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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

EMILY J. ARENDT

As our second edition of History Trails is unveiled, it is my absolute pleasure to note that we received a large number of submissions for this year’s journal, making the selection process ever more difficult. The four pieces presented here represent a cross-section of the best work done in undergraduate history at the University of Wyoming in the 2007-2008 academic year.

As different as the pieces showcased here are, covering a broad array of topics and time-frames, the four pieces published in this year’s journal all have a common-thread tying them together. All four authors turn a rather critical eye at the historical profession, exhibiting a level of analysis and awareness rarely found in undergraduate work.

Tim Pearse, in “Round Peg Square Hole: Marxist Interpretations of the English Civil War,” tackles the veracity of Marxist theories in the study of seventeenth-century English history, questioning the applicability of such formulas to history more generally. In “Trapping, the Old Spanish Trail, & Citrus: A Chicano Perspective on the Life of William Wolfskill,” Jennifer Tracey examines the interaction of Anglo and Chicano residents in the Southwest, highlighting the cultural mingling so often overlooked by other historians whose “American ethnocentrism” she examines. Taking on the understudied topic of history and public memory, Sara Robinson looks at concepts of realism and symbolism in “Uses of Symbolism and Realism in Memory at the State Museum at Majdanek.” Having visited Majdanek, a World War II concentration camp located in Poland, Robinson scrutinizes the role of public remembrances in history while painting a picture of the site itself. Finally, Emily Jelly presents a review of Colin Calloway’s monograph The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America, offering both insights and criticisms.

The field of history can only benefit from the addition of scholars who are willing to look internally within the discipline to break down unfounded assumptions, potentially outdated frameworks of analysis, and the processes by which we all remember. By testing, analyzing, and criticizing when necessary, the four authors here help keep the Department of History at the University of Wyoming fresh, ground-breaking, and self-reflective.
Dialectical Materialism, which posits that historical change occurs through the clash of opposites, and that mind sets, culture, and ideology are merely the result of material circumstances, was proposed and perpetuated through the works of Karl Marx and Georg Hegel and comprises the very core of Marxist interpretations of history. This elegant model, simultaneously simple and complex, has thus been an extremely dominant and influential idea in the framework and content of historical work since the mid-nineteenth century.

It is easy to see why these ideas have been so powerful. Marxists, participating in what Arthur Marwick, author of *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language*, calls a “metaphysical” interpretation of history, are inspired by their fundamental “belief that the society we inhabit is the bad bourgeois society,” directed and framed by the dominant capitalist culture, which can only be dismantled through “the destruction of its ideas, its values, its culture its ideology,” or in other words, its myths.

While not all Marxist historians are blatant or overly political in their work, one must understand what is at stake when a Marxist analysis is composed. If the model fails, so do fundamental beliefs about the nature of mankind, and the way society operates. This is the fundamental flaw of Marxist history. It is history with an agenda, history constantly filtered through a model, which may or may not apply to a given situation. By forcing historians to fit the evidence into a specific framework, Marxist theory hinders the ultimate goal of history, which is to understand how and why change occurred within specific periods and contexts.

A fruitful topic in which to explore this “horse-blinder” effect of the Marxist model is that of the first English Civil War of the 1640s, which, since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, has been a battleground for Marxist and non-Marxist historians. Starting in about the 1950s, historians began to classify the English Civil War as a bourgeois revolution. This proposition spawned a large body of work aimed at framing the English Civil War as a clash between a traditional aristocracy and increasingly capitalistic segments of English society, the cast of actors varying in the work of different historians.

In their attempt to fit the history of seventeenth century England into a larger canon of Marxist historiography, and to defend their propositions against an onslaught of revisionist history, Marxists have overlooked and downplayed important aspects of English society in the seventeenth century. By framing the civil war as a struggle between capitalism and traditional feudal institutions, Marxists have neglected religion as a main motivator for the actions of the warring factions in the English Civil War. In doing so they have contributed to a less comprehensive and more
biased understanding of the history of England.

I

The model of the civil war as a bourgeois revolution is an attempt to prove one of the main tenets of Marxist thought, which is, that history is the story of clashing opposites, the thesis and anti-thesis, resulting in the synthesis or new order of society. According to Marx, the current state of society, or capitalist society, arose from the clash between the capitalistically oriented bourgeoisie and feudalism. Thus Marxist historians such as Perry Anderson, Robert Brenner, and Christopher Hill, who have dealt with the English Civil War, have tried to turn it into a revolution in which the bourgeoisie rises up against feudal institutions such as privilege and royal patronage in order to recast society to fit their values and interests.

According to Jack A. Goldstone, the case of England is special in that there is no distinct bourgeois class as a result of the diffusion of commercial enterprise to almost all segments of English society. This special case has necessitated a slight reshuffling of the Marxist story. Essentially, because one can find capitalistic tendencies such as commercial mining, shipping, and agriculture throughout the entire upper crust of society, including the nobility and aristocracy, along with essentially “civilian” sects of society, it is impossible to tell the English story as a conflict between a unified bourgeoisie and aristocrats. As a result, the general strategy of Marxist historians has been to modify Marx’s model to tell the story not as an inter-class conflict between capitalists and nobles, but as an intra-class conflict between differently situated members of the Aristocracy. To this end, Anderson, Brenner and Hill all tell slightly different stories.

Anderson, in his book, *The Lineages of the Absolutist State*, takes perhaps the most traditionally Marxist stance in his description of the English Civil War. Anderson describes the history of the English Civil War as being the result of a long-term rise in the power of the English landowning and merchant classes vis-à-vis the English monarchy. In his model, the English Civil War was essentially a backlash of the landed class against the monarchy as a result of King Charles I’s attempt reassert the monarchy’s traditional powers during his 11 years rule. In this period, King Charles I dissolved the English Parliament and reinstituted many laws which the Parliament had declared illegal in the preceding decades.

For Anderson, the long-term rise of rural power, began with Henry VIII’s sale of church lands, acquired from the Reformation, to English Lords in order to raise money for his 1543 attack on France. Furthermore, Anderson argues that the English landowning class was empowered by the fact that England’s geographic isolation created relatively little need for the existence of a strong absolutist monarchy to unite them for the purpose of creating
powerful state armies. This allowed, according to Anderson, for the English nobility to transition from traditional war related roles to that of self-interested capitalistic actors. [7]

According to Anderson, the end result of the growing power of the English land-owning class was that, when King James I tried to raise money for his Bishop Wars with Scotland, he was forced to ask an unresponsive parliament, which represented the interests of the English landowning and middling classes, for money it refused to provide. For Anderson, this refusal rested in the Parliament’s anger over King James I’s extension of feudal patronage, such as monopolies and privileges, to a handful of aristocrats and his reinstatement of outdated feudal taxes. The end result was that a bourgeois class, represented by the Parliamentarians, overthrew the English monarchy. [8] This explanation can at best only cover part of the story. As will be shown later in this paper, while conflicts over privilege and monopolies did occur within the Parliament, laws and resolutions against them were passed with near universal support. Support of these was a poor predictor for allegiance in the Civil War.

The work of Christopher Hill in *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* on the topic of the English Civil War is largely an expansion of the ideas presented by Anderson in his relatively short section on English absolutism. Hill, like Anderson, represents the war as a struggle between England’s “old regime,” an aristocracy tied to the monarch, and “those gentlemen and merchants excluded from economic privilege,” including great entrepreneurs of the landed class such as commercial farmers, the wealthy merchants, and “middling men” of all sorts. Essentially, Hill argues that the Parliamentarians represented a group of people, who regardless of their formal position in society, were in favor of a government that would represent the economic interests of commercially oriented individuals. This included increasing military competition against the Dutch, important trading rivals, implementing freer trade policies including the removal of monopolies, lowering interest rates, and removing monarchial barriers to enclosure. [9] Finally, Hill argues that Parliamentarians became agitators against the king, as extensions of his prerogative, ability to force loans, and ability to tax clashed with the landowners’ interest in protecting their private property.

As evidence, Hill includes descriptions of where the king and Parliamentarians received their support as a means to demonstrate whose interests each side represented. According to Hill, Parliament’s support came from the economically advanced south and east of England, while the king’s support came from economically backward areas of the north and west, where nobles, still tied to their peasants in feudal patronage-style relationships, were able to command their peasants to fight for their cause. While Hill is right to state that the south and east of England were home to more advanced and productive forms of agriculture, his distinction that parliamentary support came from an advanced south and east while royalist support came from the north and west is disputed by work done by other
historians. For instance, work done by Leonard Hochberg to correlate the political affiliation of the members of parliament with geographic origin has shown this claim to be almost statistically insignificant. For example, in the north, Hochberg found that the royalists only represented 55 percent of the parliament members, while 42 percent were parliamentarians. Furthermore, in the south-west, reputedly one of the most advanced agrarian regions, parliamentarians and royalists alike enjoyed almost identical representation.

Hill implies that the laws passed by the Parliament, in the years following the English Civil War, indicate a seizure of power by the English bourgeois class. For instance, in his analysis Hill represents the Parliamentarians as advocating for the removal of barriers to enclosure. According to Jack A. Goldstone in “State Breakdown in the English Revolution: A New Synthesis,” the idea that Parliamentarians opposed the king based on his barriers to enclosure is unfounded. This is because, by 1630, the monarchy was England’s largest encloser, as Stuart kings participated, in partnership with local gentry, in enclosure projects on monarchial lands in order to improve incomes generated by them. While the king did charge some nominal fees for enclosure, he participated in the process and was thus still far from being a barrier to the process. Another point to consider is that the English parliament did not pass substantial laws regarding enclosures until the eighteenth century, almost 100 years after the Civil Wars.

The final and most recently published advocate for the Marxist-model that will be discussed is Robert Brenner, author of Merchants and Revolution. Brenner, in his analysis of the period tells primarily the same story as Hill and Anderson, but with more emphasis on different segments of society. Brenner does place his analysis within the context of the growth of propertied classes, which had the ability and incentives to oppose the king and his court, but places much more emphasis on role of a Merchant class, which had grown rich with the advent of the Atlantic trade. This merchant class, according to Brenner, was comprised mostly of Protestants who, while important members of the parliament, were unconnected when it came to receiving economic favors such as monopolies from the monarchy. Thus, like Anderson and Hill, the civil war is framed as an intra-class struggle between an old aristocracy and a newly commercialized landowning class, a rising middle class, and Merchants not engaged in the monopolized Levant trade. These merchants, as the title of his book suggests, were for Brenner the most important agitators against the English king, in that they played an important leadership role by utilizing their connections with all of England’s most powerful capitalists, religious authorities, and popular classes.

