

South Carolina in the Early American Republic: Lowcountry Planters'
International Republicanism and the French Revolution, 1789-1801

by

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South Carolina, a state, at one time, the most devoted to the French interest of any of the Union.

--Robert Goodloe Harper, Federalist Leader of the South Carolina Backcountry, November 1796

Abstract

South Carolina in the Early American Republic: Lowcountry Planters' International Republicanism and the French Revolution, 1789-1801 By Benoit Joseph Leridon

The thesis explores the reasons and chronology of the South Carolina elite's ideological support for Revolutionary France in the 1790s. Historians depict South Carolina as an anti-French Revolution conservative and Federalist state, contrasting to the other Southern States they deem more Jeffersonian. They also argue that the elite's supposedly adverse reaction to French revolutionary developments originated from their social and political conservativeness and their anxiety over how the examples of the French and Haitian Revolutions might endanger the state's plantation and political system. Furthermore, they contend that, by mid-1794, the little elite support that the French Revolution had first enjoyed was defunct. The thesis challenges this historiography. It argues that pro-French elite support, Jeffersonian and moderate Federalist alike, was prompted by the state's historical background and by its international republican ideology toward France; it also reveals that despite or partly because of planter anxiety over control over the plantation system and strong disquietude over French abolitionism and the Haitian Revolution, support for France occurred much more extensively and for a significantly longer time than hitherto advanced. From 1789 to 1795, this support for Revolutionary France was very prevalent in all state institutions: the government, the Society of the Cincinnati, Charleston's municipality and democratic-republican society, and local federal officials, largely consisted of and were controlled by elite supporters of the French Revolution. A significant political Francophilia remained significant even during and after the Hamiltonian hiatus of 1795-1797. The thesis also resolves the historiographical contradiction that portrays South Carolina in the 790s as an archconservative, anti-French Revolution, and Federalist state that, suddenly, and for no apparent reason, shifted in an incredibly short time to democratic-republicanism from 1799 onwards, elected Jefferson as President in 1800, altered the constitution to give universal suffrage to white men, in 1810, and became America's fiercest democratic-republican state until the Nullification Debates of the early 1830s, and beyond.

The thesis utilizes an extensive and varied range of primary sources, including many that historians of South Carolina never discussed. They comprise private and public correspondence, orations and pamphlets, administrative records, gazettes, and memoirs. The thesis explores the characteristics of South Carolina's pro-French elite Lowcountry culture and planters' reactions to national and international events connected to the French Revolution. Chapter One analyzes how colonial and revolutionary South Carolina developed a fertile ground for French support between its founding. in 1670, and 1789. Chapter Two examines pro-French support in the context of consensual politics in the United States and France after the 1791-1793 radicalization of American and French politics. Chapter Three explores elite reactions to the Neutrality Proclamation. Chapter Four investigates the elite's control of Charleston's democratic-republican society. Chapter Five studies responses to the Jay Treaty, Franco-American relations collapse, France's republicanism recantation, and the Haitian Revolution. In conclusion, the thesis finds that the South Carolina Lowcountry elite of the 1790s displayed significant and long-lasting pro-French Revolution sentiment.

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Abbreviations

AAE CC	Archives des Affaires Étrangères. Correspondence Consulaire. Etats-Unis. Chas. Tome 2.
AB	Aedanus Burke
AHR	American Historical Review
BPL	Boston Public Library
CCP	Charles Cotesworth Pinckney
FO	Founders Online
GP-LC	Genet Papers, Library of Congress
JRP-WL	John Rutledge Papers, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
LC	Library of Congress
LPB	Terry W. Lipscomb (ed.), <i>The Letters of Pierce Butler: 1790-1794: Nation-Building and Enterprise in the New American Republic</i> (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007)
PREPS	The Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesmen
PB	Pierce Butler
PBL	Pierce Butler Letter Book, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina
PBP-SCL	Pierce Butler Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina
PBP-PHL	Pierce Butler Papers (microfilm), Historical Society of Pennsylvania
PTJ	Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Jefferson Library, International Center for Jefferson Studies
RDL-UVA	Rotunda Digital Library, University of Virginia
RSP-BPL	Republican Society Papers, Boston Public Library
SCHM	The South Carolina Historical Magazine
SCL	South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina
SCG	South Carolina Gazette
SCHS	South Carolina Historical Society
SHC-WL	Southern History Collections, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
TP	Thomas Pinckney
TJP	Thomas Jefferson Papers
UVA	University of Virginia

Timeline of Dates and Events

1669	John Locke's South Carolina "Fundamental Constitutions" (in use until 1776)
1670s-1740s	Huguenot, English Republican, and Scottish Jacobite Immigration
1719	"South Carolina Revolution"
1773	Pierce Butler witnesses the Boston Massacre
1774	South Carolina: the first transatlantic state to elect Jewish people to public office
April 1775	South Carolina joins the American Revolutionary War
1776-1792	Alexander Moultrie, Attorney General of South Carolina
October 1777	Lafayette lands at the Huger Family plantation in Georgetown
1777-1782	South Carolina and French officers fight the British army side by side
1784	S.C. Society of the Cincinnati is founded (Pt: W. Moultrie; Vice-Pt: L. McIntosh)
1787-1795	Peter Freneau, brother of America's national poet, S.C. Secretary of State
1787	P. Butler, J. Rutledge, Chas. & C. C. Pinckney, at the constitutional convention
1787-1793	Thomas Pinckney and Charles Pinckney, successive Governors of South Carolina
1789	P. Butler, U.S. Senator (resigns 1796; reelected 1802; resigns 1805)
July 1789	French Revolution begins; Lafayette's prominent role until Sept. 1791 Jefferson and Lafayette write the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen
1789-1797	Young South Carolina Expatriates: Tom Rhett Smith, N. Cutting, W. Jackson, Chas., John, & Sarah Rutledge; Elizabeth & Chas. Pinckney; Tom & Sarah Butler
1790	S.C. removes religious restrictions for political office; Jewish planters elected
March 1791	Adams' <i>Discourse on Davila</i> , #33 strongly condemns the French Revolution; Pope condemns Civil Constitution of the Clergy: radicalization of political life in US, Fr.
May 1791	Thomas Paine's <i>Rights of Man</i> , in America, replied to, in June, by John Q. Adams [Publicola]: Jefferson and Madison's "final break" with Hamilton and Adams: pro and anti-administration factions start to transform into Federalists and Jeffersonians President Washington's visit to Charleston and Camden: grandiose celebrations.
June 1791	Attempted escape of Louis XVI from France: collapse of "consensual period." French revolutionaries divide into antagonistic and hostile ideological factions.

- July 1791 Lafayette's National Guard fires on republicans: First intra-revolutionary killings. Thomas Jefferson: employer and paymaster of P. Freneau's *National Gazette*.
- Aug/Sept "91 The Haitian Revolution erupts on Aug. 21st. First refugees settle in Charleston. General Assembly of the French at St. D. requests urgent aid from South Carolina. Hamilton and Knox send financial and military aid to St. D. planters against C. Pinckney's advice. New French constitution establishes a constitutional monarchy
- Nov. 1791 America attacks Native Americans but suffers disaster at "St. Clair's Defeat" Concern over Hamilton's purported plan to establish a standing, professional, army
- Dec. 1791 South Carolina Congress's plenary debate on the Haitian Revolution (on the 5th/6th.)
- April 1792 Start of French Revolutionary wars against European monarchies (until 1815)
- August 1792 T. Pinckney, ambassador to Britain; correspondence with W. Jackson in Paris Fall of the French monarchy and establishment of the Republic (22 September)
- Sept. 1792 American flag put in the French National Assembly, renamed "The Convention." Arrival of French Revolutionary Girondin consul, M.A.B. Mangourit, in Chas.
- Dec. 1792 William Moultrie elected South Carolina governor (until Dec. 17th, 1794)
- Jan. 1793 Execution of Louis XVI; Charleston celebrates French victory over Prussians
- Feb. 1793 The French Republic declares war on Great Britain
- April 1793 On the 8th, arrival of French ambassador to U.S.A, Edmond Genet, in Charleston: fetes and celebrations until the Eighteenth of April. Start of French privateering from Charleston (until early 1796) and plans to create a French sister republic in East Florida. Genet recruits American sailors and offers French commissions to officers
- April 1793 Neutrality Proclamation (on the 22nd of the month)
- May-July "93 Furor at Neutrality Proclamation climaxes: Massive protests in Philadelphia; Vice-Pt. Adam's mansion surrounded by angry crowds. Prosecutions of American captains of French privateers based in Charleston: Henfield, Hooper, Singleterry. Fall of the pro-American Girondins; beginning of Jacobin Terror (ends July 1794)
- Summer 1793 Foundation of the Republican Society of South Carolina (dissolves Spring 1795). Jefferson announces his intention to resign as U.S. Secretary of State. R. Beresford writes his first pamphlet on behalf of the French Revolution; French abolition of enslavement in St. Domingue, which is invaded by G.B. to assist royalist planters
- Nov. 1793 George Izard asks his father, Ralph Izard, for permission to enlist in the French Revolutionary Army; Izard refuses, seeing France as threat to SC plantation system
- Dec. 1793 S.C. prosecutions of Cincinnati members, Cpts. Hamilton, Drayton, & Tate, for pro-French activities; Secretary of State Jefferson steps down on the 31st

Feb. 1794	Abolition of enslavement in all French colonies
July 1794	Society of the Cincinnati oration of Dr. David Ramsay, Pt of the S.C. Senate Fall of Robespierre, and end of The Terror.
August 1794	20-yr-old Sarah Butler's French Rev. proselytism of brother Thomas, aged 16
Nov. 1794	F. Huger and Dr. Bollman attempt to rescue Lafayette from his Austrian prison
January 1795	Peter Freneau and Seth Paine buy the high-circulation Republican <i>City Gazette</i>
June 1795	Harriott and Elizabeth Pinckney, and Sarah Rutledge, soon joined by Ralph S. Izard, begin their education at the Paris school of Mme Campan (until June '96)
July 1795	Dr. Thomas Tudor Tucker, Cincinnati, delivers the Independence Day oration News of the Jay Treaty arrives at Charleston: orations and creation of committee
August 1795	Alice Izard, wife of S.C. anti-French leader, rejoices at a French victory over G.B.
1796	C. C. Pinckney's extended family in Paris; Mary Pinckney judges the French under their revolution to be the world's happiest people, except "rich Americans"!
1797	XYZ Affair: collapse of Franco-American relations.
May-Dec.'97	Richard Beresford's 2 nd and 3rd Pamphlets on behalf of the French revolution
Sept. 1797	France becomes de facto a military dictatorship (Revolution ends in Nov. 1799)
1798	Last expressions of support for the French Revolution by elite S. Carolinians
Dec. 1798	Gov. Chas. Pinckney regrets Sedition Acts; works for reconciliation with France
1798-99	Planter Isaac Sasportas plans Jamaica's enslaved-insurrection; G.B. hangs him
Dec. 1800	Jefferson congratulates Peter Freneau for his successful support and canvassing
1801	William Moultrie finishes his Memoirs and offers them to Pt. Thos. Jeff.
1804	French final defeat in St. Domingue, which becomes the Haitian Republic
1822	Denmark Vesey's enslaved rebellion planned on Bastille Day; T. Pinckney's pamphlet discusses the Haitian Revolution's impact on S.C.'s plantation system
1824	Lafayette made honorary member of the South Carolina Society of the Cincinnati
1840s/1850s	Charles Fraser & Ebenezer S. Thomas publish their memoirs of 1790s Charleston
1860s	Elizabeth K. Fludd publishes her memoirs mixed with a Legaré family biography
1914	Genet's grandson joins the French air force; becomes first WWI American casualty
2019	Ursula van der Leyen, direct descendent of pro-French Revolution South Carolina Lieutenant-Governor (1793-1795), James Ladson Sr., becomes E.U. President

Dramatis Personae

Richard Beresford, Philosopher, Literary Critic, Poet, Pamphleteer (1793-1798)
Aedanus Burke, State Judge (1778-1799), U.S. Representative (1789-1791)
Pierce Butler, U.S. Senator (1789-1796)
Sarah Butler, Ideologue and Proselytizer (1789-1795)
Robert Edwards, Charleston's Mayor (1795-1797)
Stephen Drayton, Cincinnati, Republican Society & Governor's Personal Secretary (1793-1795)
Peter Freneau, Secretary of State (1787-1795), Gazette Editor (1795-1808)
Christopher Gadsden, Cincinnati, Founder, Marine Anti-Britannic Society, Lt-Governor (1780-1782)
Alexander Gillon, Founder, Marine Anti-Britannic Society, Lt-Gov. (1789-1791), U.S. Rep. (1793-1795)
Thomas Hall, Cincinnati, Republican Society (1793-1795), Federal Clerk (1793-?)
John Hamilton, Cincinnati, Commander of the South Carolina Legion (1793-1794)
Isaac Bee Holmes, Cincinnati, Federal Customs Officer (1792-1794), Charleston's Mayor (1794-1795)
Isaac Huger, Vice-President of S.C. Society of the Cincinnati (1783-1797), Federal Marshal (1789-1794)
Thomas Lee, Cincinnati, Federal Judge ('92-97), Republican & French Patriotic Societies (1793-1795)
Charleston Mayors: John Huger (1792-1794), Isaac B. Holmes (1794-1795), John Edwards (1795-1797)
Lachlan McIntosh, Cincinnati, Republican Society (1793-1795); Son, Simon, in French Navy (1793-1794)
Alexander Moultrie, Cincinnati, President of the Republican Society (1793-1795)
William Moultrie, President of the S.C. Society of the Cincinnati (1783-1805), Governor (1793-1795)
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Cincinnati, American Ambassador in France (1796-1797)
Charles Pinckney, South Carolina Governor (1789-1793; 1797-1799; 1807-09); U.S. Senator (1799-1801)
Thomas Pinckney, Cincinnati, American Ambassador in London (1792-1796)
Isaac Prioleau, French Patriotic Society (1791-1795)
David Ramsay, Cincinnati, President of the Senate (1789-1797)
Charles Rutledge, Student (1790-95); John Rutledge Jr., S.C. Delegate, U.S. Representative (1795-1803)
John Rutledge Sr., S.C. Governor (1776-1782), U.S. Supreme Court Justice (1790-1791; Chief Just., 1795)
William Tate, Cincinnati, Commander, South Carolina Legion (1793-94), French Navy (1795-97)
Thomas Tudor Tucker, Cincinnati, U.S. Representative (1789-1793), U.S. Treasurer (1801-1828)

Introduction

“The cause of France, Americans consider as their own, as the cause of Mankind.”¹

“South Carolina, a state the most devoted to the French interest of any of the Union.”²

In June 1797, Thomas Jefferson, reminiscing on the political developments of the preceding five years, told Elbridge Gerry: “Our countrymen have divided themselves by strong affections to the French and the English.”³ With respect to this division, historiography has argued that, in the 1790s, the South Carolina elite sided with the pro-British Americans. This thesis argues differently. It presents a different picture by showing that, throughout the 1790s, pro-French Revolution international republican sentiment was extraordinarily strong and widespread among South Carolina planters. These planters were descended from European immigrants who settled the South Carolina Lowcountry, especially between 1670, the date of the British colony’s establishment, and the 1720s. Many of them came from the lower aristocracy or upper middling classes. They included many republicans who had fled Britain to escape the restored monarchy after 1660 and many Huguenots who had run away from French oppression after Louis XIV’s end of religious freedom with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1681. By the 1720s, these migrants had established themselves as the ruling elite of a society based on trade in enslaved people, plantation enslavement, and the lucrative transatlantic export of staples.

¹ Sarah Butler to Thomas Butler, 25/8/1794, in Lord Dunboyne (ed.), *When the States Were Young: A Remarkable Collection of Letters, 1784 – 1799* (United Kingdom: lulu.com, 2006), p. 209.

² Robert Goodloe Harper to Alexander Hamilton, 4/11/1796, FO.

³ Jefferson to Elbridge Gerry, 21/6/1797, TJP, vol. 29, pp. 448-449.

The South Carolina elite became fabulously wealthy from their export trade and lived lives of comfort while the enslaved people whom they controlled and who were the basis for their luxurious lives, toiled and suffered. Indeed, the South Carolina elite had immediately and overwhelmingly developed as planters from the time of the establishment of South Carolina as a colony in 1670. However, the colony's enslaved African Americans, the people that made possible the South Carolina elite's luxury, experienced a totally different situation. They lived lives of extreme toils, not only through the denial of their liberty as individuals and as a community but also due to their situation at the permanent mercy of cruel planters and overseers who had the egregious power of life and death over them and occasionally used their domination to torture or kill them.⁴ Rooted out of their African homelands and cruelly separated from their family members at slave auctions upon their arrival in the colony, they were forced to work in the Lowcountry's rice and indigo plantations or as domestic servants and artisans for people who predominantly considered them as property and were intent of inhumanely exploiting their labor through the most repressive measures.⁵

Consequently, enslaved African Americans, furious at their egregious enslaved conditions, and righteously detesting their oppressors, were continuously prepared to rebel for the sake of theirs and their families' freedom. They were fully conscious of their intrinsic power and agency,. Ryan

⁴ For examples of punishments of enslaved people, see Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 27-28.

⁵ For the political economy and commercial basis of the South Carolina plantation system in the colonial era, see S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011) and Huw David, *Trade, Politics, and Revolution: South Carolina and Britain's Atlantic Commerce, 1730-1790* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018).

A. Quintana and Daniel C. Littlefield have convincingly revealed that laborers could be found exercising significant responsibilities in “almost every conceivable manner” and in all places throughout the colony/state.⁶ The awareness of their power was augmented by their vast numerical superiority vis-à-vis European colonists in the Lowcountry parishes, and aware that the plantocracy was also occasionally violently challenged by backcountry’s small farmers and Charleston’s artisans, they seized the opportunities presented to revolt, such as occurred during the Stono Rebellion of 1739 and during the American Revolutionary War.⁷ Consequently, always conscious of the danger that the enslaved people posed to their hold on power and way of life, the South Carolina planters were deeply and permanently anxious of possible slave revolts.⁸ Therefore, it is within this context of deep anxiety at enslaved laborers’ agency and potential for revolt as well as their concern for their planter status, which they wished to defend and maintain at all costs, that the 1790s pro-French Revolution international republican elite would respond to the developments of Revolutionary France and domestic American politics.

Paradoxically, in parallel to this background of planter anxiety, the South Carolina elite also developed in a different, and ideologically distinct, way: Due to their revolutionary background

⁶ Ryan A. Quintana, *Making a Slave State: Political Developments in Early South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), pp. 49-50, 116-148. David C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton-Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1981), pp. 11, 14, 121.

⁷ For the enslaved people’s strong agency and desire for freedom, and the resulting terror felt by planters, see also Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (Boston: W. W. Norton, 1974), Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), and Woody Holton, *Black Americans in the American Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004).

⁸ Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, p. 20-21.

as descendants of English Republicans, Scottish Jacobites, and French Huguenots, South Carolina planters became significantly republican as part of their desire for political autonomy from Britain and as members of the cosmopolitan Enlightenment's transatlantic world. As such, many of them received education in the most prestigious British and French schools and universities and held positions of power in all the colony's and, after 1776, state's institutions, such as governors, colonial legislature delegates, and judges. At the earliest hour, they joined the American Revolution and the ensuing Revolutionary War, during which they suffered more than any other state elites, creating significant Anglophobia.

This thesis investigates the South Carolina Lowcountry elite's ideological support for the French Revolution during the Early Republic's Federalist Era of 1789 to 1801. In 1789, like their peers in other American states and the American national government, this elite needed to respond to the epochal world event that the French Revolution presented. Hitherto, historiography has contended that this response toward Revolutionary France had been extremely negative: South Carolina elite members, arch-conservative, and forced to be ideologically unified due to their terror at possible enslaved people's and small farmers'/artisans' rebellions, which could destroy their power, property, and lives, supported the American Federalist national government as a pillar for their safety and fiercely opposed the French Revolution which they saw as a terrible model that could be imitated by the oppressed people who wanted to overthrow their rule.⁹

⁹ For the contention that the South Carolina elite was, in the American South, the most overwhelmingly conservative and largely Hamiltonian Federalist in the 1790s, see George Rogers Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980) and, especially, Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760- 1808* (Columbia: University of Columbia Press,

However, this historiographical argument is contradicted by the views of the entirety of South Carolina Early Republic's political leaders, pamphleteers, and memorialists, whether anti-Administration and Republican or pro-Administration and Federalist, pro-French or anti-French Revolution, young or old, expatriate or America's resident, or hailing from the backcountry or the Lowcountry. Indeed, they universally affirmed that the elite as a whole was extremely supportive of the French Revolution. For example, the backcountry anti-French Hamiltonian Federalist leader, Robert Goodloe Harper, affirmed that "South Carolina [was the] state the most devoted to the French interest of any of the Union."¹⁰ This unanimous belief by people who witnessed or played an active or leading role in 1790s South Carolina or national politics should not be ignored as it has hitherto been by modern historiography. Therefore, this thesis remedies a major historiographical lacuna by analyzing the ideas and interpretations of these primary sources, as well as countless other leading actors of South Carolian political leader and their planter families. It argues that the above views on the extent of the elite's pro-French Revolution sentiment in the early republic were correct: It was overall extraordinarily strong, widespread, and long-lasting.

Indeed, the thesis reveals strong pro-French Revolution support among both the pro-administration and anti-administration elite, from 1789 to 1794, as well as among both moderate Federalists and Jeffersonians, in the latter 1790s. As shall be developed in Chapter One, by moderate Federalists, the thesis means those considering themselves as such, and who

1990). For a more nuanced view of the South Carolina elite, see Robert J. Alderson Jr., *This Bright Era of Happy Revolutions: French Consul Michel-Ange-Bernard Mangourit and International Revolution in Charleston, 1792-1794* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ Robert Goodloe Harper to Alexander Hamilton, 4/11/1796, FO.

supported Washington and Adams and, although disliking Alexander Hamilton's economic policies, still favored his emphasis on establishing a strong national state and his restricted view of popular sovereignty. By Jeffersonians, the thesis means those who considered themselves as such, or called themselves Republican, and who supported Jefferson's views more often than not, particularly his suspicions of Hamilton's policies regarding both his economic and political plans for America, and Jefferson's emphasis of a strong popular sovereignty. The thesis also argues that, alongside some prosaic ideological reasons for supporting France due to planter anxiety, there existed significant international republican causes for pro-French sentiment. This international republican pro-French Revolution feeling forms the topic of this thesis. It was very extensive between 1789 and 1796, reaching an apex from 1792 to 1795, decreased remarkably from 1796 onwards, but still remained considerable throughout the late 1790s and early 1800s. This elite's international republican pro-French sentiment occurred extensively in all South Carolina institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. Indeed, for most of the 1790s, the pro-French elite controlled the state government, the state Society of the Cincinnati, the Republican Society, Charleston's municipality, and local federal offices, including U.S. congressmen and senators, federal marshals, harbor customs officers, judges, and the Ambassadors to Britain and France.

The thesis discusses South Carolina Lowcountry planters' international republican support for Revolutionary France according to the theories of the late Eighteenth-century transatlantic

revolutionary world advanced by R.R. Palmer, Seth Cotlar, Philip Ziesche, and Janet Polasky.¹¹ Palmer argued that the Eighteenth-century transatlantic revolutions were interconnected through the common influence of the Enlightenment's idealistic principles. By comparing Europe and America from the 1750s to the 1800s, he revealed that transatlantic revolutionary movements formed part of "a general Eighteenth-century Revolution:"¹² They affected each other and were led by idealistic members of the wealthy or aristocratic classes who shared the common ideological goal of establishing constitutional monarchies and republics throughout the Atlantic world. He also explained that ideological continuity over time and space was an essential characteristic of these revolutionaries: Many revolutionaries, like Paine, Kosciusko, Lafayette, and Miranda, participated for decades in revolutions in both Europe and the Americas.¹³ Furthermore, of all revolutions, Palmer considered the French Revolution to have had the most significant impact due to its "radicalization" of revolutionary sentiment across the transatlantic world, including in the United States.¹⁴ He argued that the French Revolution became "an example to follow" and made people "inspired and enthusiastic for reforms."¹⁵ He also emphasized that, in America, the French Revolution revived hopes for renewed democratic reform among American international republicans who considered that the principles of the

¹¹ R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), Philip Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Patriots Americans in Paris in the Age of Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014) and Janet Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders: The Call of Liberty in the Atlantic World* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 2015).

¹² Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, p. 458..

¹³ Among Palmer's examples of ideologically constant international revolutionaries, he not only discussed Lafayette, Miranda, and Kosciusko, who all fought in America and their home countries, but Charleston's French consul, Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, who, after his revolutionary activities in America from 1792 to 1794, continued his international revolutionary activities in Italy, Greece, and Albania.

¹⁴ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, p. 468.

¹⁵ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, p. 468.

American Revolution had been significantly betrayed, first, at the constitutional convention and, then, by Washington's administration.¹⁶

For his part, Ziesche concurs with R. R. Palmer that American and French revolutionaries were linked in a unified transatlantic world. In his analysis of cosmopolitan Americans, such as Joel Barlow and Gouverneur Morris, who both lived in Paris during the French Revolution, he differentiates between Jeffersonian internationalists and Federalist nationalists. Like Palmer, he argues that Jeffersonians supported the French Revolution for idealistic reasons: They believed that "cosmopolitan solidarity" entailed "a moral obligation and an emotional attachment" to assist "fellow citizens of the world" fighting for "republican liberty" in "other nations founded on [the same republican] political principles."¹⁷ He also argues that Jeffersonian solidarity with France was based on the idea that human nature was universally the same and that the French deserved, and were capable of, republican government.¹⁸ Moreover, he suggests that the "memory" of French assistance during the Revolutionary War was vital in Jeffersonian support for France.¹⁹

However, Ziesche views the American Federalist's republican "ideology as diametrically opposite to [that of] Jeffersonians." In his opinion, whereas Republicans focused their hopes on the

¹⁶ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 760 ff.

¹⁷ Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Revolutionaries*, pp. 3, 6, 133.

¹⁸ Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Revolutionaries*, p. 133.

¹⁹ Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Revolutionaries*, p. 6.

advancement of republicanism across the world, Federalists concentrated on domestic nation-building. Considering international relations pragmatically, the latter endeavored to distance the United States from France and establish a rapprochement with Britain in order to make America a strong and respected international player.²⁰ He also argues that Federalists could not support the French Revolution because they considered the French nation incapable of assuming republican liberty: The French people did not have America's advantageous national character and geographical situation allowing the flourishing of republicanism; and, unlike Americans, they did not have any history of acting as participants in political process. Therefore, they believed that the American republican experiment was exceptional and could not be easily duplicated.²¹ The thesis builds upon these views advanced by Ziesche about the relations between cosmopolitan South Carolinians and the French Revolution and reveals how elite republican internationalism and nationalism informed the elite's different stances towards Revolutionary France.²²

Like Palmer and Ziesche, Janet Polasky analyzes international republicanism as a universal constant in the Atlantic World of the late Eighteenth-century. She vividly and lyrically examines this enthusiasm for "universal liberty" by extensively quoting from Enlightenment philosophers and transatlantic revolutionaries and exploring international participation in French revolutionary armies. She argues that elite revolutionaries "who had converted to the love of

²⁰ Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Revolutionaries*, pp. 3 et al.

²¹ Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Revolutionaries*, p. 8.

²² Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 68, mentions that half of the American students in Britain hailed from South Carolina.

liberty became enthusiastic over liberty abroad:"²³ Their revolutions were part of "an Atlantic Revolution broadly cast" which partook in "idealistic cosmopolitan [precepts] vibrant with universalism." In international salons and societies, revolutionary "freedom fighters" 'shared their dreams of a new world" and discussed French revolutionary developments" that would lead "the world to begin over again" as a "world of peace, civilization, and commerce."²⁴ Living in a Republic of Letters and unafraid of the people, they wrote pamphlets to spread revolutionary ideas intended to "flatter and inflame the lower orders."²⁵ The thesis includes Polasky's arguments as parameters for its analytical research. Following her example, it extensively quotes the South Carolina international elite's lyrical expressions of support for Revolutionary France.²⁶

For his part, in his study of Paineite international republicanism in 1790s America, Seth Cotlar asserts that the French Revolution radically altered American politics from consensual to conflictual. He agrees with François Furstenberg's assertion that "rarely in American history had a foreign nation and its people played such a significant role in the political life of the United States."²⁷ On the one hand, he affirms that the internal politics of the French Revolution terrified the Federalists who, therefore, found themselves at irreconcilable odds with the pro-French Jeffersonians since they feared Jacobin principles, especially those threatening private property

²³ Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders*, p. 4. She quotes Americanophile Condorcet as an example.

²⁴ Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders*, pp. 9, 23.

²⁵ Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders*, p. 11.

²⁶ For the impact of the French Revolution in 1790s Britain, see Marilyn Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1998); in 1790s Ireland and Scotland, and regarding English idealistic poets and philosophers (notably William Wordsworth and William Godwin), see Ulrich Broich (ed.), *Reactions to the French Revolution: the 1790s and their aftermath* (Berlin: LIT Verlag Munster, 2007).

²⁷ Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French*, p. 24. Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), pp. 172-173, et ali.

and advocating universal liberty and justice.²⁸ On the other hand, he suggests that Revolutionary France radicalized Jeffersonian republicanism toward greater liberalism and cosmopolitanism: Now, in addition to their traditional agrarian support for elite landed interest and for yeoman farmers, according to the precepts of the Enlightenment's Classical Republicanism, Jeffersonians also moved toward a concept of republicanism that more closely resembled French ideological principles, particularly on their emphasis of popular sovereignty.²⁹ Therefore, they supported a constant and active popular political participation which would not be restricted to the right to elect political representatives, but would influence governmental policy-making.³⁰ Consequently, the people's representatives were bound to decide state matters according to the precept of a continuously active Popular Will.³¹ Especially relevant to the thesis, Cotlar also presents the South Carolina planters David Ramsay and Pierce Butler as examples of members of the American elite idealistically swayed by French revolutionary principles.³² Furthermore, he argues that, in contrast to the nationalistic Hamiltonians, Jeffersonians were convinced that the American republic could not survive in isolation, but only through its commitment to the Enlightenment's international republican cosmopolitanism and the existence of other republics worldwide, especially in France.³³

²⁸ Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, pp. 1-3, 73, 89.

²⁹ Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, pp. 4-5, 70, 73-75, 89-93.

³⁰ Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, pp. 4-5, 70, 73-75, 89-93.

³¹ Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, pp. 4-5, 70, 73-75, 89-93.

³² Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, pp. 70, 172-173.

³³ Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, p. 75.

Furthermore, the thesis proceeds within the theoretical framework of Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick with regards to American national politics in the 1790s.³⁴ They argue that the control of the American national government, first, by Washington and Hamilton and, then, by John Adams, predicated the nature of Franco-American relations in the 1790s.³⁵ They suggest that domestic policy concerns primarily governed Federalist and Jeffersonian views about the French Revolution, and that Hamilton purposely caused the collapse of Franco-American amity.³⁶ They also argue that the Secretary of the Treasury was convinced that good Franco-American relations constituted a menace to be precluded at all costs as these relations undermined his plan to build a strong fiscal-military state and good relations with Britain. According to Elkins and McKittrick, Hamilton intended to duplicate Britain's political and socio-economic system by promoting good Americano-British commercial and foreign relations. The Secretary of the Treasury's plans also included the termination of the 1778 Franco-American alliance, an intention that made him, "logically," anti-French Revolution. Elkins and McKittrick also note that, as early as Fall 1792, Hamilton refused to continue reimbursing the American Revolutionary War loans to France, a policy they describe as 'self-interested,' and its justification as "dishonest." They also similarly interpret the Secretary of the Treasury's refusal that the American government and individuals assist France in its war with Britain.³⁷

³⁴ Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

³⁵ For simplicity, the thesis will describe Washington's, Hamilton's, and their supporters' views before 1791 as Federalist and those abiding by the precepts of Jefferson and Madison as Jeffersonian.

³⁶ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 258-262.

³⁷ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 258-262.

Furthermore, Elkins and McKittrick posit that the Jeffersonians were idealistic moralists and internationalist utopians who were gratefully attached to France due to its past services to America and its crucial role in the worldwide expansion of republicanism. They also argue that the Jeffersonians' conviction that Hamilton planned to transform America into a monarchy led them to consider France a crucial tool in the defense of American domestic republicanism through its Revolution's role as a forceful reminder of popular sovereignty.³⁸ The thesis builds on these theories: It identifies among South Carolina planters pro-French Revolution sentiments derived from idealism, international republicanism, and domestic political anxiety about Hamilton's policies.

In addition to referring to these theories about the Enlightenment's transatlantic international republicanism, the thesis also responds to modern historiography on South Carolina and the French Revolution. Rachel N. Klein contends that the 1790s South Carolina elite was so archconservative that it became anti-French Federalist through fear of the French Revolutionary concept of popular sovereignty; a concept that endangered the elite's oligarchical hold on political power.³⁹ She also asserts that South Carolina gentlemen were very alarmed by backcountry farmers' and Charleston artisans' calls for democratic reforms, especially their demand for equal franchise.⁴⁰ Moreover, she contend that the pro-French artisans' and small farmers' "Jacobin" celebrations terrorized the elite who feared they could ally with enslaved

³⁸ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 258-262.

³⁹ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 5-6, 218.

⁴⁰ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 2-3, 210-211, 234.

workers.⁴¹ To counter these threats, she argues that planters y expanded the plantation system to the backcountry to win over its Republican inhabitants and detach them from any possible amity with the Lowcountry's enslaved population.⁴²

Similarly, in his study of Charleston's 1792-1794 French consul, Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, Robert J. Alderson Jr. supports Klein's view that the South Carolina elite was conservative, Federalist, and inimical towards the French Revolution which it saw as posing a threat to the state's political and plantation system.⁴³ He also asserts that the South Carolina elite, which he considers to be Hamiltonian Federalist, controlled the South Carolina government and feared that the state's pro-French Republicans threatened Federalist power in South Carolina and America: "The South Carolina elite felt endangered by pro-French republicans [they considered a] danger to the republic [and] the wisdom of the constitution."⁴⁴ Indeed, like Klein, he argues that the Lowcountry elite did not abide by Jeffersonianism: Only the backcountry's small farmers and Charleston's urban artisans did so; thereby, they constituted a terrible menace similar to French Jacobins: "Rich planters could soon find their heads on the block: The radical sphere had taken [a] threatening turn to the Left."⁴⁵ Moreover, he suggests that the South Carolina elite became Hamiltonian Federalist because it was composed of "funding speculators made richer by Hamilton's financial policies."⁴⁶ He also surmises that they favored a strong and centralized

⁴¹ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, p. 6.

⁴² Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 6-7.

⁴³ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 175.

⁴⁴ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 136-138, 140.

⁴⁵ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p.8.

⁴⁶ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 76, 152.

national state: "The leadership of South Carolina hoped that their fellow citizens [would] strengthen the centralized republic which Hamilton and many other Federalists hoped to create."⁴⁷ Furthermore, he judges that the "south Carolina leadership" supported Britain because it viewed its former enemy as the "only barrier to the spread of [Jacobin] anarchism."⁴⁸

Klein and Alderson consider South Carolina Jeffersonians as forming a minuscule minority of maverick politicians standing outside, and in opposition to, the state government.⁴⁹ Whereas they both recognize interested motivations, Klein obdurately excludes all emotional, ideological, and idealistic reasons for elite support of Revolutionary France.⁵⁰ It was motivated by a desire for vengeance when overpassed in the attribution of diplomatic posts and personal inheritance as well as by jealousy toward the Society of Cincinnati.⁵¹ Furthermore, she argues that pro-French Jeffersonians did not ideologically differ from Federalists, but only implemented a different strategy by containing, as its leaders, the radical republican movement from the inside, and, therefore, preclude any significant political reform.⁵² Indeed, she asserts that both pro and anti-

⁴⁷ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 138.

⁴⁸ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 175.

⁴⁹ Klein, *Unification*, analyzes five Lowcountry Jeffersonians: Colonel A. Moultrie (S.C. Attorney-General, 1777-1792), Judge Aedanus Burke (U.S. Representative, 1789-1791), Governor C. Pinckney (S.C. Representative, 1792-1796), Commodore A. Gillon (U.S. Representative, 1793-1794), and Major [Brigadier-General] Pierce Butler, U.S. Senator (1789-1796; 1801-1803), the foremost French Revolution's advocate, along James Monroe, in the Federal Congress.

⁵⁰ Alderson's suggestion that Jeffersonians were partly motivated by self-interest is mostly based on Klein's views. See Alderson, *ibid.*, p. 47 note 27, and p. 83. For Alderson's views on Planters' idealism, see Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 36, where he argues that the Enlightenment created a "revolutionary tradition" among planters.

⁵¹ See Klein, *Unification.*, pp. 5-6, 193-5, 204, 207, 210-211, 213 note 15, 215-217, 234-235, for Federalists' motivation of self-interest; pp. 5-6, 193-197, 210-211, 215, 217, 234-235, for Jeffersonians' self-interest.

⁵² Klein, *Unification*, pp. 204, 214-215.

French Revolution factions “shared the same fundamental goal to reenforce their control over the state’s political and social systems.”⁵³

However, while confirming Klein’s and Alderson’s convincing argument about planter anxiety, the thesis contradicts their other historiographical views. As mentioned above, like 1790s and early 1800s South Carolina memorialists and historians, it argues that elite pro-French sentiment was extraordinarily strong and widespread for most of the 1790s. Despite or in addition to extreme anxiety about the plantation system, it originated from idealistic reasons, such as those caused by South Carolina’s international republican background, Franco-American officer interaction and gratitude to France for services rendered during the Revolutionary War, Anglophobia, the belief that good Franco-American relations, especially the 1778 Alliance, benefited the united States, the view that the French nation was capable of establishing a successful republican system, and the idea that France was the harbinger of the propagation of republicanism throughout Europe.

With regards to planter anxiety as a likely reason for its support of Revolutionary France, it must be importantly noted that it is only addressed for contextual purpose as, indeed, it is not part the of the thesis’s topic that only focuses on pro-French planters’ international republican and idealistic rhetoric and sentiment, not on their self-concerned materialistic and prosaic motivations. Yet, the thesis, on this point, concurs with Klein and Anderson that it is quite

⁵³ Klein, *Unification*, pp. 195-197, 215, 217-218.

possible, even highly likely, that pro-French planters' anxiety played a strong role in their support for Revolutionary France. As Klein argues, in addition to sincere and extensive international republican sentiment, pro-French planters might have, pro-French rhetoric to lead the small farmers' and artisans' Republican movement and, thereby, reinforce the plantation used system by separating this movement from enslaved people. Indeed, as mentioned above, Edmund Morgan and Francois Furstenberg argue that this planters' Machiavellian use of the rhetoric of liberty and equality had earlier occurred in Virginia and during the American Revolution.

In 1789, at the advent of the French Revolution, South Carolina planters were experiencing material prosperity since their thriving transatlantic commerce had allowed an economic recovery after the destruction of the American Revolutionary War.⁵⁴ Crops were handed over to factors in Charleston who arranged for their transportation and sale to Britain and, usually through British middlemen, to France and other northern European countries. On any day, a visitor to Charleston could see scores of vessels anchored off the city's port, reflecting the elite's cosmopolitanism and close connection with the northern transatlantic world. And as part of the transatlantic "Republic of Letters," where the epistolary art constituted an asset of great importance, they daily wrote to each other and their European counterparts.⁵⁵ By 1789, planters

⁵⁴ For South Carolina planters' wealth through their transatlantic commerce, see Huw David, *Trade, Politics, and Revolution: South Carolina and Britain's Atlantic Commerce, 1730-1790* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2018), pp. 70-72. David argues that planters rushed to restart the trade with Great Britain after 1783. See also, Aaron Benson, *Charleston merchants 1790 – 1819: The structure of a profession*, MA Thesis (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 2016), pp. 2, 6-7, and George Rogers Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (University of South Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 1-9. As middlemen, British traders resold much of the planters' goods to continental Europe (Rogers, *Charleston*, p. 10)..

⁵⁵ Rogers Jr., *Charleston*, pp. 1-10. For a discussion of the Republic of Letters and its most edifying example in 1790s America, see James Morton, *The Republic of Letters: The Correspondence of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*,

also lived in the state with the strongest French influence of any U.S. state. Five years after the start of the French Revolution, in an outburst of international republican proselytism, Sarah Butler, a 22-year-old elite South Carolina woman told Tom, her 16-year-old brother, a British public school student in Chelsea, London: “The cause of France, Americans consider as their own, as the cause of Mankind.”⁵⁶ Sarah was the daughter of the U.S. Senate pro-French Revolution leader, Pierce Butler, one of the Lowcountry’s wealthiest and most influential planters. Her observation to her sibling not only reflected her own personal views but also those of her father and a large portion of her pro-French elite peers. Indeed, by 1789, like Sarah, the South Carolina Lowcountry elite had been ideologically shaped by two overwhelming factors: Their status as slaveowners and members of the transatlantic Enlightenment. This dual tradition determined the ways pro-French planters would react to Revolutionary France.

Chapter One presents the 1670-1789 background for the 1790s South Carolina Lowcountry planters’ rhetoric of liberty and concomitant international republican support for Revolutionary France. On the one hand, as argued by some modern historians, liberty in southern planters’ view was rooted in their anxiety as slaveowners.⁵⁷ Planters employed a “liberal-political ideology” for

1776-1826 (New York: Norton Press, 1995). These planters identified as “planters,” a term that denoted allegiance to a specific social deportment and ethical values. For a definition of Eighteenth-century American gentility, see Tom Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries: Power and Justice in the New American Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 1-3.

⁵⁶ Sarah Butler to Thomas Butler, 25/8/1794, in Lord Dunboyne (ed.), *When the States Were Young: A Remarkable Collection of Letters, 1784 – 1799* (United Kingdom: lulu.com, 2006), p. 209.

⁵⁷ For South Carolina’s growth as plantation state, its enslaved people’s agency and permanent potential for revolt, the anxiety of planters, and their rhetoric associating liberty with the preservation of the plantation system, see Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (Boston: W. W. Norton, 1974), Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), Woody Holton, *Black*

their cynical and hypocritical purpose of bolstering the plantation system.⁵⁸ Indeed, they judged that their very liberty as a community and individuals pre-supposed perfect autonomy in the way they wielded power to keep enslaving people, and their autonomy had to be free from interference by any central authority such as British imperial officials, before 1783, or a prospective American national government, after 1787.⁵⁹ They also used a rhetoric of freedom to win over non-elite people, such as backcountry farmers and Charleston's artisans, to separate them from, and create a common front against, enslaved people who posed a permanent threat of revolt by their own agency and power. In other words, planters' rhetoric of liberty was significantly based on their anxiety as enslavers, and, in a most cynical, egocentric, and hypocritical way, did not include liberty for non-white people.

On the other hand, as modern historians also show, alongside their immense planter anxiety and their resultant cynical rhetoric of liberty, and like other southern planters and slaveholding national leaders, South Carolina planters had a long tradition of republicanism.⁶⁰ From 1670 to

Americans in the American Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: St. Martin's, 2004), and S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). For insights on 17th century Virginia that can be applied to colonial South Carolina, see Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975).

⁵⁸ Francois Furstenberg, "Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in the Early American Political Discourse," *Journal of American History* (March 2003): 1295-1330.

⁵⁹ Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, p. 26.

