

EIRFeature

Time to bury the dead culture of the Confederacy

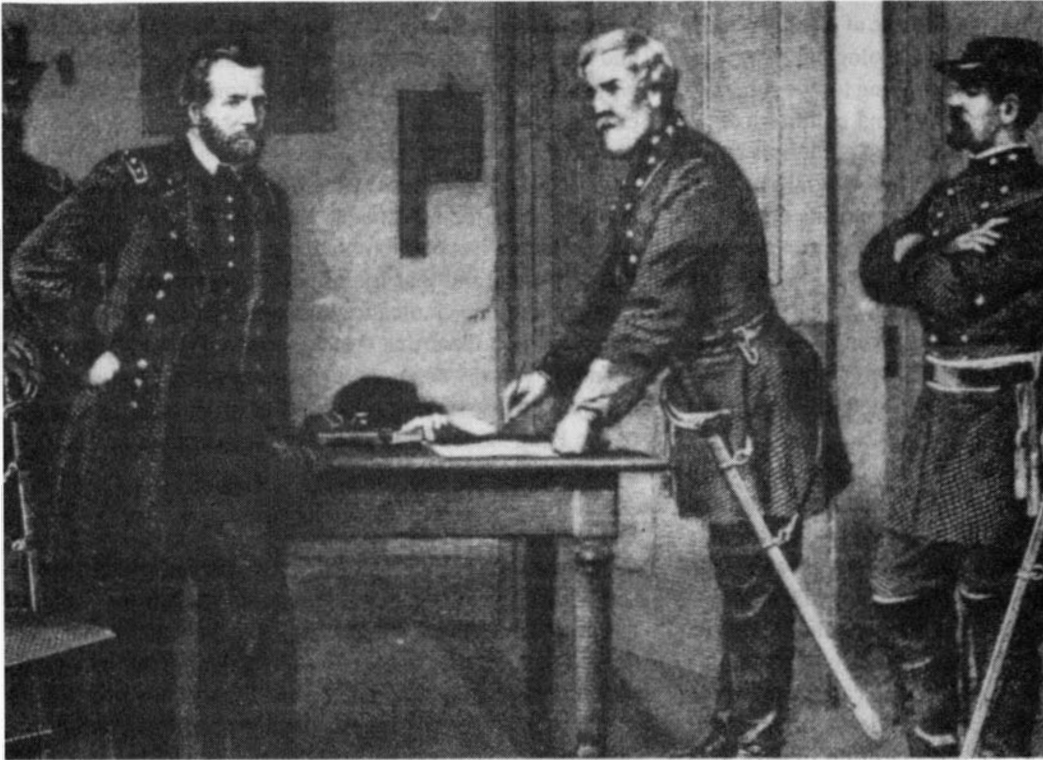
by Frederic W. Henderson

With the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox and the collapse of the Confederate States of America 127 years ago in 1865, the doctrines of free trade, slavery, and secession had been defeated militarily on the bloodiest battlefields in American history. The very economic and political policies that had ensured that military victory, reestablishing a national commitment to the American System of the nation's founders, as opposed to the destructive free trade policies of the British System of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Parson Thomas Malthus, also firmly established the basis for their defeat politically.

By the turn of the century, however, that had all changed. America finally became captive to the very doctrines against which the great war of 1861-65 had been fought. By 1914, the United States, with the First World War, and in its aftermath the postwar Versailles agreement, had become the resolute partner of Great Britain in enforcing throughout the world the very policies that it as a nation had been created to oppose.

Today, the last remnants of the bankrupt Versailles system are collapsing. Quite possibly, its most destructive legacy is that the world has lived with a British lie for 150 years. With the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement, that lie is about to visit a terrible revenge upon the nation, by bringing back slavery in a new form.

Americans urgently need to recover the true history of the War of Secession of 1860-65, and the period that followed it. In no other way can we as a nation explain how we have abandoned the commitments of the nation's founders, embodied in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution; realized in the administration of George Washington through the national bank and "internal improvements" policies associated with Alexander Hamilton; carried on through the policies of the John Adams presidency; last explicitly manifested, before the Civil War, in the 1824 administration of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay; and firmly reasserted to save the nation in the wartime policies of the Lincoln presidency.



Robert E. Lee (right) surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant on April 27, 1865 at Appomattox, Virginia, as depicted in an old engraving.

In no other way can we explain, by the turn of the century, the triumph of the obscenely pro-British outlook of Theodore Roosevelt (President 1901-8), and the even more pernicious policies and worldview of Woodrow Wilson, who followed him to the White House in 1912-20.

Wilson is the embodiment of this evil inversion of national ideals. He was the President who engineered the United States' entry into World War I on behalf of the British, and who consolidated the Anglo-American alliance at Versailles. Wilson was the first southerner elected to the presidency following the Civil War; he recorded in his diary that such was the greatest honor that could be bestowed upon a man, save having been born into the British aristocracy. Under Wilson, the unconstitutional Federal Reserve System was established, flanked by the twin national policing agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service. Wilson reflected the view, albeit in a more refined form, that had been the foundation of the South before the secession crisis.

