations of a ship's captain, his constant responsibility to prepare for combat, and the officer's ultimate mission as (in McKee's words) "the defender of the [American] mercantile republic." Unfortunately, these admonitions did not descend to a discussion of the specifics of naval tactics or strategic principles and objectives, and the broad operational guidelines were actually deleted from the revised regulations issued in 1802. The revisions of 1818 and 1833 did not restore them, and it was not until Abel Upshur's term as secretary of the navy in the early 1840s that anyone even attempted to set the navy's total strength according to comparisons with those of its probable enemies. (Even then, historian Kenneth Hagan observes that "Upshur's strategy was thoroughly conservative and traditional" in all other respects.)

The navy's attempts to provide formal education for midshipmen were far from negligible, and they demonstrate an institutional accountability to the nation that was less often evident in the actions of individual naval
officers. Each major ship was supposed to be provided with a chaplain, whose role was as much that of instructor as of minister. (Indeed, only three of fifty-eight identifiable chaplains were actually ordained clergymen.) Unfortunately, the chaplains' median tenure was only a single year, in part because over a quarter soon moved on to other naval ranks, and after 1815 these men were gradually replaced by similar officials whose role was exclusively teaching. Several commanders initiated practical exercises—roughly the naval equivalents of camps of instruction—in the form of cruises by small vessels officered entirely (save for the instructors) by midshipmen, but this practice was never institutionalized. The navy also undertook a series of efforts aimed at supplementing shipboard education with facilities on shore: a midshipmen's school in Washington from 1803 to 1812, another at Sackett's Harbor on Lake Ontario in the winter of 1814-15 that eventually included lieutenants, and a more pervasive post-war system that included schools for midshipmen in New York, Boston, Norfolk, and Philadelphia. These schools had no fixed term or curriculum because the students had to go with their vessels when the latter departed on cruises, but by 1838 the Philadelphia school had become the sole center for higher instruction, and it eventually provided the nucleus for the academy at Annapolis.24

Navigation was not the sole focus of American naval education. In 1814 Secretary William Jones recommended a central naval academy which would have taught gunnery. In 1818 midshipmen were required to show a knowledge of gunnery in order to pass the newly reinstituted commissioning exams, and in 1841 a knowledge of steam engines was added to this prerequisite. In 1843 candidates were required to know how to station a crew for battle and communicate by signal with other vessels, and Herman Melville suggested that a teacher on the frigate United States tried to instruct
the midshipmen in fleet tactics that year. This, like most tactical instruction, was an ad hoc effort, however. The only enduring institutional attempt to teach gunnery was at the Philadelphia school, although the subject was discussed at the Boston one as well, along with naval history and tactics.25

The on-shore system was created in response to the rebirth of commissioning exams for promotion to lieutenant in 1818. Candidates had to be eighteen, with two years experience at sea, in order to take the exam, and seven years of total service appear to have been regarded as a necessary qualification. In 1827 the last of these prerequisites was formalized but reduced to five years, of which three were to have been at sea; the minimum age was raised to twenty, suggesting that the main change being sought was in the candidates' maturity. That expectation was reinforced in the same year by a new rule that if a candidate failed the exam twice he would be dismissed. (He would in any event have to wait a year between exams, while losing that much seniority to his more successful brethren.) Beginning in 1831 new midshipmen were required to demonstrate the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic before receiving their warrants, and the following year shipboard instructors were ordered to test their midshipmens' progress each week, although no specific means were provided to measure or compel adherence and this may have been rarely done in practice. The reading and writing stipulation was dropped in 1833, but all midshipmen were enjoined to report to one of the four post schools after their first cruise and furlough. (The full requirement was restored in 1843, along with examinations to test its success.) In 1841 the connection between experience, expertise, and promotion was made more explicit than ever before: passed midshipmen who had not been to sea for two years nor promoted to the rank of lieutenant within three were obliged to undergo the examination a second time. If they
failed they would lose the seniority accrued from the date of their first examination and would be forced to take the exam yet again, and if they failed this third test they would be dismissed from the service. In 1846 an order by the secretary of the navy suggested that passed midshipmen "who may be found not suited to be advanced [to the post of sailing master], may be placed on furlough or dropped from the list," but in the absence of the sort of work done by McKee the actual implementation and effects of these reforms cannot be assessed. Nevertheless, these measures show that the naval hierarchy (at the initiative of the civilian secretaries) made a responsible effort to ensure basic standards of qualification and capability among junior officers.26

Other efforts to regulate the naval appointments system were slow to develop, and some may in fact have been counterproductive. The probationary character of midshipmen's warrants was given a more explicit foundation in 1820, and from 1833 onward a favorable report from a midshipman's commanding officer was required at the end of his first year in order for the junior officer to keep his warrant. In 1843 this regulation was expanded to include the testimony of the ship's first lieutenant, but in neither case does this provision appear to have become more than a pro forma rule. Indeed, the only exceptions came in cases of personal dispute, when the regulation became a captain's tool of abuse. The most notable reform measure in the pre-Civil War navy was a temporary Naval Efficiency Board created in 1855 to reduce the excess backlog of officers and speed up promotion (which would in turn enhance morale and cohesion) by selecting officers for dismissal based on old age or other factors that made them unfit for active service, but its recommendations aroused a firestorm of criticism and many of the men it picked out were reinstated after they won the right to challenge the board's conclusions.27
Such measures became necessary because of an extraordinary breakdown in naval officer discipline (and by extension responsibility) that began soon after the end of the War of 1812 and continued with little abatement until the Civil War. McKee observes that the naval officer corps emerged "from the War of 1812 with a sense of heightened reputation, status, and permanence," but its experience over the next four decades demonstrates that pride, prestige, and permanence—a sense of professional identity—do not necessarily lead to organizational cohesion or personal accountability and professional responsibility. The growing arrogance and conservatism of aging senior commanders frequently ran head-on into the impatience and insolence of the "wild youth" who seem to have been allowed into the navy (or were no longer socialized effectively by its informal mechanisms) in newly disproportionate numbers after 1815, and as in the army there was no retirement system to remove these men from their institutional fiefdoms. The primary stimulus to reform throughout this era came from the secretaries of the navy and some zealous (and of course ambitious) junior officers, not their more experienced seniors, whose energies were consumed by a wave of feuding and jealous attempts to preserve and expand each captain's personal prerogatives to the utmost limits. Following the example of their seniors, many midshipmen acted as insubordinately toward their superiors as the latter did toward the Navy Department, leading to ongoing (though usually low-intensity) crises of internal discipline and cohesion and organizational accountability to civilian control, which worsened as the limited rank hierarchy (still three permanent commissioned grades), became clogged by middle-aged veterans of the War of 1812 generation.28
Only the aggressiveness of the civilian secretaries and the (slowly) growing anger of Congress made reforms in the selection of naval personnel possible. The secretaries were driven by the daily frustration of dealing with dozens of rival naval barons, against whom they had little recourse given the vagueness of naval regulations and the congressional patronage many captains enjoyed. Longer range considerations also played a role in the quest for reform. One scholar has written that the introduction of steam engines "was the chief agency responsible for the changing education" demanded of naval officers. On the other hand, as late as 1839 navy secretary James K. Paulding called steamships 'sea monsters,' an aesthetic judgment echoed by many captains who saw steam as a sort of moral pollution embodying both disorder and the displacement of man--ultimately of their responsibility and masculinity, the foundations of both their command and their self-image and identity--by machines. Strategically, the nation's commercial expansion overseas seemed to demand a larger, better equipped, more efficient navy, but the primary impetus for reform (as ineffective as it was) came from a widespread sense among the informed and politically active public that the navy did not function as a cohesive organization, whatever the renown of many individuals within it.29

The most fundamental reason for the officer corps' postwar disarray, and the one least subject to remedy, was the utter lack of opportunity for advancement within it. The corps had doubled in size between 1807 and 1812, and it doubled again by the end of the war. The majority of these men then returned to civilian life, but the most successful ones--the captains and masters commandant--had little incentive to do so, and stayed on to clog the upper reaches of the attenuated promotion ladder (three permanent commissioned ranks) for the next forty years. McKee notes that that before
1815 the navy "was not, for the vast majority of those who enrolled therein, a lifetime vocation," but--like army officers after 1821--their tendency to resign later in life seems to have disappeared after the war, suggesting that the desire for security was an increasingly powerful motive as social deference declined and the economy became ever more competitive. The postwar officer corps fluctuated in size, but the majority of the slots added were for midshipmen appointed for purposes of political patronage, men who would soon become dissatisfied with their limited prospects for promotion. The creation of new captaincies proceeded from similar motives, and without new vessels for them to command the practice simply exacerbated the problem of a top-heavy force whose leaders often had little to do.30

As in the army, the basic source of this problem was the inability to force aged, incapacitated, or otherwise inactive officers out of the service without resorting to court-martials, a politically dangerous expedient that could hardly serve as the basis for a general personnel policy. Like the army, the navy had no provisions for pensions, while promotion became a matter of strict seniority after the 1813 Senate controversy over the arbitrary effects of merit selection. In 1842, Secretary Upshur proposed creating a deeper rank structure to allow for more promotion, but the congressional dynamic in favor of retrenchment always squelched plans that would have created so many expensive new "offices" in the armed forces, while proposals by the secretary of the navy to abolish seniority promotion and institute competitive examinations were rebuffed by Congress in 1846 and 1853. The result was a senior officer corps that increasingly lacked active employment or the physical capacity for it, for by 1854 forty out of the navy's sixty-seven captains (the equivalent of army colonels, or regimental commanders, of whom there were then fifteen, or about twenty including the staff, in an officer corps larger
than the navy's) were on half-pay leave of absence. Indeed, some had not been to sea in thirty years, but they continued to consume much of the funds authorized for naval officer pay, which precluded the creation of new slots in the higher grades with which to reward promising younger men. More generally, the surplus of officers meant that on average about three out of every ten naval officers were on leave or awaiting orders (which usually meant waiting for their new ship to return from a two to three year cruise overseas)—figures far worse than those in the army at any point during this period. James Valle notes that under these circumstances the operation of the seniority rule ultimately meant that "the cycle of stagnation alternating with periods of intense movement became instead unrelieved stagnation," and future admiral David Dixon Porter spent twenty years as a lieutenant before being promoted all the way to vice-admiral in the space of four years during the Civil War.  

Ultimately these constraints meant that the navy had no real career structure to stimulate professional activism among its officers, and in a significant reversal of past trends, patronage politics, which McKee sees so little of in the Jeffersonian navy, became much more prominent in the navy than in the army after the War of 1812. The postwar navy secretaries lost the tight personal control over midshipmen's appointments that had enabled their predecessors to choose the applicants who appeared most likely to become responsible officers, for as in appointments to West Point, midshipmen's nominations made after the War of 1812 were usually apportioned according to each state's representation in Congress, which mandated that system in 1845 as it had done for West Point several years before. Exceptions to the various training and educational requirements were commonly made for aspirants with sufficient political pull, and (as in the
army, but apparently more frequently) some officers were reappointed after being court-martialed and dismissed from the service. Indeed, this was publicly recognized as inevitable in 1831, when the Navy Department issued the otherwise redundant order that the reappointment of officers previously dismissed should not injure the rank or seniority of those already in the service. (This provision was similar to one promulgated by the War Department concerning men dismissed from West Point to whom it gave commissions.) More apparent in the eyes of the civilian public, the number of incoming midshipmen sometimes varied wildly as new administrations exercised the latitude Congress permitted them in appointing naval officers. The unpopular Tyler administration's appointment of almost two hundred midshipmen in a single year finally spurred Congress to restrict this flexibility, and an 1842 law prohibited the issuance of new midshipman warrants until attrition reduced their number to that existing on January 1, 1841. On the other hand, patronage appointments do not seem to have led to naval activism in partisan politics.32

Both abuses and the efforts to end them were frequently tied to questions of pay and compensation, but (as in the army) these were clearly less significant than issues of rank and promotion. The navy absorbed one-fifth of all federal expenditures in 1836 and 1837, and as in all organizations salaries were one of the largest components of this expense. (Indeed, by 1842 the navy accounted for one-third of the federal budget.) From 1801 onwards officers were allowed half pay when not on duty, and they normally received a furlough at the end of each long cruise--both often of a year or more in duration. Although the navy never faced a sudden resignation crisis like the army's in 1836, these provisions were often abused by officers who drew half pay for extended periods while serving on merchant vessels, and from 1818
on resignations submitted when a half-pay officer was summoned to active duty were considered a court-martial offense, which essentially meant no more than putting a black mark on the individual's record.

Other portions of officers' compensation improved or were curtailed according to budgetary circumstances and political pressures for greater economy and accountability. In 1833 Congress cut the travel allowance per mile by a third, and the new regulations issued that year generally tightened procedures and administration in the interest of accountability and regularity. On the other hand, "passed midshipmen" were granted a extra increment of pay in 1827, and salaries were nearly doubled across the board in 1835, after thirty-seven years of stasis and erosion by inflation. Officers' compensation also came to reflect their practical duties and responsibilities more accurately, with new distinctions between sea and shore service, and from 1835 to 1844 officers received the pay of the grade they actually functioned at (i.e., acting masters commandant received that pay rather than a lieutenant's). The retrenchment of the latter year caused something of a setback to the officer corps' sense of remuneration, as Congress limited the salary granted to a passed midshipman to a maximum of 180 officers in 1845. (On the other hand, an 1842 proposal to reduce naval officers' salaries by twenty percent across the board was narrowly defeated in Congress, as was similar legislation aimed at the army.)

To a greater degree than in the army, limited opportunities for promotion and combat led to a pervasive sense of malaise. This distemper was exacerbated by the close quarters of naval life and expressed through constant personal feuding. Many senior officers were highly autocratic in their treatment of subordinates, yet they remained virtually immune to sanction, while junior officers often resorted to challenges or duels to resolve
disputes among themselves. Naval officers showed even less hesitation than
their army counterparts in appealing to congressional patrons for satisfaction,
and these feuds were carried into the wider public arena in exchanges
published in national newspapers and journals. The formal system of naval
justice was so easily circumvented that no one found it a satisfactory outlet
for their grievances, and the favoritism exercised by many courts-martial
boards merely intensified this factionalism, so poisonous in a small corps
where almost everyone was known to his comrades by rumor and reputation
if not personal acquaintance.

As in the army, the promotion bottleneck made junior and senior
officers' basic interests antagonistic, so—unlike their army counterparts, who
like Henry Turner only wrote nasty letters about their superiors to one
another—junior naval officers organized themselves into secret cliques and
published anonymous exposes of their seniors' behaviour in national
periodicals, while (as seemed fairly often the case in the army) their superiors
stubbornly refused to act against one another when forced to convene in
courts-martial proceedings. In fact, an 1832 attempt to reform the regulations
that permitted these abuses was effectively suborned by the senior captains on
the Board of Naval Commissioners, who produced a program so favorable to
their own prerogatives vis-a-vis their subordinates that the Navy Department
never adopted it. Meanwhile, the dilemmas posed by the anomalous post of
sailing master recurred and multiplied in a new wave of grievance and
disenchantment among staff officers like the engineers and the surgeons and
chaplains. The former demanded a status equal to their importance as the
operators of the navy's new steamships, while the latter secured a particularly
civilian form of fame by leading public campaigns against flogging and the
rum ration. Personal quarrels easily became public controversies as officers of
every description wrote to the newspapers to publicize their sides of disputes. 34

Whatever cohesion some junior officers demonstrated against their commanders disappeared among themselves. Thirty-three officers died in over a hundred duels between 1798 and 1843, almost as many members of the corps as were killed in combat during this era. These affairs were primarily held between junior officers, and no captains or masters commandant were slain in them prior to 1815, but (as in the army before about 1820) senior officers tacitly accepted the practice, and the administrative sanctions they imposed were comparatively mild, even when their subordinates fought with foreign officers and civilians, who were usually considered beyond the bounds of challenge by army officers. Indeed, James Valle has observed that "the only real restraint on dueling in force in the Old Navy was the old British custom which prohibited duels between officers of different ranks because some might resort to it to speed up promotions." The practice did decline over time (though much more slowly than in the army), but it was not explicitly forbidden in the naval regulations until 1857. 35

Christopher McKee has titled his chapter on the dysfunctional behaviour of the navy's midshipmen "Wild Youth," and James Valle observes that the "'young gentlemen' were, as a group, one of the most troublesome and turbulent elements in the navy," a damning judgment given Valle's extensive indictment against its captains. The shipboard conditions that led to disruptive behaviour among enlisted sailors had the same effect on novice officers, who though not yet hardened or inured to vice were too young to exercise much self-restraint. They were also boys and men of the elite, unused to being disciplined by external authorities, and they were shielded by regulations that forbade their seniors to administer the corporal
punishments officers so casually meted out to ordinary sailors. McKee comments that the behaviour of these youths "barred them from a useful role in the navy or anywhere else in American society," and the navy had little success as a reformatory: "With no legal recourse available . . . except confinement or suspension from duty [essentially vacation time for unruly adolescents, of course], the navy was obliged to undertake many courts-martial for offenses that would otherwise have been dealt with through corporal punishment."\textsuperscript{36}

Given the growing use of written exams for commissioning after 1815, senior officers had few sanctions available to them except symbolic slaps on the wrist or the extreme measure of dismissal from the service. The secretary of the navy had the right to dismiss officers without formal judicial proceedings from 1799 onwards, but this practice fell into disuse after the War of 1812 when its previous effectiveness was compromised by officers' increasing resort to public channels of communication in protest of the punishments given them. Formal courts-martial then became both absolutely and proportionately much more common, and in some respects a more effective means of enforcing responsibility in that senior officers became more willing to cashier subordinates (who were usually accused of questioning a commander's authority in some way). On the other hand, naval courts also became a tool of abuse to employ against personal enemies and junior officers whose disruptive behaviour was motivated by dissatisfaction with the naval hierarchy's reactionary inertia rather than insubordinate temperaments per se. Resignations to avoid dismissal were also common, and together the two categories amounted to about a quarter of all the departures from service (including deaths) up to 1815, a rate substantially higher than in the army. Indeed, the contrast becomes a very
sharp one given the growing litigiousness of the postwar naval officer corps and the significant decline in army dismissal and resignation rates, indicating yet again the failure to sustain effective naval socialization just as West Point was providing that normative training and stability to the army.

In Valle's words, the entire naval system of administration and justice was "capricious," "erratic," and "riddled with political influence [and] favoritism." Official conduct was overregulated in trivial matters, while larger questions were left to the discretion of individual commanders and went unsupervised to systematic institutional scrutiny. Two conclusions are inescapable: that this "system" was not a true system at all, and that socialization in the naval officer corps was ineffective if not dysfunctional--the lack of normative standardization had the same damaging effects on cohesion, responsibility, and accountability as the lack of uniform training and education had for the development of expertise. Valle observes that the "vital principle" of naval life was ultimately personalistic rather than organizational or bureaucratic, leading to excessive autonomy and routine breaches of accountability of every sort imaginable. The dominant motif of naval life and the naval mind was hierarchy for hierarchy's sake, rather than order, stability, harmony and cooperation, or responsibility, and roles and relations of dominance and submission replaced principles of accountability (or mutual obligation) as the customary basis for official interaction.

The lack of functional (and thus social) responsibility represented by this sort of arbitrary disorder and indiscipline extended to officers' treatment of the sailors under their command, which was even more violent than in the army. Indeed, Valle maintains that flogging was "the navy's punishment of first resort," and by observing their superiors junior officers learned how to administer vicious punishments in gradual doses, so as to avoid the limits set
by the regulations. This artful technique became especially valuable as exposes of naval discipline stimulated civilian outrage and calls for reform, enabling the naval officer corps to continue to avoid being held accountable to the values of the society it served. Valle has attributed the navy's harsh discipline to the combination of dense spatial arrangements--the close quarters of a ship--with an egalitarian-minded recruiting base of sailors, but naval discipline was clearly far out of touch with the more democratic norms of American society. Indeed, the navy was more draconian in its discipline than many European armed forces of the day, and its officers claimed that this severity was a necessity given the libertarian air their sailors breathed while civilians.39

Britain's tacit acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine effectively shielded the United States from the designs of any other European nation during the nineteenth century. Though combat with European powers was seemingly at the heart of the naval officer corps' professional identity and was often spoken of in language that suggested that it was indeed their primary mission, the navy ultimately had little real prospect of engaging in these supposedly glamorous encounters during the century after 1815. As a result, this mission orientation was insufficient to sustain a deeply rooted sense of occupational cohesion, whether by holding out the chance of rapid wartime promotion or by stimulating professional preparation and cognitive standardization through the development of doctrine. Like the army in its constabulary missions, the navy's real work lay in gunboat diplomacy and the pursuit of pirates and slave traders, and performing these tasks meant that the permanent squadrons formally created after the War of 1812 rarely sailed, maneuvered, or fought as units. The potentially disruptive impact of this
dispersal was recognized in 1839 (the year of the Maine boundary crisis), when the secretary of the navy ordered the overseas squadrons to sail together whenever possible, and the creation of the Home Squadron in 1841 provided an organizational foundation for larger scale training and the cohesion and expertise that it would produce, because ships stationed there had no routine operational responsibilities, and were thus freed for practice together as a naval equivalent of a camp of instruction. Nevertheless, the vast majority of American vessels continued to operate in small groups at best, even in significant foreign policy ventures like Matthew Perry's expeditions to Japan.

More problematically, the work of empire and the sense of boundlessness that accompanied and stimulated it in the eras of Manifest Destiny and Young America encouraged the navy officer corps' disruptive personalism and its tendency to neglect the systematic study of operations. Like the army, the definition of the navy's mission was left to the demands of its operations in the field, because the call for its services came largely from sudden crises, and doctrine doubtlessly seemed unnecessary and even constraining when ad hoc operations so often met with spectacular success. Even apparently groundbreaking reports like those from Secretary Upshur in 1841 and Lieutenant Matthew F. Maury in 1850 were essentially general promotional efforts in favor of more modern ships to perform the navy's evolving commercial mission rather than discussions of likely wartime strategy and operations. Indeed, historian John Schroeder asserts that "the only senior officer who viewed the potential role of the navy in terms which presaged those of Alfred Mahan's generation was Matthew C. Perry." On the other hand, the navy's quasi-constabulary raids and expeditions provided valuable practice for the future because of the experience they provided in coastal operations in shallow waters, which (though never encoded in
doctrine) served as a training ground for many of the officers of the amphibious "brown water navy" that dominated the rivers and coasts of the South during the Civil War. (Personal observation of British and French operations against Chinese coastal fortifications in the 1840s and 50s had a similar value.)

Chasing criminals was hardly a task naval officers considered truly honorable or worthy of their talents, and one can easily infer the exclusionary dynamics of gentility in their distaste for anti-slavery patrols. American military officers' genteel conception of themselves always made them unhappy with doing the nation's "dirty work" in domestic or domestically oriented law enforcement, for their professional self-image was founded on combat with external "civilized" enemies, men of a similar class and culture, not engagements with ethnic and racial outcasts or those disorderly and materialistic whites whom officers saw as the refuse of American society. Military men saw war with their European counterparts as the romantic apotheosis of their social character and professional role, while conflict with local whites and Indians seemed simply (though perhaps indispensably) a matter of maintaining social order and the sovereignty of the central government which employed the army and navy, principles essential to the existence of these organizations and the officers who directed them.

On the other hand, supporting the incursions of American commerce and culture overseas gave the navy a mission it would otherwise have lacked under Britain's benign naval supremacy, and one which the army officer corps lacked in its day-to-day routine and expectations, even along the nation's borderlands. Though periodically called to account by their civilian superiors for excessive chauvinistic ardor, the navy and its officers served the nation's perceived interests in commercial expansion well between the War
of 1812 and the Civil War, and in the process the navy's mission orientation changed subtly (and largely without formal debate within Congress, the executive branch, or the navy itself) from commerce raiding and coastal defense against major European powers to commerce protection, which often meant coastal attack (albeit on a small scale) when less developed countries or indigenous peoples resisted the introduction of Western goods and culture.41

This mission was an essentially civil one, however, and a fascinating set of paradoxes and ambiguities emerge when we compare the roles of the army and navy officer corps in American expansionism. The navy came to serve particular civilian interests--those involved in overseas trade and missionary work--rather than those of the nation as a whole, because unlike the army, which at least retained an ideal of defensive warfare against the aggressions of European powers, the navy (which had no institutions for articulating or passing on such an ideal) was for all practical purposes an agent of American overseas expansion, which in the short term served only the interests of a small elite. In other words, the naval officer corps tacitly accepted the patronage of civilian special interests in order to gain public support in a way that the army officer corps (with its distaste for frontier settlers and traders) did not. The absorption of essentially civilian social and cultural values like those of boundlessness and Manifest Destiny inevitably accompanied this link, which meant that even though naval officers usually served at a greater distance from American population centers they embodied the expansionist values and the mentalité of boundlessness in mid-nineteenth century America better than their army counterparts.

Military men were well aware of the social opprobrium and lack of prestige attached to the "dirty work" of law enforcement operations, which so often embroiled them in civil-military conflicts with local political
authorities. Their responses were complex and often apparently 
contradictory, however, depending largely on who was being coerced or 
protected. Moral yet paternalistically ethnocentric qualms seem to have 
influenced many army officers charged with Indian removal and (as we have 
seen when examining the Second Seminole War) they tried to avoid the 
disturbing racial questions of maroonage as far as possible, while racism 
doubtlessly colored naval officers' aversion to enforcing the laws against the 
transatlantic slave trade, yet both did their tasks dutifully enough.
Nevertheless, most naval policing had psychological benefits for navy officers 
that their army counterparts did not enjoy, and (based on the lack of evidence 
to the contrary in secondary sources) naval officers seem to have exercised 
their racial and ethnocultural prejudices with less unease than army officers.

I would suggest that this distinction between the army and navy officer 
corps—one which was repeated in their responses to American expansionism 
in general—was a product of different situations and different relationships 
with civilian groups rather than more general cultural differences per se. 
Naval officers did not dwell among the civilians they were charged with 
protecting, and leading landing and boarding parties seemed quite conducive 
to romantic displays of courage and virility, unlike chasing Indians into 
humid swamps or forcibly convoying their families hundreds of miles in the 
dead of winter. In contrast, army officers routinely had to enforce the laws 
concerning Indian relations against American civilians (who appeared 
excessively materialistic to them), and many of them felt qualms when called 
upon to force the Seminole Indians out of Florida in the interests of white 
settlers they disdained, so they often came into conflict with citizens and their 
political representatives, an experience which then exacerbated the 
sociocultural antipathies of both sides. Regardless of their legality or justice,
army officers' law enforcement actions against frontiersmen and filibusters added to their general social reputation as antirepublican martinetts, while these experiences taught the officers to see the highly individualistic frontiersmen as anarchic lawbreakers.

Naval officers, on the other hand, dealt with few American civilians save those who depended on them for protection overseas. Both civil and military groups were clearly engaged in the same mission, the pursuit of American commercial expansion, and there appears to have been much less social tension between them, whether because of the need for national solidarity far from home or because they shared similar social and occupational (maritime) backgrounds. Naval officers were tasked with supporting American civilians abroad rather than constraining them, and this affinity gave officers strong reason to support expansionism as a socially and occupationally attractive mission that linked identity and action. Their inner aggressiveness was spurred by the indistinct boundaries of operations on distant stations, where civilian oversight was even more limited than on the nation's land frontiers, and a number of naval captains acted with reckless abandon in upholding American national honor against what they saw as slights from new Latin American republics and indigenous peoples around the world. Indeed, naval officers were often much more ardent proponents of Manifest Destiny than their army counterparts, the more so as they interpreted their routine contacts with non-Anglo-Saxon peoples to exacerbate the derogatory stereotypes they already held, a racialized pattern of response that did not flower in the army officer corps until it actually entered Mexico.

Which corps' sense of mission was more responsive to American civil society is obviously impossible to determine conclusively, but--even though
geographically isolated from civilian contact—the naval officers were probably more in tune with the values and practical interests of their society—more substantively responsible (however much we might regret it given their role in American expansion and ultimately imperialism) though less formally accountable to civilian political authority in their operations. This operational autonomy aside, naval departures from control by the government did not indicate alienation or a desire to escape civilian social control in general, and it is difficult to judge how democratic either corps ultimately was in its sense of professional responsibility. The army's more punctual attention to civilian government regulation, combined with conservative, hierarchical values antagonistic to those of much of the populace, implies a close mental identification with the formal political institutions of the nation-state, often in opposition to the actions, interests, and values of the citizens populating the frontiers, while the navy's role in facilitating American commercial expansionism demonstrates an affiliation with the economic elites who led that expansion.