⁶⁰ For planter republican idealism among national leaders, including from South Carolina, see Jack N. Rakove, *James Madison and the Creation of the American Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), Peter S. Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2012), Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter S. Onuf, *"Most Blessed of the Patriarch: Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of Imagination"* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016), Tom Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries: Power and Justice in the New American Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), Andrew Shankman, *Original Intent: Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison and the American Founding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), Colleen Sheehan, *The Mind of James Madison: the Legacy of Classical Republicanism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

1789, with an extensive republican emigration from French Huguenots and English, Scottish, and Irish anti-monarchist former rebels, South Carolina grew not only as a slave colony but also de facto as a republican colony. Republicanism was also reinforced among South Carolina planters who were part of the Eighteenth-century cosmopolitan transatlantic world by the ideas of the Enlightenment and by their participation in the American Revolution and American Revolutionary War.⁶¹ Therefore, as they had already significantly done in the 1770s and 1780s, both these planter and republican traditions would conveniently coalesce in the 1790s to produce planters' rhetoric in support of Revolutionary France. Chapter One, therefore, shows both planter and republican traditions. It first analyzes South Carolina's growth as a plantation system as part of the British North American and the Caribbean worlds and the permanent anxiety of the colony/state's planters who felt threatened by both the people they enslaved and small farmers and artisans as well as British imperial authorities and the prospect of a national constitution and central government.⁶² Then, the chapter presents the colony/state's republican tradition by discussing its republican immigration, its de facto republican colonial constitution written by Locke, the father of modern liberalism, and republican politics, institutions, and reforms, from

⁶¹ For South Carolina planters' growth between 1670 and 1789 as a cosmopolitan transatlantic colony and state and de facto republic, with strong liberal principles towards whites, see Walter Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 1989), Paul Finkelman (ed.), *Towards a Usable Past: Liberty and the State Constitutions* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), James Haw, "Political Representation in South Carolina, 1669-1794: Evolution of a Lowcountry Tradition," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 103, no. 2 (April 2000), Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Ryan A. Quintana, *Making a Slave State: Political Developments in Early South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), and Paul Finkelman, "Jefferson and the Jews," Lecture at the Center of Jefferson Studies at Monticello, December 14th, 2023, at <https://www.monticello.org>.

⁶² For South Carolina as part of the Caribbean World, see Jack P. Greene, "Colonial South Carolina and the Caribbean Connection," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 88, no. 1 (January 1987): 192-210.

the 1670s through the so-called “1719 Revolution” to the American Revolution and the constitutional convention.

Chapter Two reveals how South Carolina’s plantation and republican background of the 1670-1789 period discussed in Chapter One morphed into international republican rhetorical support for France by a large segment of the Lowcountry elite between July 1789 and April 1793. During these four years preceding the Neutrality Proclamation in the United States and the Terror in Revolutionary France, many leaders of both countries were still maintaining, or still hoping to maintain consensual and non-partisan politics. Yet, as early as July 1789, some modern historians maintain that there already existed in South Carolina and the rest of the United States two broad political schools of thought, however fluid and unmorphed, the Anti-administration school that originated from the self-proclaimed anti-Federalists of the 1787 constitutional convention debates and, by summer 1791, was to some degree, joined by those who would become radical republicans and Jeffersonians; and the pro-Administration school of political thought from which those who became Jeffersonians would incrementally distance themselves after summer 1791.

Firstly, Chapter Two argues that Franco-American relations deteriorated soon after the onset of the French Revolution. After initially welcoming it, the United States government increasingly judged the French Revolution negatively, especially lamenting the fall of the monarchy, its ensuing anarchy and violence, King Louis XVI’s execution, and, eventually, Robespierre’s Jacobin

Terror.⁶³ Secondly, the Chapter also reveals that, even after the summer of 1791, when, as mentioned, political compromise and cooperation unraveled in the USA, to a large degree, and collapsed in France, to an extreme degree, the South Carolina pro-French international republican planters steadfastly remained supportive of Revolutionary France. Such support came from both self-proclaimed pro-Administration and anti-Administration leaders and elite members, including the leadership of the successive state administrations and the State Society of the Cincinnati.

Notably, international republican support for France remained constant even after the eruption of the Haitian Revolution in August 1791 and the arrival of planter refugees in the Lowcountry. Indeed, the slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue and its resultant and logical exacerbation of planter anxiety, which was already extreme, did not yet weaken international republican support for Revolutionary France by either pro-Administration or anti-Administration planters. On the contrary, despite their terror at possible slave revolts, planters, including the state governor, expressed the desire that the United States would not do anything to endanger Franco-American relations, which were seen as essentially beneficial for the American national interest. Indeed, between 1789 and April 1793, despite their anxiety as slaveowners, pro-French South Carolina Lowcountry supporters of both political factions constantly expressed their rhetorical support for the French Revolution from five major idealistic international republican reasons: Gratitude for

⁶³ The three preeminent analyses of the French Revolution, including the fall of the monarchy and its ensuing violence, consist of Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (London: Random House, 1989), William Doyle, *Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Henri Guillemin, *1789-1792/1792-1794: Les Deux Révolutions Françaises* (Paris: Utovie, 2013).

French assistance during the American Revolutionary War; fond remembrance of Franco-American amity and military cooperation during that war; solidarity between two sister-revolutions until August 1792 and, hence, between two sister-republics involved in a similar political and military, anti-monarchic and anti-aristocratic, struggle against domestic and foreign enemies; optimism in the French national capacity to establish a just, free, and stable political system; and the view that Revolutionary France constituted the model and the means by which all of Europe would become free and republican. Furthermore, it is quite likely that, in addition to these idealistic reasons for supporting France, anti-Administration leaders, overcome by anxiety at the precarious situation of their status as planters, which they could now see threatened by a too powerful national state which they already saw as interfering in state autonomy regarding the issues of debt and a national bank, used their international republican rhetoric of liberty in support of France as part of their fight against the American federal constitution and the central government which, as Anti-Federalists, they had fought as threatening South Carolina autonomy and plantation system.

Interestingly, although this thesis is not a comparison of South Carolina planters with any other group, all these reasons for the elite's strong support for Revolutionary France show that, as early as 1789, and until April 1793, as a whole, Lowcountry planters did not join many national leaders in criticizing or disliking the French Revolution. Indeed, the dislike of the French Revolution from nearly its onset by national leaders such as George Washington, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton, later joined by Gouverneur Morris and Henry Knox, had led to the sharp deterioration of Franco-American relations, especially after the fall of the monarchy in August 1792, the

ensuing anarchy and violence, and Louis XVI's execution in January 1793.⁶⁴ Conversely, in contrast to these national leaders, many among the South Carolina pro-French elite still viewed the ongoing French Revolutionary developments very positively.

April 1793 constituted a turning point in Franco-American relations when the American government, through its Neutrality Proclamation, officially declared it would refuse to assist France in its war with Britain. The proclamation prohibited American citizens' military aid to France, infuriating French Ambassador Edmund Genet. His attempt at abrogating American neutrality by appealing to the people and his infringements of neutrality caused, in late 1793, the United States to request his recall by France.⁶⁵ Chapter Three, by primarily analyzing the elite reactions to the Neutrality Proclamation, shows that French Revolution support did not decrease after April 1793: It remained strong not only despite Washington's declaration of American neutrality but despite, and perhaps because, the continuation of the Haitian Revolution, France's universal abolition of enslavement in St. Domingue and in all its other Caribbean plantation colonies in 1793/94, and the eruption of Robespierre's Jacobin Terror in summer 1793. In fact, South Carolina, with considerable support and even incitement of its pro-French elite members,

⁶⁴ The three preeminent analyses of the French Revolution, including the fall of the monarchy and its ensuing violence, consist of Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (London: Random House, 1989), William Doyle, *Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Henri Guillemin, *1789-1792/1792-1794: Les Deux Révolutions Françaises* (Paris: Utopie, 2013).

⁶⁵ For the "Affair Genet," see Elkins and McKittrick, pp. 330-353, who describe the secret letters and meetings of Genet and Jefferson, revealing a private Jefferson very different from his public persona, almost displaying him as a hypocrite. They argue that Jefferson, behind the back of Washington's administration, reassured Genet of American friendship with France and downplayed criticisms against him. See also Harry Ammon and Harold M. Hyman, *The Genet Mission* (London: Norton, 1973) and Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

became the United States” epicenter of French international republican rhetoric and sentiment, often translated in concrete ways to support France: The pro-French elite, including top leaders of the government, the Cincinnati, and Charleston’s *Republican Society of South Carolina*, as well as federal officials, denounced neutrality, defended their support for France, permitted Charleston to become the American base for French privateers, and backed plans for the establishment of an East Florida republic.

Furthermore, the Chapter will take as a premise the idea of “private or personal diplomacy,” which was widespread in the 1790s. Elkins and McKittrick describe how, unbeknown to the American national government, Jefferson, Edmund Randolph, and James Monroe betrayed governmental policies and undertook their own diplomacy with French ambassadors and governments.⁶⁶ Indeed, in her study of the 1790s political ethics in America, Joanne B. Freeman explains that planters did not consider “confidential trust” breaches to be “sinful,” as long as they believed that to do so was honorable and dutiful. She argues that the American elites considered the elite “code of honor” sacrosanct and associated it with patriotism and public duty.⁶⁷ Therefore, Chapter Three identifies cases of “personal diplomacy” among South Carolina planters, such as those of federal and state government officials respecting their correspondence and interactions with the French consul in Charleston and with French ambassador Genet.

⁶⁶ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 258-262.

⁶⁷ Joanne Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 136, 167.

By analyzing members of the South Carolina government and other planters who held federal and local political positions in the state, Chapter Three reveals widespread pro-French Revolution sentiment among the state elite: pro-French Revolution officials were not isolated cases but exercised control of the state government or were United States officials and wielded essential positions of power in the state legislature and the Charleston's city and harbor administrations. The Chapter also shows that members of the South Carolina Society of the Cincinnati were very pro-French or, rather, that the pro-French elite was practically all members of the Cincinnati. Therefore, contrary to Alderson and Alexander Moore's arguments, it demonstrates that South Carolina Cincinnati were neither uniformly conservative nor anti-French Revolution.⁶⁸

Chapter Four also reaches a different conclusion from those of Klein, Alderson, and the historian of the society, Eugene P. Link, about Charleston's *Republican Society of South Carolina*, one of the Democratic-Republican societies which Washington complained of and viewed as having been indirectly created by Genet and responsible for the Whiskey Rebellion. It argues that the

⁶⁸ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 58-60. Alexander Moore, *The Fabric of Liberty: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2021), pp. 204-205. Historiography judges the Society of the Cincinnati outside South Carolina as conservative and hostile to the French Revolution. Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, p. 72, calls them "quasi-aristocratic." Minor Myers Jr., *A History of the Society of the Cincinnati: Liberty without Anarchy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983) argues that they were monarchists. Markus Hünemörder, *The Society of the Cincinnati: Conspiracy and Distrust in Early America* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), emphasizes their conservative nature. Yet, he also acknowledges their secondary goal of amity with France. Sandra Moats, *Navigating Neutrality: Early American Governance in the Turbulent Atlantic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2021) argues their conservatism led them to support the federal government's refusal to help the French Revolution. Tom Shachtman, *How the French Saved America: Sailors, Soldiers, Diplomats, Louis XVI, and the Success of a Revolution* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 2017) and Julia Osman, "The Consequence of Yorktown: Merci France!" 24 July 2022, American Revolution Institute, Web, 10 August 2022, stress the amity between French and American veterans, who later shared the Cincinnati's secondary goal of Franco-American amity. Osman also argues that American veterans of the Revolutionary War were immensely grateful for the French military assistance during the war, which they saw as essential for achieving American independence.

Society's pro-French Revolution sentiment did not only come from its artisan and middling-class members, who formed a minority in its membership but from its elite members, who formed a majority and comprised its entire 24-member administration and all the signatories of its declarations and correspondence.⁶⁹ Therefore, the Chapter develops Matthew Schoenbachler's arguments on America's 1790s democratic-republican societies and, rather than just discussing their generic arguments and goals, it presents a case study of the South Carolina Republican Society, including an extensive prosopography of its members. Indeed, Chapter Four investigates whether Schoenbachler's suggestion that the democratic-republican societies were established and run by "republican ideals" and were controlled by "men of wealth and moderate standing" is also valid in the case of the South Carolina Society.⁷⁰ And it concludes that the Society was not only controlled by men of great wealth but also persons of most eminent social standing who sometimes stood at the very top of the Lowcountry society, government, and politics.⁷¹

Rachel N. Klein argues that pro-French Revolution elite members first turned against France due to their "fear and disgust at Jacobin violence and Robespierre's Terror;"⁷² and due to their realization that, in late 1793/early 1794, the French and Haitian Revolution became models that

⁶⁹ Klein, *Unification*, pp. 204-205. She also contends that the Republican Society aimed at overthrowing the planter elite. Eugene Perry Link, "The Democratic Societies of the Carolinas," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 18, no. 3 (July 1941), pp. 259-277. He recognizes four planters in the society but omits to discuss their control, along with two dozen other planters he is unaware of, of the society's administration. He also mistakenly labels them as from the backcountry, making the error, like Klein and Alderson, of identifying back-country political representation as evidence for backcountry identity. For a discussion of the democratic-republican societies, see also the introduction of Philip S. Foner (ed.), *The Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800: A Documentary History of Constitutions, Declarations, Addresses, and Toasts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976).

⁷⁰ Matthew Schoenbachler, "Republicanism in the Age of Democratic Revolution: The Democratic-Republican Societies of the 1790s," *The Journal of the Early Republic* (Summer 1998), p. 243.

⁷¹ Matthew Schoenbachler, "Republicanism in the Age of Democratic Revolution," pp. 241, 243.

⁷² Klein, *Unification*, pp. 203, 210-211, 227, 230.

might incite the state's enslaved people to rebel.⁷³ She also suggests that the French government's abolition of enslavement in St. Domingue in 1793, and universally in 1794, caused immense planter anxiety.⁷⁴ However, although it fully acknowledges planter anxiety, Chapter Five argues that French Jacobinism and Terror did not fragilize pro-French sentiments. It also challenges Klein's dates for turning supporters of the French Revolution into its antagonists: Rejecting the years of 1793 and 1794 for such shift, it concurs with primary sources, such as Ralph Izard, Thomas Pinckney, Peter Freneau, and "a free Black," as well as historians of the Haitian Revolution, such as David Geggus, Robin Blackburn, and Seymour Drescher, who affirm that pro-French planter anxiety, although extremely significant and pervasive, did not fragilize their support for the French Revolution prior to the late 1790s or early 1800s.⁷⁵

Furthermore, in addition to planters' anxiety, the Chapter, builds upon the arguments of Palmer regarding the Atlantic World, of Elkins and McKittrick, and Seth Cotlar, respecting American

⁷³ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 210-212-, 218, 221.

⁷⁴ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 2-3, 5-6, 210-212, 234. For French revolutionary abolitionism, see Jack Richard Censer and Lynn Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity Exploring the French Revolution* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2001). For a belief that the Haitian Revolution impacted the Southern states only after 1800, see David Geggus, *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001) and Robert Blackburn, "Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution, *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 4 (October 2006), pp. 643-674, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master-Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slave-Holders' Worldview* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 11-68. As we shall later see, all these historians concur that planter anxiety did not lead pro-French supporters to abandon the French Revolution in the 1790s, but only in the early 1800s, due to the success of the Haitian Revolution and to Denmark Vesey's Rebellion.

⁷⁵ For the thesis that planters' anxiety about the French Revolution was exaggerated, or purposely played upon and amplified, by northern Federalists in their political fight against southern Jeffersonianism, see Rachel Hope Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from anti-Jacobinism to anti-Slavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). See also S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) for the argument that some historiography exaggerates enslaved people's agency. Also, Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 36-37, 180, agrees with Klein's views, except that he places the collapse of French support in late 1794 rather than in 1793/1794, asserting that, alongside the Jacobin Terror, France's abandonment of international republicanism played a role in decreased support for the French Revolution.

northern states, and of William Jackson concerning South Carolina, and reveals other reasons for the decline in support for France. Above all, it sees the collapse of Franco-American relations after 1796 as an extremely important reason, including French furor at the Jay Treaty, French depredations on American commerce, the Quasi-War, and French insults of American diplomats, who included South Carolina's hero, Charles C. Pinckney. All these factors, in turn, decreased pro-French planters' international republicanism and augmented their nationalism.⁷⁶ Moreover, Chapter Five suggests that the realization that the French Revolution was de facto defunct, after it recanted its republican principles in domestic and foreign affairs, led to a weakening of Francophilic sentiment, just as occurred among pro-French American northerners and English idealist poets, as argued respectively by Elkins and McKittrick, and R. R. Palmer. Still, the Chapter also reveals that, despite all these facts, pro-French Revolution sentiment strongly persisted until the end of the 1790s.

The thesis reveals the reasons and large extent of pro-French Revolution sentiment among elite planters in the 1790s. It also constitutes a prosopography of about fifty-five families of the ruling elite, focusing on the most actively involved in politics and on those with strong pro-French Revolution sentiments, the topic of this thesis. Of these families, 34 (62%) supported Revolutionary France, seven (13%) were divided in their support or changed over time, and fourteen (25%) were anti-French Revolution. These numbers and ratios have been calculated while considering the personal positions of women and youth, which increased the number of

⁷⁶ For the Jay Treaty and its impact on Franco-American relations, see Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 303-450, 529-690.

divided families. Not considering them, out of the families with the highest gubernatorial, diplomatic, and senatorial prestige, the most famous pro-French Revolution include the Pinckney, Rutledge, and Butler; the most illustrious anti-Revolutionary France encompass the Izard, Read, and Smith; and the most divided families comprise the Drayton, Huger, and Vanderhorst. Pro-French families included moderate Federalists and Jeffersonians as well as radical Republicans. Anti-French families, Hamiltonian Federalists, despite their lower numbers, also produced key state actors. The state elected these Federalists to the governorship in 1795, the U.S. Senate in 1789 and 1795, and the Charleston's U.S. Representative from 1789 to 1795, suggesting that elite anti-French Federalism was also considerable although, overall, their control of South Carolina politics and non-governmental societies was significantly shorter and weaker, as the thesis shall reveal.

It is probable that a similar ratio of pro-French planters applied to small planters, but it is difficult to assess as they did not leave many written sources and voted for candidates with more concerns than a mere focus on the French Revolution. Yet, views on the French Revolution were crucial as electoral results fluctuate according to the degree of popularity towards Revolutionary France, which reached a peak in 1792-1794, decreased significantly in 1796-1798, and resurged in 1799-1801. In the 1790s, two of the three Lowcountry districts elected pro-French members, with majorities of circa 60%; and Charleston, with the help of wealthy merchants and British residents, elected anti-French planters with similar majorities, except in 1796. Notably, there was little individual ideological fluctuation of the planters who were the most extensively involved in South Carolina and national politics: Those who supported Revolutionary France in 1790-1793,

such as Pierce Butler and the Pinckney, Rutledge, and Tate families, also supported it in 1796-1798, and beyond. The only clear exceptions to this rule consisted of Ralph Izard, Christopher and Elizabeth Gadsden, and Mary Legaré. The first abandoned France, in 1793, after the Neutrality Proclamation; the second circa 1795-1797, when his daughter, Elizabeth, and Mary Legaré, claimed, that the French had fallen into the thrall of radical atheism. What is certain is that a considerable number of the great planter families, about 13%, were divided concerning France: As we shall see in Chapter Three and Five, the most fascinating familial divisions concerning Revolutionary France include George Izard and his mother Alice Izard versus Ralph Izard with regards to French victories and whether George's wish to join the French army was well-founded; Sarah Butler versus Tom Butler, regarding the merits of the king's execution; and Stephen Drayton being prosecuted by his own first cousin, John, for having violated the Neutrality Proclamation. Whatever the exact numbers may be, there was no class, interest, nor material distinction between pro- and anti-French Revolution planters: Therefore, the most likely explanation for their divergences concerning the French Revolution must be ideological or idealistic: The respective and antagonistic visions they held for the ideal American Republic; the participation in and memory of the American Revolutionary War; their views on honor, gratitude, and nature of the French nation; and their degree of international republican wishes for other European countries.

Chapter One

The Roots of Elite International Republicanism, 1670-1789

“The popular doctrines of Thomas Jefferson had found nowhere else a more genial soil to take root than in South Carolina.”¹

In their analysis of colonial and early republic South Carolina planters, Historians, such as Jeffrey Young, James Haw, and Robert Olwell, have argued that the Palmetto state enslavers’ beliefs and actions were determined by both planter anxiety and republican ideology. Indeed, modern historiography has shown that, from 1670 to 1789, South Carolina colonial and revolutionary society developed in a dual way: On the one hand, it grew as a planter society whose defense, strengthening, and expansion became the colonial and state elite’s paramount concern. On the other hand, the planter oligarchy also developed as cosmopolitan, idealistic, and integrated into the late Eighteenth-century Enlightenment transatlantic world.

Chapter One discusses this two-pronged development of the South Carolina elite from the colony’s foundation to the onset of the French Revolution. It sets the context and background for the 1790s pro-French elite’s international republicanism and support for Revolutionary France. Paradoxically, as Fraser’s and Young’s above quotations suggest, similarly to other historians’ arguments, planter identity and idealistic international republicanism toward whites did coexist.²

¹ Fraser, *Reminiscences of Charleston*, p. 49.

² For example, Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 2001), Cogliano, *Emperor of Liberty: Thomas Jefferson’s Foreign Policy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014) and *Thomas Jefferson: Reputation and Legacy* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2006), Tom Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries: Power and Justice in the New American Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), Walter Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: The

Young especially stresses that “planters’ dedication to [idealistic] values warped [their] perceptions of [their] surroundings. [They] were destroying lives as they played out the cherished role of honorable planter.”³ Idealism and international republicanism did not lessen the severity of the crime of participation in the plantation system but, as Young and others suggest, to some extent, they were blinded to the inexcusable suffering they inflicted on the plantations’ enslaved laborers. Planters’ liberalism and international republicanism were, respectively, only directed toward whites and towards France and, very sadly, not towards the enslaved population. Therefore, the thesis will use the terms liberalism and liberal when discussing republican and humanitarian reforms, in the same way that historians have used them: With the understanding that this liberalism was not directed toward enslaved people.⁴

University of South Carolina Press, 1989), Paul Finkelman (ed.), *Towards a Usable Past: Liberty and the State Constitutions* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1991) and Finkelman, “Jefferson and the Jews,” Lecture at the Center of Jefferson Studies at Monticello, December 14th, 2023, at <https://www.monticello.org>; James Haw, “Political Representation in South Carolina, 1669-1794: Evolution of a Lowcountry Tradition,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 103, no. 2 (April 2000), Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders’ Worldview* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and Ryan A. Quintana, *Making a Slave State: Political Developments in Early South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

³ Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, p. 15. For planters’ idealism that existed alongside their egregious criminality and cruelty, see also Young, *ibid.*, pp. 10-11, 13-15.

⁴ Paul Finkelman, “Jefferson and the Jews,” Lecture at the Center of Jefferson Studies at Monticello, December 14th, 2023, at <https://www.monticello.org>.

SOUTH CAROLINA PLANTATION BACKGROUND, 1670-1789

As soon as South Carolina was established in 1670, enslavement became the basis of the colony's Lowcountry society. Despite its liberal constitution towards white men and Native Americans written by John Locke, whom historians acknowledge as the "father of liberalism," enslavement was not only tolerated but also strongly encouraged by the colony's original rulers, the English proprietors, aristocratic landowners who had been given dominion over South Carolina by the British monarchy. Through English and, then, British slavers, thousands of Africans were brought to South Carolina to become the enslaved laborers of South Carolinian European immigrants. Through such enslaved labor, and the exportation to Europe of plantations' staples, such as rice and indigo, planters became immensely rich and the wealthiest elite in America.⁵

South Carolina was an exception among the thirteen British colonies: It was so integral to the Caribbean world that it was given the pseudonym of "Caribbean Carolina." The Lowcountry was linked to the British Caribbean world and shared many of its characteristics. Its political economy was based on the exploitation of enslaved African and African-American labor. Large plantations, where the enslaved workers formed 90% of the population, grew massive amounts of indigo and rice which, in line with the English/British Mercantilist Navigation Acts, were exported as staples to the British Caribbean and Great Britain. In the 17th and early Eighteenth Century, the Lowcountry elite also criminally participated in the slave trade of Native Americans and Africans.

⁵ Olwell, *Masters and Slaves*, p. 7.

It respectively “exported” enslaved members of the Cherokee and other American Indian tribes of South Carolina and Georgia and “imported” Africans from the British West Indies.⁶

Furthermore, as early as the 1670s, the Lowcountry’s Caribbean nature was reinforced when its colonists were joined by many planters or would-be planters from Barbados when it became increasingly crowded and bereft of available land that could allow existing plantations to expand and new plantations to be established. The Barbados men, collectively known as the “Goose Creek men,” swiftly integrated the Lowcountry elite and even produced a few colonial governors. Still, overall, they never were as wealthy and influential as the other South Carolina ruling class’s national groups, perhaps due to their traditional unruly and violent deportment, strong involvement in the illegal slave trade of Native Americans, and commerce with Caribbean pirates, undertakings looked down upon by the rest of the elite. Strongly committed to anti-Catholic and anti-Dissenter Anglicanism, they, at first, virulently opposed South Carolina’s constitutional precepts of religious freedom. However, as we shall see below, Barbadian planters reconciled with liberal principles toward whites after the so-called “1719 Revolution,” when in alliance with the non-Anglican elite, they overthrew English proprietor rule.⁷

⁶ Wood, *Black Majority*, pp. 3, 48-49, 163-164; Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton-Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1981), pp. 11, 14, 121.

⁷ Eugene M. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663– 1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966); Olwell, *Master, Slaves, and Subjects*, pp. 5, 10, 64. For South Carolina-Barbados link, see also Wood, *Black Majority*, pp. 8-9, 14-22, 32-34, and Olwell, *Domesticating Slavery*, pp. 18, 33. For Goose Creek men, see Wood, *Black Majority*, pp. 87, 101, 177, 199.

The Lowcountry enslaved people who, by their labor, permitted the wealth, comfort, and luxury of these planters, Barbadian and non-Barbadian, constituted an extreme source of worry for the colony's elite. Bonded African Americans, feeling confident by their agency and vast numbers, by 1720, greater than those of whites and, by 1750, forming a 2/3rd majority in the state's population, fretted against their oppressed status and, "ready to revolt at the first opportunity," continuously looked out for their chance to overthrow the planter oligarchy and attain their freedom.⁸ An enslaved people's revolt, indeed, occurred in 1739, and its development and the later memory of it, struck terror among the planting elite. Henceforth, the prevention of any reoccurrence of an enslaved people rebellion constituted the principal concern of the terrified South Carolina elite who became committed to 'sacrifice [its] peace of mind" for the obsessional sake of preserving its way-of-life as a planter society.⁹

Planters' anxiety at the enslaved people's agency was compounded by a strong concern that British governmental authorities, as well as British Christian missionaries, not only wished to ameliorate the life conditions of the enslaved people but were prepared to circumscribed planters' autonomy to do so.¹⁰ Therefore, South Carolina planters regarded their relations with Britain in two paradoxical ways. On the one hand, they wished to remain connected with the British government for the sake of military defense vis-à-vis enslaved people's and Native American revolts as well as protection against Spanish, and French attacks; and with traders for

⁸ Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, p. 21.

⁹ Olwell, *Masters and Slaves*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁰ Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, p. 13.

the sake of transatlantic trade. On the other hand, despite Britain's official policy of benign or salutary neglect, they still feared any possible "meddling" in their planter affairs and were happy to remain "at the periphery of empire" and left alone in the way they managed their plantations and interacted with enslaved laborers. They were especially afraid of British attempts, alongside out-of-state Christian Evangelists, to limit their planter autonomy by pressuring them to pass laws that would have prevented the worst abuses against the enslaved people.

American Revolution

Therefore, in addition to its anxiety at potential slave revolts through the very agency of enslaved laborers, the South Carolina elite's identity as planters was also determined by its relationship with central authorities, namely the British government and its colonial representatives. By 1760, and especially after 1775, their dislike of British meddling on their planters' autonomy caused them to forgo their loyalty towards Britain: They no longer viewed their ancestral country as beneficial to their protection vis-a-vis enslaved people and external enemies. Therefore they immediately joined the American Revolution in 1765 and the Revolutionary War in 1775. Paradoxically, in these struggles for the sake for their autonomy as planters, the South Carolina elite used the rhetoric of liberty and justice in their fight against Britain to maintain their autonomy as planters:¹¹ For these planters, freedom and justice did not mean equal liberty and

¹¹ Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, pp. 1-2, 12, 226-228, 246-248.

fair treatment for all, especially not bonded people, but, hypocritically, their own autonomy to oppress and enslave countless African-Americans.¹²

During the American Revolutionary War, their deep planter anxiety was revealed when they rejected any suggestion of enlisting enslaved people into the state's armed forces. Additionally, the 1775 British decision to give freedom to South Carolina blacks who left their bondage led to the flight of numerous enslaved people to the British lines and their irrevocable accession to liberty.¹³ This development not only provoked a "hurricane" of fear among the elite for their status as planters, but it also enraged against the British authorities whom, henceforth, were both detested and blamed for the deaths of family members and friends.¹⁴ Therefore, in addition to an array of other reasons, it prompted the South Carolina elite, through its provincial congress-approved new constitution drafted by William Henry Drayton, to officially declare the colony's independence on 26 March 1776, a trimester prior to Jefferson's Declaration of Independence.¹⁵ Indeed, the planters' fear was justified to a very large extent. Of the American Revolutionary War bonded people, the South Carolina enslaved laborers escaped from their plantations the most frequently, continuing a trend that had already existed for decades before

¹² Francois Furstenberg, "Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in the Early American Political Discourse," *Journal of American History* (March 2003), pp. 1296-1297.

¹³ Olwell, *Domesticating Slavery*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴ Olwell, *Domesticating Slavery*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ For the text of the South Carolina Declaration of Independence, see William Henry Drayton, "Constitution of South Carolina, March 26, 1776," *Avalon Project*, Yale Law School, www.avalon.law.yale.edu. Jefferson's Declaration resembles it so much that it seems to have been inspired by it. The Declaration was attested by Peter Timothy, the South Carolina Provincial Congress secretary.

the war which contributed to the dangerously powerful and independent maroon communities.¹⁶

Planters' terror and furor were also compounded by rumors that the British were planning to provoke a slave uprising, which could have cost thousands of planters' lives. Of the enslaved people who escaped to the British lines, many left the state along with British troops in December 1782 but many also joined, and reenforced, free maroon communities that further augmented planters' terror at potential future attacks of these independent and powerful blacks.¹⁷ Therefore, putting the blame on Britain for this shaking, weakening, and menace to the plantation system, already fragile through the sheer number and powerful agency of the enslaved people, planters abandoned all of their original Anglophilia and began to feel inveterate Anglophobia, which became a defining identity of the elite not only during the Revolutionary War but also after 1782 and into the 1790s.¹⁸ By 1789, such anti-British sentiment would result not only in widespread Anglophobic rhetoric but also in the establishment of anti-British societies, such as Commodore Gillon's and Brigadier-General Gadsden's Marine Anti-Britannic Society. As

¹⁶ Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, pp. 130-139.

¹⁷ For planters' anxiety due to their incapacity to destroy maroon communities, see Laurent Dubois, "An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic," *Social History*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Feb. 2006), p. 2. Interestingly, Ryan A. Quintana, *Making a Slave State: Political Developments in Early South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), pp. 49-50 and Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, p. 141, argue that the South Carolina elite, despite its fear of an enslaved people's revolt, recognized the immense agency of African-Americans that could be crucially used in the state Patriots' military effort. They used bonded laborers in an unprecedented scale. During the war, and in the following decades, these laborers could be found, charged with significant responsibilities in "almost every conceivable manner," in all places and in most non-military functions. Forcefully enjoined to assist the Patriots' cause, they "stood at the center of the emergence of an independent South Carolina." For enslaved people's agency in South Carolina, see Quintana, *Making a Slave State*, *ibid.* and pp. 116-148

¹⁸ Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, pp. 1-2, 12, 226-228, 246-248.

we shall see, the pervasiveness of Lowcountry Anglophobia was also due to the fact that, unlike in other states, most South Carolina Lowcountry elite Loyalists had fled the state during the war against the British and the de facto civil war between the state's pro-British gentlemen and Patriot elite, and their respective non-elite allies, both conflicts having developed as the most vicious and deadly of any such types of occurrences during the Revolutionary War.

Constitutional convention of 1787

Moreover, in the late 1780s, planters' anxiety was exacerbated by the possible prospect of a future emancipationist central national government that could intend and wield the power to circumscribe planters' autonomy regarding their exploitation of their enslaved workforce and endanger the plantation system. Consequently, at the 1787 constitutional convention, the South Carolina delegation strenuously fought to make the federal constitution significantly pro-enslavement and, hence, was intent to maintain it permanently so. Other planters, outside the constitutional convention, and also anxious about their status as slaveowners, took a different strategy to maintain and bolster their hold on the plantation system. Deeply suspicious of any central government, even one that agreed to compromise concerning the plantation system, they rejected, as anti-federalists, any federal constitution and the establishment of any national government that they saw as intrinsically endangering their freedom as planters. As Paul

Finkelman has persuasively shown, Butler and his South Carolina delegation's colleagues relentlessly worked to make the proposed constitution enslavement-friendly.¹⁹

Pierce Butler's arguments at the convention are a case in point, especially his advocacy for a strongly limited central national government. He argued that the 1787 constitution gave too much power to the executive, which could then purposefully misinterpret the Constitution to advance its agenda and disregard the people's will. By the "executive agenda," read: Its will meddle into the plantation system; by the "people's will," read: The autonomy to oppress enslaved people and strengthen enslavement by maintaining practices such as the slave trade. These statements about the excessive power of the national government and its resulting limitation to popular will would later be extensively used by Butler and other South Carolina planters as part of their support for the French Revolution.²⁰ They might have also been prompted by a genuine desire for liberty for white people, as indeed occurred among some of the non-planter northern elite but there is no denial that they also conveniently matched, corroborated, and justified the planters' paramount obsession to strengthen their power as slaveholders.

¹⁹ Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 13-18, 25-31, 81-82.

²⁰ Hutson, "Pierce Butler's Records of the Federal Constitutional convention," pp. 64-73. However, he considered the constitution to possess two redeeming characteristics. First, it was more balanced and decentralized than the British constitution, which, he claimed, gave "horrific powers" to the king. Secondly, the strength and centralization of the American constitution enabled the United States to be "rescued from foreign contempt." See PB to Elbridge Gerry, 3/3/1788, PBP, SCL.

Therefore, it is also in this light that we can interpret Butler's criticism of Washington immediately after the constitutional convention and his belief that the popular adulation of the future president indirectly harmed American freedom. He contended that the American elite would have never centralized the proposed American constitution to the extent they did without their admiration of General Washington and their hope that he would become President. To his friend Weeden Butler, a politically conservative Irishman who lived in England and received honors from the British monarch, he affirmed that "*Entre nous*, I do not believe [the executive powers] would have been so great had not [the constitutional convention members] cast their eyes towards General Washington as President. So that the Man who contributed to the emancipation of his country may be the means of its being oppressed."²¹ For Butler, American liberty not only included freedom as citizens but also planters' freedom to enslave African Americans; and if left unchecked, a possible Washington's administration under the new constitution could lead to a federal government's attempt to restrict planters' autonomy as enslavers.

Furthermore, South Carolina's plantation system contributed to planters' professed liberalism and "affinities [with] republicanism" for other reasons that did not originate from any principle of humanism, altruism, and generosity.²² According to E. S. Morgan, southern elites' very experience as tyrannical oppressors of other human beings made them appreciate their own autonomy and freedom as they observed the permanent display of men suffering in bondage. He explains that planters "who grew up after the advent of enslavement turned out to be ardent

²¹ PB to Weeden Butler, 3/5/1788, LD. For Weeden Butler, see LD, pp. 34-35.

²² E. S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, p. 376.

republicans: The presence of men and women who were totally subject to the will of other men gave to those in control of them an immediate experience of what it could mean to be at the mercy of a tyrant. [Planters had] a special appreciation of the freedom dear to republicans because they saw everyday what life without it could be like. Great planters were, [therefore,] extraordinarily receptive to the republican way of thinking.”²³

Additionally, South Carolina planters’ liberalism rested on another reason which had nothing to do with genuine sentiments of humanism but was also linked to their commitment toward enslavement: The use and implementation of liberal and republican rhetoric to nullify the danger over the plantation system posed by the poorer people, especially the small, free-steading, and slaveless (or with very few enslaved people) backcountry white farmers. Planters were afraid that these small farmers had the power to overthrow their oligarchical plantocracy, especially if they united with the enslaved Black population, as had occurred in Seventeenth century Virginia during Bacon’s Rebellion, as analyzed by E. S. Morgan, and as could have happened in South Carolina during the Regulators’ Movement. Therefore, as had happened in Virginia, planters decided to win over the backcountry’s small farmers by preaching equality and fair treatment among all whites, especially regarding the equality and freedom to enslave Black people and become enslavers: Perverted equality and freedom through their setting within a system of racial dichotomy intended to establish a rigid opposition between poor whites and the enslaved Black people they would now oppress and exploit. According to Klein, by 1808, Lowcountry planters

²³ E. S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, pp. 376-377.

had succeeded in their goal of integrating backcountry farmers into the state's plantation system. The backcountry's threat to the Lowcountry had been nullified: By making small white farmers deferential to great planters in gratitude for receiving a stake in the plantation system, they had no longer any reason to consider an alliance with enslaved blacks.²⁴ In other words, South Carolina's equality and freedom had become premised on the racist basis of whiteness and the egregious ability to enslave and exploit non-whites.²⁵ Moreover, through their transformation as small planters, formerly poor and dependent farmers attained sufficient financial independence to stand free from anti-planter political influence and demagoguery coming from outside the southern planters' world and threatening enslavement and South Carolina planters' view of republicanism.²⁶

LIBERAL/INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN BACKGROUND OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1670-1789

Alongside the immoral, hypocritical, self-interested, and cynical use of liberty and justice for the sake of preserving the slave system, historians of South Carolina in the colonial, revolutionary, and confederation periods, concur that, between the colony's foundation in 1670 and the advent of the French Revolution in 1789, and in addition to their anxiety vis-à-vis British central power or enslaved people's revolts, planters also held liberal principles towards whites: In addition to their perennial and extreme anxiety as planters, "race relations did not account for everything:

²⁴ Klein, pp. 7, 77.

²⁵ E. S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, pp. 380-386.

²⁶ E. S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, pp. 380-386.

Millions of Southerners rallied with more on their minds than [the plantation system.]”²⁷ Indeed, historians have shown that many among the southern elites, including South Carolina’s, had also concerns and interests unrelated to their deep and pervasive anxiety at the threat on their plantation system due to the enslaved peoples’ agency and potential for revolt. For example, the South Carolina elite, as other southern elites, were passionate for literature and philosophy, desired to follow Christian and Classical World’s ethics, values and practice, and significantly abided by principles of liberalism and international republicanism that they formed out of their ancestral revolutionary or republican European immigrants and from their context as cosmopolitan members of the transatlantic Enlightenment.²⁸ Tragically, liberalism for South Carolina planters did not include any goodwill towards enslaved African Americans but was principally limited to the rights and welfare of white people. According to the definition of the late Enlightenment era, “liberalism” meant the defense of individual, political, judicial, and religious rights: Individual rights included freedom of the press, speech, assembly, and religion, an extensive educational system, equality before the law, and the sanctity of private property. Political rights consisted in constitutionalism, limited government, separation of powers, consent of the governed, and political equality. Judicial and religious rights respectively comprised an independent judiciary, and jury trial.²⁹

²⁷ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master-Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slave-Holders’ Worldview* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 70.

²⁸ Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *The Mind of the Master-Class*, pp. 548-556. Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, pp. 19-21.

²⁹ Excellent studies on liberalism include Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1955) and Andrew Gould, *Origins of Liberal Dominance* (Ann Arbor: the University of Michigan Press, 1999).

As we shall see below, historians, such as James Haw and Paul Finkelman, have shown that, by the 1790s, the South Carolina elite abided by strong tenets of liberalism, in both thought of action. Yet, it must be emphasized that, tragically, this liberalism was never directed, except in very few cases, toward the treatment and conditions of enslaved African Americans. We shall use the terms liberal, revolutionary, and republican, always keeping in mind their lack of inclusiveness towards non-whites and their racialized, racist, and unjust nature towards enslaved people. Furthermore, Finkelman has persuasively demonstrated that, in some ways, such as the inclusion of Jewish people in South Carolina's military and body politic, it was the most liberal state of the transatlantic world. As we shall see below, South Carolina's unique liberal features among Late Eighteenth-century transatlantic countries, as revealed by Finkelman and other historians, had also been noticed by a contemporary of the South Carolina elite: Voltaire, the great Enlightenment leader.

South Carolina liberalism commenced with its 1669 charter, "The Fundamental Constitutions," written by John Locke, the Enlightenment political philosopher considered to be the "Father of Liberalism."³⁰ Locke devised this South Carolina's colonial constitution, whose principles, unprecedentedly liberal for the late 17th century transatlantic world were later expanded in his

³⁰ Nancy J. Hirschman, *Gender, Class, and Freedom in Modern Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 79. For Locke as the major beacon of European political and social liberalism, see Urmila Sharma, *Western Political Thought from Plato to Burke* (Washington: Atlantic Publications, 2006) and Julian W. Korab-Karpowicz, *A History of Political Philosophy: from Thucydides to Locke* (New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2016). For his liberal influence on South Carolina's political and social system, see Claire Rydell Arcenas, *America's Philosopher: John Locke in American Intellectual Life* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2022), pp. 68-73, 77-81, 142-143,

Second Treatise of Government (1688).³¹ At the time of its writing, Locke was Personal Secretary of Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper, the English Chancellor of the Exchequer (1661-1672).³² Cooper was a protestant, liberal, and influential landgrave, who believed that the ideal political system should be based on popularly-supported republican elite rule: Namely, that the elite should govern but in a humanistic way toward, and on behalf of, free white men. His system foreshadowed the South Carolina elite's political philosophy.³³ He had initially fought in the republican forces under Oliver Cromwell against Charles I. After reconciliation with the English monarchy, he was offered South Carolina as a proprietorship, which he ruled from Britain alongside other landed nobles.³⁴ Likely influenced not only by his liberal principles but also by

³¹ Peter Nidditch (ed.), *The Second Treatise of John Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). For a magisterial study of early South Carolina politics and society and Locke's constitution and its classical, liberal, and English Country Whig concepts, see Thomas D. Wilson, *The Ashley Cooper Plan, the Founding of South Carolina, and the Origins of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2016).

³² James Haw, "Political Representation in South Carolina, 1669-1794: Evolution of a Lowcountry Tradition," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 103, no. 2 (April 2000), p. 107.

³³ Andrew Mansfield, "The First Earl of Shaftesbury's Resolute Conscience and Aristocratic Constitutionalism," *The Historical Journal*, vol. 5, no. 4 (September 2001), pp. 969-991.