There are two main criticisms that can be made in regards to Brenner’s book. First, Brenner seems forced to illustrate the connections between the new merchants and Puritan preachers. This, if anything, supports the argument that religion was of vast importance in the outbreak of the English Civil War. Secondly, Brenner places what many
Historians such as Conrad Russell question whether or not the seventeenth century is the proper period in which to place the development of a class of rich merchants and prosperous towns. This criticism holds some weight with further research. According to Jan De Vries in her book, *The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis: 1600-1750*, the seventeenth century is one characterized by a general downturn in the great growth and expansion experienced during the sixteenth century driven by either demographic collapse, absolutist warfare, or the debasement of European currency.

While the period discussed by De Vries did experience the transition of economic dominance from Italy and Spain to the new economic core of England and the Netherlands, this transfer occurred in the second half of the century, only after the supposed rise of the English merchant class. In the thirty years leading up to the English Civil War, English merchants, along with the rest of Europe, experienced depressed economic growth and regression, characterized by decreased demand and its corresponding effects of declining export and commodity prices. This hardly sounds like the economic growth and stimulation required for the spontaneous violent assertion of political power by England’s commercial classes over an outdated absolutist state.

Looking at some selected trends and facts from the twenty years leading up to the English Civil Wars, it becomes easy to see how the Marxists could have come to some of their conclusions. From the 1620s onward there were a series of events in Parliament which seem to suggest that indeed the Civil Wars were the result of a commercially oriented class overthrowing a government that did not represent their interests. For instance, in the early 1620s we see Parliament debating and attacking important members for their involvement in the issuing of patents and monopolies. Furthermore, the entire decade was characterized by the English parliament resisting the taxes and forced loans issued by King Charles I, as exemplified by the Petition of Rights of 1628 and the Three Resolutions of 1629, which ended with the violent dissolution of Parliament. Indeed, during the eleven year tyranny of King Charles, there was a regression into old forms of finance as demonstrated by the king’s use of taxes like “the distraint of knighthood,” fines on the use of the royal forest, patents and monopolies, and most importantly, the ship money tax.

However, to frame these events as the main causes of the Civil War is a mistake. True, the conflict between Parliament and king did represent what Robert Brenner calls “a structural tendency to financial crisis, resulting from its [the monarchy’s] limited capacity to tax,” but there is ample evidence to suggest that this conflict over taxation methods was not what caused Parliament to revolt against the monarch in 1643. While it was a legitimate concern for many, in fact both future parliamentarians and royalists, the call to arms was driven by something that was still a more powerful force in English society: religion. But for the rising threat of papist Arminianism in the English church, and
the notion by the majority of Parliament’s members that the English Church was only “partly reformed,” the many conflicts between Parliament and king would not have been resolved by means of violence.

II.

Conrad Russell, in his article “The Bourgeois Revolution: A Myth?” addresses one of the main problems with Marxist interpretations of history when he says Marxist models, “in their pure and original form, do not recognize the power of ideas as an independent variable.” According to Russell, Marxists make a big mistake when they assume that people’s thoughts and actions are dictated solely by their material position. This bleak and depressing view about the motivations of man tends to give people too little credit. Ideas and values, while often shaped by economics, can also be influenced by a myriad of other factors, which can include abstract philosophies and religious doctrine. Marxist historians have often presented the religious concerns of the English parliament’s members as “white noise” in the background of more important structural developments.\[18\] Pigeonholing the role of religion in the English Civil Wars as ephemeral developments essentially denies the fact that religion was still a powerful force in the early modern period.

The English Civil War must be understood within the context of the great paranoia felt by the religiously oriented members of English society, which existed prior to the English Civil War. Specifically, many protestants felt that King Charles I and his archbishop William Laud were steering England on a path toward papacy and cooperation with Rome, which was by many accounts of the period “the forces of the antichrist.”\[19\] Many Protestants were also concerned by the king’s, “innovations in religion,” and more specifically, the adoption of faulty religious doctrine by the Church of England. This belief stemmed from both the foreign policy of King Charles, his support of Arminianism, and Laud’s persecution of English Puritans. Finally, this paranoia was fueled by the fact that Protestantism, in the period, was experiencing a great proliferation and diversification of ideas.

To begin with, Charles I, throughout his reign was constantly subjected to rumors and claims that he was in some way affiliated with the Catholic Church. These claims were in many ways connected to Charles I’s foreign policy. One major contributor to these beliefs was that, starting in about 1630, Charles I attempted to improve his relations with Spain and France, both major Catholic states.\[20\] Furthermore, the king’s marriage to the French Catholic, Queen Henrietta Maria, and his appointment of various Catholic persons to positions of power within the English government were viewed as further proof that he wanted to bring Catholicism to England. However, these were just rumors, which only serve to illuminate the depth and subject of Protestant paranoia.

More importantly, the religious concerns of those opposed to King Charles I. were based on more concrete
developments, specifically the growth of Arminianism within the English church. William Laud, the archbishop of Canterbury, appointed by Charles I, sought to bring Arminian reforms to the Church of England, which can be characterized as an assault on both the Anglican and Puritan belief in Calvinist predestination. Essentially, Arminianism refuted the idea, held by both Anglicans and Puritans, that God decides whether people are destined for heaven before they are even born. Instead, Arminianism argues that God gives every person the tools required to go to heaven, but ultimately people either accept or reject the opportunity. Furthermore, Arminianism promoted Episcopacy, the hierarchical organization of church governance, the use of ritual within church services, and was accompanied by an increased prosecution of Puritan non-conformists. [21]

Jonathan Atkins in his article, “Calvinist Bishops, Church Unity, and the Rise of Arminianism,” outlines the many implications these policies had for the various sects of Protestantism within England. For Anglicans, Arminian policies denied the concept of predestination, which was, according to Atkins, an unofficial but important belief within the Anglican Church. While there were Calvinist bishops within the Church of England hierarchy, they tended to minimize the emphasis of this part of their doctrine for several reasons. First and foremost, Calvinist bishops were, like most Protestants in England, very wary of the growth of the power of Catholicism vis-à-vis a united Protestant church. Thus, for practical reasons, they resisted the application of predestination to official Anglican doctrine in order to prevent the over complication of the religion, which might drive away members, or the splintering of the church into various sects over the issue of predestination. Also important was the fact that Calvinist bishops were co-opted by the church governance and did not have a free hand to teach predestination, as it was essentially outlawed by Laud through various proclamations and policies. Those bishops who did attempt to teach the doctrine lost their jobs. [22]

At the base level however, the religious policies of Charles I, were a direct and/or indirect assault on all Calvinist sects of English Protestantism, which accounts for the broad coalition of Protestant sects in opposition to King Charles I during the first English Civil War. First, all Protestants were obviously opposed to popery whereby God is or was ever represented on earth by an entity other than Jesus. The attempts of Laud to bring the Church of England under more centralized control, and his claim that the King of England received his power from God appeared to many as an attempt to bring the church closer to the papist system and was opposed by many different types of English Protestants. Also, the reinforcement of the hierarchical organization of the Church of England was specifically opposed by both the Presbyterians and Independents, the two main religious sects of the English Parliament. Furthermore, all Calvinists within England including many Anglicans, and all Puritans, could take serious offense to the king’s rejection of the concept of predestination, which was a major component to their beliefs. Finally, the Puritans, who were specifically singled out by the Laudian regime for repression, often used the Parliament as a means
to redress their major concerns with the English monarchy. [23]

As can be seen, almost all sects of English Protestantism represented within the English parliament had very legitimate and important grievances with King Charles I. These grievances were more volatile and comprehensive than any secular concerns held by the members of Parliament, and thus were much more important contributors to the outbreak of the English Civil War. This fact has been well documented in the work of both John Morrill and Conrad Russell.

John Morrill, in his study “The Religious Context of the English Civil War,” utilized House Journals and the diaries of English MP’s to reconstruct the values and ideas of the English parliament, in the years leading up to the civil war. He concludes that, by and large, the members of Parliament did not advocate the destruction of the monarchical system, but rather had very specific problems with the rule of Charles I. In fact, Morrill finds vast evidence, in the language of the documents that, by 1640, most of Parliament “had limited, but clear and firm belief in a partial royal tyranny.” What was voiced consistently was that “the King was using approved powers, in inappropriate circumstances.” His offences included the raising of emergency taxes in times of non-emergency, allowing individuals to profit from powers reserved for the king himself, and for the corruption of justice. [24] Essentially those who had secular complaints about the monarchy sought to limit the king’s powers so they could not be corrupted, to do so without killing him, and to be able to create a new constitutional government. These limited aims help to explain why the regicide of Charles I was eventually followed by the restoration of king with limited powers.

Both Russell and Morrill argue that these secular problems with the king were largely agreed upon by both future parliamentarians and royalists, and did not carry the emotional charge required for the outbreak of war. They argue further that the support or opposition of these secular complaints did not necessarily denote future membership as a parliamentarian or royalist. Russell, in his article “Issues in the House of Commons, 1621-1629,” uses a sample of thirty parliament members who were still in Parliament when the Civil War broke out in the 1640s, and uses evidence from their speeches in order to determine their stances on several issues. He then compares these stances to the future affiliation of these members in the Civil War. Russell’s analysis is constrained by a few factors, mainly which have to do with its small sample size. This small sample size is a result of the factors including, that, in some cases, the exact opinion of members was impossible to make out, that many parliament members were not around when the Civil War broke out, and that in cases where members were still around, it was sometimes impossible to determine their affiliation as either a royalist or parliamentarian. [25] These limitations aside, Russell’s conclusions are buttressed by the fact that they agree with similar work done by Morrill on the Parliament in the 1640s, which will be discussed
Russell’s work is focused on investigating three main concerns or sources of opposition within Parliament, including support of Parliamentary privilege and the rule of law, opposition to privileges granted by the king, and religious issues. For the issue of Parliamentary privilege and the rule of law, Russell analyzes the support of the Petition of Right of 1628. This document is an excellent measure of support for Parliamentary privilege and the rule of law, as it deals with the issues of un-parliamentary taxes, forced loans, and unlawful imprisonment. It says on the issue of taxes that “no tallage or aid shall be laid or levied by the king or his heirs in this realm without the goodwill and assent of the Archbishops, Bishops, Earls, Barons, Knights, Burgesses, and other freemen of the commonalty of this realm.” On the issue of forced loans, it states that, “from thenceforth, no person shall be compelled to make any loans to the King against his will,” and on the issue of unlawful imprisonment, “that no freeman may be taken or imprisoned or be disseised [sic] of his freeholds or liberties, or his free customs, or be outlawed or exiled; or in any manner destroyed by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.” Russell’s sample of those whose opinions were known during the 1620s demonstrates that both future parliamentarians and future royalists supported the Petition at near equal rates. Had the issue of parliamentary privilege been a major divisive issue in cause of the civil war, we would see a more stark division between future royalists and parliamentarians.