In a final set of contradictions that have more general significance for American history, naval imperialism helped to make the ideological fears of the antinavalists and antifederalists a reality, because the navy was more in tune with the popular antebellum spirit of expansionism and boundlessness, which gradually led the United States to active involvements (and the state power necessary to sustain them against indigenous opposition) overseas, a globalism unsought by many Jacksonian agrarians (and the anti-imperialists at the end of the century) who were willing to accept continental expansionism in the belief that the thinly populated lands of the West could be occupied without the need for a massive state infrastructure that would corrupt American republicanism and democracy. Indeed, the example of
naval action in pursuit of American interests overseas suggests the limited validity of the almost stateless vision of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian expansionists where expansion beyond the confines of contiguous territories is considered. Ironically, however, the army officer corps, which was substantially less imperialist in motivation than its naval counterpart, added far more land to the territorial dominion of the United States, because it was compelled to serve the interests of the majority of the populace which sought or accepted contiguous expansion, and its interests in employment by the nation-state led it to do so faithfully despite its disenchantment with the duties of expansionism during the era between 1821 and 1846.42

Despite the sad portrait of dissension painted earlier, there were some signs of reprofessionalization in the naval officer corps during the later years of this era. Professional renewal began slowly, but it accelerated in all dimensions of naval life during the 1840s and 50s. Indeed, the interests of American economic expansion propelled much of this change, as a few young officers like Maury and Perry began to join secretaries of the navy like Upshur in advocating a leading role for the navy in advancing American expansion, particularly along the Pacific Rim. These junior reformers also provided most of the limited impetus for advances in naval expertise outside of the various commissioning exams and shore schools: Perry founded a "naval lyceum" in 1833, was an active contributor to the short-lived Naval Magazine later in the decade, and commanded the expedition that opened Japan to American commerce in 1853. (I have not examined naval officers' contributions to the Military and Naval Magazine or the Army and Navy Chronicle, but they tended to be much more technical or anecdotal than those of army officers, and of course there was no conflict like the Seminole war to
stimulate a more constant discourse among naval officers.) Perry also proposed that the United States establish a protectorate over Formosa and acquire the Bonin and Ryukyu chains (which include Okinawa and Iwo Jima) southeast of the Japanese Home Islands. Like Maury (who suggested that the United States colonize the Amazon), Perry connected an emergent ideology of navalism with an espousal of expansionism and a belief in the political, ethnic, and cultural biases that underlay it several decades before this became common dogma in the naval officer corps studied by Peter Karsten. On the other hand, neither Maury nor Captain Robert Stockton (another reform leader and later commander of the squadron that helped seize California during the Mexican War) would risk the insecurity of retirement in order to lead reform efforts as the secretary of the navy.43

In the institutional realm, naval administration changed significantly in 1842 with the abolition of the Board of Naval Commissioners, a body of three senior captains that had functioned as both auxiliary and rival to the Navy Department since the board was established in 1816. Neither the board's functions nor its place in the chain of command had ever been precisely specified, leading to constant confusion and conflict with the department. In some ways the board may be viewed as an expression of naval officers' desire for professional autonomy in and through the use of their expertise, but this led to jurisdictional conflicts with the civilian branches of government over accountability for policy formation. (In 1816 an anonymous author, presumably a naval officer, wrote in a national newspaper that the Navy Department should be replaced in its entirety by boards of officers, due to their superior knowledge of ships and the sea, an obviously irresponsible measure in both political and constitutional terms.) Civilian control remained dominant in naval policy and administration
(though in personnel questions this control was undermined by officers' appeals to influential friends and congressmen), but under the leadership of its increasingly conservative senior officer, Commodore John Rodgers, the board was able to frustrate a number of reform efforts. The board was especially antagonistic to steam powered warships, because their adoption would force captains trained by custom and tradition as intuitive generalists and agonistic leaders to fight their vessels under the technical control of younger specialists who could run the complex engines. Technology would replace character, and men who worked with their hands would usurp some of the authority of the gentry-officers.  

The board of commissioners was replaced by a system of five bureaus responsible for pay, food, clothing, and other supply functions, much like—and probably patterned after—the army’s staff system. In historian Geoffrey Smith’s opinion, this change "heralded the modern era of specialization in naval management" by placing logistics and supply under the control of distinct organizations with specific tasks. As in the army, none of these units were explicitly tasked with strategic advisory roles or the development of mission statements, expertise, or doctrine, and operational postings and command assignments always remained under the direct control of the secretary of the navy. In 1846 the bureau chiefs provided detailed reports on the navy’s deficiencies and its possible strategic options in case of war with Britain, but this was an isolated instance more akin to the informal personal ties between reformist navy secretaries and officers like Maury and Perry than to a systematic institutionalization of professional advice on policy. The lines of administrative accountability were clarified, however, because the institutional opacity of collective decision-making by the board was replaced by the bureau chiefs’ direct individual responsibility to the secretary of the
navy. The bureau system therefore provided the institutional basis and example for the gradual transition from personalistic to bureaucratic principles of authority in civil-naval relations and the operations of the naval hierarchy.45

Much as in the case of the army officer corps and West Point, the ultimate foundations of American naval professionalism lay in the operation of the Naval Academy at Annapolis after 1845. The school was officially designated as such in 1850, when its two year course was extended to four years with the inclusion of classes in French, Spanish, grammar, composition, and philosophy, humanistic disciplines useful for gentleman-diplomats in an age of American expansion overseas. Like its army counterpart before the mid-1820s, the Naval Academy took more than twenty years to attain maturity, but midshipmen there were gradually subjected to a rigorous discipline that quelled many of their previously unrestrained impulses, and it eventually provided a similar environment that encouraged aspiring officers to internalize professional norms of responsible service and internal cohesion. Indeed, the academy became the institutional basis of the naval lobby, the place where mission was articulated, tradition learned, and professional esprit and worldview developed.46

Historian James Valle provides an acute summation of the weaknesses of naval professionalism during the first six decades of the nineteenth century. "A healthy sense of professionalism and a . . . spirit of subordination to the Navy Department were . . . conspicuously lacking in the Old Navy. . . . [T]he War of 1812 had yielded a crop of overwhelmingly proud and egotistical young commodores pathologically preoccupied with personal 'honor' and incapable of sacrificing private considerations for the good of the service." Most American naval "officers were overwhelmingly preoccupied with the
fine points of . . . propriety," and they "left the question of basic principles and major reforms to the civilians." "Left to themselves . . . they tended to engage in hair-slitting over questions of honor." Valle concludes that the U.S. Navy "was among the most backward and poorly organized" of all contemporary naval services. The naval officer corps before the Civil War differed greatly from that in the closing decades of the century. The later force was highly cohesive, with a growing institutional base for the articulation and inculcation of mission, doctrine, and expertise and a strong sense of loyalty to the navy as both profession and institution. Valle suggests that antebellum officers endured "out of a grim and uncompromising sense of duty and patriotism," but it seems equally if not more accurate to say that they did so simply because the navy was their occupation, secure but not very professional.47

Many of the problems of officer cohesion and discipline were minimized or resolved in the army officer corps through the presence of a centralized institution for professional socialization, the military academy at West Point. The academy put very little emphasis on military studies, but the army officer's formative experience there fostered a sense of occupational commitment and devotion to duty that had no similar foundation in the navy. The naval officer corps did have a strong sense of professional identity based on the occupational culture of shipboard life and duty and the legacy of military glory left by success in the War of 1812, but we have already seen that this identity--which may have been more exclusionary (as the navy was more isolated) than the army officer corps'--did little to promote cohesion and responsibility in peacetime--indeed, if anything the combative professional identity of naval officers fostered dissension rather than cohesion, competition rather than cooperation. While the army had its share of
internal conflict and disorder, it at least inculcated habits of self-discipline and responsibility to bureaucratic hierarchy and an ideal of obligation and accountability for officers to model their conduct on.

With neither doctrine nor an exclusive occupational socialization to sustain its professional identity, the naval officer corps had difficulty articulating a distinctive professional mission and ideology to justify its claims to prestige and authority, and unrewarded by public esteem the naval officer frequently lost the sense of responsibility to civilian society that is essential to military professionalism. Naval officers understood the concepts of honor and country, but their sense of duty was fraught with irresponsible individualism and self-interest. The Federalist and Jeffersonian navy was able to attain at least semi-professional status because of apolitical civilian direction and the frequency with which it was called upon to perform its fundamental mission in combat, but when these conditions ceased to operate the navy's only unchallenged claim to its jurisdiction became the purely material one that it was the sole entity statutorily authorized by nation-state to carry out military functions at sea, and the only one with the organizational resources, based on taxation by the nation-state, necessary to do so.
Chapter XVI

1 As elsewhere in this dissertation, my primary emphasis in this chapter is on the internal dimensions of professionalism among officers themselves, not the external arena of policy and policy-making per se. By policy I mean questions of force strength and composition (the "establishment" in the lexicon of that era), deployment, and the geostategic debate between advocates of a guerre de course (commerce raiding by fast frigates and sloops, usually in tandem with coastal defense via fortifications and small craft) and those of the guerre de main (command of the sea through decisive encounters between battle fleets composed of large, powerful vessels, the strategic conception usually associated with Alfred Thayer Mahan). Unfortunately, books that discuss these aspects of naval policy rarely say anything about appointments policies or the social texture of the officer's experience, and vice-versa. A thorough bibliography of secondary sources on naval policy and operations is available in Kenneth J. Hagan, This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power (New York: The Free Press, 1991), pp. 391-99. For a general survey, see Robert G. Albion, Makers of Naval Policy, 1798-1947, ed. Rowena Reed (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1980), and for documentation see the American State Papers, Class VI, Naval Affairs, 4 vols., (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861) (covering 1794-1836) and The New American State Papers: Naval Affairs (hereafter cited as NASP:NA), 10 vols., ed. K. Jack Bauer (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1981) (which covers the entire period), especially vols. 1 ("General Naval Policy and Defense"), 6 ("Administration"), 7 ("Personnel"), and 8 ("Social History and Science," which includes documents relating to naval education). There is also a vast array of biographies--far more so than is the case for the army--which I have been unable to consult given time constraints.

2 See McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, chs. 1 and 19; Stephen E. Powers, "The Decline of American Naval Power, 1781-1787" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1965); and Marshall Smelser, Congress Founds the Navy, 1787-1798 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959). William M. Fowler, Jack Tars and Commodores: The American Navy, 1783-1815 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984) provides a narrative survey of operations and policy in this early period. The Continental Congress authorized 1697 privateers with over 55,000 crewmen and 15,000 cannon during the Revolutionary War, while Massachusetts and Rhode Island authorized another thousand vessels. The Continental Navy never exceeded eighty ships of all sizes, and none were ships of the line (the
contemporary equivalents of today's battleships). See Hagan, This People's Navy, pp. 16-17.

3 McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, pp. 7-12. See Wiebe, The Opening of American Society, chs. 2 and 3, for a discussion of the intense personalism of the gentry mind. James C. Bradford, ed., Command Under Sail: Makers of the American Naval Tradition, 1775-1850 (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1985) provides a set of bibliographic essays on principal figures in the early navy, and in "Edward Preble and the 'Boys': The Officer Corps of 1812 Revisited" (pp. 71-96 therein), McKee employs some of his prosopographical research and cautions against assigning too great a role to specific individuals, because common experiences and socialization produced an essentially homogeneous officer corps during this era.

4 The best example of British influence on an American officer lies in Lieutenant Thomas MacDonough's study of Nelson's leadership and tactics (especially at the Battle of the Nile in 1798), on which he based his own victorious deployment and tactics at the Battle of Lake Champlain in 1814. See Hagan, This People's Navy, p. 88.

5 Naval lieutenants were the equivalent of army captains--commanders of tactical subunits who could be entrusted with small independent commands--while naval captains the rough equivalent of army colonels, the commanders of regiments of up to a thousand men, often in command of entire geographic departments. (The commander of a ship was always known as its captain, but often held a lower legal rank. Commodore was a temporary rank given to senior captains in command of a squadron of several vessels assigned to a particular geographic area.) During the war with Tripoli Secretary Robert Smith retained about twice the number of lieutenants permitted by statute in order to provide experienced subordinate officers, but Congress accepted this policy and soon reset the statutory limits for that rank accordingly, and by 1805 there were 225 officers on the command ladder in the U.S. Navy, spread among a grand total of only four ranks: 142 midshipmen, seventy-three lieutenants, eight masters commandant, and ten captains. See McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, chs. 2-3 and pp. 414-17.

6 George Bancroft, circular, August 14, 1846, NASP:NA 7: 121; Henry L. Burr, Education in the Early Navy (E.D., Temple University, 1939), p. 85. McKee devotes ch. 26 of A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession to the dilemma of the sailing masters: "Mortification's Berth." Their numbers were initially increased to man the Jeffersonian gunboat flotillas, because too few experienced midshipmen were available and because placing these youths in
command of individual gunboats would have isolated them from one
another and diluted their education and socialization. A quarter of the
dismissals in the navy before 1815 were of sailing masters; McKee attributes
this to the relatively lower quality of these men, who were often merchant
marine personnel with personal problems that made them less successful and
more likely to try the navy (p. 433). These men were also older, and more
likely to have acquired bad habits (be they defined as alcoholism, brutality, or
fraternization with the sailors) that would unfit them for naval command.

7 McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, chs. 4 (quotation cited on
p. 46), 5 (statistics on pp. 59-63), and 19; Circular, Benjamin W. Crowninshield
to his captains, December 19, 1816, in NASP:NA 3: 120-21; and Burr,
Education in the Early Navy, pp. 174-75. Many of the navy's leading captains
were New Englanders, however.

American naval crews remained multinational, multiethnic, and
multiracial throughout the nineteenth century. Between five and twenty
percent of these men were black, and the majority of sailors were foreign-born
until at least 1888. See McKee, p. 219; James E. Valle, Rocks and Shoals: Order
and Discipline in the Old Navy, 1800-1861 (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute
Age of Annapolis and the Emergence of Modern American Navalism (New
to have declined after the War of 1812 in time with the general decline of
Revolutionary idealism toward racial issues. The army's enlisted men came
from similarly diverse backgrounds, with the exception that identifiably black
men were prohibited from serving as soldiers before the Civil War,
doubtlessly because of their greater visibility ashore.

8 McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, chs. 5 and 10. See also
250-66); Skelton, "Officers and Politicians"; and idem., An American
Profession of Arms, chs. 15 and 17. McKee does not provide as clear a picture
of the drawdown after the Quasi-War as he does elsewhere, and surely
"weeding out" had at least a quasi-partisan dimension, if only that of
Federalists leaving government service in disgust. Indeed, McKee's portrait
of Captain Alexander Murray (pp. 182-83) provides an example of political
damage to an otherwise excellent officer's career. While there is no secondary
work as statistically thorough as McKee's for the navy after 1815, its
contentiousness and officers' frequent recourse to congressional patrons in
their disputes makes it unlikely that this nonpartisan spirit was maintained
in the initial selection process.
McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, chs. 5-9 (statistics at pp. 68-70, 75-88, 96-98, and 101-102). McKee's sample base is the 855 midshipmen appointed in 1800, 1804-1805, 1809, 1812, and 1814, although the samples of those for whom parental information is known are either 323 (38%) for whom only Revolutionary service or whether they were alive or dead is known, or 262 (30%) for those of whom more is known. (See p. 74.) Although McKee is careful to caution about the "highly imprecise" nature of these statistics, his sample sizes are definitely quite valid ones, and I am willing to use them to make more general statements than he sometimes seems willing to do. The six largest American "cities" and their environs provided thirty-nine percent of the midshipmen from a base of only five percent of the total populace, and Philadelphia alone supplied one-third of these men (p. 65). Very few naval officers came from agricultural backgrounds, and those few were usually the sons of large-scale commercial producers like southern planters (p. 80). Only six of the 855 seem to have attained bachelor's degrees before entering the corps, but this was not remarkable in the society of that period, when few attended degree-granting institutions and far fewer graduated (p. 92). Eighty percent of the new midshipmen were between fifteen and twenty-three; one-third were past the age of eighteen (pp. 70-71). Somewhat surprisingly, less than one in eight had brothers in the navy (p. 87).

McKee's samples overlap somewhat, and he observes that the large percentages of midshipmen with government fathers and prior maritime experience are somewhat deceiving because he found it easier to track these men, who left records because it was in their interest to make these backgrounds clear to the secretaries. For example thirty-three out of 155 midshipmen whose prior work experiences are known were "promoted" to that rank from posts as clerks, master's mates (a semi-enlisted status perhaps most equivalent to petty officer today), or enlisted sailors within the navy, clearly an unrepresentative proportion given the probability that this number represents most if not all such men in the sample. (See p. 101-103.) The total number of midshipmen in question was 855, indicating a fairly low percentage of internal recruits.

Ibid., pp. 46-47. See also Bushman, The Refinement of America, pp. 182-86 ("Social Class") and 193-97 ("Resolutions"). Royster, A Revolutionary People at War, pp. 88-94 and 207-210, provides a similar picture of the values and motives of Continental Army officers.

McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, ch. 11 and pp. 81-83 ("A Marginal Middle Class"); Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism, p. 289. Perhaps a better term would be "liminal," because of its psychological
meaning, but that would pose a danger of exaggerating the insecurity and
even pathology found among a substantial number of individual officers into
a corps-wide judgment. As historians so often emphasize, the first half of the
nineteenth century was an anxious time for Americans undergoing the
stresses of a market culture and society for the first time, but as my fellow
graduate student Thomas LeBien once said, "Everybody's always anxious in
American history." Wiebe, The Opening of American Society, and Wood,
The Radicalism of the American Revolution, are rare and powerful
exceptions to this historiographical chorus.

12 Oscar and Mary F. Handlin, The American College and American Culture:
Socialization as a Function of Higher Education (New York: McGraw-Hill,
1970), pp. 25-37, portray early national and antebellum colleges as a
disciplinary mechanism. See Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament:
Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America
(New York: Knopf, 1977) for a discussion of the practices and goals of genteel
child-rearing.

13 McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, ch. 16 ("Setting the
Norm"). Placing oneself at the fore of society risks rejection as well as the
sought-after approbation, and the gentry were forced to maintain masks of
indifference to public opinion clothed in the image of disinterested principle
('independence') and republican virtue in order to disguise their own
dependence on public recognition, while those without such pretensions had
no need to wear such masks. My interpretation of the gentry mentalité
mixes those found in Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution,
and Wiebe, The Opening of American Society. The potential for popular
influence through the gentry's need for recognition seems as important to me
as the class's strenuous efforts to avoid any demonstration of this
vulnerability. In other words, gentry power was built on popular deference as
much as on concrete property-ownership and patronage structures. The
gentry code of honor and reputation was inherently outer-directed, but its
ethos of self-control and the restraint of passion set important precedents for
the more inwardly-directed Victorian middle class ethic. It strikes me that the
process and consequences of the transition between the two has been
underinvestigated. "Character" was a key word for both cultural systems--
historians need to ask how its meaning changed. See also Adair, "Fame and
the Founding Fathers," in Colbourn, ed., Fame and the Founding Fathers.

14 McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, ch. 16 (Secretary Robert
Smith quoted on p. 169). See Captain Thomas Truxtun's letter to
Midshipman Thomas Robinson, Jr., at pp. 166-67, for a thorough disquisition that encapsulates the most important values of the naval officer corps.


16 See e.g. cadet James Engle to his mother Mrs. Janet Engle, March 4, 1821, Engle Papers, USMA, and cadet Robert Wirt, as discussed in Jabour, "Hearts Divided."


18 Ibid., chs. 24 and 25; Langley, *Social Reform in the United States Navy*, pp. 8 and 15; and Linda Maloney, "What Role for Sea Power?" in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed., *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984* (2nd ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 55. Preble has long been given the primary credit for developing a cadre of successful combat commanders through personal example and the experience of serving under him during the Tripolitanian campaign in 1803. McKee agrees that Preble's example was one that officers recurred to as a model for aggressive combat command, but cautions that more than eighty percent of the officers under him had already been in the navy for at least of three years and went on to careers with other inspiring leaders afterwards. (See McKee, "Edward Preble and the 'Boys,'" in Bradford, ed., *Command Under Sail*, pp. 71-96.) My guess would be that officers cited Preble as an example because he died in 1807, so praise for him did not risk offending powerful superiors as that for their living rivals might.

Senior officers dismissed for a lack of aggressiveness included Commodore Richard Morris (who was felt too inactive while in command of the squadron sent against the Barbary corsairs in 1802-3), Captain Samuel Barron (who was actually suspended without pay for five years and went to Europe for about ten after he failed to prepare *Chesapeake* for battle with the British *Leopard* and had to surrender his vessel to the Briton in June 1807), and Isaac Phillips, commanding the sloop *Baltimore* when it was boarded without resistance by crewmen of HMS *Carnatic* and several Americans impressed into British service in November 1798.


47 and 54; and McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, pp. 468-72 ('Captain Hull Goes Shopping and Decides to Take A Risk'). Isaac Hull of the Constitution provides the best example of this rather undisciplined (though admirable) aggressiveness; claiming (with some cause, though probably prematurely) to fear being bottled up in port by superior British forces, he left Boston ahead of Secretary Hamilton's orders and defeated HMS Guerriere several weeks later in the first American victory of the war. McKee views Hull's action as the apotheosis of the model of the officer of independent principles and initiative that the secretaries had encouraged, but one could also view it as an irresponsible risk of strategically valuable property and citizens' lives, as critics would have done had Hull been defeated.

Fortunately for the navy, the contingency of victory depended in large part on the superiority of American crews, vessels, and captains. Hull's victory was the most famous in American naval history before the Spanish-American War, and with others in the War of 1812 it laid the foundation for a tradition of aggressive combat leadership and secured the navy's status as a permanent arm of the national government.

1985) takes the need for active naval support of American commerce as a
given, in essence a "big navy" position.

"Anti-navalist" interpretations, which have gained a great deal of
strength in the academic world during the last two decades in time with the
rise of the republican paradigm, suspicion of the modern military, and the
end of the Cold War, include Maloney, "What Role for Sea Power?," in
Hagan, ed., In Peace and War: Coles, The War of 1812; Craig L. Symonds,
Navalists and Antinavalists: The Naval Policy Debate in the United States,
1788-1827 (Newark, N.J.: University of Delaware Press, 1980); and Hagan, This
People's Navy. For all the glory of the Constitution, the non-oceanic battles
of Lakes Erie and Champlain were the most important American naval
victories of the era (just as the tactical defeat on Champlain had been during
the Revolution, because of the costly delay that preparing for it had imposed
upon British offensives in 1776 and 1777), because (in rare Mahanian fashion)
they established American naval superiority in the decisive theaters of the
war and thus prevented the British from conducting large scale amphibious
operations and resupply along their shores. This confined British offensives
to the narrow Niagara or the heavily wooded St. Lawrence river frontiers
between the lakes, where the U.S. Army was able to fight them to a standstill
after the initial disasters of 1812. See Dennis Carter-Edwards, "The Battle of
Lake Erie and Its Consequences: Denouement of the British Right Division
and Abandonment of the Western District to American Troops, 1813-1815," in
War on the Great Lakes: Essays Commemorating the 175th Anniversary of
the Battle of Lake Erie, eds. William Jeffrey Walsh and David Curtis Skaggs
(Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1991), pp. 41-55. Indeed, Maloney,
"What Role for Sea Power?," p. 57, suggests that American success in the war
as a whole was dependent upon naval control over the Lakes, because it
prevented British support for their Indian allies in the Old Northwest, the
cornerstone of Britain's containment policy against the United States. On the
other hand, she blames Commodore Isaac Chauncey for nearly losing the war
by his failure to seize the opportunity to attack the British fleet on Lake
Ontario before the United States lost the naval arms race there, as appeared
imminent in early 1815 (p. 60). In either case, these nearly landlocked theaters
of operations were far less accessible to the application of Britain's maritime
resource base than the open seas, and the strategies and outcomes in them
cannot be extrapolated to apply to operations in the Atlantic.

The U.S. Navy won many glamorous victories in individual ship-to-
ship duels during the War of 1812, but their contribution to winning the war
was questionable, and American trade suffered far more than it benefitted
from the destruction of some of its British competition. (Congress authorized
526 privateers, notably fewer than in the Revolutionary War, of which about
two hundred successfully penetrated the British blockade in 1814.) See Coles,
The War of 1812, pp. 88-90, and Sprout and Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, pp. 79-80, for evaluations of the devastation wreaked on American merchant shipping. One's evaluation of the performance of the American navy during the War of 1812 will depend largely on whether one is examining ends or means. The navy was unsuccessful as an instrument of American policy on the high seas, but it may have won the West at Lake Erie. Both outcomes suggest the desirability of a Mahanian ship-of-the-line navy able to challenge Britain, but this was clearly an economic impossibility, particularly given the destruction of the naval balance of power at Trafalgar and the British willingness to attack and destroy neutral navies in their home ports, as at Copenhagen in 1801 and 1807. It is unlikely that half a dozen ships of the line (as authorized by the Federalists in 1798 but not completed) would have achieved substantially more than the navy of 1812 did. Mahanian sea control is usually the most militarily desirable naval policy, but not always an economically realizable or a socially desirable one, as Craig Symonds points out in thorough detail. Nevertheless, the assumptions of American autonomy and power that lie behind the navalist perspective are encoded in J.C.A. Stagg's judgment in Mr. Madison's War: "The Republicans, in truth, did not have a naval policy; they had several policies which so tempered their avowed disapproval of navies that it became impossible for the administration to follow a wholly consistent course of action" (p. 134). G. Terry Sharrer, on the other hand, believes that "without question, the struggle between Britain and France largely determined the American plan of action at sea," essentially to the exclusion of alternatives like the navalist one ("The Search for a Naval Policy, 1783-1812," in Hagan, ed., In Peace and in War, p. 44).

21 See McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, pp. 156 and 306. For the most recent analyses of the gunboat navy, which are substantially more favorable than those given by previous historians, see Spencer Tucker, The Jeffersonian Gunboat Navy (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 1993, and Gene A. Smith, "For the Purposes of Defense": The Politics of the Jeffersonian Gunboat Program (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995). Maloney, "What Role for Sea Power?", pp. 56-57, observes that the gunboats succeeded in deterring or defeating British attack where they were supported by shore batteries and fortifications in the way that had been intended.

22 McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, chs. 12, 15, 17, and 18 (statistic at p. 160, quotation from p. 195). The best example of this ethos was the school formed by the officers of the frigate Philadelphia while imprisoned in Tripoli in 1803. The subjects of instruction included gunnery and formation sailing (Burr, Education in the Early Navy, p. 147).
The naval regulations required midshipmen to keep a daily journal of shipboard activities and events, but this rule was not strictly enforced, and many midshipmen apparently did nothing more than copy the ship's log. On the other hand, this practice did provide them with some minimal training in recording and transmitting information. (See McKee, p. 132, and Burr, p. 140.) Books approved for inclusion in ships' libraries at public expense in 1832 included several histories, Vattel's *Law of Nations*, John Marshall's *Life of Washington*, the *Federalist*, and the *American State Papers*, but only one work on the operation of naval artillery. By 1841 these had been supplemented by a history of naval battles and an English translation of a French book on naval tactics. Individual officers' libraries were sometimes rather extensive: one included two books on gunnery and three on tactics, one apiece from the Royal Navy, as well as that navy's *Observations and Instructions* for officers (Burr, pp. 174-75).

23 McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, pp. 175-77 (second quotation from 175) and 194 (first quotation); Burr, *Education in the Early Navy*, p. 209; Valle, *Rocks and Shoals*, p. 12; Langley, *Social Reform in the United States Navy*, pp. 28-29; Hagan, *This People's Navy*, p. 116. Upshur sought a navy half as strong as Britain's, or indeed, whichever foreign nation's navy was strongest, a concept that presaged British and American planning later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and naval arms limitation treaties in the 1920s and 1930s.

24 McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, ch. 18 ("A School in Every Frigate") (statistics at pp. 195-96) and p. 157; Burr, *Education in the Early Navy*, pp. 142. Only one in three chaplains served more than two years in that post, and only six of fifty-eight served more than four.

25 See ibid., pp. 129-32, 145, and 152.

26 Ibid., pp. 121, 176, 182, and 185; Secretary George Bancroft, official circular, August 14, 1846, in NASP:NA 7: 121.


30 McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, p. 37 (statistics on corps size) and 429 (quotation). See ibid., ch. 34 and p. 70, regarding officers' tenures before 1815. One out of nine resignations prior to 1816 were due to dissatisfaction with a lack of promotion; three-tenths were to take up a new career (in three out of four cases a maritime one, probably as ship captains in most cases.)