³⁴ Cooper had difficult relations with Cromwell due to the Lord Protector's concentration of powers. He switched sides in 1660 and joined royalist forces. However, in 1674, he switched sides again, afraid of Charles II's Catholic propensities which he considered to be dangerous to the freedom of the English parliament and to constitute a harbinger for royal absolutism. Consequently, he was indicted of high treason. After failing to organize an armed rebellion, he fled to the Dutch Republic, where he died shortly afterward. See Tim Harris, "Cooper, Anthony Ashley (1621-1683)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2022). For Cooper as an aristocrat who supported a liberal vision of a people-supported elite rule supported, reminiscent of South Carolina planters' political philosophy, see Andrew Mansfield, "The First Earl of Shaftesbury's Resolute Conscience and Aristocratic Constitutionalism," *The Historical Journal*, vol. 5, no. 4 (September 2001), pp. 969-991. For South Carolina history under the Lord Proprietors, see L. H. Roper, *Conceiving Carolina: Proprietors, Planters, and Plots, 1662-1729* (Washington DC: Palgrave and McMillan, 2004) and Michelle LeMaster and Bradford J. Wood (eds.), *Creating and Contesting Carolina Proprietary Era Histories* (San Diego: University of San Diego Press, 2013). For Charleston as an enlightened "city-state" in the colonial period, see Nelson E. William, "The Height of Sophistication: Law and Professionalism in the City-State of Charleston, 1670-1775," *South Carolina Law Review*, vol. 61, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 1-62. For the plantation system in colonial South Carolina, see Hayden S. Smith, *Carolina's Golden Fields: Inland Rice Cultivation in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1670-1860* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019) and Andrea Feaser, *Red, White, and Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2006). Underwood and Burke Jr. (footnote 5) discuss the enslaved Africans' experience, although in a religious context. For a detailed study of the African American experience in early South Carolina, see Wood, *Black Majority*, and Littlefield, *Rice, and Slaves*.

Cooper's political ideology, he hoped that his colonial constitution would create a republican utopia for free white men: He called it the "Grand Model," a name reminiscent of Cromwell's New Model Army which, during the English Revolution and Republic, had been composed of staunchly republican soldiers.³⁵ The "Grand Model's" principles included a "balanced" political system, based on yeoman farmers who enjoyed liberal rights, "natural equality," and a degree of political representation under the dominant rule of wealthy and "enlightened aristocrats."³⁶

Crucially, South Carolina's constitution made coastal planters support and implement a liberal political culture and "provided the colony with a concrete model that helped launch it on its particular [republican and liberal] path."³⁷ They contained assumptions that would be reflected in the colony's political trajectory: A balanced constitution and the ideal of planters leading responsibly in the community's interest."³⁸ As mentioned above, these liberal principles, which were very cognate to classical republicanism, led Voltaire to consider that South Carolina constituted a model for the transatlantic Enlightenment. He even judged South Carolina to be the most liberal of the thirteen British North American colonies towards whites and Native Americans. Voltaire had functioned as an advisor to the Prussian monarchy whom he had encouraged to enact philanthropic reforms. He also praised the establishment of the Republic of

³⁵ For a magisterial discussion of Locke's and Cooper's utopian plans for South Carolina and the influence they had for South Carolina planters' politics and society, see Thomas D. Wilson, *The Ashley Cooper Plan: The Founding of Carolina and the Origins of Southern Political culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

³⁶ Mansfield, "The First Earl of Shaftesbury's Resolute Conscience and Aristocratic Constitutionalism," p.. For an analysis of John Locke's influence on the creation of the American Republic, see Michael Novak, *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding* (New York: Encounter Books, 2003).

³⁷ James Haw, "Political Representation," p.107.

³⁸ James Haw, "Political Representation," p.107

Corsica (1755-1769) by the aristocrat, Pasquale Paoli.³⁹ Such radical principles had led to his estrangement from the Prussian king.⁴⁰ By 1761, he praised South Carolina and its constitution in his *Traité de la Tolérance* and asked European liberals to draw inspiration from them: “Cast [your] eyes over the other hemisphere; behold Carolina, of which the wise Locke was the legislator.”⁴¹ In the 1790s, he would become so idolized by the French Revolutionaries that they interred him in the Pantheon, Paris’s Sanctum Sanctorum.⁴²

In South Carolina, Locke’s liberal constitution was especially appealing to Seventeenth century English Dissenters and French Huguenots as well as Eighteenth-century Scottish Jacobites and Irish Catholics and Presbyterians due to its inclusion of religious freedom. All these national groups who had significantly fought their home countries’ religious and political establishments on its behalf. and, a first in transatlantic history: Complete religious liberty, not only for Christians but also for Native American “idolators and heathens” (Article 97), an astonishing fact for Seventeenth-century British America and a significant reason explaining Voltaire’s praise of Locke

³⁹ Dorothy Carrington, “The Corsican Constitution, 1755-1769,” *The English Historical Review*, vol. 88, no. 348 (July 1973): 481-503, pp. 481 et al.

⁴⁰ For Voltaire as a republican adviser to the Prussian and Russian monarchs, see Karl A. Reider, *Maria Theresa* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973).

⁴¹ David Armitage, “John Locke, Carolina, and the Two Treatises of Government,” *Political Theory*, vol. 32, no. 5 (October 2004): 602-627, p. 607.

⁴² Charleston’s planters discussed Enlightenment philosophers like Voltaire and Rousseau. See the following chapters and especially John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Jefferson, 20/11/1790, PB to John Leaky, 11/2/91, PB to Robert Goodloe Harper, 25/1/1792 and 18/2/1792, PB to Wade Hampton, 7/7/1795, PBP microfilm, PHS-Phil. For planters reciting Voltaire’s plays, see Thomas, *Reminiscences*, pp. 91-92. John Julius Pringle, South Carolina Attorney General, referred to Rousseau in his 1800 Cincinnati oration. Like Locke and Voltaire, English Country Republican Whigs, such as John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, notably in *Cato’s Letters*, defended liberal principles. Indeed, English Whigs also advocated principles of republicanism, supporting individual rights and separation and balance of governmental powers. As we shall see, members of the South Carolian elite, such as Pierce Butler, saw themselves as incorruptible American Catos, similar to English Country Republican Whigs. See PB to Weeden Butler, 7/6/1790, LD; PB to John Ewing Colhoun, 26/9/1792. Butler and William and Alexander Moultrie were also friends with the Radical Whig, Lord Wycombe, who met them in November 1792 (Lipscomb, *Letters*, p.163, note 1).

and his South Carolina constitution.⁴³ In the later constitutions of 1776, 1780, and 1790, South Carolina removed all religious qualifications for political office. In the 1770s, South Carolina even became the first state in modern history to have Jewish people elected to a state legislature. Other Jewish South Carolinians also joined the Continental Army and militias in the state in the 1770s, some of them becoming officers and receiving praise by their gentile colleagues when killed in the war.⁴⁴

Immigrants and settlers of South Carolina and their descendants also welcomed Locke's constitution due to its republican nature. As mentioned above, these immigrants consisted of English Dissenters, French Huguenots, Irish Presbyterians and Catholics, and Scottish Jacobites. They had come to South Carolina not only to flee religious oppression, but also often as refugees who had struggled to establish republican, or at least political systems to replace the established monarchies, first in France and England, and later, in Scotland and Ireland.⁴⁵ For example, English republicans who had scions who emigrated to South Carolina included the Blakes. Its first South Carolina settler, Benjamin Blake, was a brother of Robert Blake, the founder of the Royal Navy,

⁴³ Armitage, "John Locke, Carolina, and the Two Treatises of Government," p. 607.

⁴⁴ Paul Finkelman, "Jefferson and the Jews," Lecture at the Center of Jefferson Studies at Monticello, December 14th, 2023.

⁴⁵ For the revolutionary tradition among Huguenots in South Carolina, see Bertrand van Ruymbeke and Randy Sparks, *Memory, and Identity: the Huguenots and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia, SC: University of Columbia Press, 2003), Bertrand van Ruymbeke, *New Babylon to Eden: the Huguenots and the Migration to South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2006). Erskine Clarke, in *Our Southern Zion: A History of Calvinism in South Carolina Lowcountry, 1690-1990* (Birmingham, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2014) offers an outstanding analysis of colonial planters' Calvinist ethos. He argues they combined a "cavalier spirit" and luxurious living with religious devotion and assiduous intellectual and work ethics. Edward Rutledge, Piece Butler, and John Rutledge are instances of Clarke's thesis. For example, Edward Rutledge to Sarah Rutledge, 9/10/1792, 29/7/1793. 10/9/1793, ERP, SCL. See Charles C. Baird, *History of the Huguenot Emigration to America* (Washington D.C.: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1991), Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in the New World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), and Molly McClain, "A Letter from South Carolina, 1688: French Huguenots in the New World," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 3 no. 64 (April 2007): 377-394.

and had fought as a republican during the English civil war (1642-1648). In disgrace after the 1660 royal restoration, he was persuaded to migrate to South Carolina after the 1680 recrudescence of the persecution of non-Anglicans by the English monarchy.⁴⁶

French Huguenot joined English republican Dissenters in emigrating to and establishing revolutionary traditions in South Carolina. They also fled religious and political persecution by royal and Catholic authorities. Indeed, like the English monarch, Louis XIV had increased his persecution of Huguenots with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Therefore, from 1682 to 1705, French Huguenots massively immigrated to South Carolina.⁴⁷ Later, the 1760s witnessed another wave of French protestant immigration due to the Treaty of Paris of 1764, which led to the persecution of Huguenot descendants from the French province of Aquitaine.⁴⁸

The French Huguenot immigration was contemporaneous or was followed by an emigration of Irish Catholics and Presbyterians, which was South Carolina's most significant from the 1710s to the 1770s. This also contributed to the revolutionary tradition and hostility towards the British

⁴⁶ Kenneth O. Morgan, "Blake, Robert Norman Willian, Baron Blake (1916-2003)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) and "Lord Blake," *The Independent on Sunday*, 25 September 2003. For the career of Robert Blake, see William Hepworth Dixon, *Robert Blake: Admiral and General at Sea: Based on Family and State Papers* (Mount Kiso, New York: Regatta Press, 2000).

⁴⁷ Kurt Gingrich, "That Will Make Carolina Powerful and Flourishing: Scots and Huguenots in Carolina in the 1680s," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 10 (2009): 3-34. In 1755, French Catholic Acadians also massively immigrated to South Carolina due to British oppression. They were expelled from Acadia by the new British authorities after widespread exactions and trying to force them to offer their oath of allegiance to the British monarchy (Ramsay, pp. 9-10). For British atrocities against Acadians in Acadia in the 1750s and the concomitant immigration of Acadians to colonial South Carolina, see John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005).

⁴⁸ Ramsay, *Memoirs*, pp. 9-10. As we shall see, a member of this new immigrant wave was the wealthy and powerful Peter Trezevant, who, in the 1790s, supported the French Revolution and joined the Republican Society.

church and monarchy among the South Carolina elite.⁴⁹ This emigration would form an especially high number of pro-French elite members in the 1790s, such as the first generation Irish South Carolinians Pierce Butler and O'Brien Smith, and second-generation Irish Americans John and Edward Rutledge, William Tate, and David Ramsay. The Early Republic's South Carolina historian, Ramsay, estimated Irish immigration to South Carolina to be the most significant of any colony or state and affirmed that "of all countries, none has furnished [South Carolina] with so many inhabitants as Ireland [due to] the most powerful and prevalent oppression of its inhabitants."⁵⁰

Resentment against the British monarchy and, especially, the failed Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, also forced Scotsmen to find refuge in South Carolina.⁵¹ Jacobites, with their Scottish center in the Highlands, supported the restoration of the Scottish Stuarts. They believed the Stuart dynasty was more amenable to Scottish religious freedom and political autonomy than the English kings, especially after the Act of Union of 1707.⁵² These Scottish immigrants maintained their Anglophobia even in America. For example, in 1745, Lachlan McIntosh, an elite Highlander's son who had emigrated to the colony in 1736, attempted, at age 20, to return to Scotland and

⁴⁹ Jack P. Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), p. 103. Irish immigrants are studied in Arthur Mitchell, *South Carolina Irish* (Dublin: Arcadia Publishing, 2010) and Scottish immigrants in William R. Brock, *Scotus Americanus: A Survey of the Sources for the Links between Scotland and America in the Eighteenth-century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982).

⁵⁰ Ramsay, *Memoirs*, p.11. As we shall develop below, this oppression of their native land would be frequently reiterated by Irish South Carolinians of the 1790s who supported the French Revolution.

⁵¹ Ramsay, *Memoirs*, p. 6.

⁵² For a history of the Scottish Jacobite rebellions, see James Pringle, *The Jacobite Rebellions (1689-1746)* (Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh Press, 2012). For the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, see Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *The Jacobite Rebellion, 1745-46* (Boston: Bloomsbury, 2023). For the resentment of Scottish Highlanders against the 1707 Act of Union and their repression by British royal forces, see Lauchlin Alexander Cruikshank, *The Act of Union: Death or Reprieve for the Highlands?* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008). For the importance of religion in the revolutionary era of the late Enlightenment, see Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1830* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

join the Jacobite uprising led by Charles Edward Stuart.⁵³ In this mid-Eighteenth-century era, the spirit of rebellion among South Carolina planters, demonstrated by McIntosh, was also illustrated by the fact that some Anglican ministers and congregations refused to recognize the Church of England. This radical religious development foreshadowed the 1780s when Anglican planters, such as the Rutledges and the Pinckneys, abjured Anglicanism and established the American Episcopalian Church.⁵⁴

As mentioned above, these diverse immigrants fleeing persecution in Europe built on Locke's South Carolina charter and harmonized their revolutionary traditions with the political and social precepts of the Enlightenment that extensively held sway in the colony. However, these newly found freedoms could not be taken for granted. In alliance with the Lord Proprietors and their political appointees in the colony, they had to fight to keep Locke's constitution and the political and religious system based on it as another category of immigrants, coming from outside Europe, put into question the constitutional status quo.⁵⁵ Between 1670 and the 1690s, a small but financially and politically influential immigration of Barbados Anglicans settled the colony.⁵⁶

⁵³ John Bartlett Meserve, "The McIntoshes," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1932), pp. 1-24.

⁵⁴ Rogers, *Charleston*, p. 89.

⁵⁵ For the establishment and endurance of the unprecedented religious freedom in South Carolina's Fundamental Constitution and political culture, see James Lowell Underwood and William Lewis Burke Jr., *The Dawn of Religious Freedom in South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006). Underwood and Burke believed that freedom of religion in the colony was fragile and needed the constant attention of non-Anglican planters to preserve it. For a more stable and harmonious picture of religious freedom in South Carolina, see Charles H. Lippy, "Chastised by Ladybugs: Christianity and Culture in South Carolina, 1669 – 1740," *Church History*, vol. 79, no. 2 (June 2010), pp. 253-270. For his part, Edgar Walter in *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina), pp. 181-184, portrays the colony's religious situation as "pluralist and tolerant."

⁵⁶ These Anglican immigrants from Barbados were mostly English and Welsh nationals. For this immigration to South Carolina, their economic conflict with the Proprietors, and their eventual integration into the colony's plantation economy, see S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). These Anglican immigrants produced influential leaders, especially the Gibbes family, who held the

Unlike European immigrants, they did not approve of Locke's constitution, which they deemed too liberal especially respecting religious equality, and which they tried to overturn: They entered into conflict with the Proprietors, the governors and landgraves, and other immigrant families.⁵⁷ The Anglican Barbadians' threat to religious liberty forced non-Anglicans to be on constant guard to protect their rights.⁵⁸ The struggle between Lord Proprietors and non-Anglicans on one side and Anglican Barbadians on another lasted uninterruptedly for five decades. Finally, a compromise between non-Anglicans and Barbadians was achieved. After what historians, such as Robert Olwell and John Haw, refer as "the 1719 Revolution," when Barbadians accepted to keep Locke's constitution and guarantee its precepts of religious freedom while non-Anglicans agreed to abandon the Lord Proprietors, the South Carolina elite established a de facto republican system, which they ruled autonomously with the approval of Britain, after 1721, in what Jack P. Greene calls "The Era of Salutary Neglect" (1721-1763).⁵⁹ The Proprietors-appointed governorship was abolished and, henceforth, the elite, both Anglican Barbadian and non-Anglican European, ruled the colony. This new political system was officially ratified by Britain

governorship several times. James Ladson, Lieutenant-Governor (1792-1794), and childhood friend of U.S. ambassador to Britain (1792-1796), Thomas Pinckney, was one of their descendants.

⁵⁷ For the early Huguenot and Scottish immigration to South Carolina, see Kurt Gingrich, "That Will Make Carolina Powerful and Flourishing: Scots and Huguenots in Carolina in the 1680s," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 10 (2009): 3-34. For early Irish immigration to South Carolina and the revolutionary nature of Irish immigrants, see Patrick Griffin (ed.), *Ireland and America: Empire, Revolution and Sovereignty* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2021). For a general study of all early immigrants, see John J. Navin, *The Grim Years: Settling South Carolina, 1670 – 1720* (Columbia, SC: University of Columbia Press, 2019). For emigration from the Bahamas led by Puritan and republican revolutionary William Sayle, who fought English royal forces alongside Oliver Cromwell and became the first governor of Carolina (1670-1671), see A. Talbot Bethell, *Early Settlements of the Bahamas and Colonists of North America* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2008). For the constitutional and political conflict between Anglican Barbadians and the Lord Proprietors and their allies, see James Haw, "Political Representation in South Carolina, 1669-1794: Evolution of a Lowcountry Tradition," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 103, No. 2 (April 2000): 106-129.

⁵⁸ James Lowell Underwood and William Lewis Burke Jr., p. 77.

⁵⁹ Jack P. Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), p. 103.

and reinforced by a series of weak royal governors nominated after the colony became part of the British Crown in 1729.⁶⁰

Consequently, from 1719 to the dawn of the American Revolution in 1765, South Carolina enjoyed political autonomy from Britain in such above-described system of ‘salutary Neglect.’⁶¹

Britain was content to let the South Carolina elite control the colony’s legislature composed of an upper chamber (Council) and a lower chamber (House of Commons), both controlled by the elite class due to the high property threshold needed to become a representative. The legislative bodies also checked and balanced the king-appointed governors who usually yielded to them in case of conflict.⁶² Class harmony was also achieved as both elite groups, Anglican Barbadians and non-Barbadians, shared the same political and socio-economic goals for their existing plantation society.⁶³ Haw asserts that “South Carolina achieved political harmony and that “acceptance [of Locke’s constitution and its Enlightenment precepts] gave the colony’s elite a common

⁶⁰ Haw, “Political Representation,” pp. 109-111.

⁶¹ For a study of the premises of ‘salutary Neglect,’ see Mary Sarah Bilder, *The Transatlantic Constitution: Colonial Legal Culture and the Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). For the formation of South Carolina’s political system, see Rebecca Starr, *A School of Politics: Commercial Lobbying and Political Culture in Early South Carolina* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998) and, especially, Dominick Nagl, *No Part of the Mother Country but Distinct Dominions: Law, State Formation, and Governance in Massachusetts and South Carolina, 1630-1769* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). Nagl emphasizes the political autonomy of South Carolina, which the planters of the Lowcountry asserted. He agrees with Edmond S. Morgan, *The Birth of the Republic, 1764-1789* (Hartford, CT: Yale University Press, 2012) and Jack P. Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville, VA: the University of Virginia Press, 1994) who argue that American planters of the British colonies from the start of settlement exercised strong agency and wrested political autonomy by force (Morgan) or negotiation (Greene) from Britain, which accommodated itself to the devolution of responsibilities during the “Period of Salutary Neglect” (1721-1763

⁶² Haw, “Political Representation,” p. 109.

⁶³ For the development of South Carolina society and its commercial relations with Britain throughout the Eighteenth-century, see R. C. Nash, “south Carolina Indigo: European Textiles and the British Atlantic Economy in the Eighteenth-century,” *Economic History Review*, vol. 63, no. 2 (May 2010): 362-392. For South Carolina-British commerce, absentee landlords/traders living in London, and planters’ suspicions of these expatriates as agents of British oppression, from the 1760s, see Huw David, *Trade, Politics, and Revolution: South Carolina’s British Commerce, 1730-1790* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina University Press, 2018).

perspective and a political ideal to emulate;”⁶⁴ and “the ideal of a responsible elite governing in the broad [white] public interest [was] approximated in practice.”⁶⁵

The American Revolution

The descendants of the English, French, Irish, and Scottish Dissenter Immigrants put into practice their families’ revolutionary traditions during the American Revolution.⁶⁶ Ramsay contended that no other colony “to the southward of New England” was more revolutionary than South Carolina.⁶⁷ The South Carolina elite was the first colony to respond to Massachusetts’ call for support during the Stamp Act crisis of 1765.⁶⁸ In 1774, it was one of the first colonies to establish an autonomous revolutionary government and a Committee of Correspondence, which managed the policy of non-importation of British goods and, under the leadership of Henry Laurens, acted as the republican government of South Carolina in opposition to the royal government.⁶⁹ In April 1775, after the battles of Lexington and Concord, this revolutionary administration immediately joined the American Revolutionary War. South Carolina elite youth massively joined the state contingents, and in September 1775, the royal governor, William Campbell, was forced to flee Charleston.⁷⁰ As we saw above, in March 1776, three months before Thomas Jefferson did so for America, the South Carolina elite, including the President of the State Congress and State Chief Justice, William Henry Drayton, the uncle of Stephen Drayton, who later joined the French

⁶⁴ Haw, “Political Representation,” p. 110.

⁶⁵ Haw, “Political Representation,” p. 110.

⁶⁶ Jack P. Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial and Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1994), pp. 62-71, 177, 180-181.

⁶⁷ Ramsay, *History*, p. 126.

⁶⁸ Haw, “Political Representation,” p. 114-121.

⁶⁹ Haw, “Political Representation,” p. 114-121.

⁷⁰ Haw, “Political Representation,” p. 114-121.

Revolutionary armies, declared South Carolina's independence from Britain.⁷¹ The elite's fierce commitment to independence was further demonstrated when, in July 1776, it decided that the state governors would be called "President" rather than "Governor," a unique case among the thirteen rebellious states.

Scions of families with revolutionary traditions enthusiastically joined the American Revolutionary War. For example, Edward and John Blake were descendants of the English Dissenter family of John and Robert Blake who, as mentioned above, had fought the royalist forces during the English Revolution of 1642-1649; a family who, furthermore, included Joseph Blake, South Carolina governor (1696-1700). In 1775, Edward and John joined the American Revolutionary War and soon joined its list of heroes.⁷² Descendants of Dissenting Scottish families also took a prominent role in the American Revolutionary War. As noted earlier, Lachlan McIntosh had attempted in 1745 to join the Scottish forces fighting the British royal forces in the Second Jacobite Rebellion.⁷³ Indeed, Ramsay believed that the memory of the Jacobite wars and the final Scottish defeat of 1745 was importantly remembered by the elite of 1775: "[The South

⁷¹ Ramsay, *History*, pp. 150-151. In April 1776, William Henry Drayton proclaimed that "the Almighty created America to be independent. Let us beware of the impiety of being backward to act as an instrument in the Almighty's hand, now extended to accomplish His purpose." Drayton can also be considered the South Carolinian Jefferson as, by order of the State Congress, he drafted the Declaration of Independence-like list of grievances South Carolina felt against Britain in the preamble of the March 1776 South Carolina Constitution. However, it fell short of calling for independence. Cf. Avalon Project of Yale Law School, *Constitution of South Carolina-March 26, 1776*, at www.avalon.law.school.edu.

⁷² John Blake became a member of the South Carolina of the Cincinnati in 1784 and, in 1793, a founding member and administrator of the pro-French Revolution Republican Society of Charleston. See Alexander Moore. 2016. "Blake, Joseph." Walter Edgar, ed. *Encyclopedia of South Carolina*. University of South Carolina Press. Scencyclopedia.org. "John Blake" in gibbesmuseum.org; "Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice, 13 July 1793," *Republican Society Papers*, Boston Public Library (from now: DFLNJ, RSP, BPL), and *The Columbian Herald or the Southern Star*, 7 September 1793.

⁷³ Meserve, "The McIntoshes," p. 233.

Carolina revolutionary] leaders considered themselves as acting with ropes around their necks; they all knew the consequences of the battle of Culloden.”⁷⁴ During the war, McIntosh experienced a meteorite ascension in military ranks, climbing from Major to Brigadier-General in one year due to his exploits on the Southern front. In 1777, he was so well-regarded that he was acquitted of killing in a duel the signatory of the Declaration of Independence, Button Gwinnett; and he was offered protection from Gwinnett’s vengeful friends by Washington.⁷⁵

General William Moultrie was another elite South Carolinian of Scottish origins. His aristocratic ancestors, the *de Multrere*, whose lineage of nobility originated from the 13th Century and the *Auld Alliance* of Scotland and France, had also fought against English royal forces.⁷⁶ The name *de Multrere* suggests a French origin, a surmise reinforced by the pseudonym of *La Belle Ecossaise* given to Lady Janet Stewart Moultrie, who was burned at the stake for attempting to kill King James V.⁷⁷ During the American Revolutionary War, Moultrie was so successful that Congress passed a Resolution in gratitude for his military exploits, notably, his successful defense of Charleston at the Battle of Fort Sullivan.⁷⁸ Moultrie’s and McIntosh’s imprisonment, alongside practically the entire officer class of South Carolina at the fall of Charleston in May 1780, a unique development in the war, likely increased their anti-British propensities and the reasons they would have to support of the French Revolution.⁷⁹ Furthermore, in his history of the American

⁷⁴ Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, p. 135.

⁷⁵ Meserve, “The McIntoshes,” p. 233.

⁷⁶ Gerard Moultrie, “The Moultries of Scotland,” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, vol. 5 (January 1904), pp. 229-246.

⁷⁷ Meserve, “The Macintoshes,” p. 233.

⁷⁸ C. L. Bragg, *Crescent Moon over Carolina: William Moultrie and American Liberty* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013).

⁷⁹ Bragg, *Crescent Moon*, p. 21.

Revolutionary War in South Carolina, Ramsay noted the British forces’ pronounced anti-Scottish Presbyterian bias.⁸⁰ He recalled that the British army “displayed enmity to the [Scots] Presbyterians by burning their libraries, the dwellings of their clergymen, and all Bibles which contained Scots translations of the Psalms.”⁸¹ He also affirmed that these British exactions spurred revolutionary fervor among South Carolina’s Scotchmen: “proceedings, not less impolitic than impious, inspired the numerous devout [Scot Presbyterian] people with an unusual animation [in which] love for independence blended with religious fervor.”⁸²

In addition to elite Scottish South Carolinians, Irish Presbyterians and Catholics also massively joined the American Revolutionary War.⁸³ Their revolutionary tradition was likely augmented by the great suffering they experienced at the hands of the British for nearly a millennium. In his *Memoirs*, William Moultrie reminisced that the South Carolina Tories “had a particular hatred for the Irish Presbyterians, burned their meeting and dwelling houses, and destroyed their property wherever [they] could.”⁸⁴ He also stressed that the British army summarily executed Irish Presbyterian prisoners, unlike those of other national and religious denominations.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ For Scots American Presbyterians’ revolutionary fervor and philosophy, see Gideon Mailer, *John Witherspoon’s American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2017).

⁸¹ Ramsay, *History*, p. 201.

⁸² Ramsay, *History*, p. 201.

⁸³ For Irish Americans in the American Revolution, see Kelly A. Miller (ed.), *Irish Immigrants in the land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs of Colonial and Revolutionary America* (Oxford University Press, 2003) and Philip Thomas Tucker, *The Important Role of the Irish in the American Revolution* (Washington D.C.: Heritage Books, 2019). For Americans and Irish’s perceptions of each other during the American Revolutionary Era, see Gordon S. Wood, “the American Revolution and the Uses and Abuses of Ireland,” in Francis D. Cogliano and Patrick Griffin (eds.), *Ireland and America: Empire, Revolution, and Sovereignty* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2021), pp. 53-68.

⁸⁴ William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution so far as it related to... South Carolina* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), p. 217.

⁸⁵ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, p. 219. See other examples of cruelties, pp. 69, 86, 139-140, 143, 284. Benjamin Legaré in Fludd, p. 92, mentions that prisoners were massacred after a promise of amnesty was broken.

Interestingly, Moultrie, a Scotsman, noted British exactions against Irish Americans, while Ramsay, an Irish American, emphasized British exactions against Scottish Americans. British enmity against Irishmen and Scotsmen was likely due to their historical and recent anti-British monarchy struggles. After 1775, through their Volunteers' Campaign, Ireland's Presbyterians had seized the opportunity of the American Revolutionary War to struggle against Britain for greater political and economic freedom.⁸⁶ Furthermore, as mentioned above, 1775 was only three decades after the Jacobite Rebellion, cruelly repressed after the Scots' defeat at Culloden.

Irish South Carolinians, who came from a country that had tried to liberate itself from English Anglican royal rule for six centuries, pervaded South Carolina's American Revolutionary War leadership.⁸⁷ For example, John Rutledge was South Carolina's first Revolutionary President and adamantly rejected any compromise with Britain. For his part, Pierce Butler, a native Irishman, performed the crucial role of marshaling the militia into an effective force. At the same time, Irish-South Carolinian officers' sufferings during the war were significant. For example, Tate's entire family, except a brother, were killed; and Butler's two-year old toddler died during his plantation's conflagration. This suffering likely inflamed their revolutionary ardor and resentment against Britain. Indeed, all these Irish South Carolinian Irish military leaders would later supported the French Revolution; and among them were five pro-French South Carolina

⁸⁶ For the Volunteer Campaign in Ireland for greater Irish autonomy, see Morgan Llewelyn, *The Young Irish Rebels* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2001) and, especially, Allan Blackstock, *Double Traitors? The Belfast Volunteers and Yeomen, 1778-1828* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2001). For Irish Catholics and the French Revolution, see Benjamin W. Kennedy, W. Benjamin, "Catholics in Ireland and the French Revolution," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, vol. 85, no. 3/4 (1974): 221-229

⁸⁷ Irish heritage and support of the French Revolution is developed in Chapters Two and Four.

leaders: O'Brien Smith, William Tate, Pierce Butler, Aedanus Burke, and John Rutledge Sr.⁸⁸ Irish revolutionary spirit was also noted by American and French officers during the Siege of Savannah in 1779, with regards to the Irish regiments of the French armies, who were continuously employed for centuries by France as the most reliable, self-sacrificing, and nearly fanatical, anti-British soldiers who were animated by their inveterate hatred of the English monarchy.⁸⁹

Huguenot families also enthusiastically joined the American Revolution. For example, the members of the Laurens, Huger, Legaré, and Lehré families entered service in revolutionary armies at the earliest hour. Their enthusiasm for the cause made them heroes.⁹⁰ The Laurens family exemplifies the revolutionary tradition of the elite French Huguenots who had fled the French monarchy's persecutions and would support the French Revolution in the 1790s. From the early 1760s, Henry Laurens opposed British policies towards South Carolina. In 1774, he joined the new revolutionary state government and, in 1775, became its president. In March 1776, he became South Carolina's Vice-President after its declaration of independence.⁹¹

The revolutionary tradition of the South Carolina elite that made the ground fertile for supporting the French Revolution, in the words of Ebenezer Smith Thomas, was not limited to the descendants of Dissenters. For example, Thomas Tudor Tucker, born as a privileged descendant

⁸⁸ Pierce Butler, politically, and William Tate, militarily. Irish Americans formed practically the entire administration of the Republican Society. As we shall see, they also took direction as when the Irish regiment of Charleston took over a British ship at anchor of its own volition. See PB to Alexander Gillon, 13/2/1790, PBP, SCL.

⁸⁹ Thomas Pinckney in RDL, UVA.

⁹⁰ Among these Huguenot families, Francis Huger, Benjamin Legaré, and Thomas Lehré became founding members of the Republican Society of South Carolina in July 1793. Cf. chapter four.

⁹¹ Joseph P. Kelly, "Henry Laurens: the Southern Man of Conscience," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 107, no. 2 (April 2006), pp. 82-123.

of the Welsh Tudors and the son of Bermudan Royal Governor Daniel Tudor Tucker, was also the younger brother of the President of the Bermuda Royal Council, Henry Tudor Tucker, who was the Acting Royal Governor in 1775. After emigrating to Charleston in the 1760s, Thomas immediately joined the American revolutionaries, in 1775.⁹² That same year, he suggested to Washington to appeal to the Bermudian people for assistance, an advice the general enthusiastically obliged. And Tucker's brother Henry, as mentioned, the Acting Royal Governor of the Bahamas, favorably answered this American appeal for aid.⁹³

The unique violence in South Carolina during the American Revolutionary War also likely contributed to the elite's hostility against Britain. No American elite group suffered a bloodier or longer war, experienced more battles, suffered imprisonment in worse conditions, or participated in a fiercer civil war. The two most calamitous defeats of American patriots also occurred in South Carolina, at the Siege of Charleston (May 1780) and the Battle of Camden (August 1780). At Charleston's fall, uniquely among American elites, the entire South Carolina officer class was captured and suffered greatly in the notorious British prison ships.⁹⁴

⁹² William Kerr, "Bermuda and the American Revolution," *Bermuda Historical Quarterly*, vol. 30, no 1 (1968), p. 47. For a complete biography of Tucker, see Diana Dowdy, "A School for Stoicism: Thomas Tudor Tucker and the Republican Age," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 96, no. 8 (April 1995): 1-89. Dowdy considers Tucker an ethical man who abided by the highest moral principles.

⁹³ Kerr, "Bermuda," p. 47. Henry Tucker was likely never prosecuted for high treason due to his aristocratic and political prominence.

⁹⁴ For a contemporaneous description of South Carolina officers in prison ships, see the reminiscences of Moultrie, Fludd, Ramsay, Thomas, and regarding northern states, Thomas Dring's experience in Thomas Dring, *Recollection of Life in the Prison Ship Jersey* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2010). For modern analyses of South Carolina officers (who included three signatories of the Declaration of Independence) in prison ships, see T. Cole Jones, *Captives of Liberty: Prisoners of War and Politics of Vengeance in the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020) and, especially, James Waring McCrady and C. L. Bragg, *Patriots in Exile: Charleston Rebels in Saint Augustine during the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of Columbia Press, 2020). For a general account of British prison ships in the American Revolution, see Larry Lowenthal, *Hell on Earth: British Prison*

Furthermore, whereas peace quickly arrived in the other American states after the Battle of Yorktown (October 1781), South Carolina continued to suffer war for another year during which John Laurens was killed, in August 1782, the last American officer's casualty.

Furthermore, the uniquely vicious civil war, pitting the anti-British Lowcountry against the small farmers' Loyalist backcountry, included massacres of Patriots, perpetrated particularly by Banastre Tarleton, who was nicknamed "The Butcher" and "Bloody Ban," and who was the origin of the term: "Tarleton's Quarter."⁹⁵ South Carolina memorialists emphasized the uniquely violent features of the conflict pitting the South Carolina elite against both the British and Loyalists. For example, Ramsay angrily recalled that Britain violated the sacred rights of nations during wartime: "In almost every district, [the British army's] progress was marked with blood and with deeds so atrocious as reflected disgrace to their arms."⁹⁶ He specifies that at the Battle of Camden, Brigadier-General Griffith Rutherford "was killed after his submission to a party of [Tarleton's] British Legion."⁹⁷ The fact that he is mistaken since Rutherford survived Camden to continue, after a prisoner exchange, the war in the Southern Theatre under General Greene, only reinforces the sense of his Anglophobia.⁹⁸

Ships in the American Revolution (Saratoga, NY: Purple Mountains Press, 2009). Lowenthal argues that more American soldiers died in prison ships than in all war battles combined.

⁹⁵ For the background of South Carolina's civil war between Lowcountry Patriots and backcountry Loyalists, and for Patriot South Carolina's respective desire of revenge and readiness to forgive in the 1780s, see Robert S. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of Columbia Press, 1987), Russel F. Weigley, *The Partisan War: the South Carolina Campaign of 1780-1782* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975) and Rebecca Brannon, *From Revolution to Reunion: The Reintegration of the South Carolina Loyalists* (Columbia, 2016), pp. 1-50. Interesting information on South Carolina's loyalism, especially African-American loyalism, is also analyzed in Quintana, *Making A Slave State*, pp. 15-47.

⁹⁶ Ramsay, *History*, p. 209.

⁹⁷ Ramsay, *History*, p. 207.

⁹⁸ John Buchanan, *The Road to Charleston: Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2019), pp. 247-248, 252.

Ramsay contends, perhaps humoristically, that a reason for backcountry's Loyalism consisted of the fact that small farmers, unlike coastal areas' elite denizens, did not drink tea. Consequently, they did not have to pay tax on tea, unlike planters who drank tea daily.⁹⁹ He also maintains the idea, developed and confirmed by Robert S. Lambert, that other pro-British factors among backcountry farmers originated from their gratitude for the land they had "recently been granted by the king [after 1765]" and their jealousy towards planters they "envied."¹⁰⁰ In addition, based on his analysis of Jack P. Greene's study of South Carolina's Lowcountry republicanism, Lambert also asserts that backcountry Loyalists were pitted against Patriotic Lowcountry planters for two other reasons: They preferred to be ruled by Britain which was further away from the backcountry than Charleston which was located relatively near and, therefore, more likely to interfere with their regional autonomy and values; and as many were Scotch-Irish, they had a tradition of loyalty to the British Crown that contrasted to the Lowcountry planters' long-term abidance, by 1760, by the English Whig Country republican ideology.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, Lambert maintains that, unlike backcountry Loyalism, Lowcountry planters' Loyalism was small. Those, like the three brothers of William Moultrie, were an exception; furthermore, these Loyalist planters had practically all fled the state by 1779, either moving to

⁹⁹ Ramsay, *History*, p. 207.

¹⁰⁰ Ramsay, *History*, p. 207.

¹⁰¹ Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, pp. 3-21. See also Jack P. Greene, "Bridge to Revolution: The Wilkes Fund Controversy and South Carolina, 1769-1775," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 29 (1963): 19-52 and *ibid.*, "The Gadsden Election Controversy and the Revolutionary Movement in South Carolina," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 46 (1959): 469-492.

Britain or, like one of the Moultrie brothers, taking up residence as officials in British East Florida. In December 1782, the very few remaining Loyalist planters of Charleston left the city with the British army, never to return. The Loyalists who remained in South Carolina consisted of the backcountry's small farmers and Charleston's artisans and merchants, the latter usually being British-born traders who had arrived in South Carolina in the few decades before the American Revolution. Lambert posits that, before 1779, Loyalist backcountry's small farmers and Charleston's merchants and artisans respectively constituted 45% and 30% of their total numbers, whereas Loyalist backcountry's large farmers and Lowcountry planters totaled only 15% to their aggregate figures.¹⁰²

Similarly to Ramsay, Moultrie angrily kept reminding his audience of the violence that occurred in the state during the war and British exactions and injustice, which he contrasted with French officers' gallantry. He stressed the numerous battle casualties and the views of burned-out plantations and wandering civilians and military refugees in rags and with insufficient food. He also mentioned his grief caused by scenes of havoc.¹⁰³ For example, he recalled seeing on route to Charleston numerous corpses still lying unburied in the woods and fields on both sides of the roads when he was finally able to return to the South Carolina capital.¹⁰⁴ This macabre view happened in late 1782 when other states had already begun reconstruction for over a year.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, pp. 3-21, 9, 69, 69, note 88, 185-197.

¹⁰³ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, p. 140.

¹⁰⁴ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, pp. 141-142.

¹⁰⁵ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, p. 142.

However, Moultrie did not judge these war desolations as inevitable. He castigated British authorities for allowing exactions that violated civilized warfare. For example, during Charleston's siege, he condemned British general Henry Clinton's threats to have the city sacked unless it surrendered.¹⁰⁶ He also denounced the British "great barbarities" and exclaimed: "To enumerate their cruelties would fill a volume. The British detachments were not backward in their severities against the citizens, many of whom were hung up, or otherwise treated cruelly, or put to death in a wanton manner; in short, the war was carried on with great barbarities."¹⁰⁷ In addition, he recalled that the British army refused to provide medicine to physicians and food to prisoners-of-war in Charleston's jails and the prison ships at anchor in the harbor; and he believed that officers had died due to such mistreatment. As noted earlier, he also condemned summary executions of Irish South Carolinian Presbyterian prisoners of war. Furthermore, he excoriated the hanging of the former state senator, Colonel Isaac Hayne, whose execution he judged to have betrayed a former understanding.¹⁰⁸ He also viewed the British as not following the Laws of Nations specifically towards officers and reminded the British commander that "the most respectable planters of the state" had been transferred to horrid prison ships off Charleston's harbor in August 1780, three months after the city surrendered in May, even though no such proviso existed in the terms of surrender."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, pp. 69, 86.

¹⁰⁷ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, p. 219.

¹⁰⁸ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, p. 143.

¹⁰⁹ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, p. 141. While recollecting this British violation of the terms of surrender of Charleston, Moultrie refers to these terms as a "treaty," an important term.

These British exactions, ubiquitously recalled by South Carolina memorialists, likely led to the elite class's Anglophobia. In 1795, the Duke of La Rochefoucauld Liancourt, staying at, Ralph Izard's plantation, asserted that all South Carolina officer-veterans "agreed to cherish an inveterate hatred against England."¹¹⁰ Enmity against Britain, created by the violence of the war, likely played a role for their later support for Revolutionary France, according to the Sanskrit adage that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."¹¹¹ This adage, in its Latin form, *Amicus meus, inimicus inimici mei*, was used and abided by in the Eighteenth Century world.¹¹² In South Carolina, albeit writing five decades after the final passing of the Revolutionary generation, Gabriel Manigault, a descendent of the famous Manigault revolutionary planter-family, affirmed that the belief in this adage was a "natural feeling" among the people of South Carolina.¹¹³

SOUTH CAROLINA ENLIGHTENMENT CULTURE

In the late Eighteenth-century, Charleston was "the wealthiest city in the wealthiest colony of British North America" and "a center of the American Enlightenment."¹¹⁴ The values of the Enlightenment were more pronounced in Charleston than in any other southern town and, according to Michael L. Kennedy, "the city was considered the "most [liberal] city of the American South."¹¹⁵ Enlightenment writers held a prime place in the well-educated and cosmopolitan

¹¹⁰ La Rochefoucauld Liancourt, *Voyages*, pp. 113, 158-159.

¹¹¹ Kautilya. *Arthashastra*, translated by R. Shamasastri (Bangalore: Government Press, 1915).

¹¹² Forrest Wickman, "Enemy of my Enemy killed by his Friend?" *Slate*, May 16, 2013.

¹¹³ Gabriel Manigault, *A Political Creed: Embracing some Ascertained Truths in Sociology and Politics and an Answer to H. George's "Progress and Poverty"* (New York: Wynkoop and Hollenbeck Printers, 1834), p. 68. For Anglophobia as a source of support of the French Revolution, see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class*, p. 70.

¹¹⁴ Mark G. Spencer (ed.), "Charleston," *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of the American Enlightenment*, vol. 1 (New York, London, and New Delhi: Bloomsbury Incorporated, 2015).

¹¹⁵ Michael L Kennedy, "A French Jacobin Club in Charleston, South Carolina, 1792-1795," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 91 (1990), p. 5.

society. For example, after its foundation in 1750, the Library Company of Charleston immediately purchased Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*, and its catalog listed Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau.¹¹⁶ Voltaire and Rousseau were, indeed, well-regarded by Charleston's elite society. For example, while entrenched in a military barricade during Savannah's siege in 1779, Thomas Pinckney found the time to write a letter to his sister in which he advised her to read the radical Genevan's educational precepts.¹¹⁷ For his part, Ebenezer S. Thomas, while on a journey in France, undertook a pilgrimage to the sepulchres of Voltaire and Rousseau to honor their memory.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the Jefferson-protégé Philip Freneau's South Carolina brother, Peter Freneau, formed the center of Voltaire's Charleston aficionados.¹¹⁹ Thomas reminisced that "Freneau's French was unequalled. He loved Hume and Voltaire and entertained his friends by reading to them from the famous editions of Voltaire's [reform] plans."¹²⁰ Additionally, Enlightenment writers, such as Montesquieu, Hume, Adam

¹¹⁶ Kennedy, "A French Jacobin Club," p. 5. For a deft and thoughtful analysis of planters' transatlantic cosmopolitanism, see Emma Hart, *Building Charleston: Town and Society in the Eighteenth Century British Atlantic World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), pp. 90-94. She views Charleston as a uniquely cosmopolitan city in the colonial American South. Unlike their cosmopolitan counterparts in Virginia residing principally in plantations, S. Carolina planters, Hart argues, built a hybrid plantation-urban society, where Charleston had the prime of place. A perusal of pro-French Revolution gazettes also shows the refined cosmopolitanism of planters. Gazettes included a poem on the first or second page and sophisticated editorials on national or transatlantic topics. Articles also discussed European society and politics. See, for example, the poem, "Happiness by the Bounteous Heaven Assigned," *Columbia Herald*, 26/5/1788.