Russell also examines the issue of divides over the issuance of privileges by the king by looking at the support of different Parliament members for a 1621 bill against monopolies and corresponding attacks on the issuers of patents, and attacks against Buckingham, one of the king’s closest advisors who was eventually assassinated in the late 1620s. Once again, Russell finds that the evidence does not support the conclusion that these issues were really what divided parliamentarian from royalist in the 1640s. On the issue of attacking monopolies and patentees, Russell finds that, in fact, no future parliamentarian actually participated in the attack on the privileged and corrupt members of Parliament, and that the attacks were led by future royalists. On the issue of opposition to Buckingham, Russell finds that the future royalists and parliamentarians were equally divided on the issue.

Where Russell does find divisions between future parliamentarians and royalists is on the issue of religion. He generally finds that those who were future parliamentarians were Calvinists (which comprised twelve of thirteen parliamentarians examined by Russell), who used religion in an ideological and enthusiastic fashion. Some examples include the fact that parliamentarians fervidly argued for war with Catholic Spain on the grounds of religious ideology, while future royalists argued for war on more pragmatic political grounds. Also, parliamentarians who argued for further reformation of the Church, engaged in “ideological anti-papery” and used the language of “godly
enthusiasm.” [28]

While Russell’s analysis does have its limitations, it fits well into work done by John Morrill on the issues faced by Parliament in the 1640s. Morrill, using personal diaries and records from the houses like Russell, asserts that there were in fact several avenues of opposition to the king from Parliament. He breaks these issues into three main categories, including what he calls localist, legal-constitutionalist, and religious concerns. Morrill argues that the members were usually a mix of one or two of these concerns, but that neither the localist, nor legal-constitutionalist avenues of opposition carried “the momentum, the passion to bring about the kind of civil war that England experienced after 1642.” For Morrill, “it was the force of religion that drove minorities to fight, and forced majorities to make reluctant choices.” This idea is supported by Russell’s argument that, while there was little debate and disagreement on economic issues within the Long Parliament, religion was an impassioned and verbose subject of debate. [29]

When the Long Parliament met in 1641, there was what may be considered a rather quick redress of the issues, which would have been the most divisive if the Civil War was indeed a battle between a privileged aristocracy and a commercial class. For instance, in that year, Parliament quickly passed laws abolishing the king’s use of ship money, forced loans, and the distraint of knighthood, which indicates a large level of agreement between parliament members on these economic issues. Along with these laws came a relatively quick investigation and pursuit of the king’s monopolists, and the hounding of several of the king’s principal officers from office. However, there was no comprehensive or violent pursuit of many who may be considered the king’s most privileged aristocrats. The majority of the king’s tax farmers, including ship money sheriffs, those who enforced the fines for encroachment in the king’s forest, and those who enforced fines for neglecting the obligations under the distraint of knighthood, were left unscathed and uninvestigated. Had these parliament members been considered such a huge problem within parliament, they would have been persecuted violently. On the other hand, Morrill documents that those guilty of attempting innovation within religion, or supporting Laudianism, were attacked and punished with impunity and in much greater numbers than those guilty of secular offenses. [30] Had the secular issues been the main divisive issue in the English parliament, the gap between debate, language, and action between secular and religious issues would not have been so large.

Examining a 1640 address to the House of Commons by John Pym, a major leader in the road to the first English Civil War, illuminates many of the ideas central to the work of Morrill and Russell. In the speech titled “On Grievances in the Reign of Charles I,” Pym begins by outlining three main concerns with the king’s rule. These concerns are, in the words of Pym, “the greatest liberty of the Kingdom,” religion, “the next great liberty,” justice, and
“the third great liberty the power and privilege of the parliament.” Already in his opening, it seems that Pym has outlined, at least in his mind, the hierarchy of importance of the major grievances between Parliament and king, namely that religion comes first. This hierarchy is supported by the organization of the organization of the “Protestation of the House of Commons” a short but important 1629 document, consisting of three concerns which places “innovation of religion,” at the top of the list. 

Throughout Pym’s speech, he makes mention of many of the concerns, which have taken center stage in the analyses of many historians dealing with the subject. These include legal and economic concerns, including condemnations of the king’s implementation of the ship laws, unlawful imprisonments, the dissolution of parliament, and the king’s use of monopolies. However, Pym also makes frequent and forceful references to religion, particularly, the suspected popery of King Charles I.

In his speech, Pym accuses Charles I of suspending “all laws against papists whereby they enjoy a free and almost public exercise of that religion. Those good statues which were made for restraint of idolatry and superstition are now a grand security to them.” Pym continues to criticize the king for the placement of Catholics into positions of power, and of allowing them to “mold public affairs to the advantage of that party [the papists],” particularly, under the direction of “a collection of cardinals in Rome who seek to establish the Pope’s authority and religion in England.”

Pym also uses references to religion in almost backward ways, often during the discussion of economic issues. For instance, at one point in his speech, Pym claims that, “innovations in religion have forced a great number of his majesty’s subjects to forsake the land; whereby not only their person and their posterity but their wealth and industry are lost to this kingdom.” He also uses religious slander as a means to demean certain groups mentioned in his speech. For instance, in referring those men benefiting from monopolies by the king, Pym says, “the principle undertakers in this (monopolies from the king) were divers and popish recusants.”

Pym’s repeated use of religious ideas reflects a few realities. First, as Pym was a stringent Puritan, his numerous religious protestations represented several genuine concerns with the policies of Charles I. Furthermore, being a successful politician, Pym’s words can be construed to represent what the body wanted to hear. For instance, in his speech, Pym only reiterates those concerns that he knows Protestants of all sects can agree with. These are accusations that the king is involved in “innovations in religion” and the support of Catholicism. These broad accusations were exactly what were needed to bring the majority of religious minded parliamentarians, including both the Puritans, and many Anglicans, to his side. Furthermore, the fact that he used religious references frequently and often in reference to economic issues indicates that religion was at least a common thread between the concerns of
most members of Parliament. Thus, Pym’s speech seems to follow the Morrill and Russell’s models of the Civil War.

Another important set of primary sources to the view that religion was a necessary factor for the outbreak of the English Civil Wars are the various oaths used by the Parliament for those enlisting in its military service. In the initial attempt to raise an army against the royalists, the Parliament drafted and distributed the “Vow and Covenant,” an oath which was to be taken by all those who were to serve the parliamentarians. In this oath, which is taken from an article entitled “A Holy and Sacramental Paction, Federal Theology and the Solemn League and Covenant in England,” by Edward Vallance, covenant takers swore that “the forces raised by the two houses of parliament are raised and continued for their just defense and for the defense of the true protestant religion.” After an initial defeat by royalist forces, the parliamentarians entered into an alliance with the Protestant forces of Scotland. Under an agreement known as the Solemn League and Covenant, the parliamentarians joined forces with the Scots, who were also fighting for a religious cause. Under this agreement, all those who fought for this alliance agreed defend the church of Scotland, and further reform the church of England, and also to “endeavor the extirpation of popery, prelacy [hierarchy of church government], superstition and heresy,” along with the defense of the privileges of parliament, and the discovery of all evil instruments opposing further reformation. [34]

Perhaps the most telling evidence for the importance of religion in the outbreak of the English Civil Wars was the sequence of events that occurred at the conclusion of the first English Civil War. The parliamentarians, while once united in their opposition to the king based on what were basic religious ideas (the opposition to popery and the support of the Calvinist idea of predestination,) the major Protestant alliance eventually fell apart. What were once “parliamentarians” divided further into the sects of independents and Presbyterians, or, in another way, moderates and Puritans. While the Presbyterians sought reconciliation with the King, the independents thought more reform was needed, specifically in the realm of church governance. It was this extreme religious group that rose to the fore at the end of the second English Civil War, and who through “Prides Purge” of the late 1640s, were able to remove from Parliament of all those who opposed their policies of freedom of religion. It was this party who utilized the New Model Army, which consisted almost exclusively of zealous Puritans, who ordered the execution of King Charles I, and a Parliament of their membership that passed all of the important laws during the Protectorate. [35] Clearly, at every stage of the evolution towards the administration and conclusion of the English Civil Wars, religion was an important catalyst and motivator for the outbreak of violence.

Marxist interpretations of the English Civil War seem to gain legitimacy because they describe a long-term structural change from a traditional to commercially oriented society. One would have a hard time arguing that somewhere in history, this change did not occur. Clearly there have been long-term changes in the world economy, but
these changes have not been the only important factors in driving history. The application of the Marxist model to the English Civil War is essentially \textit{a priori}. It takes observations about the organization of modern society, and then assumes that all of modern history is driven by the transition toward this modern organization. Furthermore, it is \textit{a priori} in that it takes predetermined assumptions about human nature, and tries to fit historical events into this mold. Marxist accounts fail to acknowledge the complexity of society and give credit to the power of the human mind to create and follow ideas independent of their material circumstances. For these reasons, Marxist interpretations of the Civil War have been incomplete, and over simplified.

\[4\] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, \textit{The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels with Related Documents} (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1999), 66.
\[7\] Ibid., 125.
\[8\] Ibid., 142.
\[13\] Ibid., 184.
\[15\] Ibid., 17-21.
\[17\] Brenner, \textit{ Merchants and Revolution}, 199.
\[20\] Ibid.
Studies 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1986): 411.

[22] Ibid., 415, 417.

[23] Ibid., 424.


[27] Ibid., 27-28.

[28] Ibid., 34-37.


[33] Ibid.


