2022

Constitutionality, Compassion, And Convenience / The Consolidation Of Liberty

Evan Riley Stewart
William & Mary - Arts & Sciences, evan.r.stewart35@gmail.com

"Constitutionality, Compassion, and Convenience / The Consolidation of Liberty"

Evan Riley Stewart

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Master of Arts in Teaching, Relay Graduate School of Education, 2021
Bachelor of Arts, American University, 2018

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of The College of William & Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Harrison Ruffin Tyler Department of History

College of William & Mary
August 2022

APPROVAL PAGE

This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Evan R Stewart

Evan Riley Stewart

Approved by the Committee May 2022

Committee Chair
Joshua Piker, Professor, History
College of William & Mary

Andrew Fisher, Associate Professor, History
College of William & Mary

Fabricio Prado, Associate Professor, History
College of William & Mary

ABSTRACT

Constitutionality, Compromise, and Convenience: Toward a Whig American Indian Policy, 1828-1844

This paper examines the partisan dimension of Antebellum American Indian relations, focusing on the anti-Jacksonian National Republicans and Whigs, rather than the more frequently discussed Jacksonian Democrats. To build a picture of anti-Jacksonian Indian policy broadly, this paper analyzes a series of flashpoints in relations between the United States and Indigenous Peoples. Specifically, it looks at Cherokee Removal, the debate over the Buffalo Creek Treaty with the Senecas, and the Second Seminole War, in addition to exploring the Whig Party's attempt to cultivate an image of being "better" than the Jacksonians on American Indian issues. It ultimately asserts that the Whigs' and National Republicans' American Indian policy emphasized Indigenous sovereignty and obtaining majority consent in treaty-making, coupled with the beliefs that white encroachment was inevitable, and that Indigenous Peoples needed to assimilate into white culture. This paper further argues that the tension between Whigs recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and advocating for assimilation encapsulates Kevin Bruyneel's concept of "colonial ambivalence."

"The Consolidation of Liberty": The Colombian Policy of Adams and Clay

This paper explores United States foreign policy towards Latin America in the 1820s under the administration of President John Quincy Adams and Secretary of State Henry Clay. Specifically, it examines their relationship with the Republic of Colombia, using correspondence and diplomatic records between the two countries to assess the United States' intentions in involving itself in the region. The paper especially focuses on a series of diplomatic faux pas involving the U.S. diplomats in Bogota with Colombian leaders Simon Bolivar and Francisco de Paula Santander. Ultimately, it argues that Adams' and Clay's handling of these situations indicates that their primary goal in Gran Colombia was the promotion of liberal republican values in that country.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people who have helped me along the way, this year and earlier, and I cannot thank them all here, but I will endeavor to begin.

First, I must acknowledge the wonderful History Department at William & Mary, both faculty and students. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Carol Sheriff for being a fantastic educator and a wonderfully compassionate person, for showing us all that there is a North, and for putting up with my persistent Whiggery; Dr. Andrew Fisher and Dr. Fabricio Prado for both encouraging me to pursue the research I cared about, and for helping me refine my projects along the way; Dr. Kathrin Levitan for her advice on a host of issues, and for showing me who is afraid of the linguistic turn; my advisor, Dr. Joshua Piker, for his constant care and support, and for making my adjustment to graduate school much smoother than it might have been; and Dr. Paul Mapp, for the immeasurable wisdom he has dispensed upon me and my peers, and for being as close to a philosopher king as one could hope to find in Williamsburg.

So many others have helped me as well, academically and otherwise. I would like to thank Dr. Alan Levine and Dr. Gregg Ivers for their formative support during my undergraduate studies, as well as Dr. Peter Kastor for his advice obtaining diplomatic records for “The Consolidation of Liberty.” Additionally, I must express my gratitude to my Teach for America Delaware family and the students and staff of Thomas Edison Charter School, for helping to shape who I am today and for encouraging me to follow my heart and return to graduate school.

I am especially grateful to the many people who have made Williamsburg feel like home. Among these are Mehmet, Anna, DJ Dan, Sierra, Mike, and everyone at the Brickhouse and the Mellow Mushroom. Even more so, I must thank Science Club, narrow and vast, for making my time at William & Mary one of the best and most memorable experiences of my life. Each of you has helped me grow as a scholar and a person, and I cannot express how grateful I am for your relentless friendship.

Most importantly, a huge thank you to my parents, Kelly and Todd, my brother Shane, and the rest of my family, for providing me with infinite love and support, more than I can possibly quantify.

This work is dedicated to my grandfather, Bill Riley - the first and best storyteller I have known. He made history come alive like no one else, and he made better the lives of all who knew him. I have him to thank for so much of who I am and where I am.

Intellectual Biography

My main area of historical interest is early U.S. politics, particularly in the Second Party System. Much ink has been spilt describing "Jacksonian America," but I am more interested in "Anti-Jacksonian America" - the people and groups which opposed the policies of Andrew Jackson and the Democrats. This includes parties like the Whigs and National Republicans, as well as women and minority groups who became increasingly marginalized by the exclusionary policies of Jackson and his successors. My William & Mary research papers explore two of the policies of the largest organized group of Anti-Jacksonians, the Whigs. The first paper surveys Whig attitudes towards Indigenous Peoples to try to get at a "Whig Indian policy," while the second investigates the pre-Whig foreign policy of future party leaders John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay in 1820s Colombia.

My first paper, "Constitutionality, Compassion, and Convenience," was written in Dr. Fisher's Settler Colonialism seminar. I was particularly interested in looking at the politics of Indian Removal. As one of the most infamous and tragic chapters in the nation's history, there is a growing abundance of excellent scholarship on the subject. However, I noticed that there seemed to be relatively little written about political opposition to removal amongst elected officials. There has been plenty written on Jackson and his policies, because they were implemented, but it was hard for me to discern whether his political opponents had a cogent policy stance of their own. Even scholarship about the Whig Party has generally treated Indian policy more as an aside than a key subject for the party. Furthermore, existing studies of the politics of

Antebellum Indian policy tend to focus specifically on the debate around the Removal Act itself, but do not really address the broader scope of removal in the era.

My hope was to look at the Second Party Era more holistically and determine whether the National Republicans' and Whigs' actions from the 1820s to the 1850s constituted any sort of coherent policy regarding treatment of and relations with Indigenous Peoples. Guided by the available sources, and with Dr. Fisher's suggestions, I narrowed down this extremely broad topic to choose a few key debates during the Second Party System (Cherokee Removal, the Buffalo Creek Seneca Treaty in New York, and the Second Seminole War), as well as the party's depiction of itself. These incidents alone obviously do not fully encapsulate Whig Indian policy, but I felt that they captured several different facets of the party's actions on Indigenous matters. Dr. Fisher also helped me situate the paper theoretically by engaging with settler colonial theory, specifically Kevin Bruyneel's concept of colonial ambivalence. This is something I certainly would not have done without his encouragement.

As I note in the paper itself, the place I would most like to develop this work further is by incorporating more about Indigenous activism and interactions with the Whigs. The limitations of time and readily accessible sources prevented me from delving into this relationship as much as I would like to in the initial paper, but it is certainly an important part of the equation to investigate going forward.

My second paper, "The Consolidation of Liberty," focuses on a slightly earlier period. Participating in Dr. Prado's Atlantic World research seminar provided me with a unique opportunity to investigate what Anti-Jacksonianism looked like in a larger Atlantic context. Again, the policies of Jackson and his expansionist successors tend to

dominate discussions of Antebellum international relations, but the Whigs and their precursors offered their own, very different vision of America's place in the larger world. I was familiar with the work of scholars like Caitlin Fitz who study the relationship between the United States and revolutionary Latin America, and I knew that Anti-Jacksonians like Henry Clay had played a key role in that relationship. I decided to look at the period when Clay was Secretary of State and John Quincy Adams was president, as this was a unique occasion when two of the definitive Anti-Jacksonians were in a position to direct federal policy, and particularly U.S. diplomacy.

It became clear to me that the 1825 Congress of Panama was a definitive event in the burgeoning relationship between the United States and the new republics, and initially I thought I might write something about this. However, because of its importance, there was already significant scholarship around it, and so I decided to find a more specific inroad, perhaps looking at U.S. relations with a particular country. This opportunity arose as I read through State Department correspondence from the Adams-Clay Administration. I noticed a number of rather dramatic letters coming to Clay from two successive envoys to Gran Colombia, regarding a series of incidents involving the envoys and Simon Bolivar. I was intrigued by this, and so I tried to read further about the events, only to find there was very little scholarship on them, and almost nothing written about one of the key U.S. diplomats involved, Beaumont Watts. Given this lack of scholarship, and considering the high-profile figures from both countries involved in the affairs, I decided this could be an interesting case study to investigate Adams' and Clay's foreign policy in action.

Dr. Prado was very supportive of my interest in this subject broadly, and in this particular choice of topic. Given my (very) limited knowledge of Colombian history, he helped me to refine my topic and encouraged me to focus on what the implications of these events were for politics and policy in the United States specifically. At the same time, he provided me with an abundance of Latin American scholarship which helped me situate my paper within the broader Atlantic historiography.

To further develop this paper, I would like to look at the way that U.S. officials' views on race informed Colombian policy, if at all. I know that this is an important and fast-developing direction for early U.S. diplomatic history, and I think delving into it could enhance my work. I would also be interested in expanding this study into something comparative by looking at the Adams Administration's relationships with other new republics. Peru stands out as particularly interesting in this regard because it seems to have had both a leader Clay and Adams were more satisfied with, and a more capable U.S. envoy.

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to write these papers, and to have had supportive seminar instructors in Dr. Fisher and Dr. Prado. They encouraged me to research what I was passionate about and offered an abundance of helpful advice in sharpening and situating my topics. Dr. Piker was also very helpful and patient in listening to early ideas as I tried to find a research angle in the fall. My work is far better because of all of their guidance.

Constitutionality, Compassion, and Convenience:
Toward a Whig American Indian Policy, 1828-1844

In the leadup to the 1832 presidential election, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the first Indigenous newspaper in the United States, published a series of reflections on the first term of Andrew Jackson's presidency. One editorial, reprinted from the *New York Advertiser*, opined that before "Jackson was elected President… the Constitution was revered, [and] the laws were obeyed… Up to the time of his accession, the validity of the treaties and laws [with Indigenous Nations] was not questioned."[1] However, upon taking office, Jackson "gave the government of Georgia to understand that the Indians were at their mercy."[2] Another letter in the same issue favorably compared former President John Quincy Adams' defense of Cherokee sovereignty to Jackson's enabling of Georgia's encroachments on their land and laws.[3] The year before, the paper's former editor, Elias Boudinot, had published a similar sentiment when he sardonically reflected on the "'peculiar care' [Jackson's phrase] and protection, as Gen. Jackson has extended to us since his elevation to the presidency."[4]

Based on their decisions to write and publish such articles, Boudinot and the other editors were clearly eager to depict Jackson's American Indian policy not only as damaging, but as a break with past federal policy. In the looming shadow of deportations, it was obvious to the Cherokees how Jackson's actions, and especially the Indian Removal Act, had fundamentally altered the American-Indigenous relationship. Yet, as time has passed, that distinction has been somewhat obscured.

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[1] *The New York Advertiser*, "Review of General Jackson's Administration," *Cherokee Phoenix*, October 6, 1832, Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers.
[2] "Review of General Jackson's Administration," *Cherokee Phoenix.*
[3] "Review of General Jackson's Administration," *Cherokee Phoenix.*
[4] "Multiple News Items," *Cherokee Phoenix*, December 31, 1831, Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers.

Historians of removal frequently situate Jackson's policies as continuing the visions of his predecessors, notably Thomas Jefferson.[5] Intriguingly, this tactic works both for pro-Jackson historians, who assert he was executing the Founders' visions, and settler colonial historians, who can point to Jefferson's words as evidence of a logic of elimination from the earliest days of the American Republic.[6] While Jefferson's words did often betray deep settler colonial reasoning, it is a mistake to characterize Jackson's American Indian policy as merely a continuation of the status quo, as Claudio Saunt explains in his recent history of Indigenous Removal, *Unworthy Republic*. Not only was "the state-administered mass expulsion of indigenous people [in the 1830s] unprecedented," but it "departed from established policy," which, "since the Washington administration," had been to "civiliz[e] native people in place," rather than remove them.[7]

Another important distinction from Jackson-era policy on which Saunt does not focus as intently is that the debate surrounding the Indian Removal Act marked a sea change in the national discourse around American Indian policy. This change was partly due to the Removal Act's unprecedented nature, but also to the personalities and surrounding context of the day. Even to the degree that Jackson furthered the goals of Jefferson and others, his own intemperance, imperiousness, and poor management served to escalate the issue into a full-fledged political debate in a way that it had not been before. As a significant and contentious departure from earlier assimilation programs, the Removal debate blew open a national political dialogue around American Indian policy.

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[5] Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory.* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2020), 14.
[6] Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, 14.
[7] Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, xv, 22.

Opposing Jackson's calls for removal were his political rivals, the National Republicans and Whigs, who had their own vision of Indigenous-American relations.[8]

This paper seeks to characterize the Whig American Indian policy. It will argue that such policy was primarily characterized by a respect for Indigenous Nations' right to sovereignty and majoritarian decision-making. Instead of removal, Whigs generally encouraged Indigenous Nations' partial assimilation through the adoption of "white ways." Inherently of a constitutional bent, the Whigs' opposition to Jacksonian deportation campaigns sometimes remained grounded in pragmatism and legal reasoning, but was also supplemented by moralistic arguments. Furthermore, although some Whigs ignored the policy as a matter of electoral convenience, particularly at the state level, as a national party the Whigs considered their "pro-Indian" image important enough that it was reflected in their choice and presentation of presidential and vice presidential candidates.