31 Smith, "An Uncertain Passage," in Hagan, ed., In Peace and War, p. 87; Valle, Rocks and Shoals, pp. 66 (statistic on captains in 1854) and 13 (quotation); Burr, Education in the Early Navy, pp. 53 (statistic on leaves) and 184. Only twelve officers received pensions in the pre-1815 navy, all due to disability (McKee, p. 418).

32 Burr, Education in the Early Navy, pp. 42, 47, 54, 63, 182, 186, and 208. See Valle, Rocks and Shoals, regarding the politicization of naval administration and appointments. Valle points out that this was also evident in the creation of new captain and lieutenant slots by the Adams and Van Buren administrations (p. 13). Burr, Table 1 (p. 54), lists "Numbers, Deaths, Resignations, and Dismissals of Midshipmen" from 1814 to 1845. The number reached a peak in 1815 at 495, fell to an average of 404 from 1816 to 1818, and then fell to and remained at about 350 until 1827. By 1829 there were 435 midshipmen, but from 1831 to 1833 this number declined to an average of 360, and by 1836 the number had dropped to 251, where it generally remained until 1841. In the next year 199 new warrants were issued, bringing the number of midshipmen to 460. In 1843 the number fell to 410, in 1844 356, and in 1845 314. (These are aggregate figures, and they certainly conceal officers who never actually reported for duty or who resigned shortly after doing so.) It is notable that these figures would correspond with a wave of patronage appointments in the waning years of the Adams administration.
(and perhaps the initial ones of Jackson's first administration) and a pruning out during the Jackson administration under reformist secretaries of the navy. The alternative opportunities available during the economic boom of the early to mid-1830s may have drawn potential naval officers elsewhere, as was the case in the army, but the Panic of 1837 did not usher in a surge of applications, or at least the Van Buren administration refused to take advantage of them to appoint unusual numbers of additional midshipmen. The Tyler administration was widely accused of attempting to build up its own "personal" patronage fiefdom independent of the established party system (an accusation that illustrates the acceptance and importance given to the idea of party by 1841), and its naval policy of sectional appointments (disproportionately from the seaboard South) appeared to be a prime example. Several crises threatened war with Britain at the time, but the same had been true with regard to France during the mid-1830s, without a correspondent increase in appointments. There is no mention of partisan political activity (or even of proportional partisan allegiance) in any of the monographs on the naval officer corps that I have examined, although this may be more a matter of authorial focus than a reflection of nonpartisan reality. Contemporary army officers' allegiances that could be ascertained divided about equally between Whigs and Democrats; see Skelton, "Officers and Politicians" and An American Profession of Arms, ch. 15.

33 Burr, Education in the Early Navy, pp. 57-63 and 184; Schroeder, Shaping A Maritime Empire, pp. 36 and 64. See also McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, pt. 7.

34 Valle, Rocks and Shoals, pp. 24-27 and 62. Naval staff officers were given "equivalent rank" between 1846 (for surgeons) and 1859 (for engineers), but not actual lineal rank (and thus the capacity to command) until 1899. See Valle, pp. 56-59 and 258-63, regarding cases of "official oppression" of subordinate officers and the difficulties of successfully prosecuting court-martials against their commanders. See his introduction and ch. 9 for overview of the officer corps' lack of cohesion and the inefficacy of the naval system of justice.

35 Valle, Rocks and Shoals, pp. 88 (quotation)-89; McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, pp. 403-406; Burr, Education in the Early Navy, pp. 197-99. The incidence of deaths by duel did decline as time went on: eighteen of the deaths occurred between 1794 and 1815, fifteen between 1815 and 1843. Sailing masters were essentially immune to challenges because they were not considered gentlemen. In comparison, only forty-eight out of 2902 officers (two percent) were killed in action or died of wounds received during the
period 1794-1815 (McKee, p. 398). American naval indiscipline overseas became so egregious that at one point officers were ambushed by local civilians at Port Mahon in Minorca and the Spanish authorities closed the port to American naval vessels (Valle, p. 87).

The most famous naval duel was that between Commodores Decatur and Barron in 1820. Decatur had been on Barron's court-martial in 1807 after the *Chesapeake* affair. The duel was arranged through the artifices of a Barron supporter who hated Decatur for supporting Oliver Hazard Perry in a controversy over his conduct during the Battle of Lake Erie. Commodore William Bainbridge, one of the navy's most senior officers, appears to have knowingly allowed the affair to occur without attempting to intervene, if he did not actually connive at it. Decatur, the *beau ideal* of the American naval officer and one of the navy's most successful combat commanders, died of wounds suffered in the duel. Ironically, Decatur had instituted a system binding his officers to bring their grievances before him for adjudication before resorting to the duelling grounds. See Long, "The Navy Under the Board of Naval Commissioners, 1815-1842," in Hagan, ed., *In Peace and War*, p. 66.

36 McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, ch. 37 (quotation from p. 461), and Valle, *Rocks and Shoals*, pp. 90-91. (See also the particularly outrageous examples from the years 1799-1800 that Valle cites at pp. 256-57.) McKee observes that "many of the dismissed midshipmen sooner or later reentered the navy as seamen or petty officers" (p. 465), which can hardly have made their superiors' tasks any easier. (This tendency also illustrates the practical value of self-discipline and restraint for those who aspired to careers in naval leadership.)


39 Ibid., pp. 47-49, 79 (quotation), and 276-81. McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, pt. 5 ("Confided to Their Care"), presents a much gentler picture of naval discipline, but he agrees that the lash was often used and generally considered indispensable. I think that McKee's reliance on "positive evidence" and his reluctance to speculate on anything not supported by statistics causes him to underestimate the degree of brutality in naval discipline. As in so many other areas of military and naval life, the strength of civilian administration before the War of 1812 was probably the key to whatever success the navy had in minimizing it before then. The navy's sailors were volunteers, but they usually signed on for a single cruise
at a time, and turnover among them averaged about sixty percent per year (Valle, pp. 15 and 19). As in all the other military services (aside from the French army) discussed herein, it was virtually impossible for enlisted sailors to attain a commission during this era.

40 Sprout and Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, p. 145; Schroeder, Shaping A Maritime Empire, pp. 189-90; Hagan, This People's Navy, p. 110. "Commander" had replaced master commandant as the rank between lieutenant and captain, and Maury was placed on the list of officers to be dismissed because of his physical impairments.

Much like Edmund Gaines, Secretary Upshur's primary fear was that steam power, which allowed the building of shallow-draft vessels capable of both transoceanic movement and amphibious operations along shallow coastlines or up rivers, would give the British the means to strike at the South by encouraging and supporting slave insurrections. The Gulf Coast had previously been safe from the likelihood of incursions because there were so few deep water harbors there. Examples of significant pre-Civil War experience in "brown water" (coastal and riverine) operations include Commander Andrew Foote's bombardment of the Chinese "Barrier Forts" near Canton in 1856 and Lieutenant David Dixon Porter's service in the extensive inshore bombardment and landing operations along Mexico's eastern coastline in 1846-47. (Foote was actually second-in-command of the East India Squadron at the time; his commander discretely withdrew from the scene during the bombardment.) See K. Jack Bauer, Surfboats and Horse Marines: U.S. Naval Operations in the Mexican War, 1846-1848 (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1969). Lieutenant John Dahlgren studied the ship-to-shore duels at the Barrier Forts and in the Crimea during his design work on new shell guns at the end of the decade (Hagan, This People's Navy, p. 159). The Second Seminole War provided extensive riverine and swamp experience but without such distinguished practitioners; see George E. Bunker, Swamp Sailors: Riverine Warfare in the Everglades, 1835-1842 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1975) and Edmund P. Flannery, "Naval Operations During the Second Seminole War" (M.A. thesis, University of Florida, 1958).


41 See Schroeder, Shaping A Maritime Empire, especially pp. 53-55, for examples of the difficulty of restraining coercive naval operations in support of American maritime interests from Washington. Here one notes a lapse of formal institutional civil-military accountability which nevertheless sustained general American interests (so long as they did not cause a major conflict) and was probably approved by the great majority of the American people. While commonly sanctioned by executive authorization before or after the fact, landings on foreign shores also led to the recall and court-martial of a number of overzealous officers, usually in order to forestall tensions with Britain. One such officer was Captain David Porter (the father of David Dixon Porter, and commander of the Essex during the War of 1812), who led the West India Squadron in clearing the Caribbean of pirates between 1821 and 1823, often turning them over to the British for summary execution rather than remanding them to the United States for trial. In 1824 Porter went too far when he landed in Puerto Rico to punish the mistreatment of one of his officers. Though sentenced to a mere six months' suspension (with pay) by court-martial, the aggrieved Porter resigned. (See Hagan, This People's Navy, pp. 97-98.)


42 See Symonds, *Navalists and Antinavalists*, especially pp. 233-35, for a discussion of the social and political beliefs behind antinavalism. These were connected to both the Antifederalist and Old Republican traditions of the past and the anti-imperialist and isolationist ones of the future. Astolfi, *Foundations of Destiny*; Belohlavek, *Let the Eagle Soar*; and Hietala, *Manifest Design*, all suggest that the continentalism of the Jacksonians was merely a prelude to overseas expansion and globalism, however. Occupational self-interest and the hierarchical worldview fostered by their command role and class biases doubtless led naval officers to favor navalism and an activist foreign policy that emphasized American national "honor." See Wiebe, *The Opening of America*, chs. 2-4, for a brilliant discussion of the connections between the gentry mindset and early national foreign policy, especially in regard to their concepts of hierarchy and honor.

43 Smith, "An Uncertain Passage," in Hagan, ed., *In Peace and War*, pp. 86 and 92-96. The *Naval Magazine* lasted only two years (1836-1838). The *Military and Naval Magazine of the United States* (1833-1835) and the *Army and Navy Chronicle* (1835-1844, including a later version) both included
extensive stories about naval life (usually highly anecdotal, as in various
"Reminiscences of a Midshipman"), navigation science, and technology, but
virtually nothing specific on the navy's mission, training, or doctrine.

44 Sprout and Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, pp. 91-93 and 118;
Hagan, This People's Navy, p. 118. The board was occasionally called upon to
make reports in support of departmental recommendations to Congress, but
their rarity suggests that the board was not viewed, and did not view itself as,
a permanent strategic advisory body. Hagan suggests that the advent of steam
proved "psychologically dispiriting" for the old sailing captains.

Hagan, This People's Navy, p. 117; Smith, "An Uncertain Passage," in Hagan,
ed., In Peace and War, p. 84.

46 Ibid., p. 87. See Valle, Rocks and Shoals, pp. 91-93, for a brief discussion of
the academy's early disciplinary problems, which broadly mirrored those at
the Military Academy between 1816 and 1825. The most significant difference
was that there were no disputes over the command of the Naval Academy, as
there were between Alden Partridge and Sylvanus Thayer (who was backed by
the civilian command structure) in 1816-1817--most of the difficulties in the
Naval Academy and its predecessors were disputes between midshipmen
rather than between students and the faculty and administration as had been
the case at West Point, which suggests that some of the "wild youth" of the
navy had been tamed by the later Jacksonian period.

47 Ibid., pp. 14, 24, 28, and 274.
Chapter XV

The Civilian Professions in Early Republican America:
Organization, Retreat, and Consolidation

My study of the army officer corps would remain incomplete if not placed in the context provided by an examination of the civilian professions in the United States, the so-called "free professions" which lacked the organizational sponsorship and security of employment by the nation-state. This chapter explores the rise of the civilian professions in late colonial, early national, and nineteenth-century America and the often powerful opposition they faced from competitors and the lay populace. I will emphasize the ministry and the law because of their cultural and societal prestige and authority and the contrasting organizational dimensions of their responses to the challenge of the postrevolutionary transformation of American life. (Spatial constraints and the historical limits of contemporary medical professionalism will preclude extensive attention to the experiences of medical practitioners.) The ministry is of particular interest to us because it like the army became bureaucratized during the nineteenth century, while the legal profession actually appears as something of a middle ground between state employment and bureaucracy and the autonomy from political processes of private practice, since it was an individualistic and highly competitive occupation that still drew its work from the legal structure created by the nation-state and performed much of that work within the public institutions of the judicial system, while a significant proportion of lawyers pursued politics as avocation or second career.
Historians agree that aspiring professionals in colonial America sought to enhance their social status by emulating the ideal of the English gentleman, but these professions soon found that American society was too loosely and diffusely structured to give sufficient institutional support to this endeavour. The Revolution and the decline of Federalism then led to a decentralizing "revolution in choices" that forced aspiring elites to restructure the material and ideational bases of their claims to authority, a process not fully embarked upon until after the Civil War. American social decentralization fostered democratic ideologies and was in turn given popular legitimacy by them; both social structure and ideas discouraged interest in and often inspired antipathy toward the very ideas of professional knowledge and institutions and the authority that they implied. Historian Daniel Calhoun has observed that in this decentralized context the quality of performance has been the only universally accepted cultural justification for the existence and use of power. Doctrinal or diagnostic standardization thus became imperative if professionals were to achieve exclusive jurisdiction by convincing potential clients of their expertise. Standardization depended on cohesion, however, and lacking the enforced proximity and necessary cooperation produced by mutual employment by the nation-state, civilian professionals had even less of that than their military counterparts.¹

The development of the professions illuminates important problems of individual motivation and behaviour, for the gentility, status, and authority ascribed to those recognized as professionals naturally lured the ambitious, yet the very ambition that drove the responsible among them to strive for useful knowledge could easily become an obstacle to the development of a sense of accountability to their clients. Laypersons and professionals alike knew that knowledge is power, and the very
standardization of professional expertise necessary to exclude irresponsible quacks also threatened to foster a distant manner and a sense of superiority that appeared simultaneously insincere and unredeemed by the moral imperatives of altruism, men who appeared temperamentally unaccountable --if not actually so through their arrogation of authority and decision-making --to the society they claimed to serve. Under these circumstances professional "disinterest" could seem literal, not as selflessness and a lack of materialism--claims which commonly aroused suspicion among an individualistic populace that placed private property and the main chance among its preeminent values and looked askance at those professing others--but as a lack of personal interest in the client as a fellow human being.

The early national professional had to walk a fine line between appearing cool, calm, and collected--knowledgeable, authoritative, and commanding--and distant and aloof--authoritarian, aristocratic, or unrepugnant. Since command over diagnosis and treatment (be it in theology, medicine, or law) meant command over and intrusion into the intimate problems of an individual, the practitioner had to balance firmness with caring so as not to alienate the dependent client and produce a backlash, for asserting one's professional authority always carried with it the inherent danger of implying another's dependence or inferiority and undermining the basic sociocultural myth of equality. Indeed, given these dynamics potential clients commonly felt that some further physical guarantee of professional responsibility was necessary as a balance against the need to occasionally subordinate oneself to specialized (and thus exclusive) expertise--some form of occupational control, whether by state regulation or organizational employment, always seemed necessary to restrain the power of esoteric (and
(thus exclusive) and perhaps inauthentic knowledge which could not be tested by men of ordinary knowledge.²

More fundamentally, the principle of "objective" science based on human reason had very limited public appeal before the scientific discoveries of the mid- and late nineteenth century, and Magali Larson suggests that in their absence "the only general ideological structures on which professional ethicality and social credit could be convincingly established were those inherited from the passing traditional order." In the words of historian Samuel Haber, "America's first wave of professionalization . . . consisted largely of the assumption of the propertied of the upper ranks of the British professions by men of lower standing." These men attempted to meld class and culture together, as the idealized image of the English gentleman promoted the collective social mobility of the professions by providing a visible expression of and a tangible meaning to the dominant cultural values of disinterestedness and social service (in presecular colonial America to "ministry," and by the mid-eighteenth century to the paternalistic or "benevolent" noblesse oblige of the country squire and the republican gentry). Indeed, we have already seen that this self-conception and its underlying cultural ethic survived into the nineteenth century as a defensive reaction against the dislocations of urbanization and production for markets. Professionals implicitly equated lay trust with deference, while they attempted to manifest their own gentility through the calm exercise of reasoned authority--self-possession and restraint of passion in the face of crisis, socially functional characteristics which entitled their possessors to leadership, prestige, and authority. Ultimately, with the minister's pastoral role as his paradigm, the colonial professional acted as a community
therapist, balancing firmness and sympathy in his diagnosis and treatment of personal, social, and cultural disorder. 

* * *

Culturally, the dominant profession in America during most of the colonial era was the clergy, because religion was the ultimate source of causal explanation ("Providence") and thus of legitimate power--the cultural architectonic, to use historian Bruce Kimball's phrase. Clergymen committed themselves to the most fundamental goal of both individuals and society (salvation), and they based their cognitive and psychological authority on what most persons considered society's (indeed humanity's) founding text. Ministers were expected to be self-conscious exemplars of society's fundamental values in all aspects of their lives, and they normally (and normatively) received higher social status and greater material compensation in return for it. In a more practical sense, ministers had the greatest control over access to the markets for their services of any of the civilian professions--although divided by denomination and to a lesser extent by the presence of Catholics and Jews, the local occupational monopolies of the Protestant ministerial profession were sustained by the congregational form of religious organization and the geographic concentrations of religious allegiance fostered by the patterns of European settlement. Indeed, the denominational system proved effectively self-replicating and inherently adaptable to the diversification of religious belief during and after the Great Awakening.

Similarly, the profession was essentially able to ignore the rare nondenominational or "irregular" practitioners, while the potentially
disruptive growth of itinerancy was contained within the denominational framework. Indeed, of all potential or aspiring professions in colonial America, only ministers could draw upon societally accepted systems for professional training and career structures that monopolized occupational access. Far more (and a higher proportion of) clergymen held college degrees than did any other professional group, and ministers frequently played auxiliary roles as physicians, educators, and mediators of disputes. Their work and jurisdiction could thus be said to encompass and subordinate those of competing professional groups and conceptual frameworks (like those of the law), which were less well suited to the central cultural goal of preserving community harmony because of their materialist foci—their inability to transcend human self-interest and self-absorption. Indeed, in New England the ministry was the closest thing to a legally defined "order" (with the privileges and prestige thereof) in colonial American society. (Note however that the competitive individualism of the Chesapeake was more conducive to the mindset and practice of the law.)⁴

The status of the clergy began to decline in the eighteenth century under the pressures of religious and social egalitarianism, secularism, and monetary inflation, although we should remember that this decline was from a peak that few other professions would ever achieve. These challenges forced ministers to choose between two basic patterns of response, which historian Patricia Bonomi has identified in their reactions to lay challenges during the Great Awakening: to enter the secular arena in quest of greater relevance by taking up a leadership role in larger political developments like the Revolution, or to draw back and sharpen the boundaries of professional jurisdiction. The first option risked entanglement in the conflicts and absorption of the values of secular society, the second tacitly or explicitly
accepted a loss of authority outside narrow bounds, and both of them tended to commodify and thus constrain religious values and authority, as we shall see when examining the experience of the nineteenth-century ministry. Among New Light evangelicals, the once-organic community of town and church became increasingly divided into distinct worlds of the converted and the unconverted, the sanctified and the secular, while theological disputes undermined the internal cognitive consensus among clerical professionals. Indeed, by the latter decades of the century client relations were increasingly formalized via externally mediated contracts, breaking down the organic solidarity of practitioners and local communities that had been embodied in the theory of congregational organization. Ministerial security of tenure became increasingly subject to market negotiation with congregations (who effectively came to act in the role of employers), a process often arbitrated--and in effect overseen--by the members of another profession (lawyers), a transformation of the basis of pastoral relations which the ideal of congregational service left ministers ideologically unable to resist.⁵

Most decisively of all, the American cultural architectonic (i.e., the fundamental paradigm or archetype for social interaction) shifted during the creation of the American republic, moving decisively from community and harmony (even in the form of traditional republicanism) toward the individualism and competition of politics and liberalism. During the 1790s this shift drew New England ministers into the partisan conflict between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans despite yet indeed because of their antipathy for the disorder produced by what their occupational culture predisposed them to perceive as inherently illegitimate factionalism and social conflict. The ministers did this in fulfillment of their traditional role as public guardians, to preserve or restore morality, social and cultural harmony
and stability, and the principle of authority (and thus hierarchy) which they believed necessary to sustain these social goods, but in the rabid climate of the 1790s the clergy became tainted by the very dissension they purported to resolve.

Indeed, the Congregational establishment became increasingly dependent on the Federalist party for its privileged position even as that party reacted to its defeats in 1800 and 1804 by developing into a pragmatic organization devoted to its own occupational (electoral and patronage) success and correspondingly open to embarrassment by the fervor of ministers still faithful to outdated values. Politicians and ministers increasingly found little use for one another, and activism in the political sphere failed as a means of sustaining ministerial jurisdiction and occupational monopoly, just as the Federalists had found it an unstable vehicle for sustaining their hierarchical values and worldview--the Federalists remained committed to the ideal of elite social governance, but the instrumental partisanship of Federalist and ministerial actions undermined the ideology and mentalité of consensus on which their social and institutional power had once been based. The decline of deferential politics was only one dimension of a multi-faceted social transformation in which the ministerial role changed from one of guidance to that of advice, from direction and injunction to admonition and exhortation, but the clergy compromised its mental and institutional autonomy by entering the arena of political conflict.6

The clergy reacted to the perils of its partisan dependence by deliberately disengaging from the political realm in the 1810s, turning to voluntaristic "moral societies" as an antidote against disorder. Cognitive and hence jurisdictional clarification and delineation followed this reconception
of the clergy's public role, for these fledgling voluntary associations were dependent on public opinion—then undergoing what historian Robert Wiebe has labelled "a revolution in choices"—rather than partisan sanction. Models of persuasion (and in the theological sense the doctrine of free will) therefore replaced those of prescription, easing the New England ministry into the voluntary evangelical order forced on them by the process of disestablishment that concluded in the 1820s.

The ministry did not abandon its efforts to shape society; indeed, its activism became ever more organized as the clergy was forced to confront the problems of maintaining moral order and authority in the potentially entropic society of ever-growing scope and scale produced by westward movement and urban concentration. Indeed, evangelism—which was both a natural outgrowth of the denominational form of religious association and a reaching-out to seek the adherence of those previously excluded or ignored by the theological strictures and localism of the congregational system—became the centerpiece of ministerial adjustment to increasingly decentralized American social realities, the foundation of its reassertion and reinstitutionalization as an occupation and ultimately what Perry Miller labelled "the evangelical basis" of national "unity through diversity" (which Robert Wiebe has called "the Jacksonian resolution" of "parallelism").

Indeed, evangelicalism, which had been perceived as a challenge to established clerical jurisdiction and authority during the Great Awakening, was by the 1820s essentially incorporated into the religious mainstream or had become the mainstream itself. According to historian Donald Scott, "immersion in an ever expanding, ever more carefully organized and comprehensive revivalism" during the 1820s "fostered a self-consciously instrumental" and syncretically ecumenical conception of professional
practice among the mainstream of northern clergymen (in contrast to the more spontaneous eruptions of Baptist and Methodist evangelicalism during the Great Revival twenty years before). New England ministers soon developed an "applied science of revivalism"; they became "adept at diagnosing a communicant's particular spiritual state and applying the doctrinal dosages needed." Denominational competition for converts spurred institutional growth and articulation, particularly in the foundation of new training facilities for the inculcation of theological doctrine, but this competitive dynamic was complemented by a theologically and organizationally ecumenical network and doctrine of revivalism, missionary activity, and moral reform—the "evangelical united front."

Professional recruiting was also institutionalized and systematized, and between 1800 and 1840 the rate of entry into the New England clergy grew to three times that in the eighteenth century as the ministry expanded to keep pace with booming population growth and geographic mobility. The expansion was a deliberate and increasingly organized one, in which aspirants self-consciously sought admission and were selected by increasingly specialized translocal institutions established to screen them by impersonal standards and procedures, in place of the informal face-to-face recruitment town leaders had made based on personal qualities in the past. Besides bureaucracy, the institution of the new procedures also represented the acceptance and utilization of the changing social bases of ministerial recruitment and the social and psychological roots of professional motivation and identity, for the socioeconomic status of the average recruit to the ministry declined as it increasingly became a career for young men of modest economic circumstances, whose religious conversion experiences were often closely related to personal psychological crises over career and occupational
choice. Many of these men were forced to leave overcrowded farms while still in their teens to support themselves, and they were frequently in their twenties before they were able to afford the ongoing collegiate study required of ministerial aspirants. (Like army and navy officers following their fathers, many others were the sons of clergymen, also in search of economic security but already positioned to take advantage of growing employment opportunities in their fathers' profession.) Donald Scott has therefore suggested that--unlike their predecessors--"these young men had very little sense of themselves as members of a social or cultural elite." In other words, like the military elite of the officer corps, their identities were founded on occupational choice, translocal institutional affiliation, and careers within large-scale (though still relatively decentralized) organizations rather than the social origins of family or wealth, and ministerial communities and allegiances would come to be functionally rather than geographically based.9

The religious denominations recognized this new source of potential recruits and founded associations to provide aspirants with financial assistance for education and training. This in turn fostered internal task specialization, as "staffs" of clerical bureaucrats were organized to administer increasingly large amounts of aid to growing numbers of applicants over extensive geographic areas on a full-time basis. Training was also formalized and standardized through the establishment of new institutions, and the new theological seminaries (beginning with Andover's foundation in 1808) acted primarily as agencies of specifically occupational (or functional) rather than more general elite socialization. They offered longer courses than the eighteenth-century colleges, with a set duration (usually of three years) and contents overwhelmingly devoted to the practice of ministerial functions. The development of institutions dedicated to specifically occupational
training and socialization reshaped the form and character of their graduates' social and professional identities, as genteel behaviour became a symbol of piety rather than class for graduates from overwhelmingly middling backgrounds. In the new professional model, occupational values underpinned social ones rather than vice-versa.¹⁰

Ministerial professionalization was a response to the decline of clerical prestige and authority brought on by political and denominational conflict, theological disputes between Unitarian liberals and orthodox Calvinists, and the increasing precariousness of clerical tenures and compensation produced by the decline of deference in an increasingly democratic society structured by mentalités of market and contract (the latter a tool and extension of the new dominant profession of law). Rapid population growth and movement during the later decades of the eighteenth century transformed communities already in flux and eroded what remained of the New England town ideal. As a result, half of Yale's ministerial graduates from the classes of 1795 to 1815 held at least three pastorates during their careers, and thirty percent held four or more. Only a quarter never changed congregations, and this statistic hides the new reality that many of these men left the profession altogether.