Uses of Symbolism and Realism in Memory at the State Museum at Majdanek

Sara Robinson

On August 27, 1944, following a visit to the Majdanek concentration camp in Lublin, Poland, New York Times journalist W. H. Lawrence wired his report to his editor. On August 30th, his front page story began with the chilling words, “I have just seen the most terrible place on the face of the earth.” In his article, Lawrence detailed his tour of the camp and the evidence he found of atrocities committed there, stating, “After inspection of Maidanek, I am now prepared to believe any story of German atrocities, no matter how savage, cruel and depraved.” The graphic descriptions Lawrence provided of the Majdanek camp were so shocking to American readers that the Times felt obligated to run an editorial in the next edition which confirmed Mr. Lawrence as a “thorough and accurate correspondent” and to cite his sources. [1] A copy of the August 30th edition of New York Times now rests in a glass display case at the State Museum at Majdanek, representing a connection between east and west and acting as a testimony of the camp’s history. Today, the camp appears much as it did at the time of Mr. Lawrence’s visit; the sights and smells evoke a not-so-distant past while its monuments act as a reminder and a solemn warning. As a site of memory, the State Museum at Majdanek combines both realism and symbolism to convey the atrocities of Nazism and to memorialize its victims.

The Majdanek Concentration Camp

On July 20-21, 1941, SS chief Heinrich Himmler visited the Lublin district of the General Government in occupied Poland in search of a location on which to build a prisoner of war labor camp. The camp facilities, located one mile southeast of Lublin and covering approximately 667 acres of land were intended to be “militarized and industrialized agricultural complexes around which permanent German settlements in eastern Europe would grow and expand, after the Germans physically annihilated Jews and members of the Polish and Soviet leadership elites.” Although only twenty percent of the camp was completed, the plans called for an initial forced labor population of approximately 150,000 inmates with an intended expansion to 250,000. In contrast with other Operation Reinhard camps, Majdanek was not built in secrecy, but in an open field within view of Lublin. With the location of the camp chosen, barbed wire fences were erected in October 1941 in preparation for the first inmates, approximately 2,000 Soviet prisoners of war. Upon arrival, these first prisoners found only empty fields with no barracks and no facilities. Forced to begin construction on the camp, most of the first Soviet prisoners died as a result of hard labor, poor conditions, and exposure to the elements. [2]

To maintain a steady population of laborers, round-ups of Jews in Lublin began in December 1941, followed by non-Jewish Poles in February 1942. In March of that year, transports of Jews destined for Auschwitz were re-routed to Majdanek; those fit for labor were selected to remain while the others were sent directly to the Sobibor killing center. Though it had a diverse population which included a number of nationalities during its use, for the first two years Majdanek was officially
listed as a Waffen SS prisoner of war camp. Even after its reclassification as “Concentration Camp Lublin” in February 1943, a significant percentage of its inmates continued to be Soviet POWs. When the first planned phase of construction was completed in 1942, 144 prisoner-built barracks stood in the camp. Though built for 300 persons, as a result of the large prison population, 500-800 inmates were generally packed into the barracks. In fact, in size, the Majdanek concentration camp was second only to Auschwitz. [3]

When it was established, Majdanek was not designated primarily as an extermination camp. As the number of prisoner transports to the Lublin district increased, gas chambers utilizing Zyklon B and carbon monoxide were built in October 1942. Initially, the gas chambers were used to exterminate prisoners no longer able to work, but as death camps in the region were dismantled, Majdanek took on this additional role. While the numbers of those killed upon arrival at the camp is not known, it is generally believed that as transports of Jews and Poles arrived from throughout Poland, thousands were immediately gassed. The most notorious event in Majdanek’s history was the November 3, 1943 “Harvest Festival.” Following the August 2nd prisoner revolt and escape at Treblinka and the October 14th revolt at Sobibor, Himmler feared that Jews in other camps would be encouraged to revolt as well. In response, he ordered the mass execution of Jews in all camps in the Lublin area, to be conducted simultaneously and with military precision. Jews from various camps in the Lublin area were rounded up and grouped with those at Majdanek. With music blaring through speakers to drown out the sound of machine gun fire, approximately 26,000 Jews were shot at Majdanek in one day, making it “the largest single-day, single-location massacre during the Holocaust.” [4]

In response to the growing need for an efficient corpse disposal method, the Majdanek crematoria were built in 1943. Heated by coke, the largest crematorium was capable of burning approximately 1000 bodies a day, creating a black plume of smoke which was clearly visible from the neighboring city. Once cremated, the ashes from prisoners’ bodies were bagged and used as fertilizer both in the camp and throughout the region. [5]

In January 1944, as the Soviet Army pushed the Germans west, the decision was made to begin the transfer of an estimated 40,000 prisoners from Majdanek to other camps or directly to Germany for forced labor. When the Soviet Army liberated Majdanek on July 23, 1944, between 500 and 1,000 prisoners remained in the camp. Reports of the numbers of those who died or were killed at Majdanek between October 1941 and January 1945 vary greatly. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s estimates are among the most conservative, and are listed at between 95,000 and 130,000; 89,000 to 110,000 of those killed were Jews. While a great number of these people were murdered outright, many died as a direct result of forced labor, beatings, and poor conditions. In her book, Hitler’s Death Camps, Konnilyn Feig states that “Majdanek suffered from the highest mortality rate of any German concentration camp in its middle years,” and that “a transfer to Auschwitz actually raised an inmate’s life expectancy.” [6]

Majdanek as a Site of Memory
As a result of the Soviet Army’s speed as they approached the Lublin District, the Germans were forced to abandon Majdanek relatively quickly, leaving the camp barracks, gas chambers, and crematoria intact. Upon arrival, Soviet troops found storehouses full of goods taken from prisoners, bodies that had not yet been cremated, mounds of human ashes, and only a small number of survivors. Majdanek was the first of the concentration camps liberated by the Soviet Army, and as the horror of their discoveries mounted, Lieutenant General Vasily Chuikov “ordered his soldiers to be escorted through the camp so that they might have the character of their enemy indelibly imprinted on their minds.” Estimating that 1.5 million men, women, and children had died at Majdanek, Soviet authorities chose to exploit it as an example of fascist atrocities against the proletariat. To this end, in an unusual gesture of openness, western reporters were invited to tour the camp and to report on their findings. Sadly, in spite of these reports, “a remarkably high percentage of the people in the West remained skeptical, dismissing eye-witness accounts and photographs as ‘Russian propaganda.’”[7] It was not until after the liberation of several other camps that the western world began to fully comprehend the scale of Nazi atrocities.

In recognition of its role in the Nazi war machine as an Operation Reinhard concentration camp, the State Museum at Majdanek was established by the occupying Soviet government in November 1944. On July 2, 1947, Majdanek gained legal status as a Polish central state institution through Parliamentary law. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, its original focus on crimes committed against Soviet citizens has shifted largely toward Polish victims of Nazi atrocities. The currently published aims of the State Museum at Majdanek are “to preserve the buildings as material evidence of the crimes committed…; to analyze the facts of these crimes; and to present analyzed facts to the public.”[8] To accomplish this, the Majdanek site is preserved much as it was when it was liberated in July 1944.

In considering the State Museum at Majdanek as a site of memory, it is helpful to break it into two separate parts. The first, the remains of the camp which house the museum, should be studied as an archeological site. Its cold sparseness, which creates an almost unendurable sense of realism, is in many ways the most powerful aspect of Majdanek. The second part of the museum consists of two symbolic monuments which, lying outside the jurisdiction of the wire fences and guard towers, is something of a departure from the realism of the central camp. Though seemingly at odds with one another, when properly understood, the archeological site and symbolic monuments work in tandem to make Majdanek a place of history, memory, and mourning.

Memory through Realism

The core of Majdanek, the barracks, guard towers, showers, gas chambers, and crematorium stand now just as they did when the Soviet Army arrived. Visitors pass the guards’ barracks, walk through the main gate, and pause before the disinfection chambers to look down a long row of evenly spaced prisoner barracks. The gravel road and overgrown grass give the impression of a place lost in time. The apartment buildings and private homes a short distance away are a reminder of the confidence of the Nazis; safe within the heart of occupied Poland, they had no reason to hide their activities. Entering the disinfection chamber, a sign printed in Polish, Russian, English, German, and French explains that prisoners were shaved and
forced to shower before being registered as inmates. The gray concrete walls and floor are unassuming and distinctly non-threatening. Passing into the second room, eyes are drawn to cloudy blue stains which appear to creep up and down the walls and across the ceiling. The black sign with white text simply states, “Eksperimental [sic] gas chamber for exterminating the prisoners with Cyclone B thrown into the chamber through holes in the ceiling.” Like the prisoners brought to Majdanek, visitors here walk into a shower and are surprised to find themselves in a gas chamber.

The main portion of the museum is housed in several former barracks. Displays arranged along the wood plank walls tell the story of Hitler’s rise to power, the German invasion of Poland, the camp, and its prisoners. Exhibited are artifacts such as toothbrushes, combs, a child’s doll, eye glasses, thousands of shoes, things that the poet Daniel Siegel calls “the most common objects/ of our everyday,” imbuing Majdanek with a sense of almost unbearable humanity. For many, it is the intimacy of the artifacts that are most disturbing. In his August 30, 1944 article, W. H. Lawrence wrote of the shoe warehouse he had toured, “in which I walked across literally tens of thousands of shoes spread across the floor…. I saw shoes of children as young as 1 year old. There were shoes of young and old men or women.” Forty-nine years later, Edward T. Linenthal, in his book *Preserving Memory*, describes his reaction to these same shoes as he entered the barrack in which they are displayed: “I could only go in a few feet. The smell and the impact were overpowering, suffocating. I was stunned by the power of the ruins.” Linenthal goes on to explain that in Majdanek, “the story was told within the total environment of the camp, an environment that seemed to collapse the distance between event and recollection of event, an environment in which the shoes were actually worn, taken off, left behind, and collected.”

As a result of the accessibility of the artifacts to the visitor, Majdanek gives the sense of “an almost unaltered geography of horror and death that has remained unchanged since the Nazis fled the camp in the final days of the war.” Through its silent and strikingly simple realism, Majdanek invites its visitors to use all of their senses to experience the camp as it once was and to understand its significance as a sacred place in the memory of the Holocaust.