I. Colonial Ambivalence and a Need to Return to the History of Politics

To acknowledge that Jackson's deportation and extermination campaigns were the objects of intense political debate speaks to another recent shift in the historiography around Indigenous issues. As Claudio Saunt points out, the dominant interpretations of

[8] At the time, the party system was in flux, with the Democratic-Republicans evolving into Andrew Jackson's Democratic Party, and the opposition, led primarily by John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, initially creating a loose coalition known as the National Republican Party. After being twice beaten by Jackson in the 1828 and 1832 presidential elections, the National Republicans reformed into a more viable machine and rebranded as the Whig Party. There were differences between the National Republicans and the Whigs, but also had much continuity in leadership and goals. Most importantly, for the purposes of this paper, the tenor of partisan opposition to Jacksonian American Indian policy was largely consistent between the two parties. Accordingly, there is little sense in distinguishing between the National Republicans and Whigs on this issue, and this paper necessarily moves between the two fairly fluidly. For an outside account of the two parties' consistency on American Indian policy, see Fred S. Rolater, "The American Indian and the Origin of the Second American Party System." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 76, no. 3 (1993): 180–203. For an account of the overall history and major distinctions between the two, see Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party : Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Indigenous removal have long insisted on its inevitability. He notes that earlier scholarship took Jackson's paternalistic view that the deportations were a positive good.[9] While more recent scholarship does not accept the paternalistic argument, it often concludes that "the continent's newcomers were too avaricious to allow [Indigenous Peoples] to remain," thereby still framing the deportations as an inevitability.[10] Saunt counters these schools of thought by asserting that removal was not inevitable, but in fact "would not have occurred without a law, passed by Congress and implemented by the executive branch."[11] In other words, it was a political decision. This is a welcome intervention, but Saunt leaves significant gaps in his case. He admirably profiles Indigenous resistance and the antagonists who enabled and executed the deportations, but devotes significantly less space to discussing congressional or electoral opposition to removal.

Saunt is not alone in eschewing the legislative and political dimension of American Indian policy debates. Indeed, given the past historiography of the subject, one can see why historical scholarship has been reticent to linger on the political dimension of removal. In the past, historians who merged Indigenous history and political history, such as Remini and Francis Paul Prucha, have taken top-down and paternalistic stances, often consequently accepting the Jacksonian political narrative.[12] Many who reject this view, like Saunt and Jeffrey Ostler, tend to focus on acts of Indigenous survivance and

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[9] Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, xviii. For this view, one need look no earlier than Robert Remini's 2001 appalling assertion that "Andrew Jackson genuinely believed that [he had] rescued these people from inevitable annihilation. And… that is exactly what he did." Robert V. Remini. *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, (Penguin, New York, 2001), 281.
[10] Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, xviii.
[11] Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, 30.
[12] See again Remini, *Indian Wars*, 2001.

resistance rather than Congressional policy debates.[13] But it is unacceptable to let the early paternalistic arguments stand as the last word on the political aspect of Indigenous removal. To accept Jackson's vision as the vision of the entire nation (or merely the entire government) is to commit a conflation of Rousseauian proportions. There was never a national consensus around the deportation of Indigenous Peoples, and Saunt is right that it was not inevitable. At every step, Jackson and his followers were opposed by those on the other side of the aisle. To truly understand how things might have reasonably ended up differently, one must recentralize politics as a key part of the story.

One field which has raised the importance of policy and politics is that of Settler Colonial Studies. In particular, Kevin Bruyneel gives credence to the idea that no single American Indian policy can be taken as definitive of the settler state as a whole. He acknowledges that the nature of federalism and deliberate government means that "the United States does not always speak in one voice about its relationship to indigenous people," resulting in "shifting policy eras [and] a political dynamic in which different components of the American state... occasionally conflict over the direction of U.S. policy."[14] For Bruyneel, this conflict is intrinsic to the settler colonial agenda, and he coins it "American colonial ambivalence"—a tension between recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and trying to force assimilation. Although one can trace nominal "conservative" and "progressive" trends in these fluctuations, the alternatives generally manifest themselves as separation (i.e., deportation) or assimilation. Both alternatives move forward the settler colonial agenda of replacing Indigenous society, the former by

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[13] See Saunt's *Unworthy Republic* and Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*. (Yale: New Haven, 2019).
[14] Kevin Bruyneel. *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.–Indigenous Relations.* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 10.

exterminating Indigenous Peoples themselves and the latter by exterminating their culture.[15]

Bruyneel's work focuses primarily on American Indian policy after the Civil War, wherein the significant shift away from treaty-making lends itself to a different sort of analysis.[16] Nonetheless, his framework, and the dichotomy between deportation and assimilation, offers possibilities in analyzing the Antebellum Era as well. Uniquely, this particular stage of colonial ambivalence had a tangible partisan divide that would recede in later iterations of national debate around American Indian policy. The Jackson Democrats' policies of deportation and extermination are fairly clear because Jackson and his allies were generally able to implement them. To understand the nature of American ambivalence, however, one must explore the policies of his political rivals, the Whig Party.

The gulf between Antebellum political history and Indigenous history runs both ways, and as a consequence there is a relative dearth of literature which directly addresses the relationship between partisanship and Antebellum American Indian policy, particularly in the case of the Whig Party.[17] Michael Holt's otherwise comprehensive Whig history, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party,* hardly mentions the subject.[18] More helpful is Daniel Walker Howe's thoughtful but brief treatment of the issue in his *Political Culture of the American Whigs*. He looks primarily at the party's

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[15] See Bruyneel, *Third Space of Sovereignty*, 14.
[16] Bruyneel, *Third Space of Sovereignty*, 2.
[17] For the general lack of studies of partisanship and American Indian policy in the period, see Rolater, among others. The Jacksonian Democrats' policy was on display for most of the duration of the Second Party System, when Jackson and his followers were in power. Consequently, it is relatively easy to find in historical accounts, particularly those which focus on Jackson. This is distinct from the Whigs, who suffered repeated defeats, deaths, and defections in their attempts to control the White House.
[18] Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party : Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

image, concluding that the Whig Party had a consistent "reputation for being less hostile to the Indians than its rival."[19] His coverage, however, is only a few pages, and merely part of a larger section on the Whigs and race relations.[20]

One scholar who speaks to the issue directly is Fred Rolater, who employs statistical models to examine the correlation between legislators' party affiliation and their voting record on Indigenous issues.[21] His analysis finds a statistically significant correlation between voting against removal legislation and an anti-Jacksonian party affiliation. In fact, he determines that votes on issues of American Indian policy are the "most consistent predictor" of party identity in the era.[22] Rolater's analysis is especially intriguing because he contextualizes this partisan divide as a critical piece of the entire era of Jacksonian-Whig competition, not just a relic of the initial Cherokee Removal debate in 1830.

As important as Rolater's study is, however, the statistics alone do not offer much characterization of what the two parties' policies actually looked like, or how and why such positions informed partisan identity to the degree that they did. Stephen Valone has undertaken such an examination on the state level by exploring the Whig Governor William Seward's dealings with the Seneca Nation.[23]

This paper seeks to expand on Howe's and Rolater's findings that the Whigs tended to be "better" than Democrats on American Indian policy. To do so, it employs both Howe's linguistic methods and Valone's use of case study. By exploring the actions

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[19] Daniel Walker Howe. *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (University of Chicago: 1979), 42.
[20] Howe, *American Whigs*, 38.
[21] Rolater, "Second American Party System," 188.
[22] Rolater, "Second American Party System," 189.
[23] Stephen J. Valone. "William Seward, Whig Politics, and the Compromised Indian Removal Policy in New York State, 1838-1843." *New York History* 82, no. 2 (2001): 107–34.

and writings of Whig politicians and writers at various inflection points, as well as their interactions with Indigenous Nations and activists, it strives to delineate, insofar as it is possible, a coherent Whig American Indian policy.[24] Temporally, this paper focuses primarily on the period from 1828-1844, encompassing as it does both the high-water marks of Jacksonian deportation efforts (concluding with the Second Seminole War) and of the Whig Party itself (culminating in the Clay-Frelinghuysen presidential ticket's narrow 1844 loss to James K. Polk).[25]

The paper's body is comprised of four sections, arranged roughly chronologically and each dealing with a specific aspect or exemplar of Whig American Indian Policy: 1) the Cherokee Removal debate and the Indian Removal Act; 2) the Buffalo Creek Treaty debate and the relationship between New York State's Whig government and Indigenous Peoples; 3) Whig depictions of their nominees for national office; and 4) the debate surrounding the Second Seminole War. To offer a fully comprehensive party history on removal is a task far beyond the purview of this paper, but in investigating these four pieces, one can characterize some of the important through-lines and nuances of Whig American Indian policy.

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[24] Among these sources, the correspondence and orations of Henry Clay figure prominently. This is to some degree an artifact of a limited timeframe and access to materials, but it is also a historically reasoned decision. There was no one man held to embody the principles of the Whigs more than Clay, a sentiment reflected both by historians (see Holt, *American Whig Party*, 188) and his contemporaries (see the various Whig party platforms, which essentially equate him to the party itself, even when he was not the nominee). Even so, no one person truly is a political party, and where possible, this paper juxtaposes Clay's views with those of his contemporaries. In possible future expansions of this project, further primary accounts will be key. The author particularly wants to include Chief John Ross more prominently, as he certainly played a key role in leading the Indigenous-National Republican alliance during Cherokee Removal.

[25] A loss subsequently described by party members as "the crisis of our political destiny." See "Whig Party Platform of 1848." June 7, 1848. *American Presidency Project*. UC Santa Barbara.

II. "Immemorial Possession" and "Dissolution of the Union" - Cherokee Removal

The Indian Removal Act and Trail of Tears together comprise the most heavily discussed historical element of Antebellum American Indian policy, though they are far from the only chapter. As such, rather than presenting the chain of events in great detail, this paper will primarily focus on the elements of the Cherokee Removal debate which can help define the larger continuity of partisan debates on American Indian policy.[26]

Nonetheless, a brief statement of major events is necessary to set the stage. In 1830, both Houses of Congress narrowly passed the Indian Removal Act, a pet priority of Jackson's which provided him with the authority to exchange the land of Southeastern Indigenous Nations for lands west of the Mississippi River.[27] Subsequently, Georgia passed a law attempting to supersede Cherokee sovereignty within its borders.[28] Under the leadership of Principal Chief John Ross, the Cherokees sued and took their case, *Worcester v. Georgia*, to the Supreme Court, which determined that Georgia had no right to supersede Cherokee law.[29] Despite this victory, President Jackson refused to uphold the ruling to defend Cherokee sovereignty, instead allowing the Georgia government to continue transgressing against the Cherokees in an effort to hasten their removal West.[30] This was the inaction the *Cherokee Phoenix* decried on the eve of the 1832 election, and

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[26] Accounts abound, but two excellent recent histories including Cherokee Removal are Saunt's *Unworthy Republic* and Jeffrey Ostler's *Surviving Genocid*e.
[27] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 211.
[28] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 264.
[29] Howe, *American Whigs*, 41.
[30] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 265.

the fallout from Jackson's decision helped splinter Cherokee unity, allowing for many of the Cherokees to more easily be deported into the West.[31]

While the deportation of Indigenous Peoples is clearly a human rights issue, the Cherokee case was also seen at the time as a states' rights issue, as Georgia's defiance of the Supreme Court challenged the supremacy of the federal government.[32] In fact, the National Republicans attacked Jackson's Cherokee policy from both angles, with some leaders criticizing it from a pragmatic, constitutionalist angle, and others taking a more moralistic approach.

Henry Clay, by this time the National Republican leader and eventual 1832 presidential nominee, firmly embodied the former mindset. It is clear from Clay's writings throughout the crisis that the challenge to federal supremacy concerned him most. As an ardent supporter of the federal government, he saw the issue in Georgia as a potential constitutional crisis and a showdown over states' rights. When a colleague wrote in 1831 inquiring what he thought should be done about Georgia, he replied, "What *will* be done I cannot say; what ought to be I do not doubt. The Constitution, treaties, and laws ought to be faithfully and firmly executed. If Georgia submits it is well. If she chooses to rebel... I have no doubt that she would be reduced to obedience."[33] This stance on Georgia amounted to tacit support of Cherokee sovereignty,[34] but it is striking just how tacit it was—Clay did not mention the Cherokees at all in the letter.

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[31] "Review of General Jackson's Administration." *Cherokee Phoenix.*; Ostler, ***Surviving Genocide***, 266-267.
[32] Ostler, ***Surviving Genocide***, 265.
[33] Henry Clay to Samuel L. Southard, February 14, 1831 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*. ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 323.
[34] This was no surprise, given the *Worcester* effort was coordinated between Principal Chief John Ross and other Anti-Jacksonians like Clay's fellow Adams Cabinet alum William Wirt. See Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 264.

A year later, after the *Worcester v. Georgia* decision asserted that Georgia was in the wrong, Clay's constitutionalist framing of the issue had not changed, though his anxiety had risen considerably. He wrote another colleague, "If [the Court's decision] be resisted, and the President refuses to enforce it, there is a virtual dissolution of the Union," with states being implicitly allowed to ignore whatever federal laws they wished.[35] Once again, he prioritized the constitutional ramifications instead of directly addressing the plight of the Cherokees. At any rate, his fears were confirmed shortly thereafter when Jackson took Georgia's side.