In this sense, Americans have lived with 150 years of the British lie that something other than the fundamental struggle between republicanism and oligarchy was the core of the battle between North and South that erupted into war in 1861. The Confederacy was nothing more than a British critter, enslaved to British oligarchical economic, political, cultural, and social doctrines. Its "war for independence" was a British-inspired attempt to split the one bulwark of republicanism in the world into an impotent set of petty satraps, easily

subjugated to British interests. As I have developed in other published locations, the American South of 1860 was a society based on British free-trade economic doctrines and practice; slavery and the other manifestations of its economic backwardness were *imposed* on the region by an insanely destructive opposition to the economic doctrines that had developed the rest of the nation.¹

The southern economy had become almost exclusively a slave-based agricultural one, dependent on British markets to sell its cash crops of cotton and some rice, totally indebted to British or British-allied finance, and dependent on outside sources for food imports and consumer and capital goods. Close to 80-90% of all land in the slave states was owned by 2-3% of the people—the 350,000 slaveholders in a population of 11 million. Of these, no more than 100,000 owed two-thirds of all land and 90% of the enslaved black population of 4 million. The bulk of the remaining whites were either landless or eked out a living on tiny farms on the poorest land. What little industry existed, was rudimentary and primitive. Almost none of the extensive mineral and natural resources in these southern states was developed or harnessed.

The South's political institutions paralleled the slaveholders' economic views, paying homage to the aristocratic, oligarchical traditions of the old world, particularly Great Britain's.

The American System

The institution of slavery was central to what was viewed

as a uniquely southern mission: the defense of an oligarchical worldview viscerally opposed to technological progress. Southerners justified their actions by arguing for the superiority of their political, economic, social, and cultural institutions. The so-called popular culture of the South, thus created, was the clearest expression of this, and it would be from here that the most insidious and damaging of its effects on its own people, and on the nation as a whole, after the war, would spring. Just as such "culture" would be the basis in 1861 to mobilize for war a region in which the vast majority of people were brutally oppressed by its institutions, so today the legacy of such ideas has been used to pervert most Americans' sense of national purpose into a course of national suicide.

The nature of this culture and its genesis can only really be grasped from the standpoint of what it was concocted and deployed to destroy. Although few Americans know this today, it was well understood even by ordinary citizens a century ago that the United States had developed a new system of political-economy which had the potential to put an end to slavery in all of its forms, *permanently*; and that this new system was the antithesis to the British capitalism which turned human beings into mere commodities. Communism, the crazed theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, was merely the radical extension of the British dog-eat-dog capitalist system.

According to classical capitalism, as defined by the British school, the supreme goal on Earth is to increase wealth and power continually through exploiting natural resources and subordinating labor to capital and money. In the Marxian system, the workers constitute themselves as a class and overthrow their masters, take possession of the means of production—and proceed to pitilessly exploit both labor and workers. The foreign policy extension of predatory English capitalism, has always been called "free trade."

Henry Charles Carey, the Irish-descended author of *The Harmony of Interests*, was the principal theorist of the American System. He loathed the British capitalist system as a social disease to be fought and conquered. Contrary to the British view, he saw that what is specifically *human* in man, what sets him above the beasts, is what keeps him from exploiting others and from being exploited by them. Man's greatest source of strength, the very guarantee of his liberty and his power over nature, Carey argued, lies in his association with his fellow men to form a society (in the words of the federal Constitution, "a more perfect Union") with other human beings for the purpose of producing enough nourishment for all and a greater common happiness. The ultimate purpose of all human effort, according to Carey, was not just the accumulation of the things of this world, but a higher civilization: "the production of the being known as Man capable of the highest aspiration." This characteristically *American* ideal was put into practice in the United States most particularly through the policy of setting protective tariffs to

protect infant industries from predatory foreign competition; and the policy of "internal improvements," such as waterways and highways which facilitated commerce in the broadest sense.

Carey wrote of the national "mission" of the United States, "To substitute true Christianity for the detestable system known as the Malthusian, it is needed that we prove to the world that it is population that makes the food come from the rich soils, and that food tends to increase more rapidly than population, vindicating the policy of God to man." He was making it clear that this American System of political-economy was the coherent application to civil society of the teaching of Jesus: that divine love (*agapē*, or in the English of the King James Bible, *charity*) is the ruling principle of the universe.

Who was 'Godless'?

It was thus an outrageous perversion that the American southerners were organized around an irrational belief that the creation of the Confederacy and its "war for independence," the defense of what was actually a Spartan society, was divinely ordained. The motto *Deo Vindice* or "God's Vengeance" inscribed on the great seal of the Confederate States of America was not accidental. The Confederate Congress selected this epigram "to express the religious sentiments of the nation," in which the anti-Christian notion of *revenge* replaced that of Christian charity. Indeed, southern "Christianity" with its delusions of being a Chosen People, was far closer to the Old Testament notions of retributive justice and the Islamic *jihad* of conversion by military conquest, than to the teachings of Christ which had explicitly overturned those aspects of the "old law" designed to regulate a tribal society.