*Memory through Symbolism*

Beginning in 1967, design submissions for a Majdanek memorial were solicited from around the world. Chosen from 130 designs, Architect Wiktor Tolkin’s two monuments, the Monument of Struggle and Martyrdom and the Pantheon-Mausoleum were dedicated on September 1, 1969. According to James E. Young in his book, *The Texture of Memory*, the design of the Monument of Struggle and Martyrdom represents “the great weight of memory” standing on “a proportionally undersized base, which creates a sense of top-heaviness, even danger, for those standing beneath it… as a literal gesture to the hazards in memory itself, which can jeopardize our current sense of well-being.” Approaching the monument, visitors pass through the “gate of hell,” a narrow corridor, sided by jagged rocks and urns for ceremonial flames. Walking up the stairs to the base of the monument, the Pantheon-Mausoleum is visible one mile in the distance, over the Homage Road and through the “Valley of Death.” Young explains that the twenty-minute walk between the monuments, with open fields to one side and
barracks to the other, is intended to be an enforced period of meditation and contemplation. [12]

The Pantheon-Mausoleum, though largely symbolic in nature, protects the most valuable evidence of Nazi atrocities in a way that is shocking in its cold simplicity. Its inscription, carved into the marble in huge letters, translated, reads: “Let our fate be your warning.” Appropriately situated next to the main crematoria and supported by three pillars, the dome-shaped cover protects several tons of human ashes that were collected by Lublin townspeople following the camp’s liberation. Janet Jacobs, in her article, “Ritual and Mourning at Sites of Terror and Violence,” explains that “because the remains of the victims are both visible and accessible to the visitor, no other memorial space in eastern Europe conveys the reality of the Holocaust in quite the same way.” This monument, “built in the shape of a rotundal urn covered by a lifted stone dome… reflects the old Slavic custom of burying body ashes in urns,” and “enacts an essentially Polish burial of the victims.” As “technologies of genocide are transformed and redefined as religious spaces… the sacred and profane are brought together in a spiritual reconsecration of the death campsite.” [13] Through this, the Pantheon-Mausoleum becomes a site of memory and of mourning, of ritual and of symbolism.

**Conclusion**

As the city of Lublin grows, its skyline draws ever closer to Majdanek’s borders. Many of those who live near the former Nazi camp walk across its grounds on their daily business. While the largest number of those killed at Majdanek were Jews, it is significant that they were also Poles, and that Poland is still considered by many to be the first victim of Nazi aggression and atrocities. Poles are daily faced with the uneasy memory of the Holocaust and of how their own people were violated. As a result, “the boundaries between the sacralization of the horrors of the past and the day-to-day lives of those living in the present have become uncomfortably blurred.” [14] In this place, past and present struggle for reconciliation as symbolism and realism work together to implore “Let our fate be your warning.”
Monument of Struggle and Martyrdom, designed by Wiktor Tolkin, 1969

Source: Sara Robinson

Pantheon-Mausoleum, designed by Wiktor Tolkin, 1969

Source: Sara Robinson
Homage Road through the “Valley of Death” from the Monument of Struggle and Martyrdom to the Pantheon Mausoleum

Source: Sara Robinson


[14] Ibid., 313.
Historian Robert Glass Cleland called William Wolfskill “a pioneer in the Santa Fe-Los Angeles trade and one of the two earliest founders of California’s wine and fruit industries, Wolfskill was a gentleman of modesty, integrity, and enterprise to whom Los Angeles and Southern California owed much of their development.” Ruth Waldo Newhall referred to Wolfskill as “an ingenious and respected trader … and a leader in all major southern California commercial transactions.”[1] The praise for William Wolfskill’s achievements and virtues are seemingly endless. Not only was William Wolfskill highly economical, he was well liked and respected as well. Wolfskill also succeeded in becoming the first in many of his endeavors: he was the first to travel the entirety of the Old Spanish Trail; he planted one of the first, and largest, orange orchards in California; and he brought many new types of produce to the West Coast. He was like many other American trappers in the American Southwest in that he married into a prominent Spanish family, but unlike other trappers, he made the majority of his fortune after he left the fur trade.

William Wolfskill was a highly virtuous and intelligent man. The major defect in current scholarship, such as Iris Higbie Wilson’s biography, is that they do not acknowledge the importance of Hispanic influences in the life and times of William Wolfskill. This paper will examine not only previously undisclosed endeavors of Wolfskill, but also the trials and tribulations of the Mexican people who lived and worked with him in California and New Mexico. That there is even a biography of this American Frontiersman points to an even larger issue: historians, especially Americans, have taken far more interest in Americans in the Southwest than Mexicans, exemplified by the fact that they rarely write about the lives of Mexican Frontiersmen. American biographers have been ethnocentric in their subject selection, as historian David J. Weber noted when he wrote that “their choice [to write about a Chicano Frontiersman] often seems influenced by the fact that their subject was either pro-American or cooperated with Americans,”[2] and this leaves huge gaps in the history of Mexicanos in the Southwest. The Mexican era was not simply an extension of the Spanish era, nor an inconsequential precursor to the American era. American ethnocentrism has proved detrimental not only in biography, but in the conservation of Mexicano history as well.

William Wolfskill was born on March 20, 1798 to Milton and Anna S. Wolfskill; he became one of seven children in his Kentucky family. He was born of German and Irish ancestry and according to Harris Newmark, his family was “originally of the Teutonic stock…traced back to a favorite soldier of Frederick the Great.” His family left Kentucky for Missouri in 1809, following an invitation from Daniel Boone. When the family arrived in Missouri,
William was only eleven years old, and he remained there for the majority of his juvenile years. Wolfskill first traveled across Missouri with William Bucknell, the Father of the Santa Fe Trail. In the fall of 1822, Bucknell and his party, including Wolfskill, traveled from New Mexico to Chihuahua, Mexico to trap beaver and to trade horses and mules. The men then drove the horses and mules to Texas and through Louisiana and finally into Alabama. The beaver pelt trade began to peak around this time, following Mexican Independence in 1821. Thomas Chávez asserts, “Beaver trappers, working for large companies, permeated the Rocky Mountain West, some traveling as far as California seeking beaver skins.”[3] Soon, Wolfskill became one of them.

In January of 1823, Wolfskill set out on a hunt with an unidentified Chicano man from New Mexico with whom he had trapped before. While sleeping along the Rio Grande one night, Wolfskill woke to find, presumably, that an Indian had shot him. The injury was not severe because the bullet had passed through his hand and opposite arm before entering his chest, but the bullet damaged him nonetheless. Wolfskill walked twenty-five miles to the nearest town, Valverde, soon to discover that his New Mexican companion had arrived in the town as well. The unnamed Chicano man claimed that Indians had attacked him and Wolfskill, as Wolfskill had originally thought, but he claimed that Wolfskill died in the ambush. The resulting investigation turned up no evidence of an Indian attack. The only footprints found at their camp were from Wolfskill and his companion. The New Mexican man also claimed that the Indians had shot at them with arrows, but again, there were no arrows found at the scene. The investigators concluded that there was no evidence of Indians having been in the camp and that the Chicano man had shot Wolfskill. New Mexican authorities scheduled the man’s trial while Wolfskill returned home to mend, but because of excessive delays, the New Mexican authorities cancelled the trial and set the man free. Wolfskill was left dumbfounded as to why his companion had attacked him because the men had only collected a few furs by that point. According to Henry Barrows, an old Mexican man warned Wolfskill before the expedition that his companion was untrustworthy, but unfortunately, Wolfskill ignored the old man’s advice.[4]

After returning to Santa Fe and recovering from the attack, Wolfskill, along with Ewing Young and Isaac Slover, set out on another trapping expedition along the San Juan and other Colorado River tributaries in 1824. The party set out from Taos in February and initially was quite sizeable. As the expedition progressed though, the party decreased in size; small contingents of trappers set out on their own at economically opportune moments. Eventually, Wolfskill, Young, and Slover were the only party members left, so they decided to finish the season together. The men returned to Taos in June, having made about $10,000 in pelts.[5]

One of the first expeditions that Wolfskill led happened upon him by accident. In 1826, Wolfskill met Young in Missouri and decided to join Young’s party to go to Santa Fe to trap along the Rio Gila. There are differing accounts
about how many men were actually under the authority of Wolfskill during the original Gila expedition. Some accounts claim there were eleven men with Young and Wolfskill, and others say there were sixteen men total with the addition of the Smith and Le Duke (Le Duc) party. When the men reached Santa Fe, Young took ill and convinced Wolfskill to lead the eleven-man party for him. The expedition seemed successful at first because the men quickly found an abundance of beaver, but it did not last long because soon after they left Santa Fe they ran into Apaches. Originally, the Apaches claimed to be looking for friendship, so the trappers and Apaches had a dinner feast together. When the Apaches left after the meal, one of them shot an arrow into a trapper’s horse. The trappers took that as a hostile sign and decided to pack up and leave. While collecting their traps, the Indians attacked them with a shower of arrows. The men were unable to retrieve their traps, but they left with their lives. [6]

In 1828, Young organized a second Gila expedition, but this time Wolfskill served only to outfit the men with supplies, not to trap with them. Young’s men bought their supplies from Wolfskill’s general store in Taos, New Mexico. After the winter ended, trappers often brought their furs to New Mexico to sell and ship, and it was common for many trappers to spend their summers around Taos. There, the trappers not only found a place to stay, but they benefitted the economy in New Mexico as well. In the summer of 1828, Wolfskill traveled to Paso del Norte to buy brandy, wine, and panocha (brown sugar) to bring back for sale in Taos. According to his records, the majority of the money made in Wolfskill’s store was from whiskey sales. Wolfskill made it a habit never to bring whiskey on expeditions because it caused quarrels and other trouble. [7] In 1830, while living in New Mexico, Wolfskill applied for and received Mexican citizenship. Soon after he secured his citizenship, he made one of the biggest discoveries of his lifetime.

In the winter of 1830-31, William Wolfskill and George C. Yount planned an expedition, bringing along twenty other men. Wolfskill hired eleven men for the voyage, and Yount claimed to have hired two trappers and two camp keepers, but the ledger of accounts makes it seem that the men Yount hired were actually free. The group traveled from Abiquiu to the San Juan River then to the Dolores River along the original Escalante route. They then crossed the Green River and the Wasatch mountains to get to the Sevier River and the Great Basin. They went up Clear Creek Fork (a variation of the Smith route) and finally came out of the mountains near Little Salt Lake. [8] Historian Edwin Sabin said of the expedition that “with a party of traders, [William Wolfskill] broke a new trail, soon to be, and long to remain, popular as the ‘Old Spanish Trail,’ through California” and that the trail was “at best only a saddle and pack trail.” [9] Although the Old Spanish Trail was not destined to be a route taken by the average family of pioneers, it was extremely valuable for people who repeatedly traveled to and from California for trade. Other pioneers had discovered portions of the trail, but Wolfskill will remain famous for leading the first expedition to travel the
complete trail to California.