Even if Clay was much more focused on legal reasoning than the human dimension of the removal debate, he did occasionally use that legal reasoning to speak out on behalf of the Cherokees in Congress. In 1834, he successfully argued that the Cherokees' status as a domestic dependent nation entitled them to petition Congress, in addition to arguing that Congress should pay them the annuities they requested.[36] The next year, he presented a Cherokee petition himself, and with it added two propositions, that 1) Cherokees be allowed to use federal courts to better protect their treaty rights, and 2) the federal government earmark additional land in the West for the increased number of Cherokees determining to leave Georgia.[37]

To be sure, Clay was far from alone in his legalist views on Cherokee Removal, and especially in his constitutional concerns over Jackson's failure to enforce *Worcester*. In fact, it is interesting to contrast the positions of Jackson and Clay in this instance. For all their differences, both men were devout unionists and generally scorned sectionalism.

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[35] Henry Clay to James Barbour, March 10, 1832 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 472.
[36] See "Remark in Senate, May 20, 1834" in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 726-7.
[37] See "Speech in Senate, February 4, 1835" in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 759-760.

(It would not be unreasonable to say this was, in fact, the only political position they held in common.) Nonetheless, they were on opposing sides of the Georgia crisis, with Clay supporting the Cherokee claim under purview of federal law, and Jackson taking the states' rights argument.[38]

Such political gymnastics on Jackson's part could perhaps be chalked up to a mere inconsistency in a life full of them, were it not for the fact that, simultaneously with the Georgia debate, another states' rights issue consumed much of the national dialogue. Vice President John C. Calhoun and other states' rights proponents in South Carolina had pushed for the repeal of the Tariff of 1828, which they felt put undue pressure on Southern markets.[39] Barring its repeal, they asserted the right of South Carolina to nullify the law as unconstitutional. To this assertion of states' rights, Jackson responded forcefully and worked with Congress to authorize his use of the U.S. Army to force compliance with federal law. How, then, could he simultaneously undermine the federal government in Georgia?

To be sure, Jackson's waffling did not go unnoticed by his critics, and perhaps no one capitalized on the inconsistency more than William Apess. Apess, a Pequot preacher in Massachusetts, used the crisis to assert a degree of sovereignty in his state. In his blistering 1834 publication *Indian Nullification*, he delineated the overtly racist policies aimed at Indigenous Peoples in the United States and in Massachusetts specifically. Cleverly, however, rather than appealing to Jackson in his hypocrisy, he recognized the overwhelming Anti-Jacksonian sentiment in Massachusetts and instead appealed to New

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[38] Howe, *American Whigs*, 41.
[39] For a discussion of the Nullification Crisis, Jackson's response, and its political effects, see Holt, *American Whig Party*, 20-23.

Englanders' own hypocrisy: "How true it is that men see the faults of others, rather than their own. If the good people of Massachusetts were as ready to do right as to have the Georgians do right, the Marshpee Indians might, perhaps, send a Representative to the Legislature."[40] Such a critique powerfully layed out some of the regional and political biases at play, and Apess was successful in liberating the Mashpees from a state-imposed custodianship.[41]

As logical as Apess' argument was, it also contained its share of pathos, arguing for sovereignty on a moral level. Within the National Republicans, both strands of thought had supporters. People like Clay channeled pragmatic legalist arguments, while the most outspoken moralist on the issue in Congress was Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey.[42] In 1830, Frelinguysen attracted national attention with a lengthy speech about the immorality of the Indian Removal Act.[43] On the floor of the Senate, he argued for Cherokee sovereignty, asserting that, "by immemorial possession, as the original tenants of the soil, they hold a title superior to… all adverse pretensions of our confederation and subsequent union," and questioning "by what process of abstract deduction… their rights have been extinguished."[44] He went on to ask how the country could "justify this trespass" to "all the glory of the past and the promise of the future."[45] This striking condemnation of Jackson's tactics, notably more moralistic than the rhetoric

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[40] Apess, William, and William Joseph Snelling. *Indian nullification of the unconstitutional laws of Massachusetts relative to the Marshpee tribe, or, The pretended riot explained*. (Boston: Press of J. Howe, 1835). Sabin Americana: History of the Americas, 1500-1926, 50-51.
[41] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 372.
[42] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 211.
[43] Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.
[44] Frelinghuysen, Theodore. "Speech of Mr. Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey, delivered in the Senate of the United States, April 6, 1830." American Indian Histories and Cultures, 7.
[45] Frelinghuysen, "Speech," 28.

of people like Clay, reflected Frelinghuysen's embodiment of "the reform impulse of American protestantism."[46]

Near the beginning of his speech, Frelinghuysen recounted the earlier Cherokee policies of the Washington Administration and the Treaty of Hopewell, and he registered his dissatisfaction that Jackson "did not pursue the wise and prudent policy of his exalted predecessor."[47] Intriguingly, Frelinghuysen was not the first person to invoke Washington in the removal debate. Two years earlier, a *Cherokee Phoenix* editorial, (presumably penned by editor Elias Boudinot) had made the same argument. The editorial was published in March 1828, a full year before Jackson's ascendancy to the Oval Office, yet there were already troubling stirrings of a removal push, and the author was evidently trying to get ahead of such calls. The editor lavishly praised George Washington's "liberal and kind policy," which later administrations had maintained.[48] He leaned heavily into assimilationist rhetoric in an attempt to show the success of Cherokee civilizing projects, arguing that, under the policies, "the Cherokees have made laudable improvement, in agriculture and civilization… the happy effects of it are now to be seen in almost every house."[49] By his measure, such gains should show "the practicability of the measures of Washington to enlighten the Indians," and he implied that continued adherence to such policies would be best for all involved.[50]

It is likely unknowable whether the *Phoenix* editorial had a direct impact on Frelinghuysen and his speech, but given the latter's strong feelings on Cherokee

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[46] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 188.
[47] Frelinghuysen, "Speech," 3-4.
[48] "Washington and the Cherokees." *Cherokee Phoenix*, March 20, 1828. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers.
[49] "Washington and the Cherokees." *Cherokee Phoenix.*
[50] "Washington and the Cherokees." *Cherokee Phoenix.*

sovereignty, it is not unreasonable to think that he had encountered this broadside or a similar one from Boudinot in the years when the removal debate was heating up. Whether Frelinghuysen was familiar with the article or not, the similarities in the men's approaches here are striking. Nor would this be the only moment in the fight in which white anti-removal advocates echoed the work of Cherokee activists. Historian Tiya Miles has demonstrated the critical legacy of Cherokee women like Margaret Ann Scott in pre-Jacksonian petition campaigns. She argues that, "In relation to the much more famous women's petition drive [led by Catharine Beecher against the Indian Removal Act], the Cherokee women's antiremoval campaign can claim certain precedence and likely influence."[51] In both cases, Indigenous activists rhetorically and tactically foreshadowed some of their most prominent white supporters. More than anything, such a pattern indicates the unsurprising truth that Indigenous Peoples were and are their own best advocates, even when white allyship is more commemorated.

At any rate, even if Boudinot's words reached the likes of Frelinghuysen, Frelinghuysen's own lofty rhetoric failed to persuade his colleagues in the Senate. Against his protestations, the Indian Removal Act passed, and later efforts on his part and others', like the *Worcester* case, were similarly thwarted or ignored by the Jacksonians.[52] Despite their failure, historians now generally acknowledge that the soon-to-be-Whigs were reasonably politically unified in such efforts to oppose Cherokee removal.[53] In fact, some scholars have characterized the National Republicans' anti-removal efforts as a "patently partisan" about-face from John Quincy Adams' policies of attempted

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[51] Tiya Miles. "'Circular Reasoning': Recentering Cherokee Women in the Antiremoval Campaigns." *American Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2009): 221–43. p. 236.
[52] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 211, 264-267.
[53] See, for example, Rolater, "Second American Party System," 193.

assimilation.[54] Doing so, however, obscures the fact that, as president, Adams had in fact alienated the state of Georgia by rejecting earlier treaties with the Cherokees and Muscogees which he deemed illegitimate.[55] Assimilationist he may have been, but he had strong feelings about Indigenous sovereignty, as the *Cherokee Phoenix* made clear.[56] Perhaps more importantly, regardless of their efforts' genesis, National Republicans' defense of Cherokee treaty rights during the Removal Crisis would help set Indigenous legal sovereignty as a going policy consideration moving forward.

III. If "It Should Be Convenient" - The Buffalo Creek Treaty and Seneca Sovereignty

Indeed, the Anti-Jacksonians had plenty more opportunities to preach anti-removal rhetoric as the decade wore on. Having re-formed as the Whig Party in 1833-34, they still lost the Election of 1836 to Martin Van Buren, keeping them out of national power for another four years.[57] Nonetheless, in the 1838 midterms they experienced some modest gains, notably in Van Buren's home state of New York.[58] The New York Whigs' dealings with Indigenous Nations residing in New York in this period are more a saga than a singular event, and they prove illuminating as a flashpoint in getting at partisan attitudes towards American Indian policy. The main controversy stemmed from the Treaty of Buffalo Creek, an 1838 arrangement with the Senecas to purchase much of their land and deport many of them West.[59] The treaty, negotiated by Democrats, was highly suspect for not truly having the approval of a majority of the Seneca Nation, and it

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[54] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 211.
[55] Howe, *American Whigs*, 241.
[56] Howe, *American Whigs*, 40.; "Review of General Jackson's Administration." *Cherokee Phoenix.*
[57] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 45-49.
[58] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 78.
[59] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 108.

would ultimately force a reckoning amongst the New York Whigs who inherited it when they won election later that year.[60]

But before Whigs in New York could deal with the political grenade Democrats had handed them, national Whigs in the U.S. Senate had to vote on the treaty's ratification. As usual, Henry Clay was among them, and had strong feelings about the matter. His musings on this treaty, captured in a letter to Massachusetts minister Seneca White, offer one of the best pictures of his personal views on American Indian policy. In the letter, Clay suggested that, while "the interests of both races would be promoted" by the agreement, he "could not, in [his] conscience, vote for a treaty that did not appear to have the necessary sanctions," namely the consent of the Seneca Nation.[61] He went on to say that, if the treaty's legitimacy should come before the Supreme Court, and "it should be convenient," he "would take part in the Argument of the Cause," for the Senecas, although he could not commit to representing them directly.[62] In its final form, the treaty won Senate approval with Clay voting against it, though it was not challenged in the Supreme Court.[63]

Although Clay was far from committed to offering direct legal aid to the Senecas, his thoughts on the matter are still illuminating. The history of U.S.-Indian treaties is replete with deception and coercion, yet here Clay drew a line in the sand and refused to condone such conduct. Conversely, he espoused the replacement component of settler colonialism by suggesting that the Senecas should accept the "great liberality" of the

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[60] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 109.
[61] Henry Clay to Seneca White & John Kennedy, May 22, 1840 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 9*. ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 415.
[62] Clay to White & Kennedy, May 22, 1840.
[63] See editorial note, Henry Clay to Seneca White & John Kennedy, May 22, 1840 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 9*. ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 415.

current treaty and "submit to what… it would probably be beyond their power to avoid."[64] But even as he framed this fate as inevitable with one hand, he acknowledged the Senecas' humanity and right to due process with the other: "I should be most happy to render any services that would be proper and in my power, to the Seneca Nation, towards which I cherish sentiments of sympathy and cordiality."[65] Regardless of how much his views were reflected by the party at large, Clay's attitudes towards the Senecas here are perfectly representative of his own personal ambivalence. He seemingly did not want to see violence or wrong done to Indigenous Peoples, but he saw the acquisition of their land through legal means as legitimate and desirable. He would lend his voice to criticize anything short of that, but would only go out on a limb if "it should be convenient."[66]

Just as with the Cherokee sovereignty crisis in Georgia, Clay's opposition to deportation policies here was largely legalistic in nature, revolving around the "necessary sanctions."[67] How much of this was rooted in concern for Indigenous Peoples as human beings, and how much of it was concern for the rule of law, is certainly worth questioning now. But perhaps this very ambiguity was part of the position's strength, appealing to both moral crusaders and legalist moderates. Insofar as one can truly characterize Clay's position, he certainly saw Indigenous Nations as meriting protection under the law and deserving of due process, even if he pragmatically felt that they would ultimately lose many of their holdings. As such, Clay's outlook perfectly encapsulates the anti-Jacksonian pole of colonial ambivalence.

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[64] Clay to White & Kennedy, May 22, 1840.
[65] Clay to White & Kennedy, May 22, 1840.
[66] Clay to White & Kennedy, May 22, 1840.
[67] Clay to White & Kennedy, May 22, 1840.

Things were more complicated in New York, where the Whig Party scattered along the entire spectrum of settler colonial viewpoints. William Seward, a Whig who later served as Abraham Lincoln's secretary of state, was elected governor in 1838 and immediately found himself in the delicate position of inheriting the outgoing Democratic government's deportation framework. Scholars such as Stephen Valone argue that the roots of the Democratic Seneca removal effort were to draw away Whig support in the Western part of the state, where the Senecas resided.[68] Consequently, some Whigs, particularly those like Millard Fillmore (a Congressman at the time) who resided in the party bastion of Buffalo, crossed the aisle to support the treaty and undercut potential Democratic inroads in the region.[69] Statewide, the party position was more mixed, with leading party spokesman Thurlow Weed arguing along the same lines as Clay, that the treaty lacked sufficient Seneca support and should not be ratified.