On the other hand, the growth of American population and its rapid movement spurred efforts at evangelism that had been unnecessary in the more settled conditions of the colonial era, and the clergy responded to these challenges through the development of more structured ministerial careers, which offered a wider range of opportunities than the traditional pastoral role. Internal specialization developed apace with the growing need for full-time fund-raisers, administrators, tract authors and distributors, and seminary educators. Two-thirds of the graduates of Andover's classes of 1810-1820 spent some part of their careers outside pastoral practice, and a third
spent more than half of their professional lives in the new subspecializations. Indeed, these posts gradually became sources of special prestige within the profession, and ministers felt a conscious sense of career as a path of individual ascent that linked their personal ambition with the larger evangelical cause. Like army officers of the same era, clergymen sought wealthy cosmopolitan centers as a base from which to practice their self-interested altruism, and the status of ordinary pastoral practice (like military garrison duties in comparison to those of the staff) suffered in consequence. The reform institutions of the evangelical "benevolent empire" provided the security of mission and careers, but the reform impulse ultimately became counterproductive in terms of professional cohesion and security when the question of slavery and abolition rose to the fore, as ministers were no longer able to remove basic moral questions from the contested public sphere and contain them under professional jurisdiction. The ecumenism of the evangelical united front was disrupted, placing ministers at the mercy of an often antagonistic public opinion much as they had been several decades before.11

Doctrinal conflict between Unitarian liberals and the Congregational establishment seemed harmony itself in comparison to the strife aroused by the rise of abolitionism in the 1830s. Like army officers, the majority evangelical ministers, particularly those in leading positions, rejected the immediate abolition of slavery as an uncontrollable disruption of the social order, a fanatic monomania that stirred volatile popular passions that could destabilize society and undermine all authority if permitted to be unleashed. The abolitionists' demand for state intervention in the moral affairs of society seemed to violate the antipolitical "voluntary principle" that the clergy had cherished since the decline of Federalism and the Congregational
establishment after the partisanship of 1790s. nevertheless, moral issues became institutional, public, and political ones because of the Garrisonian insistence on immediate purification through purgation, separation, and expulsion. Their moral and institutional absolutism made the issue unavoidable, and ministerial cohesion evaporated amidst a cycle of accusation and recrimination. Most denominations split into northern and southern wings by the mid-1840s, and men as prominent as Lyman Beecher were crushed in the vise of faction. Indeed, Scott suggests that "by the end of the thirties . . . the structure of evangelical public guardianship [developed only a decade before] was in a state of collapse."12

Sectional divisions aside, the pandemic factionalism engendered by such basic cultural (even ontological) conflict could hardly be contained within the profession alone, and it spread to congregations throughout the North and exacerbated the continuing friction between congregations and clergy over compensation and security of tenure. Ministerial pay appears to have declined significantly, and a number of ministers were forced to seek new posts, which stimulated further bitterness on both sides of the professional-client (or "civilian," to draw the military comparison) divide. More than thirty percent of the graduates of Andover's classes of 1815 to 1835 held six or more posts during their careers, and some held as many as twelve. Only six percent held a single post throughout their careers, and as many as thirty percent were unable to find clerical employment at some point in their professional lives. Indeed, by the late 1850s thirty percent of New England's Congregational clergy held temporary pastorates. Older ministers were particularly hard hit by these pressures: more than a quarter of Andover's early nineteenth century graduates became dependent on the support of new 'societies for aged and destitute clergymen' at some point in their forties and
fifties. This loss of security led to a personal and (though ordinarily camouflaged) occupational sense of crisis and depression, and ministers responded with bitter sermons against the 'aggression' of their flocks, which cannot have won them any new sympathy.\textsuperscript{13}

Nevertheless, overt clerical efforts to resist these congregational authority only exacerbated the friction between them, and once again the ministry had to adapt to conflict and challenge by stressing new bases of service, organization, and cognition. Ministers created regional agencies to arbitrate disputes with congregations, and manuals prepared new clergymen for the struggle with their communicants by advising them to investigate a potential congregation's history, to avoid strong opinions that would embroil them in controversy, and even to withhold some of their best prepared sermons for later use so as not to exaggerate expectations. Ultimately, the strife produced a reversion to the earlier ideal of permanency and pastoral service, as new ministers began to forgo attractive but insecure opportunities in major but publically divided congregations and settled for lower salaries and compensation in favor of the stability of permanence in less exposed positions. In some respects, ministers' efforts to avoid public controversy can be compared to army officers' increasingly nonpartisan conception of their role, particularly in the context of public criticism in the 1830s and 1840s, but the very employment of military officers forced them to remain publically engaged. Like officers, ministers sought the security of career, but without state sponsorship they increasingly had to forgo more general public authority in order to do so. Army officers retained the security of employment by the nation-state, and this factors made it easier for them to accept and carry out the controversial edicts of the government in Indian removal and territorial expansion.\textsuperscript{14}
Similarly, ministers relegated doctrinal controversy to the walls of the seminaries and the pages of newly specialized professional journals in order to regain control over the form and expression of their clients' devotions. Pastoral practitioners no longer sought to provide a comprehensive ontological system through intellectual disquisition. Instead, they would adapt their practices, and eventually their identities, to suit their clientele by stressing harmony, tranquility, and the private sphere of life, often through feminized metaphors of domesticity. (The public status of the ministry suffered as its clientele became primarily female, however.) The church was to become a refuge from worldly competition for clergy and laity alike. Theology was softened and simplified for lay consumption, smoothing the harsh edges of Calvinism in favor of a general acceptance of the doctrine of free will. Amidst a cultural transformation of transatlantic dimensions, New Testament values of Christ's selfless love and example replaced the Old Testament paradigm of God's command as the primary metaphor for religious devotion. Sermons became more impressionistic, less formal and argumentative, and the role of sentiment was elevated, creating an intimate environment for the expression of sympathy. (Indeed, specially trained choirs were formed to provide soothing aesthetic accompaniment.) The minister became a brotherly friend and counselor rather than a stern father-figure and lecturer, but lost much of his authority in the process.  

Parallel measures were taken to enhance intraprofessional harmony. "Revival manuals" sought to standardize professional methods in the interest of predictability and community harmony, which would in turn assure lay support. The intraprofessional competition created by translocal institutions and their agents was curtailed by subordination to the autonomy of local authority and routine—in New England itinerants were barred from
preaching outside the geographical boundaries of their licensing associations, and in 1836 they were forbidden to enter individual churches without the express permission of the local pastor (who thus assumed a benevolently proprietary relationship toward his flock). This segmented form of professional practice then discouraged the methodological and ideological competition (overt or implicit) between ministers that had provided examples and opportunities for dissatisfied laypeople to exploit.16

Donald Scott writes that "the new conception of the minister set up boundaries of pastoral duty that essentially removed the major sources of controversy and conflict--social activism . . . theological disquisition, and doctrinal partisanship--from explicit pastoral responsibility." Doing so acted "to secure him against the effects of social issues and contention" by depoliticizing his role and jurisdiction. The sacred sphere was defined as a "totally private one, utterly separate from any direct public responsibilities." (Indeed, this had been the basic norm in most southern evangelical denominations since the turn of the century, after divisive controversies over slavery were suppressed.) Clerical practice was commodified under pressure from all sides, internal and external. In doing so, the ministry was participating in a general cultural movement that George Forgie has labelled "sentimental regression"--an emotionally driven and expressed attempt to escape the conflict and disorder produced by a rapidly growing society and the deepening sectional crisis. Like other professionals (including army officers), the clergy sought an end to the seeming entropy of Jacksonian boundlessness. Unlike other professionals, however, ministers hoped to deflect lay antagonism by accepting certain implicit boundaries to their professional role, a redefinition of their jurisdiction that drastically curtailed their actual power and authority.
Despite an active role on both sides in mobilizing support for the Civil War, the ministry never regained the general social influence it had had before the 1830s, and later clerical forays into social reform were based as much on secular cultural values and concerns as on specifically or uniquely religious ones. More generally, the experience of the nineteenth-century ministry anticipated the move toward a society of therapeutic consumerism, in which mission and message were increasingly commodified to suit the lowest common denominator and secure the largest possible clientele (or to be blunt, market share). From a more positive perspective, this attention to psychology and sentiment did serve important therapeutic functions for individuals, and may therefore have been substantively responsible, as well as accountable, in relation to client needs and wishes. One's interpretation of the balance between an irresponsible refusal to take sides on fundamental moral questions and the value of concentrating professional energies on the consolation, support, and salvation of individual clients is a counterfactual question that must depend largely on one's assessment of professional role and responsibility, as either path represented a choice of moral imperatives and a potential departure from primarily theological paradigms of professional activity in favor of more general societal ones. Perhaps this conflict was inevitable as American society and culture became increasingly secularized, replacing Biblical paradigms with those of republican politics, market economy, and bureaucratic organization. Ministers were then forced to adopt new mechanisms to secure their professional jurisdiction, mechanisms that were perforce more specialized and more vulnerable to interprofessional competition from new therapeutic occupations in the later nineteenth century. After shifting its basis of authority from the theocentric communal organicism of the New England town to the functional specificity
of translocal institutionalization during the first third of the nineteenth century, the majority of the clergy retreated to regain the security of the earlier intimacy during the second third of the century, but perforce on a more equal basis with its now self-selected clientele.\textsuperscript{17}

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Propelled and sustained by its political role in the creation of the American republic, the legal profession was not forced to retreat, though it did change its collective tactics. Eighteenth-century lawyers sought and attained many of the institutional characteristics scholars commonly attribute to professions. Like the Congregational ministry, these cosmopolitan urban attorneys initially aspired to a cohesive, highly structured, self-regulating profession along English lines, emulating the English gentry. (Indeed, Blackstone wrote that law was "the proper accomplishment of every gentleman . . . part of a liberal and polite education.") Their practice was similarly organized around geographically based extraprofessional institutions (the local markets or client bases of town and the practice setting of court), and their quest for professional status and jurisdiction likewise illustrates both the utility and inadequacy of state regulation for occupational aggrandizement. As early as 1720 legislation began to prohibit non-lawyers and individuals from other colonies from charging fees for arguing cases, and lawyers were defined either by law according to a set period of education or training or as those who met similar standards set by the fledgling bar associations. The bar associations established during the mid-eighteenth century soon created minimum fee scales and graded systems of seniority and training that they hoped would limit competition. In either case the
probationary period tended to be set at five to seven years, and Samuel Haber has observed that "a college education as well as an extended apprenticeship with a recognized lawyer became prerequisites for practice in many jurisdictions." ¹⁸

The outcome of these attempts to secure jurisdictional and market monopolies was not England's formal stratification and division of functions between barrister and attorney, however, because the colonies' supply of legal advocates was too low—even though litigation was comparatively rare outside urban areas (due in large part to the ministry's role as mediators), the demand for legal advice was too great to be monopolized by the small number of lawyers trained to the levels required by statute. Indeed, on the whole sociologist Terence Johnson has observed that the success of nineteenth-century American professional associations (and certainly their eighteenth-century predecessors) lay in giving prestige rather than providing effective mechanisms for excluding or sanctioning untrained or irregular practitioners. (Competition from the militia, volunteers, and privateers aside, the army and navy were really the only professions which did not lack monopolistic institutions, since even in the ministry an aspirant could always switch to another denomination or found his own sect.) Instead, an informal hierarchy developed, with elite lawyers (numbering no more than several hundred in even the most populous and commercial of colonies) and a mass of untrained practitioners who took up legal pleading on a more or less part-time basis on the strength of electoral office, court employment, community recognition, personal education or intellect, or simply the incidental opportunity to supplement one's income provided by personal acquaintance with litigants. Regulatory legislation often went unenforced, and the bar associations were unable to effectively discipline deviant
practitioners, but when trained lawyers acted in concert they demonstrated that they were capable of driving competitors out of the most profitable legal practice. (When attorneys in York County, Massachusetts withheld their services from cases where laymen were employed the proportion of such cases declined from half of the total number argued in 1767 to one-tenth of those seven years later.) Attorneys had their hands too full to monopolize all legal practice, and they often underestimated the degree of lay antagonism against them, but legal historian Gerard Gawalt asserts that their occasional successes provided "a firm basis for future attempts at improving the status and quality of the legal profession." 19

The creation of the American republic—the rise of an new polity based on new ideological foundations—advanced the status and aspirations of individual lawyers and supported the rise of the legal occupation to a preeminent place among the professions in early national America. Adversarial jurisprudence replaced mediation as individual aspirations and economic contractualism began to take precedence over the organic communal harmony and substantive justice valued in traditional theologically based moral economies like that of the colonial New England town. The Enlightenment and the Revolution advanced the concept of a free marketplace of ideas, and the general commercial boom that followed independence fostered a demand for the creation of universalistic secular rules to provide an impartial framework and a predictable environment for the release of entrepreneurial energy in an expanding nation. Lawyers were ideologically positioned to undertake this role because of the generally grateful popular recognition (particularly among members of the social and economic elite, who stood to profit the most from such an environment) of their articulate support for the national cause. The competitive
individualism of lawyers and their wide public exposure as advocates (especially in questions over the distribution of land, the most important task of mediation among individuals in early American public life) led them naturally to politics, where their actions and rhetoric reinforced the cultural authority of their professional worldview. In Massachusetts, this congenial milieu attracted enough ambitious men that the ratio of lawyers to the general populace increased tenfold between 1740 and 1840, even as the total population quadrupled. State, occupation, and class formation were closely related to the rise of the legal profession, for the rules and institutions that constituted the American nation-state were largely conceived and formulated by lawyers, particularly those from the ranks of the elite.  

This concern for the new cultural architectonic of politics led naturally to group consciousness, self-confidence, and a spirit of association among lawyers, who began to invoke what had previously been religious metaphors of selflessness and service in support of their claims to prestige and authority. Incredibly, over forty percent of the 764 lawyers who practiced in Massachusetts between 1760 and 1810 were elected to political office at some time, and their numbers increased (in absolute though not proportionate terms) during the following decades. Gerard Gawalt has commented that "such men did not fear centralized institutional power. They sought it," because they (like army officers) expected to secure occupational jurisdiction and monopoly from political sponsorship. Politically and institutionally, trained lawyers increasingly replaced gentry justices of the peace within local judiciaries while asserting their authority as judges--trained experts, with a knowledge unavailable to the laity--to instruct and overturn lay juries on "technical" points. Materially, attorneys had the highest incomes among early nineteenth century professionals, and an increasing proportion of
college graduates chose the law rather than the ministry. Culturally and ideologically, the ascendancy of the legal profession was signalled etymologically (and given rhetorical legitimacy) by their appropriation of the adjective "professional" to distinguish themselves from the lay public.21

This picture was not nearly so clear at the time, of course. Two out of every five lawyers had remained loyal to the British crown, and their postwar work as bill collectors during the debt crises of the 1780s only enhanced popular stereotypes of the lawyer as a parasite. Reopening the courts after the Revolution made attorneys targets for debtor unrest, and court closings were a favorite tactic of populist rebels and "regulators" from Maine, Vermont, and western Massachusetts to western Pennsylvania and the Carolinas. Backcountry antifederalists and urban radicals demanding the popular representation embodied in legislative supremacy called for an elected judiciary, the repeal of laws that restricted court pleading to attorneys, and legislation that would require the use of arbitration in preference to litigation. Lawyers defended their occupational jurisdiction and authority by using their expertise and their institutional positions as officers of the courts to negate such reforms on technical grounds. Gerald Gawalt labels this "a conspiracy to continue an illegal monopoly through the coercive force of professional institutions," and lawyers clearly considered their conception of an appropriate legal system superior to that articulated in reforms passed through the democratic process, an outstanding lapse of accountability to the public they claimed to serve. Indeed, their success at this allowed bar associations to increase fee scales and to restrict practice by lawyers from outside their states and counties in the 1790s and 1800s. The courts supported these efforts at fostering occupational stratification and monopoly by requiring aspirants to be examined by court-appointed boards and by
designating lengthy periods of training or practice in lower courts before allowing attorneys to plead before more authoritative ones (which also tended to be those in which the more profitable cases would be heard). In effect, the courts began to assume the bar associations' role as accrediting agencies, an example where more organized practice settings curtailed the autonomy of some professional practitioners in favor of others.22

Many of the bar associations' specific legislative goals had been achieved by 1810, but on the whole they failed to satisfy lawyers' aspirations for monopolizing legal practice, weak instruments more honored in the breach than in the observance. Indeed, bar associations then declined in significance as lawyers discovered that they were not essential for professional cohesion or advancement given the greater practical power of the courts in which attorneys actually worked. The growth of law firms to meet the increasing demands of business employment provided more stable incomes than unenforceable fee tables, while the institutional core of legal practice coalesced around the judiciary, which increasingly became the model for emulation and aspiration. (Leading American lawyers had often avoided the bench before the 1820s because of its low salaries, but as they became more individually secure they felt able to take up these posts, from which they exerted even greater influence on American law and legal practice.) The growing numbers, specialization, and stratification of attorneys spread over greater distances drove wedges into their ranks as common standards for evaluation became more difficult for a diverse profession to agree upon—membership in a bar association was no longer a sufficient guarantee of professional purity, and many lawyers sought to escape their constraints, particularly those setting awkward and increasingly unrealistic geographic
boundaries on practice. (As Daniel Calhoun points out, the decline of the collegial circuit bar had similar origins and effects on the western frontier.)

American lawyers hoped to reduce competition through doctrinal consolidation as well as institutional power. Exclusion began with standardization, initially based on the books of court reports and opinions first compiled in 1805. By the 1820s these were being supplemented by synthetic analyses written by eminent jurists, some of which (such as James Kent's Commentaries) nearly gained the cognitive authority of founding texts like army regulations or the Bible. This consolidation and narrowing of access was also manifested in the processes of occupational training and socialization, where private proprietary schools gradually took the place of training through apprenticeship, although not without difficulty. (For example, Harvard Law School had two students in 1829.) Apprentices' training and initial socialization had been familial, personalistic, and decentralized, and it had depended on a single man, whose favor was vital to their future opportunities. This placed their aspirations and investments in great jeopardy if the relationship went awry. In contrast, organized schooling was less personalized but more predictable (and thus reliable) in its products, whether the perspective was that of potential employers, fellow practitioners, or the aspirants themselves.

Similarly, all the new mechanisms of inculcating systematized knowledge emphasized technical expertise (knowledge of law), rather than moral inspiration, practical experience, or the intangible stylistic authority of genteel "presence" as the basis for professional authority. The influential legal commentators and their compendiums stressed the value of diligent study (which required lengthy periods) over that of intuitive personal genius, which though rare was also less subject to occupational control. This
institutionalized standardization of socialization, training, and knowledge had dramatic consequences for professional cohesion and self-image. The traditional corporate ideal of organic professional unity gradually evaporated under pressures internal and external, cultural, organizational, and individual, and lawyers themselves abandoned the corporate institutional structures (bar associations and the like) with which they had once hoped to reproduce the English system of professional stratification and prestige.25

Social responsibility remained a professional ideal, and lawyers entered partisan politics (another professionalizing occupation during the party formation of the Jacksonian era) to translate the ideal of public service (which they visualized in tandem with the pursuit of economic growth and development) into reality. Indeed, they had to do so out of self-interest, because they faced extensive populistic challenges to their interpretive authority and social legitimacy despite (or in many cases because of) their socioeconomic utility (which often appeared in the form of an instrument of elite class power) and material success. The most potent opposition to this cognitive dominance came from the "codifiers," laymen (and some dissident professionals) who wanted to simplify the law enough that it would enable nonprofessionals to plead their own cases. The drive to rationalize and nationalize American law had begun soon after independence, as democrats and cultural nationalists sought to shake off the tentacles of the English common law and the use of equity, a form of trial without juries that was attacked as arbitrary and subjective. These bodies of doctrine appeared undemocratic in operation and effect, the products of centuries of evolving customary (rather than formally articulated, per the American model of written law and constitutions) practice in a social setting seemingly very
different from the supposedly boundless American one. It was this very evolutionary quality, however, that lawyers and judges used to persuade the public of the common law's value in a constantly changing society, for they stole the thunder of cultural nationalists by proclaiming the common law especially appropriate to American circumstances and the American character because it was not a rigid set of unalterable precedents but a framework of general principles. Indeed, the increasing complexity of the law enabled American lawyers to gain considerable autonomy in the practice of their work, and they successfully quashed most challenges to their control over suits in their charge, but popular suspicion of their power remained strong.26

These conflicts were intimately related to those over judicial discretion (particularly in cases of equity law) and judicial review, and all these were ultimately aspects of the national cultural debate over the role of elites in the land of Everyman. Lawyers and judges themselves proclaimed that judicial restraint (or what historian Perry Miller calls "negation") went hand in hand with judicial review. The struggle for control over legal interpretation was closely bound up with questions of property rights ("the hinge of negation," in Miller's phrase), contract, and the use of natural resources, all matters of decisive importance during the market revolution. To its champions the common law represented flexibility in the service of predictability through the power of jurists to decide cases on principles of order and regularity beyond the reach of passing popular emotions, while modern historians have tended to be more sceptical: Charles Sellers presents a damning critique of the lawyers' role as "the shock troops of capitalism," who "felt engaged in a desperate struggle to strengthen the law as a bulwark [for the sanctity of property] against envious democracy," while Morton Horowitz has roundly criticized the supposedly "objective" basis of decisions aimed at codifying the
principle of contract. Indeed, the motives, attitudes, and objectives of the legal mainstream bear strong parallels to those of the business Progressives later in the century in their assertion of disinterested and transpolitical (and therefore theoretically "objective") social guidance by elites, and in their success in creating legal structures (through the use of equity in support of contract) to support the expansion of market and corporate capitalism (and consequently the interests of the investing and employing classes).27

To the codifiers the common law was an opaque mass of contradictions and little-known exceptions that empowered learned elites and artificial scholasticism at the expense of the people and their natural common sense. They sought a more uniform system that would embody American genius and exceptionalism, a doctrinal web that might somehow hold the nation together by fostering a sense of permanence and cultural unity, hopes that in their rhetoric sometimes appeared missionary and even millenial in ambition. Indeed, though both the codifiers and the professional giants who had forged the bases of American law through intellectual elegance and massive commentaries spoke in a rhetoric of science and practical utility, both were ultimately engaged in a romantic quest for the organic and the sublime, a national (and natural) wholeness that they feared would otherwise elude the spreading nation. Consequently, the codifiers (themselves led by trained and sometimes eminent lawyers, since no one else could operate effectively within the increasingly complex system erected by the profession) and their opponents both argued for a system (and in effect a doctrinal form of occupational control) that could accommodate the diversity of American experience and interest without acting as the instrument of class favoritism.

Perry Miller labels this debate "a contest between nationalism and cosmopolitanism," "a dispute over the identity of the nation" as a European
civilization founded on centuries of evolving custom or a novus ordo seclorum founded on perfectionist impulses, innately whole and self-contained. Miller does not locate this discourse in the contested relationships between center and periphery within the United States, and it would superficially appear that either conception of law could be used to argue from one perspective of the other. The intricacy of the common law could be seen as either an undemocratic system of mystification that denied the laity and the middling classes access to the legal knowledge and power available to metropolitan corporations and elites, or as a bulwark against doctrinal and perhaps political centralization, an image founded in the example of Napoleonic codification in France that persuaded many who were otherwise sympathetic to the codifiers' nationalistic perfectionism.28

Questions of class and nationality aside, Daniel Calhoun's emphasis on the laity's acute awareness of dependence and their fears of arbitrary professional discretion is clearly apparent as the psychological context for this ideological debate. Unlike doctors or ministers, the lawyer's therapeutic role was usually a temporary one determined by the client's specific economic goals or predicament—that is, legal relationships were innately contractual and market-driven; they lacked the "natural" and essentially disinterested character of efforts to save lives or souls. Even as an economic actor, the lawyer was a hired gun—an employee, not a proprietor—who lacked a direct interest in the fortunes of his clients. (We shall observe this dilemma again when I examine civil engineering. Businesses tried to assure accountable expert advice through the permanent employment and gradual "incorporation" of members of both professions onto their boards of directors.)29 Under these circumstances individual lawyers mounted a sustained public relations campaign through novels, obituaries, professional
journals, and even childrens' literature that legal historian Maxwell Bloomfield believes changed "the lay image of the American lawyer . . . from [that of] a designing cryptopolitician into a benevolently neutral technocrat" abstracted from the overtly political sphere of social and economic conflict. While this assertion seems rather questionable for the era prior to 1850 (if not after the Civil War, when the image could draw on much changed social attitudes), the metaphors lawyers used in their quest for cultural legitimacy are indicative of the form and degree of adaptation to American conditions found in the realities of their professional lives. Antiparty sentiment remained strong if largely rhetorical for half a century after the ratification of the Constitution, and the growing number of lawyers in politics were pressed to identify their work with the transcendant issues of the polity as a whole rather than individual or party ambition. Again, though questionable in its presumption of public success, Bloomfield's evaluation certainly indicates the direction of their efforts: "The divorce of law from politics was the most significant contribution that [Jacksonian] publicists . . . made to legal mythology." Legal propagandists emphasized their service to society as a whole and tried to establish a distinction (highly artificial, of course) between their quasi-religious sense of calling and the presumably tainted ambition of politics. This in turn allowed legal conservatives to attack reformers as demagogues who lacked respect for the enduring and supposedly societally functional principles of the law. In theory, 'true lawyers' became involved in politics only as an extension of their public interest work, itself a natural extension of their innate professional concern for the community values of polity. Whether judges, advocates, or even politicians themselves, lawyers would thus serve as neutrally disinterested guardians of popular interests
while restraining the self-interested excesses of partisan opportunists through their role as men of "objective" reason and keepers of the public conscience.\textsuperscript{30}

Though recent historians have emphasized the exclusive mindset of the Jacksonian legal profession, we must remember that doing so is in great part of matter of hindsight, in which we quickly pass over the pervasiveness and cultural legitimacy of entrepreneurial energies among the expectant capitalists of Jacksonian America. The idea of a unitary public interest, though fully consonant with the still-pervasive rhetorical ideals of republicanism, was hardly compatible with the realities of life in the liberal market society of Jacksonian and antebellum America, and efforts to adjust to these realities were bound to affect the images lawyers had of themselves and their profession. Bloomfield reasonably observes that both "elitism and genuine democratic sympathies . . . characterized the antebellum legal profession," and these contrasts were apparent in lawyers' rhetoric as well as in the debates over codification and reform. Legal publicists responded to fears that they would elevate artifice and form over substantive responsibility and occupational technique over social justice by associating their work and themselves with the culturally potent values of Christian benevolence, piety, and gentility. They identified their mental labor as meritorious social service and depicted their profession as a classless one where common sense, ambition, and experience came together to form the "workingmen of the profession," skilled craftsmen who used their "native" (innate, natural, and also national, or intuitively patriotic) intelligence to defend popular interests -- a rational and efficient division of labor to serve the individually specialized needs of an increasingly interdependent society.\textsuperscript{31}

Metaphors like these allied a profession popularly considered parasitic with important Jacksonian and early Victorian values like industrious labor,
individual "improvement," social utility, nationalism, and even the organic harmony of nature. The lawyer idealized by professional propagandists was a rugged individualist who rose from modest circumstances to eminence through the practical exercise of innate genius, a jack of all trades whose public-spirited altruism and pursuit of "useful" knowledge was contrasted to the supposedly more divisive materialism of the mercantile aristocracy whom he served in reality. A man of comprehensive intellect and broad vision, he would integrate reflection and action in the service of social harmony and progress. The harmony of a "sublime system" of law thus carried with it the sanctification of nature and community alike, and the benevolence and utility of the lawyer's profession illustrated his individual disinterestedness and community patriotism. Institutional and procedural purity was thus to be taken to reflect societal purity and to sustain national as well as professional cohesion. The checks and balances of law and professional control (judicial review) would restrain the passionate excesses of human nature and prevent the cyclical decline Americans saw in all past civilizations--law would provide the indispensable key to the survival of a union of ordered liberty.32

Whatever the success of these grandiose hopes and visions, historian Samuel Haber observes that "the American lawyer . . . [had] achieved an importance in his country that far surpassed that of his counterpart" in the mother country, and law remained premier among the professions throughout the Jacksonian period. Indeed, Gerard Gawalt suggests that "the Jacksonian years [rather than the post-Civil War era] marked the emergence of the modern legal profession in Massachusetts" and elsewhere. As in the case of the army officer corps, this occupational formation also reflected successful elite formation or reproduction, a part of the more general
socioeconomic consolidation of elite class power during this period. Many if not the majority of these lawyers—three quarters of Massachusetts attorneys between 1810 and 1840, for example—were the sons of professional men, and in Massachusetts at least three quarters of their professional fathers were lawyers themselves. In other words, half of Massachusetts lawyers, who were among the leaders in what legal historian Morton Horowitz calls "the transformation of American law" in the service of market capitalism, were actually the sons of lawyers themselves, and similar proportions married the daughters of other professionals, creating a virtual "professional class" of connected occupational (and usually social) elites. Indeed, the economic prerequisites of occupational formation and individual career choice became increasingly significant, as the financial cost of a professional education replaced formal institutions as the primary mechanism excluding new entrants from the upper ranks of the profession, effectively limiting access to individuals from families with disposable wealth and reinforcing the interpenetration of social, economic, and occupational elites in the American upper class.33

In more general socioeconomic terms, attorneys successfully allied themselves with business interests while continuing to undermine or coopt movements for legal reform. Indeed, the clientele for elite lawyers was largely a business (and increasingly a corporate) one, whose interests lay in frustrating popular reforms that threatened the sanctity of property. Gawalt observes that under these circumstances, lawyers with broad perspectives and ambitions "saw no advantage in local autonomy for professional institutions. They did not fear [occupational] regulation because they expected to control it." This increasingly self-perpetuating professional class had no need for rigid institutions to buttress its authority, for—though not directly state-
sponsored and employed like army officers—its members ran the courts and made up a powerful bloc in the legislatures. While the clergy adapted to conflict by retreating from competition to refined but humble gentility, lawyers dropped some of their genteel pretense to quasi-aristocratic authority and noblesse oblige in favor of the practical competitive individualism encouraged by the operation of the adversarial system in the growing market economy.