Hence, the Confederacy's "religious sentiments" were the American equivalent of the "holy war" of Khomeini's Iran a century later, when a Fountain of Blood in Teheran celebrated the sacrificial victims, including tens of thousands of children, whose lives were crushed in a fanatical war. A similar religious justification for state action became during the war a central aspect of southern life. In dozens of national days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer declared by Jefferson Davis, and in officially sponsored "revival" meetings within the Confederate Army, these notions were cultivated and spread. A sampling of the views espoused by both southern political and religious leaders gives one a sense of this. "To shed such blood, as we have spilled in this contest, for the mere name of independence, for the vanity or the pride of having a separate national existence would be unjustifiable before God and man. We must have higher aims than these. . . . All nations have their assigned missions. A nation should not be a dead abstraction, signifying only the aggregation of individuals, instead it possesses a unity of life . . . analogous to the powers of will in a single mind. It stands in definite moral relations."

This rhetoric, voiced in an 1861 Fast Day sermon, was widespread throughout the South, as was the belief in what that mission was. As the *Christian Observer* noted in 1862, "The Confederacy will be the Lord's peculiar people. It will be the nation to do his work upon earth." A similar view was expressed by a Greensboro, South Carolina minister, "A pure Christianity is wrapped up in this revolution, and Providence is using the South for the grand work of its preservation and extension." And as Alexander Sinclair, a Methodist leader from South Carolina, asserted, "I have heard men in their ignorance attribute our national disorders to the influence of Puritan doctrines. Egregious error! The doctrines of the original Puritans were, and are, the doctrines of the Bible. . . . But the descendants of the Puritans have gone astray from the creed of their forefathers [sic]. Confederate independence will establish the South 'like a city set upon a hill' to fulfill her God given mission to exalt in civilization and Christianity the nations of the earth. . . . The time has arrived when the claims of moral and political duty are so indissolubly connected, that they cannot be considered apart."

Given the nature of southern society, particularly its reliance on human slavery, and the principles against which it was in revolt, religious justifications for this "holy mission" would inevitably be directed against an "unholy" North. The Biblical imagery used in the following sermon from a southern minister, was one with widespread use throughout the Confederacy: "David broke off from the first Israel under the reign of the house of Saul. . . . Davis broke off from the second Kingdom of Israel under the reign of her first King, A. Lincoln, and established the second Kingdom of Jerusalem." Similarly, the following section from Jeremiah 1 was quoted frequently, often with a sense of the Biblical prophecy implied by the war and its expected outcome: "Then the Lord said unto me, out of the North an evil shall break forth upon the inhabitants of the land, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee."

This involved more than a people naturally seeking a higher justification for their actions. Some historians or social historians have attempted to dismiss it in this fashion, along with arguing that in other ways the South's view of itself and its "mission" sprang from a common tradition that existed, both geographically and historically, throughout all of the American nation. As one historian has put it: "National politics were intimately tied to religion in what one scholar of the revolutionary era has called a 'convergence of millennial and republican thought.' The Confederacy self-consciously portrayed itself as the fulfillment of this legacy."

However, this was in no way the case. The architects of southern secession bolstered their justifications for southern actions not just with attacks on the North, but with a specific repudiation of everything "northern," of all that represented the republican tradition upon which America had been built. What was being created was the notion of Southern Supremacy, pivoted on African slavery.



Alexander H. Stevens, the Confederacy's first vice president, proclaimed in 1861 that the founding fathers had erred in believing that slavery was wrong.

Slavery and the southern mission

"Slavery is central to not only our spiritual but our national life."—Pastoral letter of the Bishops of the Southern Episcopal Church

"Negro Slavery is the South, and the South is Negro Slavery."—A Georgia editor in 1860

"Slavery and the cause must rise or fall together, for they are identical."—*Mobile Register*

"Now what are we fighting for? We are fighting for the idea of race."—*Daily Richmond Enquirer*

"Our Ideal is a *Pro Slavery Republic*."—Augusta, Georgia *Daily Constitutionalist*

"This struggle has set the seal of providence before the eyes of the world upon domestic slavery. Above all, it is this that lends an awful sacredness to this contest on our part—that the rightful claims of Jehovah are deeply involved."—William A. Hall, in a lecture entitled "The Historical Significance of the Southern Revolution"

"We do not place our cause upon its highest level until we grasp the idea that God has made us guardians and champions of a people whom he is preparing for his own purposes and against whom the whole world is banded."—Episcopal Bishop Stephen Elliot, "Our Cause in Harmony with the Purposes of God in Jesus Christ," a sermon given in Savannah, Georgia in 1862

These quotes from a variety of southern religious and political leaders and major southern editors make clear the

central position of black slavery in this “southern mission.” Southern racism extended the oligarchical notion of blood and breeding beyond color, to view southern whites who were not of the planter class, and northerners, of no matter what wealth and class, as inferior beings.