Weed controlled the influential *Albany Evening Journal*, a prominent Whig publication. The *Journal* followed the Seneca deportation saga fairly closely and offered editorials from papers across the state on the proceedings. In 1841, with the debate still ongoing, they published an editorial from the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser*, which fittingly offered an ambivalent opinion on the treaty's merits and legitimacy. The writer stated that "we believe that, in every stage of [the treaty's] progress, like every other Indian treaty it was characterized by bribery and corruption of more or less chiefs and influential men, but… irrespective of the means by which it was brought about, no treaty ever made is as good."[70] So good, it went on, that the terms would have been enough to

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[68] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 114.
[69] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 115.
[70] "The Seneca Treaty," *Albany Evening Journal.* (Albany, New York) December 4, 1841. America's Historical Newspapers.

"tempt an equal number of our farming white people to abandon their comfortable homes and… emigrate West."[71] Nonetheless, the piece concluded, if tribal leaders "have been unduly operated upon so as to… agree to what is not the wish of the tribe, the treaty ought to be void as fraudulent…We have no authority to compel their removal on the ground that, in our opinion, they will be better off."[72] A bemusing blend of contradictory opinions, this Buffalo publication demonstrates the unwillingness of many Western Whigs to take a fixed stance on the treaty. For all its waffling and wishing legitimacy upon the proceedings, however, the editorial did make one point clear—the Senecas had the rightful claim to their land, and the state accordingly needed legitimate consent from the Seneca Nation to encroach upon it. This was consistent with the position Clay staked out a year earlier on the treaty, itself a continuation of the National Republican stance on Cherokee sovereignty.

As the *Journal* editorial makes clear, the Buffalo Creek Treaty was a live wire for Whigs who claimed to support Indigenous sovereignty yet did not want to alienate supporters in Buffalo. As both the state party leader and a Weed ally, Governor Seward found himself caught between the factions. In the short term, he chose to back the treaty and its supporters over the Senecas, which likely aided him in his reelection effort later that year.[73] After his reelection, he spoke more freely, privately acknowledging that "the consent of the Senecas was obtained by fraud, corruption, and violence and… ought to be held void," and eventually publicly coming out against the treaty with much milder language to the same effect.[74] Such an about face after the election suggests his earlier

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[71] "The Seneca Treaty," *Albany Evening Journal.*
[72] "The Seneca Treaty," *Albany Evening Journal.*
[73] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 129.
[74] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 130.

support for the treaty was nakedly political; he clearly sold the Senecas out for his own gain.

Seward's American Indian policy record seems even less consistent if one looks beyond his record with the Senecas. In his dealings with two other Indigenous Nations, the Onondaga and St. Regis Nations, he privately attempted to dissuade them from selling their land, suggesting to them that "you would best promote the welfare and happiness of your children by leaving to them the entire inheritance you received from your forefathers."[75] Rather than sell, they should "keep the lands altogether and study to improve in agriculture and in the manner and customs of white men."[76] Especially after the Buffalo Creek affair, this was a striking claim coming from a sitting governor—encouraging Indigenous sovereignty in conjunction with assimilation towards white culture.

At a glance, these various images are at odds, with even the same individuals sometimes supporting removal and sometimes not. Fillmore and the campaigning Seward largely jumped on the Democratic removal bandwagon. On the other hand, the words of the unelected Thurlow Weed and the lame-duck Seward strongly suggest an actual interest in respecting some degree of Seneca sovereignty in their right to negotiate with the American government. Whigs outside the sphere of New York also found it easier to remain consistent on the issue. This included Clay but also John Quincy Adams, who criticized the "unnatural influence" causing Fillmore to support the "swindling practices" of Van Buren and the Democrats.[77] Perhaps most intriguingly,

[75] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 132.
[76] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 132.
[77] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 116.

Seward's private dealings with the Onondaga and St. Regis chiefs suggest he had some degree of personal interest in the tribes' welfare, albeit of an assimilationist bent; it is hard to discern the political benefit of his dissuading these nations from ceding their lands. In essence, then, it seems that the general Whig attitude towards Indigenous issues in New York State at the time was similar to Clay's personal one: Whigs would oppose deportation and support Indigenous sovereignty, if "it should be convenient."[78]

It is certainly not fair to suggest that all of these party leaders' gestures of support were conditional and opportunistic. (Indeed, John Quincy Adams in particular was never one for prioritizing electability over his own morals, and it is difficult to imagine him compromising on the Seneca issue if he were in Seward's position). But insofar as one can examine the on-the-ground actions of New York Whig leaders, who were weighing electoral considerations (namely Fillmore and Seward), they did not risk much politically to support Indigenous rights, even when some of them harbored personal sympathies for Indigenous groups.

IV. Flipping Tippecanoe - American Indian Policy and The Whig Electoral Image

If many of the New York Whigs displayed a predilection for pragmatism over principle, the opposite could likely be said of their colleague to the East, Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey. As a staunch defender of the Cherokees in 1830, the evangelical Whig raised his profile enough that he later found a place as Henry Clay's running mate in the 1844 presidential election.[79] Nominees, at least in theory, should say something about a party's values and direction, so what, exactly, can Freylinghuysen's

[78] Clay to White & Kennedy, May 22, 1840.
[79] Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.

placement on the ticket reveal in trying to define a Whig American Indian policy? In fact, it offers several key takeaways, even if many of the details surrounding his nomination have been obscured by the years.[80]

The first piece of the puzzle is that Clay himself did not choose Freylinghuysen as his running-mate; instead he left it to the delegates at the convention to choose.[81] Accordingly, the fact that Freylinghuysen was nominated indicates he had some degree of acceptability to the party at large. Whig scholar Michael Holt notes at least seven other vice presidential contenders going into the convention, all of whom had some sort of baggage (ranging from intra-party rivalries to perceived abolitionist ties) which rendered them more divisive than Freylinghuysen.[82] That Freylinguysen himself was not also rejected suggests a comfort with him, including his clear stance on Indigenous rights. Holt raises another possible explanation: the famously moral New Jerseyan was chosen "to offset Clay's supposed weakness on the 'character' issue" amidst Democratic accusations of the party leader's immoral personal habits.[83] This, then, would seem to confirm a deliberate avowal of Frelinghuysen's American Indian stance; he was evidence of Whigs doing right by Indigenous Nations, or at least of their attempts to do so.

Even if the moral argument helped create a tidy package, it seems likely that it was more of a coincidence after a lengthy process of elimination, as Clay apparently "expressed astonishment at Freylinghuysen's nomination."[84] This suggests that Frelinghuysen was more a convenient choice than a deliberate one. Such a theory aligns

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[80] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 188.
[81] Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.
[82] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 189.
[83] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 188.
[84] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 189.

with an examination of the 1844 Whig Party Platform. Although far shorter than modern platforms, it still delineates several specific policies of the party, such as "a well-regulated currency; a tariff for revenue [and] a single term for the presidency."[85] Unsurprisingly, it makes no mention of Indigenous peoples or a policy towards them, but in describing Frelinghuysen's nomination, the matter seems something of an elephant in the convention hall, as that was his signature issue. The platform offers a dual assessment of Frelinghuysen: "As a senator [he] was always strenuous on the side of law, order, and the constitution, while as a private man," he devoted himself to "morals, education, philanthropy, and religion."[86] One could argue these are two sides of the same coin, but the emphasis on "law, order, and the constitution" sounds much more like Clay's depiction of *Worcester v. Georgia* as a constitutional issue than Frelinghuysen's own moralistic defense of the Cherokees. It seems the Whigs were largely comfortable with Freylinghuysen's earnest American Indian policy, but they still packaged it to fit in with their pragmatic constitutionalism.

Frelinghuysen was not the only national candidate of the era with a reputation for dealings with Indigenous Peoples. Four years earlier, William Henry Harrison's successful journey to the White House was due in no small part to his fame as the Hero of Tippecanoe and his victory over Tecumseh's Shawnee Confederacy. Yet, as Daniel Walker Howe notes, Harrison and his campaigners appear to have tried to modify this image.[87] In 1840, Harrison himself wrote "A Discourse on the Aborigines of the Ohio Valley," a bizarre 40-page tract which found him parlaying his time fighting Indigenous

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[85] "Whig Party Platform of 1844." May 1, 1844. American Presidency Project. UC Santa Barbara.
[86] "Whig Party Platform of 1844."
[87] Howe, *American Whigs,* 42.

Peoples in the Northwest Territory into an attempt at evaluating and commemorating their cultures and history. Though Harrison kept his own actions conspicuously absent from most of the tract, he praised the "high moral character" of Northwestern chiefs and compared Tecumseh to the fallibly tragic figures amongst "the great men [of] civilized nations."[88] Presumably, this effort was designed to achieve the dual aims of implicitly making Harrison out to be a more impressive military leader (having defeated formidable and noble opponents) while also demonstrating a sympathy for Indigenous Peoples to show he was not merely a merciless "Indian-fighter."[89] In truth, considering Harrison's military record and subsequent efforts at Indigenous land acquisition as territorial governor of Indiana, he may be a contender as having the worst record on American Indian policy among notable Whigs.[90] Yet rather than play into this, he seems to have attempted to soften his image.[91]

Whether this was Harrison's own doing or the work of party leaders, the effect was that the Whig ticket posed a contrast to the Democratic incumbents in 1840, comprising Martin Van Buren (Jackson's adjutant and the man who carried out much of the actual Trail of Tears) and Richard M. Johnson, whose primary claim to fame was as the alleged killer of Shawnee leader Tecumseh in the War of 1812.[92] As part of their successful 1836 campaign, in fact, the Democrats had memorialized that myth with the sickening slogan "Rumpsey, Dumpsey, Colonel Johnson killed Tecumseh."[93]

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[88] William Henry Harrison. *A Discourse on the Aborigines of the Ohio Valley*. (Chicago, Fergus Printing Company: 1883). Hathitrust, 39.
[89] Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.
[90] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 41.
[91] Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.
[92] Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.
[93] Stuart S. Sprague. "The Death of Tecumseh and Rise of Rumpsey Dumpsey: The Making of a Vice President." *Filson Club History Quarterly*. Vol. 59 No. 4, Oct. 1985.

Considering that both Johnson and Harrison made their names in the same campaign against Tecumseh, the different ways the parties framed their relationships with the event is further evidence of a Whig attempt to depict themselves as distinct from Democrats on American Indian policy.[94]

Harrison's triumph over Van Buren in November 1840 would prove his last, as he succumbed to pneumonia a few weeks after his inauguration the next spring. Serving a mere month in office before his death, it is impossible to know whether Harrison would have proved an honest convert to the prevailing Whig image of Indigenous sympathy. What is certain, however, is that his successor, Vice President John Tyler, had no inhibitions about bucking the Whigs, to the point that the Whigs ultimately bucked him. The true boiling point which resulted in Tyler's ejection from the party was economics, specifically the rechartering of the Bank of the United States, but this was far from the only policy on which "His Accidency" and the Congressional Whigs disagreed.[95] In fact, American Indian policy would prove a significant flashpoint in the conflicts between Tyler and his former party.

V. "Miserable, Petty [and] Exhausting" - Opposition to the Second Seminole War

Though Cherokee Removal is perhaps the best-known example of Antebellum Indian Removal, another less-discussed campaign of national deportation occurred almost simultaneously, proved just as damaging, and dragged out far longer. This was the attempted eradication of the Seminoles from their homes in Florida, in what has become known as the Second Seminole War. As much an extermination campaign as a war, it is

[94] Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.
[95] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 137.

notable for two main reasons. The first is that the Seminoles, under leaders like Osceola, displayed laudable success against the U.S. military, which became so frustrated with its failures that the Army went through six different commanding generals in six years.[96] Secondly, this conflict has repeatedly been noted for the U.S. Army's startingly inhumane tactics, ranging from torching Seminole settlements, to ignoring white flags of parlay, to hunting Seminoles with bloodhounds.[97] Historian Jeffrey Ostler asserts that, rather than an anomaly, the war should be seen as "entirely consistent with the United States' policy of Indian removal," insofar as it was the logical conclusion of a tribe refusing to accede to deportation peacefully.[98] This sentiment, however, once again conflates the will of the governing party with the will of the American people. It might be more accurate to say that this was consistent with *Jacksonian* American Indian policy, as the war was conducted under Democrats Jackson and Van Buren, and the outcast Tyler, who ultimately drew more Congressional support from Democrats than Whigs.

However one characterizes the conflict, it was certainly not *Whig* American Indian policy. Just as their members had during the Cherokee deportation debate, the Whigs emerged as the strongest critics of the Seminole eradication effort, again taking up the anti-removal pole of colonial ambivalence. Characteristically, much of the Whig criticism was more pragmatic and legalistic than overly moralistic, especially coming from the likes of Henry Clay. Clay voiced his opposition early and often, and the Jackson and Van Buren administrations were the target of his ire. In 1836, he decried Jackson's pattern of violent deportation campaigns, asserting that "the wars with Black

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[96] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 283-4.
[97] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 279, 282.
[98] Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 286.