These ambitious men had no more patience with the artificial constraints of a guild system than other Jacksonians, and they dismantled many of the restraining features of their own occupational associations in order to encourage competition and opportunities for individual advancement. Indeed, their first national organization, the American Legal Association, was not founded until 1849, and it survived only five years. Given their political influence and economic utility (at least to those with the wealth and motivation to make use of it), Jacksonian anti-institutionalism did not greatly diminish the power of legal professionals. The profession emerged as an internally competitive, specialized occupation reflective of the market economy and the socioeconomic hierarchy, which secured its power and prestige from the provision of services to individuals and corporations (which were redefined during this era as legal individuals themselves) rather than the abstraction of society as a whole. Given the increasingly specialized (i.e., complex, and thus exclusive) structure of laws and judicial institutions, the economic value of the attorney's services was unmistakable, and the legal profession faced little of the jurisdictional competition that doctors received from empirics, ministers from the laity and unlicensed spiritual leaders, or army officers from the militia. With powerful allies and a profitable role to play, personal ambition quickly became the dominant motivation for
entering legal practice, which was performed in mutually beneficial
subordination to the interests of those who could pay the most for it.34

* * *

The experience of the medical profession illustrates the cognitive and
organizational dilemmas facing the professions in Jacksonian America even
more clearly than that of legal and clerical ones, for its fragility and insecurity
was far from a simple matter of anti-institutional egalitarian enthusiasm run
destructively amok. In an era when medical "science" had little verifiable
basis and often seemed counterproductive when applied, practitioners
seeking professional and popular followings were forced to articulate new
therapeutic styles (whose substance was healthier but ultimately secondary to
their form) in order to appeal to social sectors and subcultures that felt
neglected by the so-called "regulars" (a term also used by army officers to
distinguish themselves from lay competitors). Internally, professional cliques
formed around leaders and their therapies, localities, economic issues (the
merits of fee tables), and the most appropriate forms for professional
association. The result was a proliferation of factions and sects whose client
constituencies lay in different social classes or along the divides between
cosmopolitans and localists and metropole and hinterland. Indeed, in the
words of Daniel Calhoun "each joining of the issues created more
antagonism than it resolved" making professional cohesion and the
standardization of expertise and practice impossible. The elites who had led
efforts toward professionalization in the colonial and early national periods
first lost control over the profession's organizations, then over its fragile
cognitive paradigms. Unlike lawyers, the majority of whom did not
participate in insurgent movements like that for codification--or did so
assuming that they would still control the operation of the new system--
medical practitioners split into at least three major sects, one of which—the rural, egalitarian Thompsonians, whose cultural perfectionism and social antimonopoly far transcended that of the legal codifiers—began by explicitly encouraging lay involvement to the point of deprofessionalization.35

This process had begun in the earliest days of American medical professionalization. Samuel Haber has observed that "the very predilections of the Enlightenment [toward doctrinaire schematization, here in the dogmatic use of allegedly 'heroic' treatments like bleeding] led the most influential American doctors of the era to a kind of [therapeutic] overreaching that proved to be ultimately disabling for the profession and disastrous for many of their patients," who reacted by seeking less intense therapies. The associational experience of the colonial medical occupation paralleled that of the law: a small cosmopolitan elite of European-educated doctors in the colonial seaport cities sought fee tables and licensing as means to identify respectable practitioners and differentiate them from the mass of part-time empirics who lacked their systematic education and pretensions to gentility, but the Revolution destroyed any chance these professed doctors had to achieve the corporate status of their English models. All but three states had enacted licensing laws by 1830, but these were rarely enforced with any vigour and popular antagonism forced their repeal during the following decade.36

Unlike lawyers, however, the adherents of medical schools and societies fought each other to a standstill throughout the early national and antebellum eras. Lacking the state-sponsored institutional monopoly of the court system to draw and allocate clients, medical organization meant either the creation of a new hierarchy or levelling a preexisting one by subjecting it to critical evaluation, and internal controversies burst forth as suits and countersuits charged violations of the medical code of ethics, subjecting the
medical profession and the validity of its methods to the judgment of the lawyers. State and county medical associations repeatedly battled over the central question of professional inclusiveness, securing laws that alternately made all legal practitioners members and then permitted more exclusive forms of association. In the former instance more practitioners became subject to regulation, but their presence diluted the strength of those restrictions (and thus the scarcity of monopoly) that could be passed or lobbied for from the legislatures. Indeed, as medical associations grew they became divided among themselves over questions of method and organization, leading to repeated subdivision as dissenting or self-aggrandizing groups broke free of institutions that they found constraining. The reassertion of exclusiveness sustained cohesion within smaller groups at the cost of continued strife between them. This communal disorganization and tendency toward entropy persisted until the success of the homeopaths—who appealed to a more genteel (and thus prosperous) urban constituency than the Thompsonians on a cognitive basis of trained expertise similar but apparently superior to that of the regulars—began to force some counterorganization in the late 1840s, ultimately leading to the formation of the American Medical Association. By this time, however, the medical profession (insofar as such a unitary term can be used) had lost much of its credibility in the eyes of the public, and it was forced to confront the most primal of Jacksonian dilemmas through the political struggle over licensing: "was a truly liberal policy one that removed restriction . . . [or] one that used restriction to preserve the vigor and approximate equality of many middling competitors?"37

At first the jurisdictional threats from the Thompsonians and homeopaths intensified rather than ameliorating these quarrels, but the new sects developed their own internal divisions quickly enough that they did not
subsume or replace the regulars. Indeed, the initially ultra-egalitarian Thompsonian movement soon split over questions of lay practice and cognitive intricacy, and the majority of full-time Thompsonian practitioners soon subordinated their ideological beliefs in favor of their economic interest in professional dominance over the laity, indicating the power of the professional appeal to ambition. Doctors themselves considered their profession uniquely open to dissension, and ultimately doctors and patients alike came to believe that "ambition was less likely to stimulate research than to corrupt judgment." Ironically, then, the search for comity sometimes worked against that for therapeutic expertise, as practitioners seeking cohesion avoided raising important questions of method and technique. As Daniel Calhoun observed of the New York medical community, "what America lacked was a set of [culturally and morally] legitimate opportunities for the individual physician to advance himself and claim special distinction . . . ambition had little outlet except in flight toward the wilderness or in furnishing leadership to lesser men." Indeed, Calhoun's observations bear lengthy quotation as insights into the problems met in creating rationalized organizations in a society of anxiously competitive individualists forced to practice in highly particularistic local markets (or in a phrase, in attempting to organize Jacksonian America): "Repeatedly, men seeking the advancement denied them within the [local] profession tried to expand their chances by using the whole population of practitioners as a basis on which to erect . . . more formal, less personalistic institutions." These efforts were defeated by existing professional elites, and "each level of dispute sloughed off new factions . . . creating new base for quarreling. Thus the attempts to create formal institutions resulted in intensifying the [existing] excesses of competition, factionalism, and individualism; and the very fact that no such
institutions . . . [operated effectively] meant that no means existed to restrain individual ambition." In the end, the medical profession retreated like the ministerial one, maintaining a great degree of authority for individuals but collectively settling into a kind of uneasy stasis, hoping that time would somehow heal its wounds. The development of truly scientific, and far more efficacious, medicine in the last quarter of the century did so, providing the basis for the rise of the medical profession to a position of prestige and authority equal to if not greater than that of the legal one.38

* * *

Law, medicine, and the ministry were the only generally recognized civilian professions in Jacksonian America, but steps toward occupational self-consciousness and cognitive standardization and exclusion were common in many other fields. Ministerial organization and specialization was emulated in (if not the actual basis of) numerous reform associations, and institutional and occupational specialization in the form of highly organized mass political parties, public schools, penal institutions, and the penny press led politicians, educators, prison reformers, and journalists alike to develop a sense of distinctiveness in and commitment to their work, though public recognition was given more to the institutions they served than to the aspiring professionals themselves.39 Chapter eight discussed the experience of the Jacksonian civil engineers, and it seems probable—as in all the other professions discussed herein (including the army officer corps)—that defense against political attack spurred a heightened sense of group consciousness and jurisdiction among engineers because of the necessity for articulating a specialized occupational function. This consciousness is
evident in the gradual evolution of a professional literature. In 1822 fully eighty percent of the engineering books in the West Point library (the nation's largest repository of such works at the time) were written in French, and the first American civil engineering text was not published until 1830. Short-lived professional journals were established at the state and (putatively) national level, and the American Railroad Journal became a generally recognized forum for engineers' ideas about collective association and their work, but little of concrete or enduring value followed until the late 1830s, when the lengthy responses to state inquiry provided a written cognitive base (in this case the equivalent of a mission statement with guidelines for practice) unarticulated before then.40

Proposals were occasionally made for occupational association, and the first serious attempt at organization was made in a convention of prominent engineers in 1839. The conventioneers proclaimed that engineers should regulate themselves in order to coordinate training efforts and make the profession's internal hierarchy evident and acceptable to clients and the public. The organizers' exclusive sense of jurisdiction was most prominent in their antagonism towards practitioners who came to engineering (often with political connections to support them) after failing in other professions. (It is unclear but doubtful whether the conventioneers included ex-West Point cadets and ex-army officers among these interlopers, since several of the organizers came from this well-recognized background themselves.) The conventioneers expected that these measures would increase the occupation's social "respectability" and internal "esprit." (Note the military terminology.) Caveats must of course be made: Daniel Calhoun notes that "the impressive list of names covered . . . much apathy," and their effort was roundly criticized by other engineers as too exclusive, since the association's dues were
high and its primary goal was obviously to distinguish some practitioners as superior to others. Nevertheless, it is clear that an occupational hierarchy had emerged, and Calhoun suggests that "by the 1840s, civil engineers had become a definite occupational group." As in the other occupations discussed herein, the basic pattern for professional development in American engineering had emerged by the end of the Jacksonian era, sustained by an increasingly complex, large-scale society that demanded specialization and full-time commitment in socially essential occupational roles. As we have seen in the army officer corps, "it was not a Jeffersonian America but a corporate [one] that . . . sustained the engineer" and gave him a socially legitimate role that provided prestige and authority.\(^{41}\)

Stratification and specialization within the professions grew during the Jacksonian era alongside that in society as a whole. Sociologist Magali Larson notes that:

Insofar as the choicest professional monopolies were based on grounds [of class, culture, and state sponsorship] other than the manifest criteria of inclusion (formal education and licensing), the concessions to the common man did not establish open competition, except where it mattered less: the average man and the marginal practitioners suffered [most] from . . . [heightened] competition . . . if democratic encroachments were not always resisted by the established professionals, it was because the internal stratification of the professions was not threatened by them.\(^{42}\)

Daniel Calhoun gave this apparent paradox extensive attention in his case studies of antebellum doctors, lawyers, and clergymen. Each profession reacted differently to the strains of social fluidity and egalitarian attack. As
the economy became increasingly specialized and stratified, the legal
profession also became differentiated according to its clienteles. Its members
held great power but did not exercise it as a unified group save to fight
codification and other antimonopolistic reforms. Lawyers accepted market
competition with one another, while, denominational and sectarian
correlations with different socioeconomic strata aside, ministers and
physicians retreated away from competition and the ideal of unified,
putatively objective expertise towards increasingly personalistic therapeutic
practice, the consolations of local social prestige, and a "respectable" genteel
style. Indeed, Calhoun suggests that medical men "were willing to slap down
the efforts of some extraordinary individuals because those efforts threatened
group leadership," and the growing moderation of revivalists like Charles
Finney suggests a similar, though self-imposed, development among the
clergy. Despite its conservative form and intent, this conformity provided the
professions with a needed respite from factional bitterness, and from
Calhoun's perspective it paved the way for the eventual bureaucratic
resolution (or as I have phrased it, reintegration) of the problem of individual
ambition by depersonalizing ideas. The pressure of denominational
competition and increasingly demanding congregations forced the ministry
farthest down the road towards institutionalizing careers within a
bureaucratic hierarchy (though one run by clerical professionals themselves),
despite its simultaneous sentimental regression into humble pastoral
practice, but this development produced professional security, not
professional power. The growth of ministerial bureaucracies is important to
us because of the parallel with army experience, but most clergymen either
retreated into or retreated from these institutions in flight from lay criticism,
and they did not form effective power bases for the exertion of direct social
influence or authority.  

Jacksonian antagonism towards monopolies and elites fostered laws
that opened up professional licensing in all the professions, but state
sponsorship allowed military professionals to minimize the institutional
impact of appointments directly from civilian life. More importantly, this
anti-institutional mood filtered into the organizations and ideologies of the
professions themselves, in the shape of the ministerial reorientation toward
pastoral practice, the constriction of the bar associations, the movement for
legal codification, and the conflicts of sectarian medicine, while engineers
employed by corporations and business enterprises were brought under client
control even more directly than the other professions. The prestige,
authority, and jurisdiction of the civilian professions were undermined,
externally by ideological criticism and political intervention and internally by
ideological and sometimes doctrinal schisms and social divisions, which were
reflected in quarrels that often precluded effective national organization and
monopoly. In any case, the capture and control of national occupational
markets was impossible without more widespread diffusion of
communications and transportation technology, and when this did occur
(after the Civil War) there was also a new cultural architectonic and a new
organizational context available to sustain professional aggrandizement.

Samuel Haber concludes that "from the standpoint of organizational
power and effectiveness" (my italics) the years 1830-1880 "were the nadir of
the professions in America"; but even so he observes that "the central fact of
this era for the professions was that they were able to maintain the distinction
between the specially honored and authoritative profession and the ordinary
occupation." The proof was in the growing numbers of professionals and
aspirants; professional training was in demand. Lower (or nonexistent) standards of education and admission hurt the image of the professions, but aside from ministers their incomes do not appear to have suffered, and the same segmentation that hampered their organizational development also insulated them from competition. In Magali Larson's words, "while formal guarantees of professional monopoly were abrogated during the Jacksonian period, informal social controls and bases of prestige ... [were] maintained or reconstituted at the local level." As Haber observes, the professions as a whole "maintained genteel authority and honor within their work settings, though they [temporarily] surrendered some of both in society at large." The expanding economy of Jacksonian America was certainly big enough to accommodate the influx, and the preexisting professional institutions were inadequate in size and flexibility to supply the market for professional services.44

In fact, with the decline of the gentleman as a distinctively elite social type (i.e., as one who could afford not to work) under the opprobrium of egalitarianism and the entrepreneurial work ethic, the professions became a model for gentility, rather than vice-versa. Although the specific origins and elaboration of the Victorian ideals of character and respectability are difficult to distinguish, their attributes are easily discerned in the professions. The genteel virtues of calm and moderation, refinement and cultivation (all of which a liberal education was said to foster), provided visible reassurance of the trustworthiness that was both expected and demanded in professionals. Bourgeois evangelical moralism and the genteel code of honor became intertwined, effectively to the point of fusion. Professionals benefitted from this association and from the equivocality it lent to attacks on professional authority. Indeed, the creativity and showmanship involved in dealing with
new, often intangible situations had immense appeal to the individualistic, opportunistic Jacksonian. Practicing in local markets, with intimate knowledge of their clients and limited competition as individuals, doing work that was clearly necessary and clearly made more effective by at least a modicum of training, the professional remained a man honored and respected by the community in which he did his work. Democratic everymen remained humanly vulnerable to the ills professionals promised to cure, and thus to the pretensions of professionals themselves. Clients naturally reacted with both suspicion and trusting hope, and the professional ideal of expert stewardship survived the "egalitarian interregnum" of Jacksonian America.45

Antebellum America was simultaneously a nation of bounded localities and boundless optimism, and long ago historian John Higham remarked that "it was easier to be a visionary . . . than it was to be . . . an expert or a planner" in Jacksonian America. A weak state apparatus and the prevalent ideology of individual opportunity gave the civilian professions little chance of monopolistically aligning themselves with the political structures that supported professional power in Europe or in the army and navy. According to Larson, "the absence of central traditional structures in the United States determined the characteristic fragmentation of the early professional project, while depriving it of the ideological unity that was inherent in the bourgeois challenge against corporate or aristocratic strongholds" in Western Europe. But American culture and social structure began to change in the last decade before the Civil War: a paradoxical spirit of constraint and consolidation arose even as industrialization, long distance communication, and technological change accelerated, and Higham observes that "professional men seeking a firmer basis for their authority contributed
greatly to this shift of cultural mood away from boundlessness toward consolidation."\textsuperscript{46}

This process took root in the increasingly organized society that developed after the Civil War. Larson suggests that popular antagonism and anti-intellectualism among professional elites meant that for inherently elitist meritocratic claims to function as effective ideological legitimations, new themes—such as an ethos of efficiency and the need to regulate anarchic competition—had to be accommodated by the dominant ideology. The social reorganization accomplished between the years 1870 and 1920 provided the structural support for this ideological shift. The rise of corporate capitalism transformed the larger market in which professions operate; it provided a new context of ideological and organizational resources for . . . [professional aggrandizement].\textsuperscript{47}

Military events were an important catalyst in this transformation, and the leading generals of the Civil War had first learned their trade at West Point a generation before. The experience of modern war, of organization and sacrifice on an unprecedented scale in the pursuit of political and cultural centralization, prepared the way for a society more receptive to limits and restraints, more amenable to rules and institutions. According to historian John L. Thomas, "young Emersonians returned from combat convinced that professionalism, discipline, and subordination . . . were essential . . . A new emphasis on leadership, and performance was replacing the benevolent amateurism of the [antebellum] perfectionists." The professions flourished in this new environment, where the "objective" architectonic of science—the empirical discovery of rational, putatively transpolitical rules of material
order--and its correlate of utilitarian "efficiency" reigned supreme. The growing scale and scope of economic and cultural endeavour stimulated by railroads and the telegraph necessitated and was in turn fed by the development of new systems of organization and administration--in a word, bureaucracy.48

Professionals were among the leading agents of bureaucratization after the war. Organizations and codes of conduct that had been forced to adapt to local circumstances (and had often failed and disintegrated in the attempt) now operated in a more supportive atmosphere, where methods and standards were increasingly uniform throughout the nation. But the individual and collective goals of professionals remained the same--to receive prestige and authority for doing intellectually stimulating and psychologically satisfying work within a framework that provided economic security, cognitive autonomy at work, and the opportunity to gain prestige. For individual professionals, bureaucracy provided a life of safely predictable individual opportunity through cognitive standardization, credentialing, and incorporation into organizations at once specialized and hierarchical--that is, by providing autonomy in daily work and both opportunity and the security of scheduled mobility through the concept of career.49

Indeed, Larson asserts that "far from being in conflict with the model of profession, the 'bureaucratic phenomenon' creates the structural context of successful professionalization" by ordering career patterns more securely than ever before. Historian Burton Bledstein labels the restructuring of late nineteenth century American society on the basis of career "the culture of professionalism," "a cultural process by which the middle class in America matured and defined itself." Like Samuel Haber, Bledstein draws together different interpretations of the motives of American professionals by focusing
on their aspirations as individuals for prestige and authority while attaining
economic security and freedom from stifling supervision in their daily
routine, desiderata that army officers attained for the most part within their
own professional bureaucracy. Bledstein suggests that "the middle-class
person required a more reliable institutional world in which to liberate
individual energy" amidst the apparent chaos and disorder of the post-Civil
War era. Postbellum aspirants found this reliable order in the university,
which (like West Point for army officers) "provided the testing ground for the
kind of world an energetic middle class sought to create for itself." In turn, "it
became the function of the schools in America to legitimize the authority of
the middle class by appealing to the universality and objectivity [the fairness]
of 'science.'"\textsuperscript{50}

Professionalism thus provided a vehicle for structuring individual,
occupational, and class aspiration and achievement; it reinforced the
\textit{mentalit\'e} of future orientation, planning, and goal commitment needed to
comprehend and act upon the potential for vertical mobility, personal
aggrandizement, and security embodied in the concept of career. Civilian
professionalism became an exercise in individual, cognitive, and social
definition and distinction that theoretically made meritocratic competition
possible without the necessity for the 'unnatural' distortions of state
regulation and intervention. Career and identity melded together and
reinforced one another. Success would depend solely on individual qualities,
and natural specialization by talent and vocation would determine social
status, yet in doing so would foster and justify social distinctions of class and
authority. As Bledstein observes, "the professional person released nature's
potential and rearranged" it on putatively rational grounds that were
recognized as unequal yet accepted as the products of a fair competition. "For
middle class Americans, the culture of professionalism provided an orderly explanation of basic natural processes that democratic societies, with their historical need to reject traditional authority, required": "[S]cience established a rational and orderly process of development beneath the fragmented experiences of American life." Professionalism meant a self-disciplined autonomy, the expression of self within moral bounds, the responsible resolution (insofar as this is possible) of the constant clash between ambition and discipline. For army officers this process had begun a half-century before in the classrooms of West Point, as individual ambition, occupational discipline, and social responsibility were reconciled in the security of bureaucratic accountability to civilian political control and institutional employment by the nation-state.51
Chapter XVII

1 Daniel H. Calhoun, Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), ch. 1; Bruce A. Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America: A History (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), ch. 2. A "revolution in choices" is Robert H. Wiebe's phrase, in The Opening of American Society. See also Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution; and among authors unsympathetic to this transformation see Rowland Berthoff, An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) and Sellers, The Market Revolution. Broad studies of Jacksonian and antebellum culture contain few reflections on the role of the professions as an ideal or way of life. Examples include Rush Welter, The Mind of America, 1820-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), and Lewis Perry, Boats Against the Current: American Culture Between Revolution and Modernity, 1820-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), though Perry does use the professions as an example of the restlessness, insecurity, mobility, and search for interesting and psychologically satisfying work he finds characteristic of the era (pp. 181-91). Donald M. Scott, "The Profession That Vanished: Public Lecturing in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," in Gerald L. Geison, ed. Professions and Professional Ideologies in America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), pp. 12-28, makes a similar analysis, and Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism, sees the lyceum movement as an agency of middle class formation that supported the development of mentalités conducive to professionalism (p. 26). Surveys of Jacksonian America give virtually no attention to the professions per se. Note that this chapter depends on an historiography heavily biased by the lack of literature on regions outside the northeast. There is a growing body of scholarly work on the professions in the South, but the basic works on the American professions are primarily drawn from northern experience. Samuel Haber's focus on Cincinnati and Memphis in his section on the Jacksonian era in The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750-1900 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) is the outstanding exception.


3 Larson, The Rise of Professionalism, chs. 5 and 8 (first quotation from 57); Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, Part
I (second quotation from 6): Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 1; Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, ch. 2. See Perkin, Origins of Modern English Society, chs. 4-7, especially pp. 237-52, for an assessment of the dislocation fostered by industrialization and the ideological reactions (particularly in reassertions of traditional communitarian values) to it. There is no such authoritative interpretive synthesis in the literature on the industrial transformation of American society, though Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution, provides one of great power for the democratization of the early republic. Sellers, The Market Revolution, makes the attempt, with what seems probable to be a generally accepted theme overall, and often with acute insight, but in a polemical and deterministic way that often undermines the persuasiveness of his argument. See also Wiebe, The Opening of American Society, which, like his assessment of American society in general, is much more open to the existence of nonbinary alternatives.

4 Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, ch. 2; Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, ch. 1. See Timothy D. Hall, Contested Boundaries: Itinerancy and the Reshaping of Colonial American Religious World (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994) regarding itinerant practice. Larson does not consider the clergy or military officers in her reflections, because they "do not transact their services on the market" (The Rise of Professionalism, p. xvii). They do have competitors for jurisdiction, however, in both the cognitive and organizational spheres (psychiatry and the militia, for example), and both must appeal to public opinion for their legitimacy and authority. Indeed, I hope that my work suggests numerous instances where Larson's insights are applicable to both occupations.

5 See Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 4 ("Permanency in the New England Clergy: The General Problem and the New Hampshire Case"); Patricia Bonomi, "Stewards of the Mysteries of God": Clerical Authority and the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies," in Geison, ed., Professions and Professional Ideologies in America, pp. 31-47; and in general Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966). Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, ch. 2, gives extensive statistics on the educations and compensation received by the different professions. His observations are weighted towards the New England colonies; the decline of ministerial authority he describes was already much farther advanced in the others, where clerical establishments were comparatively weak to begin with.
A number of historians have seen the American colonies outside of New England moving toward a more stable and hierarchical social order in the early and mid-eighteenth century; for a broad synthesis of this view see Berthoff, *An Unsettled People*. American society was certainly becoming more organized and cosmopolitan (particularly in the cities and at the upper income levels where activities not directly economic in function became increasingly possible and desirable), and its growing institutional density was closely related to the search for upward social mobility through the emulation of English elites. John M. Murrin, "Anglicizing an American Colony: The Transformation of Provincial Massachusetts" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1966) is the prototypical example of this "Anglicization thesis."

Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British America and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), on the other hand, emphasizes the relative openness of American colonial societies outside of New England, and historians of American radicalism and southern evangelicism paint pictures of extensive discontent that occasionally burst forth in turmoil. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, presents the strongest recent synthetic statement of the transformation of American society in a more individualistic and less hierarchical direction during and after the Revolution, but in doing so Wood postulates a relatively static "monarchical society" before it. Wood's picture of the colonial period is as highly nuanced as the rest of his work; he portrays trends in both directions, overtly towards *mentalités* and structures supporting traditional forms of ascribed authority and status and more quietly towards the articulation of a libertarian and eventually democratic ideology of meritocratic individual self-determination.

The diversity of scholarly opinion on this topic is in great part due to the wide range of issues involved and analytic perspectives available: the colonial societies clearly became more stratified by wealth- and land-holding, and an array of new institutions appeared, but individuals increasingly struck out on their own, regardless of or in opposition to hierarchical or centralized structures. In doing so, many people were also abandoning and undermining traditional communal attachments, as studies of New England towns have so thoroughly demonstrated, or creating stronger communities of association through individual self-selection, as in the evangelical sects of the late colonial South. The most telling portent of the society to come lay in the development of the New England and Mid-Atlantic seaports, where social wealth and authority became increasingly stratified without becoming more stable as a result--a good characterization of the effects of market economies and modernization in general. Opportunity did not produce equality. This is the phenomenon that the critics of the shift to commercial agriculture
lament, along with the loss of traditional communal identities, which, though more constraining than many modern scholars are willing to admit, do provide a more secure basis for the self (though not necessarily a more "natural" one, unless this means never being aware of alternatives). On the other hand, equality did breed opportunity, which is the most essential encapsulation of Wood's thesis (and American ideals) that I can give. Richard D. Brown, Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976) is a synthesis that fuses these different aspects and suggests their function as the basis for psychological change in a democratic direction.

My references to the ministry are based primarily on the experience of the Protestant denominations, primarily the Congregational and Presbyterian ones of New England. The southern clergy were much less established in institutional and career terms (aside from the weak Anglican establishments before the Revolution), at least until the antebellum period, when a measure of specialization and organization-building developed as the Baptists and Methodists moved from sects to denominations. Most southern denominations were intensely and overwhelmingly evangelical, and congregations were often quite hostile to extralocal institutionalization. (The anti-missionary movement of the 1820s and 1830s provides a good example of this.) Doctrinal and methodological articulation were usually subordinated to the practical application of revivalist fervor. Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), discusses the alienation of evangelicals from "worldly" secular society, which appears to have been more extreme than that of New Lights in New England and the Middle Colonies. The basic work on southern evangelicalism remains Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); see also John B. Boles, "The Discovery of Southern Religious History," in Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham, ed. John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), pp. 510-48, and Anne C. Loveland, Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), which covers many of the topics Donald M. Scott does for New England.

There is little general literature about the Catholic or Jewish clergy in colonial and antebellum America, but the debates among them in response to American conditions after the Civil War contain many parallels to those among Protestants then and a hundred years before. More generally, see Sidney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972) and Nathan O. Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989).


8 Scott, From Office to Profession, ch. 3 (quotations on p. 37). Calhoun observes that disestablishment had little real effect, because denominational competition had been so vigorous already (Professional Lives in America, p. 163), but disestablishment did provide the ultimate confirmation of the clergy's loss of state sponsorship. The literature on evangelical reform has grown to vast proportions; Charles I. Foster, An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960) provides a starting point and narrative detail.

9 Scott, From Office to Profession, ch. 4 (quotation from p. 56). Most of the ministers in Scott's sample had one or more sons in the clergy (p. 55), and about one-third of Massachusetts clergymen came from clerical households (Gerard W. Gawalt, The Promise of Power: The Emergence of the Legal Profession in Massachusetts, 1760-1840, Contributions in Legal Studies 6 [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979], Table 29, p. 204).
10 Scott, From Office to Profession, ch. 4.

11 Ibid., chs. 4 and 7 (statistics at pp. 74 and 68), and Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 4. The parallel between bureaucratization, the growth of staff and support organizations, and career differentiation and status hierarchies in the ministry and the army is unmistakable.

12 Scott, From Office to Profession, chs. 5 and 6 (quotation from p. 108).

13 Ibid., ch. 7 (quotation from p. 115), statistics at pp. 114-15 and 120. Up to a third of all New England ministers sought material aid from professional associations when in their forties or fifties during this period. Half of the Congregational ministers in northern New England held temporary posts in 1858. In the South the average figure for the clergy throughout this period was only one-sixth, but by 1861 it had increased to over a quarter of the total, illustrating patterns of change ultimately similar to those in the North.

14 Ibid., ch. 7. Bonomi, "Stewards of the Mysteries of God," p. 45, observes that intraprofessional reconciliation during and after the Great Awakening was little hindered by theology, and this appears to have been the case a century later as well.