¹¹⁷ Thomas Pinckney to Mary Pinckney, 1/10/1779, PREPS.

¹¹⁸ Thomas, *Reminiscences*, pp. 90-94. For the influence of Voltaire and Rousseau on the American Revolutionary generation, see Leo Damrosch, "Friends of Rousseau," *Humanities*, vol. 33, no. 4 (July-August 2012) and *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius* (Philadelphia: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005). Damrosch argues that Jefferson's Declaration of Independence paragraph, "We hold these truths, etc.," came from Rousseau's *Le Contrat Social* (1750).

¹¹⁹ For Freneau's career as publisher, planter, and S.C. Secretary of State, see Milledge B. Seigler and Richard B. Davis, "Peter Freneau, Carolina Republican," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 13, no. 3 (August 1947): 395-404.

¹²⁰ Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 77, who argued that Freneau's favorite authors, alongside Hume and Voltaire, included the Enlightenment historians Edward Gibbon and William Robertson, playwrights Thomas Smollett and Alain Lesage, and novelists Quevedo and Cervantes. He also said that "[Freneau's] society was courted. [He was] one whose like we never shall look upon again." He also noted Judge Burke's enactment of laws, such as refusing "to give the death penalty to horse thieves."

Smith, Rapin, Diderot, Davila, and Locke, were extremely popular among Charleston's elite, who also read the revolutionary histories of Rome, Venice, Genoa, Naples, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal.¹²¹ The elite read these Enlightenment authors in their mansions' private libraries. For example, the Huger family was famous for its extensive and richly endowed library and Pierce Butler requested his friend John Huger to send him books to reconstitute his library, which the wartime conflagration of his plantation had destroyed. In the 1790s, he repeatedly asked his American and English friends to send him books, a favor he frequently returned.¹²² This elite bibliophilia foreshadowed an astonishing event: In 1793, in the middle of the Franco-British naval war, a ship arrived at Charleston with a cargo of 30,000 books, whose dealer believed would be quickly purchased.¹²³

The South Carolina elite, integrated into the Enlightenment's *Republic of Letters* and looking eastward for its intellectual and political inspiration, also corresponded with their European counterparts.¹²⁴ It interacted with contemporaneous Enlightenment philosophers such as Joseph Priestly and Richard Price. Price, a friend of Butler, had his son hosted at the United States Senator's mansion. The Republican Society of South Carolina later grieved his passing.¹²⁵ Similarly

¹²¹ Rogers Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, p. 101.

¹²² PB to John Hunter, 22/11/1791, PBP, SCL.

¹²³ Rogers, *Reminiscences in the Age of the Pinckneys*, p 101.

¹²⁴ America as a Republic of Letters, akin to European nations, is magisterially analyzed by Dennis Carr, "A Republic of Letters: Writing Virtue and the Forging of an American Nation," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. 16/10/2016. Youtube.com/@mfaboston. Carr argues that American planters in the late Eighteenth-century were committed to forming one transatlantic, republican community of intellect and "virtue" with their European counterparts.

¹²⁵ For the Enlightenment's Millennialism principles, see Richard Landes, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). On the Enlightenment activist Richard Price, see Rémy Duthille, "Richard Price on Patriotism and Universal Benevolence," *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 28 (2012), pp. 24–41, and Anthony Page, "'A Species of Slavery:' Richard Price's Rational Dissent and Anti-Slavery," *Slavery and Abolition*, vol. 32, no.1 (2011): 53–73, as well as Carl B. Cone, (1952). *Torchbearer of Freedom: The Influence of Richard Price on Eighteenth-century Thought* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1952). With regards to Priestly

to Price and Priestly, planters such as Pierce Butler and Richard Beresford held Enlightenment's Millennialist and universalist principles, eventually leading them to consider the French Revolution as the harbinger of a new world founded on justice and humanity.¹²⁶ Planters also befriended the reformist Irish aristocrat Lord Wyman, who came to South Carolina and visited Governor Moultrie and U. S. Senator Pierce Butler in the early 1790s.¹²⁷

Charleston's cultural institutions also displayed Enlightenment culture. A liberal arts university, the College of Charleston was founded in 1770 by Edward Rutledge and Charles C. Pinckney. It became the fourth public university in America and the first in the South. In the 1770s and 1780s, the city boasted four gazettes. Charleston also took pride in its well-attended theater, which served as an operatic venue. It also hosted the Library Company, America's second oldest subscription library, which ordered gazettes from France, including the prestigious Enlightenment periodical *Mercure de France*, for whom the emancipationist, republican, and Americanophile, Jacques Pierre Brissot, contributed articles.¹²⁸ Brissot, an Enlightenment idealist, venerated the United States, which he considered a republican Eden. He visited the country in 1788 and 1789 and might have traveled to Charleston. Another Enlightenment reformer and philosopher stayed among the elite: the Duke of La Rochefoucauld Liancourt. His

and his welcome of the French Revolution, see Clarke Garrett, "Joseph Priestley, the Millennium, and the French Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34.1 (1973): 51–66, and Martin Fitzpatrick, "Joseph Priestley and the Cause of Universal Toleration," *The Price-Priestley Newsletter* 1 (1977): 3–30.

¹²⁶ Millennialist iconography is prevalent in the Great Seal of the United States, devised in 1783 by French Revolutionary War veteran L'Enfant, who joined the Continental Army at age 23 and served with South Carolina planters at Savannah and Charleston. He devised and bought the medals for the South Carolina Cincinnati members from France in coordination with William Moultrie. The Millennial mottoes on the Great Seal: "*Novo Ordo Seclorum*" (A New Order for the Ages) and "*Annuit Coeptis*" ([Providence] favors [our revolutionary] undertakings.)

¹²⁷ PB to General Gunn, 17/8/1790 and 20/8/1790, LPB. Also, see the editor's note of the 17/8/1790's letter, LPB.

¹²⁸ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p.184.

visit occurred in the 1790s, but he had already made friends with elite members from Charleston in the 1780s during their European journeys.¹²⁹

The South Carolina elite also displayed their Enlightenment cultural values and tastes through classical music. Fraser observed that “the love of music was a characteristic of the [elite society] of Charleston and generally cultivated by them as an accomplishment.” He noted that the melomaniac elite attended a music institution in particular: Saint Cecilia Society, which was “an association of planters amateurs.” He also asserted that “on its rolls were inscribed the names of our most respectable planters and among its officers were always found some of the first men of the State.” Furthermore, he reminisced that Saint Cecilia’s concerts were well attended, and their audience included “the Governor, the Chief Justice, [and] two assistant judges.” The orchestras played planters’ “favorite composers,” such as Haydn and Mozart.¹³⁰

Fraser also described another Enlightenment elite cultural society: The Cossack Club, to whom he belonged alongside eminent planters, such as Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, who assiduously attended its meetings. He emphasized that “those who composed [this] best private society stood high in the service of their country and brought to the conversation their knowledge and experience as statesmen, diplomatists, soldiers, and jurists.” He also noted the club’s “charm of literary discourse” and the fact that, in addition to the preparation of sumptuous dinners, the

¹²⁹ Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Voyages dans les Etats-Unis d’Amérique du Nord* (Paris: Du Pont, Buisson, et Pougens, 1799), p. 143. He stayed at Ralph Izard’s plantation, one of his South Carolina friends. Whom he had met in France in the 1780s.

¹³⁰ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 59.

elite company's sole "rule" consisted of "talk on subjects to *enlighten* others" and of "the contribution to the very extent of [one's] intelligence [of] whatever might promote happy and *enlightened* intercourse."¹³¹

Charities, "unsurpassed by any similar institutions in the United States," also revealed South Carolina's Enlightenment culture. The Orphan House, the South Carolina Society, and the Fellowship Society provided, financially and educationally, for widows and orphans, who seem to have included both American and French family members of soldiers killed during the American Revolutionary War. The ethnic-based elite societies, such as the Hibernian Society and St. Andrew's Society, also "possessed extensive funds doing charitable work" for their indigent co-nationals. Wealthy marine societies, such as the Marine Anti-Britannic Society of Commodore Gillon and Christopher Gadsden, also cared for poor mariners.¹³²

Enlightenment culture was likely indoctrinated into the minds of young planters during their schooling in Europe, overseas schooling which was, by far, the largest of any American colony/state. For example, half of the American students enrolled at Oxford came from South Carolina.¹³³ As earlier mentioned, they underwent primary and secondary education in boarding schools in London, France, and Switzerland and undertook tertiary education in British universities. For example, elite youth, such as Beresford, the Rutledges, and the Pinckneys,

¹³¹ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 50-51, who also recollected that dinners were "expensive" as they cost two pounds.

¹³² Thomas, *Reminiscences*, pp. 36-37, who mentioned that widows helped by the South Carolina Society received an allowance of 300 pounds per annum, a generous sum for the times.

¹³³ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 68.

attended prestigious English elite schools, including the centuries-old Westminster School in London, and gained diplomas in Classics from Oxford and Cambridge and degrees in London Law Schools; the study of Classics and Law was considered essential for a later life of civic duty and public service.¹³⁴ While students in England and Scotland, the elite youth ineluctably visited France and sometimes Italy or Germany. Their continental journey was named the “grand tour” and formed an experience that the Enlightenment-educated classes were enthusiastic about.¹³⁵ For his part, Aedanus Burke, excluded from Irish and British universities because of his Catholic religion, studied at the Jesuit seminary of Saint-Omer in France.¹³⁶

The Laurens and Grimké families, including their most famous scion, John Laurens, exemplify the Enlightenment in South Carolina through their concern about plantation life and the economy. Henry Laurens, a close friend of Lachlan McIntosh, held the role of patriarch of the Laurens family in the 1770s and 1780s.¹³⁷ As a youth, Henry trained in London at the business company of Richard Oswald, who became famous as the chief British negotiator of the Treaty of Paris. He eventually served as South Carolina’s vice-president (Lieutenant Governor) at the time of Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, to which he duly appended his signature, alongside twenty-one other Founding Fathers. He became President of the Continental Congress and sent his son and daughter, John and Martha, to Switzerland to study in a French-speaking school. In

¹³⁴ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 88.

¹³⁵ Ritchie Robertson, *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness* (New York and London: Penguin, 2020).

¹³⁶ John C. Meleny, *The Public Life of Aedanus Burke* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, for The Hibernian Society, 1989), p. 67.

¹³⁷ James Grant Wilson and John Fiske (eds), “Lachlan McIntosh,” *Appleton’s Cyclopedia of American Biography* (London: Forgotten books, 2018). Also, Meserve, “The McIntoshes,” p. 234.

1776, Henry Laurens freed hundreds of enslaved Africans.¹³⁸ He had experienced qualms of conscience due to the contradiction between American demands for freedom and South Carolina enslavement.¹³⁹ Robert H. Bremmer affirms that Laurens was ‘seeing the inconsistency [of] his claim of exploitation by the hand of the British [with] his slaveholding.’¹⁴⁰ Paul Finkelman also asserts that he “carried out [his son’s plan] of manumission.” Laurens also abided by an idealistic view of patriotic duty. While imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1780, he rejected any suggestion to be exchanged for his son, John, and when the latter was killed in 1782, Laurens said that he preferred that his son had died as a hero than lived without patriotism.¹⁴¹

Henry Laurens’ children might also have qualms of conscience about the plantation system. His son, John Laurens, was famous for his audacious ethical principles and was close friends with Enlightenment emancipationist figures such as the Marquis of Lafayette and Alexander Hamilton.¹⁴² As an American Revolution officer, he was perplexed by the institution of enslavement, and with his father’s support, he called for the emancipation of enslaved Africans who agreed to join black military regiments.¹⁴³ An abolitionist at heart, he still preferred

¹³⁸ Barbara Tuckman, *First Salute: A View of the American Revolution*, (NY: Random House, 1988), p. 67. American Philosophical Society, “Henry Laurens,” 2019.

¹³⁹ Tuckman, *First Salute*, p. 67.

¹⁴⁰ Robert H. Bremmer, “Henry Laurens, the Founding Father who was Imprisoned in the Tower of London,” *Early America Review* (April 1965), 3rd Series, vol. 77, pp. 3-42.

¹⁴¹ Bremmer, “Henry Laurens,” pp. 3-42.

¹⁴² For Lafayette’s emancipation efforts, see Hank Parfitt, “Lafayette and Slavery,” *The Lafayette Society* at lafayettesociety.org. For the view that he was a “true abolitionist,” see Diane Shaw (ed.), *A True Friend of the Cause of Liberty and the Anti-Slavery Movement* (New York: The Grolier Club and Lafayette College, 2016). For the theory that Hamilton was an “uncompromising abolitionist,” see Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton: A Biography* (New York and London: Penguin, 2005), p. 592. For the view that Hamilton, the son-in-law of the enslaver Schuyler, was not an emancipationist, see Gillian Mary Disney, *Alexander Hamilton, and Anti-Slavery: Deconstructing the Myth* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

¹⁴³ Gregory D. Massey, ‘slaves and Liberty in the American Revolution: John Laurens Black Regiment Proposal,’ *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* vol.4, no. 3 (Winter-Spring 2003), p. 34.

emancipation as he thought, as all or most of his emancipationist contemporaries, that an immediate freeing of all enslaved people would do them more harm than good.¹⁴⁴ Henry Laurens' daughter, Martha, also displayed Enlightenment values by marrying Dr. David Ramsay, the Princeton-educated President of the South Carolina Senate (1788-1797).¹⁴⁵ As marriages were arranged in Eighteenth-century South Carolina, her marriage with the anti-enslavement Dr. Ramsay indicates that the Laurens family held significant anti-enslavement sentiments, as her father would not have approved of this marriage without sharing similar inclinations. Even though Ramsay's questioning of enslavement cost him, in 1798, his appointment as U. S. Senator, he was repeatedly elected as state representative for the Lowcountry, from 1788, and as the State Senate's President from 1792 to 1797, showing that, in the late 1780s and 1790s, the South Carolina elite was tolerant of people who held different views than their own and could nominate them to important political positions, something unimaginable in the 1800s.¹⁴⁶ In addition to the Laurens, the Grimké family expressed disquiet about enslavement. In the 1780s, John Faucheraud Grimké, an Associate Justice, was the Grandmaster of Charleston's Freemasons, an international society that was, then, known for its Enlightenment ideology and anti-enslavement sentiment.¹⁴⁷ Alongside Laurens, Ramsay, Lachlan McIntosh's father, and other eminent coastal leaders, Grimké was suspected of anti-enslavement sentiment. His two daughters, Sarah and

¹⁴⁴ For Laurens' ideal to "abolish slavery completely," but his flawed reasoning that such abolition of enslavement would do more harm than good for black people, see Nadelhaft, *The Disorder of War*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁴⁵ From 1789 to 1794, South Carolina witnessed a situation that might seem paradoxical to Historians arguing the existence of a dichotomy between middling class pro-French radicals and a conservative elite: The most conservative state house, the Senate, was led by the pro-French Ramsay, while, until 1794, the anti-French Revolution and Hamiltonian Federalist led the less conservative state house, the House of Representatives, Jacob Read. See "Jacob Read" *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Charles Fraser, *Reminiscences of Charleston*, p. 151.

¹⁴⁷ See Geoffrey Cubitt, *Freemasonry and Anti-Slavery*, archives.history.ac.uk. and Joseph Yannielli, "George Thompson among the Africans: Empathy, Authority, and Insanity in the Age of Abolition," *Journal of American History*, vol. 96, no. 4 (March 2010), pp. 979-1000.

Angelina, became leading abolitionists in the 1800s and eventually departed South Carolina because of enslavement. His son, Thomas, remaining in Charleston, became renowned for his radical views on non-violence, and on behalf of free Black people.¹⁴⁸

South Carolina's Enlightenment liberalism was also demonstrated by the way it treated the colony's/state's Jewish planters; in fact, until the religious reforms of Revolutionary France in 1790/1791, no other political or social system in the transatlantic world treated Jewish people so well and so equally. During the colonial period, South Carolina treated Jewish people much better than the religiously-intolerant Puritan Northeast. Huguenots, Catholics, Anglicans, and Jewish people got along well, with even a Jew elected in 1702 to the legislature although, in violation of the South Carolina constitution, he was allowed to take his seat.¹⁴⁹ Still, the colony's religious tolerance was so prevalent that a traveler noticed: "[Charleston's] inhabitants were from the beginning renowned for tenderness towards each other without regard or respect of nation or religion."¹⁵⁰

Just before the advent of the American Revolutionary War, South Carolina became the first political state in the transatlantic world to elect to its legislature a Jewish man, the planter Francis Salvador.¹⁵¹ Salvador was also the friend of planters who later supported the French Revolution,

¹⁴⁸ Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters From South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition* (Cary, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

¹⁴⁹ Leon Huhner, *The Jews of South Carolina: from the Earliest Settlement to the End of the American Revolution* (Baltimore: The Frieden Wald Company Press, 1904), p. 77.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Paul Finkelman (ed.), *Towards a Usable Past: Liberty and the State Constitutions* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), pp. 45-46.

¹⁵¹ Finkelman (ed.), *Towards a Usable Past*, p. 18, 24.

such as Charles C. Pinckney, John Rutledge, and Samuel Hammond.¹⁵² During the Revolutionary War, of all the former British colonies, South Carolina witnessed the greatest number of enlistment of Jewish men into the rebel army and militia; and whereas in the other rebellious states, Jewish support for the cause usually limited itself to financing the Revolutionary War, in South Carolina, Jews enlisted in droves and some reached the position of higher officers, such as Major Salvador, Colonel Solomon Bush, and Captain Lushington.¹⁵³ Some, such as Major Benjamin Nones, fought in the international republican regiments of Lafayette and Pulaski; others fought alongside gentile planters and French troops at the Battle of Savannah and the Siege of Charleston.¹⁵⁴

After the war, South Carolina's Jewish people highly praised Governor Moultrie's opening of a new synagogue in 1794.¹⁵⁵ As shall also be discussed later, there is strong indication that some of the Jewish officers became radical Republicans or Jeffersonians while primary source evidence suggesting support for Washington and Adams' administrations is missing, although it must have of course occurred as well. One Jewish soldier, Captain Abraham Sasportas joined the pro-French Democratic-Republican Society in 1793; his nephew, Isaac Sasportas was later hanged in 1799 by the British after, against his uncle's advice, he tried to instigate a slave revolt in Jamaica. In 1800, Major Nones showed his international republicanism by praising Pulaski and in 1801, President Jefferson nominated Colonel Reuben Etting to be United States Marshall of Maryland.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² For Salvador's friendships, see Finkelman, *Usable Past*, p. 18. A South Carolina forest is now named after Salvador.

¹⁵³ Finkelman (ed.), *toward a Usable Past*, pp. 47-51.

¹⁵⁴ Finkelman (ed.), *toward a Usable Past*, pp. 47-51.

¹⁵⁵ Finkelman (ed.), *toward a Usable Past*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁵⁶ Finkelman (ed.), *toward a Usable Past*, p. 26.

It must also be noted that the Lowcountry planters' liberalism, analyzed above, did not extend to the backcountry. The backcountry consisted of all the colony/state's territory 50 miles west of the Atlantic coast and, therefore, about 3/4th of the state's area. It was also quite different socially and economically from the Lowcountry: By 1789, after a massive British-sponsored immigration, especially of Scotch-Irish, it had 3/4th of South Carolina's population, consisting overwhelmingly of poor white small farmers in contrast to the Lowcountry which was controlled by wealthy planters surrounded by an immense number of enslaved blacks. The backcountry's few Black people worked in small farms or as house servants. Unlike the Lowcountry with its marshy and sandy landscape that was perfect for growing rice, the plantation economy would take a long time to penetrate the backcountry as its dry and hard soil was better suited for crops, such as hemp.¹⁵⁷

The backcountry was also different from the Lowcountry politically. First, they were suspicious of the arrogant Lowcountry planters whom they believed were not doing enough to assist them, especially against Indian raids and banditti violence. Therefore, they, occasionally, took matters in their hands, without approval of the Lowcountry authorities, as happened with the Regulators' movement of the 1760s when they organized vigilante groups and marched twice to the Lowcountry to demand more political representation and other judicial and administrative reforms on their behalf.¹⁵⁸ Secondly, jealous of their local autonomy which they viewed was

¹⁵⁷ Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise*, pp. 91, 168, 255-259, 260-264.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Maxwell Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963) and *ibid.*, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

threatened by coastal planters' power, they generally abided by strong feelings of loyalty towards more distant Britain, which, furthermore, were reinforced by the extensive Scotch-Irish origin of many inhabitants and by gratitude for having been given land by the British Crown, in the 1760s. As discussed above, backcountry pro-British sentiment, during the American Revolutionary War, led to the region's strong Loyalism and transformation into the epicenter of the state's civil war. After the war, partially punished and partially forgiven for such Toryism, the South Carolina backcountry maintained its demands to the Lowcountry of better treatment, rights and representation, which were significantly met with the transfer of the state's capital to Columbia, the region's main city and some constitutional democratization. Yet, the backcountry thought these reforms insufficient and continued to pressure for more political changes into the 1790s.¹⁵⁹

VOICING SUPPORT FOR RADICAL AND INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICANISM IN THE 1780s

American officers who established the Society of the Cincinnati in 1784 might have had a secondary and unofficial goal, at least in South Carolina, of honoring French officers' participation in the war, strengthen the bonds between American and French officers, and perpetuate the Franco-American alliance, as seen in their correspondence with French Cincinnati, by the very fact that the Cincinnati included French veteran officers in France and America and, as we shall see, by their pro-French activities in the 1790s, during their vituperations of the Neutrality Proclamation and the Jay Treaty, and in their violations of American

1975), pp. 67–90. See also Klein, "Ordering the Backcountry: The South Carolina Regulation," *William and Mary Quarterly* (Winter 1981), vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 661–668.

¹⁵⁹ Klein, Unification; Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, Richard J. Hooker, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

neutrality.¹⁶⁰ Franco-American friendship and the idea of a perpetual Franco-American alliance were central to the prevalent view of American planters in the 1780s. Pro-French Revolution sentiments, such as those Jefferson would hold in the 1790s, were not created *sui generis* but reflected widely-held popular principles shaped by Franco-American cooperation during the American Revolutionary War.¹⁶¹ However, ideological differences among American leaders existed as early as the time of the negotiations of the Treaty of Paris in 1782. Different political philosophical views led American leaders to disagree about the 1787 Constitution and would later make them differ regarding the French Revolution. In the 1780s, leaders who eventually became pro-French Jeffersonians in the 1790s viewed the ideal American political, commercial, and diplomatic system differently from those who became anti-French Revolution Federalists.¹⁶²

The first post-war divergences in political philosophy with regards to popular sovereignty and to relations with France and Britain occurred during the negotiations of the Treaty of Paris in 1782. Hamilton-led conservatives held a vision of the ideal American republic that was inspired by the British political system. They argued that popular sovereignty was located in the elected people's representatives rather than in the people themselves. They also wished to establish a strong, centralized, urban, fiscal-military industrial state financed by commercial relations with Britain. These economic relations enjoined strong diplomatic links with Britain, perhaps even bolstered

¹⁶⁰ Cincinnati By-Laws and Meetings, 1780s-1800s, American Revolution Institute. For the assertion of the French consul that his support in South Carolina came from veterans of the Revolutionary War, see Mangourit to Adel Fauchet, 30/3/1794 in Murdoch, p.77, and other letters of Mangourit in Murdoch, *Correspondence*, pp. 73-79. For South Carolina Governor Moultrie and his sense of honor and friendship towards the French Cincinnati, see William Moultrie to Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, 28/7/1786, Moultrie Papers, SCL.

¹⁶¹ Alexander DeConde, *The Quasi-War Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1797-1801* (New York: Scribner, 1966), pp. 76-78, 82, 194-195.

¹⁶² Shachtman, *How the French Saved America*, pp. 297-303.

by a future military alliance, and in parallel, the necessary weakening -or end of the 1778 alliance with France.¹⁶³ However, as early as 1782, Jefferson, Madison, and their followers opposed this political and economic philosophy.¹⁶⁴ First, Jeffersonians wanted the American government's policymaking on domestic and foreign issues to be based on popular sovereignty, namely, that it should be decided by the people: Unlike Hamilton, Jefferson believed that elected representatives did not become autonomous in their policymaking after elections but had to permanently shape their policies according to the wishes of their constituents. His vision of republicanism was based on the precept of "Popular Will," or the permanent sovereignty of the people. Suspicious of urban industry and finance which he saw as destroyers of republicanism, Jefferson also favored an agrarian state, giving prime place to farmers, whether planters or yeomen, whom he saw as the best citizens to uphold the principles of popular sovereignty.¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, concerning diplomacy and international trade, Jefferson, profoundly anti-British, dismissed strong political and commercial relations with Britain, which he considered America's archenemy. However, he wanted to increase to the broadest possible extent America's relations with France, America's main ally; also, he believed there was a place for "gratitude" in foreign policy. He also thought Britain was 'selfish and commercially arrogant' and hostile and "feared

¹⁶³ See Andrew Shankman, *Original Intent: Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, and the American Founding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 34, 65-67 and, *ibid.*, "How Should We Think about the Election of 1800? *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 33, no. 4 (Winter 2013), p. 753; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, p. 344, note 58; Shachtman, *How the French Saved America*, pp. 297-303.

¹⁶⁴ Andrew Shankman, "Decent Democrat, Indecent Democracy: Madison on Public Opinion and Westward Expansion," *American History*, vol. 38, no. 2 (June 2010): 234-240, pp. 235-239; Coleen Sheehan, *James Madison, and the Spirit of Republican Self-Government* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 1-2, 8, 10-17); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, p. 344, note 58, paraphrasing Saul Cornell, *The Other Founders: anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America: 1788-1828* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

¹⁶⁵ Shankman, "Decent Democrat," pp. 234-239. Sheehan, *James Madison*, pp. 1-17.

her as a country not to be trusted.”¹⁶⁶ Jefferson wished for close relations with France, the only country able to “counterpoise” Britain, and viewed Franco-US relations as his diplomatic “polar star” that would ensure American prosperity and security. These relations were to occur within the framework of the 1778 Franco-US Alliance, the “cornerstone” of American diplomacy.¹⁶⁷

In addition to these political divergences at the national level, political unease also appeared during the debates of the 1787 Constitutional convention. As we shall see, South Carolina participants at the Convention expressed considerable worry about the proposed constitution. This fact reveals more ideological consistency than hitherto believed and partly explains their eventual support for the French Revolution. All four South Carolina delegates at the convention, Pierce Butler, Charles and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and John Rutledge, displayed ideological tenets that foreshadowed Jeffersonian ideology in the 1790s and its correlated support for the French Revolution.

Historians of South Carolina and the French Revolution consider the South Carolina delegates at the Convention as archconservatives with only one goal: The defense of enslavement. Although, indeed, South Carolina planters’ commitment to enslavement is certain,, historians must also discuss the doubts the four state delegates to the Convention entertained about the proposed Federal Constitution: Like other South Carolina planters, such as Aedanus Burke, Thomas T. Tucker, and Robert Anderson, outside the Constitutional convention, they all judged several

¹⁶⁶ Shankman, “Decent Democrat,” pp. 234-239. Sheehan, *James Madison*, pp. 1-17. Thomas Jefferson, *The Anas*, Dec. 27, 1792, FO. Also, DeConde, *The Quasi-War*, pp. vii-viii, 51-52.

¹⁶⁷ DeConde, *The Quasi-War*, p. 52.

important constitutional proposals to be flawed through a lack of liberal principles.¹⁶⁸ However, it must be stressed that these liberal principles, such as those that enjoined a limited and relatively weak central government, did not go against their commitment to enslavement: As earlier discussed regarding E. S. Morgan's link between plantocracy and republican liberalism, they reenforced planters' local autonomy and, therefore, control of the plantation system. Yet, Klein's interpretation of the 1787 Constitutional convention, setting the ground for her arguments about support for the French Revolution, ignores the link between planters' liberalism and defense of enslavement. On the contrary, she suggests that planters supported the 1787 Constitution only for its non-liberal principles, such as the inclusion of a strong executive limiting the power of the states' local autonomy and, therefore, plantocracy. Indeed, she contends that coastal leaders strongly supported the plans for a new centralized constitution that matched their priorities: The defense of enslavement and their opposition to democracy. She argues that sectional views during the Convention foreshadowed the 1790s division in South Carolina between a pro-French Revolution backcountry and an anti-French Revolution Lowcountry. However, disquiet about the 1787 Convention arose not only in the backcountry but also among coastal planters. For example, Klein recognizes that Thomas T. Tucker and Alexander Gillon opposed the 1787 Constitution, but she incorrectly believes them to be from the backcountry when, in fact, they belonged to the coastal elite: As she does throughout her book, she mistakenly assumes that a representative elected in a backcountry constituency must hail from that region. Yet, if they, like Thomas T. Tucker and Alexander Gillon, lived in Charleston and owned Lowcountry plantations, they should be considered part of the coastal elite, regardless of the

¹⁶⁸ Klein, *Unification*, pp. 168-169.

geographical location of the constituency in which they were elected or whether they had backcountry plantations.¹⁶⁹

Klein also asserts that the South Carolina delegation's conservative values were illustrated by their signatures on the Constitution's final draft.¹⁷⁰ However, as discussed, Jeffersonians considered that signing a political document did not mean approval but the approval of the constituents who had elected you to the delegated position. Butler advanced this argument after his return to South Carolina from the Convention, and he refused to attend the South Carolina Congress" debates about the ratification of the 1787 Constitution.¹⁷¹ The South Carolina delegation's objections were based on the same liberal principles they later used to attack federal government policies they deemed anti-French Revolution, such as the Neutrality Proclamation and the Jay Treaty. First, they objected to a strong national government. Butler and Charles C. Pinckney were adamant that the U.S. executive should not have full treaty powers. They believed such powers could lead the government to be bribed by a foreign power, an incidence which Jeffersonians later argued was a significant cause for the federal government's Neutrality Proclamation and Jay Treaty.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Klein, *Unification*, pp. 168-169.

¹⁷⁰ Klein, *Unification*, pp. 168-169.

¹⁷¹ For Butler's belief that he needed to sign the proposed constitution as his political duty to his constituents, regardless of his own opinions, and for his refusal to attend the South Carolina Congress" debates on ratification, see James H. Hutson, "Pierce Butler's Records of the Federal Constitutional convention," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, vol. 37, No. 1 (Winter 1980): 64-73. For these debates, see South Carolina Assembly House, *Debates Which Arose in the House of Representatives of South Carolina: On the Constitution Framed for the United States, by a Convention of Delegates* (Columbia: Swansea Press, 2018).

¹⁷² Hutson, "Pierce Butler's Records of the Federal Constitutional convention," pp. 64-73.

South Carolina planters also expressed concern about the overrepresentation of the wealthy in the electoral system of the 1787 constitution. John Rutledge and Charles Pinckney, who, in the 1790s, would advocate for universal suffrage, were already worried about the United States becoming even more divided between rich and poor. They sided with the liberal and abolitionist Benjamin Franklin to lower the property requirements for the voting franchise.¹⁷³ Charles Pinckney supported lowering the voting threshold even though he was the wealthiest planter in South Carolina. He owned seven plantations totaling one thousand acres and a private museum, a gallery with the rarest paintings.¹⁷⁴ The South Carolina delegates also tried to introduce a bill of rights into the 1787 constitution, four years before Jeffersonians included such a bill in 1791. On the 20th of August 1787, Charles Pinckney asked the Constitutional convention to agree to a bill of rights of thirteen clauses, including rights of the press, religion, and habeas corpus. Alongside the delegate, Elbridge Gerry from Massachusetts, who would become a radical supporter of the French Revolution, Pinckney also requested the inclusion of trial by jury in civil cases.¹⁷⁵ In his criticisms, Pinckney was joined by South Carolina planters abiding by similar concerns, who berated the Constitutional convention as being too conservative. For example, Rawlins Lowndes, as South Carolina governor (1778-1779), had called for reforming the state senate into a popularly elected body. In 1787, he asserted that the constitution transformed the

¹⁷³ Henry Flanders, *The Lives and Times of the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippicuthy, 1874), p. 607. Flanders says Rutledge was key, even more so than Franklin, in having property qualifications lowered, calling out the danger of a society divided between “have” and “have-nots.”

¹⁷⁴ Marty D. Matthews, *Forgotten Founding Father: The Life and Times of Charles Pinckney* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), p. 54.

¹⁷⁵ RSW, pp., 34, 41-42, 60. After introducing the Fugitive Slave Clause, Charles Pinckney and Butler withdrew it after the objection of the Pennsylvania delegate, James Wilson. The next day, the clause was reintroduced by an anonymous Southerner and was adopted by the convention without further debate. . Paul Finkelman, *Slavery, and the Founding Fathers: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), p. 82.

American President and Senate into British “King and Lords.” He even requested the epitaph on his tombstone at Charleston’s St. Philip’s Church to state: “Here lies the man who opposed the constitution because it was ruinous of the liberty of America.”¹⁷⁶

These worries of the South Carolina delegates at the Convention and other elite members about the Federal Constitution constitute another ingredient of the background that explains the elite’s later support for the French Revolution. The *entire* South Carolina delegation to the convention expressed doubts about it, and eventually, all four would support the French Revolution in the 1790s.¹⁷⁷ Pierce Butler, who would become the uncontested leader of the 1790s pro-French planters, already wished for “a” French Revolution as early as July 1788, one year before its advent in 1789. His assertions of international republicanism happened before he supposedly changed his political ideology for prosaic reasons, and his correspondence regarding his wish for a French revolution reflected a culture ‘steeped in Enlightenment political and moral philosophy.’¹⁷⁸ Indeed, when, in July 1788, he enthusiastically welcomed the idea of “a” French Revolution, he celebrated the premises of the French Revolution not from motives of personal profit but through the philanthropic expectation of a historical watershed that would benefit humanity for ages to come. He asserted: “I share in the happiness of my fellow men. I feel the sensation of giddy hope and unbounded ambition [for universal freedom]; the fire of vigorous

¹⁷⁶ RSW, pp., 34, 41-42, 60. Henry Laurens, Aedanus Burke, and Rawlins Lowndes, constitute other examples who, like Pinckney and Lowndes, criticized the plans of the Constitutional convention.

¹⁷⁷ The South Carolina delegation comprised Charles C. Pinckney, John Rutledge, Pierce Butler, and Charles Pinckney, all neighbor-friends (Charles C. Pinckney to Arthur Middleton, 13/8/1782, Pinckney Papers, SCL; PB to Charles Pinckney, 24/8/1792, LPB; the friendship of Rutledge and Butler harkened back to fighting together and acquiring their hero status during the American Revolutionary War, directly under William Moultrie (LPB, p. xvii).

¹⁷⁸ Jonathan Israel, *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775-1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 347.

[political and philosophical] speculation and radical reform; the deep sense of historical momentum. May we continue to advance in civilization until wars, injustice, and oppression are banished from the earth.”¹⁷⁹

Butler claimed that his hope for a French Revolution was prompted by his observation of the Dutch people’s oppression at the Austrian emperor’s hand. Before he expressed hope for a French revolution, he had encouraged Hollanders to fight for their rights: “Hollanders cannot submit to the treatment they have received without subjecting themselves to the contempt of all men.” His statement reveals that his international republican sentiments predated the eruption of the French Revolution in 1789 and did not reflect prosaic concerns of self-interest. If he had been pro-French Revolution only to ingratiate himself with the pro-French backcountry, as Rachel Klein contends, he would not have also hoped for a revolution in Holland, a country that the backcountry might have known little about and cared even less for, as Hollanders, although allies during the American Revolutionary War, never fought alongside Americans. He also expressed his support for “a” French revolution despite his ignorance of the first revolutionary act on June 7th, 1788: the “Day of the Tiles.” He could not have learned about this event, which called for the election of a French parliament, as news took at least a month and a half to travel from France to South Carolina.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ PB to Weeden Butler, 18/7/1788, LD.

¹⁸⁰ PB to Weeden Butler, 18/7/1788, LD. The Day of Tiles was the first step in the march to freedom, as it forced the king to allow the election of a Parliament, the Estates-General.

Furthermore, Butler hoped that poetic justice would lead the French nation to reap the benefits of their virtuous assistance to the Patriots during the American Revolutionary War. He asserted that he had “always thought that the number of French who were in America during the war would carry back sentiments ill-suited to the genius of monarchy.”¹⁸¹ This statement demonstrates Butler’s hope for French freedom originated during the American Revolution and reveals gratitude for the nation that had aided America in its distress and pride that the model of the American Revolution could prompt nations to endeavor a similar fight for liberty. Furthermore, in the same letter of July 1788, through his hope for French and European-wide revolutions, he reconciled himself to the tragic losses he suffered during the American Revolutionary War, such as the demise of his two-year-old son. He affirmed that “if the [American Revolutionary War] should be the means of opening the eyes of the enslaved to make them cast off their chains, I shall be reconciled to my sufferings and losses.”¹⁸² Similarly, other planters who eventually supported the French Revolution were veterans who had suffered tragic losses. As noted earlier, the Moultrie and Huger brothers had lost siblings during the Siege of Charleston, and William Tate had suffered from the massacre of his entire family, except a brother, at the hands of pro-British Native Americans. And after the fall of Charleston, planters had also greatly suffered in prison ships and other egregious forms of confinement.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ PB to Weeden Butler, 18/7/1788, LD.

¹⁸² PB to Weeden Butler, 18/7/1788, LD.

¹⁸³ Fludd, *Reminiscences*, p. 105, also says that an elite family in St. John’s Island, the Gibson family, included a widow with her husband and four sons killed at the Siege of Charleston. The de Saussure family also suffered when the three brothers of Daniel de Saussure were killed during the war. See David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History, 1598-1948* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2011), p. 77.

However, these South Carolina planters' liberal concerns over the maintenance of republicanism at the Constitutional convention and with regards to republican freedom in France and other European countries should not hide the fact that, if they were to some extent prompted by genuine American and international republicanism, they were also intended to defend and preserve the southern plantation system and South Carolina planter oligarchy. Defense of liberal principles towards white men in America and Europe accorded with Charleston's free artisans and the backcountry's small white farmers' political views, thereby making them more deferential to the planters defending these views; whereas attack on the constitutional plans that excessively gave too many and strong powers to the executive branch of the central, national, government, threatened South Carolina planters' local autonomy, and, therefore, as we saw earlier, their hold on power vis-à-vis the plantation system they were striving to maintain over the oppressed but hostile enslaved black people who waited for the opportunity to rebel and overthrow the state's plantocracy. The liberty that planters, such as Lowndes, one of the most horrid South Carolina planters who boasted of killing enslaved men, spoke about, was every bit the planters' freedom to safely maintain and even reinforce enslavement by upholding the slave trade and letting or encouraging the state's backcountry poor small farmers to become planters.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ George B. Chase, *Lowndes of South Carolina: A Historical and Genealogical Memoir* (Boston: A. Williams & Co. 1876), pp. 12-13.

FRENCH INFLUENCE

The unique links of South Carolina with France before 1789 likely contributed to the pro-French elite's support for the French Revolution in the 1790s. South Carolina had a singularly significant French national and cultural presence, and from the 1680s to the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, Charleston was the most Frenchified city of the thirteen colonies/states. South Carolina's French connection developed through its Huguenot immigration of the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth-century, through joint military fight and cooperation of South Carolina and French officers in the American Revolutionary War, and through the settlement of French veterans in Charleston after 1783.

As developed in Chapter One, French Huguenots settled in South Carolina after the 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes to benefit from the religious liberty and equity of treatment holding sway in the colony and granted by the South Carolina constitution to all elite members. Therefore, they integrated the planter society, becoming wealthy and powerful, and controlled the economy and politics alongside their non-Huguenot counterparts.¹⁸⁵ They always remembered their French roots. They named their plantations with French names, such as the Belmont plantation of the Faucheraud-Grimké family. They also continued to speak French and attended French-language services at the Huguenot Church of Charleston.¹⁸⁶ Huguenot females were taught French by French tutors and ballet dancing by French masters; like their husbands,

¹⁸⁵ Jack P. Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial and Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), p. 103. The wealth of the French Huguenot elite was remarkable, for example, in the 1740s, the Laurens, who settled in Charleston in the 1680s, owned plantations totaling over 40,000 acres.

¹⁸⁶ "The French Protestant (Huguenot) Church" in Huguenot-church.org.

they also went to French hairdressers as adults.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, they lived in Charleston's mansions which were often located in districts that spoke predominantly French, a fact that astonished European visitors.¹⁸⁸ During the Revolutionary War, significantly due to their French language fluency, Congress selected two South Carolinians, John Laurens and his personal secretary, William Jackson, to go to France to negotiate more loans.¹⁸⁹

This connection of South Carolina Huguenots with France was also illustrated at the beginning of the American Revolutionary War. In October 1777, of all places along the 1,500-mile American coastline, Lafayette landed at the Huger family's plantation.¹⁹⁰ The five-year-old Francis Huger beheld with wonderment this international republican who had crossed the Atlantic to join the American Revolution and, if necessary, die for American liberty. His father, Benjamin, was later killed at the Siege of Charleston, and his four uncles, Thomas, Daniel, John, and Isaac, became Lafayette's lifelong friends. In 1794, the Huger family, spurred by its matriarchs, would plan Lafayette's rescue from his Austrian prison, to be led by no other than Francis Huger.¹⁹¹ The Laurens family was also quite Frenchified. For example, Henry Laurens' daughter, Martha, spoke

¹⁸⁷ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 108-109.

¹⁸⁸ Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Voyages dans les Etats-Unis d'Amérique du Nord* (Paris: Du Pont, Buisson, et Pougens, 1799), p. 143. "The French Protestant (Huguenot) Church" in Huguenot-church.org. Mark Perry, *Lift Up Thy Voice: The Grimké Family's Journey from Slaveholders to Civil Rights Leaders* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2001), p. 17.

¹⁸⁹ Editor's note, William Jackson to Thomas Pinckney, 14/08/1794, *The Papers of American Revolution Era Pinckney Statesmen*, RDL- UVA.

¹⁹⁰ Marc Leepson, *Lafayette: Lessons of Leadership from the Idealist General* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 47. The young Huger scion, five-year-old Francis, never forgot this event. At age 20, he would risk his life by joining the German international republican, Dr. Justus Erich Bollmann, in a daring attempt to rescue Lafayette from his Austrian prison where he was in confinement for revolutionary activities and for having led the French revolutionary army of the North against the Prussian and Austrian monarchs until August 1792. Paul S. Spalding, *Lafayette, Prisoner of State* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), pp. 79-84. An excellent book on the contributions of Lafayette to the American Revolution War is David Clary, *Adopted Son: Washington, Lafayette, and the Friendship that Saved the American Revolution* (Bantam Books, 2007).

¹⁹¹ His cousin Francis Huger joined the Republican Society of South Carolina in 1793.