The trip to discover the trail became an eventful one when the men ran into a band of Mohave Indians as they were traveling along the Colorado River. Luckily for Wolfskill, the Indians were not hostile like the Apaches he had encountered five years earlier. Although Wolfskill was actually the leader of the expedition because he had more hired men working for him, the Mohave were adamant in their belief that Yount was in charge. The Mohave treated the men well and traded for cloth, knives, and food with them. Despite their kindness toward Wolfskill and his men, the trappers remained apprehensive about an ambush and after two days, the men were back on their way. The party finally reached the California ranch of Don Antonio María Lugo on February 5, 1831. [10]

Many of the men that traveled the Old Spanish Trail with Wolfskill and Yount were New Mexico natives. Upon their arrival in Los Angeles, many of the men gainfully traded their serapes and fresadas (wool blankets) to California Indians in exchange for mules, which they took back to New Mexico with them in the summer of 1831. Not all of the men from the expedition decided to return to New Mexico, as Wolfskill and Yount both decided to make California their new home. Historian LeRoy Hafen said that “both became outstanding American pioneers, Wolfskill in Los Angeles, and Yount in the Napa Valley of northern California.” He also noted that “both men were to become leading citizens in California after they settled there in 1831.”[11]

According to Historian David Weber, “there is a saying in the West that ‘water does not run downhill. It runs toward money.’” Wolfskill saw an opportunity for a more profitable career in California and pounced upon it. In 1822, after Mexican Independence, the Mexican government removed restrictions that the Spanish had placed on trade. This gave traders more freedom, and the California fur trade began to flourish. Thus, the one-way trip that Wolfskill took along the Old Spanish Trail led to not only a change in scenery, but a change in trapping game and, hopefully, economics as well. In California, it was more profitable to hunt sea otter than to trap beaver, and through sheer luck, Wolfskill was able to make the switch. There was an abundance of sea otter in California at the time, but under California law, it was illegal to hunt them without a license. After Wolfskill became a Mexican citizen, he petitioned the governor of New Mexico for a permit to hunt beaver. The permit that the New Mexican government gave him allowed him to hunt ‘nutria,’ the New Mexican slang for beaver, but ‘nutria’ in proper Spanish meant otter. Because of a mistake made by the governor of New Mexico, the California government decided that they had to allow Wolfskill to hunt the sea otter as his license permitted. [12]

Soon after he decided to stay in California, Wolfskill found himself in a predicament because he needed a boat to hunt sea otter, but did not own one. With the encouragement of Father José Sánchez of Mission San Gabriel, Wolfskill accepted help from Indian laborers to aid in building a schooner. The Indians went into the San Bernardino
Mountains, cut timber, and sawed planks for Wolfskill. Wolfskill first launched the boat in 1831 and sailed between Cedros Island and San Luis Obispo. There has been much controversy and speculation over the name of Wolfskill’s schooner. Alfred Robinson was present at the launch of the boat and claimed that Wolfskill christened it ‘Guadalupe,’ but H.D. Barrows and J.J. Warner both referred to the boat as ‘Refugio.’ Beattie proposed that there may have been two boats, which resulted in the confusion over the names. Either way, Wolfskill was unsuccessful in his hunt and he returned to California in the spring. From then on, Wolfskill ceased to hunt for furs. [13]

Following his retirement from the fur trade, William Wolfskill acquired land in various areas of California, often selling land to buy new, better land for agricultural purposes. In 1842, Wolfskill petitioned Mariano Vallejo for a stretch of land called Rancho Rio de los Putos, and Vallejo approved the petition. This grant was approximately 17,704 acres, and in 1854, the United States Land Commission confirmed Wolfskill’s ownership. [14] The Land Grant Commission could either confirm the grants or deny them and return the land to public domain. According to historian David Vaught, “Wolfskill had a relatively easy time, however. Unlike most Hispanic claimants, Wolfskill had a rudimentary knowledge of both Mexican and United States law and was able to present a convincing, if not ironclad, case.” [15]

Before the Mexican-American War, the Spanish and Mexican governments had frequently given land grants to Anglo and Mexican citizens. Prior to 1851, 42% of all land grants given by the Spanish and Mexican governments reached non-Mexican petitioners. After the Mexican-American War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the California Land Act of 1851 supposedly ensured that Mexican citizens living on what had then become American soil would be able to retain their land, just as Wolfskill had, if they could authenticate their titles. Although the treaty protected them in theory, Americans often manipulated the treaty against Chicano landholders. Greedy American lawyers swindled Chicanos out of land by taking advantage of their lack of knowledge of the American legal system. Lawyers regularly charged one-quarter of the disputed land as a fee for representation. If the lawyer chose not to charge in land, they would charge such high interest that Chicanos had to sell their land to pay off their debt. Two of Wolfskill’s neighbors, Manuel Vaca and Juan Felipe Peña (who shared a property), endured this very situation. Vaca and Peña hired a very expensive lawyer, and after a series of rejections and appeals, they owed their lawyer a total fee of 4,500 acres. Furthermore, their lawyer demanded that his land be the most fertile on their property. Although Chicanos were highly discriminated against in this system, upper-class Anglos were equally unfair toward lower-class whites. Most of the approved land grants fell into the hands of wealthy white railroad owners, banking tycoons, and mine operators. Senator William Gwin, the author of the California Land Act, unabashedly admitted later that his
intentions for writing it were to “free up land for Yankee homesteaders,” not to preserve Californios land. [16]

A similar fate befell the land of New Mexican Chicanos as well, but through different means. Americans imposed a land tax upon all of New Mexico, and the local governments unjustly implemented the tax against Mexicanos. The new tax system called for a set tax based on the size of the land, rather than on the amount of crops that the owner produced each year from that stretch of land. The government set the price, and more often than not, the taxes were so high that most Hispanics could not afford to pay them. When the land fell into the ownership of an Anglo, the local government would reduce the tax from about $1.50 per acre, which the Chicano owners were paying, to 30-40 cents per acre. In addition to this, the American government reclaimed land owned by Hispanics for railroad development and national forests, further reducing land available for Hispano farmers to use for grazing their livestock.

As indicated by historian Mario Barrera,

The decisive action taken by the court [to reclaim land] in its years of activity relegated the Spanish-Americans to a position of greater disadvantage than they had occupied prior to its establishment…The conflicts over land were turned over to a supposedly impersonal third party, the Court, which technically fulfilled the Anglo-American conception of “justice” but at the same time proceeded to fix the Spanish-American in a position of subordination.

After the Mexican-American War, the United States government was not sure what to do with New Mexico because its population was large enough to warrant statehood, but the people there were not white and were not Protestant. Thomas Chavez writes, “The inhabitants appeared, both to Easterners and to Congress, to be more like Indians than not. Obviously, these ‘colored’ people could not be capable to full status.”[17] This reasoning seemed, to Americans at least, to justify populating New Mexico with Anglos and swindling Chicanos of their land.

Despite the difficulty that Mexicanos and Californios were having retaining their land holdings, Wolfskill, because he was white, was able to continue acquiring and selling property. At one point, he owned land in Yolo and Solano counties, which he shared with his brothers John and Mateo. He eventually sold this land, returned to Los Angeles, and in 1860, bought the Rancho Lomas de Santiago and in 1865, he bought the Santa Anita rancho. Over time, Wolfskill converted Rancho Lomas de Santiago into a sheep ranch until he sold it to the Flint-Bixby interests for about $7000 in 1866. [18]

Wolfskill eventually acquired a portion of Rancho San Francisco and, according to I.H. Wilson, sold it later to the Philadelphia Oil Company for 75 cents per acre. In another account by Ruth Waldo Newhall, Wolfskill came to own a portion of the ranch by loaning money to José Salazar and Jacoba Félix so they could repay their loan from another lender. Newhall said that “his loan of $8,500 to the Salazars gave him a mortgage on the Rancho San Francisco.” Jacoba’s stepson, Ignacio del Valle, was the owner of the ranch and feared that he would lose his land because of his stepmothers poor financial management, so he convinced Wolfskill to take over the entire debt
remaining on the ranch, about $16,350. Wolfskill then requested that the bank foreclose on the ranch; at the following
auction, the county awarded the title to the ranch to Wolfskill. He gave five-elevenths of the ranch back to Ignacio,
and thereafter Newhall’s account of whom the ownership transferred to next is different from I.H. Wilson. Newhall
asserted that Thomas A. Scott, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, sent his nephew Thomas R. Bard to California
to stake claims on land where Californios had recently discovered oil. On March 18, 1865 the co-owners of the Rancho
San Francisco-- Wolfskill, and the stepsons of the Salazars, Ignacio and Jose del Valle-- met with Bard to discuss
selling the land. Bard paid $53,320 for the entire ranch. Wolfskill received $21,307, Jose $5,811, and the remaining
balance went to Ignacio. Newhall denoted ownership to Bard, [19] while I.H. Wilson denoted ownership to the
Philadelphia Oil Company.

Wolfskill and his brother John acquired land to cultivate their first vineyard in 1838, later called ‘The Wolfskill
Vineyard Tract,’ located near the center of Los Angeles. When they bought the vineyard, it contained a mere four
thousand grape vines. Before selling the vineyard, Wolfskill expanded its size to 145 acres and cultivated
approximately fifty-five thousand grape vines from the original four thousand. He sold the vineyard in order to
purchase a much larger one nearby. Historian Harris Newmark praised the vineyard cultivator saying, “William
Wolfskill was one of the leading vineyardists, having set out his first vine, so it is said, in 1838, when he affirmed his
belief that the plant, if well cared for, would flourish a hundred years!” He went on to say that “William Wolfskill sent
to San Francisco some of the first Northern grapes sold there; they were grown in a Napa Valley vineyard that he
owned in the middle of the fifties, and when unloaded on the Long Wharf, three or four weeks in advance of Los
Angeles grapes, brought at wholesale twenty-five dollars per hundred weight!” According to Wolfskill’s friend Juan
José Warner, “Wolfskill indeed had, at an early date, shipped a little wine [to San Francisco], but his aim was to turn
his grapes into brandy” rather than wine. [20]

Because of the shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming in the nineteenth century, agribusinesses
in California, such as Wolfskill’s, demanded a labor force. On his new, more extensive vineyard, Wolfskill needed to
hire laborers to prune trees, irrigate the vineyard two to four times each season, and to gather and harvest the grapes at
the end of the season. The California Indians or the Chicanos living in Los Angeles presumably did this labor. Because
so many Hispanos had lost their land, they worked in the labor market out of necessity, but often in disadvantaged
positions. According to Wolfskill’s son-in-law Henry D. Barrows, Wolfskill had employed forty hired hands in 1859.
Wolfskill’s vineyard contained four wine cellars that could hold sixty thousand gallons of wine each, and could store
up to one hundred thousand gallons of wine each, if necessary. Within five days of his 1859 harvest, Wolfskill’s
vineyard turned 160,000 pounds of grapes into about 10,000 gallons of wine. [21] Wolfskill’s vineyards were thriving,
in large part because of the Chicano labor force he employed.