16 Scott, From Office to Profession, chs. 7-9.

17 Ibid. (quotations on pp. 128-30); Forgie, Patricide in the House Divided, ch. 5 ("Sentimental Regression from Politics to Domesticity"); Higham, From Boundlessness to Consolidation, especially p. 27; and Boles, "The Discovery of Southern Religious History," in Interpreting Southern History, pp. 514-15, n. 7 (which cites works pertinent to the disputes over slavery).

More positively, Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, Book One ("The Evangelical Basis"), notes the implicit association contemporaries often
made between revival and Union and views revivalism as "a gallant effort, by insisting on the purity of American hearts, to to conserve the Republic" (p. 72). John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," American Quarterly 17 (Winter 1965): 656-81, believes that the revival impulse began with conservative ends but was redirected under the pressure of perfectionism once deterministic concepts like predestination were rejected. W. David Lewis, "The Reformer as Conservative: Protestant Counter-Subversion," in The Development of an American Culture, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), pp. 80-111, also provides some parallels.

Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, p. 157, applies the term commodification to the new conception of the ministerial role and its production. He emphasizes the salience of internally derived occupational status and identity in the mid-century ministry: "[O]rientation to the community had been replaced by orientation to the clerical profession and to the denomination" (pp. 170-71 and 174). See also Martin E. Marty, "The Clergy," in Hatch, ed., The Professions in American History, pp. 73-92, who stresses the shift from public (as a "church," in the classic typology) to denominational and ultimately private ministerial service (p. 77). (Within this schema, congregationalism is regarded simply as a form of organization.) Marty writes that "the essence of . . . modern religion is choice" and "the reaction to [social] diffusion is a renewed specificity" in the religious choices offered (pp. 84 and 86) (or niche marketing, to use appropriately consumerist language), which I think neatly encapsulates these movements in the relationship between New England ministers and their clients.

Paul H. Mattingly, The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century (New York: New York University Press, 1975) observes a similar phenomenon among those who trained teachers for the elementary and secondary schools, but in this case the tendency to avoid conflict was present from the very beginning, inherent in the occupation's worldview because of the more middling social origins of its practitioners and its more elite founders' desire to foster more harmonious social relations. Like Scott's, his picture is one of professional declension, in which the schoolmens' conscious efforts to avoid social controversy, internal stratification, and politicization led to conceptions of the professional role so vague as to render the occupation powerless, if not simply irrelevant, in its relations with society.

Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, ch. 3 (quotation from p. 73); Blackstone quoted in Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, p. 143; Gawalt, The Promise of Power, ch. 1; and A.G.

19 Gawalt, The Promise of Power, pp. 22 and 28 (quotation); Johnson, Professions and Power, p. 29. When I refer to "attorneys," "lawyers," or "trained lawyers" I normally mean those trained in accordance with state statutory requirements.

20 Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, ch. 3; Gawalt, The Promise of Power, p. 13 (statistic).

21 Gawalt, The Promise of Power, pp. 5 (quotation) and 68 (statistics); Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, ch. 3, especially pp. 138-47. The proportion of Yale graduates choosing law over the ministry in the periods 1701 to 1792 and 1793 to 1815 was almost reversed, from fifteen to thirty-five to thirty-three to nineteen (Gawalt, Table 14, p. 141).

The new use of "professional" was the fourth of Kimball's "rhetorical moments" in the changing etymology of the concept of profession. He also points to the growing use of the word "service" to mean a specific action or process, often contracted for on a fee basis, rather than its earlier use to mean vocation or duty. "Architectonic" is Kimball's term; here he means an overriding concern with the problems of politics, rather than those of the soul, or of science and technology. His word "polity" therefore includes republicanism, liberalism, and whatever other paradigms scholars may use to classify contemporary ideas, rather than referring to a specific nation as is usually the case. Kimball argues convincingly that the law emerged as a profession before the Civil War, despite the absence of national organizations, and that postbellum professional organizations were the culmination rather than the foundations of professional community (The "True Professional Ideal" in America, p. 195).

See also Larson, The Rise of Professionalism, ch. 8; Maxwell Bloomfield, American Lawyers in a Changing Society, 1776-1876 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); and Miller, The Life of the Mind in America. Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution, p. 346, provides an apt citation from Jefferson: "[Law] qualifies a man to be useful to himself, to his neighbors, and to the public. It is the most certain stepping stone to preferment in the political line" (Jefferson to Thomas Mann.


23 Gawalt, The Promise of Power, ch. 5 and p. 102; Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, p. 76; Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, p. 151; Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 3 ("Branding Iron and Retrospect: Lawyers in the Cumberland River Country"). See also Stephen Botein, "What We Shall Meet Afterwards in Heaven: Judgeship as a Symbol for Modern American Lawyers," in Geison, ed. Professions and Professional Ideologies in America, pp. 49-69.

24 Gawalt, The Promise of Power, pp. 105 and 154, and ch. 4; Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, Book Two, ch. 2 and pp. 138 and 149. Bloomfield, American Lawyers in a Changing Society, p. 137, asserts that lawyers in the Jacksonian era "were even more likely than their predecessors to cherish a narrow vocational outlook."

25 Gawalt, The Promise of Power, ch. 5 and p. 102.


For a more positive viewpoint, see J. Willard Hurst, Law and the Conditions of Freedom in the Nineteenth Century United States (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956).

28 Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, Book Two, chs. 1 and 7 and pp. 103-104, 161 (source of second quotation, from Professor Simon Greenleaf of Harvard Law School in 1838), 241, 254-55 (quotations, italics in original), 257, and 264. I found Miller indispensable for an understanding of this conflict of worldviews. He views it largely within the context of developing American nationalism and the self-conscious search for a flexible but cohesive framework for American national unity and a cultural identity separate from Europe. Both codifiers and anticodifiers partook in some form in the shift toward consolidation in American culture and society in the 1850s. Miller, p. 206, sees a sense of intellectual constriction and retreat in the law of that decade (aside from the residual perfectionism of codifiers like David Dudley Field): "By this time the mighty tomes of Kent and Story seemed the creations of a far-off era, when the mind had had free play."

29 Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 1; Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, p. 77. Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, p. 162, observes that the lawyers were well aware of the popular distrust for "a body of men who arrived at eminence only by subordinating their avarice and ambition to the rules of their material" (though more recent historians would point out that it was this not-impartial material which sustained their economic influence and power).

30 Bloomfield, American Lawyers in a Changing Society, 1776-1876, pp. 142 and 148 (quotations), 150, 166, 169, and 180.

31 Ibid., pp. 145, 152, 160-61, and 184-86 (quotation from 184); Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, Book Two, ch. 4 and pp. 166, 188, 192-98, and 206.

32 Bloomfield, American Lawyers in a Changing Society, 1776-1876, pp. 174, 177, and 183; Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, Book Two, chs. 4-5 and pp. 135, 166, 190-92, and 215-16. See John William Ward, "Jacksonian Democratic Thought: 'A Natural Charter of Privilege,'" in The Development of an American Culture, eds. Coben and Ratner, pp. 58-79, for a classic exposition of these tropes. These values were not all shared in the same form by the Jacksonians and the early Victorians, nor by all of one or the other. The overlap between Jacksonian and early Victorian culture has not received much explicit attention from scholars, but there were numerous points of intersection and similarity. I would especially suggest their presence in the
perfectionist and millenial impulses which one finds in Jacksonian antimonopolyism and the hard-money crusade and among the Democratically aligned legal codifiers and medical Thompsonians as well as in abolitionism and the evangelical "benevolent empire" (usually assumed to be Whiggish in its political and cultural allegiances). Daniel Feller, The Jacksonian Promise: America, 1815-1840 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) provides a rare sense of the underlying similarities between these groups. For a broad survey of Victorian culture in America (and there are far fewer than one might expect), see Daniel Walker Howe, "Victorian Culture in America," in Victorian America, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), pp. 3-28. Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, chs. 4-5, stresses the role of the professions in local civic leadership and as a force for social order. (See especially pp. 124, 131, 142, and 161-62.)

Scott, "The Profession That Vanished," in Geison, ed., Professions and Professional Ideologies in America, pp. 12-28, suggests that lyceum lecturing satisfied an "interpretive imperative" in American culture: "[T]he lecturer's essential purpose was . . . either explicitly or implicitly, to deepen the audience's awareness of American character and custom" (p. 25). "[T]he lecturing system was thought to bind far-flung and disparate Americans into a common culture, transcending the differences that fragmented American society" (p. 26).

33 Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, p. 67; Gawalt, The Promise of Power, p. 5 and Tables 20 and 21 (pp. 172 and 175). Gawalt's statistics may be somewhat illusory, because we have no comparable set for southern or western states, where there was probably greater room for non-elites to make their way in the legal profession, but the role Boston played as a financial center and locus of reform organizations made these men prominent players in the spread of market capitalism and what Peter Dobkin Hall labels "the organization of American culture" and society. See Hall, The Organization of American Culture. Bloomfield, American Lawyers in a Changing Society, p. 137, and Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, p. 195-96, agree with Gawalt's periodization of legal professionalization, although Kimball emphasizes group consciousness and social hostility as the impetus for professionalization in a fairly traditional way, while Gawalt stresses the alternatives available to lawyers as individuals rather than as a "professional polity," whose authority came primarily from economic rather than political developments and employment. In other words, Kimball's focus is on the opportunities and dilemmas presented by the consequences of the American revolution, Gawalt's on those--more uniform--matters of opportunity for lawyers--of what historians now call the
market revolution. (Gawalt's conception of the legal profession is also based more on the specific circumstances of American legal practice rather than ideal-typical definitions. It is therefore more flexible, though perhaps more presentist.) Both Kimball and Bloomfield agree that traditional accounts of professional decline mistake formal organizations for the substance of professional strength (pp. 194 and 137 respectively), but Bloomfield's argument stresses the rhetoric of contemporary legal propagandists who focused more on the social roles and characteristics of lawyers than on their actual duties. Miller's perspective in The Life of the Mind in America is different from the others because of his focus on cognitive phenomena such as cultural nationalism and the law per se.

34 Gawalt, The Promise of Power, p. 183 (quotation).


36 Haber, The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, ch. 2 (quotation from p. 45); Kett, The Formation of the American Medical Profession, ch. 1; Rothstein, American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century, chs. 1, 4, and 7. Haber notes the importance of association in the Continental (and Union and Confederate) Army medical corps for future professional connections and association (pp. 65, 149, and 185), as does Calhoun (p. 28).

37 Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 2, especially pp. 47-50 (quotation from pp. 56-57). For discussions of the "irregular" sects, see Kett, The Formation of the American Medical Profession, chs. 4-5, and Rothstein, American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century, chs. 7-8. William R. Johnson, "Education and Professional Life Styles: Law and Medicine in the Nineteenth Century," History of Education Quarterly 14 (Summer 1974): 185-207, suggests that law schools were less significant (and thus less controversial) than medical ones because lawyers' work was ultimately that of public theater rather than proto-scientific cognition.

38 Calhoun, Professional Lives in America, ch. 2 (quotations on pp. 56-58); Larson, The Rise of Professionalism, ch. 8. See also Haber, The Quest for
Authority and Honor in the American Professions, Part II (especially pp. 180-83); Kett, The Formation of the American Medical Profession, chs. 2-3; and Rothstein, American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century, chs. 4-6. See Robert H. Wiebe, The Segmented Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); idem., The Opening of American Society; and Thomas Bender, Community and Social Change in America (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978) for broad synthetic treatments of the American alloy of community and individual.

39 The literature on party development and reform movements is too vast to even touch on here. See George H. Daniels, American Science in the Age of Jackson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) regarding scientists and Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum, concerning penal reformers. Concentrating on teacher training for the public elementary and secondary schools rather than that for collegiate teaching, Mattingly, The Classless Profession, examines educators' unfulfilled quest for professional status and blames its failure on vague cognitive foundations and a primarily lower middle class (and increasingly female) social base. "Professors" at the higher level saw themselves as professionals but appear to have had little group consciousness until the rise of the university system in the 1880s. (See Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism, and Laurence R. Veysey, The Emergence of the American University [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965].) Kimball, The "True Professional Ideal" in America, ch. 4, postulates that education and science became the premier fields of professional endeavour after Reconstruction (although I find his evidence for the authority of educators unconvincing for those outside of the universities and colleges).

40 Shallat, "Structures in the Stream," chs. 1 (p. 61) and 3; Calhoun, The American Civil Engineer, ch. 8.

41 Ibid., quotations on pp. 183, 182, and 199 respectively.

42 Larson, The Rise of Professionalism, pp. 133-34 (italics in original). I would demur, however, from reductionist, materialist, and presentist statements that "the enlargement of the professions brought about by the Jacksonian movement, and above all, by laissez-faire economic development, did not mean democratization" and that "in the professions as elsewhere, Jacksonian democracy attacked the forms, but not the substance, of inequality" (pp. 133-34).

Haber, *The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions,* Part II: Overview (first and third quotations on 105 and 113, my italics); Calhoun, *Professional Lives in America,* ch. 5; Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism,* ch. 8 (second quotation from 133, italics in original). Larson stresses the cognitive and structural advantages lawyers had over doctors: the latter lacked an institutional base like the courts, since hospitals were small, rare, and poorly funded; and the former applied doctrines formally created by external authorities, and thus less subject to controversy.

Charles E. Rosenberg, "The Therapeutic Revolution: Medicine, Meaning, and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Therapeutic Revolution: Essays in the Social History of American Medicine,* eds. Morris J. Vogel and Charles E. Rosenberg (Philadelphia: University Press of Pennsylvania, 1979), pp. 3-25, sketches out a gradual shift in the late nineteenth century from medicine as a cultural ritual enacted in local contexts to a scientific procedure appealing to translocal values for its legitimacy. This change was part of the more general move from holistic to specific and empirical modes of thought and from personalistic to impersonal forms of human interaction—characteristics both of bureaucratic development and the trend from boundlessness to consolidation (or constraint) in American life. Many patients and practitioners resisted this transformation, setting humanistic values of balance and art against fears of impersonal (distant, uninspired, and thus potentially unaccountable) sterility. Gerald N. Geison's essay "Divided We Stand: Physiologists and Clinicians in the American Context" (in ibid., pp. 67-90) examines a similar division between academic specialists and general practitioners, who considered physiology 'mechanical' (artificial and inauthentic). See also John Harley Warner, "Power, Conflict, and Identity in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Medicine: Therapeutic Change at the Commercial Hospital in Cincinnati," *JAH* 73 (March 1987): 934-56.


Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, pp. 276-86 and 345-47, contains an excellent discussion of the newly glorified cultural meaning of work in the Middle Period. Although Wood suggests that "intellectual and bodily work, the liberal and mechanical arts, . . . working for the public and working for profit . . . were casually collapsed into a single category" by contemporary publicists like Edward Everett (p. 284), he also acknowledges that Everett was forced to do so in order to appeal to a working class audience. Although Tocqueville was impressed by the peculiarly American celebration of work, he also commented extensively on the American's anxious drive for distinction from (and over) his fellows. Middle class Americans increasingly aspired to refinement and gentility, and the professions provided both through creative, intellectually satisfying work under conditions of substantial individual autonomy—distinction of all sorts from the masses. See Persons, *The Decline of American Gentility*, and Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, for different views of the cultural status of gentility in the nineteenth century; Persons examines the New England Brahmins and similar elites, while Bushman discusses the middle class (albeit largely the upper echelons thereof), thus their contrasting images of declension and aspiration.


51 Ibid., pp. 90 and 326.
Conclusion

Professionalism, Bureaucracy, and Class and State Formation: The Wider Significance of the Army Officer Corps in Nineteenth-Century America
Though initially a narrow study of professionalism, this dissertation has become an inquiry into the connections between organizational structure and culture; class and other social attitudes and values; the "professional" habits and values created through the mingling of organization, occupational socialization, and client needs and demands; and the growth of the American nation-state and the elaboration of its sovereignty along the borders and frontiers. In the process I have consistently stressed the forms and processes by which military professionalism was socially constructed, whether in terms of expertise, jurisdiction, or work itself. My central concern has been to connect officers' behaviour to the question of social responsibility and accountability to civilian political control. In doing so, I have sought to demonstrate the decisive importance of officers' employment by the nation-state in perhaps the largest, most far-flung organization in the United States at that time. Each of these factors had a profound influence on the way the officer corps developed and the work officers did. State sponsorship meant security, but it also meant oversight, which was exercised by legislators obsessed with fiscal economy. On the whole, however, officers' incomes and careers were far more secure than those of American civilian professionals, or than those of their predecessors in the army before 1815, who had frequently been subject to crisis-induced expansions and reductions in force size. This security led to longer careers, greater experience, and on the whole more expert officers, though without a retirement system it also tended to produce superannuated senior officers. Even the latter phenomenon was not without an ironic consequence, however, for the incapacity of these men for field command allowed more junior officers to hold responsibilities well above those of their formal ranks, mitigating the damage the sluggish
promotion system wrought to officers' command experience and the army's capability.

The study of the officer corps presents important implications for our understanding of the nuances of professional autonomy. Civilian control meant that the officer corps could not choose its own clients or missions, but given the poor communications technology available, the army's dispersal along thousands of miles of borders and frontiers meant that officers exercised substantial autonomy in their day-to-day work maintaining the army as an organization. Even in their active operations upholding national sovereignty, officers received little guidance from their civilian superiors, who usually left the execution of policy to the commanders on the spot unless criticism from local civilians led to a congressional investigation. Indeed, both the size and dispersal of the army forced senior officers and civil officials to decentralize authority even as the army was becoming increasingly organized and specialized during this period. This was done both to improve its warfighting capability and to permit the delegation of authority by standardizing and rationalizing procedures intended to depersonalize its exercise and ensure accountability from the periphery to the center. Bureaucracy thus reinforced the growth of accountability; greater organization may have reduced the individual officers' autonomy (which was certainly nothing like that of civilian practitioners of medicine and law), but it contributed to the growth of habits of accountability which are closer to the heart of a socially responsible definition of professionalism, and given the improvement in the army's combat performance between 1812 and 1847 it hardly seems as though the additional regulations and paperwork damaged the army's capability or effectiveness.
The army's professionalism also benefitted from a centralized institution for training and socialization that no other profession in the United States possessed. (Indeed, few of the officers of the European armies attended schools for postsecondary education, whereas virtually all of their American counterparts did so during the years between 1821 and 1836.) The West Point experience set a tone for the officer corps based on the shared values and habits encapsulated in the motto "duty, honor, country": responsibility and obedience, integrity and faithfulness, and patriotism and nationalism. All three meant disinterestedness, service, and accountability, the essences of professionalism. In social terms, honor also meant gentility, especially in the form of holding oneself independent of external control and refusing to accept insult or degradation. In this sense, the appearance of disinterestedness actually masked the self-interested urge to be recognized and given respect as a leader and a man of prominence—if only as a comparatively highly educated agent of the national government on the local social scene—and at this point the officer's personal ego and professional superego (or his sense of ethics and accountability) often came into conflict, sometimes with its employers but more often with fellow officers.

Indeed, at West Point the officer candidate's socialization was a force for cohesion, but this unifying experience was followed by endemic dissension in the daily life of the regiments, and both patterns of behaviour were based largely on civilian social values of gentility (or in more specific form, honor) rather than specifically or uniquely "military" ones. In other words, officers were far from isolated from the social values and attitudes of their parent society, and the most thorough socialization and elaborate bureaucracy then known in the United States did little to constrain the
continual quarrels among officers and between different suborganizations within the army, conflicts which commonly illustrated the close ties between arguments made in the language of specialized functional efficiency and more self-interested motives. Indeed, the very process of organization created new opportunities for individuals and branches to extend their authority, while for others bureaucratization threatened their existing jurisdiction and authority. Organization therefore fostered conflict as well as accountability, by creating new sources of authority and by setting up new boundaries and relationships between groups and individuals. Ironically, however, this very lack of cohesion increased the army's accountability to civilian political control by spurring officers to seek political intervention not as representatives of a unitary military interest, as was often the case in Europe, but as individuals seeking patronage or the agents of units and branches seeking to enhance their authority and jurisdiction. As was the case regarding its autonomy, the officer corps' cohesion may have suffered from state sponsorship in some respects, but the product was greater professionalism.

Paying attention to the contingency, nuance, and complexity of the officer corps' professional work and its development as an institutionally organized occupation requires that we accept the frequent--indeed the almost constant--overlap between categories of definition and analysis like "expertise," "cohesion," and "responsibility," and their implications for one another. As these examples indicate, it is virtually impossible--and highly arbitrary--to single out a phenomenon and attempt to conclusively label it a matter of accountability, autonomy, or cohesion, and I have tried to stress the constantly overlapping connections between different dimensions and
consequences of professional practice. Indeed, the overlap and the
connections were much more "real" than the artificially distinctive categories
applied by scholars searching for the progressive fulfillment of a state of grace
which can be labelled professional. Moreover, the pattern of these
connections shifts whenever we examine it from a new angle, leading
repeatedly to the appearance of paradox, irony, and ambiguity. Thus from
another perspective accountability to state sponsorship and control led to
greater cohesion, as officers intermittently fought hostile congressmen to
retain or improve their compensation or to refute attacks on the army as an
institution. Nevertheless, their subordination to congressional control
caused officers to seek alliances rather than to attempt to suborn a legislature
that controlled their salaries and (ultimately) their promotion.

These alliances were personal rather than overtly partisan in character,
because the army officers' entire mentalité of disinterested service and duty to
country led them to regard partisan activism with suspicion and often
distaste. This does not mean that officers were isolated, alienated, or
antipolitical, however, for many of them—especially the young junior officers
who grew up during the evolution of the second party system—followed
elections and intraparty maneuvers, of which they were well-informed by
their connections in Washington. This interest in politics should not
surprise us at all, since the army was dependent on state sponsorship and its
officers came into frequent contact with political leaders and elected officials,
both in the course of their official duties and in the social intercourse between
men of similar class backgrounds. Officers certainly found much of
"Jacksonian" life distasteful, but so did many civilians—the key is not the
presence of a distinctly, uniquely, or specifically military mindset, but the
tvalues of order, stability, and hierarchy that officers shared with many Whigs.

As in any other aspect of the officer corps' attitudes and behaviour, age,
rank, and the consequent experience and connections were important factors
shaping their political interactions. West Point provided a socialization in
nationalism, which could lead to either antipartisanship or to an interest in
the doings of the government and its leaders, responses that often depended
on the situation in question and whether an individual officer was angered
by congressional attacks on the army or the Military Academy. The army's
senior officers (the generals and the staff chiefs) were unavoidably drawn
toward the political arena by their very power and prestige as government
officials, but with the exception of Winfield Scott they avoided contact with
partisan politics between 1830 and 1845. Though certainly well-acquainted in
political circles, middle-ranking commanders were perhaps the least overtly
attentive to partisan affairs; as historian Arthur Wade suggests, field grade
officers formed the "hard core of the nonpolitical leadership of the army."

This nonpartisanship, or at least partisan neutrality, was most
significantly manifested in the officer corps' conduct of constabulary
operations along the nation's borders and frontiers, from the Texas frontier
beginning in 1819 to the Canadian border during the late 1830s and in the
enforcement of nonintercourse laws and the Indian removal policy in the
country's internal borderlands throughout this era. Though faced with
considerable opposition and criticism from local civilians who sought a freer
hand to engage in territorial expansion and land theft, army officers
consistently carried out federal policies, even when they felt qualms or
ished for more aggressive action themselves. My close attention to the evolution of the army's accountability to civilian control through its practical work in the borderlands is the most original aspect of this dissertation, and one with wider significance than for the study of military professionalism alone, for it helps to explain both officers' nonpartisanship and the consolidation of the federal government's authority in borderlands areas where national sovereignty was contested by Indians and local whites. Aside from the era of the Hartford Convention, historians have tended to see the sovereignty of the federal nation-state relatively unchallenged between the end of the Federalist era and the onset of the sectional crisis, and they have viewed filibustering as a phenomena primarily of the early national period (prior to 1815) or the 1850s. This was not so. Aside from the Florida border before 1820 and the Canadian one during the Patriot crises, the Texas border remained in turmoil throughout the period from 1815 to 1846, and our consciousness of the fragility of federal control over land allocation and military action during the early republic is even greater when we recognize squatting and Indian removal as processes of internal conquest, colonization, and consolidation, the "violent incorporation" of America.

Long known to scholars as "agents of empire" or Manifest Destiny, army officers played a much more highly nuanced role in American territorial expansion than most historians, even those of the army, would recognize. Purely material self-interest played a much less powerful role than one might expect, for the army was never really substantially increased in size between 1815 and 1845, and since promotions were by seniority there was little reason for the ordinary officer to hope that his duties on the frontiers would bring him higher rank and compensation. Indeed, after the conquest
of Florida the army's role in the borderlands was one of peacekeeping and policing, which often meant restraining white settlers rather than Indians, until the onset of the removal policy during the 1830s, and even as the army struggled to expel the Seminoles from Florida its actions on the border with Texas continued to be essentially nonexpansionist in nature. A few officers resigned to join the Texan rebels, but Edmund Gaines, Andrew Jackson's aggressive subordinate in Florida twenty years before, acted responsibly by executing government policy without exceeding the boundaries of his instructions.

In other words, with the single exception of Jackson's conquest of Florida near the beginning of this period (which followed the trend of a decade of government policy and was for all intents and purposes tacitly sanctioned by the Monroe administration), the army's role in furthering American territorial expansion and the expropriation of the Indians was undertaken in subordination to the policies of the civilian government, and officers did not initiate aggression themselves. Despite the sense of responsibility that frontier officers like Gaines felt for American settlers, and the remarkable--indeed by today's standards incredible--lattitude in the directions given to them by the central government, officers did not exploit explosive situations on the borders for their own gain or aggrandizement. Though officers certainly shared the ethnocentricity that facilitated the conquest and exploitation of Amerindians and the Mexican Southwest, their lack of aggressiveness does speak well of the corps' sense of accountability to the central government which employed it, and in a broader sense of its responsibility to the Constitution and the fundamental principle of civilian control over issues of war and peace. Insofar as the members of the officer
corps were racists, national chauvinists, and imperialists, they followed the course of Anglo-American society rather than preceding it.

Indeed, though senior commanders commonly gave exaggerated estimates of the potential threats they faced, the army officer corps did not promote war scares, attempt to mobilize chauvinism against Indians, Mexicans, or Britons, or otherwise exploit its expertise and jurisdiction for purposes of organizational aggrandizement. In contrast, Burton Bledstein observes that as the vanguard of the "therapeutic revolution" in late nineteenth-century America, professional "practitioners succeeded by playing on the weaknesses of the client, his vulnerability, helplessness, and general anxiety": "The culture of professionalism tended to cultivate an atmosphere of constant crisis . . . in which practitioners both created work for themselves and reinforced their authority by intimidating clients." This was not the case in the army of the Jacksonian era, for officers knew well enough that the United States was not seriously threatened by external attack, and they were probably too fearful of the danger of politicization to their occupational security to seek an active role in the suppression of the domestic disturbances of the 1830s and 40s. Though they routinely called for military preparedness in exaggerated terms that suggested an uncertain world of competition and conflict, army officers were content to enjoy the security of their organization and its state-sponsored monopoly over the direction of armed force against foreign nations, a monopoly that often seemed more in danger from competitors in the militia and volunteers (and their extralegal counterparts, the filibusters) than from aggression by foreign military forces, which the corps was ultimately employed to defeat.
The early republican officer corps thus played an important, perhaps decisive, role in the definition of American federalism in border and frontier regions, and its services to the national government often brought the army into conflict with local citizens and their political and military representatives. The army's involvement in these disputes led regular officers (following their self-interest as employees of the nation-state) to a growing sense and practice of accountability to the central government, an allegiance that explicitly acknowledged civilian supremacy and proclaimed the duty and value of partisan neutrality in everyday life as in the execution of government policies. This sense of accountability precluded the adventurism common in the behaviour of the officer corps before 1820, and this allegiance cemented the de facto alliance between profession, nation, and (though in less overt form) the elites who ran and benefitted most from the nation-state. Indeed, the West Point motto "duty, honor, country" implies this association between professionally neutral service, genteel values and the ambition to receive public recognition in return for that service, and the national structures and loyalties which made this service and recognition possible. By connecting the officer corps' work and attitudes in the borderlands to its occupational socialization and the individual, occupational, and organizational quest for security, this dissertation has provided an explanation for the corps' self-conception as a politically neutral instrument of the centralized nation-state which was previously lacking.