French impeccably as she was educated in Switzerland and France from age sixteen to twenty-four. Just as Jefferson's daughter had wanted to stay in Paris after his recall to America in 1789, Martha Laurens wanted to remain in France when asked to return to South Carolina. Once in the state, her culture was so French that she was nicknamed "the Frenchwoman."¹⁹²

The cooperation of French and South Carolina officers during the American Revolutionary War also considerably reinforced the state elite's Francophilia. First, the French alliance gave the officers great hope that their struggle would succeed. David Ramsay, who believed that French assistance had been "essential" to secure final victory, noted that "in 1778, the alliance with France inspired all ranks of men in Carolina with confidence in the final establishment of their independence."¹⁹³ South Carolina planters were also the first in America to have experienced the coming of French assistance in person, and that in a heroic and adventurous way, worthy of the greatest military epics. As mentioned above, in October 1777, the Huger family had uniquely awoken in the middle of the night to witness the arrival of Lafayette and his dashing co-officers, intent to join their cause of freedom; and they remained his lifelong friends, just like several other officers from the state who had fought alongside him, such as the brothers, Thomas and Charles C. Pinckney. Lafayette also joined the South Carolina Cincinnati as an honorary member.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Joanna Bowen Gillespie, *The Life and Times of Martha Laurens Ramsey, 1759-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), pp. 21, 27. For northern American women abiding to French cultural tenets and political participation in their salons, see Susan Branson, *The Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2001).

¹⁹³ Ramsay, *History*, pp. 213-214. The ships purchased consisted of *La Bricole*, 44 guns, *La Providence*, 44 guns, *Boston*, 32 guns, *La Reine de France*, 28 guns, *L'Aventure* and *La Truite*, 26 guns each, and *Notre Dame*, 16 guns. Gillon's ship, which he had obtained after personally meeting the French Queen Marie Antoinette, was originally named *L'Indien* but was later renamed 'south Carolina' (Ramsay, *History*, p. 184).

¹⁹⁴ In May 2021, at the National Society of the Cincinnati in Washington D.C., this thesis's author was privileged to hold the document where Lafayette's signature as an honorary member is affixed

Furthermore, several South Carolina officers, such as Isaac Huger and the Pinckney brothers, served under Lafayette as his *aides-de-camp*. South Carolina officers also witnessed firsthand the “gallantry” of the French army and the sacrifice on the field of honor of two prominent international republicans whom Lafayette had brought with him: Pulaski was killed at the Battle of Savannah, and de Kalb died of his wounds at the Battle of Camden. In letters to his mother, Eliza Lucas Pinckney, written during the Siege of Savannah, Thomas Pinckney praised French gallantry and Pulaski’s heroic charge that foreshadowed John Laurens’ fate three years later.¹⁹⁵ De Kalb was also honored when a South Carolina county was named after him.

Ramsay also gratefully listed the names, cargo, and number of cannons of each French ship the South Carolina admiralty purchased and operated by American captains and crews, all under the command of South Carolina Commodore Alexander Gillon. Gillon, a native Scots owning a plantation worked by one hundred and fifty enslaved Africans, had traveled to Paris in 1775 to secure the purchase of these ships; after the war, alongside Christopher Gadsden, his hatred for Britain prompted him to establish the anti-Britannic Society.¹⁹⁶ Ramsay noted that these French ships made South Carolina more optimistic about the war’s progress: “The arrival of the French fleet roused the whole [state] immensely.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Pinckney to Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 17/10/1779, PFP, RDL-UVA.

¹⁹⁶ LPB, p. 23.

¹⁹⁷ Ramsay, *History*, p. 179.

Furthermore, as earlier discussed, of all the elites in the thirteen states, South Carolina planters had the greatest cause to be grateful to France after their uniquely violent experience in the war. Suffering endured during the war created support for the future French Revolution. As previously stated, in his hope for a French revolution, Butler said such an event would reconcile him with his war experience.¹⁹⁸ South Carolina planters also suffered alongside French officers. They were present in three defeats where French officers were widely involved: the battles of Savannah and Camden and the Siege of Charleston. The French regiments suffered more casualties in many battles than the American or South Carolina regiments. For example, at the Battle of Savannah, the French casualties numbered six hundred thirty-seven whereas the Continental Army and the South Carolina militia suffered six hundred and seven.¹⁹⁹

Furthermore, as we saw above, the fall of Charleston led planters to become, as an entire social group, prisoners-of-war inside the egregious British land prisons and prison ships, an event unique among American planters.²⁰⁰ These planters shared this suffering in close intimacy with captured French officers for months. Benjamin Legaré, the brother of the planter Thomas Legaré, mentioned that when wives of captured planters came to visit their interned husbands, they would sing French songs and praise French assistance to fluster the attending British officers and uplift the Americans” and French morale.²⁰¹ For his part, Ramsay remarked that of the army that

¹⁹⁸ PB to Weeden Butler, 18/7/1788, LD.

¹⁹⁹ Ramsay, *History*, p. 181.

²⁰⁰ Eliza C. K. Fludd, *Biographical Sketches of the Huguenot Solomon Legaré and of His Family. Also, Reminiscences of the Revolutionary Struggle with Great Britain, including Incidents and Scenes which Occurred in Charleston* (Heidelberg: Hansebooks, 2017), pp. 112-120.

²⁰¹ Fludd, *Biographical Sketches*, pp. 115-116.

had surrendered at the fall of Charleston, “eight hundred men died in prison ships.”²⁰² He also criticized how the British treated Charleston’s elite, including the civilians. He remarked: “In the summer of 1780, 160 persons were shut up in prison; thirty of them, though citizens of the most respectable character, were loaded with irons.”²⁰³ He also decried a litany of British atrocities in detail and emphasized the hanging in Charleston of Major Haynes, one of the highest-ranked American officers executed by Britain during the war.²⁰⁴ He denounced how the British martial court ignored “[Haynes]” feelings as an officer.”²⁰⁵

Furthermore, the memory of French military assistance and Franco-American cooperation during the American Revolutionary War would also be continuously reminisced by South Carolina planters in the 1790s. For example, in a letter to President Washington discussing an epistle he had written to the Assembly of Saint-Domingue, Charles Pinckney, who had become a ‘strong and consistent Republican’ after 1790, claimed that he “felt very close to the French, especially in light of their assistance to the colonies during the [American] Revolution.”²⁰⁶ Therefore, in the 1780s, Franco-American friendship and the Franco-American alliance were considered unassailable principles after the war. The South Carolina elite’s Francophilia, French culture, and attention to French events also likely increased due to the settlement in South Carolina of American Revolutionary War French veterans of modest social conditions. Among them, barbers

²⁰² Ramsay, *History*, p. 263.

²⁰³ Ramsay, *History*, pp. 200-201.

²⁰⁴ Ramsay, *History*, pp. 252-266.

²⁰⁵ Ramsay, *History*, p. 263.

²⁰⁶ Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/09/1791, in Matthews, *Forgotten Founding Father*, p. 78. For the early “Republicanism” of Charles Pinckney, in Lisle A. Rose’s words, see Rose, *A Prologue to Democracy: The Federalists in the South, 1789-1801* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1968). P. 102.

might have made intense international republican propaganda over the heads of their planters customers. For example, the planter, Charles Fraser, a renowned miniature artist, recalled that when he was 11, he heard that the barber, Frederic Vieux, returned to France to witness the execution of Marie-Antoinette. Furthermore, French barbers were so prevalent in Charleston that an ode was sung in their honor.²⁰⁷ In addition to barbers, South Carolina planters hired French teachers and dance experts. Dancing was particularly essential socially in South Carolina. President Washington described his dazzling at the number of dancers and the grand luxury of the grand balls he was invited to during his May 1791 visit to Charleston and mentioned that he had never experienced anything like that.²⁰⁸ Bernard Fay, an early 20th-century historian specialist on French culture in the United States, described the impact of this French interaction with American intellectual and spiritual life: “The entire [American] wealthy and commercial society opened itself to French officers. Intellectuals also welcomed them. [T]his mixing did not happen without influencing the intellectual life of the United States. Furthermore, during this time, [French] merchants settled in every American harbor. Some were successful. Those who were not became French language instructors. So did French officers without financial resources.”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Fraser, *Reminiscences of Charleston*, p. 44

²⁰⁸ [May 1791], FO.

²⁰⁹ Bernard Fay, *L'Esprit Révolutionnaire en France et aux États-Unis à la Fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris : E. Champion, 1925), pp. 81-83. My translation. The original text : “tous les milieux mondains, riches, et commerçants, s’ouvrirent aux officiers français. C’étaient aussi les milieux intellectuels. Cette fusion ne fut pas sans influencer sur la vie spirituelle des États-Unis. D’autant plus qu’en même temps, se répandirent dans tous les ports des marchands français. Quelques-uns réussirent. Ceux qui échouaient restaient dans les villes et se faisaient professeurs. Il y eut encore quelques officiers sans ressource qui firent de même. »

The Huguenots and the entire planter society were heavily Francophile and French-cultured in the Eighteenth-century South Carolina Lowcountry. Like the Francophone Huguenots, many leading non-Huguenot great planters also boasted their French language skills and asked their children to speak and write perfect French. For example, Edward Rutledge was thrilled by his ability to convey complex ideas in French to his interlocutors, and Pierce Butler enjoined his expatriate children, Thomas at his boarding school in Chelsea and Sarah at her boarding school in Marble Arch, to write alternate letters in French.²¹⁰ The South Carolina natives, American Ambassador to Great Britain, Thomas Pinckney, and Edward Rutledge, also spoke and wrote impeccable French, with the former even boasting he was able to correct the grammar of French people.²¹¹ Furthermore, after 1783, American universities regularly ordered books and recruited professors from France or already living in the United States. In the South Carolina Lowcountry, the College of Charleston, whose board of directors included Edward Rutledge and Charles C. Pinckney, hired Jean-Paul Coste to become its first professor of French.²¹² Charleston planters were also members of the American Philosophical Society, which included French veterans who had stayed after the American Revolutionary War and corresponded with French philosophers and scientists.²¹³ In 1787, they asked the French botanist André Michaux to manage a one-hundred-acre botanical garden in Charleston.²¹⁴ South Carolina planters also attended French

²¹⁰ Edward Rutledge to Duke of Parma, 21/2/1798, TPP, SCL. PB to Thomas Butler, 12/7/ 1788, LD.

²¹¹ Thomas Pinckney to (undecipherable), 1/3/1794, *ibid* to Louis, King of Etruria, 20/11/1795, PFP, RDL-UVA.

²¹² Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 67-76., who also affirms that Coste was first hired as a professor and then as the pastor of the Huguenot Church. It is not clear whether Coste retained his professorship after becoming a pastor.

²¹³ Jones, *Captives of Liberty*, p. 527.

²¹⁴ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 177-178. Charlie Williams, "Explorer, Botanist, Courier, or Spy? André Michaux and the Genet Affair of 1793," *Castanea* vol. 69 (2004), pp. 98-106. See also André Michaux, *André Michaux in North America: journals and letters, 1785-1797, translated from the French, edited, and annotated by Charlie Williams, Eliane M. Norman & Walter Kingsley Taylor; with a foreword by James E. McClellan III* (Birmingham, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2020). As we shall later see, in the 1790s, Michaux, with the assistance of Jefferson and South

colleges. In the late 1760s and early 1770s, Charles C. Pinckney and Aedanus Burke, respectively, attended the military academy of Saint-Cyr and the Catholic College of Artois.

CONCLUSION

The history of colonial and revolutionary South Carolina before 1789 established a fertile soil, in Thomas' above-quoted words, for elite support of the French Revolution in the 1790s. On the one hand, anxiety for their status as planters made South Carolina use the rhetoric of liberty and justice to justify their fight against Britain from 1775 to 1782, a rhetoric that we will now see in Chapter Two and that serendipitously matched the rhetoric of the French Revolution. On the other hand, there also existed a genuine abidance by liberal and republican/revolutionary principles for white people as well as sincere feelings of gratitude and a sentiment of brotherhood for former French veterans of the American Revolutionary War and for France as a nation and country that made the rhetoric of liberty and justice, however cynical, easier to express and also made it acceptable and justifiable for people to support the French Revolution.

Carolina planters, such as Governor Moultrie, would spy in the western territories on behalf of the French Revolution. See Williams, "Explorer, Botanist, Courier, or Spy? André Michaux and the Genet Affair of 1793," pp. 98-106.

Chapter Two

Pro-French Revolutionary Support, July 1789-April 1793

“The political profession of [Charleston’s] leading men was of the Jefferson school.”¹

“The 14th of July, the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastille, was celebrated with enthusiasm more befitting the observance of one of our national festivals.”²

Introduction

Chapter Two analyzes elite support for the French Revolution between its advent in 1789 and the end of April 1793, South Carolina planters strongly supported the French Revolution not only during the “consensual period” of the constitutional monarchy between July 1789 and August 1792, when their friend Lafayette and other veterans of the American Revolutionary War were controlling French politics, but even after the summer of 1792, when a new group of French revolutionaries took power, attacked moderates, and turned the revolution into violent anarchy.

The Chapter demonstrates the exceptional steadfastness of the elite’s support for the French Revolution even after the Haitian Revolution erupted in August 1791. Despite the elite’s extreme anxiety at the sight of an enslaved rebellion partially successful in overthrowing another planter society in St. Domingue, it still supported strong connections with French revolutionaries. Furthermore, it explores the correspondence of female youth in the United States and male expatriate youth in Europe, such as those of Sarah Butler, John Rutledge Jr., his elder brother Charles, his cousin Henry, and his close friend, Thomas Rhett Smith, whose sister he would

¹ Ebenezer Smith Thomas, *Reminiscences of the Last Sixty-Five Years* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), p. 34.

² Thomas, *Reminiscences of the Last Sixty-Five Years*, p. 42.

marry.³ It also analyzes the correspondence of veterans of the American Revolutionary War, such as Pierce Butler and Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney.⁴

Chapter Two analyzes the elite's support for France chronologically. First, it investigates support during the French Revolution's "consensual period" of 1789-1791, when political factions cooperated, and polarization was limited. Secondly, it examines support between the summer of 1791 and April 1792, corresponding to the beginning of the Haitian Revolution and when France became sharply divided due to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the King's attempted flight, and the Field of Mars massacre. Then, it concludes by exploring support between April 1792 and April 1793, at a time when France waged war against European continental monarchies, the French monarchy collapsed, and the French Republic was established.

[July 1789 to Spring/Summer 1791](#)

The summer of 1789 marked the beginning of a new era for both France and the United States. Both countries transformed politically, France as a constitutional monarchy and the USA as a unified republic under its new 1787 constitution. Between 1789 and 1791, the new French government was still moderate. It kept the French monarchy in place, albeit making it constitutional rather than absolute, with significant limitations to the king's power. It also enacted far-reaching democratic reforms with regard to suffrage, the judiciary, religion, and land. Led by veterans of the American Revolutionary War, the new political class, with the help and

³ Librarian's Foreword, John Rutledge Papers, Southern Collections, UNC-CH.

⁴ Constance Schultz (ed.), *The Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesmen* (Rotunda Digital Library: University of Virginia, 2016). They are the digitized edition of the Pinckney Family Papers, University of Virginia.

enthusiastic supervision and advice of Jefferson at the American embassy, wrote a Declaration of Rights strongly resembling Jefferson's Declaration of 1776. However, the new French government and its parliament, *l'Assemblée Nationale Constituyente*, were confronted by colossal tasks in their attempt to transform France. Unlike the American Revolutionaries, the French revolutionaries started from nothing to transform France into a just and equal society. Yet, between 1789 and 1791, French revolutionaries enacted reforms in a relatively peaceful and consensual environment despite their enormous challenges. Meanwhile, in St. Domingue, the new revolutionary authorities neither reformed the plantation system nor granted rights to non-whites. The planters, for cynical and hypocritical reasons, welcomed the French Revolution, as it gave them greater autonomy at home and political representation in Paris.⁵

While these events occurred in France, the United States also changed politically. After May 1789, a newly elected Federal Congress and Executive governed the country under the 1787 Constitution. Most of the new administration, led by President Washington and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, welcomed the French Revolution reluctantly and coldly. The Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and the Attorney General Edmund Randolph warmly welcomed the French Revolution but held little power as Washington usually followed the advice of Hamilton. socio-economic system.⁶ As early as October 1789, Hamilton expressed "disdain" for the French Revolution and criticized Lafayette for his revolutionary "reveries."⁷ His policies

⁵ Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle*, pp. 148-201, Doyle, *Oxford History of the French Revolution*, pp. 100-167., and Guillemin, 1789-1792/1792-1794: *Les Deux Révolutions*, pp. 22-79.

⁶ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism*, pp. 92-113, 195-262.

⁷ Israel, *The Expanding Blaze*, p. 325.

contradicted Jefferson's, who favored continued distance from Britain and solid Franco-American commercial, diplomatic, and military relations. Jefferson had just returned from France with unbounded enthusiasm for French revolutionary reforms.⁸ Between 1789 and 1791, he increasingly suspected that Hamilton and other political leaders, such as John Adams, had undergone a "conservative reaction."⁹ He judged their purported goal of introducing a British-like political system in America as a betrayal of American revolutionary ideals.¹⁰ In May 1791, Jefferson judged that Hamilton had "apostatized from the true faith" and entertained "prejudices in favor of monarchy."¹¹ He also deemed the Secretary of the Treasury to be an "anti-revolutionary" who aimed "a breaking of connections with France."¹²

After the summer of 1789, the political novelty of France and the United States contrasted with South Carolina's political continuity. The state introduced a new constitution in 1790 with only minor changes from the previous one. It did not challenge the planter class's hold on power as its only major reform, in addition to transferring the capital from Charleston to Columbia, was to increase the Backcountry congressional representation by 4 percent.¹³ The South Carolina

⁸ Jefferson preferred to remain in France and participate in revolutionary reforms, as he had actively done since July 1789; he reluctantly accepted his appointment as Secretary of State and only did so after Washington's insistence and from a sense of duty for his mother country.

⁹ For the collapse of the 1780s political consensualism and the formation of antagonistic principles between Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians, see Elkins and McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism*, pp. 257-287.

¹⁰ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism*, p. 322.

¹¹ Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America; The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Republicanism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville, VA: The University of Virginia Press, 2011), p. 73.

¹² Israel, *The Expanding Blaze*, p. 325. Israel and Cotlar consider that Hamilton, Morris, and Jay were forming an anti-French troika. As Chapter One mentions, Shachtman believes the three became anti-French as early as 1782.

¹³ The most detailed study of South Carolina politics in the post-war 1780s and the 1790 constitution can be found in Nadelhaft, *The Disorders of War*, pp. 105-212. The author's conclusions are often contradictory from one section to the other. They include the unsupported proposition that the Georgetown and Beaufort coastal areas, where the

government continued to be ruled by American Revolutionary War veterans who deeply admired France and resented Britain. Indeed, in the period from 1789 to 1791, the South Carolina government was composed of Charles Pinckney, the Governor; Commodore Alexander Gillon, leader of the Marine Anti-Britannic Society; the Lieutenant Governor; Peter Freneau, the Secretary of State; and Colonel Alexander Moultrie, the Attorney-General. In contrast to the Federal national government, whose ideological composition and physical location strongly predisposed it to take a reserved stance on the French Revolution, even in its early “consensual” stage, the composition and ideology of the South Carolina government favored support for France. As seen in Chapter One, Governor Charles Pinckney was reserved toward the 1787 constitution that he deemed too centralized and conservative. Three other senior members of his government were radical republicans: Alexander Moultrie, Alexander Gillon, and Peter Freneau, whose radical inclinations have already been mentioned.¹⁴

A close friend of Pierce Butler, to whom he entrusted the implementation of his will, London-educated Lieutenant Governor Alexander Gillon was a first-generation Scottish South Carolinian who owned large plantations near Charleston worked by 106 enslaved people. In 1780, he was appointed Commodore and established the South Carolina Navy after the state government sent him to Versailles. In the French capital, he charmed the monarchs and returned to Charleston

wealthiest planters resided, were de facto part of the backcountry, and the idea that the 1790 Constitution gave poor people the electoral franchise, although there was no moderation of the wealth qualifications for voting.

¹⁴ Eugene P. Link, “Republican Society of Charleston,” *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (1943): 23-34, pp. 29-34 and James A. Lewis, *Neptune’s Militia: The Frigate South Carolina during the American Revolution* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), pp. 129-138.

with French ships operated by South Carolina-commissioned French captains and sailors. After the war, he established Charleston's Marine Anti-Britannic Society, whose two objectives were to encourage democratic reforms and foster anti-British resentment and legislation. He led this society throughout the 1780s alongside another elite radical, Lieutenant-Governor (1780-1782), Christopher Gadsden.¹⁵

South Carolina Attorney-General Alexander Moultrie was the South Carolinian brother of former governor and hero of the American Revolutionary War, William Moultrie. As already discussed, the Moultries were a wealthy planter family from Scotland with Franco-Scottish aristocratic ancestry. In 1776, the same year that saw his brother win the Battle of Fort Sullivan, Alexander Moultrie was appointed Attorney-General, a post he would hold for a record sixteen years. Moultrie's eminent judicial position did not preclude him from the American Revolutionary War, during which he became colonel. In 1784, he joined the Society of the Cincinnati and became part of its administration.¹⁶

¹⁵ Lipscomb (ed.), *The Letters of Pierce Butler*, note 1, p. 23; Walter Edgar (ed.), "Alexander Gillon," *Encyclopedia of South Carolina*, University of South Carolina Press, Scencyclopedia.org; PB to Ann Purcell Gillon, 11/11/1795, PBL-HSP, and James A. Lewis, *Neptune's Militia: The Frigate South Carolina during the American Revolution* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), pp. 13-19, 128-130, 132-134. For Gadsden's radical politics, see Stanly Godbold, Jr. and Robert Woody, *Christopher Gadsden and the American Revolution* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), Daniel McDonough, *Christopher Gadsden and Henry Laurens: The Parallel Lives of Two American Patriots* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2000).

¹⁶ In 1789, Moultrie acquired western lands in violation of the Federal government's policy that tried to prevent the expropriation of Native American territories. For this and rumors of embezzlement, he was prosecuted in 1792 and forced to resign. See Lipscomb (ed.), *The Letters*, note 2, p. 3.

The elite framed their response to the French Revolution's "consensual phase" of 1789/1791 in the context of these respective national and South Carolina governments. During this period, Pierce Butler was the uncontested leader of the pro-French South Carolina elite. In December 1788, Butler had been appointed United States Senator by South Carolina's congress despite, or perhaps because, of his strong reservations about the 1787 constitution. Like Jefferson, he worried about Hamilton's supposed aim of introducing a British-like political and economic system in America. In January 1790, he asserted that Hamilton's actions confirmed his view that the 1787 constitution could be misused for centralization of power, a danger he had emphasized as a constitutional delegate in 1787 and had discussed with his friend Weeden Butler in 1788, as previously noted. He also mocked the quasi-monarchical pageantry of President Washington and Vice-President Adams at the State of the Union Address.¹⁷ In February 1790, he reiterated fundamental principles of Jefferson, such as equal representation, a popularly elected senate, and the removal of the President's absolute veto.¹⁸ In May 1790, he affirmed his support for Madison's pro-French propositions.¹⁹ Due to his anxiety as a planter, Butler also likely feared that a central national government with too much powers could one day interfere with the autonomy to restrict South Carolina's autonomy to keep oppressing enslaved people and maintain the plantation system.

¹⁷ PB to ?, 15/1/1790, PBP, SCL.

¹⁸ PB to John McPherson, 13/2/1790, PBP, SCL.

¹⁹ PB to Edward Rutledge, 24/5/1790, PBP, SCL.

Yet, Pierce Butler showed his international republicanism when he extolled the virtues of the French revolutionaries, whom he judged to be the brave and gallant harbingers of world freedom. In November 1790, he exclaimed:

What an example to other nations of the earth! Frenchmen! Great People! I bow with reverence to you! I revere your patriotism, your magnanimity, your love of freedom! I congratulate the Benevolent of all nations on completing the French Revolution, a phenomenon not to be paralleled in history. I feel so much enthusiasm for the cause that I almost restrain myself from touching on it, not knowing when to stop.²⁰

Butler also expressed his international republicanism when he hoped other European countries would follow the model of the French Revolution and become politically free. He asserted: "The Rights of Man in Europe are at stake. Every human breast must be interested in the issue. If the French succeed, [they] will show the unlettered peasant that he has rights. If the French complete their plan, they will render infinite service to Mankind."²¹ As part of such international republicanism, he also commiserated with the plight of his native country, Ireland, suffering under the yoke of British rule. In a letter to the abolitionist Irish Quaker John Rea, he asserted that, in Ireland, "the injudicious deportment of too many landlords, the oppressive tithes, the religious discriminations [were] more than sufficient causes to prompt a change, if they do not cause a civil war." He hoped for peaceful reforms in Ireland but saw civil war as necessary if it constituted the only means to obtain "civil and political change in our native country." Butler

²⁰ PB to C. G. Richards, 19/11/1790, PBP-SCL.

²¹ PB to C. G. Richards, 19/11/1790, PBP-SCL.

considered the benefits that republican change would bring to Ireland. As he had done during the American Revolutionary War, he was ready for the present generation to endure sacrifice to help succeeding generations: “Thinking man would rather run the risk of all evils than submit to oppression. The present generation may experience distress from the conflict, but their children will be happy. We live not for ourselves alone.”²²

Butler’s concerns for the conditions of all nations of Europe reveal the extent to which he was ideologically different from the nationalist Federalists: He was not merely content to see the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous United States but abided by the Millennial view of the American Revolutionary War that had wanted to ‘start the world over again.’²³ These Millennial ideas endured into the 1790s on both sides of the Atlantic, with the Feuillants and Girondins in France and the Jeffersonians in America.²⁴ As a native Irishman who knew about the inequities suffered by the Irish population, Millennialism particularly touched him; like his Irish-American peers, he hoped its implementation would soon come to his native Ireland.²⁵

²² PB to C. G. Richards, 19/11/1790, PBP-SCL.

²³ This Millennial view was reiterated in the Great Seal of the United States: “Ordo Novo Seclorum.”

²⁴ For the view of the French Revolution as a divinely preordained event, see Richard Landes, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 250-287. For Millennialism in America’s late colonial and Early Republic period, see James Breig, “Eighteenth Century Millennialism: to ‘start the World over Again,’ Politics and Religion Intertwined,” *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Autumn 2012): 1-21, Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). For British Millennialists corresponding with South Carolina elite members, see Jack Fruchtman Jr., *The Apocalyptic Politics of Richard Price and Joseph Priestly* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

²⁵ For international republicanism regarding Ireland during the French Revolution, see Ultan Gille, “Republican Internationalism and the Question of Ireland: Constructing Democratic Thought in Ireland in the Age of Revolution, 1775-1800,” in Joanna Ines (ed.), *Reimagining Democracy in the Age of Revolutions: America, France, Britain, Ireland, 1750-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), and Marianne Elliott, *Theobald Wolfe Tone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), that describes Irish-American and Franco-Irish international republican relations.

Therefore, he reflected the South Carolina elite's integration into the revolutionary Atlantic world.

Like Butler, the younger generation of the South Carolina elite also supported the French Revolution between 1789 and 1791. This youth consisted of American Revolutionary War veterans' sons and daughters. In the late 1780s and early 1790s, they resided in Britain for their studies and visited France to follow the developments of the French Revolution with their own eyes. These young men and women's fascination for the French Revolution confirms R. R. Palmer's thesis of a single "Atlantic World" where the ideals of the American and French Revolutions were interconnected. Indeed, the observations of this youth on the French Revolution reflect those of other young European people, such as the Scottish and English idealist poets and students of Oxford and Cambridge.²⁶ The male youth included the planter-lawyers John Jr. and Charles Rutledge, the sons of the former South Carolina Governor, John Rutledge; their cousin, Thomas Rhett Smith, the son of Mary Rutledge and Robert Smith, the latter being an eminent Lowcountry planter and founding member of the South Carolina Society of the Cincinnati. These young men corresponded with one another and with John Brown Cutting, who was from Boston and was likely related to Nathaniel Cutting, a lifelong friend of Jefferson. Analyzing Cutting's correspondence is essential as he discussed the opinions of Charles and John Rutledge and their connections with English planters who were supporters of the French Revolution in London.²⁷

²⁶ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolutions*, pp. xviii, 95, 392, 717-718.

²⁷ John Brown Cutting studied medicine in London from 1784 to 1788, then spent 1787-1788 in Charleston before returning to Europe in 1788-1794. He again lived in Charleston from 1794 to 1798. His correspondents also included

In their correspondence, this youth reveals its fascination with the developing events in Revolutionary France. As John Rutledge Jr. exclaimed: "I would never finish [if] I said all that I could say upon this inexhaustible subject."²⁸ These young planters' enthusiasm for the French Revolution pervaded their letters. They rejoiced about this rare opportunity to witness this epochal, unheard-of event in a struggle for freedom that reminded them of their fathers' heroic struggle of a decade earlier. Their enthusiasm is reminiscent of the young British poets", such as William Wordsworth, who would recall their good fortune of being a contemporary of the French Revolution: "Bliss it was in that [Revolutionary] dawn to be alive."²⁹ They excitedly debated the French national debt, national bankruptcy, the sale of clergy land, the abolition of nobility titles, the value of the assignats, the new electoral system, and the relative power of representatives and their constituents.

Two essential features of these young planters' correspondence refute the idea that motivation of personal interest informed their support of the French Revolution. First, they did not hesitate to criticize some aspects of the French Revolution, whereas flattery and personal agenda force one to stick to the line of pretended support and admiration. As the pro-American and French Revolution aristocrat Pierre de Beaumarchais argued, there is no genuine praise without a concomitant willingness to criticize. Secondly, this youth's support for the French Revolution

William Stephens Smith, likely a South Carolina Cincinnati and member of the pro-French Revolution Republican Society, who married Abigail Adams and resided in Europe in the 1790s before joining the Latin American revolutions in the 1810s, as well as William Short and George Washington. He was considered by American residents in Europe as "a gentleman of genius and merit." See editor's note, "To George Washington from John Brown Cutting, 25 July 1789," FO.

²⁸ John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Rhett Smith, 26/12/1790, JRP, UNC.

²⁹ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, 1799, 1805, 1850 (London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1979).

showed *continuity*, often a sign of idealism. Indeed, they criticized aspects of the French Revolution not because they opposed it but because they wished it to succeed. For example, John Rutledge Jr., Charles Rutledge, and Thomas Rhett Smith criticized French National Assembly members whom they deemed genuine republicans but judged as incapable of putting the affairs of France in order. Smith “dreaded a national bankruptcy [which] the rulers of the National Assembly would precipitate.”³⁰ However, he remained optimistic about the ultimate success of the French Revolution. He saw some improvements: “The land of the clergy has been eagerly purchased, and the assignats have consequently borne a respectable price [and] as many have been destroyed, it is certain they will increase in value.” Also, he was hopeful that his dread of a French bankruptcy might not happen “because the diminution of the national debt [constitutes] a grand circumstance [that] alone will be sufficient to give a new [positive] tone to French affairs.”³¹ However, likely comparing the French legislature to those of South Carolina and the national government, he also had a very low opinion of the National Assembly representatives and of the French executive, which he considered rife with factional disputes: “I still think the National Assembly a bad one [and] that the government of France is naturally discordant and radically defective.” Furthermore, he believed the French assembly to be defective because it did not dare to stand by what it thought to be the best policies for France but changed its policies according to the people’s wishes. He decried the National Assembly’s “cowardliness” in its inability to resist demands based on “popular frenzy.”³²

³⁰ Thomas Rhett Smith to John Rutledge Jr., 18/3/1791, JRP, UNC.

³¹ Thomas Rhett Smith to John Rutledge Jr., 18/3/1791, JRP, UNC. Smith’s discussions of French national finances reflected similar debates in South Carolina regarding the state’s and national government’s debts. See Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries*, pp. 90-93. He argues that Jeffersonians, such as Butler and Burke, feared that Hamiltonian Federalists’ plan to create a large debt was economically dangerous and would remain in place perpetually.

³² Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries*, pp. 90-93.

Indeed, the French legislature and government in early 1791 included groups vehemently at odds with each other. In the French assembly, absolute monarchists, constitutional monarchists, Girondins, and Montagnards fought ideologically with each other and were often reluctant to accept other points of view or compromise. Furthermore, National Assembly representatives, by 1791, believed that they had to implement the wishes of their constituents. Given the people's fickleness and lack of political and economic education, enacting the people's ever-changing and conflicting wishes led to an unstable and ineffective government. Meanwhile, the French government did not fare better. The Queen rejected avenues for compromise with government ministers. At the same time, the hapless King, incompetent and indecisive, agreed with the last advice he received and alternately vetoed and approved laws, displeasing all groups.³³ In March 1791, the situation in revolutionary France was less consensual than the politics of the American congress and executive. Washington listened to the opinions of his two principal secretaries, Hamilton and Jefferson, and although usually favoring Hamilton's opinions, he tried to integrate their opposite points of view as much as possible. For his part, Jefferson agreed to implement Washington's decisions even when he strongly disagreed with them.³⁴

John Rutledge Jr. and Thomas Rhett Smith wished France to duplicate the government and legislative system of the United States which they considered to be better than what the French

³³ For analyses of the dire situation of French Revolutionaries and the multi-faceted and constant dangers to their revolutionary project, see Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle*, pp. 148-201, Doyle, *Oxford History*, pp. 100-167, and Henri Guillemin, *1789-1792/1792-1794*, pp. 22-79. Jefferson, safely in America, keeps calling Louis XVI an "idiot."

³⁴ For a comprehensive analysis of the American Revolutionary idea of the natural aristocrat (in contrast to the hereditary aristocrat of Europe), see Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 28 October 1813, in University of Chicago, <https://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/>. See also Paul D. Ellenbogen, "Another Explanation for the Senate: The Anti-Federalists, John Adams, and Natural Aristocracy," *Polity*, vol. 29., No. 2 (Winter 1996), pp. 247-271.

Revolutionaries were trying to create. Rutledge Jr. believed that American Revolutionaries had been wiser than the French Revolutionaries because they had retained the good features and institutions of the pre-American Revolution era under British rule. In his opinion, there lay the principal difference between the two Revolutions: “[American revolutionaries] did not say, as the French did, “whatever is, is not right,” and set about leveling all that had been raised. We acknowledged that part of what we possessed [that] was worthy of being retained, and only fought against the encroachments of tyranny. However, the French made an indiscriminate destruction of everything. This universal devastation is indeed expected where popular frenzy is observed.”³⁵

Still, unlike some elder counterparts, like Adams and Hamilton, who had criticized the French Revolution from its very beginning, these young planters wished it to succeed. They always continued to hope for its ultimate success despite its present vicissitudes. Smith entertained “cheerful hopes” that the French revolutionary representatives “will receive those improvements that [they] want (i.e., lack)” and that “every *friend to mankind* ardently wish [them] to receive.”³⁶ Indeed, Rutledge Jr. asserted that he criticized the French Revolution because he “love[d] the French very much [and] wish[ed] to see them prosperous and happy.” He indicated the faults of French revolutionary policies because he saw them as doing “little good” and weakening the French Revolution by making more foes than friends. For example, he berated the forced abolition of aristocratic titles not only because he deemed them as “moral property” but because

³⁵ John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Rhett Smith, 26/12/1790, JRP, UNC.

³⁶ Thomas Rhett Smith to John Rutledge Jr., 18/3/1791, JRP, UNC..

it was harmful to revolutionary principles and the French Revolution.³⁷ He also saw the forced abolition of aristocratic titles as standing against individual freedom. He believed that the question of retaining one's title was a matter of individual choice and unrelated to one's revolutionary credentials. He pointed out that while Lafayette and Mirabeau no longer used their nobility titles, they retained them, making them no less revolutionary than the aristocrats who had foregone them. Indeed, he judged the abolition of nobiliary titles as "puerile" without practical purpose or benefit for the Revolution. He also deemed the abolition of titles harmful as it antagonized aristocrats and created "many enemies to the French cause."³⁸

Although Rutledge Jr.'s constructive criticisms of the French Revolution are partly reminiscent of those expounded by the anti-French Edmund Burke, he differed from the British philosopher in his good wishes for the French Revolution. Contrary to Burke who condemned a system and people he saw as irremediably flawed, he advised an allied nation on the weakness of a system he hoped and believed could be improved. Also unlike Burke, he understood that the French Revolution faced more difficult circumstances than the American Revolution a decade earlier: He argued that, unlike American Revolutionaries, whose foes had only been British constitutional monarchists, the French revolutionaries faced radical enemies of liberty, such as absolute monarchists in France and in all countries bordering it.³⁹ Furthermore, he suggested that the French had everything to learn because, unlike Americans who had gained practical knowledge

³⁷ John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Rhett Smith, 26/12/1790, JRP, UNC.

³⁸ John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Rhett Smith, 26/12/1790, JRP, UNC.

³⁹ Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle*, pp. 148-201, Doyle, *Oxford History of the French Revolution*, pp. 100-167., and Guillemin, 1789-1792/1792-1794: *Les Deux Revolutions*, pp. 22-79.

and skills through their participation in de facto autonomous republican systems during the “Period of Salutary Neglect,” France had never experienced constitutional government. Consequently, they had to learn everything *ab initio*. He acknowledged that “these [failed measures of the French Revolution] / excuse, upon the reflection that one extreme commonly leads to another; that the difficulties might have been greater than I was aware of, and that [the French Revolutionaries] had *everything to learn* when they were obliged to act.”⁴⁰

However, John Rutledge Jr., with arguments again reminiscent of Burke’s, criticized the French Revolutionaries for lack of chivalry, gallantry, and justice.⁴¹ In his view, the French revolutionary government unfairly mistreated aristocrats, as they had already become “prostrate.”⁴² His belief in sparing one’s former anti-Revolution enemies can be viewed in the context of contemporaneous developments in South Carolina. The state elite, such as Pierce Butler and Aedanus Burke, opposed vengeful anti-Tory laws that the State Congress eventually passed under popular pressure.⁴³ Indeed, they believed that former Tories who had stayed in South Carolina

⁴⁰ John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Rhett Smith, 26/12/1790, JRP, UNC For the Era of Salutary Neglect, which allowed American colonists to exercise republican government, see Murray H. Rothbard, *Conceived in Liberty: “Salutary Neglect” in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century* (Arlington, VA; Arlington House Publishers, 1975) and Jack P. Greene, *Power, and Center: Constitutional Developments in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990). For republicanism in colonial South Carolina, see Jack P. Greene, *The Quest of Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1689-1776* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).

⁴¹ For Burke’s criticisms of the French Revolution, see Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴² John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Rhett Smith, 26/12/1790, JRP, UNC.

⁴³ For the civil war background of South Carolina’s desire for revenge against Tories, see Moultrie, *Memoirs*, and Russel F. Weigley, *The Partisan War: the South Carolina Campaign of 1780-1782* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975) and John Buchanan, *The Road to Charleston: Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2019). For the debate in South Carolina for the proposed confiscation of Tory property in the 1780s, see Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries*, pp. 72-77. He argues that planters were divided about this issue, but some, such as Pierce Butler and Aedanus Burke, opposed it from principles of “justice and equity.”

after the American Revolutionary War should be forgiven, granted back full citizenship, their property untouched or returned if formerly confiscated, and the debt owed to them by patriots reimbursed.⁴⁴ However, if he wanted the French Revolutionaries to forgive their aristocratic foes, he was not in such a conciliatory spirit regarding Great Britain. He said that he hoped for the success of the French Revolutionaries because he “wish[ed] to see them, above all else, in a situation to trounce these haughty Britons.”⁴⁵

Rutledge Jr. and the other expatriate youth wrote long letters devoted to discussing the French Revolution and consisting of thoughtful and in-depth analyses of events in France. They argued back and forth, challenging or approving each other’s points with reasoned arguments, and even brought their letters to the salons of young English revolutionary aristocrats. For example, in March 1790, John Brown Cutting informed John Rutledge Jr. that he thought that John’s brother, Charles, was correct in believing that idealistic British planters were secretly pro-French Revolution: At a London’s salon where he had dined “with a large party,” he had read John Rutledge Jr.’s pro-French Revolution letter aloud, which had been “most highly applauded” and deemed “very satisfactory.”⁴⁶ Providing evidence for pro-French Revolution sentiment among English aristocrats, these youth’s letters further confirm Palmer’s thesis that idealistic aristocrats supported an integrated transatlantic world of revolution and international republicanism. The interaction between the South Carolina youth and English international republicans also reflected their parents’ generation, such as Richard Beresford and Charles C. Pinckney, who

⁴⁴ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 67-76; Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries*, pp. 72-77.

⁴⁵ John Rutledge Jr. to Thomas Rhett Smith, 26/12/1790, JRP, UNC-CH.

⁴⁶ John Brown Cutting to John Rutledge Jr., 3/6/ 1790, JRP, UNC-CH.

admired and interacted with leaders of English international republican societies, such as Joseph Priestly and Richard Price.⁴⁷

These young planters' idealistic republicanism also led them not to restrict their support for the French Revolution alone. They hoped to see republicanism triumph across Europe. Above all, they wished for a republican system in Britain, their country of residence, and in Ireland, their ancestral country. Therefore, they castigated Britain for its antagonism to the French Revolution and berated anti-French British aristocrats as oppressors of liberty at home and abroad. They believed these aristocrats, through the British government, prevented Britons from knowing the truth about France by their oppression of pro-French Revolution writers and printers. For example, Thomas Rhett Smith complained: "I enclose for you the pamphlet [of Thomas Paine]. The printer of it will be put in the pillory. Paine is, I hope, in France. Several booksellers undertook to publish it but were intimidated."⁴⁸ They believed a revolution in Britain would eventually come because it would be supported by most people, including elite civilians and army officers who secretly abided by revolutionary sentiments until they were regimented to change their opinions.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Pro-French Revolution international republican societies in Britain included the Revolution Society, the Society for Constitutional Information, and their counterparts in Scotland. Richard Price was called the "greatest Welsh thinker of all times" and the "British Platonist." Like Plato and Cicero, he defended the idea of the importance of "moral obligation," an ethical philosophy also defended by Vattel, Kant, Jefferson, and Madison, respectively, authorities on International Relations and supporters of the French Revolution.

⁴⁸ Thomas Rhett Smith to John Rutledge Jr., 18/3/1791, JRP, WL, UNC-CH.

⁴⁹ Thomas Rhett Smith to John Rutledge Jr., 18/3/1791, JRP, WL, UNC-CH.

Summer 1791 – April 1792

The summer of 1791 was a turning point as the French Revolutionary consensus collapsed. Hence, revolutionary factions morphed into ideologically distinct parties. As Julian P. Boyd convincingly argues, “by 1791, the political and sectional cleavages [of national politics] had become obvious” to everyone.⁵⁰ They still occasionally cooperated but increasingly viewed each other with deep suspicion or even as mortal enemies. Three reasons caused this breakdown of consensus. First, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy of September 1790, which put French Catholicism under the heel of the French secular government, became a source of virulent revolutionary division after the Pope rejected it in April 1791. This rejection further antagonized Louis XVI towards the French Revolution and prompted his attempted flight from France.⁵¹ The French King’s flight increased division among French revolutionaries. It added constitutional to religious reasons for their mutual antagonism and destroyed trust in the constitutional monarchy. Heretofore widely accepted, it was now challenged by an ever-growing republican movement. Lafayette, the head of the National Guard, then irremediably divided the revolutionary movement after his troops fired on peaceful republican demonstrators in the Champ de Mars Massacre.”⁵² The blood shed among revolutionaries radically changed the nature of the French Revolution: constitutional monarchists now confronted republicans, the latter now committed to overthrowing King Louis XVI.⁵³

⁵⁰ Julian P. Boyd (ed.), TJP, vol. 20, p. 724. For a discussion of the debate on the Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian press of 1791/1792 that reveals that the respective supporters of the Secretaries of State and Treasury viewed each other as belonging to different “factions” or parties,” see Boyd’s Editorial Note on “The National Gazette,” TJP, vol. 20, pp. 718-753. It also discussed the role of the national and state press in the formation of the political party system.