Among the sins in the eyes of southern leaders, for which the war was serving as a punishment, was the corrupting influence of northern life, and, particularly, its influence over the federal government. To many southerners, and emphasized by southern religious leaders, failure to observe the Sabbath was “one of the sins which has, in a measure, come down to us by entail from the federal government.” As Episcopal Bishop Stephen Elliot, one of the most prominent of the southern clergy, described it, “There is no instance upon record of such rapid moral deterioration of a nation as has taken place in ours in the last forty years.” The antidote was secession and war as “purification, separation from the pollutions of decaying northern society, that monstrous mass of moral disease,” as the *Mobile Evening News* described it. As Bishop Elliot argued, to reject northern industrial development, with the manufactures and the scientific and technological advances that were central to it, and to “strive to bring back the purer days of the republic, when honest merit waited like Cincinnatus at his plow, to be called forth for service,” was the objective of the Confederacy.

This turned the intentions of the founding fathers upside down. The first President, the Virginian George Washington, despite his own preference for agriculture, saw the development of manufactures as the only means to overcome the evil of slavery. It was not simply what southerners thought about what the nation was becoming that alarmed them; the very principles on which the nation was founded needed to be rejected. There was also a curious symmetry between this southern “purist” ideology and that of the radical abolitionists in the North around William Lloyd Garrison, who advocated the dis-union of the United States, so that the nation would no longer be tainted with the sin of southern slavery!

Numerous southern political and religious leaders argued that the Confederacy was being founded upon a purer basis. Contrasting the federal Constitution with that of the Confederacy, they compared the invocation of God in their own and judged that of the founding fathers a “Godless instrument.” The Preamble of the Confederate Constitution struck out the words “in order to form a more perfect Union,” contained in the 1787 federal Constitution of the United States, to substitute the phrase, “each State acting in its sovereign and independent character, in order to form a permanent federal government.” It then sealed the crime of secession by blasphemously adding: “invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God.”

“May it not be that God is now punishing this nation for this practical atheism and national neglect and not by organic law, legislation, and in a public manner acknowledging His supremacy?” sanctimoniously asked one southern religious

leader. James Henley Thornwell, a leader of the Southern Presbyterian Church, argued that the problem with the U.S. Constitution was that it endeavored “to make the people a God.” The error that underlay most of America’s sins was the development of doctrines that, as Rev. Calvin Wiley put it, “glorify man, and as a natural consequence, discredit God.”

“It is imperative to talk less of the rights of the people and more of the rights of God,” Methodist Bishop George Foster Pierce admonished the Georgia General Assembly.

What these southern ideologues ignored, in their towering hypocrisy, was the fact that the framers of the Constitution of the United States were primarily concerned to dis-establish the Church of England, the religious enforcement arm of the British Empire.

By restoring the vengeful God of the Old Testament as the pillar of their Constitution, the *status quo* of an oligarchical ruling elite was strengthened, with the approval of both the state and the church. Not just the cause of “southern rights” and the state ostensibly created to defend them, but African slavery, and the free trade-based, feudal agrarian economic system which bred slavery, were given divine justification. The “divine right” to rule of Europe’s aristocracy, had become “divinely” ordained Southern Supremacy.

Flowing from the British doctrines of “free trade” would be both political doctrines based on a logically parallel oligarchical outlook, and cultural and social practices that reflected this same irrationalist world view. Religious beliefs would develop as a negation of the concept of *imago viva Dei*, or man in the living image of God, which is the Christian core of the republican outlook planted on the North American continent with the American Revolution. Similarly, the cultural outlook of the South by the late 1850s would reflect and reinforce these same notions and the economic, political, and social practice which it was concocted to justify.

Romanticism

“There can be no question that the suppositious Line of Mason and Dixon separated two people as dissimilar in thought and feeling, in habit and in need, as were the Saxons and the knights of Rollo the Norman.”—Thomas Cooper De Leon

De Leon—the protégé and namesake of the freemasonic prophet of radical “states rights,” universal slavery, and secession, Thomas Cooper—would on another occasion describe the fundamental difference between Americans of the North and South as that of southerners, in whom “the Norman blood of Kings and Nobility flowed,” subjected to the oppression of northerners “descended from Saxon slaves and peasants.” While the whole of the United States was the target of the cultural warfare of England and the rest of Europe’s oligarchy in the first 50 years of its existence, no portion of the American people was so infected by the debilitating doctrines of the Enlightenment and Romanticism as the

South. A small handful of American historians has noted the effects of such ideas on the creation of a cult of southern "chivalry," yet none has understood that such was in fact a cult of irrationalism.

While Americans both North and South read the works of Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron, the emerging planter aristocracy of the American South lived, breathed, and worshiped at the altar of such lunacy. The most widely read writers in the South between 1830 and 1860 were Scott, Byron, Bulwer-Lytton, and Thomas Carlyle, the English writers who glorified the pre-industrial past before the advent of the nation-state and painted the portrait of an idyllic age of chivalric innocence which had never existed in reality. Drugged with this heady potion, the southern planter class viewed themselves as the natural descendants of what they came to view as the "best" of their imagined Anglo-Norman antecedents. For them the Ossian myth of the continuity of King Arthur and his Round Table would be resuscitated in the cultural outlook and social structure of southern "chivalry."