The significance of the army officer corps is not limited to the study of military professionalism or the borderlands alone, for the officer corps' behaviour and experience during the Jacksonian era anticipated the trend of
social and institutional organization, centralization, and consolidation apparent in late nineteenth-century America. This was most obviously true in the borderlands where officers acted as agents of national sovereignty, but Burton Bledstein's postbellum "culture of professionalism" also provides a pertinent analogue. Bledstein believes that this culture was founded in large part on the aspiration for personal advancement and fulfillment through careers in organizations of growing scale and scope, a set of motives that was not simply anticipated by--as he points out regarding the Jacksonian middle classes--but already present in the army officer corps of the 1830s and 40s, for the very reason that officers had a stable organization within which to structure their careers. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to assume that professionalization in the officer corps simply coincided with the more general social changes brought on by industrialization and the transportation revolution, for to suggest this minimizes the degree to which the army was a new sort of institution, far more tightly organized and specialized than any other in the nation, and seriously underestimates the role of the state in fostering social change and professionalism.

The army had both an easier and a more difficult road to bureaucratization in Bledstein's sense, for state sponsorship brought with it legal monopoly, legal and fiscal oversight, and the intraorganizational tensions and conflict involved in integrating individuals into the most complex, internally articulated, rules-bound organization in the United States of that era. The careerism of bureaucratic employment formed a pervasive motivation and pattern of behaviour among officers, one which provided the material basis and some of the motivation for professionalism but simultaneously fostered friction in officers' relations with their society and
one another. I have therefore devoted extensive attention to the complex relationships between individualism—especially individual ambition, which deTocqueville said was more pervasive in a democratic society and army than in aristocratic ones with more clearly defined class boundaries of status and authority—and the desire for career and organizational security, particularly in the ironies and nuances of individualism manifested in the balance of ambition and security found in the concept and experience of career and in officers' fears of favoritism and inequality. As historian Thomas Haskell has observed of the civilians who predicated their postbellum careers on the new university system, officers of the Jacksonian and antebellum eras were "expressly dependent on institutions for their authority and professional identity," and in the army as in civilian society, "the professional man's whole history and occupational situation inclined him toward [social] consolidation."3

Indeed, one of the primary themes of this dissertation has been the intimate relationships between professionalization, state sponsorship, and elite class formation. In a larger sense, what we are used to calling "professionalization" is really more a matter of organization, both in the general sense of organizing knowledge (and thus establishing cognitive and practical jurisdictions) and in the specific one of organizing individual practitioners into institutions, be they voluntary associations, qualifying organizations with monopolistic legal authority, or organizational practice settings like hospitals and army units. As theorists of the professions have pointed out since the 1960s, this process of organization reconfigures the bases of elite status and authority to suit new social contexts, which both sustains
existing class power and provides a basis for the entry of new individuals into
the dominant social strata. Indeed, the influence of class and gentility
pervaded officers' behaviour toward civilians, enlisted men, and one
another, and the officer corps benefitted greatly from the class values of
American elites, which led to its recognition as an elite group and permitted
it autonomy in command of enlisted soldiers. In turn, the officer corps
sustained the sovereignty of the nation-state in borderlands regions where its
authority was otherwise limited, and in doing so the corps contributed to the
growing centralization of the federal political system and, in a less obvious
manner, to the centralization and consolidation of American class structure
and society in general.

These processes--which effectively meant the concentration of social,
political, and economic power--became much more overt after the Civil War,
when the corps' strict sense of accountability to the nation-state came clearly
to serve elite class power in strikebreaking actions against the industrial
working classes, and at that point the army ceased to be substantively
responsible even to the majority of the nation's inhabitants who were
considered citizens. Partisan neutrality was clearly not the same thing as
political neutrality in the larger sense, but the demands of economic elites
and the very different social atmosphere of the postbellum era drew the army
into class politics and conflict; officers did not initiate it. Given the power of
the ideal of subordination to civilian control in the minds of officers and
civilians of all classes, the relatively elite class origins (and certainly
aspirations) of officers, and the security provided by government
commissions, we should not be surprised that they followed the orders of an
increasingly class-based government rather than resign or otherwise protest their government's actions.

Strongly influenced by Marxism and beliefs in hegemony, the sociological theorists of professional monopoly who wrote during the 1960s and 70s sometimes exaggerated the class dimensions of professionalism, but they offered a powerful insight simply by subjecting the professions to scrutiny as self-interested occupational groups that had successfully laid claim to exclusive jurisdictions over important social functions and the prestige and authority that accompanied this jurisdiction. My frequent emphasis on gentility as a cultural archetype and behavioural norm is derived from this recognition, and from the recent work of historians like Richard Bushman, Robert Wiebe, and Gordon Wood, whose nuanced explorations of early republican society have pointed to the intimate connections between class and culture as constituents of prestige, authority, and power. Very few army officers came from the working classes; indeed, military command was considered a prerogative of the middle classes and elites, especially those social elements known as the gentry. While believers in the thesis that the United States is a fundamentally middle-class society—including of course the vast majority of the Anglo-Americans of the early republic, though they would not have phrased it so—can and do take comfort in this class dominance over the direction of armed force, scholars aware of the extent of class structure and division in American society must question its desirability and ask how and why it developed.

Class, occupation, and state formation were intimately related in the evolution of the army officer corps, and of these factors class came first chronologically. Richard Bushman has recently attempted to suggest the
degree—which actually increased during much of the first half of the nineteenth century—to which ideals of gentility and refinement pervaded American society, and has warned us that "in our preoccupation with the coming new order we may wrongly neglect the persistent influence of the old." The persistence of aristocratic value systems is a standard theme in the historiography of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe (in which this persistence is often attributed to military structures or militarist attitudes in general), and Bushman has observed that "at the center of refinement's great power, the reason it could serve [so many other] functions was [an] imagined vision of [the] noble life once enjoyed by the aristocracy of the Old World. The refinement of America involved the capture of aristocratic culture for use in republican society." Indeed, one of the underlying themes of this dissertation has been the persistence of gentry values much akin to those Gordon Wood has recently described as "republican," in the midst of an increasingly democratic society, for claims to gentility, whether provided by education, public service and official position, or habits and behaviours of decorum, provided social sanction and legitimacy to the army officer corps' authority over enlisted men and in its dealings with civilians in the borderlands.4

One of the central features of the mindset of gentility inherited from European aristocratic society was the belief in a cultural and national "center" to which the peripheries looked for guidance. Indeed, army officers like other early republican government officials often spoke of a "Court" in terms that harked back both to monarchical Europe. This trope did not take the form of the republican distinction between people, government, and faction, for officers in fact looked to "court" for patronage (regardless of whether that
patronage was bureaucratic and organizational rather than personalistic in character). It is not my primary intent to trace aristocratic survivals or their republican bastards, but this language--like the officers' use of the word "state" to indicate the nation as a whole--reconfirms the centrality of the nation-state in the minds of Jacksonian government officers both civil and military, a consciousness which points us back to the reciprocal connections between elite class and state formation. Army officers served the state, but the European examples and that of Gilded Age America demonstrate that in class societies state service means service to the elites which dominate the social structure and the state. Given the persistence of class and the horrors of overt military intervention in politics, it is unclear how the demands of accountability to the state and responsibility to society as a whole can be reconciled, and the outcome is inevitably a matter of constantly changing social processes and relationships.

Indeed, in the army the growing class distinctions in American society were hardened into caste boundaries by the very rigidity of employment by the nation-state, and specifically by the legal authority granted to officers over the enlisted men under their command. The rigidity and social distance of relations between officers and enlisted men anticipated the undemocratic evolution of civilian class relations--e.g., the growing concentration of wealth and power and what Richard Bushman calls a "midcentury aristocratic revival"--that began in the Jacksonian period and erupted into overt social conflict during and after the Civil War, when the army was called directly into the political arena as an agent of class power to break strikes and otherwise serve corporate interests. Like middle-class civilians reenvisioning "the worker" during the transition from artisan to wage laborer, from the
Revolution onward army officers created and increased social distance by defining enlisted soldiers in contrast to themselves. Like workers, soldiers lacked gentility; they lacked refinement; they lacked education. Their dependence (a product of the changing character of the economy during the era of the market revolution) made them servile, lacking the "independence" of the officer, and officers who sprang to the defense of the army as an institution were unusually reticent when it came to defending their enlisted subordinates from civilian criticism. While enlisted men provided officers with a source for demonstrations of their paternalistic noblesse oblige (an analogue of the patrician "benevolence" so valued in the worldview of gentility), they also gave officers workers to command, and command—ultimately perhaps the most important of the attributes of gentility—was one of the key constituents of the officer corps' prestige.5

This dissertation has also gone much further than previous scholarship in locating the form and focus of American military expertise in the American social and contemporary technological contexts. Indeed, because of my overriding concern for the development of social and political responsibility my work sometimes comes quite close to questioning the entire premise of the search for "expertise" that has characterized so many works on the army and its officers, and I explicitly define expertise much more in terms of administrative and logistical capability than in strategy and tactics. I believe that the United States army was substantially more capable in the former, less specifically "military," realms than in the latter, and that this balance of capability was in fact more desirable than the reverse—a tactically
and strategically expert army that had difficulty maintaining itself as a functioning organization.

Viewed from this perspective, the greatest significance of the Military Academy was as an agent of professional socialization, which fostered mental habits of accountability that buttressed the evolution of army bureaucracy and responsiveness to civilian political control. Indeed, most army efforts at training and professional improvement had something of a rote character to them, and from a more traditional perspective, I agree with previous commentators who have seen the army's quest for expertise and capability as a diffuse and often unorganized one which produced technical advances and a general increase in tactical competence without leading to the growth of major institutions or schools of thought. The growth of a small cadre of experts (primarily of highly specialized technicians) served as a locus of professional expertise and an informal adjustment to the army's problems of limited budgets and geographic dispersal, but their interests were either too diffuse or too specific, their thinking either too abstract or too practical, to encourage the development of coherent and comprehensive American approaches to military art and science. I have therefore devoted chapter eight solely to the evolution of the staff bureaus, which proved capable of supplying campaigns—or in effect, of projecting military power—on a scope previously unimaginable to American policymakers, enabling them to plan and execute the campaigns that conquered a continent.

In other words, though traditional in form, Part Two seeks to understand the social construction of expertise and evaluate its necessity in contemporary historical terms rather than those of a hindsight shaped by different social and technological circumstances, and this in turn reflects my
subjective sense that professionalism is not an objective or socially neutral
phenomenon that scholars can abstract and reify as an inherent social good.
In the process, I have provided a revisionist analysis of the character,
constituents, and necessity of higher military expertise in nineteenth-century
America that enters into a number of scholarly debates over what historian
Edward Hagerman labels "the muddy waters of antebellum military
thought," the transmission of this knowledge, and the conduct of operations
in the Civil War, and my preliminary conclusion is that we should look to
politics and culture rather than military thought per se for the most
important factors shaping nineteenth-century American warfare.6

The relationships between the army's efforts at creating expertise and
the character of its responsibility to American society were highly nuanced
ones that illustrate a great deal about the relationships between class, state,
and occupational formation and the social construction of expertise and
cognition. In some respects, officers were remarkably conscious of the
interdependence of social, economic, and technological factors in warfare, but
their understanding was filtered through blinders of organizational self-
interest (particularly among the technical branches), ethnicity, and class.
These blinders were most apparent in the officer corps' remarkable neglect of
the study of its Indian opponents, a dereliction of duty that officers rarely
questioned. The reasons for this neglect are clear: Anglo-Americans were
conditioned by cultural inheritance to think of war in terms of conventional
combat between the highly organized forces of internationally recognized
nation-states, usually meaning those in Europe. Combat with ethnic and
cultural "others"--like that with workers, peasants, or other "subordinate"
classes--was considered a lesser form of war deserving (and needing) little
study, and most American officers simply expected to apply their usual methods in an ad hoc manner with minimal adjustments (primarily to suit rough terrain) to warfare with Amerindians. In contrast to the French and British armies, whose officers devoted extensive attention to the problems of colonial warfare, American officers wrote remarkably little (the Second Seminole War aside) about their usual opponents, and the United States army did virtually nothing to institutionalize expertise on this subject.

Aside from some frontiersmen and their representatives, few contemporary politicians and policymakers questioned this bias, which suggests the power of the nation's European cultural inheritance and, at a deeper level, the class and even ethnoracial biases inherent in American reactions to the alternative models of warfare available to them. Genteel officers and politicians both thought in terms of European warfare because it was considered (insofar as war can ever be) orderly and "civilized"; it brought glory and was fought in centralized ways (through rigid linear tactics) that permitted officers to maintain direct control--command--over their working-class enlisted men, two of the basic sources of officers' social prestige and authority. Indeed, on a more general level historians have long recognized that the military reaction against citizen-soldiers during and after the Civil War (usually first associated with Emory Upton) was in part a drive for professional monopoly over military command, but beset by hindsight and the deep-set presumption of professional superiority few have seen fit to subject this aggrandizement to criticism.

Besides drawing connections between organization, professionalization, politics, and social change, this dissertation has attempted
to provide a narrative that is more attuned to nuance, complexity, and paradox than most of the works in this field. I have sought to do so in three ways: by applying sociological theories of the professions (on which I say a bit more in Appendix L) more explicitly, by providing four important—if not indispensable—bases for comparison in my chapters on other professional groups, and by exploring historical change through a chronologically organized narrative in Part Five. Surprising though it may seem, few general studies of the officers corps are organized chronologically. There are good analytical reasons for topical organization (which I have adopted in allocating topics to chapters prior to Part Five), given the difficulty of discovering obvious unifying themes of general improvement or decline, yet in Part Five I have striven to provide a historical sense of change without losing sight of the ironies and ambiguities of actual historical processes. (I have also done this as much as possible within chapters, and again to a surprisingly greater degree than most of the important works in the field.) My survey of the officer corps before 1815 provides an indispensable baseline for doing so, and it is here that my use of comparative methods is most directly pertinent. The officer corps (using the plural given their rapidly changing composition) before 1815 demonstrated much the same emphasis on gentility and class authority as their successors, but the early national officer corps lacked the institutional and personnel stability and cohesion that later sustained army bureaucracy and accountability to civilian political control.

Motivated as much by the main chance (opportunities on the frontier) and the gentry quest for fame and reputation as by the search for material and psychological security that characterized Jacksonian regulars, early national officers had only a very limited sense of professional commitment and
identity. Officers were frequently and intimately involved in partisan and ideological politics; they were subject to frequent discharge in accord with political changes; and the army lacked effective institutions for the collection and diffusion of military expertise, professional socialization, and oversight to assure its combat readiness and political accountability. As a result, the army was ill-prepared for the War of 1812, and officers junior and senior often engaged in filibustering and other adventurism along the nation's borders, demonstrating both the individualism of the early national gentry and the limits to officers' sense of accountability as members of a politically neutral instrument under the centralized control of the constitutionally elected representatives of the nation-state. By using the officer corps before 1815 as a starting point, I provide the context for demonstrating the officer corps' growing accountability to civilian control over American territorial expansion and the application of military force along the borders and frontiers, essential matters repeatedly contested by the officer corps itself before 1820. In sum, chapter two sets forth the problem of balancing individual ambition (especially in the gentry aspiration for fame, glory, or reputation) with collective responsibility and civilian control that recurs throughout this work.

The exigencies and opportunities of the War of 1812 led to the rise of a new generation of more committed officers who would lead the interwar army toward a more professional status in all respects, but even after 1815 or 1820, the story of the army officer corps does not easily lend itself to a happily teleological narrative of progress and maturation—or, in sociological language, professionalization—and I have therefore resisted imposing what I consider an excessively artificial analytic order over the chaos and complexity
of historical reality. If professionalism is something to be sought after and achieved, the inevitable question must be whether de-professionalization ever occurs, and of course it does. Indeed, the period of the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) was one of crisis for the army, especially at its beginning when large numbers of officers resigned, and might well be labelled a time of "regression." Nevertheless, the practical performance of the army officer corps in the latter part of this era—including the war with Mexico—does demonstrate significantly greater expertise, capability, and responsibility to civilian authority than it did in the years prior to 1820. By the end of this period the army's training had produced junior officers capable of executing more complicated tactical plans than most of their predecessors three decades before, using their own initiative when (as they often did) the plans of their superiors went awry. I have attempted to show these developments warts and all, particularly in the realms of expertise and personal and organizational conflict, and in the occasional difficulty the historical actors had in discovering and defining (which often meant choosing between powerful constituencies and viable alternatives) responsibility. In particular—and of much more significance than the largely counterfactual question of whether or not the corps became more capable or expert—I believe that I have both demonstrated the officer corps' growing accountability to civilian control in its operations along the frontiers and provided an explanation for this development which does not depend on unidimensional models of self-interest or on exaggerating the corps' cohesion as an occupational group.

Another major dimension of this work has been comparative, a perspective underutilized by previous historians of the officer corps and of
military professionalism in general. Besides proving a basis for comparing the United States army's expertise and capability, the example of the European officer corps illustrated the social construction of professionalism through conflicts over the values of character and merit and in explicit attention to the issues of social responsibility and political accountability raised by government service in overtly (and indeed legally, in the cases of Prussia and Russia) class-dominated societies. The American officer corps appears somewhere in the middle in terms of expertise, probably less expert than the French or Prussian, more so than the Russian, and less so in absolute and institutional terms but perhaps equally so in proportional ones compared to the British. Social and political comparisons is a perilous endeavour, but the United States army officer corps did not serve as an instrument of class repression until after the Civil War. While this may represent professional regression, the American corps never intervened as directly as its European counterparts to sustain elite class power and—particularly in Prussia, which has often been considered a model of military professionalism because of the institutions created to train its officers and their success in the Wars of Unification—to block democratic political reform. At the very least, this difference suggests the different forms military professionalism takes in bourgeois societies (like the antebellum United States) and aristocratic ones, and I intend that my future work will use the insights I have gained by studying the European officer corps to better understand the constituents of elite class identity and authority in the United States as they changed over the course of the nineteenth century.

Among the American professions, the army officer corps was substantially more professional in most generally accepted senses of the word
than the contemporary naval officer corps or the principal civilian occupations which claimed professional status, a distinction due in large part to the army's superior organization, whether expressed in the occupational socialization gained at West Point, which distinguished the army officer from his naval counterpart, or the support of state sponsorship, which effectively provided the army officer corps with a single primary client orientation and a legally secure occupational jurisdiction unavailable to the civilian professions competing in an effectively unconstrained market. It is unclear whether the average army officer was substantially more expert than his naval counterpart, but he certainly had a greater sense of professional identity and cohesion and was less likely (surprising though it sounds) to engage in disruptive quarrels or to invite political intervention in them for purposes of personal self-aggrandizement. Both corps served as instruments of national expansion, but for complex reasons (that cannot be adequately summarized here) the army officer corps was less bellicose and less prone to adventurism. (See chapter seventeen for elaboration.) Indeed, my future work will look more explicitly toward a comparison of the officer corps on the borderlands and their oceanic equivalents in order to explore the nuances of responsibility and accountability in these somewhat similar yet simultaneously very different environments.

The most important conclusion I draw from examining the American civilian professions is that the very success of professionalization in the army officer corps was due in very great part--decisively so--to its employment by the nation-state, which provided a secure legal basis for jurisdictional monopoly and required the articulation of bureaucratic structures, methods, and mindsets conducive to accountability and efficiency in order to meet the
standards demanded by the army's democratically elected civilian paymasters in Congress. In other words, though it lacked the highly articulated cognitive bases of the law and theology, the army officer corps was probably more organized, cohesive, and exclusive than any American civilian profession. This was in large part because it had the national government to organize around, the government's legal power to exclude competitors, and attacks from antagonistic congressmen to focus a sense of occupational identity and mission during an era of general peace. Given the weakness of foreign threats to the United States and the lack of preexisting "military" elites like the aristocracies of Europe, these developments were not the product of uniquely or specifically military needs or a specifically or exclusively military identity--socialization at the national Military Academy at West Point produced a sense of corporateness exceptional in that era of individualism, but that corporate feeling was largely an abstraction rather than a practical day-to-day reality. The differences between civil and military elites (including the professions) were not primarily matters of military function but of organization--the growing presence and specialization of army bureaucracy, rather than a distinctively military value system or subculture. In other words, civilian social values were adapted and reshaped--but certainly not replaced--by the needs and agency of the nation-state, which was itself shaped largely by the influence of elites.

Indeed, the very organization of the army officer corps into a bureaucratic hierarchy had profoundly paradoxical results in comparison with the civilian professions, for officers actually secured a substantial degree of internal autonomy from their civilian masters, while the constant proximity and necessity for cooperation with fellow practitioners led as much
to internal conflict and dissension as to cohesion and the development of a corporate professional identity. One must therefore question the degree to which "professional attitudes arose originally from the internal dynamics of the military establishment," as William Skelton once put it, unless he meant the very fact and process of their organization itself. Bluntly put, the army and its officer corps were originally a product of the state, and the class structure of American society predated both, making it difficult and perhaps largely artificial to attempt to view military professionalism in isolation. The army officer corps could not develop autonomously from political processes (and beneath them social ones), for it depended for its monopoly on the agreement of Congress and the executive branch.8

The experience of the army officer corps bears out Burton Bledstein's suggestion that the chaotic fluidity of 1830s and 40s proved a psychological watershed in the development of what would later become the professional middle class. Indeed, the personal and institutional experiences and aspirations of U.S. army officers during the Jacksonian era prefigured the more general move toward social and cultural consolidation in American culture and society that surfaced during the following decades. Fears of social and institutional breakdown, declining social status and deference, and economic insecurity were equally if not more common among officers as among their counterparts in the civilian professions, for officers knew that their professionalization project, and the security of institutional careers that went along with it, was dependent on the stability of the social order embodied in the American nation-state. It is therefore ironic that we today take the sovereignty and pervasiveness of that state structure so easily for
granted, for in the Jacksonian era this structure remained both undeveloped and open to challenge along the nation's borders, internal and external. I have therefore located the evolution of army bureaucracy squarely within the story of the officer corps' growing accountability to the dictates of civilian political authority, a development central to any rounded definition of military (and in a broader social sense civilian) professionalism as a social phenomenon.

Taken as a whole, this dissertation has attempted to present the beginnings of a reassessment of the organizational, occupational, and cultural reconstruction of personal ambition, elite status, and community obligation in nineteenth-century America, or in still broader terms, of processes generally associated with modernization. Ultimately, the study of individual motivation within complex, large-scale organizations can help us understand the reintegration of the individual and the community in the rapidly changing social context of nineteenth-century America. The army officer corps was the first national managerial class in the United States, and its experiences clearly anticipated the broader movement toward complex, translocal functional organization and specialization in American society and culture that flowered after mid-century. For society as a whole the results of professionalization were conservative, and in many respects undemocratic. For the army officer corps, dependent on the sovereignty of the nation-state for this monopoly over the direction of armed force, state formation preceded occupational formation or professionalization, but the process of professionalization provided the central government with a reliable instrument for national aggrandizement. As an agent of American territorial expansion, the army was a leading force in the dispossession of Mexico and
the Amerindians, its actions contributing factors in the market revolution and the dissolution and reconstitution of the Union. For better or worse, nineteenth-century American military professionalism was an active force in the move from a milieu of boundlessness to one of consolidation, organization, and stratification.
Conclusion


2 Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism, p. 100.

3 Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science, ch. 4 (quotations on p. 85).

4 Bushman, The Refinement of America, pp. 408 and xix.

5 Ibid., p. 416.


7 See Appendix L for further ruminations on this topic.

8 Skelton, "Professionalization in the U.S. Army Officer Corps in the Age of Jackson," p. 459.
Appendices
Appendix A: Secretaries of War and Principal Commanding
Officers of Staff Bureaus and Regiments, 1815-1846

Secretaries of War:

James Monroe 1814-1815
William H. Crawford 1815-1816
George Graham (acting secretary) 1816-1817
John C. Calhoun 1817-1825
James Barbour 1825-1828
Peter B. Porter 1828-1829
John H. Eaton 1829-1831
Lewis Cass 1831-1836
Joel R. Poinsett 1837-1841
John Bell 1841
John C. Spencer 1841-1843
James M. Porter 1843-1844
William Wilkins 1844-1845
William L. Marcy 1845-1849

Commanding Generals of the Army (1821 on):

Major General Jacob Brown 1821-1828
MG Alexander Macomb 1828-1841
MG Winfield Scott 1841-1861

Primary Territorial Commands:

Division Commanders (1815-1821):

MG Brown (Northern Div.)
MG Andrew Jackson (Southern Div.)

Department Commanders (1821-1837 and de facto 1837-46 as divisional commanders):

Brigadier General Scott (usually Eastern Dept.)
(replaced by BG John E. Wool 1841-46)
BG Edmund P. Gaines (usually Western Dept.)

Theater and Strategic Commanders (principal strategic operations)

BG Gaines Florida border, 1815-1818
MG Jackson First Seminole War, 1818-1819
Col. Henry Atkinson Missouri Expeditions, 1819-1825, Winnebago War, 1827, Black Hawk War (in field), 1832
BG Scott Nullification Crisis (in charge of military preparations, sent to Charleston as emissary, investigator), 1832,
Black Hawk War (formal command), 1832
Col. Duncan L. Clinch Second Seminole War, 1835-January 1836
BG Gaines Second Seminole War, January-February 1836, Texas border, 1836-1843
BG Scott Second Seminole War, January-May 1836, Creek War, 1836, Canadian border, December 1837-February 1838, Cherokee removal, 1838
BG Jesup Creek War, 1836, Second Seminole War, December 1836-May 1838
Col. Zachary Taylor Second Seminole War, May 1838-May 1840
CG Macomb Canadian border, summer 1838, Second Seminole War, peace mission, March-May 1839 (not operational command)
Col. Walker K. Armistead Second Seminole War, May 1840-May 1841
Col. William J. Worth Second Seminole War, May 1841 to 1843
Col. Zachary Taylor Corps and Array of Observation, Army of Occupation, Texas borders, April 1844-1846

Staff
Adjutant Generals:
BG Daniel Parker (adjutant and inspector general) 1814-1821
Col. James Gadsden 1821-1822
Captain Charles J. Nourse 1822-1825
Capt. (staff Col.) Roger Jones 1825-1852
(de facto 1818-1821, relinquished lineal rank 1835)

Inspector Generals (two):
Col. Arthur P. Hayne (for the Southern Division) 1816-1820
Col. James Gadsden (""") 1820-1821
Col. Samuel B. Archer 1821-1825
Col. George Croghan (for the Western Department) 1825-1849
Col. John E. Wool (principally for the Northern Division and Eastern Department) (de facto 1816-21) 1816-1841
Col. Sylvester Churchill ("") 1841-1861

Quartermaster General:
BG Robert Swartwout 1813-1816
Cols. James Mullany and George Gibson 1816-1818
BG Thomas S. Jesup 1818-1860

Commissary General:
Callender Irvine (no military rank) 1812-1818 (of Purchases 1818-41)
(of Subsistence) Col. George Gibson 1818-1861
Paymaster General:
  Robert Brent (no rank)  1808-1819
  Col. Nathan Towson     1819-21, 1822-1854

Surgeon General (no military rank):
  Joseph Lovell          1818-1836
  Thomas Lawson          1836-61

Chief Engineer:
  Col. Joseph G. Swift   1812-1818
  Col. Walker K. Armistead 1818-1821
  Col. Alexander Macomb  1821-1828
  Col. Charles Gratiot   1828-1838
  Col. Joseph G. Totten  1838-1863

Chief of Topographical Engineers:
  six equals (rank major) (but effectively Isaac Roberdeau) until 1831

Chief of Ordnance:
  Col. Decius Wadsworth  1815-1821
  Col. George Bomford   1832-48 (de facto 1821-32)

Principal Regimental Commanders (all colonels)

Artillery (1821 onward, before then four lieutenant colonels):

Regiment of Light Artillery (to 1821):
  Moses Porter (inactive, Lt. Col. Fenwick de facto commander)
1st Regiment:
  James House           1822-1834
  Abraham Eustis        1834-1843

2nd Regt.:
  William MacRea (acting colonel) 1822-1832
  William Lindsay       1832-1838
  James Bankhead        1838-1856

3rd Regt.:
  Walker Armistead      1821-1845

4th Regt.:
  John Fenwick          1821-1842
  John DeBarth Wallbach 1842-1857
Dragoons:
1st Regt. (formed 1833):
   Henry Dodge (civilian, commander of Battalion of Mounted Rangers, 1832-33) 1833-1836
   Stephen W. Kearny 1836-1846
2nd Regt. (formed 1836):
   Daniel E. Twiggs 1836-1846

Infantry:
1st Regt.:
   Daniel Bissell 1815-1821
   Talbot Chambers 1821-1826
   Zachary Taylor 1832-1843
2nd Regt.:
   Hugh Brady 1812-1851
3rd Regt.:
   Henry Leavenworth 1825-1834
   James B. Many 1834-1852
4th Regt.:
   William King 1815-1821
   Duncan L. Clinch 1821-1836 (succeeded by four men before 1846)
5th Regt.:
   Josiah Snelling 1819-1828
   George M. Brooke 1831-1851
6th Regt.:
   Henry Atkinson 1815-20, 1821-1842
   Zachary Taylor 1843-1846
7th Regt.:
   Matthew Arbuckle 1820-1851
8th Regt. (disbanded 1821-1838):
   Duncan Clinch 1819-1821
   William J. Worth 1838-1849
Rifle Regt. (disbanded 1821):
   Talbot Chambers 1818-1821
Appendix B: Principal and Notable Officers and Military Instructors at West Point

My principal source here is Cullum, Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., from March 16, 1802, to January 1, 1850.