⁵¹ Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 148-201., Doyle, *Oxford History*, pp. 100-167, and Guillemin, 1789-1792, pp. 22-79.

⁵² Guillemin, 1789/1792, p. 67.

⁵³ Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 148-201, Doyle, *Oxford History*, pp. 100-167, and Guillemin, 1789-1792, pp. 22-79.

Summer 1791 was also a turning point in the French Revolution due to developments in St. Domingue. The French colony, in addition to its enslaved people who were exploited and oppressed by planters, included three classes of free people: Wealthy white planters owning large sugar plantations; middling-class whites, mostly shopkeepers, artisans, and merchants; and the “gens de couleur” (free and mixed-race people), usually consisting of artisans. These classes were color and class-conscious: Whites discriminated against gens-de-couleur, and each class despised the other classes. American shopkeepers and factors also inhabited the island.⁵⁴ Initially, St. Domingue planters welcomed the French Revolution as they resented royal officials whom they saw as ruling “arrogantly” over them; the middling-class whites hoped to gain more rights and be more equal to planters; the “gens de couleur” hoped to end racial discrimination and gain equal rights. Therefore, the free population of St. Domingue debated reforms through a rhetoric of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which was heard by the enslaved laborers, who constituted 90 percent of the colony’s population.⁵⁵ On 21 August 1791, the Haitian Revolution erupted: Enslaved people revolted to make French revolutionary rhetoric match reality. They also rebelled because the French Revolution had paradoxically made their situation worse. The chaotic situation of revolutionary France had allowed planters to become more autonomous and disregard Louis XVI’s Black Code which had restricted the most egregious planter crimes against the enslaved people. The Haitian Revolution, which initially successfully proceeded in the

⁵⁴ St. Domingue’s exports constituted one-third of French colonial exports. Its imported American products amounted to three million dollars, equaling half the amount of American exports to Britain and double the American exports to France. Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, p. 649.

⁵⁵ For revolutionary rhetoric in the Caribbean context, see Dubois, “An Enslaved Enlightenment,” pp. 1-14. For the Haitian Revolution, see David Geggus, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), *ibid.*, *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2009), and Robert Blackburn, “Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution, *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 4 (October 2006): 643-674.

northern third of the colony, turned into a campaign that forced many planter families and their enslaved dependents to flee to South Carolina.⁵⁶

Like in France and St. Domingue, the summer of 1791 was a turning point in American politics: According to James R. Sharp and Elkins and McKittrick, consensual politics collapsed when Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians morphed into the ideologically-based and mutually-inimical Republicans and Federalists.⁵⁷ Jefferson and Madison broke with Hamilton and Adams and Jeffersonians attacked Federalists, believing that Hamilton and Adams were “monarchists” and abided by “doctrines of monarchy, aristocracy, and the exclusion of the influence of the people.”⁵⁸ They created a Manichean political lexicology dividing the political arena into two rigidly distinct parts, pitting their supporters, systematically called “republican,” against their opponents, branded as “monarchists, aristocrats, speculators, [and] Tories.”⁵⁹ Hence, an unrelenting political war was waged between the respective supporters of Jefferson and

⁵⁶ Lynn Hunt and Jack R. Censer, *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), p. 124. For French refugees from Saint Domingue in the United States, see Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French*, pp. 101-111. Leonora Sansay, Aaron Burr’s mistress and the wife of a French officer in St.-Domingue, recounts the relations between the rebels, their French oppressors, and the American merchants in the middle, all caught in the Haitian Revolution. See Eleonora Sansay, *The Horrors of St. Domingo in a series of Letters* (Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1808), and Cécile Accilien, ‘secret History: St. Domingue through the Lens of an American Woman on the Eve of Haitian Independence,’ *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 25, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 66-94.

⁵⁷ James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic: The Nation in Crisis* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1993), who argues that a real danger of civil war existed in the 1790s that was only averted by the Patriots’ desire to see the republican system survive. He also contends that the two-party system of Federalists vs. Jeffersonians was in place by 1799. See also Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, pp. 236-239.

⁵⁸ Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, pp. 236-239. Jefferson to Madison, 10/7/1791, FO.

⁵⁹ Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, p. 237.

Hamilton, who clearly by then viewed each other as leaders of mutually antagonistic factions.⁶⁰ One way to wage this political conflict was to appeal to the public via gazettes. For example, Jefferson hired Philip Freneau, the brother of South Carolina's Secretary of State, Peter Freneau, to publish a new gazette in Philadelphia, *The National Gazette*, to promote his republican principles and castigate those of Hamilton.⁶¹ The viscerally anti-British Freneau, the "Poet of the American Revolution," strongly supported the French Revolution. His intemperance as a publisher, notably his invectives directed at Hamilton and Washington, contributed to America's fiercely confrontational political debates. He accepted his post as publisher after the promise that he would not only receive payments from the Department of State, but also "inside news of foreign affairs" that Jefferson, the State Secretary, would surreptitiously provide him.⁶² By July 1792, Hamilton viewed Freneau's editorial activities as proving that Jefferson had paradoxically and "ungratefully" become an anti-Administration leader despite his position as Secretary of State: "The 'National Gazette' receives a salary from [the State Department] to vilify [its own] administration [and] oppose the measures of government."⁶³ Even by Spring 1792, the Secretary of the Treasury had been convinced that, alongside Madison, Jefferson, through such policies as the National Gazette's "Anti-Federalist" ideological and financial sponsorship, "was at the head of a party (sic)... generally unfriendly to the Government and [its] measures... subversive of the

⁶⁰ For how much Jeffersonian political lexicology was a rhetorical move and how much it actually represented or shaped reality, see Joanne B. Freeman and Johann N. Neem (eds.), *The Rhetoric of Opposition Meets the Realities of Governing* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), pp. 1-12, 80-102.

⁶¹ Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, p. 240, notes that the National Gazette started to be edited in October 1791 and stopped publishing in late October 1793. It is speculated that the Yellow Fever of Philadelphia of September 1793 killed many of its subscribers and that Jefferson's planned resignation from his post as Secretary of State, effective on the 31st of December 1793, foreshadowed the end of its primary funding source. Even before the yellow fever, the number of subscribers had dwindled, perhaps due to the gazettes' unrelenting invectives, directed against Hamilton and Washington, who hated Freneau and called him a "rascal."

⁶² Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, p. 240.

⁶³ T. L. [Alexander Hamilton,] "Editorial Note," *Gazette of the United States*, 25/7/1792, TJP.

principles of good government.... and dangerous to the union [and] peace of the Country.”⁶⁴

Therefore, he suggested that Jefferson resign as the State Secretary could not be both “hold a place in [the] administration and at the same time be instrumental in vilifying [its] measures.”⁶⁵

In fact, the political division between Jefferson and Hamilton, within Washington’s administration had started before the summer of 1791. By Spring 1791, Jefferson increasingly complained that Washington approved all of Hamilton’s policies he detested, such as those on the mint, the bank, and excise. At the same time, the president rejected the policies he supported, such as Madison’s *Navigation Act* proposal, which was intended to favor France over Britain.⁶⁶ Convinced that the success of the French Revolution was necessary for the survival of the American Republic, now threatened by Federalists, he was especially prone to see any anti-French view as evidence of monarchism and intent to overthrow the 1787 Constitution.⁶⁷ In the spring/summer of 1791, he had been infuriated by Adams’ *Discourses on Davila no.33* and by the anonymous *Publicola Letters*, believed by some to have been written by Adams but actually composed by his son, John Quincy Adams.⁶⁸ These works condemned the French Revolution in similar tropes to those propounded by Edmund Burke’s *Reflections* and constituted a rebuke to

⁶⁴ Hamilton to Edward Carrington, 25/5/1792 and Hamilton to Rufus King, 25/5/1792, quoted in editor’s note, TJP, vol. 20, p. 719.

⁶⁵ An American [Hamilton] to Fenno, 4/8/1792, *Gazette of the United States*, FO.

⁶⁶ Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, p. 236.

⁶⁷ Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, p. 236.

⁶⁸ For an analysis of *The Letters of Publicola*, published in the *Federalist Boston Gazette*, *The Centinel*, from June 1791, and for Jefferson’s response, see James R. Zink, “The Publicola Debate and the Role of the French Revolution in American Constitutional Thought,” *American Political Thought*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Fall 2015): 557-587, pp. 557-561. Zink, p. 561, agreeing with Elkins, sees the Jeffersonian and Federalist as having formed two fully-fledged parties by the spring of 1791.

Paine's *Rights of Man*.⁶⁹ They also consisted of an attack on Jefferson's vision of the 1787 American Constitution and, as we earlier discussed, the Secretary of State's view of unlimited popular sovereignty, similar to that now propounded by the French Revolution.⁷⁰ In contrast, Adams and other Federalists regarded the 1787 Constitution as establishing sovereignty shared by the government and people equally. Therefore, Jefferson called Adams a traitor to the American Revolution and the Spirit of "76 and castigated him as a man who secretly supported monarchism and was intent on overthrowing the American Republic.⁷¹ He also believed that the Secretary of the Treasury aimed to form a large professional army to assist Adams' designs.⁷²

While these debates occurred, in September 1791, news of the eruption of the Haitian Revolution added more cause for political division. American politicians took different views on the Haitian Revolution: Jeffersonians condemned the enslaved Africans' revolt because, as the party of planters and their deep anxiety at the fragility of the southern plantation system, they supported enslavers and were terrorized at the model which the Haitian Revolution provided to southern enslaved people who, like their St. Domingue's brethren, were permanently ready to start a rebellion and gain freedom. Furthermore, Jeffersonians' Francophilia made them furious at the enslaved people's rebellion and fight for liberty in opposition to America's French allies. For their

⁶⁹ Elkins, *The Age of Federalism* p. 237. Adams' *Discourse on Davila*, number 33, was published on March 15th, 1791, by the *Federal Gazette* of Philadelphia. Paine's *Rights of Man* London was published in February 1791; the first American edition was published in May 1791.

⁷⁰ See pp. 114-115.

⁷¹ Zink, "The Publicola Debate," pp. 557-561.

⁷² After November 1791, Jefferson also feared that Hamilton would use General Arthur St. Clair's defeat at the hands of Native Americans as a pretext to create such a professional, standing army. For Saint-Clair's defeat and its repercussions on American politics, see Colin Gordon Calloway, *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

part, Northern Federalists welcomed the Haitian Revolution due to their hostility toward the French Revolution and their strong antagonism to enslavement.⁷³ The Haitian Revolution also impacted South Carolina at the time of the governorship of the pro-French Revolution Governor, Charles Pinckney. St. Domingue's French planters fled to Charleston, the closest major American port to the island, which consisted of a similar society of planters. South Carolina planters, in solidarity to a people similarly involved in the most egregious crime of enslavement, welcomed their French counterparts and the state government financially assisted them.⁷⁴

From direct communication with the planter-controlled Saint Domingue's "General Assembly of the French" and planter-refugees, and via a debate on 4 and 5 December 1791 in the State Senate and General Assembly, South Carolina planters became thoroughly acquainted with the developments occurring in the French colony.⁷⁵ The State Governor, Charles Pinckney, after receiving a request for military aid from French planters, discussed the Haitian Revolution in two long and detailed letters.⁷⁶ In his letter to St. Domingue's General Assembly of the French, he expressed his very deep anxiety as a planter, terrorized by the righteous retribution of the rebellious enslaved people on their former oppressors: He feared "the indiscriminate slaughter

⁷³ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, p. 179.

⁷⁴ Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 44. At a distance of one thousand miles, Charleston was located the same distance from Saint Domingue as it was from Boston. The travel time was much shorter as, in the late Eighteenth-century, sea travel was the fastest way to travel. The state government aided the refugees financially: see Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 44 and Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 65.

⁷⁵ Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 44.. See also Governor Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, and "General Assembly of the French at St. Domingue" to South Carolina Governor Charles Pinckney, 24/8/1791, FO. The South Carolina Senate and General Assembly decided to send food provisions for planters amounting to 3,000 British pounds. See editor's note, Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO.

⁷⁶ Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO; Charles Pinckney to the General Assembly of the French at St. Domingue, 12/9/1791, editor's note 2. Pinckney refused to help the French planters militarily, arguing that such aid was exclusively a prerogative of the national government.

of the whites, the conflagration of sugar estates, the general destruction of property, and a probable famine” and, therefore, he egregiously assured French planters that he wanted their success in crushing the rebellion.⁷⁷ He gave three reasons for his feeling of terror at the sight of the Haitian Revolution and his offensive wish for French planters’ success. First, violence was directed at Frenchmen, South Carolina’s friends, and America’s allies, towards whom he was grateful for their service during the American Revolutionary War: “In common with the other citizens, my duty [is] gratefully to recollect that in the time of our most imminent distress, the arms and treasure of France were generously devoted to our relief.”⁷⁸ Furthermore, he said that he wanted to assist St. Domingue as his terror concerning his state’s “similar situation in possession of slaves” made him dread “a day when [it] may be exposed to the same insurrection.”⁷⁹ Therefore, he deemed the destruction of the Haitian Revolution as essential for the security of South Carolinian planters by affirming that “your decided success will prove the general detestation in slave insurrections [which] will always be opposed.” He also asserted that St. Domingue planters’ success would have “a happy effect as an example to prevent similar commotions” which he dreaded could also occur in South Carolina. Indeed, he concluded: “We sensibly feel for your situation and have a particular interest in hoping that [American] support will enable you to crush so daring and unprovoked a rebellion.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO.

⁷⁸ Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO.

⁷⁹ Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO.

⁸⁰ Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO.

However, the Haitian Revolution presented a dilemma for Governor Pinckney: He did not want to take sides between the various French factions, since, as his letter to Washington reveals, he believed that French planters, suspected of royalism, were at ideological odds with metropolitan revolutionaries despite, or perhaps because of, the emphasis of their loyalty to revolutionary France. The French planters sent him the colony's "Act of Constitution," stating its "Oath of Union," with Revolutionary France to dispel "unfavorable impressions" about their revolutionary sincerity.⁸¹ Indeed, historians have questioned the revolutionary sincerity of St. Domingue planters: Jeremy Popkins argues that they proclaimed to support the French Revolution only to ingratiate themselves with pro-French Americans.⁸²

Due to his international republicanism and his pro-French Revolution support, and despite the very significant planter anxiety that he displayed, Pinckney did not want the destruction of the Haitian Revolution if it came at the cost of upsetting the French revolutionary government in the metropole, suggesting that he, indeed, suspected St. Domingue planters to be against the French Revolution: In his letter to George Washington, he advised the American president to be "cautious" before sending them arms so as not to "risk offending [the French revolutionary government] unnecessarily." Indeed, he argued that, since there was "not an Union of Sentiment in the French Empire," the St. Domingue planters and the French revolutionaries "may be obliged before [the French Revolution] is settled to proceed to hostilities." Therefore, putting good

⁸¹ The Act of Constitution can be found in editor's note #1, Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO.

⁸² Jeremy D. Popkin, *The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 298.

Franco-American relations before the defense of St. Domingue planters, he suggested to the President that “it must be the policy to appear to favor no particular party or opinion.”⁸³ He proved clairvoyant: In 1793, St. Domingue planters declared themselves against the French Revolution and assisted a British invasion of the colony which came to help them restore the island’s plantation system.⁸⁴ Paradoxically, whereas he had proved reticent toward American aid to St. Domingue’s planters, the Federalists Hamilton and Knox, upon Washington’s injunction, “zealously” provided funds and arms to them: Hamilton helped French planters against the Haitian formerly-enslaved revolutionary freedom-fighters with funds intended to repay the US debt to France and Knox with military supplies intended for West Point.⁸⁵ This confirms the South Carolina Governor’s suspicions that French planters were crypto-royalists: The emancipationist Hamilton and Knox would unlikely have aided St. Domingue planters against a righteous enslaved people’s rebellion aiming at the complete abolition of enslavement on the island, if these planters had sincerely adhered to the French Revolution, especially after Revolutionary France’s recent descent into chaos, which confirmed members of Washington’s administration, such as Knox, Adams, and Hamilton, deep pessimism about it. Indeed, only two months later, Hamilton’s anti-French Revolution stance led to his suspension of the repayments of the U.S. debt to France.⁸⁶ The difference of view between Pinckney and Washington’s administration and, especially, between Pinckney and Hamilton and Knox, offers more nuance and fluidity than modern

⁸³ Popkin, *The Haitian Revolution*, p. 298.

⁸⁴ James Perry, *Arrogant Armies: Great Military Disasters and the Generals Behind Them* (New York: Castlebooks, 2009), p. 66.

⁸⁵ For Hamilton’s financial and Knox’s military aid to St. Domingue planters, approved by President Washington, see Jean-Baptiste Ternant to George Washington, 22/9/1791, FO, and George Washington to Henry Knox, 22/9/1791, FO.

⁸⁶ Editor’s note on the ‘statement of the Payments to France,’ Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 3/1/1793, FO.

historiography that portrays northern Federalists as sincere emancipationists permanently committed to the Haitian Revolutionaries' victory: In 1791, they wanted their destruction.⁸⁷

In contrast to Washington's administration, Pinckney wanted the President to sustain or even improve Franco-American relations. He told him: "Our connection is with France, under whatever Government they may establish. I have always been of the opinion that our connection with her has never yet been thoroughly understood or improved to those useful purposes it might."⁸⁸ By arguing that the Franco-American connection must be preserved under any political system France chose, he seems to refer to the cooling of Franco-American relations, which Jefferson had noticed was happening since April 1791, and purportedly due to France's increasingly radical government. He also likely referred to Vice-President Adams's recently published *Davila Discourses*, which condemned the increasingly radical French reforms and whose content and tone, reminiscent of Edmund Burke's, had infuriated the Secretary of State. Furthermore, Pinckney's wish for the Franco-American connection to be "improved to useful purposes" seems to refer to Madison's 1789 plan of a U.S. trade treaty favorable to France, which had floundered in the U.S. Congress by the spring of 1791, but was supported by key South Carolina international republican leaders, such as Edward Rutledge.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ For evidence of northern Federalists' welcome and support for the Haitian Revolution in the late 1790s and early 1800s, and the fact that supporting St. Domingue's African revolutionaries "dovetailed with their Francophobia," see Finkelman, *Slavery*, pp. 179-181.

⁸⁸ Charles Pinckney to George Washington, 20/9/1791, FO.

⁸⁹ For Madison's plan of improved trade with France, see Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, pp. 73-74 ff.

Whereas Charles Pinckney took a realistic approach in his support of the French Revolution, Pierce Butler and Thomas Pinckney used moral reasons to justify their support for France. For example, in a letter to his English republican friend, G. C. Rogers, Butler discussed in ethical terms the new French constitution of September 1791, which officially ratified the constitutional monarchy established *ad hoc* in July 1789.⁹⁰ Using Rousseauan rhetoric, he emphasized that his support for these reforms came from moral principles: The 1791 Constitution strengthened justice and freedom in France. He also asserted that what “attached” him to the French Revolution was “moral character, sincerity, benevolence, philanthropy, and love of justice.”⁹¹ Furthermore, he also moralistically extolled the French revolutionary reforms creating an army of citizen-soldiers.⁹² He judged that “citizen-soldiers” were crucial in maintaining a republican system as they would refuse to support monarchists and were “patriots” whose virtue would make them refuse “to plunge [their] bayonet into the bowels of fellow man merely for the gratification of ambition.”⁹³ He concluded that, because of their civic virtue, “yeomanry [and] militia are the natural, constitutional defense of free countries.”⁹⁴ Conversely, in contrast to this virtuous yeomanry, he saw standing armies as dangerous to republicanism because of their moral defects: He considered “army regulars [to be] *the cast-offs of towns* [and] debauched men [with] debilitated constitutions,” who became the “tool of monarchies [and] the bane of free

⁹⁰ PB to C. G. Rogers, 19/11/1791, LPB.

⁹¹ For example, PB to John Leckey, 2/11/1791, and PB to Robert Goodloe Harper, 18/2/1792, PBP, SCL. In the latter letter, Butler mentioned that he supported Adams as vice president of the United States. Despite their opposite political stances and “differences and disputes,” he admired Adams’ moral virtues and sincerity. He claimed that “[Adams] has the virtue of not being a hypocrite; whatever his opinions, he discloses them. My soul abhors private views and interested motives.”

⁹² PB to John Leckey, 2/11/1791, PB to Robert G. Harper, 18/2/1792, and PB to John Hunter, 28/8/1791, PBP, SCL.

⁹³ PB to John Hunter, 28/8/1791, PBP, SCL.

⁹⁴ PB to John Hunter, 28/8/1791, PBP, SCL.

governments.”⁹⁵ He also castigated Hamilton for planning the establishment of a standing army and for his purported plan to “increase the military establishment” by using the Native American destruction of General Arthur St. Clair’s citizen army to justify replacing militia with professional soldiers.⁹⁶ His use of moral terms to frame the debate on the French Revolution reflected Jeffersonian national leaders’ rhetoric. His welcome of the new 1791 French Constitution and the French citizen army as bulwarks of freedom based on moral principles allowed his audience to contrast French revolutionary reforms with the Federalists’ purported attempt to vitiate the 1787 U.S. Constitution and create a professional standing army. His assertion that the new French Constitution and military reforms were based on moral principles could also be compared to Jeffersonian criticism of Hamilton, which portrayed the Secretary of the Treasury as immoral and intent on undermining the American Republic.⁹⁷

Like Butler, former South Carolina governor, Thomas Pinckney, moralistically framed his support for the French Revolution. He disagreed with the Federalists’ Burkean assertion that the French national character made establishing freedom in France impossible, and, like Jeffersonians, he judged the French Revolution as a beacon of international republicanism.⁹⁸ He asserted: “The happy revolution which has been accomplished! France having thus vindicated her right to equal

⁹⁵ PB to R. G. Harper, 18/2/1792, PB to Wade Hampton, 12/1/1792, PBP, SCL.

⁹⁶ Butler to Wade Hampton, 12/1/1792, PBP, SCL. For earlier discussions of the French citizen armies, see PB to C. G. Richards, 19/11/1790 and 15/2/1791, PBL. For the conflict between Jeffersonians and Federalists over military policy, see Robert Wooster, *The U.S. Army and the Making of America: From Confederation to Empire, 1775-1904* (Lexington: University of Kansas Press, 2021), pp. 40-56.

⁹⁷ Like the Democrat-Republicans, he also praised rural identity in contrast to urban life, which he despised as corrupt and unrepublican. For Jeffersonian praise of agrarian society and distaste of cities, see Joanne Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, p. 177-178 and Jon Meecham, *Jefferson: The Art of Power* (New York: Random House, 2012).

⁹⁸ For Federalists’ and notably Adams’ view on the French national character, see C. Bradley Thompson, “John Adams and the Coming of the French Revolution,” *Journal of Early America*, vol. 16. no. 3 (Autumn 1996): 361-382.

liberty, it is not to be imagined that the barrier of [frontiers] can prevent that sacred flame from diffusing itself among [nations].”⁹⁹ An Oxonian Pinckney was the son of Antigua-born Eliza Lucas (1723-1799), who had introduced the indigo crop in South Carolina, ameliorating the colony’s agriculture. He was also the son of Charles Pinckney (1699-1758), South Carolina’s Chief Justice (1753-1754); the brother of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney (1746-1825); and the cousin of Governor Charles Pinckney (1789-1793). After serving in the American Revolutionary War as Major and Lafayette’s aide-de-camp, he became Governor of South Carolina (1787-1789). In July 1791, at the time of his oration, he was a member of the Society of Cincinnati and the State House of Representatives.¹⁰⁰ Four months later, his support for France led Jefferson to advise his nomination as Ambassador to France instead of Hamilton’s choice, Gouverneur Morris.¹⁰¹

Pinckney delivered a pro-French Revolution oration on the 4th of July 1791 at St. Michael’s Church to an audience of the Society of the Cincinnati and government officials, such as the Secretary of State, Peter Freneau, whose brother, at this precise moment in Philadelphia, attacked Federalist policies in the Jeffersonian *National Gazette*. The oration was divided into three parts. The first was an encomium of American Revolutionary War heroes mixed with the remembrance of British exactions during this war. The second part extolled French assistance, particularly his friend Lafayette’s, during that war.¹⁰² The third part associated the American and French Revolutions,

⁹⁹ Thomas Pinckney, *Oration Delivered at Saint Michael’s Church on the Anniversary of the Revolution*, published by Request of the South Carolina State Society of the Cincinnati (Charleston: Markland and Bowen, July 1791); reprinted in *The Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesmen*, American History Collections, 2015-2020, RDL.

¹⁰⁰ Lipscomb (ed.), *The Letters*, pp. 106, 165, 179, also mentions, p. 150, that Pinckney was nominated as ambassador to Britain in November 1791.

¹⁰¹ Editor’s note no. 2, Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Pinckney, 6/11/1791, FO.

¹⁰² Pinckney, *Oration*, p. 14.

ending in the latter's panegyric. His encomium of the French Revolution was based on four reasons: The quality of French national character, gratitude, virtue, and the survival of the American Republic. He explained his support of the French Revolution thus: The French, good and loyal people, aided the American Patriots during the American Revolution. To be grateful for those who helped is virtuous, and virtue is necessary to make the American Republic endure. Therefore, it was in the American interest to support France as it is part of virtue, a sine qua non quality for the perennity of the American republican system. Therefore, he asserted:

[France], generous and gallant nation! While gratitude is esteemed a virtue and virtue is cherished in America, the benefits you have conferred and the sacrifices you have made shall endear you to our hearts and command our grateful services! Blessings will continue to be shed on America as long as her sons by their love of virtue shall deserve [it].¹⁰³

In his praise of France, Pinckney demarked himself from Federalist anti-French rhetoric. As mentioned, by the time of his oration, John Adams and his son, John Quincy Adams, had published pamphlets and letters attacking the French Revolution: *The Discourses on Davila* and *The Letters of Publicola*, which had created an unprecedentedly fierce political debate across America. However, Pinckney refused to accommodate this anti-French invective and asserted his strong support of France to the Cincinnati and government officials. Additionally, due to the association in these debates of the French Revolution with the American Constitution, Pinckney's praise of France suggests that, like Butler, he shared Jefferson's constitutional principles.

¹⁰³ Pinckney, *Oration*, pp. 6-7.

Similarly, his encomium for Paine's *Rights of Man* suggests he condemned the rhetoric of Federalists, whose criticism of Paine had become center-stage for their anti-French agenda.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, his moralistic arguments, like Butler's, reveal Jeffersonian international republican idealism: He reiterated the Jeffersonian idea that gratitude was enjoined to a nation whose politics were based on morality and asserted that "the fond effusion of grateful love should bestow loveliest tints to illuminate [Americas'] countenance."¹⁰⁵

Moreover, Pinckney's portrayal of French revolutionaries in the most flattering way contrasted with the *Davila Discourses* and the *Publicola Letters* excoriations of the French national character. Whereas Federalists considered French people as lacking virtue and incapable of leading a revolution to its successful completion, he portrayed them as "virtuous," "loyal," "gallant," "intrepid," and "generous" and expressed his optimistic view that the French Revolution would eventually succeed.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, his emphasis on British exactions during the American Revolution War reflected Jeffersonian Anglophobic sentiments and contradicted Federalist Anglophilia. He described British injurious actions in the most vivid terms:

[Neither] age, nor sex, nor condition of life, nor debility could claim exemption. All who were obnoxious [to Britain] were doomed to experience the loathsome terrors of a

¹⁰⁴ Pinckney, *Oration*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ Pinckney, *Oration*, p.11.

¹⁰⁶ Pinckney, *Oration*, pp. 6, 10, 13 et al. For the belief that "virtue" was more than a word but that its "idealism and practice was everything" for pre-industrial transatlantic elite generations, 'something' that post-World War One generations "cannot imagine," see the bemusing and intellectually engrossing 1952 interview of the English philosopher and humanist, Lord Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), at "Conversation with Bertrand Russell," youtube.com.

squalid jail with all its injuries and contumelies. These miserable captives [could catch] in the harbor the melancholic view of the prison ships, full frightened with their unhappy fellow citizens and soldiers, [that] tolled the parting knell of their ill-fated countrymen.¹⁰⁷

This reference to the war internees' contumelies experienced at the hand of Britain must have resounded well among his audience who, like himself, a two-time prisoner-of-war after the defeats at Camden and Charleston, had suffered incarceration on land and sea.¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, Pinckney also dissociated himself from the nationalistic Federalists with his attention to revolutionary internationalism. After extolling the American Revolution's influence on the advent of the French Revolution, he enumerated the French revolutionaries' exploits in extending liberty to European countries.¹⁰⁹ He also asserted that his and French Revolutionaries' "enthusiastic love of freedom" might lead people to act "beyond the limits of political wisdom."¹¹⁰ Indeed, portraying French revolutionaries as selfless heroes fighting for greater-than-human ideals, he stressed revolutionary ideals in contrast to the Federalists' politics based on material interests, such as "trade and manufacture," banks, agiotage, manufacturing, and the establishment of a safe and peaceful state.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Pinckney, *Oration*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Lipscomb (ed.), *The Letters*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Pinckney, *Oration*, pp. 14-17.

¹¹⁰ Thomas Pinckney, *Oration*, p. 7.

¹¹¹ Thomas Pinckney, *Oration*, p. 6. With regards to a safe and peaceful state, cf. Jefferson's adage: "I prefer dangerous freedom over peaceful slavery."

In conclusion, Governor Charles Pinckney, U.S. Senator Pierce Butler, and former Governor Thomas Pinckney have shown that, between July 1791 and April 1792, eminent members of the South Carolina elite supported the French Revolution despite its increasingly radical nature. They also supported the French Revolution despite their planters' dread at the model that the Haitian Revolution provided to South Carolina's enslaved people who could, at any moment, destroy the state's plantation system in the same way Haitian Revolutionaries were destroying enslavement in St. Domingue. Despite such extreme anxiety, South Carolina pro-French planters' international republicanism was so strong that they put good relations with the French Revolution above their apprehension as planters and their egregious and immoral solidarity with the island's planters.

[Revolutionary War Generation, April 1792 – April 1793](#)

Nine months after Pinckney's oration, the start of the war between France and the European monarchies fundamentally altered Franco-American and Franco-South Carolinian relations. First, the war further destabilized France: Factions, already mutually hostile, now suspected each other of betrayal in favor of the foreign enemy. Lafayette's constitutional monarchist Feuillants were the most suspect. Despite commanding most armies on the frontline and fighting for revolutionary France with energetic patriotism, their situation became untenable after the fall of the monarchy, and they fled for their lives. Therefore, in August 1792, French veterans of the American Revolution, practically all Feuillants, departed revolutionary politics, and, henceforth, the French Revolution was controlled by two republican factions: the Americanophile and

internationalist Girondins and the nationalist Montagnards.¹¹² Within six months, they would establish a republic, execute the King, and declare war on Britain.¹¹³ These developments, especially the establishment of the French Republic and its war with Britain, greatly impacted American politics. American people enthusiastically eulogized republican France. The number of French cockades, flags, pro-French banquets, toasts, poetry, and celebrations of Bastille Day and French military victories vastly expanded. Memorabilia commemorating the Franco-American alliance also circulated extensively, such as printed porcelains and “war-pitchers” celebrating “the union of the two great republics.”¹¹⁴

Following these events, pro-French and anti-French Revolution American leaders were forced to clarify their positions. Paradoxically, both groups could better justify their contrasting stance: Those antagonistic to Revolutionary France could correctly tell that the pessimistic predictions they had held at the very onset of the Revolution were vindicated as France had now descended into chaos and war. They could also argue that this chaos and, particularly, the fall of Louis XVI and the Feuillants, who had both crucially helped America during the American Revolutionary War, made it reasonable for America to take a hands-off approach, stop repayments of the war debt, and become neutral with regards to the European wars. In contrast, pro-French leaders could rightly argue that it behooved America to assist France more than ever. It was now fighting

¹¹² The pro-American Girondins renamed the republican National Assembly as *The Convention*, in honor of America’s 1787 Constitutional convention. They also put the bust of Thomas Paine and the American flag at the center of the *Convention’s* forefront. They also gave honorary citizenship to Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Paine, allowing the latter to run as a deputy; he was duly elected by universal male suffrage (Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Patriots*, p. 62).

¹¹³ Respectively, in September 1792 and January 1793, and on February 1st, 1793.

¹¹⁴ Jackson Jr., *Privateers*, p. 23. McCauley Collection, Smithsonian Institute, *Pitcher “Union of the Two Great Republics.”* www.si.edu. These porcelains were fabricated in Liverpool and exported to America.

the same struggle America had waged, and the French nation assisted, a decade earlier: France was now a republic fighting against Britain for independence and freedom. Also, American assistance to France was legally enjoined by the Franco-American alliance and could prove beneficial if America wanted to count on French aid and preserve its independence from Britain in the future.¹¹⁵ Indeed, many political leaders, such as Jefferson, judged the establishment of the French Republic in September 1792 as the savior of American republicanism, which they believed was being endangered by Washington's administration. In March 1793, Jefferson wrote to William Short:

Characters of opposite principles [to republicanism] high in office, all hostile to France and fondly looking to England, [did not have] their prospects brightened. [They] have espoused [the American constitution] only as a stepping stone to monarchy and have endeavored to approximate it to that in its administration. The successes of republicanism in France have given the *coup de grâce* to their prospects and, I hope, to their projects.¹¹⁶

Like pro-French national leaders, the pro-French South Carolina elite intently followed revolutionary developments in France and enthusiastically supported them. Fascination with France's vicissitudes put domestic affairs to a standstill: Five weeks following the establishment of the French Republic, Governor Pinckney informed his cousin, Thomas Pinckney, the American ambassador to Britain, that "all our political attention being directed to France, we have little to

¹¹⁵ The Franco-US Alliance was the cornerstone of Jefferson's American diplomacy. He argued that "there was no nation on whom [America] could rely at all times but France. This doctrine [is] my polar star." Thomas Jefferson, *Notes of a Conversation with George Washington on French Affairs, 27 December 1792*, FO, and *Political Musings or Anas, 1791-1809* (Oxford: lulu.com). Jefferson, *Notes*, and Jefferson, *Political Musings*.

¹¹⁶ Jefferson to William Short, 3/1/1793, FO.

communicate from Home.”¹¹⁷ The elite continued eulogizing the French Revolution steadfastly even after it began its violent and anarchic phase in April/August 1792.¹¹⁸ Butler went so far as to contrast his favorable view of French developments with those in America. In June 1792, he reaffirmed his distaste for the 1787 American Constitution: “One of the aptness and imbecilities of the human mind [is] to run from one extreme [the Confederation Congress] to another [the 1787 Constitution].”¹¹⁹ In contrast, he saw revolutionary France as moving toward his ideal political system and being on the right side of history, justice, and God.¹²⁰ In September 1792, he exclaimed: “I look with those feelings that a friend to the rights of mankind must have. God grant them success. I think He will. For Justice is on their side.”¹²¹

Like Butler’s, Thomas Pinckney’s correspondence with Polish, British, and American international republicans revealed continued support for France despite its new chaotic situation. His correspondents included Andrzej Kosciuszko, the eminent Polish veteran of the American Revolutionary War; John Harriott, a self-styled “citizen of the world;” George Keate, a poet and friend of Voltaire who was interested in the Republic of Geneva; and Elias Vanderhorst, United States consul in Bristol and uncle of the American Revolutionary War veteran, General Arnoldus

¹¹⁷ Charles Pinckney to Thomas Pinckney, 28/10/1792, RDL-UVA.

¹¹⁸ For distrust in British news, see Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to TP, 7/1/1793, HPHP, RDL-UVA.

¹¹⁹ PB to John McPherson, 11/06/1792, LPB. Butler was repeating his distrust of the 1787 revolution expressed as early as May 1787. See LPB, p. 1, note 1 and PB to W. Butler, 3/5/1787, LD.

¹²⁰ For the relation between personal and public ethics and religious piety, see Eliza Pinckney Horry’s correspondence with her grandson Daniel, also called Charles Lucas Pinckney in HPHP, RDL-UVA., the beautiful letters of John Rutledge to his heirs while on death’s threshold, in John Rutledge Papers, SCL, and Pierce Butler’s letters to his son, and his son’s tutor, in LD.

¹²¹ PB to WB, 2/09/1792, LD, p. 179. Italics in the text. See also his letters where he expressed his enthusiasm for the freedom and human-rights-based transformation of Mankind, such as PB to Weeden Butler, 6/7/1790, LD and PB to John Hunter, 28/8/1791, PBP, SCL—italics in the text.

Vanderhorst, who became governor of South Carolina from 1795 to 1797.¹²² Vanderhorst's October 1792 letter to Thomas Pinckney is particularly fascinating: Only two months after the downfall of Louis XVI and its associated atrocities, it revealed that both he and Pinckney supported the French Revolution as he rejoiced in and complimented Pinckney for the success of the French revolutionary armies: "It is with peculiar pleasure that *I congratulate you* on the retreat of the combined [foreign] armies from the French territories, an event which will prove extremely favorable to the cause of freedom."¹²³

Like Vanderhorst, Thomas Pinckney reiterated his support for the French Revolution. In response to the invectives against the French Revolution expressed by Gouverneur Morris, the American Ambassador in Paris, he affirmed that Americans "must be particularly desirous for [the French], who [were] instrumental in establishing our independence, to enjoy [liberty]" and that France was "a country to which we owe so much and wish well."¹²⁴ Ironically, Pinckney's correspondence with Morris shows the American envoy to Britain supporting the French Revolution while the American ambassador in Paris condemned it.¹²⁵ Furthermore, In another show of defiance to

¹²² George Keate to Thomas Pinckney, 1/11/1792, John Harriott to Thomas Pinckney, 31/8/ 1792,; and Thomas Pinckney to Andrzej Kosciuszko, 7/3/1793, HPHP, RDL, UVA. Other letters of international republican are in Constance Schultz (ed.), *PREPS*, RDL-UVA.

¹²³ Elias Vanderhorst to Thomas Pinckney, 10/10/ 1792, HPHP, RDL-UVA.

¹²⁴ TP to Gouverneur Morris, 28/8/1792 and 11/9/1792, HPHP, RDL-UVA.

¹²⁵ Washington had originally wished Pinckney to serve as ambassador to France, perhaps due to his friendship with Lafayette, but then appointed him envoy to Britain, following Pinckney's preference. Morris probably wanted the ambassadorship in France to reignite his former paramours. See Meredith Hindley, "Ungoverned: Founding Father and Ladies" Man Gouverneur Morris Flees Revolutionary France," *Humanities*, vol. 33, no. 2 (March-April 2012). For Morris' anti-revolutionary activities while ambassador to France, see Melanie Randolph Miller, *Envoy to the Terror: Gouverneur Morris and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Miller relates Morris' brave attempt to free the king and other aristocrats at the peril of his life, like an American Scarlet Pimpernel. She exonerates him from the accusations of Jeffersonians and excuses him for not being successful in helping Paine while in prison and under the death penalty. She believes his anti-French Revolution sentiments came as much from his love for a French aristocratic woman as from ideological reasons. Perhaps William Short's criticisms of France

Morris's ill wishes towards the French Revolution, Pinckney asked him to send him a French translation of the Danish international republicans' *Ode to the National Convention*, which had been presented to the French representatives "in honor of French arms;" and he also rejoiced at Britain's unlikelihood of waging war against France due to Scotland's and Ireland's strong resistance to fight republican France and the British government's reluctance to spend vast military funds.¹²⁶

Like his brother Thomas, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney also supported the French Revolution after Louis XVI and the Feuillants fell. In January 1793, when Federalists used Louis XVI's prospective execution to castigate France and justify the non-repayment of French loans, he exulted at the beneficial effects the experience of the French Revolution in France itself would have on his young nephew's republicanism: "I am glad my nephew has been so long in France. He will return as a good republican."¹²⁷ He also averred that the British press portrayed the French Revolution erroneously, an accusation frequently repeated by other Jeffersonians.¹²⁸ He argued that his nephew "will find that the French have been misrepresented when viewed through a British medium and that they are not the people the British say they are."¹²⁹ Pinckney's

after 1792 also came from his amours with another French aristocratic woman. See George G. Shackleford, *Jefferson's Adoptive Son: The Life of William Short* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992). Other American revolutionaries with French paramours included Franklin, Jefferson, and Burr.

¹²⁶ TP to Gouverneur Morris, 30/11/1792, HPHP, RDL-UVA.

¹²⁷ Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to TP, 7/1/1793, PREPS-RDL-UVA, whose editor's note mentions that Pinckney's nephew was Daniel Horry Jr., also known as Charles Lucas Pinckney. Horry Jr. elected to reside in France during the most eventful years of the French Revolution. Asked by his uncles, in 1798, to return to America to enter public life, he refused, married a French aristocrat, and spent the rest of his life in France. For Horry Jr.'s biography and further information on his Pinckney uncles' republican exhortations, see G. Melvin Herndon, "Pinckney Horry, 1769-1828: Rebel without a Cause," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, vol. LXX, no. 2 (Summer 1986), pp. 232-263.

¹²⁸ Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to TP, 7/1/1793, PREPS-RDL-UVA.

¹²⁹ Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to TP, 7/1/1793, PREPS-RDL-UVA.

assertion that the French Revolution could only be understood in France rather than in Britain or from British news made him ideologically distinct from Federalists and their trust in the veracity of British gazettes.

Furthermore, unlike Federalists and even some Jeffersonians, eventually dismayed by the revolutionary violence and chaos, Pinckney did not excoriate the revolutionaries responsible for the fall of Louis XVI and the flight of the moderate Feuillants. On the contrary, he praised the new generation of republican Revolutionaries, although many of them, such as Condorcet and Brissot, were members of the emancipationist society, *Les Amis des Noirs*.¹³⁰ He asserted that “Roland and [war minister] Servan appear to be excellent ministers and Dumouriez, Custine, Montesquieu, Anselm, and Bunonville to be able and gallant officers. I trust they will continue to be so.”¹³¹ Despite his planter anxiety towards emancipationism, he showed that the South Carolina elite was so intensely pro-French that it was ready to praise French Revolutionaries, regardless of their views on enslavement. Moreover, even after France’s descent into chaos, and unlike Federalists who, from the start, had considered it incapable of success, he remained optimistic about the French Revolution’s eventual success: “French liberties are I hope out of all danger from foreign insult. When these commotions, which are the natural consequences of all great revolutions, have subsided, I hope they will form such a constitution as will insure their liberties.”¹³²

¹³⁰ See Bette W. Oliver, *Jacque Pierre Brissot in America, and France, 1788-1793: In Search of Better Worlds* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016) and Guillaume Ansart (ed.), *Condorcet: Writings on the United States* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University, 2012).

¹³¹ Cotesworth Pinckney, PREPS-RDL-UVA.

¹³² Cotesworth Pinckney, PREPS-RDL-UVA.

Only four days after Charles C. Pinckney reiterated his support for French Revolutionaries, and ten days before the execution of the French king, an event occurred in Charleston that so marveled Charles Fraser, a young elite member, that he recounted it in detail in his Memoirs:

On the morning, the bells of St. Michael's were chimed and a salute of 13 guns was fired by the artillery. A procession of French and American citizens paraded the streets, headed by the Governor, the Chief Justice, consul Mangourit in full costume, the orator of the day, Reverend Mr. Coste, pastor of the French Church, the judges, Chancellors, the Speaker, and all other public officers. On arriving at St. Michael's church, two salutes were fired by the regiment of infantry, an animated oration was delivered by Mr. Coste, the *Te Deum* was sung, and the services were closed by the *Hymne de la Marseillaise*.¹³³

This event took place on 11 January 1793, twenty months after Adams' anti-French Revolution rants, *Davila*, were published, seventeen months after the start of the Haitian Revolution and the arrival of planter-refugees in Charleston, five months after the fall of the French monarchy, and four months after the September Massacres that witnessed the first explosion of extra-governmental Jacobin violence. It celebrated the military victory at Valmy, which had saved the French Revolution. The celebrants included Governor Moultrie, Chief Justice John Rutledge, judges such as Thomas Hall and Aedanus Burke, Federal officials such as Thomas Lee and Isaac

¹³³ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 40-41.