The chivalric romances whose spell had scrambled the brains of Cervantes' fictional hero Don Quixote a few centuries before, were revived to spread pornographic infantilism throughout a class idled by economic backwardness—with a power only rivaled by the hypnotic omnipresence of today's

television soap opera.

To understand how deeply rooted and pervasive such notions were, one need only look at what Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia did after its crushing defeat at Gettysburg. Less than a week after it was nearly destroyed in Lee's insanely "chivalric" effort to dislodge the Union forces with Pickett's Charge, the Army of Northern Virginia would be "entertained" on its return to Virginia by a full-scale jousting tournament provided by Stuart's cavalry—ordered by Lee to lift the morale of his shattered army—and complete with a full-blown mobilization of the local planter aristocracy to view Stuart's gallant "knights of the Confederacy." Such events occurred frequently throughout the whole of the South in the decade before the war, and even in wartime. Stuart almost lost his cavalry at Brandy Station in a surprise attack by Union forces that caught him and the better part of his officers at a gala ball organized by the local gentry.

Simms and the 'border novel'

The pervasiveness of these deranged flights from reality can best be seen by examining one example: the work of William Gilmore Simms, the South's most prolific, and without question most influential writer, after the untimely death of Edgar Allan Poe. Between 1833, with the publication of

Confederate Constitution upheld free trade, slavery

The so-called Confederate States of America was a political institution established to guarantee, as its two most important "rights," human chattel slavery and British free trade. This can be seen from the two clauses in its founding instrument that differ most radically from the Constitution of the United States (emphasis added):

"Article 1, Sec 8: The Congress shall have power—
(1) To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, for revenue necessary to pay the debts, provide for the common defence, and carry on the Government of the Confederate States; but no bounties shall be granted from the treasury; *nor shall any duties or taxes on importations from foreign nations be laid to promote or foster any branch of industry*; and all duties imposed and excises shall be uniform throughout the Confederate States. . . .

"(3) To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes; but *neither this, nor any other clause contained in the Constitution shall be construed to delegate the power to Congress to appropriate money for any internal improvement*

intended to facilitate commerce; except for the purpose of furnishing lights, beacons, and buoys, and other aids to navigation upon the coasts and the improvement of harbors, and removing of obstructions in river navigation, and in all which cases, such duties shall be laid on the navigation facilitated thereby, as may be necessary to pay the costs and expenses."

While the Confederate Constitution guaranteed the right of human bondage, it also barred any State or Territory, as well as the Confederate government, from passing any law that would allow for its eventual abolition:

"Article 1, Section 9. (3) No bill of attainder, or *ex post facto* law, or law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed."

That the South's "peculiar institution" was of more importance than the much-vaunted principle of "state sovereignty" or "states' rights" was clear from the clause which established an internal fugitive slave law:

"Article 4, Section 2. (3) No slave or other person held to service or labor in any State or Territory of the Confederate States, under the laws thereof, escaping or unlawfully carried into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such slave belongs, or to whom such service or labor may be due."

his first novel *Martin Faber*, and his death in 1870, Simms wrote what today fills 83 volumes. Most known for his several dozen novels, he also wrote poetry, five biographies, a history of South Carolina, various works on the war and its aftermath, and literary criticism; edited the writings and speeches of James Hammond; and was editor of a series of southern literary journals from 1842 to 1860.

The reigning academic view today of Simms as a sort of southern James Fenimore Cooper—whose work his resembles only in a superficial similarity of thematic material—is buncombe. Cooper belonged to a circle of writers, which included Edgar Allan Poe, who represented a patriotic republican outlook in early American literature, flanking the American System of political-economy as fostered by Franklin, Hamilton, and Carey. Their efforts to create an American national literature were sharply opposed to the crippling influence of Romantics like Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, and Carlyle, whose writings Poe so brilliantly satirized.

Simms's most popular works, and those he considered his most important, were his historical romances, particularly those dealing with the western frontier, his "border novels." Following the example of Walter Scott, Simms sought to develop a highly romanticized view of the Revolutionary War, and with it the character of "unique" southern culture.

Simms saw the "civilization" of the western frontier from the vantage point of a southern expansionist. The western frontier was to be pushed forward for a slave-based system, not for a republic based on the expansion of human freedom through building infrastructure and applying new labor-saving inventions to solve economic problems. His two most popular border romances, *Richard Hurdis, A Tale of Alabama* and *Border Beagles, A Tale of Mississippi*, were based on the life of John Murrell, the son of a prominent planter family, who made his name as the leader of a gang of outlaws and slave-stealers. Presenting a highly romantic view of the western frontier, the two novels are probably the first works in American literature to glorify the "wild west." The Simms frontier was the arena for the fiercely independent individualist at war with both the forces of nature and the constraints of civilization. Less politely stated, it was the raving irrationalist's war against reason in the form of both the lawfulness of nature, and the rule of law in civilization.