Superintendents:
(de facto) Col. Jonathan Williams 1802-1812 (exc. 1803-1805)
Capt. Alden Partridge 1815-1817 (and de facto 1812-15)
Capt. Sylvanus Thayer 1817-1833
Maj. Rene DeRussy 1833-1838
Maj. Richard Delafield 1838-1845
Capt. Henry Brewerton 1845-1852

Commandants:
Capt. William Worth 1820-1828 (de facto 1820-25)
Capt. Ethan Allen Hitchcock 1828-1833
Maj. John Fowle 1833-1838
Lt. Charles F. Smith 1838-1842
Lt. John A. Thomas 1842-1845
Capt. Bradford R. Allen 1845-1852

Some Principal Military Instructors and their West Point Assignments:

Brewerton acting asst. prof. engineering 1819-20, asst. prof. 1820-21
Mahan asst. prof. eng. 1825-26, acting prof. 1831-32, prof. 1832-71
Hitchcock asst. instructor of infantry tactics, 1824-27
Lt. Charles F. Smith asst. inst. infy., 1829-31
Lt. John A. Thomas asst. inst. infy., 1834-37
Lt. Zebina Kinsley asst. inst. infy., 1820-23, inst. artillery, 1823-35
Lt. Robert Anderson asst. inst. arty., 1835, inst. arty., 1835-37
Capt. Erasmus D. Keyes inst. arty., 1844-48
Appendix C: Officers Sent on Professional Missions Overseas
(Non-combat)

1815-17    Thayer, McRee                                      Paris, London, probably Metz
1815-16    Cpt. James Renwick (COE)                          Britain, Paris
1826-30    Mahan                                            Metz (engineering)
1828-30    Lt. Daniel Tyler                                  Metz (artillery), Woolwich
1832-33    Wool                                             London, Woolwich

1839-41    Lt. William Eustis, Henry S. Turner, Phil Kearny (1st Dragoons) and William Hardee, Washington Newton, and Lloyd Beall (2nd Dragoons) (and informally Bayard Clark, appointed to the 2nd in 1841) Saumur (cavalry)

1840-41    Lt. Alexander J. Swift                            Metz, Italy (privately)
1840-41    Mordecai, Huger, Baker                            Ordnance (throughout Europe)

1841        Capt. Augustus Canfield, Lt. Robert McLane        Topog. Engs (Capt. William H. Swift of TEs also in Europe for U.S. Coastal Survey)

1844-45    Thayer                                          quasi-official, throughout Europe
1845        Halleck                                        public works, Western Europe
Appendix D: Key Personnel of Principal Boards

The Board of Engineers for Fortifications (1816-1826):
  Totten
  BG and Assistant Engineer Simon Bernard, president
  Maj. William McRee (resigned 1818)

Artillery School, key personnel:
  Fenwick   Commandant (official), 1824-25
  Eustis    Commandant, 1824-25 (de facto), 1825-28, 1831-34
  Walbach   Director, 1828-29
  Worth     Director, 1829-32
  Capt. Rufus L. Baker   Ordnance Officer, 1824-28

The "Infantry Board" of 1815 (principals):
  Scott, president
  Swift
  Fenwick

The "Infantry Board" of 1824 (manual published in 1825):
  Scott, president
  Thayer
  Worth
  Fenwick

The Militia or "Cavalry and Artillery" Board of 1826:
  Scott, president
  Eustis
  Zachary Taylor
  Lt. Col. Enos Cutler
  Gen. Thomas Cadwalader (Pa. militia)
  Capt. Charles J. Nourse (acting AG, 1822-25), secretary
  Lt. William Theobald Wolfe Tone, original secretary

The "Military Board" (principal working members), 1831-1835:
  Macomb
  Jesup
  Gibson
  Bomford
  one of the inspector generals (Wool or Croghan)
  Lt. Samuel Cooper (Macomb's ADC and son-in-law, AG 1852-61,
  Confederate AG), secretary
The Ordnance Boards:

1832:
- Macomb
- Wool
- Gratiot
- Bomford
- Eustis

1835:
- Wool
- Gratiot
- Eustis
- Lt. Col. George Talcott, ordnance
- Capt. Benjamin Huger ("")
- Capt. Alfred Mordecai ("")

1837:
- Eustis/Fenwick
- Talcott
- Mordecai
- Rufus Baker

1839:
- Talcott
- Mordecai
- Baker
- Huger

The Artillery Board of 1843 (principals):
- Capt. Samuel Ringgold
- Lt. Minor Knowlton
- Capt. William G. Freeman
Appendix E: Systems of Drill

Infantry (all essentially translations and revisions of the French *Reglement* of 1791, as it had been updated in France):

- 1815
- 1825
- 1834 (with open order skirmishing for light infantry)

Artillery:
- unofficially, 1820 (Henri Lallemand, French)
- unofficially, militia system, 1826 (Lt. Daniel Tyler)
- unofficially, Gribeauval system, trans. by Tyler, 1828
- 1840, Capt. Robert Anderson
- 1845, revision, with Capt. Samuel Ringgold's horse artillery system
  (derived from the British)

Cavalry:
- militia system, 1826
- 1837 (Stephen W. Kearny)
- 1841 (based on experience at French Cavalry School)
Appendix F: List of Selected Titles and Subjects of pieces in Henry Halleck's "Military Note Book" (in the order present therein)

Quebec campaign, 1759
"Military Schools" (French)
the value of training
the tempo, costs, and losses in land and naval warfare
Porto Cavallo, 1743
Copenhagen, 1801
Louisbourg, 1745
"The Defenses of New York"
lists of English and French naval vessels
"Napoleon's Construction of Fortresses"
"Generosity of the Military Character"
"The Military Defenses of France in 1815" (fortress locations)
"The Relative Cost of Militia and Regulars"
"Military Notes on Canada in 1840"
"Railroads vs. Fortifications"
"Monthly Pay in the Austrian Army"
"The Spanish Army for 1841"
"Fortifications vs. Ships"
a Senate speech on national defense from 1841
Wool's report on Maine
"Invasions of England" (since Caesar)
report of the Fortification Board, 1821
"Maritime Descents"
"Naval Depots"
an article proposing preparation for a campaign against Quebec
the decisiveness of Napoleonic battles
Thomas Hart Benton's Senate speech on military preparedness (June 15, 1844)
"French Pontooneers"
"The Necessity of Engineer Troops"
"Engineer Officers of the Revolution"
distances for the inland navigation of the West
"Defences of the Lakes"
"Military Promotion"
"Western Convention at Memphis--Military Defences for the West"
"Ship Canal to Chicago--Western Interests"
British government revenues and expenditures
a comparison of British and American army pay and allowances
an article on the defeat of a British and French expedition against Uruguay
"Memoir on the Defence of the Gulf of Mexico"
"The Defences of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus"
Appendix G: Principal Officers Assigned to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827-1830
(including branch, other railroad service and resignation dates)

Lt. William Cook, artillery, resigned 1832, then engineer on three RRs
Lt. John M. Fessenden, arty, resld. 1831, then RR chief engineer and RR commissioner of Massachusetts
Maj. Stephen H. Long, topographical engineer, Chief Engineer, state of Georgia, 1837-40
William Gibbs McNeill, arty Lt. 1817 (grad. of USMA in three years), Capt. T.E. 1823, Maj. 1834 (and by brevet for ten years service in 1833), ch. eng. to eight RRs and Georgia before 1837 resig., then RR ch. eng. (1837-40), president of C&O canal (1842-43), ch. eng. to U.S. dry dock in Brooklyn (1844-45), and major general of Rhode Island militia (1842)
Lt. William B. Thompson, infy, resld. 1830, eng. on Virginia Board of Public Works
Lt. Isaac Trimble, arty, resld. 1832, eng. on four RRs (ch. eng. on three)
Lt. George W. Whistler, arty, resld. 1833, eng. on five U.S. and a Russian RR, also of an American canal

(Drawn from Hill, Roads, Railways, and Waterways, p. 106, and the usual biographical registers.)
Appendix H: Statistical Summary of the Career Patterns of Officers Ranked First and Last in Their Classes at West Point, 1818-1846

Remember that graduates were not ranked until 1818.

**Summary of officers who graduated first in their class:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers resigned</td>
<td>11 (four to become academy professors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in service 1846</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>died in service (all causes)</td>
<td>4 (two noncombat in Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wounded in action but survived</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who served in some other staff post</td>
<td>1 (an AQM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who served as instructors at West Point</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilian professors (after resignation)</td>
<td>4 (of 7 who resigned from army entirely)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil engineers</td>
<td>3 (only ten percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other civilian professions</td>
<td>one cleric, one editor, two lawyers, one judge, two militia leaders, and Alexander Dallas Bache headed U.S. Coastal Survey after 1843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individuals of note: Richard H. Delafield (1818), Alfred Mordecai (1822), Dennis Hart Mahan (1824), Alexander J. Swift (1830, died in 1847)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brevetted for Mexican War service</td>
<td>6 (nine brevets)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that all but a handful of these men were commissioned as engineers. The proportions of men resigned and still in service in 1846 are similar to those among the Smiths in Appendix J, along with the proportions of officers receiving brevets in Mexico, but without the significant commands or casualties. In other words, far fewer of these men became civilian engineers than we might have expected, but the group was not marked by other notable civilian activities, staff assignments aside from the Corps of Engineers, or extensive combat service. Its greatest impact was clearly in providing teachers at West Point.

**Summary of officers who graduated last in their class:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>28 (one was not commissioned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers resigned</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dismissed</td>
<td>2 (one reinstated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ephraim Kirby Smith)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in service 1846

died in service (all causes) 13
mortaly wounded or killed in action 8
    including Ephraim Kirby Smith, and one at Resaca de la Palma
who served in some staff post 5
brevetted in Mexico 3 (four brevets) (and one
    brevetted for Florida)
civilian professions four railroad engineers,
    three militia leaders, one lawyer, one editor, two legislators, one U.S.
    Coastal Survey

Note here that only a quarter of these men resigned, and that they appear to have been far more active thereafter than the men who graduated first in their classes and resigned. Few served in staff assignments (and none as instructors at West Point) or received brevets, but they did bear a greater burden in casualties, and remember that officers killed in action would certainly have received brevets had they survived. A quarter died in service, leading to the same rates of departure from the service as among the front-rankers and the Smiths.
Appendix J: "Smiths of the Army"--The Careers of Officers
Surnamed Smith, 1815-1846

This listing of all the officers with a single common surname who were commissioned between 1815 and 1846 was made possible because of the small size of the army. (The first seven officers on the list were commissioned during the War of 1812 but were not disbanded in 1815--the only such officers--while I have excluded two paymasters, a surgeon, and four volunteer officers.) Though not precisely representative in a statistical sense, the list does illustrate the patterns, connections, and diversity of officers' careers during this era, and a brief statistical summary is placed at the bottom. As in Appendix J, there is some overlap in the numbers here because many officers fit into more than one category.

Gerard D.--commissioned (cmd) 1812, reg't adjutant 1813, ADC to Winfield Scott, captain, wounded and brevetted for Lundy's Lane 1814, resid 1819
Joseph Lee--cmdn major 1812, colonel 1818, disbanded 1821, judge of U.S. Superior Court for East Florida 1822
James--cmd 1812, resid 1819
Thomas F.--cmdn 1813, captain 1819, resid 1837
Nathaniel--volunteer wounded at Horseshoe Bend 1813, cmdn 1813, resid 1816
Walter--cmdn 1813, ACS, adjutant at the Artillery School, captain 1832, resid 1833
John Lind--cmdn COE 1813, major 1838, two brevets in the Mexican War
Henry--USMA 1815 (as were all but five of these men who were commissioned after the War of 1812), regimental adjutant (reg't adjt) and quartermaster (Qm), AQM, ADC to Winfield Scott 1825-26, AQM 1826-30, service in the Black Hawk War, resigned (resd) 1836, U.S. government civil engineer 1836-40, reappointed QM and died at Veracruz 1847
Samuel Stanhope--1818 and science instructor (instr.) until death in 1828
Francis--cmdn fr. civil life 1818 and resid that year
Charles G.--1822, USMA tactical instr. 1825, died 1827
Constantine--dropped out of USMA 1819, cmdn USMC 1825, transferred to US Army 1830, ACS 1835 and killed by Seminoles that December
Joseph R.--1823, ACS, reg't adjt 1835-38, captain 1838, two wounds and brevets in Mexican War
John--cmdn fr. civil life 1819, died 1824
William P.--cmdn fr. civil life 1820 and resid two months later
John W.A.--1824, USMA math and science instr. 1824-25, dismissed 1828
Charles Ferguson--1825, USMA tactical instr. 1829-31, adjt. 1831-38, captain 1838, Commandant 1838-42, horse artillery battery commander 1842-46
and in Mexican War, earning three brevets for performances in five battles

Ephraim Kirby--1826, dismissed 1830 for brutality against enlisted man, reinstated 1832, captain 1838, "Light Battalion" commander and mortally wounded at Molino del Rey
Joseph Brice--1829, USMA math instr. 1829-31, resd 1832
Robert Percy--1832, USMA ethics instr. 1835-36, resd 1836, math prof. Kenyon College for several years thereafter
Frederick Augustus--1833 COE, USMA engineering instr. 1833-34, captain 1838, USMA field engineering instr. 1846-48
Francis H.--1833, USMA ethics instr. 1834-35, resd 1836, civilian math prof. 1837-39, first Superintendent of Virginia Military Academy 1839
Richard Somers--1834, resd 1836, railroad engineer, reappointed 1840 and USMA drawing instr.
Larkin--dismissed from USMA 1831, reinstated 1831 and graduated 1835, regt adjt 1845-46, ADC to William Worth, captain 1846, brevetted for gallantry, severely wounded at Molino del Rey, Deputy Governor of the Soldiers' Asylum 1851
Andrew Jackson--1838, captain 1847 but acting lieutenant colonel of the Mormon Battalion in Stephen W. Kearny's Army of the West while still a first lieutenant in 1846
Henry L.--1839 COE, engineering and ethics instr. 1839-40
William S.--1839, died 1849
James Madison--cmnd fr. civil life 1838, captain 1846, died 1847 in Mexico
Gustavus Woodson--1842 COE, USMA engineering instr. 1844-46, as a lieutenant the commander of the COE's sapper company in Mexico 1847-48 and won two brevets, USMA engineering instr. 1849
Martin Luther--1842 Topographical Engs., brevet for service in Mexico
Sidney--cmnd fr. civil life 1839, wounded at Molino del Rey and mortally wounded in the capture of Mexico City (9/14/46)
Joseph P.--1844, distinguished at Molino del Rey and killed in action Chapultepec (9/13/46)
William F.--1845 Topographical Engs., USMA math instr. 1846-48
Edmund Kirby--1845, two brevets in Mexico, USMA math instr. 1849
William D.--1846, severely wounded at Molino del Rey

Statistical Summary:
Total Number 35
Officers resigned 12 (five before 1821)
(Note that four of the seven officers commissioned before 1815 were gone by 1822; two resigned in the 1830s, and only one, an engineer, served in the Mexican War.)
disbanded in 1821 1
dismissed in service 1846 in 1847

died in service (all causes) 11 (two noncombat in Mexico)
mortally wounded or killed in action 4 (one in Second Seminole War)
wounded in action but survived 4 (three at Molino del Rey)
who served in some staff post 12
who served as instructors at West Point 12
who held significant commands in the Mexican War 4 (two of specialist companies, one of volunteers)
brevetted in Mexico 7 (thirteen brevets)
(Officers killed in action did not receive brevets, which were awarded after the war.)
Appendix K: The Army in the 1850s

Perhaps the greatest lacuna in this study is its conclusion in 1846, and a brief set of speculations is thus in order. It is unclear from existing secondary works whether the officer corps changed substantially during the decade between the Mexican and Civil Wars, but since the late 1960s this period has been recognized as one of social and cultural consolidation in American life, a trend the officer corps had been participating in, and forwarding along the frontiers, for the preceding generation. Professionally, the army became still more institutionally articulated than before, and a more congenial civilian climate helped to sustain the corps' cohesion as an occupational group in its relations with outside groups and institutions. On the other hand, from other perspectives the corps' professionalism seems to have remained the same or even declined after the war with Mexico. The army's quest for expertise and training continued on its meandering way, for no new professional journals were founded, nor does there appear to have been any formal, officially sponsored study explicitly devoted to analyzing the military lessons of the war. Similarly, the cavalry and artillery schools revived during the fifties do not seem to have represented significant advances over their antebellum predecessors, which were primarily centers for troop rather than officer training, while the additional emphasis given to military knowledge at West Point during the last years of the decade came to an abrupt halt with the end of the five-year course at the outset of the Civil War. Though an unprecedented number of American officers went abroad to observe military developments, this practice represented a continuation or revival of antebellum policies (from circa 1840, for example) rather than a new
departure, and the written products of these trips (like the still limited American military literature in general) do not suggest more wide-ranging interests or thinking than those of their predecessors.

The expansion of the army and its officer corps also brought about new conflicts over the old occupational questions of rank, promotion, and postings. Nevertheless, the war with Mexico brought the army unprecedented public recognition and acclaim, and in the following decade the army became even more stable as an institution because of the expansion necessary to police America's newly acquired territories in the Southwest and the interest in reform taken by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. Building on their experiences in the war and the more congenial civilian atmosphere that followed it, officers seem to have demonstrated greater cohesion toward the civilian world—dysfunctionally so in the case of Winfield Scott's feud with his civilian superior—a *mentalité* they expressed in the language of martial glory and the rhetoric of romanticism and sentimentality. Scott aside, this cohesion was not necessarily (and, indeed, probably to a lesser degree than in the 1830s or 40s) expressed in antagonism to elements in and the values of civilian society—ironically, the conservative climate of the 1850s seems to have offered officers fewer mental alternatives outside the mainstream, and (regardless of partisan affiliation) fewer of these men appear to have been "Jacksonian" in their social views than their predecessors during the 1830s and 40s. Similarly, though many remained Whig-Republicans, the successes of Manifest Destiny appear to have spurred the corps' belligerence, as attested by an increase in filibustering by erstwhile officers that ran counter to the trend of two decades, while operations toward the Plains Indians were conducted with a growing harshness that does not seem to have aroused the
disenchantment or dissent of the Second Seminole War and the removal era. On the whole, it takes little imagination to see the officer corps becoming simultaneously more nativist, bellicose, chauvinistic, and authoritarian in every way during the 1850s, but in doing so the corps was following the general trend of American society, which was itself catching up to the tendencies toward sociocultural consolidation and hierarchy implicit in the officer corps' bureaucratization, its relations with enlisted men, and its operations along the nation's frontiers during the preceding generation.

I will only offer the briefest of speculations here concerning the mass desertion of officers to the Confederacy during the secession crisis—I think that when one envisions the southern nation as a sectional recreation of the American one (especially in the realm of government, which was perhaps the element of principal concern to officers employed thereby) much of this apparent incongruity disappears. Moreover, the centralizing tendencies of Confederate national leaders were not unlike those of their northern counterparts; in either case, army officers easily joined and led in the national organizing process fostered by the war.
Appendix L: The Theory of Professionalism and the Politics of
the Study of Military Professionalism

Historians of the army and its officers have usually taken a teleological
approach that posits professionalism as an end-point or culmination to be
achieved, without asking what professionalism really means or whether it is
actually desirable. The motives for doing so are not hard to see, for historians
of civilian society and professions have long questioned the claim of military
officers to the status of professionals. On the other hand, those who question
the potential professionalism of military forces have been blinded by equally
simplistic presumptions of their own, for they have reified the so-called "free
professions" of individual practitioners like traditional doctors and lawyers or
modern academics without pausing to observe that even in these occupations
the vast majority of modern professionals work within organizations of
increasing scale, scope, and complexity.

Beginning from this broader perspective and recognizing the
historicized social construction of claims to and the appellation of
"professional," I regard the specific historiographical question of whether or
not the army was "professional" at a particular point as something of a red
herring, a quest which has diverted scholars from deeper analyses of the
meanings of military professionalism in the evolution of nineteenth-century
American society. Officers and their civilian contemporaries—or at least those
who considered professionalism socially desirable—routinely characterized
military officership as a profession, and previous historians have made it
clear that the army officer corps possessed all the attributes demanded by
functionalist definitions of professionalism to some, and often to a
comparatively significant, degree—in some cases exceeding that of any
contemporary civilian profession—during this period. My intent herein is not
to question or dispute the presence of professionalism in the interwar army,
but to probe more deeply into the content and character of that quality and its
constituent elements.

With rare exceptions like the work of Peter Karsten for the postbellum
navy (which is clearly influenced by the ardent critiques of professionalism
mounted by the monopoly theorists of the late 1960s, as well as a laudable
attention to the dissonances between American military professionalism and
the values of its parent society derived from the experience of the Vietnam
era, but overcorrects by drawing a unidimensionally negative portrait), the
study of military professionalism has long been marred—and perhaps denied
some of the legitimacy it deserves by scholars of civilian professionalism and
the professional phenomenon in general—by the acceptance and
employment of analytic paradigms which have been in question for several
decades among students of the civilian professions. Skelton and others have
begun to employ newer perspectives and a wider context for analysis, but the
study of military professionalism has remained grounded in the putatively
objective assumptions of the functionalist school of analysis associated with
sociologists like Talcott Parsons, in which professions and their practitioners
fulfill universal needs for services indispensable to a society's survival--
functions like mediation (law), healing (medicine), emotional therapy or
counseling, and national defense.

I believe that functionalism is itself indispensable, and that some of its
critics have gone too far in their desire to point out the monopolistic and
exploitative dimensions of professional practice and organization, but paying
attention to the works of these revisionists (variously known as the "monopoly" or "power" school of scholarship on the professions) and applying their insights in a nuanced manner cannot help but expand our sensitivity to the complexity of professionalism and the methods used to claim that status. A revisionist account that simply sought to point out that officers sought occupational monopoly and were agents of middle-class or elite power would have little more value than a simplistic functionalist one. Stimulated by the rise of the monopolist school of sociological analysis and the insights about the power of culture made by anthropologists like Clifford Geertz in the late 1960s, a generation of historians like Burton Bledstein, Gerald Geison, and Samuel Haber have given new attention to the specific historical and cultural contexts in which professionals performed their work, going beyond class in the Marxist sense to combine aspects of both the functionalist and monopolist analyses.

Fortunately for me, scholars have not stopped with culture. Among the most recent students of the professions, two have gone on to fashion new approaches. Drawing on and extending the work of the cultural school, Bruce Kimball has demanded our attention to the etymological construction of professionalism through the use of socially loaded language, while Andrew Abbott has drawn our attention to the jurisdictional conflicts over work that evolve from and do much to construct the boundaries within which professionals operate. Abbott's work is especially significant because it calls on us to move away from the traditional analysis of institutions and the external factors of culture to the actual practice of professional expertise, a process in which that knowledge and the means and context of its application is reshaped and reconstructed by conflict both internally (within a
professional group, in the army between different branches of service, especially those of the staff bureaucracy and the combat arms commanders) and externally with competitors—in the case of the army officer corps militia, volunteers, and private adventurers. On the other hand, knowing that professional work and the simultaneous articulation and contestation of professional standards so often occurs within institutions and is shaped by culture, Abbott does not neglect these factors in his attention to occupational and suboccupational aggrandizement, making his perhaps the fullest and most rounded account yet of professional development. Like the monopolists, Abbott makes it clear that the history of the professions is one of conflict, but he goes beyond their tendency to lump professionals into monolithic blocs to demonstrate that conflict was endemic within professions as well as in their relations with elements in their parent societies. While one cannot ignore the cohesion that officers demonstrated in their efforts to secure an occupational monopoly from their civilian employers, it would be equally ahistorical to downplay the pervasiveness of friction and controversy within the officer corps itself.

On a more personal and political note, I frequently find myself in great sympathy with Jacksonian critics of the officer corps and the professions, an attitude that I believe sets me apart from most scholars of the army officer corps during this period. In both scholarship and practice the quest for military professionalism has long been shaped, overtly or otherwise, by the desire to legitimize the subordination of citizen-soldiers to Regular Army control, a desire as old as the army and its officer corps themselves. While I do not dispute the ultimate superiority in expertise of regularly trained career
officers, I believe that any socially responsible analysis of American military professionalism must take a fuller and—more importantly—a more balanced account of the tension between "professional" and amateur or citizen-soldier alternatives than most scholars have been willing to do.

This tendency to privilege the regular officer is intimately related to the belief that the primary mission of the armed forces is preparation for war with an enemy of relatively equal technological sophistication, in other words a conventional conflict with European or European-style forces. While responsible insofar as these are the forces that pose the most overt threat to our society, this tendency cannot therefore be taken for granted as a historical truism exempt from analysis—a matter of increasing practical importance today, since the United States is so powerful in conventional terms that few opponents will directly oppose us in these ways. From both a scholarly and a political standpoint, we must recognize that the army's "warfighting" mission is a construct suspect to question and analysis, for by virtue of its isolation the nineteenth-century United States enjoyed enough geopolitical security that there was little immediate or overt need for an army of this sort. Instead, as all students have recognized but many have refused to accept, the nineteenth-century army was primarily involved in constabulary operations in the nation's borderlands, whether in law enforcement (especially against unsanctioned trade with the Indians), in Indian-fighting (whether offensive or in an immediate sense defensive), and in Indian (and occasionally squatter) removal intended to clear a path for white settlement.

Once the nation had won its second war of independence from Britain it fought only a single conventional war on the American continent, and it did not fight one far distant from American shores for over a century, yet
regular officers directed their attention almost exclusively to conventional warfare rather than Indian-fighting. While this concentration certainly provided the officer corps with a powerful sense of mission and identity, which in turn contributed to its cohesion as a professional body, no profession should be permitted to define its own responsibilities, particularly in a manner contrary to the practical realities thereof. To do otherwise is as much evidence of neglect as of professionalism, but--burdened by our knowledge that the United States has engaged in three hot and cold world wars in this century, which demanded expertise in conventional warfare--few scholars have been willing to question the officer corps' collective privileging of warfare it was unlikely to fight at the time. One significant exception, now more than thirty years old, makes many of my points. Writing in 1962, Russell F. Weigley asserted that "standing apart from American life, American military leaders failed to address themselves to the discovery of military programs in accord with that life. . . . the professionals gave scarcely any thought to . . . evolving a doctrine designed to draw the highest usefulness from an armed citizenry." Indeed, Weigley concluded that "the professional officers of the Jacksonian era were isolated from realistic thinking about how to fight an American war. They expected society to adapt itself to their mode of warmaking; they made little effort to adapt their ideas on warfare to American society. Thus they were little prepared for the full dimensions of the Civil War." While I do not believe that American officers were isolated--their values were simply much more Whiggish than Jacksonian--and I do think that they were comparatively well-prepared to supply and administer, if not maneuver, the mass armies of the Civil War,
Weigley's words encapsulate a profound critique of American military professionalism that is too rarely voiced.**

Although spatial constraints have forced me to neglect this dimension, I believe that it is dangerous to treat the militia and volunteers (or the National Guard today, as many regular officers regrettably do) as a mere foil or straw man to demonstrate the superior efficacy of professional leadership. While our nation's wars have been won (and occasionally lost) under professional command, they have been fought largely by citizen-soldiers, and the Regular Army, an institution I find in many respects among the most admirable in American society, has only suffered from the efforts of its officers to deny this unalterable social reality. Even if the nation's future wars should be short decisive victories like those of recent years—a profound testament to the professional expertise and capability of today's armed forces—it would still be regrettable, and perhaps at some future date dangerous, for the army to develop a sense of isolation from civil society based on claims to a superior efficacy in the performance of its military functions. Social responsibility and accountability to democratic political processes must be the core of an American military professionalism worthy of our support, and the "objective" civilian control represented (however imperfectly) by constitutional structures and lines of communications must always be supplemented by a healthy communication and connection between soldier and citizen, however imperfectly "subjective."

** Weigley, Towards an American Army, p. 78.
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**Dissertations:**