In many parts of the United States at this time, Anglos employers implemented a dual wage system in which the labor contractors were “paying one wage to minority workers and another to nonminority workers who perform the same task.” Anglos all over the Southwest were earning higher pay for the same jobs as minority workers, but there is no evidence of this happening on Wolfskill’s vineyards or orchards. In actuality, the contrary was true of him. H.D. Barrows claimed that Wolfskill “never ill-advised Californios or took advantage of them.” He goes on further to say that “the names of ‘Don Guillermo’ (Spanish for William) Wolfskill and a very few other Americans of the olden time, were almost worshipped by the former generation of ‘hijos del pais.’” To warrant such admiration from his employees, one can assert that Wolfskill did not employ a dual wage system, nor was he unfair in any other way to his Californio laborers.

Another problem for Chicanos and Chicanas in the Southwest was occupational stratification, which Barrera defines as the “practice of classifying certain kinds of jobs as suited for minorities and others as suited for nonminorities. The result is that minority workers are concentrated in the least desirable occupations.” Because many Chicano and Mexican laborers worked for very low wages, there was not a high demand for Anglos in the “less desirable” occupations, similar to the contemporary workforce. Because Chicanos in the Southwest had severely reduced land holdings and thus, very little land of their own to tend to, commercial industries were able to secure a labor force whenever they needed it. The reserve labor force, made up of Californios and California Indians, made it possible for the fruit and vegetable agribusinesses in California to develop because they were in specific need of seasonal, temporary labor. William Wolfskill operated an agribusiness that was like many others in that it demanded a seasonal labor force. A racially prejudicial law created at this time was the “Greaser Act,” passed in California in 1855. According to Linda Heidenreich, this law referred to “all persons who are commonly known as ‘Greasers’ or the issue of Spanish or Indian blood.” The purpose of the law was to give local authorities the power to force minority “vagrants” into laboring for them. The stratified forms of labor that Americans forced Chicanos into caused their assets to deplete quickly.

Wolfskill soon had yet another endeavor for which he would need to hire seasonal Chicano labor because in 1854, a Doctor Halsey who had started a small orange and lime nursery on John Rowland’s property decided to sell his land to William Wolfskill for about $4,000. At the time of its purchase, Los Angeles had no more than one hundred orange trees in the whole county. By 1857, Wolfskill had planted several thousand orange trees, creating the largest orange grove in the entire United States. Along with orange trees, Wolfskill also cultivated citron trees, lemon and lime trees, walnut, fig, and apricot trees, as well as apple, pear and peach trees. Wolfskill’s orange trees made him a
profit of about $125 each, and early in the life of his orchard, he had thirty bearing trees and over six thousand more trees growing in the nursery that had not yet grown enough to bear fruit. According to Harris Newmark, the Fathers at the San Gabriel Mission “excelled in the cultivation of citrus fruits,” their own having been the first orchard in California. Despite their seniority in the orchard business, Wolfskill was their chief competitor, his being the second, and largest, orchard planted in California. Wolfskill was the first person to plant many types of vegetation in California including eucalyptus trees, and in 1855, he planted California’s premier almond and Italian chestnut trees.

Between 1838 and 1858, Wolfskill slowly expanded the size of his vineyards and orchards. His hard work paid off, even after his death, because in 1879, his son Joseph Wolfskill shipped over 10,000 boxes of oranges, 300 boxes of lemons, and 100 boxes of limes to other parts of the United States. As stated earlier, Wolfskill’s vineyards and orchards were located near the heart of Los Angeles, and according to LeRoy Hafen, “Growth of the city in time required that his orchard be cut up into city lots, and finally brought destruction to his grand old adobe house in 1902.” After nearly fifty years of owning the orchards, the family subdivided the land and quickly sold it to private parties because of the expansion of urban Los Angeles.

Wolfskill’s personal life seemed to thrive just as much as his orchards and vineyards had. In January 1841, William Wolfskill married Doña Magdalena Lugo, the daughter of Don José Ygnácio Lugo of Santa Barbara. Hafen said that “William Wolfskill married into one of the leading Spanish families of California” like many other American men at the time. After Mexican Independence, it was commonplace for American men to marry Spanish or Mexican woman. Vélez-Ibáñez said that economic relationships were created through kinship alliances between elite Hispano/Mexicano landowners and American traders, trappers, and merchants. Prior to the Mexican war, for example, the landed-elite of Los Angeles included Mexicanized Anglos who through marriage and land ownership became cultural copies of the small Hispano/Mexicano landed gentry. Thus…“Juan Jose” Warner… [and] William Wolfskill…married Hispanas/Mexicanas and assumed a bicultural identity and important political and class relationships with local Dons.

California pioneer John Bidwell noted, “Euro-Americans [such as William Wolfskill] who had intermarried assimilated into the dominant Californio culture and lived ‘in every respect like the Spaniards.’” I.H. Wilson did not stress enough the importance of the union between Wolfskill and Dona Magdalena. Their bond not only created economic ties, it created a new identity for William. He, like some other American men of his day, became bicultural, a lifestyle experienced by very few upper class Anglos during his time.

Together, William and Magdalena had six children, four of whom were still living when their father died. Two of his daughters made very advantageous marriages with affluent men. Senorita Magdalena married Frank Sabichi, an Italian man whose family made their fortune through their mercantile business in Arizona. Wolfskill’s eldest daughter
Juana, at age nineteen, married Henry Dwight Barrows, age thirty-five. The two wed on November 14, 1860, but Juana tragically died shortly after their union, on January 31, 1863. 

Marriage ties fostered new economic and commercial relations between Anglos and Mexicans, so after the Mexican-American War, Californios welcomed the Americans because they assumed all Anglos would assimilate and intermarry just as readily as men like Wolfskill had. Much to their disappointment, relationships such as William and Magdalena’s did not remain the norm after the Mexican period ended. Heidenreich states:

Many of the newer immigrants did not want to assimilate into California society. Instead, they arrived in the area well immersed in the ideologies of white supremacy and Manifest Destiny. They saw the Californios as racially and ethnically inferior to themselves, and believed that God had appointed them to populate and “civilize” the continent.

Although the attitudes held by Anglos were prejudicial, it would be foolish to assume that Mexicanos did not feel the same in return. David Lavender best sums the dichotomy:

To the Americans in the Southwest no law could alter the fact that Mexicans were, in their minds, a mongrel race inherently promiscuous, superstitious, priest-ridden, cowardly, lazy and cruel, obsequious in trouble, arrogant in power. Yes, the younger women were pretty and made good housekeepers. Yes, New Mexicans were good customers. But still… the vision of the Hispanos was just as narrow. They could not understand the apparent callousness with which Anglo-Americans cut family ties.... Americans were godless, grasping, boisterous, bold, brutal, and lawless. Small matter that some of the storekeepers who married and settled in New Mexico turned out to be pleasant, productive citizens. They were forever searching for personal advantage, no matter what the cost might be.

Although the Wolfskills overlooked the differences between their cultures, not all Americans and Chicanos were so able or willing to overlook the differences between themselves and members of the opposite sex and race.

The Mexican people may have become prejudicial toward Anglos over time, but this certainly was not always the case. In the late eighteenth century, shortly after the founding of Los Angeles, a large mestizo class dominated the city. Color alone did not determine one’s social standing. Although Los Angeles founders considered European physical characteristics more attractive, they were less concerned with race than with the beauty standards associated with having European physical traits. Despite the attitudes about attractiveness, a person’s skills or abilities were more influential in determining their social status. Mexicans in Los Angeles at this time felt that they were culturally superior to California Indians, but Antonio Ríos-Bustamante claims that “they also viewed Native Americans as human beings with souls, legal rights, and as essential members of the community.” This is in stark contrast to how Euro-Americans viewed both Hispanics and Indians. Californios did not subordinate Native peoples in the same way that Anglos did, and they did not feel that it was necessary to swindle them out of all of their land and basic human rights.

Historian Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez claims that “the eventual cultural subordination of the Mexican population is
the aftermath of a series of processes. The first involves the rise of Anglo trapping and commercial activities in the region, and the second, the joining of Anglo trappers and merchants and elite Hispano/Mexicano families through marriage, partnerships, and alliances.” He believed the demise of the Hispanic culture was because of the simplicity of becoming a Mexican citizen. Often, the process for an American to become a Mexican citizen was as simple as paying taxes to the Mexican government and converting to Catholicism. Once an Anglo became a Mexican citizen, the Mexican government gave them the exact same rights as any Chicano; this was dissimilar to the way the American government treated Chicanos when they became American citizens after the Mexican-American War. Another contributor to the subordination was the illegal arms trade with native groups. Vélez-Ibáñez felt that this type of trade led to the destruction of Hispano “ranching, family, and community stability.”

Clearly, many factors led to the subordination of Chicano culture and no single factor is solely responsible.

A factor that later influenced the depletion of Hispanic culture was education. William Wolfskill was a proponent of education, and much of this is discernable through the interesting relationship he had with his son-in-law H.D. Barrows. Barrows contributed large amounts of literature about the life and accomplishments of his father-in-law. Henry Dwight Barrows first arrived in Los Angeles in 1854, after receiving his education and spending time to become a Yankee schoolmaster on the East Coast. When he arrived in Los Angeles, he became Wolfskill’s private tutor. Barrows said that Wolfskill was an avid reader with a very strong memory, that he was a very bright man. In 1857, Los Angeles schools were only open during the fall of each year; they had to close each spring because they did not have adequate funding. Because Wolfskill was an advocate of popular education, he gave the Los Angeles School Board enough money to reopen one of the Los Angeles Schools. At this school, he employed his very own tutor H.D. Barrows as a teacher. Barrows taught not only Wolfskill’s children, but also the children of his neighbors, the Carpenter, Rowland, and Pleasants families.