Hawk and the Seminoles were scarcely a luncheon for [Jackson's] voracious appetite."[99] Nor did his opposition to the war end when Old Hickory left office. In 1839, Clay scorned Van Buren's request for further funding to militarily occupy Florida. He lamented the "gross and culpable misconduct" by which the war was being managed, and opined that the effort was a "totally inefficient" expenditure of money and American lives.[100] A year before, he had suggested in a private letter that "The sooner [the war] can honorably be gotten rid of, the better… It might be practical, without affecting the national honor, to leave the Indians in the quiet possession of a portion of the Territory."[101]

Clay's positions, as usual, were aligned with his party nationally. Horace Greeley's *Log Cabin* published a bevy of Seminole War criticisms from Whig leaders in an attempt to support the 1840 Whig ticket. Its account of the New York State Whig Convention that year called for the government to "prosecute efficiently or altogether abandon its war upon the Seminoles in Florida."[102] The next year, three weeks after Harrison's inauguration, Greeley reprinted a laundry list agenda for the new administration from Thurlow Weed's *Albany Evening Journal*, insisting that "The miserable, petty, but exhausting war with the Seminoles should be terminated."[103] If the New York Whigs were largely pragmatic in wanting to wash their hands of the conflict,

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[99] Henry Clay, Speech in the Senate, February 19, 1838 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 9*. ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 145-6.
[100] Henry Clay, Draft of Speech in Senate, ca. February 18, 1839 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 9*. ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 288-9.
[101] Henry Clay to Robert Swartwout, April 2, 1838 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 9*. ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 167-8.
[102] "Address of the Whig State Convention." *Log Cabin* (New York, New York) I, no. 20, September 12, 1840: [4]. Readex: America's Historical Newspapers.
[103] "Legislative Acts/Legal Proceedings." *Log Cabin* (New York, New York) I, no. 17, March 27, 1841: [1]. Readex: America's Historical Newspapers.

other critics, like Congressman Joshua Giddings of Ohio, took a more moral tone of condemnation. Giddings argued that the war was being prosecuted to support slavery within individual states, and was thus a state matter in which it would be unconstitutional for the federal government to intervene.[104]

With Harrison's death, ending the Seminole War and the rest of the Whig agenda fell onto the obstinate shoulders of John Tyler. Perhaps as part of a bid to outmaneuver Clay for party leadership, or perhaps out of his natural stubbornness, he chose to push on with the war instead.[105] Most of the party refused to go along with him, with two-thirds of Whig Senators voting against continued funding of the war effort in 1842, and the Whigs in the House voting 76-10 to condemn Tyler's opaque management of the war two weeks later.[106] Just as the Whigs molded Harrison's campaign to their image on the issue of American Indian policy, they refused to be co-opted by Tyler.

VI. Conclusion: American Indian Policy and the Whigs

Having jettisoned Tyler, the Whigs nominated Clay and Frelinghuysen in 1844, who went on to lose a devastatingly close race to James K. Polk. Four years later, they enjoyed their second and final presidential victory when Zachary Taylor defeated Jackson crony and staunch removal supporter Lewis Cass.[107]

In December 1848, just after Taylor's election, a young Cherokee student named Clement Vann wrote to Henry Clay about the incoming administration. Vann, who himself would grow up to be an Arkansas state senator, thanked Clay for his "kind and benevolent defence of my wronged and oppressed nation," and implored him to "lend

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[104] For a discussion of Joshua Giddings and his abolitionist strategies, see Howe, *American Whigs*, 174.
[105] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 137.
[106] Rolater, "Second American Party System," 197.
[107] Holt, *American Whig Party*, 194, 368; Howe, *American Whigs*, 42.

your influence to [the Cherokee] Cause" in the Taylor Administration.[108] Vann's praise was perhaps a bit overzealous given the clinical constitutionalism with which Clay often spoke of Cherokee Removal, but it is significant that he and his schoolmates saw Clay as an ally in a time when, he noted, Indigenous Peoples "seldom ha[d] cause" to praise white politicians.[109] It is reflective of the fact that Clay and the Whig Party worked to cultivate an image of opposition to Jacksonian removal.

Indeed, instead of accepting Jackson's policies, the Whigs presented their own, which this paper has sought to define. Whig American Indian policy was principally characterized by the following ideas:

1) Primarily, respect for Indigenous sovereignty and a focus on majority consent in treaties.
2) Along with this, a sentiment among many that Indigenous Peoples should keep their land titles (evidenced by their support of the Cherokees, Seward's private advice to the Onondagas, and Clay's private musings about the Seminole War).
3) Conversely, beliefs that Indigenous Peoples should adopt the "manner and customs of white men,"[110] and that, in certain situations, white encroachment was inevitable. This exemplified the Whigs' place in colonial ambivalence.
4) Rhetorically, an emphasis on constitutionality and the rule of law (as evidenced by the *Worcester* case) and pragmatism (seen particularly during the Second Seminole War). At times, progressives like Frelinghuysen employed highly moralistic language as well.

To this list, one can add two other qualifications:

5) For many Whigs, Indigenous issues were a secondary policy concern and not a hill to die on, as evidenced by Seward's abandonment of the Senecas.
6) Nonetheless, the party put enough stock in their American Indian policy that they were willing to elevate notably staunch anti-removal advocates like Frelinghuysen to positions of national importance. They would also attempt to rehabilitate (in the case of William Henry Harrison) or rebuke (in the case of John Tyler) prominent party affiliates who did not fit the Whig image of support and respect for Indigenous Nations.

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[108] Clement N. Vann to Henry Clay, December 7, 1848 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 10*. ed. Melba Porter Hay, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 561.
[109] Clement N. Vann to Henry Clay, December 7, 1848.
[110] Valone, "Compromised Indian Removal," 132.

Truthfully, at the peak of their ideological cohesion, and in so many of the moments where it mattered most, the Whigs found themselves out of power, largely unable to do anything but extemporize in the face of Jackson's transgressions. Perhaps most lamentably, even when they were in power, key figures like Seward and Fillmore often put electoral considerations over the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Even so, as a national party, the Whigs continued to voice a fairly consistent American Indian policy from the Indian Removal Act to the Second Seminole War. Doubtless, the position resulted from a range of considerations, which varied from member to member. Regardless, in cultivating a party persona of moral superiority to Jacksonian avarice and bloodlust, the Whigs offered a legitimate electoral alternative to the Democrats' Indigenous removal campaigns.

Such an organized policy alternative is historically significant, and it supports both Bruyneel's theory of colonial ambivalence and Saunt's assertion of alternate possibilities to removal. There is a great deal more to be studied about the Whig role in the American Indian policy debate, but this paper has sought to delineate the basic elements of the party's policies in order to better understand what one of the more likely alternate paths to Jacksonian removal might have looked like.

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"The Consolidation of Liberty"[1]: The Colombian Policy of Adams and Clay

I. Introduction

The film pitch practically writes itself: a war hero and rising U.S. politician, on the run from a foreign government, with whom, until recently, he had enjoyed a diplomatic post. Accused of abetting rebellion and supporting a coup attempt against that country's popular president, he defends his conduct in a lengthy broadside, emphasizing his actions were rooted in patriotism as "a child of our own Revolution." [2] Rather than allowing the incident to stunt his career, he successfully spins it into a testament of his republican zeal and uses it as part of the package that eventually carries him to the White House. Such a story may sound like it is ripped from the pages of a Tom Clancy novel or an Aaron Sorkin screenplay, but in fact it is a true episode in the life of William Henry Harrison. Fifteen years after gaining fame for his victory at the Battle of Tippecanoe, and a dozen before he became the shortest-tenured president in U.S. history, William Henry Harrison found himself persona non grata in Colombia. The story of how this happened is merely one piece of a largely unexamined chapter of U.S. diplomatic history.

By exploring Harrison's story, and the events which preceded his appointment and eventful tenure in Colombia, one can get a better picture of U.S. foreign policy in the 1820s, a period of significant transition for the young republic.[3] From 1825-1829, President John Quincy Adams and Secretary of State Henry Clay steered U.S. diplomacy,

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[1] The titular quote comes from a letter from Francisco de Paula Santander to Henry Clay, discussing their shared hopes for New Granada after the former's election as president there. June 4, 1832 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 490.

[2] This quote, along with the other details here regarding Harrison's time in Colombia, come from his personal account: William Henry Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison, late envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States to the Republic of Colombia, on certain charges made against him by that government.* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1830), 4.

[3] For a detailed account of the early 1800s as a time of great change, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848.* (Oxford, 2007).

and they exhibited a marked interest in the new republics of the former Spanish Empire.[4] Given the recently reinvigorated scholarly discussion about the nature of early U.S. support for Latin America more generally (particularly under the Madison and Monroe Administrations), it is critical to study the Adams-Clay policies to better understand the U.S. objectives which underpinned increased involvement in the region.

This paper seeks to do that by exploring the diplomatic relationship between the United States and the Republic of Colombia from approximately 1824-1830. As one of the largest nascent American republics of the period, and one with internationally known leaders including famed revolutionary Simon Bolivar, Gran Colombia presents an excellent opportunity to examine U.S. diplomacy in the region more deeply, particularly because of the wealth of surviving correspondence between the two states' leaders and diplomats. By using such correspondence, one can better interrogate Adams' and Clay's motives in getting involved in newly republican South American states.

Of particular note is a series of diplomatic faux pas committed by U.S. envoys to Colombia, which have been largely overlooked by scholars. Two successive diplomatic heads of mission in Bogota fell afoul of the turbulent political environment there in the late 1820s, though in markedly different ways. Both U.S. ministers were effectively perceived to take sides in the increasing partisan strife within Colombia between President Simon Bolivar (who advocated for pragmatic and increasingly illiberal policies) and Vice President Francisco de Paula Santander (calling for institutionalism and liberal republicanism).[5] In the first incident, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Beaufort Taylor Watts

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[4] Charles Nicholas Edel, "Searching for Monsters to Destroy: The Grand Strategy of John Quincy Adams." Order No. 3525310, (Yale University: 2012), 214-217.

[5] David Bushnell. "The Gran Colombian Experiment (1819–1830)." In *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself*, 1st ed., 50–73. (University of California Press, 1993), 63-64.

improperly praised Bolivar at the expense of Santander in a letter which went public. Because of this, Watts was sharply rebuked by his superiors in Washington, and ultimately removed from his post, demoted to a junior position, and sent elsewhere.[6] Watts' successor, future U.S. president William Henry Harrison, quickly put himself on the other side of the conflict, alienating Bolivar with calls to liberalize Colombia. Although he acted brashly and was effectively thrown out of the state, the incident did not end his career. Instead, because Harrison's actions were ideologically aligned with the bolder course Clay and Adams had begun taking in Colombia, Tippecanoe was ultimately able to use the event as evidence of his own republican credentials when he later ran for president.[7]

The Adams Administration's instructions to its diplomats amidst these crises, and Clay and Adams' interactions with Colombian officials, help illuminate the United States' intentions in cultivating relationships with new American republics. They specifically underscore the ideological component of the Adams Administration's involvement in Gran Colombia. Economic and pragmatic concerns factored into this relationship, but Adams' and Clay's actions and correspondence indicate that their primary ambition in Colombia was the promotion of republicanism and "liberty."

II. Historiography

Given the insight which stands to be gleaned from the Watts and Harrison incidents, there is a surprising dearth of secondary scholarly work regarding both of their tenures as envoys. Very little scholarship exists about Watts at all, and few biographies

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[6] Walter B. Smith II. *America's Diplomats and Consuls of 1776-1865: A Geographic and Biographic Directory of the Foreign Service from the Declaration of Independence to the End of the Civil War.* (Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs: 1986). Accessed through Hein Online, 232.
[7] See Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*.

of Harrison dwell on his time in Colombia.[8] Accordingly, this project seeks to uncover what these episodes can say about Adams' and Clay's designs for the U.S.-Colombian relationship, while situating the events within a wave of recent scholarship repositioning the adolescent United States in a larger hemispheric context.

As far back as 1985, scholars have pointed to debates over U.S. recognition of newly independent Latin American states as a seminal issue in the development of the Second Party System. This largely began with Andrew R. L. Cayton, who points to debate over sending a U.S. delegate to the Congress of Panama as a moment which helped to make U.S.-Latin American policy a partisan issue.[9] Importantly, Cayton also begins to lay out the differing ideologies underpinning whether a given U.S. politician would support greater U.S. involvement in Latin America. Cayton's pioneering work has led to other, wider studies of the confluence of U.S. domestic policies and international relations. In *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood*, James E. Lewis explores the various domestic and international concerns which factored into U.S. policymakers' differing responses to intervention in the former Spanish Empire until 1830.[10]

Such work has been picked up much more recently by scholars such as Caitlin Fitz. In *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of Revolutions*, Fitz demonstrates a shift from something of a consensus on the revolutionary Latin American

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[8] At least two accounts from his lifetime did, however. See James Hall, *A Memoir of the Public Services of William Henry Harrison, of Ohio*. (Key and Biddle: 1836). Accessed through Internet Archive, 300-301; Also see S. J. Burr, *The Life and Times of William Henry Harrison*. (New York: L. W. Ransom; Philadelphia: R. W. Pomeroy, 1840). Accessed through Internet Archive, 255-256.

[9] Andrew R. L. Cayton. "The Debate Over the Panama Congress and the Origins of the Second American Party System." *The Historian* 47, no. 2 (Feb 01, 1985): 219-238.