The later western exploits of Theodore Roosevelt find a striking echo in Simms's "frontier" works. However, while Teddy Roosevelt's demented view of the frontier was remarkably similar to that of Simms's hero Richard Hurdis, by the 1890s this criminal mentality would no longer be confined to outlaws, slave-stealers, or horse thieves: It was the creed of America's imperialist elite. While in the 1850s, Simms became a fanatical supporter of a perpetual and expansionist system of slave-based feudalism, by the 1890s, Roosevelt, and many more like him, advanced an imperialistic Anglo-American alliance, or as Roosevelt called it, an alliance of "the English-speaking peoples," to guarantee their global

hegemony for British imperial policy—i.e., the spread of slavery under new names.

Simms, in both his fiction and "historical" works, attacked the outlook of the American System faction headed in political life by Whig Party leader Henry Clay and in economic thought by Henry Carey. Even though he, like other Andrew Jackson Democrats, was an outspoken foe of nullification in South Carolina in 1832—when the state attempted to nullify a federal tariff law—Simms was just as irrationally opposed as the nullifiers were, to the protectionist measures to foster industrial development which would have changed the South economically and resolved the crisis. In 1839 he described himself as "a states' rights man, opposed to tariffs, banks, internal improvements, American Systems, Fancy Rail Roads, Floats, Land Companies and similar humbugs. I believe in the people and prefer trusting their impulses, than the craft, the cupidity and the selfishness of trades and Whiggery."

Revolution for southern barons

Simms's novels of the American Revolution, particularly *The Sword and the Distaff*, later retitled *Woodcraft*, were intended as the South's most "eloquent" rebuttal to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the abolitionist novel. In it, Simms portrayed the "true" heroes of the fight for independence as the slaveholding planter class, the men of substance. His protagonist, Captain Porgy, is a leading member of Marion's partisan band, the quintessential rustic planter-aristocrat, supposedly loved by his black slaves and revered by his lesser white neighbors. Simms's Porgy is the feudal baron, to whom his slaves and poor white neighbors are vassals, to be mobilized to serve in time of war as in peace.

In Simms's twisted history of the war in South Carolina, such would be the patriots; while foreigners (in this he included northern emigrants to the South), poor whites, and refugees from Spanish-controlled Florida were the Tories who continued to support Great Britain. In *Woodcraft*, the revolution is perverted into a fight of an emergent American aristocracy for its rightful place as Englishmen within the British Empire—the noble, who demands his rightful relation to an overbearing king. Opposition to the British desire to exploit its American colonies by barring economic development and political freedom, is transformed into the mere protection of property; and in *Woodcraft* this in its most savage form, the right to property in other human beings.

It is not necessary to deny that such backward elements took part in the American struggle for independence; the fact that the U.S. Constitution permitted slavery is a sign of the compromises which were made with such men. Yet the leading statesmen of 1787 believed, as even the vice president of the Confederacy admitted in 1861, "that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically," and



The County Election, by George Caleb Bingham, 1851-52, depicts frontier politics in Missouri a few years before the Confederacy was created. Such western border areas were the battleground between the republican ideal of development through internal improvements, and the romantic "wild west" ideology of those who wanted to expand slavery into new territories.

“that somehow or other, in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent and pass away.” What Simms did, however, was to hoist the bestiality of these most pathetic participants in the war of independence, as a banner around which to rally a fight to the death against civilization and decency.

Thus for Simms, the pinnacle of British tyranny in the South, as expressed in *Woodcraft*, was the theft of the slaves of those planters, like Captain Porgy, to send them off to the West Indies. In the novel, the issue in the final battle in the independence struggle, the British withdrawal from Charleston, is to secure the wherewithal to reestablish the baronial life of an American nobleman. Hence Simms argued that the concept of the equality of all men in the Declaration of Independence was mere metaphor, intended by the founders as an expression of their belief in the equality of all Anglo-Saxons.

Such perverted views about the principles behind the American Revolution did not die a lawful death with the crushing of the Confederacy, any more than eugenics or “race hygiene” theories vanished after the World War II defeat of Nazism, which was the direct heir to the Confederate ideology. They simply took on new guises.

The future President Woodrow Wilson, in his biographies of George Washington and Robert E. Lee, written in the 1890s, would make Lee the reincarnation of Washington, and Washington the true English nobleman. It was not for

republicanism which Washington fought, but for the right of an English gentleman to be treated as such; and Lee had fought for the same principle. The inalienable rights of man were not, and had never been intended to be universal, but merely the rights of a ruling elite fit to exercise them. The federal union would be metamorphosed into something equatable with the tyranny of George III, and American liberty into the so-called birthright of every English nobleman. As Wilson argued, the fact that Washington was the commander-in-chief of American forces in 1776 was a geographical accident; if their family histories had been reversed, it could just as well have been Cornwallis to whom Washington surrendered British forces at Yorktown.

By 1850, even Simms’s Jacksonian brand of nationalism vanished, when he attempted to organize a “Young Carolina” movement, and became in the process a rabid regionalist, and radical “states’ rights,” pro-secession defender of southern feudalism. When William Walker, the most prominent southern expansionist (“filibustering” in the jargon of the day), was arrested in Central America in 1857, Simms wrote in protest: “Filibustering [sic] is the moral necessity of all Anglo-Norman breed. It is the necessity of all progressive races.”