Huger, and South Carolina government officials such as Peter Freneau, Stephen Drayton, and James Ladson.¹³⁴

Charles Fraser, the elite eyewitness of this celebration, later became a miniaturist painter of American Revolutionary War heroes. In the late 1790s, he traveled to London to paint the exiled Corsican revolutionary Pasquale Paoli, admired by Voltaire and Jefferson. In his memoirs of the event, he contended that the French consul, Mangourit, was playing up French religious liberty to the Huguenots to stimulate support for France. He argued that Mangourit was trying to contrast Huguenot suffering at the hands of the French monarchy and Catholic church with the French Revolution's good treatment of Protestants and establishment of religious freedom. He affirmed that "passing before the French Church, the consul, as an expiation for the persecutions of Louis XIV against the [Huguenots], halted the procession, took off his hat, and saluted it with the national colors."¹³⁵

In 1793, Charleston Huguenots were only the second or third generations following their ancestors' arrival in South Carolina, which had been prompted by French royal and Catholic persecution, and they welcomed the French Revolution.¹³⁶ They closely followed its progress and rejoiced at its attack on the Catholic Church and monarchy and its enactment of religious freedom and equal citizenship for French Protestants.¹³⁷ They expressed their support in their functions

¹³⁴ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 40-41.

¹³⁵ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 40-41.

¹³⁶ For example, the Huger brothers' grandfather was Daniel Huger Sr., who was born in France (Alice Huger Smith, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston* (Charleston: The History Press, 2007), pp. 40-41

¹³⁷ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 40-41.

as South Carolina and federal government officials. For example, at the time of the January 1793 celebration, Peter Freneau was South Carolina's Secretary of State. He was also the brother of Jefferson's protégé and publisher of the pro-French *National Gazette* in Philadelphia.¹³⁸ Alongside Freneau, pro-French Revolution Huguenots included members of the Huger family, who had welcomed the 19 year-old Lafayette at their plantation in 1777: United States House Representative Daniel Huger; federal marshal Isaac Huger; Charleston mayor John Huger; Francis Huger Jr., who became a member of the pro-French Republican Society in July 1793; Francis Kinloch Huger, who in 1794 tried to free Lafayette from his Austrian prison; and the family matriarchs, who originally planned this attempted rescue.

In 1792, Daniel Huger had appointed the French Revolutionary Jean-Paul Coste as pastor of Charleston's Huguenot Church. Coste had also been previously appointed the first French language professor at the College of Charleston in the 1780s and was a member of the French Revolution's Girondist faction. Additionally, he was the brother of Jean-Francois Coste, an acquaintance of Voltaire. Jean-Francois joined the American cause in 1780 as Chief Surgeon of Rochambeau's army, named his two daughters "Victoire" and "Virginie" to commemorate the battle of Yorktown, and funded military hospitals with his own money. Before Yorktown, General Washington had commended him for inoculating three thousand American troops who, in those times, were much more likely to die from smallpox than battle wounds.¹³⁹ At the January 1793

¹³⁸ Jeffrey Pasley, "The Two National Gazettes: Newspapers and the Embodiment of American Political Parties," *Early American Literature*, vol. 35, no. 5 (2000): 1-86.

¹³⁹ Exhibition of Medicine and the American Revolutionary War, 14/7/2021, American Revolution Institute, Society of the Cincinnati.

celebration, Charleston's planters also asked Jean-Paul Coste, rather than an Episcopalian pastor, to deliver the main oration of the day despite the elite being preponderantly Episcopalian and the oration being delivered at St. Michael's Episcopalian Church, which was attended by non-Huguenot planters and served as the venue for the Society of Cincinnati's Independence Day orations.¹⁴⁰

Daniel Huger's hire and remuneration of Coste as pastor of Charleston's French Church exemplifies, like Charles Pinckney, the fact planters put their support for France before, and despite, their absolute terror at the possibility of an enslaved people's revolt. Indeed, they hired Coste to become their Huguenot Church pastor, despite the fact that he was a "rabid" Jacobin revolutionary who made his parishioners sing *La Marseillaise*: Most logically, as Charles Pinckney also evidenced, they did so in order to establish strong relations with French revolutionaries whom they strongly supported.¹⁴¹ Indeed, Coste's dismissal was likely due to a decline of support for France through concerns about its abolitionism and Jacobinism, as contemporary historians argue.¹⁴² Yet Klein's assertion that "members of the wealthy Huguenot church expelled their minister, John Paul Coste, for including French patriotic hymns in a service" does not convincingly links such dismissal to planter anxiety, as French revolutionary hymns did not refer to enslavement or abolitionism.¹⁴³ Yet, planters must have dismissed Coste out of planter fear

¹⁴⁰ For example, Thomas Pinckney, *An Oration*, as mentioned earlier.

¹⁴¹ Jean-Paul Coste to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 13/4/1793, *Republican Society Papers*, BPL.

¹⁴² In addition to using incorrect dates, Klein, in *Unification of a Slave State*, misnamed Coste as "John Paul" rather than the "Jean-Paul" by which he signed his letters, and she seems unaware of his French nationality. She principally based her argument on an M.A. thesis (Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, p. 210, note 1) and a "redacted translation" from French into English of Coste's letter. The English translation is full of errors.

¹⁴³ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, p. 211. Planters sang *La Marseillaise* at the January 1793 and other pro-French celebrations as well as at the beginning of plays at the French theatre. See Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 123-124

toward French abolitionism, as indeed, he was an emancipationist. They just might have purposely hid their planter anxiety behind less genuine, but, importantly, also less shameful reasons, such as their distaste for French Deism, as Coste's public Deism, made it a perfect excuse.¹⁴⁴ Yet, the religious excuse for his dismissal, even if, as likely, were untrue, shows planters' concerns about French Revolutionary anti-religious policies. Coste's purported dismissal due to his Deist beliefs suggests that, even if, as most likely, he was fired due to planter anxiety, religious issues also might have weakened the elite's support for the French Revolution, as Rachel H. Cleves convincingly argues with regard to the northern states.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, by Coste's dismissal in March 1793, the French religious situation had sharply deteriorated. After the fall of the monarchy, French Revolutionary governments and Jacobin crowds had attacked Christianity. For example, in August 1792, War Minister Servan removed all references to God in the *Marseillaise* and, in September 1792, the people in Paris massacred scores of Catholic clergymen and women while the French government started the policy of deChristianization.¹⁴⁶

After his dismissal, Coste maintained amicable relations with Daniel Huger, who apologized for the whole affair. In fact, it was not Huger but Gabriel Manigault, the son-in-law of Ralph Izard, the co-leader of the Federalists in South Carolina, who expelled Coste from his position as pastor of the French Church.¹⁴⁷ Interestingly, Huger's election as a pro-administration in 1788 and his

¹⁴⁴ Coste asserted that an "English pastor attending the church" and "Charleston merchants" accused him of Deism and convinced the congregation that this religion was "impious." See Jean-Paul Coste to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 13/4/1793, *Republican Society Papers*, BPL.

¹⁴⁵ Rachel H. Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 4, 17-18, 146-149, 152. She also discusses, pp. 79-89, northern Federalist propaganda about the French Revolution, which exaggerated the possibility of enslaved people's revolts in the South to undermine Jeffersonianism.

¹⁴⁶ The French revolutionary policy of dechristianization is discussed by Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 776-779, 829-839, Doyle, *The French Revolution*, pp. 37-64, and throughout R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of Terror in the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

¹⁴⁷ Jean-Paul Coste to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 13/4/1793, *Republican Society Papers*, BPL.

campaign as a self-proclaimed Federalist in 1792 reveal some nuance and fluidity in South Carolina political system as the self-proclaimed and perceived state's Federalists were divided between supporters and antagonists of the French Revolution, Huger, just as Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, forming examples of the former.¹⁴⁸ Yet, in December 1792, despite asserting his pro-French credentials, Huger was not reelected into the Georgetown electoral district as U.S. House Representative but was defeated by Lemuel Benton, a Jeffersonian who kept being re-elected until 1798.¹⁴⁹

Coste's dismissal was not a sign of a significant anti-French Revolution shift on the part of the elite is revealed by his continued popularity with planters long after his dismissal. The accusations of Deism against him did not seem to affect non-Huguenots. For example, Coste wrote the play, *Les américains et les français au Siège de Yorktown ou l'Amérique sauvée*, about Franco-American amity at the Battle of Yorktown.¹⁵⁰ It was composed in March 1793, when the Federalist national government prepared to abandon the French Revolution with the Neutrality Proclamation. Through his play, Coste intended "to *electrify* Americans against the English" and counter the anti-French shift in U.S. foreign policy. The play, "dedicated to the troops of South Carolina, particularly the battalions of Charleston," was "dedicated to General [Charles Cotesworth] Pinckney." The dedication to Pinckney and its reference "to the troops of South Carolina and

¹⁴⁸ www.ourcampaigns.com and Gordon DenBoer (ed.), *Documentary History of the First Federal Elections* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), pp. 208-210

¹⁴⁹ www.ourcampaigns.com and DenBoer (ed.), *Documentary History of the First Federal Elections*, pp. 208-210; "Lemuel Benton," Biographical Sketches of the United States Congress, www.bioguide.congress.gov. Benton's election as a Jeffersonian in a coastal district also shows that South Carolina was not sectionally divided between an elite anti-French Federalist Lowcountry and a small farmers' pro-French Jeffersonian backcountry as asserted in Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 5-8.

¹⁵⁰ Jean-Paul Coste to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 13/4/1793, *Republican Society Papers*, BPL.

especially to the battalions of Charleston was meant to remind the elite of the Franco-American alliance and increase elite support for France. Intending to “inspire with the love of our [French] republic,” the play reminded its audience of “the promises [of American support] made [by the Franco-American alliance] but which were not kept, and of the benefits [America had gained from France] but had not felt.”¹⁵¹

The play was performed at the French Theatre of Charleston in April 1793, when, as mentioned, America was on the cusp of reneging its alliance with France through the Neutrality Proclamation. Yet, despite the imminent proclamation of American neutrality, the play was extensively attended by Charleston’s elite and elicited pro-French Revolution support. For example, Charles C. Pinckney, strongly endorsing the play, publicized it and encouraged planters to view it.¹⁵² This success reveals the extent of pro-French Revolution sentiment among the elite as only supporters of France attended the French Theatre while pro-British planters attended another theatre.¹⁵³ Furthermore, Pinckney’s enthusiasm for the play and its large attendance foreshadowed the elite’s outrage at the Neutrality Proclamation’s abandonment of France a few days later, on 22 April 1793, and showed that the South Carolina elite drastically differed from the Federalist-controlled national government regarding the French Revolution and Franco-American relations. Coste’s pro-French Revolution play was one of many plays sustaining the cause of international republicanism performed at Charleston’s French Theatre, a hub of elite pro-French Revolution

¹⁵¹ Jean-Paul Coste to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 13/4/1793, *Republican Society Papers*, BPL.

¹⁵² Jean-Paul Coste to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 13/4/1793, *Republican Society Papers*, BPL. Coste’s play was so popular among the elite that it was still played as late as 1795. See *City Gazette*, 29/4/1795.

¹⁵³ Walter J. Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of Columbia Press), p. 81. Coste seems to have soon been reinstated as minister: see Jean Paul Coste to George Washington, 24/11/1794, FO.

support that contrasted with the city's other but less successful theatre, attended by the pro-British elite and wealthy merchants. For example, the French theater played *Cato*, which portrayed Romans dying in defense of their republic. Its orchestra also played *the Marseillaise* at the beginning and end of the plays.¹⁵⁴

In April 1793, while Jean-Paul Coste presented his play to Charleston's elite, a twenty-year-old woman, Sarah Butler, also expressed her support for the French Revolution to her younger brother, sixteen-year-old Tom, studying in Chelsea, England. Sarah had studied at a private boarding school in Marble Arch, London, for eighteen months but was now back in South Carolina. She was the daughter of U.S. Senator Pierce Butler. Her father adored his children, let them have their thoughts except regarding matrimony, and did not proselytize them politically. Her studies in England took place in 1784-1785, when she was 12-13, at the premier boarding school for girls, the French *Ecole Moreau*. She spoke French fluently and corresponded with her brother alternately in French at their father's request. Butler exulted in the education of his older daughter: stressing her abilities in Spanish, Astronomy, History, Classics, and Geography, he considered her unsurpassed among all South Carolinians in her knowledge of Mathematics. Unusually for the ages, she eventually married against her father's will. Her chosen spouse was an English navy officer of French origin, Dr. James Mease, who saw service in the Caribbean.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ George Rogers Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Columbia: University of Columbia Press, 1989), p. 75.

¹⁵⁵ LD, p. 23.

In Chelsea, her brother Tom (also called Thomas) was then studying at a premier boarding school whose principle in education was “elite learning.”¹⁵⁶ According to Sarah, Tom had become anti-French Revolution because of the influence of living in Britain since the age of six.¹⁵⁷ His Anglo-Irish headmaster, Weeden Butler’s political leanings seem conservative as he was appointed chaplain to the Pimlico Volunteers by the Duke of Kent, the father of the future Queen Victoria.¹⁵⁸ Yet, Pierce Butler would have unlikely entrusted his son to an anti-French Revolution master. Moreover, due to his philanthropy, Weeden Butler established a free infirmary for the poor at Margate.¹⁵⁹ Also, one of Tom’s protectors, G. C. Richards, led an English pro-French Revolution Society, *The London Correspondence Society*.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, Tom’s negative view of the French Revolution must have been caused by the influence of his peers in school. Tom was also a friend of Francis K. Huger, the orphan of Ben Huger, who had welcomed Lafayette in 1777 and was killed at the siege of Charleston. Francis saw Pierce Butler, who felt paternal affection for the young man, as a surrogate father and asked him for advice from across the Atlantic.¹⁶¹ Although a very gentle and dutiful young man, Tom eventually disappointed Butler by not undertaking a political career and by marrying a French aristocrat, Elizabeth de Mallevault, for which he was disinherited. He then lived intermittently in France and the USA.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ LD, pp. 34-37.

¹⁵⁷ Sarah Butler to Thomas Butler, 15/04/1793, in LD.

¹⁵⁸ LD, pp. 34-37.

¹⁵⁹ LD, pp. 34-37.

¹⁶⁰ LD, pp. 34-37., and Pierce Butler to Weeden Butler, 19/11/1791, PBP, SCL.

¹⁶¹ Mary Butler to Thomas Butler, 2/8/1788. The letter mentions that Huger asked advice from Butler because his Huger uncles opposed Francis’ plans to take part “in the mercantile profession” as beneath the status of coastal planters. Instead, they wanted their nephew to become a doctor. Since his father’s death ruined Francis, Butler advised him to follow a business career to compensate for his lost inheritance. Francis, however, decided to become a doctor. See PB to WB, 2/3/1788 and PB to TB, 4/5/1788, LD. Butler also wished his son Tom to be more like Francis.

¹⁶² LD., p.6. In his letters, Butler continually gave Tom the most uncompromising examples of righteous behavior and counterexamples of political leaders’ ambition, but he never referred to the French Revolution. However, he asked

Sarah wrote to Tom three months after Louis XVI suffered the death penalty. In ways reminiscent of Rousseau, who emphasized the intrinsic equality of all people, Sarah admonished her anti-French brother, Tom, for condemning the King's execution: "Why does the death of one man excite such emotions? The life of the honest peasant is equally dear to him, and his *feelings* are the same! What a long list of atrocious cruelties does the history of the kings of France present with which the act so violently reprobated bears no comparison."¹⁶³ Her letter to her brother reflected Jefferson's radical views expressed in the New Year 1793 when he defended the French monarchy's fall and the violence that presaged Louis XVI's execution. The Secretary of State lectured his friend, William Short, then American Ambassador to the Netherlands, who had lamented that some of his French friends were killed during these events: "The liberty of the whole earth was depending on the issue of the contest: Was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood? Rather than it should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated."¹⁶⁴ Therefore, Sarah revealed that South Carolina elite members could be so loyal to the French Revolution that they agreed with Jefferson's radical views and objected to any criticism of France. Furthermore, Short's criticism of the French Revolution demonstrates that, like Federalists, Jeffersonians also held contrasting views about the French Revolution, a fact that questions some historians' binary rigidly separating anti-French Federalists and pro-French Jeffersonians.

the pro-French Constitutional Information Society to take Thomas under its wings. At age 9, Tom was fluent in French (Weeden Butler to PB, 29/05/1788, LD).

¹⁶³ Sarah Butler to Thomas Butler, 15/04/1793, LD.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 3//1/1793, FO.

Conclusion

Chapter two demonstrates the extraordinary resilience of the South Carolina elite's support for the French Revolution between its advent in July 1789 and April 1793, the eve of the Neutrality Proclamation. Except for a slight weakening of support among some of the more religious planters, elite support for France was as strong in April 1793 as in July 1789. Such support could be expected during the Revolution's relatively peaceful consensual period of 1789-1791 when American pro-administration conservatives generally welcomed their French allies' reforms, and those who did not, such as Hamilton and Adams, confined themselves to private criticisms. However, South Carolina planters supported France even after April/July 1791, when the French revolutionary consensus collapsed, the first intra-revolutionary blood was shed, and France descended into anarchy. They refused to join the Federalists in attacking the French Revolution now that it could be justifiably condemned, and that President Washington had become a critic.

The South Carolina elite's refusal to criticize France and enthusiastic support for the French Revolution are even more remarkable considering the eruption of the Haitian Revolution in September 1791, when their deep anxiety as planters and their absolute commitment to preserving enslavement should have converged with the northern Federalists' distaste for the French Revolution. However, in a way significantly challenging presently rigid historiographical binaries, the South Carolina elite showed less determination to have the Haitian Revolution crushed than northern Federalists: They expressed the wish to maintain good relations with France before all other concerns, despite their ubiquitous and overwhelming planter anxiety toward the extremely dangerous example that the revolt in St. Domingue provided to the South

Carolina Lowcountry enslaved people, who wielded very significant power of agency, a fact which was acknowledged by planters themselves, such as Thomas Pinckney, as we will see in Chapter Five. And the enslaved posed an immense and imminent threat to the state's plantation system.

The Haitian Revolution's inability to move the elite away from the French Revolution demonstrates strong elite support for France, regardless of external events and South Carolina's domestic situation, notably planters' concern for their hold on enslavement and their terror at what a duplication of the Haitian Revolution in South Carolina would mean for their lives. Yet, it is likely that, actually, and counter-intuitively, planter anxiety played a strong role for their support of the French Revolution. They just likely hid, behind a cover of international republicanism, their planter anxiety, whether at the possibility of a reenactment of the Haitian Revolution in South Carolina, or at an excessive power in the hand of the American national government, which could lead it to interfere in the state's plantation system.

Chapter three

South Carolina Planters and the Neutrality Proclamation

April 1793-June 1794

“Citizens murmur. No clear explanation of such an amazing decision distracts people’s minds.”¹

“Gratitude to France and remembrance of injuries induced to transgress neutrality.”²

“The [Proclamation] was officious and improper. Hammond might have asked it.”³

“My son expresses a desire to enter the French army to which I cannot consent.”⁴

“A very alarming state of things at Charleston interferes with the views relative to neutrality. I am perplexed with the circumstance of my not having received any account of it from you.”⁵

Introduction

On 22 April 1793, on the advice of the Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, President Washington issued the Neutrality Proclamation that declared neutrality with respect to the war waged by France, America’s present friend and ally, against Britain, America’s mortal enemy of just a decade earlier.⁶ The entire cabinet of Washington agreed that neutrality was in America’s best interest and war had to be avoided even at the cost of possibly violating American

¹ Peter Freneau to George Washington, 3/6/1793, FO.

² Ramsay, *Reminiscences*, p. 55..

³ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 29/6/1793, Catanzariti, p. 403.

⁴ Ralph Izard to Thomas Pinckney, 12/8/1793, PSP, RDL-UVA.

⁵ Alexander Hamilton to Isaac Holmes, 2/6/1794, FO. Holmes was Charleston Harbor’s Federal Customs Officer.

⁶ For the Neutrality Proclamation, see Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism*, pp. 311-372. They show that Jefferson publicly defended the Proclamation but helped Ambassador Genet circumvent it (p. 343 ff.). See also Charles M. Thomas, *American Neutrality in 1793: A Study in Cabinet Government* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), and Charles S. Hyneman, *The First American Neutrality: A Study of American Understanding of Neutral Obligations during the Years 1792-1815* (Boston: Porcupine Press, 1974). For their part, Alexander DeConde, *Entangling Alliance: Politics And Diplomacy Under George Washington* (Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, LLC, 2012), p. 195, and Ammon and Hyman, *The Genet Mission*, p. 51, argue that Jefferson interpreted the Neutrality Proclamation as “a benevolent neutrality” that favored France, an argument refuted by Elkins and McKittrick, p. 338.

obligations under its 1778 Treaty of Alliance with France. Whatever Hamilton's real motivation behind the Proclamation, it appears as the logical development of his long-held policy of distancing the United States from France, a country he hated, while effecting a rapprochement with Britain, a country he admired and saw as a model for America. American neutrality was declared while, in the meantime, a massive increase of American popular support for the French Revolution had taken place in the preceding seven months: The French constitutional and military situation had transformed itself into a situation that significantly resembled the one prevailing in America contemporaneously and during the American Revolutionary War: In September 1792, France became a republic and, in February 1793, went to war with Britain.⁷ Therefore, many Americans believed it was America's moral duty to help France in its hour of need, not only because it was now a 'sister republic' but also because France, just a decade earlier, had helped America fight similar enemies: Britain and monarchists.⁸

Chapter Three investigates how and why the elite's support for the French Revolution continued after the Neutrality Proclamation, which redefined Franco-American and Franco-South Carolina relations. It analyzes international republican rhetorical support for France from April 1793 to April 1794, when debates about neutrality raged and concrete assistance to France took place in the state.⁹ Historians have recognized some support for France among the South Carolina elite

⁷ For the increasing support of Americans for the French Revolution after it became a republic, see Francis D. Cogliano, *Revolutionary America, 1763-1815: A Political History* (London and New York, 2000), pp. 151-152.

⁸ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, pp. 151-152.

⁹ For the theory that Lafayette and other French veterans of the American Revolutionary War recommended Washington to remain neutral, see Sandra Moats in *Navigating Neutrality: Early American Governance in the Turbulent Atlantic* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2021). For the debates of Washington's cabinet

during the months following the Neutrality Proclamation. However, they judge it as originating from a few mavericks pitted against an anti-French and Federalist South Carolina government. They downplay elite pro-French Revolution sentiment while arguing that support for France came almost exclusively from backcountry farmers and Charleston's artisans. They also contend that the elite formed a solidly united conservative Federalist group that welcomed neutrality and even turned away from France due to the Genet Affair. Furthermore, historians' descriptions of pro-French rhetoric and action do not usually differentiate between those of the elite and those of non-elite members, leaving the incorrect impression that support for France came from the non-elite rather than from elite society.¹⁰

However, Chapter Three does not support the simple binary of a conservative elite class unanimously agreeing with neutrality in contrast to a non-elite disagreeing with it. Indeed, it shows that South Carolina planters' rhetoric reveals strong elite opposition to neutrality that confirms Ramsay's assertion that "the duties of neutrality were novel. Gratitude to France for favors received in the American War, and a keen remembrance of injuries inflicted by Britain, induced [South Carolina] to transgress impartial neutrality."¹¹ Indeed, the elite's strong pro-French Jeffersonianism displayed before the Neutrality Proclamation continued unabated after it and even increased since neutrality forced planters to openly declare or justify their position

members about the pros and cons of the Proclamation, see Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), especially, p. 415 ff.

¹⁰ Klein, *Unification*, p. 217, Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. xi, 29-30, 33, 49.

¹¹ Ramsay, *Reminiscences*, p. 55. He was the president of the State Senate (1789-1797).

toward France, especially as Genet and Charleston's French consul had just made Charleston the hub of French revolutionary activities in America.

The Chapter first analyzes the theoretical responses to the Neutrality Proclamation expressed by the elite. It then refers to the extent to which the elite's rhetorical support for France was implemented concretely through its support for French privateering and the planned East Florida expedition to establish a French sister republic in the Spanish colony. It also looks at the responses published in the South Carolina and Philadelphia gazettes, the letters of South Carolina government officials to President Washington, and the correspondence of elite members, either abroad at the American Embassy in London or in their private capacity as non-official expatriates in Europe. Chapter Three shows that South Carolina's pro-French elite was generally divided into three groups: Radical Jeffersonians, including South Carolina Governor Moultrie and Secretary of State Freneau, who condemned Washington and Hamilton for the policy of neutrality and violated it by taking concrete action to help France; moderate Jeffersonians, like John Drayton, who supported the Neutrality Proclamation and even took part in the committee who prosecuted violators of neutrality, who included his cousin Stephen; and moderate Federalists, like the Pinckney brothers, who supported the French Revolution rhetorically, but not in action and were, at least publicly, supportive of American neutrality and furious at the radical Jeffersonians' attacks on the President. The pro-French elite was also divided in a different way: The moderate Federalists emphasized gratitude for the assistance of France in the American Revolutionary War and loyalty to the Franco-American alliance whereas, in addition to these sentiments, the

Jeffersonians, like Jefferson and Madison, also stressed constitutional principles that placed sovereignty, in the people, and the power to declare neutrality, in Congress, and not in the national executive. The pro-French South Carolina elite put its rhetoric into action and, through the radical Jeffersonians' control of the state government, the Society of the Cincinnati, and the Democratic-Republican Society, extensively helped French Revolutionary plans for Charleston as a base for its privateers and as a launching pad for its intended invasion of Spanish East Florida.

Chapter Three demonstrates that support for the French Revolution in South Carolina increased to an unprecedented level between April 1793 and April 1794, which exactly corresponds to the paroxysm of French Jacobin Terror, the continuation of the Haitian Revolution, and the universal abolition of enslavement, including in St. Domingue. Therefore, it contradicts the view that "as the French and Haitian revolutions became increasingly radical, pro-French sympathies dwindled in [South Carolina]:"¹² Indeed, the Chapter reveals that in the year unfolding from April 1793 to April 1794, and despite profound and universal planter anxiety, pro-French sentiment increased, and even reached its apogee, contemporaneously to the Haitian revolution, French abolitionism, and the increase in Jacobin violence. This fact confirms the convincing argument of historians of the Haitian Revolution and southern planter society, such as Blackburn, Drescher, and Geggus: Planters' anxiety about St. Domingue, despite planters' terror at the Haitian Revolution, did not make southern elites turn against the French Revolution in the 1790s; this would only occur in the early 1800s, when formerly-enslaved blacks stroke even more terror and fear among planters

¹² Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 92.

after successfully completing their Revolution and establishing the world's first republic of people of African descent at the South's doorstep, in 1804.¹³ Indeed, as discussed earlier, historians focusing on the impact of French abolitionism and the Haitian Revolution concur that American southern planters' anxiety, although most ubiquitous and significant in the early and mid-1790s, only dramatically increased after 1797. Furthermore, Robin Blackburn attributes the immense growth of southern planters' anxiety to the completion of the Haitian Revolution in 1804. For his part, Seymour Drescher argues that the Haitian Revolution did not increase the already existing and incredibly significant planter anxiety in the United States, but only in the Caribbean islands.¹⁴

South Carolina debates about, and violations of, American neutrality, occurred during the Franco-British war. They were particularly relevant for the state as it had been selected by France, due to its geographical position, and likely for the pro-French sentiments of its Jeffersonian and moderate Federalist elite, to become the base for its privateers that harassed the British Royal Navy and British commerce with America. Except Savannah, Charleston owned the nearest American port city to the Caribbean. These islands became the main Franco-British war theatre in the Atlantic due to the high volume of trade from and to British and French islands and both

¹³ Simon P. Neuman, "American Political Culture and the French and Haitian Revolutions," Robin Blackburn, "The Force of Example," pp. 15-23, and Seymour Drescher, "The Limits of Example," pp. 10-15, in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. David P. Geggus (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2001), Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), David P. Geggus, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), Geggus, *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2009), Geggus (ed.), *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), and Robert Blackburn, "Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 4 (October 2006), pp. 643-674.

¹⁴ Robin Blackburn, "The Force of Example," pp. 15-23. Seymour Drescher, "The Limits of Example," pp. 10-15.

countries invading each other's territories. Similarly, except Georgia, South Carolina was the nearest state from East Florida and Louisiana, where France planned to establish sister republics.

South Carolina debates and actions regarding American neutrality also occurred when the French government became increasingly radical at home. After April 1793, revolutionary violence greatly increased, reaching a climax in June 1794 during the "Great Terror," which saw thousands of executions. Turning points consisted in the overthrow of the Girondins in June 1793, Robespierre's accession to the Committee of Public Safety in July, the official proclamation of the "Terror" in September, the execution of the Girondins and the Queen in October, and of the Indulgents in March 1794, and the advent of the "Great Terror" in April 1794. Furthermore, throughout this year, civil war reached its highest level, notably with the "Nantes Drownings" of thousands of people, including hundreds of priests, monks, and nuns. It also occurred when Louis XVI's eight-year-old son, the Dauphin, was incarcerated in the cruelest conditions.¹⁵

To the dismay of Hamilton and other Federalists, the Franco-British war caused the American people to increase the number and extravagance of festivities celebrating Franco-American friendship. At these celebrations, the people, declaring their hostility towards Britain, expressed the wish that the national government assist France. Some veterans of the American Revolution even decided to join the French army. For example, Richard Henry Lee, the then U.S. Senate

¹⁵ Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle*, pp. 148-201, Doyle, *Oxford History of the French Revolution*, pp. 100-167., and Guillemin, 1789-1792/1792-1794: *Les Deux Revolutions*, pp. 22-79.

President pro Tempore, 'sought and received the offer of a commission of Major-General in the army of revolutionary France."¹⁶ Moreover, French consuls encouraged enthusiasm for France: They incited Americans to welcome French privateers in American ports, accept French commissions to join these privateers as well as the French army or pro-French "legion," such as the one being established in South Carolina, and assist with French plans for the establishment of French sister republics in Spanish North America and in British-controlled Quebec.¹⁷

To stop the enthusiasm and looming aid of France by individuals and states and the possibility of war with Britain, Washington issued the Neutrality Proclamation, which, in line with Hamilton's policy of rapprochement with Britain, prohibited any civil and military assistance to France. Many, probably most, Americans were shocked by Washington's edict which they saw, rightly or wrongly, as being pro-British and anti-French. As the South Carolina Secretary of State, exclaiming his disbelief at the Proclamation, remarked: ""Citizens murmur. No clear explanation of such an amazing decision distracts people's minds."¹⁸ Indeed, merely a decade earlier, Britain had been their mortal enemy and France their vital friend; and, in 1793, France and the United States were bound by a military alliance, which some even believed behooved military aid for France in case of war.

¹⁶ Lipscomb (ed.), note 1, p. 277. Lee was eventually dissuaded by President Washington to go to France and remained in America.

¹⁷ For French consuls playing up Francophile sentiments among the people, see Murdoch, "Citizen Mangourit," pp. 528-540, and Alderson, *This Bright Era*. For the French attempt to invade East Florida in cooperation with South Carolina planters, see Charles E. Bennet, *Florida's French Expedition* (Pensacola: University Presses of Florida, 1989) and, especially, Alderson Jr., *This Bright Era*, and his article, "Entangled Borderlands: The 1794 Projected Invasion of East Florida and Atlantic History," *Florida History Quarterly*, vol. 88, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 54-89. Alderson Jr. argues, like R. R. Palmer, that international republicanism played a vital role in the planned invasion.

¹⁸ Peter Freneau to George Washington, 3/6/1793, FO.

In America as a whole, and including South Carolina, the Neutrality Proclamation did not diminish, as some historians incorrectly argue, but increased enthusiasm for France, which then reached its apogee. In addition, by forcing political leaders to take a position for or against the Neutrality Proclamation and, therefore, Revolutionary France, American neutrality augmented political divisions and greatly contributing to the establishment of the first part-system. Those supporting France tended to identify with the “Republican interest,” while those preferring close ties to Britain leaned toward Hamiltonian views on foreign and even domestic policies. Still, the system was far from rigid. For example, in South Carolina, leading supporters of Revolutionary France, such as the Pinckney and Rutledge brothers still referred themselves as Federalists; although they meant it as supporting Washington’s national administration rather than Hamilton whom they did not like as they perceived him to be anti-French. Yet, the Neutrality Proclamation was so divisive that, in July 1793, only three months afterwards, it prompted Jefferson to ask Washington to accept his resignation as Secretary of State.¹⁹

Jefferson, though “consumed with hatred for England,” Jefferson supported peace and American neutrality since he considered it to be in America’s interest as it would prevent “the calamities of war.”²⁰ However, he was furious at the way Hamilton, “who detested the French Revolution,” issued and interpreted the Neutrality Proclamation: He became increasingly convinced that the

¹⁹ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, p. 211. Washington, however, was able to convince Jefferson to stay in office until December 31st.

²⁰ Jefferson to Madison, 28/4/1793. See also Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 338, 341. Jefferson, in his support for neutrality, seems less radical than Madison who seemed, at times, quite ready to start a war with Britain if American interests, or French ones, vitally required it. As we shall see in Chapter Four, the radical Jeffersonians in the Democratic-Republican Society expressed more praise toward Madison than for Jefferson.

Secretary of the Treasury, in connivance with British Ambassador Hammond, was using neutrality, on the one hand, to effectuate a rapprochement with Britain and, on the other hand, to end the Franco- American alliance, which constituted the very “polar star” of Jefferson’s foreign policy.²¹ For example, in April 1793, he refuted Hamilton’s justifications for his desired ‘suspension” of the Treaty of Alliance with France and his suggestion that the alliance could be altogether “renounced” or made “void.”²² In July 1793, in the case of the French privateer, *The Little Sarah*, renamed *La Petite Démocrate*, a ship of fourteen canons, which included American sailors and was ready to sail as part of the projected invasion of Louisiana, he not only castigated Hamilton and Knox for being ‘so tender” towards Britain, but suggested they wanted to start armed action or a war against France.²³ He even claimed that Hamilton was perhaps treasonous by suggesting American neutrality had been forced upon America by Britain: “The Neutrality Proclamation was officious and imperious. My objections to the impolicy of a premature declaration were answered by such arguments as timidity would readily suggest. I now think it extremely possible that Hammond might have been instructed to have asked it.”²⁴ Jefferson also downplayed American enlistment into French privateers in comparison to the much greater British impressment of American citizens and he opposed Genet’s recall by France.²⁵

²¹ In 1797, Jefferson even believed that Hamilton had drafted the Neutrality Proclamation to start a Franco-American war. See Jefferson to Madison, 26/6/1797, TJP

²² Jefferson to Washington, 28/4/1793. Jefferson to Madison, 2/6/1793, FO. Also, Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 339-340.

²³ Cabinet Opinions on the *Little Sarah*, 8 July 1793, and *ibid.*, editor’s note, and Genet to Jefferson, 9/7/1793, FO. Jefferson, “Anas,” 5/7/1793 and 10/7/1793. Notes on Neutrality Questions, 13/7/1793. For the projected French revolutionary invasion of Spanish Louisiana with French privateers sailing out of American ports, see Jefferson to Jean-Baptiste Ternant, 15/5/1793; Jefferson to Genet, 5/6/1793; Genet to Jefferson, 22/6/1793, FO, Jefferson, “Anas,” 5/7/1793 and 10/7/1793.

²⁴ Jefferson to Madison, 29/6/1793, Catanzariti, p. 403.

²⁵ Cabinet Opinions on the *Little Sarah*, 8 July 1793, and *ibid.*, editor’s note, and Genet to Jefferson, 9/7/1793, FO. Elkins and McKittrick, *Federalist Era*, pp. 350-353. For these particular debates and those of neutrality in general, the most authoritative works are still Charles M. Thomas, *American Neutrality in 1793; A Study in Cabinet Government*

For his part, Madison, understood popular furor against the Neutrality Proclamation, which he deemed to be excited by the people's belief that American neutrality "protects the British breach of the modern Law of Nations."²⁶ Similarly to many American people, he viewed American neutrality as favoring Britain and harming France and lamented that "British goods are protected by the Neutrality whilst [the Royal Navy] insolently seize and search for French goods."²⁷ Furthermore, after Jefferson, obsessed by the idea that neutrality was shaped by the Hamilton-Hammond duo to favor British interests, prevailed upon him "to defend the French alliance" by questioning "the constitutionality of declaring neutrality" [and] "by advocating support for the French Revolution," he undertook a campaign against the Neutrality Proclamation. Under the pseudonym of Helvidius, a republican Roman who had fought against aristocrats and tyranny, he penned a series of pamphlets which he asked the Federalist editor, John Fenno, to publish in his gazette to provoke Hamilton's response.²⁸ The Secretary of the Treasury obliged, sparking a total of twelve-essay debates between the two men.²⁹

In 1793, imbued by Anglophobia and Francophilia which "overrule[d] almost any other category of thought and considerations of high policy," many people of the "effective political nation,"

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), and Charles S. Hyneman, *The First American Neutrality: A Study of American Understanding of Neutral Obligations during the Years 1792-1815* (Boston: Porcupine Press, 1974).

²⁶ Madison to Jefferson, 29/6/1793, FO.

²⁷ Madison to Jefferson, 29/6/1793, FO.

²⁸ Madison's "Helvidius" Essays, 24 August–18 September 1793 (Editorial Note), FO. James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, *The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793–1794: Toward the Completion of the American Founding*, edited by Morton J. Frisch (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007).

²⁹ Hamilton wrote under the pen-name of "Pacificus."

supported France more radically than Jefferson:³⁰ Believing that American neutrality flouted the 1778 Franco-American Alliance Treaty, they violently protested against the Neutrality Proclamation and its defenders.³¹ As James M. Lindsay argues, “the opposition to Washington’s decision [on American neutrality] was on the substance. Many Americans favored siding with France. The two countries had a treaty of alliance, French support had been critical to winning the War of Independence, and neutrality would help the hated British.”³² In Philadelphia, the popular furor against American neutrality took extreme proportions which even included calls for the overthrow of the national government and for waging war against Britain on the side of France: “Ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia, day after day, threatened to drag Washington out of his house and effect a revolution... or compel [the government] to declare war in favor of the French Revolution and against England.”³³ Popular anger was so great that Vice-President Adams even feared for his and his family’s lives; and he sent away his relatives to safety.³⁴ He armed himself and his servants, expecting the enraged crowds, surrounding his mansion, to break into it at any moment.³⁵ He later concluded that his

³⁰ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, p. 27. For America’s “effective political nation,” and its Francophilia and Anglophobia that matched those of Jefferson and Madison and other Jeffersonian leaders, see *ibid.*, pp. 26-29.

³¹ Morton J. Frisch (ed.), *The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793–1794: Toward the Completion of the American Founding* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), p. vii.

³² James M. Lindsay, “TWE Remembers: The Pacificus-Helvidius Debate,” Council of Foreign Relations (21 January 2020), www.cfr.org. For the same argument, especially for the American people’s attachment with France and the Franco-American Alliance, see also Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 338-353 as well as Markus Hünneimörder, *The Society of the Cincinnati: Conspiracy and Distrust in Early America* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), Tom Shachtman, *How the French Saved America: Sailors, Soldiers, Diplomats, Louis XVI, and the Success of a Revolution* (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 2017), Julia Osman, “The Consequence of Yorktown: Merci France!” 24 July 2022, American Revolution Institute, Web, 10 August 2022, who all stress the amity between French and American veterans and the Cincinnati’s secondary goals of Franco-American amity and the honoring and strengthening of the Franco-American alliance. They argue that veterans of the American Revolutionary War were grateful for French military assistance, which they deemed vital for achieving the goal of independence.

³³ John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 30/6/1813, FO.

³⁴ John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 30/6/1813, FO.

³⁵ John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 30/6/1813, FO.

survival and that of Washington's administration had only come due to the unexpected yellow fever outbreak of August 1793 that killed thousands and forced many people and the American government to flee the city and suspend most political activities.³⁶ In other words, in Adams' opinion, had there been no yellow fever, the government of George Washington would have probably been overthrown and America would have plunged into anarchy, or fell in the power of radical Jeffersonians.³⁷

Vice-President Adams particularly blamed the Southern elites for the outbreak of this massive popular anger against American neutrality: He lamented that anti-neutrality "terrorism was excited by the circular letters from members of Congress in the Southern States to their constituents."³⁸ Indeed, in June 1794, half of the Senators, most of them Southern Jeffersonians, voted against the Neutrality Act; the Act was passed only because Adams, as Senate President, held the deciding vote. In the South, the Neutrality Proclamation particularly shocked the pro-French South Carolina elite, who had just grandiosely feted French Ambassador Genet's visit to Charleston only a week earlier and had agreed with his plans to make Charleston the base for French privateering and French launching ground for an invasion of Spanish East Florida.³⁹ Worse, American neutrality turned South Carolina planters into criminals, considering that their

³⁶ John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 30/6/1813, FO.

³⁷ . For the yellow fever outbreak in Philadelphia and, similarly to Adams, for the belief it changed the history of the United States, see Bryn Barnard, *Outbreak! Plagues That Changed History* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2014).

³⁸ John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 30/6/1813, FO.

³⁹ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 16-19.

assistance in French privateering and the planned French invasion of East Florida violated the Neutrality Proclamation.

Undeterred, however, the South Carolina elite maintained its commitment to come to the aid of France and called for the Neutrality Proclamation to be repealed. Elite members had called for concrete assistance to France even before Genet's arrival and the Neutrality Proclamation. An anonymous writer argued that pro-French Revolution celebrations fell short of what duty entailed and reminded that French freedom fighters had not waited for the approval of their government to help America and had done so without their government's consent:

Had the French, when we were struggling for our liberties [only] expressed their approbation of our conduct by splendid and sumptuous banquets and by quaffing bumpers of champagne accompanied with florid toasts and left us to our own feeble efforts, where would have been the freedom of America? [The French] dyed our shores with their blood [before] France, as a nation, declared herself in our favor.⁴⁰

This planter's call for concrete action reveals that the memory of the Revolutionary War was a significant factor in the elite's support of the French Revolution. Furthermore, the fact that he took his position not after France went to war against the continental monarchies but after it went to war against Britain suggests that anti-British resentment also played a strong role in pro-

⁴⁰ South Carolina State Gazette, 29/3/1793.

French sentiment, especially as France was now fighting the same enemy as the Americans did in 1776. He also insisted that French assistance to America had first come through the exertions of individuals, regardless of their government's stance, and his audience must have immediately remembered Lafayette, who, despite the risk of imprisonment, had joined the American cause against the wishes of Louis XVI. They would also have remembered other individual volunteers who, of their own volition, had come to fight and die alongside South Carolina officers, such as French Baron de Kalb at the Battle of Camden and the Polish officer Casimir Pulaski at the Siege of Savannah.

Proclaimed only weeks after this planter's article, American neutrality clashed with his view that individual American citizens should dutifully assist France, regardless of national policy. In the Neutrality Proclamation-generated tug-of-war between the American national government and those calling for assisting France, the South Carolina elite chose to follow the latter's advice and aided France rhetorically and concretely under the guidance of Charleston's French consul, Michel Ange Bernard Mangourit, providing theoretical and organizational structure.⁴¹ Ironically, neutrality may have created more aid to France than would have occurred without it: In their relentless fight against Hamilton, Jeffersonians likely seized the opportunity it afforded by providing them with the theoretical and moral justification to fight the Secretary of the Treasury.