[10] James E. Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood : the United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.) ProQuest Ebook Central.

states (c. 1815) to a rabidly partisan and racialized brawl by the end of the 1820s.[11] She also does an excellent job bringing in a wider sample of the U.S. population, rather than just the political elite. Other recent historians such as Stephen Chambers emphasize economics and the slave trade more than higher-level ideological concerns in driving U.S. policy. In *No God But Gain: The Untold Story of Cuban Slavery, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Making of the United States*, Chambers asserts that promotion of U.S. slaveholders' interests in places like Cuba was a definitive factor driving U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere, particularly for John Quincy Adams.[12] Chambers' work in problematizing Adams' foreign policy concerns speaks to a larger scholarly discussion about the sixth president's diplomatic legacy, which complicates a linear assessment of his goals in Latin America.

Although this discussion manifests itself differently across scholarship, recent work contains an essential truth: Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams began the 1820s very much at odds with each other over how the United States should interact with the burgeoning republics. What is broadly clear, however, is that Clay was an early and enthusiastic promoter of the Latin American republican cause, whereas Adams was a major skeptic as Secretary of State under James Monroe and did not really embrace it until elected president himself in 1824. Charles Nicholas Edel gives perhaps the most comprehensive recent overview of this transition on Adams' part, while Brook Poston juxtaposes Adams' early reticence with his predecessor James Monroe's republican

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[11] Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: the United States in an Age of Revolutions.* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 13.
[12] Stephen M. Chambers, *No God but Gain : the Untold Story of Cuban Slavery, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Making of the United States*. (London: Verso, 2015), 130.

zeal.[13] The tensions between Adams' tenures as chief diplomat and chief executive make it all the more important to scrutinize available evidence regarding his foreign policy intentions.

Together, these scholars also lay out an array of reasons which could explain why a given politician or voter may have supported or opposed U.S. outreach to Latin America. On the pro-support side, these include considerations such as free trade, support for liberal republicanism, a kinship with these burgeoning republics, a desire to limit European influence, and even the mere creation of a wedge issue in domestic U.S. politics.[14] On the isolationist side, factors include anxiety about Latin American abolitionism, fear of provoking a war with Europe, concerns about increasing federal authority, and again creation of a domestic wedge issue.[15] These various theories on what most influenced U.S.-Latin American relations help contextualize this paper's findings regarding Adams' and Clay's motivations.

In addition to histories looking outward from the United States, several works in Latin American history have proven helpful in making sense of things from a more hemispheric perspective. Hilda Sabato's *Republics of the New World* serves as something of a political survey for the revolutionary Latin American states, presenting trends across the new republics as they undertook the process of state-building.[16] Tyson Reeder's *Smugglers, Pirates, and Patriots* accounts for the impact of trade in

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[13] Edel, "Monsters to Destroy"; Brook Poston, "'Bolder Attitude': James Monroe, the French Revolution, and the Making of the Monroe Doctrine." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 124, no. 4 (2016): 282–315.
[14] See Cayton, Lewis, Fitz, Poston, and Edel for various accounts of the pro-support perspective.
[15] See Cayton, Lewis, Fitz, and Chambers for various accounts of the anti-support perspective.
[16] Hilda Sabato, *Republics of the New World: The Revolutionary Political Experiment in Nineteenth-Century Latin America.* (Princeton, 2018).

revolutionary South America, and explores the commercial concerns which factored into revolutionary republics gaining diplomatic recognition. In particular, Reeder demonstrates that U.S. politicians often saw free trade and republicanism as intertwined goals.[17] Ernesto Bassi's *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World* has also been quite helpful in framing the scope of this project. Bassi focuses on the Greater Caribbean and demonstrates the historical contingency of national and state borders, a useful reminder of the degree of fluctuation the Western Hemisphere experienced in this revolutionary period.[18]

III. Note on Terminology, Scope, and Structure

As with any project of this nature, precision is key, and thus a note on terminology and scope is appropriate. Firstly, this paper draws a distinction between "the United States" and "America," with the former referring to the nation specifically, and the latter referring to the Hemisphere more broadly. Scholars of this region and era like Fitz effectively employ this dichotomy, and it is also more true to the understandings of contemporary historical actors.[19]

Secondly, while this paper investigates U.S.-Colombian diplomacy, it does so largely from the U.S perspective. Its primary concern is discerning what this relationship says about U.S. politics and statecraft. Accordingly, Colombian figures factor primarily based on what they can say about U.S. policy. Other aspects of the relationship are, of

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[17] Tyson Reeder, *Smugglers, Pirates, and Patriots: Free Trade in the Age of Revolution*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2019). See especially pages 5, 210.
[18] Ernesto Bassi, An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World. (Durham: Duke University, 2016).
[19] See Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 15-16. For a historical example, see Santander's invocation of "the American cause," clearly referring to the Hemisphere broadly, rather than merely the United States, in his letter to Clay, April 10, 1832 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 490.

course, extremely significant, but they are beyond the scope of this paper as a study of the policy concerns of U.S. statesmen.

Thirdly, this paper focuses specifically on diplomacy with the Republic of Colombia, or Gran Colombia. Given the specific nature of the diplomatic events this paper studies, and the juxtaposition offered by the Bolivar-Santander rivalry, Gran Colombia makes for a compelling case study in U.S. foreign policy in this era. Nonetheless, it is important to note that U.S. foreign policy differed in different parts of the current and former Spanish Empire, with significant discrepancies across both regional and national boundaries. In recognition of that, this paper generally refers to the region, where appropriate, of "South America," with a specific focus on the Republic of Colombia.[20] To assume that the policy towards one new American republic was necessarily the same as others would be a mistake, but the Colombian case makes for an intriguing study given its ideological battle and the manner in which U.S. diplomats engaged in this debate.

Lastly, a note on structure. The body of this paper includes three main sections. The first explores the ideas underpinning republicanism in the early nineteenth century, and contextualizes the Adams-Clay foreign policy by briefly surveying the two men's prior roles in Latin American diplomacy. The next section accounts for and analyzes the diplomatic ministry of Beaufort T. Watts to Colombia, and his fall from grace with the Adams Administration. The third section explores the fallout from the Watts affair, and

[20] For U.S. residents' different thoughts on Mexico compared to South America, see Fitz, *Our Sister Republics*, 42-44. Chambers' *No God But Gain* deals largely with the Caribbean, and depicts a very different U.S. outlook there than South America. Bassi notes the deeply contingent geography of this period: even what "we now know as the Colombian nation was only one of many imagined possibilities." See *Aqueous Territory*, 12.

the hardening of Clay's and Adams' stance towards Bolivar. It contrasts Watts' tenure with that of his successor, William Henry Harrison, and shows how Harrison was able to package his own diplomatic indiscretions as evidence of his republican virtue. Finally, the conclusion further analyzes what this series of events says about the nature of Adams' and Clay's goals in Gran Colombia.

IV. "New World" Order: Republicanism in Early U.S. Thought

There surely exist more definitions of "republics" than actual states in the world today, and pinning down the Platonic ideal of a republic is far beyond the purview of this paper. However, considering the centrality of republicanism to this paper's subject and argument, it is necessary to sketch generally what Clay, Adams, and their contemporaries meant when they used this word. One definition, offered by U.S. President James Monroe, consisted of "governments elective and representative, in every branch, similar to our own." [21] Indeed, perhaps convinced of the perfection of their system, U.S. statesmen frequently extolled the virtues of their own system, and saw other countries parroting it as a positive development.[22]

In correspondence from this time, republicanism and "liberty" were often mentioned in the same breath, and together, they hint closely at what this vision was: freedom from what people at the time would have called "arbitrary" government, where the state could exert its will largely unchecked.[23] Such fears made some self-proclaimed republicans, including Henry Clay, anxious about the idea of a standing army.[24] Along

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[21] Quoted in Poston, "Bolder Attitude," 308.
[22] See for example, Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 48.
[23] See, for example, Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 4.
[24] See Henry Clay to Simon Bolivar, October 27, 1828 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 7*. ed. Robert Seager II, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 517-518.

the same lines, republicans feared "despotism," with one or a few people ruling without the voice of the people, and also saw these evils connected to "empire." [25]

In short, this paper defines republicanism and "the cause of liberty" as the quest for a limited government, with a constitution and the rule of law, in which sovereignty is held by the people in some elective capacity.[26] Obviously, these things do not always develop in tandem, and most U.S. statesmen understood the need for variance in different states and situations, but the above definition offers a rough idea of what the players in this history might have envisioned when invoking the term.

To understand what republicanism was, nineteenth century Americans needed only to look across the Atlantic to see what it was not. Many saw "arbitrary" government and empire as endemic to European states, and those people who considered themselves veterans or descendants of the American Revolution were eager to curtail such "despotic" influence.[27] This underwrote another facet of the republican movement - it was often understood as an international cause, where a victory in one place was good for republicanism the world over. From this ambitious perspective, republicanism had potentially massive implications to promote commercial prosperity and diplomatic tranquility. Numerous U.S. leaders saw that the new states of the Western Hemisphere would play a key role in the United States' future prosperity.[28]

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[25] See Henry Clay to William Henry Harrison, October 13, 1828, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 7*, 492.
[26] Even more briefly, one might say a classically liberal, representative government.
[27] Randolph B. Campbell. "The Spanish American Aspect of Henry Clay's American System," *The Americas* Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jul, 1967), pp. 3-17. Cambridge University Press, 4.
[28] Lewis, *American Union and Problem of Neighborhood*, 10-11.

One such rising statesman was Speaker of the House Henry Clay, who found a place as an early advocate of the new Spanish American republics.[29] He spoke out repeatedly for diplomatic recognition of these states, asserting that the step would further not only U.S. commercial and manufacturing interests," but also an "infinitely more gratifying" cause: making the United States "the centre of a system which would constitute the rallying point of human freedom against all the despotism of the Old World." [30] This greater cause was something he would hold onto through the 1820s; the idealism coloring his rhetoric here found its way repeatedly into his later actions and writings as Secretary of State under John Quincy Adams.

If Clay was an early prophet of international republicanism, Adams was something of a late convert. As Secretary of State under James Monroe, Adams acted as a voice of caution, arguing that the United States should be a "well-wisher" to the republican cause, rather than an active ally.[31] In fact, some recent scholarship has asserted that his pre-presidency views on foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere were driven at least partly by an economic interest in the defense of slavery.[32] Nonetheless, in the early 1820s, Adams changed his stance towards a more direct embrace of the new American states. This was likely driven by both a desire to shore himself up politically against Clay, and by the hope of obtaining favorable economic and diplomatic relations with these new states.[33]

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[29] In fact, Clay's famous "American System" of domestic commercial unity was originally introduced as an international plan of commerce and alliance with the new Latin American republics. Fitz, *Sister Republics*, 178; Campbell, "American System."

[30] Henry Clay, "Speech on South American Independence." May 10, 1820 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 2*. ed. James F. Hopkins, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1961), 853-859. Quote on 857.

[31] Quoted in Poston, "Bolder Attitude," 301.

[32] Chambers, *No God But Gain*, 112-114.

[33] Specifically, both Clay and Adams looked towards running for president in 1824. See Fitz, *Sister Republics*, 188.

Whatever the reason, by 1825, Adams himself was President, and with Clay now his Secretary of State, the two pushed for much greater involvement in Latin America.[34] As Secretary of State, Clay probably continued to be the driving force behind the new administration's diplomatic outreach to South American republics, but Adams did speak out publicly in favor of greater involvement, and the pair's correspondence during Adams' presidency suggests they were largely on the same page in this period.[35]

V. Watts Goings-On: The Tenure of Beaufort Taylor Watts, 1825-1827

Like much of the Western Hemisphere, the Republic of Colombia was in a state of flux in the mid-1820s. By now, the new state had a constitution and an elected government, designed by "the Liberator" of Latin America, Simon Bolivar.[36] Bolivar also served as its head as chief executive, a position he had drafted with a life term. His Vice President was a key lieutenant, Francisco de Paula Santander, known as "the Man of the Laws" for his steadfast devotion to institutionalism and the rule of law.[37] However, as Gran Colombia began to feel growing pains, particularly with a revolt in Venezuela, Bolivar and Santander clashed mightily over the best way to lead the state. Bolivar favored a more military-driven, autocratic solution to the crises the nation faced, while Santander encouraged reform and the expansion of liberal institutions.[38] By late 1826, they essentially headed opposing factions within the Colombian political system.

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[34] Edel, "Monsters to Destroy," 216-7. The first test of this new push was getting Congress to send U.S. delegates to the Bolivar-organized Congress of Panama. It was in debates over this mission that Adams and Clay first encountered organized resistance to their Latin American goals, largely by pro-slavery politicians who were anxious about how a pan-American alliance might affect the institution. See Fitz, *Sister Republics*, 222, as well as Cayton's seminal "Debate over the Panama Congress."

[35] As Secretary of State, Clay also had far more direct engagement with U.S. envoys, and so this paper often looks to his correspondence as the voice of the Adams Administration.

[36] For domestic Colombian politics, this piece relies on Bushnell's *Making of Modern Colombia*. Here, see 52.

[37] Bushnell, *Modern Colombia*, 55.

[38] Bushnell, *Modern Colombia*, 63-64.

Bolivar's faction supported his militaristic and charismatic leadership, while Santander's supporters encouraged a more republican Colombia.[39]

Such was the rapidly changing situation in which U.S. envoy Beaufort T. Watts found himself upon his promotion to head of mission for Bogota. A South Carolinian, Watts began his career in Colombia as a secondary diplomatic officer, and was promoted to the chief role of Charge d'Affaires when his superior officer left to attend the Congress of Panama in 1825.[40] In both of his roles in Bogota, Watts appears to have made few waves until mid-1827, when he unwisely put himself directly in the thick of the partisan conflict between Bolivar and Santander.