Simms’s notion of race was common to most of the South Carolinian gentry, and by the time of the secession crisis of 1860, prevailed throughout the South. He viewed race as the preeminent force in history (as would Roosevelt, British

poetaster Thomas Carlyle, and later “liberals” such as Lord James Bryce). His writings harped on the idea that southerners were superior to northerners as a result of their Norman Cavalier ancestry, as opposed to the more plebeian roots of New England Roundheads.

Such “Norman” references, part of the standard litany of Southern Supremacy, although applied generically to “southerners,” never meant more than the tiny fraction of the white elites that controlled all of southern life, the pro-British landed gentry. Any honest appraisal of the realities of the region, particularly after 1840, must recognize that this southern, slave-holding, feudal class showed only marginally greater recognition of the humanity of poor southern whites, than of their black slaves.

Racialism reinforced—after the war!

However important the definition of race based on color was in the South before the war, it became even more so after slavery had been abolished with the defeat of the Confederacy. While before the war such distinctions were important for the justification of black slavery, they were of greater consequence for the manipulation needed to ensure control of the majority of the white population after the war. They were essential to rationalize the old political elite’s continued control of the South, and became the underpinning for the swindle called the “reconciliation” of North and South—the creation of an alliance with the pro-British financial oligarchy of New England and New York. It is no accident that such a notion of race was common to both southern “fire-brand” secessionists and northern “blueblood” abolitionists in the 1850s. Such extreme “southern nationalists” as Thomas Cooper, De Leon, William Yancy, and Albert Pike, and slavery’s most violent northern critics, such as Sen. Charles Sumner, William Lloyd Garrison, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and E.L. Godkin all agreed with the sentiments of Britain’s “enlightened” racist John Stuart Mill on questions of race and class.

After the war, the scribe of the “Lost Cause”—that glorification of the South’s ill-fated struggle and the Spartan, feudal society that it was designed to defend and perpetuate—Edward A. Pollard, expressed it as follows:

“If the South succeeds to the extent of securing the supremacy of the white man and the traditional liberties of the country, she really triumphs in the true cause of the war, with respect to all its fundamental and vital issues.

“What is that hope of the South to which we have referred? It is the hope of a new political conflict, in which the South will stand stronger than she ever did before; in which she will have occasion to repeat what were really the most important issues of the war; in which she will have the opportunity to regain her ‘Lost Cause.’ She may have to endure much before she reaches the threshold and fruition of this new controversy; but the conclusion is sure to her. This new cause—or rather the true question of the war revived—is the

supremacy of the white race, and along with it and strengthening it, the reassertion of our political traditions and the protection of our ancient fabrics of government. This was the ultimate, logical problem of the war, although the people of the South but dimly perceived it.

“The thoughtful historian of America will find that the obvious visible inferiority of the Negro was constantly, although unconsciously, educating the people of the South to a disregard of the mere artificial distinctions of society, by the side of this great natural difference of races—was, in fact, developing, by a process of comparison, the idea of equality as among men of the same race; and he may startle some convictions when he announces the important political discovery that the equality clause of the Declaration of Independence, so far from condemning Negro Slavery, was obtained from it, originated in its contact and experience! It is a startling declaration in our political history, a vivacious interjection; yet it is profoundly true. Mr. Jefferson’s doctrine of equality as of men of the same race was merely the transfer to the domain of politics of that law of natural history which teaches us that all *the members of a species are equal*. The varieties within the boundaries of a single species are of no account in comparison with the differences as between distinct species. The habitual observation of the South was as between two species or races of men; and there was an obvious mental necessity. It is thus that as people regarded this great natural distinction, they should attach less importance to those inferior distinctions made by society in mere classes and conditions of life, and thus progress to clearer perceptions of the natural equality of their own species and race. That the Negro Slavery of the South became the instructor of white republicanism; and that the inferiority of the Negro is to be recognized as a fruitful and conservative principle in our system of politics; and that we claim a value for this fact, which we suggested at the beginning of this article would exceed the ordinary estimates.

“We add another view of the importance of this fact. The permanent, natural inferiority of the Negro was the true and *only* defense of Slavery. The intelligence of the South has at last awakened to this idea in the stimulating light of the recent war and its consequences; but it is strange how in the past the Southern mind wandered in its defenses of Slavery, and chose the narrowest and most imperfect grounds for a controversy which it might have maintained on an impregnable principle of natural law. The question of races figured slightly in the accustomed debate and was thought to be scarcely more than a nice and curious philosophy. The argument *a posteriori* was preferred to that *a priori*. . . .