It is possible that Hispanic families in the area may have used the school funded by Wolfskill, but this would not have been the case by 1865. According to Linda Heidenreich, “In 1865, when the state of California passed its first laws to govern the public schools, they explicitly established them for the exclusive use of ‘white children between five and twenty-one years of age.’” An advocate of education, Wolfskill undoubtedly would have objected to the California government imposing such legislation upon his school. In New Mexico in the 1850s, the majority of adults could not read or write their own name, but Mexicano parents did not want to send their children to school because “Anglo-directed education” would go against the teachings of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, the McGuffey Readers that were used in Western schools emphasized that being American meant being white and of European descent. From the 1870s on, Mexican children were taught that they only way to be a good American was to
completely reject their Mexican heritage. Well-meaning ethnocentric Anglo teachers sought to erase language, culture, social relations, and even food preferences from their Chicano students. Wolfskill, who was well liked and respected by his Californio neighbors and employees, likely, would not have been supportive of this style of education.

William Wolfskill died on October 3, 1866. His son Joseph took over the family property and business, but tragically, had to sell all of the land that Wolfskill had spent many years cultivating about thirty-five years after his death. To facilitate the urbanization and expansion of the growing Los Angeles population, Wolfskill’s family sold and tore up the land where his orange orchards and vineyards were. Upon his death, Barrows fondly remembered Wolfskill: “In religion he believed in the teachings of the New Testament, and, at the last, he received the consolations of the Roman Catholic church” although he believed that “a loyal, honest heart and a good life” were more pertinent than any religious denomination. Major Horace Bell said of Wolfskill, “Mr. Wolfskill was the most economical of men, yet in all truth he was one of the most hospitable and generous.” As one of the founders of Los Angeles, he had a substantial influence over the people there, Anglo and Californio alike, and although his orchards and vineyards were long ago lost to rural development, his legacy remains.

Mexicanos have become “strangers in their own land,” a term coined by D.J. Weber to describe how Americans stripped Mexicans of the social standing, culture, and land. Americans have thanklessly prospered off the hard work of Mexicans by swindling them out of their own land and forcing them then to work the land for very little pay. Vélez-Ibáñez sums this up well, saying, “Hispanos/Mexicanos came to be thought of as a commodity to be bought, sold, and periodically expelled.” Regardless of their skills, which were comparable to Anglos, Americans thought of Chicano workers as nothing more than a commodity, and one that did not deserve to be paid the same wages as white Anglos for the same work. William Wolfskill was an exception to the rule. By treating the Californios around him with decency and respect, he became a champion to Chicanos. Following the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, the descendants of “early pobladores and rancheros would resist relinquishing their ethnic or cultural identity. Their land was gone and their political influence was crushed. But their pride remained.” To those surrounding him, William Wolfskill was not only successful in his own life, but also in providing lives with which the Californios around him could be proud.


Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, 147.


December 17, 1858.


[15] Ibid., 144.


[23] Barrera, *Race and Class*, 43, 44, 47; Heidenreich, *This Land was Mexican Once*, 145.


[32] Heidenreich, *This Land was Mexican Once*, 120; Lavender, *Southwest*, 141; Heidenreich, *This Land was Mexican Once*, 123; Vélez-Ibáñez, *Border Visions*, 66.


The Treaty of Paris in 1763 fundamentally changed the geographical boundaries of the European American Colonies, affected deeply the citizens of America, and provided the spark for the discontent that would start the American Revolution.

The first chapter in Calloway’s book describes America and the Americans in 1763. Discussing communication and how long it took to get word around the colonies about the Peace of Paris, Calloway claims that communication occurred over months and weeks instead of minutes and seconds. The Americans did not live in big cities but rather in villages and they did not think in international terms but instead in local ones. The distance from the Old World to the New did not mean that the colonists became immune or isolated from change, although the Peace of Paris registered very slowly for most people. The first chapter also introduces the reader to some of the important men who resurface later on in the book, like Sir William Johnson, Jean-Jacques Blaise d’Abbadie, and General Jeffery Amherst.

After the British victory over the French, the Americans expected to be able to move into the western lands won in the war. Chapter 2 talks about the land conflict between the Americans and the Indians after the end of the war. For the Indians, the “French and Indian War was about Indian lands.” They would be sadly disappointed that after the war they would continually have less and less land to call their own. Not all native tribes just stood by idly as settlers took their lands; several tribes went to the colonial governments to stop the encroachment, and the Mashpee’s took their case all the way to the king of England. The war made Indian populations even more dependent on Europeans since their production of goods decreased during the war and they relied on their allies for things like clothing and food. The contest for land intensified as the immigration of Europeans increased, as did the westward movement of settlers after the war. The severity of the whole situation further deepened due to the fact that land speculation after the war made people, wanting to get to get rich, push harder for the west.

The territorial changes sparked by the Peace of Paris came as a shock to many Indians because most of the land in question belonged to the natives, who did not understand how the English, French, and Spanish could exchange land not belonging to them. Chapter 3 details the Native American reaction to the Peace of Paris, the reaction of some settlers to the so-called Pontiac’s Rebellion, and the British soldiers’ reaction to the conflict. Oddly, Pontiac’s War did not break out in places because of land issues creating conflict. Rather, according to the author, the war broke out because the natives expected the British to do the same thing the French had done previously, and give presents to appease the spirits of the warriors. Sending in troops and withholding gifts reinforced the Indian’s belief that the British wanted to get rid of them in order to take the land. Unfortunately, Jeffery Amherst, ignorant of Indian customs, did not see much point in giving presents: he believed that an empire was “something to be governed, not negotiated and cultivated by giving gifts.” Amherst, with his stinginess, endangered the troops and forts he controlled on Indian land. Under these circumstances, Pontiac easily gathered a force of warriors to fight the British. The settlers often struck against non-hostile Indian tribes when they felt that they were being threatened. Such was the case in Paxton, Pennsylvania when the Conestoga Indians were attacked simply because they were Indians. The attack on the Conestoga Indians illustrates how race was a main instigator of violence, since the Conestoga wore English clothes and
went by English names. Of course, like in any other war, captives were taken. Some would “go Indian” and stay with
the tribe, others would be killed, and the rest would eventually go home. [3]

According to Calloway, another change regarding American perceptions of the British Army occurred during this
time. Unfortunately for the British Army regulars, the Seven Years War would turn the American colonists against
them. Although they were in place to protect the colonists, in the settlers’ minds, the army had turned into protectors
of the Indians. As evidence, the colonists pointed to times when the army attempted to hold them out of Indian lands to
the west. Also, fighting in America remained far different from the combat a soldier would experience anywhere else.
Soldiers who served in Indian country may have been “decentered” by the severing of traditional ties, as well as the
new ways of living and killing they experienced. [4]

In late 1763, in an attempt to keep the Natives and the Europeans segregated, King George issued a
proclamation that the Appalachian Mountains would be the border between European and Indian lands. Chapter 4
discusses the decision to set this boundary line and how the colonists reacted to the proclamation. While the British
recognized that peace in the west meant keeping the settlers out, the settlers did not seem to care much about peace
with the Indians and continued to try to push through and around the mountains. The Proclamation of 1763 has been
described as the Indians’ “Bill of Rights,” with courts in both America and Canada attempting to interpret its meaning.
The most important feature in the Proclamation of 1763 is the recognition that the Natives held rights to unceded lands
in British North America, rights which could be surrendered only to the Crown or it’s duly appointed agents in public
council. [5]

Calloway points out that whenever there is a mass transfer of land, the people living there are going to be
greatly affected. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 all talk about the people who were living in the newly acquired British Territory.
Discussing the French colonies that the British took over, Calloway shows how many French-Canadians felt shocked
by the treaty because they expected Canada to be returned to the French at the end of the war. However, the French
had a strategy behind the ceding of Canada to Britain and giving Louisiana to the Spanish, as they believed that
without French power in the North to hold them in check, the American colonies would attempt to break away from
Britain and disrupt British commerce. The Peace of Paris guaranteed French inhabitants the security of property and
the right to practice the Catholic faith, and permitted those who did not wish to change their allegiance from one king
to the other to return to France. However, the high cost of returning to France kept many in Canada. [6]

In chapter 6, Calloway talks about the Louisiana land transfer and how the Spanish eventually set up there. For
the most part little changed in the Louisiana territory: Spanish officials did not arrive in Louisiana until 1766 and did
not really take control until 1769. Overall the towns that had been established remained French in population and
character. Local French leaders were often kept in place because they had already established relationships with the
Indians in the area. The one big problem for the Spanish became their inability to control the Indian population over
whom they “ruled.” The British moved into the French role of giving the Natives guns and the Spanish were forced to
create new policies to manage their new vast empire. [7]

The final chapter, titled “Exiles and Expulsions,” discusses the great migration of people after the war. As the
author notes, “European emigrants crossed the Atlantic, settlers pushed toward the west, and many slaves moved
farther across the South.” Unlike the Spanish who offered settlers in Florida a new place on the American continent,
the French had no nearby place to settle and little incentive to leave their homes. Settlers in Florida had little reason to stay and most moved to other parts of the Spanish Empire, only to move have the British move out of Florida after the American Revolutionary War when Spain regained control of Florida. After the war ended in 1763, the Jesuits and their work were suppressed in both Europe and America, when most of them returned to their native country. The French Acadians were forced to find new places to live and rebuild their lives: some went to Louisiana, some returned to France, and others fanned out through North America. Overall, the transfer of land equaled a mass exodus of people in an attempt to stay under the monarchy to which they were accustomed. [8]

There are a couple of main problems with Calloway’s book. The way *Scratch of a Pen* is set up is a little hard to follow sometimes. The author often jumps from point to point without making good connections, then attempts to go back to his original points after they have become muddled in other events. The way the book is set up semi-topically makes the parts of the book repetitive. Furthermore, all of chapter 3 is confusing and does not connect the three different subsections very well. While the author’s arguments are logical, the arrangement of material detracts from the overall readability of the book.


[2] Ibid., 48, 52-3, 60.


[4] Ibid., 82, 90.


[6] Ibid., 113-14, 122.


[8] Ibid., 150, 152, 158.
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