Amidst the growing strife within Gran Colombia, President Bolivar tendered his resignation to the Colombian government in early 1827. In response to this turn of events, Watts wrote a strongly-worded letter to Bolivar, imploring him to return to the Colombian capital. Writing as "the representative of my country, of the Republic of Washington," Watts begged Bolivar to make a"speedy return to Bogota, that you may save your country. *Without your excellency all is lost.*" [41] Watts further added that, without Bolivar's presence, the new South American Republics would "relapse into their primitive state of obscurity." [42]

Paternalism towards Latin America aside, this was, of course, a glowing assessment of Bolivar coming from someone who claimed to speak for the United States.

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[39] Bushnell, *Modern Colombia*, 63-64.
[40] Henry Clay, "Appointments of Ministers to and Their Duties at the Congress of Panama," *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875*. American State Papers, House of Representatives, 19th Congress, 2nd Session. Foreign Relations: Volume 6, 555.
[41] Watts, Beaufort T., S. Cooley, and F. J. Maria Teguia. "U. S. Agents in Colombia and Peru," Niles' Weekly Register (1814-1837), Jan 12, 1828, 323. Reprinted from *Peruvian Mercury*, March 15, 1827. Emphasis original.
[42] Watts et al., "U.S. Agents in Colombia."

Based on Watts' later reasoning, the invitation may even have played a role in Bolivar's decision to rescind his resignation.[43] Although Watts later claimed that this letter was intended to be private, Bolivar saw that it found its way to the Peruvian news outlets.[44] Mass circulation quickly exposed two issues with Watts' letter. First, his effusive praise of Bolivar as the lone savior of Colombia would certainly be taken as a slight by Vice President Santander. Secondly, and more problematically for Watts, although he claimed to be the official mouthpiece of the United States, his assessment of the Colombian situation was far different than that of his superiors in Washington.

By June 1827, Watts had a firestorm on his hands. He wrote an impassioned defense of his actions to Henry Clay at the State Department, explaining that his goal had been to encourage Bolivar to unify the country at a time when Bolivar and Santander were in separate places, "issuing conflicting decrees, and paralysing the government." He believed that Bolivar alone, "as the individual who unites popular opinion [with] an unimpeachable integrity," could bring the country together and secure its institutions. Even as Watts dug in, however, he finally acknowledged the implications of his actions, noting that Vice President Santander was "highly incensed" and would reportedly "ask an explanation of my Government." Ultimately, he meekly reassured Clay that he had at least "pleased the President [Bolivar]," even if he had "unintentionally offended… Vice President [Santander]." He thus hoped that his actions might meet with Adams' "approbation." [45]

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[43] Beaufort T. Watts to Henry Clay, Bogota, no. 30, "Duplicate" in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 6*. ed. Mary W.M. Hargreaves and James F. Hopkins, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1981), 684-685.
[44] Watts later wrote Clay that he "had no idea that the letter could possibly have resulted in a dangerous imprudence, particularly as I intended it as a private appeal to the President at a moment of political peril." Beaufort T. Watts to Henry Clay, Bogota, no. 39, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 6*, 1269.
[45] Watts to Clay, Bogota, no. 30, 684-685.

If Watts thought Clay and Adams would accept his self-defense, he was deeply mistaken. Some two weeks later, the Secretary of State wrote to John Quincy Adams of "that most strange letter of Mr. Watts inviting Bolivar to return to Bogota." Clay posited that it was "worthy of consideration whether he ought not to be immediately recalled… Of Mr. Watts' incompetency I had before no doubt; and this new proof furnishes a just occasion to replace him by one more capable." Moreover, Clay suggested, allowing Watts to remain might be construed as a tacit U.S. endorsement of Bolivars' "designs" on Colombia. Clearly, Clay was not merely concerned with Watts' incompetence - he worried that that incompetence was working directly against his and Adams' vision for Colombia.[46]

No immediate response from Adams to Clay is available in the archive, but by August, the affair had blown wide open. Watts' letter and a string of responses from various U.S. and Latin American officials circulated in Peruvian and U.S. newspapers. At least one fellow U.S. diplomat, the envoy to Peru, quickly faulted Watts for taking sides in a domestic issue and for dubiously claiming to speak for the government.[47]

By the fall, Watts was proven right about one thing - Santander did request an explanation from the U.S. government. In October, at a state reception with the Colombian delegation, President Adams was asked about Watts' behavior. He wrote in his diary that the Colombian envoy "spoke of a complaint, which by order of the Vice-

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[46] Henry Clay to John Quincy Adams, July 2, 1827 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 6*, 737-738. Clay's allusions to Watts' past "incompetency" may refer to a series of accounting errors Watts seems to have made on the State Department bankroll. See Henry Clay to Beaufort T. Watts, September 10, 1825, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 4*, ed. James F. Hopkins, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), 634. The frustrations evidently continued even after the Bolivar incident; see Baring Brothers and Company to Henry Clay, August 4, 1827 and September 18, 1827, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 6*, 852 and 1052.

[47] This was James Cooley, published Aug. 14 in *Peruvian Mercury* and republished in Watts et al., "U.S. Agents in Colombia."

President, Santander, he had addressed to Mr. Clay" regarding Watts' letter." Adams responded "that that letter had been unauthorized, and was disapproved by me." Apparently, the envoy informed him that Clay had said the same thing, and thus the letter "had been attributed to indiscretion rather than any evil intention" by Santander's office.[48]

Even if Santander's staff were willing to mend fences with Watts, Clay and Adams evidently were not. Although it is not clear from existing records exactly when the order was delivered, Watts had been given notice of his recall from Bogota by November 1827. In a letter to Clay, Bolivar himself made note of Watts' imminent "departure" while emphasizing that the envoy enjoyed "high esteem and consideration" amongst Colombia's "most illustrious citizens."[49] At any rate, upon his return to the United States, Watts seems to have had one largely inconsequential meeting with Adams before departing for his next assignment. Presumably as a testament to Clay's confidence in him, he was dispatched to St. Petersburg, Russia as Secretary of Legation (the same secondary post he had started as in Bogota before his promotion).[50] At this point, he disappears almost entirely from both Clay's and Adams' writings, and largely from the historical record.

In December, Clay wrote of the situation to James Cooley, who was Charge d'Affaires in Peru, and presumably a more trustworthy lieutenant than Watts. Clay's

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[48] John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of his Diary from 1795-1848*, edited by Charles Francis Adams, Vol. VII. (J.B. Lippincott & Co: Philadelphia, 1875). Hein Online, 337-338.

[49] Simon Bolivar to Henry Clay, November 21, 1827 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 6*, 1298-1299. Interestingly, the letter only exists now as translated by Watts himself, without an extant copy of Bolivar's Spanish original.

[50] For meeting with Adams: *Memoirs*, 542. For St. Petersburg: Smith II, *America's Diplomats*, 232.

comments are noteworthy because, in addition to providing his thoughts to Cooley, the Secretary concluded his remarks by instructing Cooley to promptly and "informally" "make the Government of Peru acquainted with the substance of this despatch."[51] Thus, they provide an excellent view of exactly how Clay wanted to spin the Watts narrative, both inside the State Department, and to potential diplomatic allies like Peru.

Clay first noted that Watts' letter "was written without instructions, and gave great dissatisfaction to… President [Adams]." Most obviously, it was "a departure from that well established principle of avoiding all interference in the internal affairs of other countries, by which this Government has ever regulated its conduct." This, a breach of neutrality and interference in another country's domestic politics, was the general public line by which Clay and other U.S. officials distanced themselves from Watts. But his next assertion to Cooley was stronger: Watts' conduct and letter were especially "objectionable [for] indicating a confidence in the views and purposes of Genl. Bolivar which… President [Adams] regretted he was obliged not to feel."[52] Although Adams' and Clay's growing distaste for Bolivar may have been obvious to any trusted State Department insider, it was evidently not obvious to Beaufort T. Watts, and it is certainly noteworthy that Clay wanted to drop hints about it to the Peruvian government. Clay and Adams were becoming bolder in their diplomacy with Colombia, and the next two years would see even more active lobbying for their republican vision.

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[51] Henry Clay to James Cooley, December 18, 1827 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 6*, 1368-1369. Cooley had been the envoy defending the Adams Administration in the Peruvian papers after Watt's letter went public; see Watts et al., "U.S. Agents in Colombia."

[52] Clay to Cooley, December 18, 1827, 1368-1369.

VI. Send Lawyers, Guns, and Money:[53] General Harrison Abroad, 1828-1830

On New Year's Day, 1828, Henry Clay wrote to an old ally and fellow international republican, the Marquis de Lafayette, discussing the prospects for liberty in various places around the world. More candid with a friend than a diplomatic underling, Clay wrote critically about "the ambitious views of Bolivar," while expressing his "anxious hope" that republicans like Santander and President Lamar of Peru could get the Colombian President to give up "his splendid projects of power and empire," and instead work towards "the truer glory of establishing the Liberty as well as the Independence of his Country."[54] Clearly, Clay was becoming increasingly impatient with what he perceived as Bolivar's choice of self over state. Yet he expressed hope for the triumph of liberty in the end.

Perhaps Clay had reason for this optimism regarding Colombia's evolving situation, even beyond the developments in Peru. Having finally washed his hands of the Beaufort Watts affair, he had more latitude in Colombian diplomacy and could install someone he deemed "more capable."[55] His choice would be a fellow Westerner, Senator William Henry Harrison of Ohio. Unlike Watts, Harrison was already a figure of national stature, famous for his military victories in the War of 1812.[56] In particular, of course, he was known for routing Tecumseh's Shawnee Confederacy at the Battle of Tippecanoe, which earned him the moniker he would carry for the rest of his days. A

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[53] Warren Zevon, "Lawyers, Guns, and Money," track 9 on *Excitable Boy*. Asylum Records, 1978.
[54] Henry Clay to Marquis de Lafayette, January 1, 1828, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 7*, 1-3.
[55] Clay to Adams, July 2, 1827, 737.
[56] Harrison would be "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary" to Bogota, still the diplomatic head of mission but with a higher title than Watts had, commensurate with his greater status. For an explanation of early U.S. diplomatic ranks, see Smith II, *America's Diplomats*, 30.

rising figure on the national scene himself, Harrison had been an elector for Clay in the presidential contest of 1824.[57]

In addition to installing someone in whom he had more confidence, Clay now had the benefit of hindsight after the Watts crisis to help shape the contours of Colombian diplomacy going forward. This was evident in his instructions to Harrison regarding the latter's mission. Clay first noted that the mission was "one of great delicacy, and… high… importance" because of "the uncertainty of whether a constitutional Government, or a military despotism is existing" in Colombia. Accordingly, Clay deemed it "hardly necessary to say" that Harrison must "cautiously abstain from identifying [him]self with either of the contending parties" - a not-so-subtle dig at Watts. Even so, Harrison should feel free to speak of President Adams' hope that Colombia's political struggles "may terminate in the establishment of a constitutional Government, so as to secure her liberty, and advance her happiness and prosperity." Likewise, Harrison could, "on proper application, communicate freely and frankly the nature of our [U.S.] institutions, and their practical application." Clay and Adams were asking Harrison to thread a difficult needle: appear impartial in Colombia's politics, but simultaneously take any opportunity to proselytize about the virtues of republicanism, American-style.[58] The establishment of institutionalized "liberty," achieved through anything short of active partisan lobbying, was the clear U.S. priority in Colombia.

In fact, Clay sent that message himself two weeks later, in a letter to Simon Bolivar. Bolivar had written Clay a year earlier, thanking him for his early and staunch

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[57] William A. Taylor and Aubrey C. Taylor, collaborateur. *Ohio Statesmen and Annals of Progress, from the Year 1788 to the Year 1900.* (Columbus, Ohio: Press of the Westbote Co., 1899). Accessed through Hathitrust, p. 145.

[58] Henry Clay to William Henry Harrison, October 13, 1828, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 7*, 492-494.

support of the revolutionary cause against Spain, and Clay now took his response as an opportunity to remind the Colombian President why he and his countrymen had supported the revolution in the first place. The U.S. had hoped that, "Along with [South America's] independence, would be established free institutions, insuring all the blessings of civil liberty" - a development towards which they "still anxiously look[ed]." The rest of Clay's comments were similarly prescriptions couched in diplomatic niceties. Clay spoke of the dangers of a standing army, implicitly suggesting Bolivar should disband his. He also warned that, although many had hoped Bolivar could be a Washington-like figure for South America, Bolivar's "enemies" had recently attributed "ambitious designs" to him. While Clay insisted that he was personally "most unwilling to credit the unfavorable accounts," he encouraged Bolivar to "render a satisfactory explanation to Colombia, and to the world, of those parts of your public conduct which have excited any distrust." In the end, Clay told the Colombian president that he trusted he would choose "the true glory of our immortal Washington, [over] the ignoble fame of the destroyers of liberty."[59]

This was a bold letter to a powerful man, and Clay's veneer of flattery could scarcely veil his criticisms of Bolivar. True, the Secretary of State was not overtly politicking for one person or party over another, but he was offering completely unsolicited advice on how Bolivar should lead his own country, all in the service of "liberty." Clay made it very clear that the U.S. ambition for Colombia, and South America more broadly, was the establishment of liberty and strong institutions. Had republicanism not been his goal, Clay would not have risked offending Bolivar by

[59] Henry Clay to Simon Bolivar, October 27, 1828 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 7*, 517-518.

suggesting that he dissolve his army or mentioning the possibility of "ambitious designs."[60] The letter was the most direct statement yet on the Clay-Adams Colombian policy, and Bolivar's overt lack of response suggests that he did not take it well.[61]

Even as Clay escalated his efforts, political developments within the United States would soon drastically alter his and Adams' plans, for Colombia and elsewhere. Just days after Clay sent his letter to Bolivar, voting began in the 1828 U.S. presidential contest, a rematch between Adams and his rival, Andrew Jackson. Jackson had run on a platform both personally and ideologically opposed to Adams and went on to defeat the incumbent handily.[62] With only a few months left in their tenure, Adams' and Clay's ability to wield influence in Colombia was now likely at an end, at least for a while. It was in this environment that their new Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, William Henry Harrison, arrived in Colombia in December 1828.[63] Although Adams and Clay were now effectively lame ducks waiting for the transition to Jackson's presidency, Harrison would remain at his post somewhat longer, until Jackson could appoint a successor who received Congressional confirmation. Ultimately, he would lead the delegation until September 1829, and his time would prove quite eventful.