“The true question in Negro Slavery was that of right or wrong. It was all wrong, if the Negro was really the equivalent of the white man enveloped in a black skin. Admit this and Slavery becomes a great crime; the breach of the Constitution to attack it, a sacrifice of virtue and patriotism; the war to exterminate it, a rightful one; the consequent policy of

Negro equality, just; the gift of the suffrage, unavoidable; and even the rewards of the Negro above the white man and a superior solicitude for him, commendable in view of his deprivations and sufferings in the past. We cannot stop in the argument; it runs irresistably to every extremity of the governing Radical policy at Washington, and surrenders every question in the present political controversy. We must do—what the South has never, fairly done—meet the whole controversy at the minor premise, contending for the natural inferiority of the Negro. . . . The fact is important as a historical vindication of the past. It is also important as a supreme instruction for the future.”

The obnoxious view so “eloquently” expressed by Polard here had its roots in what was quite possibly the most significant scientific debate in American history, more than 15 years before. Springing from the British-created Romantic cultural environment were the first arguments for “Darwinist” and “Social Darwinist”-like theory in America, more than a decade before Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* was printed. In 1850, the publication of *The Types of Mankind*, co-authored by Josiah Nott and George Glidden, triggered a debate in the American scientific community, and beyond.

Nott, a student and co-thinker of Thomas Cooper at South Carolina College, was a leading pro-secessionist figure in Alabama, and an erstwhile “naturalist.” In conjunction with Glidden, and utilizing the “research” of America’s first race scientist, William Morton, a Philadelphia doctor, in *The Types of Mankind* he posed a unique argument for racial distinctions. While not exactly of the type of Darwin’s later argument, Nott and Glidden developed a “stronger species” line to assert that blacks were a distinct, and inferior, species or race from whites. The determination of species and genera is based on the nonsense category of “primordial organic forms,” which was deliberately made incomprehensible and arbitrary. Nott used this gibberish to support his argument for multiple and independent strains of human development; therefore numerous distinct species, rather than variety, of mankind, with inferior and superior gradations. Needless to say, Nott’s gradation of “species” of humans proceeded from “Caucasian” downward to “lesser developed” non-white races.

In response, John Bachman, a Charleston Lutheran minister and scientist, very cogently argued that such a standpoint was both unscientific and un-Christian. In his *The Unity of Man*, he argued that Nott and Glidden’s work was an explicit repudiation and attack on the scientific method developed in the study of living forms starting with the Swedish botanist Linnaeus (1707-78) and continuing through the von Humboldt brothers Alexander (1769-1859) and Wilhelm (1767-1835), an approach which traces its lineage back to the seventeenth-century universal thinker Gottfried Leibniz. Alexander von Humboldt in his concept of biological evolution, and Wilhelm von Humboldt in his studies of philology, had unfolded theories of harmonic development which excluded any idea of a competitive war between species. Point-

ing out that through the use of their conception of “primordial organic forms,” Nott and Glidden were attempting to displace a coherent methodology for determining the differences (or as he noted, more positively the unity) of species and genera, with unscientific and arbitrarily fixed criteria. Particularly, the uniquely human characteristics, possessed by no other animal lifeform—the cognitive ability to understand and change the universe of which human beings are a coherent part—were ruled out as a significant “criterion” for determinations of such similarity or difference, and man was reduced to the “primordial organic form” of ape-like Neanderthals. Moreover, Bachman argued, the simplest test—such as the fact that intermarriages between so-called different races of human beings are fully fertile—demolishes the fanciful Nott-Glidden theory that different colors of human beings belong to different species.

Bachman, in his defense of the coherence between science and Scripture, made it clear that the issue was not one of science versus religion, but rather the coherence of God’s creation, and its intelligibility to man. Unfortunately, a majority of the American scientific community embraced the bogus method advanced by Nott and Glidden. In the years after the War of Secession, the United States was flooded with the works of Darwin, and his co-thinkers, particularly the Social Darwinists Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer, came to prevail in social thinking.

It had been with similar ravings that over a million non-slaveholding southern whites were mobilized for war against their nation, the United States. Ideas that most of them would have never accepted only a decade before the war, now became the basis for an insurgent government. An ideology and a political, economic, and social system that most non-slaveholding southerners should have found repugnant prior to the war, had become hegemonic.

The United States had waged a war unprecedented in human history to eliminate these ideas, and the policies based on them. The issue following that war was to ensure that they would never be resurrected. To the extent that the doctrine of free trade, described accurately by Henry Carey as “the most gigantic system of slavery the world has yet seen,” is resisted, the tendency toward freedom grows; to the extent it is not, slavery, and the degradation of man, and with it the destruction of that which differentiates man from the beast, becomes the hallmark of a nation on its way to extinction.

Notes

1. Cf. F. W. Henderson, “Free Trade, the Confederacy, and the Political Economy of Slavery,” in *New Federalist*, Vol. V No. 36 (Nov. 11, 1991); *Treason in America*, by Anton Chaitkin (New York: New Benjamin Franklin House, 1985), and *The Civil War, America’s Second War against Britain, 1860-76*, by W. Allen Salisbury (New York: New Benjamin Franklin House, 1976).

2. *The Harmony of Interests: Agricultural, Manufacturing, and Commercial*, 1851, reprinted by Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1967. See also *EIR*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Jan. 3, 1992, p. 24.