By Harrison's own account, he zealously set about advocating for republicanism in Colombia with an enthusiasm that he later admitted "might have led me often to trespass upon good manners." While Harrison suggested that his efforts amounted merely to "extolling the effects which our [U.S.] institutions had produced," the envoy

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[60] Clay to Bolivar, October 27, 1828, 518.
[61] It does not appear to have sat well at all with Bolivar. Harrison wrote Clay, over a year later, that Bolivar had received Clay's letter and had "no answer." William Henry Harrison to Henry Clay, April 11, 1830, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 191.
[62] Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 282-284.
[63] Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 3.

conceded that "it is probable that I might have carried this so far as to annoy my guests, by its too frequent recurrence."[64] Obviously, no one had suggested to Harrison that he offend anyone with his patriotism, but singing the praises of U.S. institutions in juxtaposition to Colombia's situation had been a specific part of Clay's instructions. Harrison was following the letter of his brief, if not as tactfully as his superiors might have preferred.

If Harrison rubbed many Colombians the wrong way in his time as envoy, he considerably upped the ante once out of office. Apparently inspired by a conversation with an old man in one of the Colombian towns he passed through, Harrison decided to write a letter to Bolivar after his official capacity as envoy had ended.[65] It was an attempt to wield his clout as a war hero and U.S. statesman to influence Bolivar to liberalize Colombia, but once again, Harrison's zealousness seems to have eclipsed his manners, likely reducing his appeal's effectiveness.

In the letter, Harrison drew an ugly picture of the situation as he saw it in Colombia, suggesting that the current government's rule rested on a lie: "It is presented, that [the Colombian people] had become enamored with… despotic measures, and so disgusted with the freedom they did enjoy, that they were more than willing to commit their destinies to the uncontrolled will of your Excellency." Such claims, Harrison asserted, would "gain no credit with the present generation or with posterity." He went on to speak of the political contest in Colombia, warning that the "real object" of one of

[64] Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 37. Quotes are in both text and Harrison's footnote.
[65] Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 43.

the competing factions (the one supporting Bolivar) was "nothing short of the establishment of a despotism."[66]

This direct address to Bolivar was far bolder even than Clay's, particularly considering it came from a relatively minor U.S. politician. Harrison not only prescribed solutions for Colombia to Bolivar, but suggested directly to the Liberator that he was fallible and was risking his own historical reputation to feed his ego. Unsurprisingly, the letter was not well received, and it was at this point that Harrison seems to have made the transition from rude American exceptionalist to enemy of the Colombian state.

Within days of sending the letter, Harrison was informed by the Colombian government that he was to leave the country immediately, and one of his companions was imprisoned.[67] Indignant at this treatment, Harrison refused to leave until the charges against him were clarified. In response, the Colombian government stated that Harrison had "shown himself to be constantly, and especially within a few days [after sending the letter to Bolivar], an enemy of the Liberator." They went on: "In his official notes, in the relations which he has formed, all with persons avowedly disaffected... and finally, in all his acts and conduct, [Harrison] has shown his enmity to the government near to which he was accredited."[68] On top of this, they accused Harrison of actively supporting an attempted coup against Bolivar's government!

Considering the magnitude of the charges, and Harrison's seeming inability to court goodwill amongst the Colombian elite, the immediate affair blew over fairly uneventfully. Harrison left Colombia with his entourage and embarked back to the

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[66] The full letter to Bolivar is published in Harrison's *Remarks,* pp. 44-53. Quotes from 46.
[67] Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 13.
[68] Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 22.

United States, publishing an account of his experiences upon his return.[69] Designed as a defense of his own conduct, he detailed each of the charges lobbied against him and protested his innocence. Obviously written with an eye towards campaigning, the account nonetheless offers a fascinating window into Tippecanoe's obstinance. Just as in his letter to Bolivar, Harrison comes across in his narrative as a man who accorded himself audaciously, even boorishly, in promotion of his republican beliefs.[70] Fortunately for him, he would prove much better at selling those beliefs in the United States than he had abroad.

Though Harrison wrote to Clay about the dramatic episode upon his return, Clay did not write back, and neither he nor Adams seem to have addressed the issue in any meaningful way.[71] True, they were out of office, but neither the former President nor the former Secretary of State would long remain private figures. Clay, in particular, believed he had a national future ahead of him, and was likely already looking forward to a rematch between himself and Jackson in 1832.[72] Given Clay's longtime personal interest in South America, and the fact that he continued to speak about any number of other political issues immediately after leaving office as Secretary of State, his silence on the Harrison controversy is somewhat intriguing.[73]

Two years earlier, Clay had worriedly written to Adams that silence on the Watts issue might be construed as a tacit endorsement of Watts' actions; it might be reasonable

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[69] Harrison, *Remarks of General Harrison*, 2.

[70] Harrison seems to have been more indifferent to his brashness than unaware of it. The first line of his letter to Bolivar proactively apologized for any "offence" the letter might give. *Remarks of General Harrison*, 44.

[71] Harrison to Clay, April 11, 1830, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 191.

[72] See Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 211.

[73] As evidence of Clay's continued political commentary, see, for example, his "Speech at Hagerstown, Maryland," March 20, 1829, in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 14-15.

to assess Clay's subsequent treatment of Harrison with the same logic. Most objective measures would indicate that Harrison failed extraordinarily in his time in Colombia, yet rather than being virtually banished to Siberia as his predecessor had, Harrison went on to become a leading figure, and two-time presidential nominee, in the party founded and led by Clay, the Whigs. The two had a complicated relationship, and ultimately a significant intra-party rivalry, but Clay never seemed to regard Harrison as a pariah the way he did Watts.[74]

Is it reasonable to accept Clay's and Adams' silence, and the eventual Whig alliance between Clay, Adams, and Harrison, as an endorsement of Harrison's actions in Colombia? Doubters could argue that, in the Age of Jackson, the Colombian moment had simply passed, and U.S. politicians were more occupied with domestic debates and matters in neighboring parts of North America. Even so, the historical record shows that Harrison's supporters actively stoked memories of his time in Colombia. They evidently saw his conduct in Bogota as an achievement more than an embarrassment, and in both cycles he stood as a presidential candidate, they published literature which lauded his "stern republican integrity" in the face of "military despotism." The letter which had caused a minor diplomatic crisis in Colombia was now proudly republished in the United States as "an elegant and vigorous" testament to "the principles of liberty."[75]

As time went on, and Harrison became a leading Whig spokesman alongside Clay and Adams, his triumphant narrative clearly won out. By 1840, the year he was elected president, supporters wrote of a man of "plain appearance and republican manners"

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[74] Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*. (Oxford: 1999). 125-127.

[75] All quotes in this paragraph from James Hall, *Memoir of the Public Services of William Henry Harrison*, 301.

whose letter to his "personal friend" Bolivar was "replete with wisdom, goodness, and patriotism."[76] If this rather whitewashed account of Harrison's time in Colombia elided many of the less savory details of the story, it was all the more effective at bolstering his image as a dutiful republican.

Ultimately, the fact that Harrison consistently framed his Colombian foray as a battle for republicanism explains why none of his former superiors saw fit to criticize his performance as envoy. The truth is, while Harrison's letter to Bolivar was certainly a breach of decorum, and was worded much more critically and directly than anything Clay or Adams wrote, it was ideologically aligned with Clay's and Adams' mission in Bogota. Harrison had followed their instructions, perhaps not very tactfully, but at least in a manner more ideologically satisfying than Watts had. Even if Tippecanoe had not acted effectively, he had still worked to advance the principles of liberty and republicanism which had been at the heart of the Adams-Clay Colombian policy.

VII. Conclusion: Tippecanoe (but not Beaufort Taylor, too)

Many scholars have speculated as to the motives driving U.S. foreign policy in this era. They offer any number of possibilities regarding Adams' and Clay's goals, most of them less noble than trying to espouse republican virtue. Yet the record seems quite clear when one examines the evidence regarding Gran Colombia. If Clay and Adams were primarily interested in securing trade agreements (a concern which did arise between Clay and envoys to other South American countries), they would have been wise to sidle up to whoever was in power in Colombia, rather than passively-aggressively critique Bolivar. Likewise, if they were most interested in securing power in the region,

[76] S.J. Burr, *The Life and Times of William Henry Harrison*, 255-256.

alienating the most popular man in South America would not have been a wise strategy. Nor does slavery appear as a consideration in their diplomatic strategy with Colombia. What does appear is a significant effort at the highest levels of U.S. diplomacy to support an ideological agenda that Clay and Adams both spent the better parts of their respective careers advocating for, at home and abroad: what Clay referred to as "the cause of human liberty."[77]

In the end, Adams and Clay clearly prioritized their ideological preferences for liberty and constitutionalism over their relationship with Bolivar. This is evident in their choice of envoys, their instructions to those envoys, and in their private correspondence. It is even evident in their correspondence with Bolivar himself. At every opportunity, and with increasing audacity over time, Adams and Clay attempted to assert their diplomatic sway to advance the development of constitutional republicanism in Colombia.

Consider the diplomatic record again, in brief. The Adams Administration, at the advice of Clay, removed Beaufort Watts from his post because they were unhappy that he had alienated the republican faction in Colombia, at the same time that he had ingratiated himself with Bolivar. If Clay and Adams had merely cared about advancing U.S. influence in the region, or gaining favored commercial status with Colombia, they might have persisted in courting Bolivar, a man who was still by all accounts immensely popular.[78] Instead, they removed the diplomat who had gained Bolivar's favor because

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[77] Clay to Bolivar, October 27, 1828, 518.

[78] Bolivar's popularity arises in numerous primary sources, including Harrison's *Remarks*. See also Bushnell, *Modern Colombia*.

they were worried that allowing him to remain would send a tacit signal of support to the Liberator.

In Watts' place, Clay and Adams sent Harrison, a trusted ally, with specific instructions to proselytize for republicanism, and Clay sent his own personal appeal to Bolivar to liberalize Colombia. Both of these acts came closer to burning bridges than building them. Clay and Adams likely did not expect Harrison to act as bombastically as he did, but the envoy was essentially fulfilling the letter of the mission which he had been given, even as he boldly criticized Bolivar's excesses. If they had wanted someone to play nice with Bolivar, they could have kept Watts at his post. Instead, Clay and Harrison both antagonized Bolivar for being insufficiently liberal.

The ideological emphasis which Adams and Clay placed on their diplomacy in South America makes further sense when one considers their political trajectories over the next two decades. Their project of liberty and republicanism in Colombia aligns with their later work as leaders of the Whig Party in their own country - an organization formed to oppose the perceived executive excesses of Jackson's presidency, and one that favored constitutional rule of law, legislative supremacy, and republicanism.[79] That Harrison was able to return from his scandal abroad, parlay it into his political persona, and himself become the first Whig President, suggests that he had acted in accordance with Clay's and Adams' ideology.

[79] For the beliefs of the Whigs, see Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*, (University of Chicago: 1979). For the party's formation, see Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*.

VIII. Epilogue: The Election of 1832

As time marched on, one other key player in the U.S.-Colombian drama also kept it on his mind: Francisco de Paula Santander, "the Man of Laws." In the spring of 1832, he was seeking the leadership of New Granada at the same time his old ally Henry Clay was running for President of the United States. Santander wrote Clay a pair of warm letters wishing him success in attaining "the premier position" in his country, and hoping that Clay would continue to be an "advocate of independence, liberty, and order in all the new American states." [80] He further hoped that his own election in New Granada would allow him to work towards his longtime goal: "the strengthening of liberal Institutions."[81]

This correspondence between Santander and Clay indicates more than mere diplomatic courtesy; it represents what Santander conceived of as a mutual commitment to push for the expansion of republicanism and liberalism across the Western Hemisphere. When Clay and Adams had controlled U.S. foreign policy, they could not actively side with Santander against Bolivar. Nonetheless, in their correspondence and choice of envoys, they had consistently supported Santander's republican agenda. Santander's continued support of Clay several years later is a testament to that fact, and an affirmation that he, Clay, and Adams had shared a diplomatic goal: "the consolidation of liberty" in the republics of the New World.

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[80] Franciso de Paula Santander to Henry Clay, April 10, 1832 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 490.
[81] Santander to Clay, June 4, 1832 in *Papers of Henry Clay, Vol. 8*, 490.

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