⁴¹ Alderson, *The Bright Era*, pp. 38-40.

Furthermore, the South Carolina elite opined that the Neutrality Proclamation was problematic regarding America's treaty obligations and reputation in the international community:⁴² The Franco-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce's Article 17 stipulated America's obligation to assist France militarily in the event of a defensive war.⁴³ Yet, Hamilton justified neutrality by arguing that France had declared war on Britain and could not invoke this article. Still, Jeffersonians deemed the Secretary of the Treasury's argument to be specious and meant to justify his wish to abrogate the Franco-American alliance. Indeed, they judged that France was defending its freedom and survival as a nation and that Britain, after the execution of Louis XVI, had become the aggressor through its threat to the French Revolution's very existence: it aided Austria, Prussia, and the French émigrés in their plan to overthrow the French Republic.⁴⁴

Like the national Jeffersonians, the South Carolina elite did not accept Hamilton's justifications for not helping France. Like them, they also argued that the Neutrality Proclamation's violation of the Franco-American alliance, by its unfaithfulness, discredited the United States in the eyes of the international community. Peter Freneau illustrated this view in a letter of May 1793 to President Washington.⁴⁵ He argued that neutrality made America "infamous among the nations of the earth" because it violated its duty toward France, which had enabled America's liberty:

⁴² "The Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States and France, 6 February 1778," The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, www.avalon.law.yale.edu.

⁴³ For the treaty's interpretation, see David M. Golove and Daniel J. Hulsebosch, "A Civilized Nation: The Early American Constitution, The Law Of Nations, And The Pursuit Of International Recognition," *New York Law Review*, vol. 85 (October 2010), pp. 932-953.

⁴⁴ Elkins, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 334-340, 346-354.

⁴⁵ Veritas, *Letter Addressed to President George Washington*, 31/5/1793; reproduced in the National Gazette, 1/6/1793, FO. Freneau signed his letters under the pseudonym of Veritas: see RBD, p. 396. For his friendship with Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, see Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to his attorney (name unknown), 26/9/2022, in PFP,

How can the proclamation be considered as consistent with our duty so long as we pretend to any faith as a nation or remember with gratitude the circumstances under which our treaties with France were concluded? And, despite the reciprocal ties of national treaties, to treat an inveterate enemy with the same friendship as our best and most faithful ally?⁴⁶

Indeed, Freneau, dismissed the Federalist claim that it strove to make America a country equal, respected, and honored “among the nations of the earth.”⁴⁷ He argued that, on the contrary, the Neutrality Proclamation violated the alliance with France and, thereby, proved that America had betrayed not only its French ally but international republicanism: The Federalist government “disregarded its plighted faith and, thereby, incurred this disgraceful character for which [a country] becomes infamous among the nations of the earth.”⁴⁸ Neutrality was an “insult” and “injurious” to France, an ungrateful and “unreciprocated” act towards “*America’s first and only ally,*” given “the generous exertions of France in the cause of American liberty” and the fact that “[America was] indebted [to France for] her national existence [as] a free nation;” it was also “an

RDL-UVA. He was appointed Secretary of State at the age of 27. Immensely wealthy, he owned 22 tracts of land, numbering thousands of acres, in both the mid-state and near Charleston and Georgetown. See RBD, p. 396.

⁴⁶ Veritas, Letter Addressed to President George Washington, 31/5/1793.

⁴⁷ Freneau’s, the South Carolina elite’s, and national Jeffersonians’ attacks on the Neutrality Proclamation, as a perfidious edict violating American treaties with France, challenge Eliga Gould’s thesis in *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 1-6, that the Federalists’ main diplomatic goal of the 1790s was to make America enter the concert of nations as a faithful, trusted, and respected member.

⁴⁸ Veritas, Letter Addressed to President George Washington, 31/5/1793.

open *violation of the faith* of a Solemn Treaty. The proclamation violated our treaties with France.”⁴⁹

In his scathing denunciation of American neutrality, Freneau expressed his views in the context of national politics and reflected Jefferson’s own distaste for American neutrality. Although Jefferson did support American neutrality, he was furious by the procedure by which the Neutrality Proclamation had been proclaimed. Like Freneau and the South Carolina elite, he saw it as Hamilton’s indirect assertion that the Franco-American Alliance was no longer valid.⁵⁰ Although, out of respect for the law, he did not accept the outright violations of the Proclamation, he still tried to undermine it by asking and paying the editor of the *National Gazette*, Peter Freneau’s brother, Philip, to embark on a campaign against neutrality and requested Madison to write pamphlets and speak in Congress for its abrogation. He also argued that the Neutrality Proclamation was invalid because it was a declaration of war in reverse and the House of Representatives, rather than the executive, was the only governmental body constitutionally allowed to declare war, and therefore, its opposite, neutrality.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Veritas, Letter Addressed to President George Washington, 6/6/1793.

⁵⁰ United States Attorney-General, Edmund Randolph, believed that Jefferson was strongly biased despite the Neutrality Proclamation and his official position as Secretary of State. This support for France can be seen in Thomas Jefferson’s letters to Edmund Genet of May and June 1793 when they discussed the prosecution of American captains of French privateers. Randolph made Jefferson remove from the cabinets” advice to Washington that these captains would not be found guilty. See Founders Online, editorial note, Jefferson to Edmund Genet, 6/1/1793, FO.

⁵¹ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 23/6/1793, FO.

Furthermore, the Jeffersonian South Carolina elite, like the national Jeffersonians, considered the Franco-American alliance as perpetual. As we shall see below, South Carolina Cincinnati leaders, such as its president, William Moultrie, and its vice president, Isaac Huger, continually expressed their amity to France and their attachment to the French Alliance. This might explain why the South Carolina Cincinnati formed the core of pro-French support in South Carolina, as we shall also see in Chapter Four. In fact, they suggested that the Neutrality Proclamation foreshadowed the abrogation of the Franco-American alliance and the end of American amity with France.⁵² Indeed, members of the South Carolina elite denounced what they perceived as the Federalist plan to abrogate the Franco-American alliance. For example, Freneau accused the Federalists of having “seized the French Revolution as a chance to officially nullify the [Franco-American alliance] treaties,” which were “valid [as a] perpetual alliance” because they did not specify any end date. For his part, Butler believed that Hamilton was fomenting Indian wars to divert public opinion away from the French alliance.⁵³ South Carolina Jeffersonians also rebuked the Federalist justification for neutrality and the American government’s non-repayment of the American Revolutionary War French loans. They did not accept the idea that the French alliance and loans had been made with Louis XVI, whose demise now made them invalid.⁵⁴ Contrary to Federalists, they believed that international treaties and loans were made between nations, not with individuals like the French king, especially when they were absolute monarchs.⁵⁵

⁵² David Ramsay, *An Oration delivered on the anniversary of American Independence* (London: Isaac Eaton, 1795) and Thomas Tudor Tucker, *An Oration delivered at Saint Michael’s Church before the Inhabitants of Charleston* (Charleston: [Benjamin Franklin] Timothy and Mason, 1795).

⁵³ Veritas, *Letter Addressed to President George Washington*, 31/5/1793.

⁵⁴ For a rebuke of these Federalist views, see PB to Joseph Nutt, 2/12/1793, PBP, SCL and Colonel Sir Thomas Butler, O.B.E., “The Butler of South Carolina and Carlow, Ireland,” *Journal of the Butler Society*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1968), p. 54.

⁵⁵ Thomas Butler, O.B.E., “The Butler of South Carolina and Carlow,” p. 54.

These Jeffersonian arguments regarding international treaties and loans reflected the opinion of the foremost Enlightenment theorist on international relations, Emer de Vattel (1714-1767). By the time of the American and French Revolutions, he had become the foremost authority on international law, owing to its treatise, *Law of Nations* (1758), which was considered the American elite's axiom on how countries should interact in times of peace and war.⁵⁶ Indeed, the elite-owned South Carolina gazettes extensively used Vattel's principles to denounce the Neutrality Proclamation. For example, in Timothy Franklin Bache's *City Gazette*, articles reiterated Vattel's concept that individuals could choose to aid any belligerent power: Therefore, they affirmed that American aid, including privateering, on behalf of France was legal. They also used his arguments that duty and gratitude formed some of the Laws of Nations' core principles.⁵⁷ For his part, Hamilton did not wish Vattel's theories to interfere with his plans for American diplomacy. For instance, while discussing the Neutrality Proclamation, he argued that Vattel's theories could be ignored out of national interest since foreign affairs needed to be based on "reason of state, [not] the law of nations."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Benjamin Franklin, in 1775, and Washington, in 1789, acquired, like practically all political leaders, copies of Vattel's opus.

⁵⁷ As we shall later see, Madison also discussed gratitude as a core international law principle when he discussed American assistance to France.

⁵⁸ See *City Gazette*, 3/5/1793 and 30/8/1793. For the study of the use of Vattel's international law principles, see Vincent Chetail, "Vattel and the American Dream: an Enquiry into the Reception of the Laws of Nations in the United States," in Vincent Chetail (ed.), *The Roots of International Law: Liber Americanum* (Leiden: 2014). In the same volume, Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina, "The Friend of all Nations: Punishment and Universal Jurisdiction in Emer de Vattel's Law of Nations," explains in detail the international regulations that Chetail discusses.

The gazette articles also repeated Vattel's contention that a nation could not unilaterally withdraw from an alliance or a treaty but only by negotiation and mutual consent. This reasoning ran counter to Hamilton's reluctance to repay the U.S. debt to France and to French American Revolutionary War volunteers who had loaned money to America out of their own fortunes. To the dismay of Jeffersonians, the Secretary of the Treasury even stopped repayments to French individual creditors in 1793 and discussed the complete end of the U.S. debt remittance to France.⁵⁹ From 1793 onwards, the issue of the non-repayment of French loans became so crucial that the American ambassador to Britain, Thomas Pinckney, repeatedly informed his French correspondents that he was trying his best to make the federal government honor its debts.⁶⁰

Regarding the Neutrality Proclamation's betrayal of France and violation of international law, South Carolina Jeffersonians did not only criticize Federalists, nor Hamilton in particular, but they also condemned George Washington. Contrary to even the moderate pro-French Revolution Federalists' admiration of Washington which prevented them from finding any fault in the General, they strongly criticized the President for his administration's decision to make America neutral. For example, Freneau and a planter writing with the pseudonym, "A Citizen of Charleston," launched personal attacks on Washington in the *State Gazette of South Carolina*.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Gregory E. Fehlings, "America's First Limited War," *Naval War College Review* (Summer 2000), vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 106-107.

⁶⁰ Thomas Pinckney to Monsieur de la Bore, 27/10/1792. PFP, RDL-UVA. French veterans of the American Revolutionary War's appeals to Pinckney rather than to the Federalist American ambassador to France (June 1792 – April 1794), Gouverneur Morris, suggests that Pinckney's pro-French Revolution sympathies were known even outside the United States.

⁶¹ These Gazette's articles, written in the form of letters addressing the American president, were reprinted in the Philadelphia's *National Gazette* and also mailed to Washington himself—for example, Veritas to George Washington, 28/7/1793 and 3/6/1793, FO.

The South Carolina Secretary of State claimed that the American Head-of-State was a weak man who was too vain to close his ears to the flatterers of his political entourage who pressured him to undertake anti-international republican and anti-French Revolution policies.⁶² He particularly criticized Washington for being keen to “open his ears to the whispers of servile adulation [and for being] lulled into a fatal lethargy by the opiates of sycophancy [that made him] too weak [to] prevent [violations of] the solemn treaties” with France. He also added a stunningly affronting tirade: the President, “buoyed by official importance, [was] deceivable, contemptible, corrupt, deceitful, [and a] tyrant divested of the feelings of men.”⁶³ For his part, “A Citizen of Charleston” disparagingly emphasized the large crowd, “in the thousands,” who, in Philadelphia, had “acclaimed” French ambassador Genet’s public address, “requested by the most respectable citizens” and which had condemned American neutrality, in contrast with the small group who had praised Washington for the Proclamation.⁶⁴ Furthermore, in a letter addressed to Washington written, not coincidentally, on July 4th, 1793, America’s anniversary of its Declaration of independence, he descanted about Washington’s “treasonous” treatment of France:

You are open to the arts of courtier-like sophistry or tricks of aristocratical ambition, sensitive to flattery, derelict of principles, indignant [and a] *traitor*, [facts which] tarnished your character, debased your name, [and made you the enemy] of the suffering cause of republicanism and the equal rights of man.⁶⁵

⁶² Veritas to George Washington, 28/7/1793 and 3/6/1793, FO.

⁶³ Veritas to George Washington, 28/7/1793 and 3/6/1793, FO.

⁶⁴ A Citizen of Charleston to George Washington, 4/7/1793. FO.

⁶⁵ A Citizen of Charleston to George Washington, 4/7/1793. FO.

Additionally, “Citizen of Charleston” stressed that, since neutrality had been decided in opposition to their wishes, South Carolina’s “most respectable” planters had lost their affection for the President:

Most of the citizens are warmly interested in the success of the French Revolution. [The Neutrality Proclamation has caused] the affections of your fellow citizens [to be] withdrawn from you, and suspicions are entertained that you have indignantly cast behind you the endearing principles of republicanism to which you are, in great measure, indebted for all your fame. The most respectable citizens [have lost] that love and esteem for you which you once glorified to exhibit.⁶⁶

“Citizen of Charleston”’s statement that neutrality had caused “a large majority” of the South elite to lose their esteem for Washington contradicts the theory that the Neutrality Proclamation had decreased support for France because of anger generated by Genet’s disrespect of the President.⁶⁷ It rather demonstrates that the few months after the Neutrality Proclamation were a turning point in South Carolina history for the opposite reason. Indeed, even South Carolina Governor Moultrie himself defended Genet against Washington’s criticisms:⁶⁸ He publicly asserted his trust in Genet’s denial that he had intended to appeal to the American people over

⁶⁶ A Citizen of Charleston to George Washington, 4/7/1793. FO. By referring to the love and esteem that the President loved to exhibit, *A Citizen of Charleston* plausibly refers to Washington’s May 1791 visit to South Carolina when he showed exceeding relish at the demonstrations of affection and pageantry, such as balls, banquets, and military displays, that Charleston’s planters organized to honor him. See Washington’s journal of his visit to Charleston in [May 1791,] FO.

⁶⁷ Klein, *Unification*, p. 217, Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. xi, 29-30, 33, 49.

⁶⁸ Moultrie’s arguments in defense of Genet against Washington’s criticisms were published in *The Columbian Herald* and Philadelphia’s *National Gazette*.

the President's head and praised the French ambassador for his "boldness and dignity for trying to appeal to the US Congress rather than the American people." He also asserted that he was "enchanted" by Genet's explanations due to "my regard for you [and] your good sense."⁶⁹

Governor Moultrie's pro-French and anti-neutrality slights of Washington continued after the above-mentioned letter. As shall be developed below, in May 1793, Washington ordered the prosecution of any violation of the Neutrality Proclamation, and consequently, in December 1793, the South Carolina Congress indicted members of the state elite who had assisted France.⁷⁰ Yet, from May 1793 to the end of his tenure in December 1794, Moultrie defiantly backed Charleston's French Revolutionaries, including in their most daringly neutrality-busting plans, such as privateering from South Carolina and their intended invasion of East Florida. Furthermore, even after Washington blamed Genet for the creation of the Democratic-Republican Societies and for the Whiskey Rebellion and requested the French ambassador's and Charleston's French consul's recalls to France, the South Carolina governor continued to display his friendship with both men. For example, in April 1794, alongside other prominent planters, such as General Isaac Huger, he honored Mangourit on his departure to France and wrote a letter of recommendation on his behalf which was addressed to Robespierre.⁷¹

⁶⁹ William Moultrie to Genet, 5/9/1793, Genet Papers, LOC and Columbian Herald, 5/11/1793.

⁷⁰ William Moultrie to the South Carolina Senate, 7/12/1793, *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 14 (1 September 1793 – 31 December 1793), RDL-UVA.

⁷¹ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 171.

The insults directed at President Washington during the debates about neutrality illustrate that the pro-French South Carolina elite was generally divided into two broad groups. On the one hand, the elite in the state government unequivocally supported the French Revolution and its emissaries and dared to disrespect Washington. On the other hand, some members of the pro-French elite outside the state government, like Charles Cotesworth and Thomas Pinckney, refused to criticize the president directly for his anti-French stances. They believed disrespect toward him crossed a red line and were furious at Genet for his lack of diplomatic skills vis-à-vis Washington and at the Republican Society for hurling abuses at the American president.⁷² Despite his pro-French feelings, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney even informed his brother that he would only support neutrality if it were implemented “with honor” and justified by Vattel’s precepts.⁷³

Some members of the South Carolina elite also justified their outrage at the Neutrality Proclamation by invoking the American Revolutionary War and the different ways Britain and France treated America until 1793. They argued that Britain always mistreated America while France showed continuous generosity towards it. Therefore, they considered the Neutrality Proclamation to be illogical and unjust as it treated both countries similarly. France’s and Britain’s different treatment of America was, of course, never greater than during the American Revolutionary War.⁷⁴ South Carolina Senate’s President, David Ramsay, remarked that this

⁷² Cotesworth Pinckney to Thomas Pinckney, 23/9/1793, PFP, RDL, UVA.

⁷³ Cotesworth Pinckney to Thomas Pinckney, 16/4/1793, PFP, RDL, UVA, who added that he was ‘studying the sixth and seventh chapters of the third book of Vattel,’ which analyzed states’ international duties toward themselves and other nations and advanced the concepts of “perfect and imperfect rights” and “internal and external duties.” See Morten Bergsmo and Emiliano J. Buis, (eds.), *Philosophical Foundations of International Criminal Law* (Brussels: Torkel Opsahl Academic Publisher, 2018), pp. 315-350.

⁷⁴ With regards to British exactions in South Carolina during the war, Nadelhaft, in *The Disorder of War*, pp. 58-63, 75, notes the role of Loyalists in war crimes and that Aedanus Burke believed that desire for revenge would lead to

constituted the primary cause for the elite's opposition to neutrality: "Gratitude to France for favors received in the American War and a keen remembrance of injuries inflicted at the same time by Britain, induced [the South Carolina elite] to transgress the like of impartial neutrality."⁷⁵ Indeed, as we saw in Chapter One, the South Carolina pro-French Revolution elite had greatly suffered and witnessed the suffering caused by the British during the Revolutionary War. As we also saw in Chapter One, Moultrie had a brother killed at the Siege of Charleston and beheld American prisoners-of-war officers fall ill and die, and Butler had lost a three-year-old son in his plantation's conflagration. Years after these tragic events occurred, both men still referred to them with utmost sadness and Butler even confided that only the success of the French Revolution could make him reconcile with the suffering he had experienced during the war.⁷⁶

Governor Moultrie's violations of American neutrality in favor of France can, therefore, be likely partly explained by his experience of British exactions during the American Revolutionary War. Indeed, as analyzed in Chapter One, he devoted much of his memoirs to the description of desolation created by the British during the war. Interestingly with regards to his position on the Neutrality Proclamation, he suggested in his Memoirs that the British army had not followed the norms of international law. For example, he had complained to the British commander that "the most respectable planters of the state" had been transferred to horrid prison ships off Charleston's harbor in August 1780, three months after the city surrendered in May, even though no such proviso existed in the terms of surrender, which he referred as a "treaty."⁷⁷ For his part,

the hanging of at least a thousand of them and that so many crimes were committed that "civil courts would not be able to settle them in twenty years." See also Moultrie, *Memoirs*, pp. 69, 86, 139-140, 143, 219, 284.

⁷⁵ Ramsay, *Reminiscences*, p. 77.

⁷⁶ PB to Weeden Butler, 18/7/1788, LD.

⁷⁷ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, p. 141.

in his discussion of the Neutrality Proclamation, Pierce Butler directly referred to the American Revolutionary War, when he tried to convince his friend, Richard Henry Lee, to oppose neutrality by exclaiming: “Recollect the donation!”⁷⁸ By donation, he referred to the gift of millions of French Pounds, negotiated, as we shall see in Chapter Four, by John Laurens, with the help of his Personal Secretary from South Carolina, William Jackson, and offered by France to the United States during the Revolutionary War.⁷⁹ This donation was believed to have ‘saved America’ at a time when it had no more money to pay for its soldiers or produce war materials.⁸⁰

Indeed, Proclaimed just a decade after these contrasting treatments of America during the American Revolutionary War, American neutrality toward the conflict between the former enemy and the past and present ally shocked the South Carolina elite. Such affirmations show that, in 1793 and the succeeding years, the South Carolina elite had still not changed their respective feelings towards France and Britain, a decade after the American Revolutionary War. The Duke de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, a French revolutionary residing at Izard’s plantation, confirmed this fact: He observed that “all [the South Carolina elite] agreed to cherish an inveterate hatred against England.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ PB to Robert Henry Lee, 22/12/1793, LPB.

⁷⁹ The donation was negotiated by John Laurens, sent as an emissary to France to negotiate French loans and “gifts;” see Shachtman, *How the French Saved America*, pp. 140-159.

⁸⁰ Shachtman, *How the French Saved America*, pp. 65, 88, 99, 128-129, 249.

⁸¹ La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Voyages*, pp. 158-159.

Furthermore, the South Carolina elite's antagonism toward Britain was also due to its belief that their former enemy remained hostile to the United States, despite the end of the Revolutionary War and even after the Neutrality Proclamation. For example, a planter complained to Mangourit: "The English treat America with the most insulting contempt. [Since the Neutrality Proclamation], one hundred and forty [American] vessels have been conducted to the [West Indies and the Bahamas]. What matter humiliations and injuries, provided they are paid for?"⁸² Similarly, Freneau, excoriating the Proclamation's failure to end Britain's exactions, told Washington: "Notwithstanding all [your] endeavors to curry favor with Great Britain, it is evident that she despises our professions and acts of neutrality. In open violations of the rights of neutral nations, she has determined to seize [our] vessels bound for France. However, they may have no contraband articles, and no neutral vessel cleared out from a French port is to be admitted into a British port. Will not these serve to convince Americans of the hostile views of Great Britain?"⁸³

The South Carolina elite also complained about British impressment of American sailors and civilian passengers, in spite of the post-1783 American peace treaty with Britain and the Neutrality Proclamation. Between the start of Franco-British hostilities, in February 1793, and the official declaration of American neutrality, in April 1793, the Royal Navy impressed scores of American sailors and civilians found on French ships, and British-born Americans were even hanged.⁸⁴ The Neutrality Proclamation did not address this issue, and its prohibition of assistance

⁸² R. K. Murdoch, "Correspondence of French Consuls in Charleston, South Carolina, 1793-1797," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 74., no. 1 (January 1973), p. 14.

⁸³ Veritas to George Washington, 3rd letter, 6/6/1793.

⁸⁴ For British impressment, see Marcel Mercer, "Northern Experience: Resistance to Naval Impressment in British North America, 1775 – 1815," vol. 91, no. 2, *The Canadian Historical Review* (June 2010): 99-232.

to France on the part of American sailors could be seen as justifying the atrocious British treatment of American seamen sailing on French ships. Furthermore, impressment after the start of Franco-British hostilities could be deemed particularly pernicious to the American Revolution veterans, since it forced American citizens to fight for the nation they hated, Britain, against the nation they still considered friend and ally, France. Indeed, General Lachlan McIntosh, the Commander of the Southern Front and a hero during the American Revolutionary War in South Carolina and Georgia, where he had closely cooperated with French officers, expressed his distress at the British impressment of American citizens in a letter to his friend, Thomas Pinckney, with whom he had fought alongside the French at Siege of Savannah.⁸⁵ His distress might have been especially strong as his son Simon had been captured while serving on a French ship: He might have feared his impressment in the British navy, or worse.⁸⁶ As American Ambassador to Britain, Pinckney agreed with McIntosh, condemning British impressment in the strongest terms, especially due to the fact that it made Americans fight their French ally. In a letter to British Foreign Secretary Lord Grenville, he “lament[ed] that persons proved to be citizens of the United States should not only be taken by violence and divided from country... and friends but should have their lives exposed in naval engagements and be compelled to fight against France!”⁸⁷

⁸⁵ McIntosh to Thomas Pinckney, 12/12/1794, RDL-UVA. Pinckney at Savannah had then served as Aide de Camp of McIntosh and, due to his impeccable French, was chosen by the general to liaise military activities with Admiral d’Estaing. See Cotesworth Pinckney, *Life of Thomas Pinckney* (Boston and New York: Mifflin, 1895), p. 65.

⁸⁶ McIntosh to Mangourit, 21/5/1793, AAE CC.

⁸⁷ Thomas Pinckney to Lord Grenville, 21.7.1794. Pinckney Family Papers. Rotunda Digital Library, UVA.

In contrast to this British mistreatment, the South Carolina elite emphasized French goodwill toward America. For example, Pierce Butler, even though he exported, like most planters, his staples to Britain rather than to France, told Robert Henry Lee: “Different [to Britain] is the conduct of the Governing Powers of France. They hold out to you very great commercial advantages, making their ports as free to U.S. vessels as those of France, taking off restraining duties on articles of the U.S. carried to France.”⁸⁸ Also, contrasting the Federalists’ apprehension of a war with Britain with American courage displayed during the American Revolutionary War, some elite members suspected that the national government was guilty of cowardice. For example, Peter Freneau argued that:

If a proclamation [of neutrality] was justifiable and proper in 1793, was it not equally so in 1792 when several European powers were engaged in a war? If so, why was it deferred till Great Britain became a party? It is but too evident that the conduct of our government, with respect to that of Great Britain, has for some years been shamefully pusillanimous.⁸⁹

Freneau seems correct in his appreciation of the American government’s fear of Britain. The Neutrality Proclamation had been decided in the context of an imminent expectation of war with America’s former enemy. Only five days before the Proclamation, South Carolina Governor William Moultrie had not only reminded Washington of the state’s preparedness for such a war against Britain but also of the fact that France was the ally of America if such war broke out.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Pierce Butler to Robert Henry Lee, 22/12/1793, PBP, SL. For South Carolina planters’ trade with Britain in the late Eighteenth-century, see Huw David’s outstanding analysis in *Trade, Politics, and Revolution: South Carolina and Britain’s Atlantic Commerce, 1730-1790* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018).

⁸⁹ Veritas to the President of the United States, 3rd letter, 6/6/1793, FO.

⁹⁰ William Moultrie to the President of the United States, 17/4/1793, FO.

Indeed, as previously discussed, war with Britain was anathema to the Hamiltonians, who believed American prosperity was based on US-British trade and a British-like political system. Many Federalists also believed America could no longer win a war with Britain as they thought that, in 1793, the American situation was weaker than it had been at the end of the Revolutionary War. They were likely correct since, in 1793, America could only rely on the assistance of France, which, by then, could hardly help in the same way as it did during the late 1770s and early 1780s, embroiled as it was, for its very survival, in military campaigns against all major European states. However, the pro-French South Carolina elite did not seem to fear war with Britain, which the Neutrality Proclamation meant to prevent and had likely prevented. They argued that the idealism, boldness, and “spirit of ‘76” displayed during the American Revolutionary War was strongly alive among American veterans, which prompted them to support France, as it was fighting for the same republican liberty as Americans had done in 1776.⁹¹ Freneau argued that:

American Whigs of 1776 will not suffer the French patriots of 1792 to be vilified with impunity by the common enemy of both. [The French are] Republican Brethren contending for the [same] liberty [as] republican citizens of America. Even if no written treaty existed between France and America, the strongest ties of amity still would have united the people of both nations, and [Americans] have sympathized with [the French] in their misfortunes and rejoiced in their success. The spirit of 1776 is again roused.⁹²

⁹¹ For analyses of the ‘spirit of “76,” see Peter Lowell Beilenson (ed.), *The Spirit of “76* (Washington D.C.: The Peter Pauper Press, 1974) and Thomas Jewett, “Thomas Jefferson and the Spirit of “76” *Early American Review*, vol. XV, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2011).

⁹² Veritas to President George Washington, second letter, 3/6/1793, FO.

Remembrance of the American Revolutionary War and its associated anti-British sentiment is also suggested in the December 1793 correspondence of the brothers, Charles and John Rutledge Jr., while they lived in Britain. Charles Rutledge, calling himself a “Republican” with a capital “R,” expected his brother John Jr. to rejoice at the British military’s discomfiture at the hand of French forces: “It must give you great pleasure to observe the successful resistance made by the French against the combined powers. The British have to bear the honor of having lost more men than any of the other Allies. They have sustained a great loss in the capture of General O’Hara, fighting against the friends of freedom.”⁹³

In April 1793, under the recommendation of “the planters of Charleston,” John Singleterry, a non-elite but wealthy man involved in shipbuilding, had accepted a navy commission issued by Genet to become captain of the privateer *Citizen Genet*. Philadelphia authorities impounded his ship in May, and he was indicted for violating American neutrality.⁹⁴ Charleston’s pro-French elite were incensed at his prosecution, considering it proof of the Neutrality Proclamation’s illegality and injustice. For example, after sarcastically reminding that the proclamation had “not been generally respected,” “A Citizen of Charleston” claimed that indictments of American citizens

⁹³ Charles to John Rutledge Jr., 28/12/1793, John Rutledge Papers, Southern History Collection, UNC-CH. In the same letter, Charles Rutledge believes that many British officers supported the French Revolution. He does not say how he reached that conclusion but, at that time, he lived in London and consorted with the city’s aristocratic elite. Charles Rutledge later became American Chargé d’Affaires in Spain between 1795 and 1797, a time which corresponded to Thomas Pinckney’s mission to Madrid, and he also served as Charleston’s mayor in the early 1800s.

⁹⁴ For Singleterry’s prosecution, see William R. Casto, “Foreign Affairs Crises and the Constitution’s Case Controversy Limitation: Notes from the Founding Era,” *American Journal of Legal History*, vol. 46, no. 3 (July 2004): pp. 242-250.

who served on French privateers “excited much surprise, mixt with no little indignation.” He also contended that Singleterry’s prosecution transformed the federal government into an anti-republican tyranny: It made America a “military camp” by “establishing no other measure between the executive power and the citizen than rigid command and implicit obedience.” He also argued “that an American should be prosecuted for enlisting under the banners of the French Republic is a measure incompatible with every principle of republicanism. It is a stretch of power no existing laws or treaties, not even your proclamation, can authorize.”⁹⁵ “A Citizen of Charleston’s accusations also reflected some South Carolina Jeffersonians” unease toward the 1787 Federal Constitution and present government: They judged both institutions as restrictive of individual rights. Singleterry’s prosecution occurred four/six years after Jefferson, while in Paris, had enjoined Madison to advocate for constitutional amendments protecting individual rights.⁹⁶ The Neutrality Proclamation prosecutions now increased Jeffersonian apprehensions that prohibiting assistance to France was part of a Federalist plan to curtail these very rights.⁹⁷

Furthermore, “A Citizen” contended that Americans had the right to join French privateers for another reason: Joining French armed forces allowed them to fight Britain, a country that was hostile to America and did not respect the 1783 Treaty of Paris. He exclaimed “that a citizen of the United States should be punished for legally fighting against a perfidious nation that despises our government, depresses our trade, and tramples on treaties is a measure incompatible with

⁹⁵ A Citizen from Charleston to George Washington, 4/7/1793, FO.

⁹⁶ For Jefferson and the Bill of Rights, see Jeff Broadwater, *Jefferson, Madison, and the Making of the Constitution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

⁹⁷ A Citizen from Charleston to George Washington, 4/7/1793, FO.

every principle of republicanism.” He also suggested that even if the 1783 peace treaty had prohibited United States citizens from enlisting in a foreign army, Americans had, nevertheless, a right to fight for France, because Britain had violated its treaty obligations. He told Washington:

Let us admit, Sir, that the peace treaty between Great Britain and America expressly prohibited the American citizens from taking up arms and fighting under the colors of the French Republic. Ought a free and independent citizen be punished for directly opposing the treaty when even the British government has not yet complied with some of its most important articles?⁹⁸

Furthermore, the elite saw the prohibition of assisting France militarily as violating the right of expatriation, namely, the right to enroll in another country’s armed forces, as we discussed above, in relation to Vattel’s theories on the Law of Nations. Freneau affirmed:

I have been informed that [Singleterry], lately in the service of France, has been thrown into jail to be tried by our laws for a violation of neutrality declared in your proclamation. We view it as an infringement of those rights which every American citizen possesses on entering the service of a foreign nation. On entering the service of a belligerent power, [he] puts himself beyond the jurisdiction of the [USA].⁹⁹

⁹⁸ A Citizen from Charleston to George Washington, 4/7/1793, FO.

⁹⁹ Veritas to the President of the United States, 3rd letter, 6/6/1793, FO.

Moreover, Freneau's defense of the right of expatriation or joining a foreign army must be analyzed in the context of the late Enlightenment world, especially as experienced by the South Carolina elite during the Revolutionary War.¹⁰⁰ In 1777, Lafayette, with his international republican volunteers, landed on the South Carolina plantation of Benjamin Huger to join the American cause of freedom. He and his friends joined a foreign army, the Continental Army, and received commissions from the Continental Congress. The South Carolina elite judged that Singleterry, and other privateer captains, were now doing for France what Lafayette and his international republican friends had done for America. Therefore, the Neutrality Proclamation displayed inconsistency, hypocrisy, and ingratitude, by refusing reciprocity towards France, especially as it was now itself engaged in a same fight in behalf of republican liberty: It prevented American international republicans from doing for France, in 1793 what French international republicans had done for America, in 1777. Alexander Moultrie, Governor Moultrie's brother, emphasized this fact by noting that the Neutrality Proclamation forbade exactly the same thing that the American and South Carolina governments had agreed to do during the Revolutionary War. In a pamphlet published by an elite member of the Republican Society of South Carolina, he asked people to remember the cases when South Carolina officers had offered commissions to French international republican citizens in France, with the blessing of the South Carolina government and the Continental Congress, and stressed that French officers had fought in South Carolina under American commissions, despite not being American citizens:

¹⁰⁰ For the changing meaning of expatriation, see Nancy L. Green, *Expatriation, Expatriates, and Expats: The American Historical Review: the American Transformation of a Concept*, Volume 114, Issue 2 (April 2009), pp. 307–328. Green argues that in the late Eighteenth Century, expatriation did not mean to switch citizenship but to hold allegiance to another country than one's nationality. For the South Carolina elite attacking American neutrality, it clearly means to enlist in the French armed forces.

Do not [South Carolina] powers (of giving commissions) appear by powers of record in the Secretary's Office of this state? Did not this state give Commodore Gillon, last war, power to purchase frigates and *enlist men for us in France*? Did not this state give him *blank commissions* for the purpose? When he went to France, did he not exercise this authority, and was he not *thanked for it*? Did not Congress do the same thing with Dr. Franklin? Did not this state countenance Captain Preveaux of the South Carolina 2nd Regiment in going to the French Indies to raise men? And what is the case of the late French engineer (General Duportail, hero of the Siege of Charleston) sent here and employed as a military engineer though a French citizen?¹⁰¹

In fact, the South Carolina elite had cherished the French officers' service under South Carolina and American commissions in the South Carolina military and in Charleston just a little more than a decade prior to the Neutrality Proclamation, and affectionately recalled their interactions with these international republicans. For example, the Francophile Charlestonian, Major Alexander Garden, General Greene's Aide-de-Camp, delightfully recollected a scene that he had himself witnessed: A young and enthusiastic French officer, acting as a juror during the court-martial of a deserter, ravished General McIntosh and his fellow American officers. In response to the General's question, "What is your religion, Sir?" the Frenchman replied, "The American, Sir."¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Alexander Moultrie, *An Appeal to the People on the Conduct of a Certain Public Duty in South Carolina, Respecting Col. Drayton, and Col. Moultrie* (Charleston: Markland and M'Iver and Co, 1794), pp. 8-9. Italics in the text.

¹⁰² Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War in America, with sketches of character of persons the most distinguished, in the Southern states, for civil and military services* (Charleston: W. P. Young, 1822), p. 206.

Furthermore, by forbidding American citizens from joining French armies or getting involved in French affairs, the Neutrality Proclamation diverged from the norms of the Late Enlightenment with regards to personal diplomacy. In the first months of the French Revolution, Jefferson, in his role as American Ambassador to France (1784-1789), strongly involved himself in French domestic affairs.¹⁰³ In 1793, as in 1789, international republicanism was the order of the day, and foreign political participation in another country's politics was accepted and welcomed as long as ideological affinity existed. For example, in June 1793, at the very time of Singleterry's prosecution, American and other international republicans were participating in French politics. Thomas Paine, Anacharsis Cloots, and Thaddeus Kosciuszko were members of the National Assembly. While in Southern France, Joel Barlow followed the French armies' progress in Italy and wrote pro-French pamphlets. Even Virginia's governor, Henry Lee II, was preparing to resign and enlist in the French army.¹⁰⁴

The Neutrality Proclamation suggested that the help of all these international republicans for the French Revolution was wrong and implied that all men who had accepted a commission during the American Revolutionary War were likewise in the wrong. Emphasizing this lack of logic and consistency between the welcome of French international republicans during the American Revolutionary War and the Neutrality Proclamation that now interdicted similar help from

¹⁰³ For Jefferson's involvement in the French Revolution while Ambassador in Paris, see William Adams, *The Paris Years of Thomas Jefferson* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁴ Lipscomb, *Letters*, note 1, p. 277. Washington, telling Lee he needed to remain in America to serve his country, prevented him from going to France. For international republicans, including American Revolution veterans' participation in the French Revolution, see Ziesche, *Cosmopolitan Revolutionaries* and Carine Lounissi, *Thomas Paine, and the French Revolution* (Washington: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

international republican Americans for France, Alexander Moultrie concluded: “How will the argument [against South Carolina officers accepting French commissions] operate against every native European who joined us last war?”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the South Carolina elite viewed the Neutrality Proclamation and its injunction to prosecute Americans, such as Captain Singleterry, for helping republican France as full of contradictions and even hypocritical: the Neutrality Proclamation interdicted republicans of one nation enlisting in the republican army of another nation, the very thing that America had welcomed and benefitted from, during their republican struggle against Britain of a decade ago. The elite’s outrage at this double standard on the part of their central government also reveals that in 1793, they put international republicanism before allegiance to their national government, which they suspected of being anti-republican due to the contradiction of a republican government to refuse to assist a republican country, mainly when that country, France, had contributed to America’s freedom.

Furthermore, the South Carolina elite viewed the Neutrality Proclamation as violating popular sovereignty. As previously analyzed, Federalists believed that the American Republic should be ruled by the educated and wealthy, whereas, under the influence of the French Revolution, Jeffersonians viewed the popular will as the basis of government. The American government had proclaimed neutrality despite the people’s desire to honor the Franco-American alliance and help France. In June 1793, Freneau addressed this concept of popular sovereignty: “*Popular opinion is the basis of our government*, something that has been forgotten by our [federal government’s]

¹⁰⁵ A. Moultrie, *An Appeal to the People*, pp. 8-12.

magistrates. [President Washington] is deceived by the lordlings, court satellites, the aristocratic few, [and] Tories. The Citizens murmur.”¹⁰⁶ Similarly, in December 1793, discussing the treatment of French ambassador Genet and the prosecution of international republicans, Alexander Moultrie suggested that popular sovereignty was violated. He castigated Hamilton for furthering “anti-Gallicism,” in association “with a few well-informed planters.”¹⁰⁷ In his opinion, the Secretary of the Treasury undertook anti-French schemes unbeknown to the people and secretly chose “the actors and parts.” Moultrie proclaimed that “in this [anti-French] political drama, the managers were behind the curtain and the actors and parts were chosen by [Hamilton] alone.”¹⁰⁸

For Jeffersonians, popular sovereignty was best expressed in the legislative branch of government, not the executive. That the Neutrality Proclamation was a presidential mandate and did not originate legislatively made it intrinsically inimical to popular will. Pro-French South Carolina elite members used this argument to disparage it as violating popular sovereignty. For example, Colonel Stephen Drayton, Governor Moultrie’s Personal Secretary, used this argument when defending himself against pro-French activities.¹⁰⁹ He contended that the Neutrality Proclamation “had no force of law” since it was merely “a presidential proclamation,” not a law passed by Congress. Therefore, “there was no legal prohibition against joining or aiding a foreign army.”¹¹⁰ He also believed that the prosecutions were emblematic of a lack of popular

¹⁰⁶ Peter Freneau to George Washington, 3/6/1793, FO.

¹⁰⁷ Moultrie, *An Appeal to the People*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Moultrie, *An Appeal to the People*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ Drayton was South Carolina Quarter-Master-General during the American Revolutionary War. He gave the Fourth of July 1793 Cincinnati oration. It is lost but is described in the *South Carolina State Gazette*, 6/7/1793.

¹¹⁰ Stephen Drayton, ‘statement,’ *Gazette of the United States*, Philadelphia, 7/1/1794.

sovereignty in America: “There remains something despotic [in the United States].” He also agreed with the argument of Madison that only Congress could have proclaimed neutrality, as treaties were the prerogatives of the legislative branch and “neutrality was a treaty in the negative.”¹¹¹

Therefore, the view of these elite members that the Neutrality Proclamation was against the principles of Popular Will reveals that pro-French support was not only based on sentiments of gratitude for France but on principles of popular sovereignty. Furthermore, in this defense of sovereignty, these South Carolinians criticized Washington. He no longer possessed the aura he once had as an anti-British republican, now that he seemed pro-British and anti-French Republic.

To counter the Neutrality Proclamation, South Carolina pro-French planters established the Republican Society of South Carolina on 13 July 1793, the eve of the Taking of the Bastille’s anniversary. In their founding document, *The Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice*, they affirmed that the society’s *raison d’être* was to ensure the success of republicanism in France and America by countering the federal government’s anti-French positions. As shall be developed in Chapter Four, the sixteen founders of the Society, who called themselves “worthy citizens,” consisted entirely of prominent and wealthy South Carolina elite members. For example, the society’s highest administration offices were taken by scions of families who had

¹¹¹ Stephen Drayton, ‘statement’, *Gazette of the United States*, Philadelphia, 7/1/1794. The attacks of Madison against neutrality were written upon Jefferson’s insistence.

marked South Carolina's history since the founding of the colony in 1670, like Stephen Drayton and John Blake, as well as relatives of heroes or actual heroes of the American Revolution, such as Major-General Lachlan McIntosh and Colonel Alexander Moultrie. Members outside the society's administration also included a majority of elite members: for example, Thomas Hall, an eminent judge; O'Brien Smith, the planter who hosted President Washington overnight at his plantation; and William Moultrie Jr., the son of the state governor. Furthermore, the society included many Society of the Cincinnati members, including several who held high administrative offices at the state and national levels.

Within the Neutrality Proclamation debates, a dissonating voice arose: the moderate voice of Richard Beresford. Beresford, a second-generation South Carolinian-Irish nicknamed "King Richard" or "the King of Ireland" due to his aristocratic demeanor, served as captain during the Revolutionary War under Isaac Huger and William Moultrie and was the Continental Congress' deciding vote for the ratification of the 1783 Treaty of Paris. In 1784, he renounced his political career and resigned as South Carolina lieutenant governor, vowing to devote his life to the sole pleasure of intellectual pursuits. He became a philosopher, moralist, and poet, editing a literary journal, *The Vigil*, and offering his articles to South Carolina gazettes, including Benjamin Franklin Timothy's *South Carolina Gazette* and Peter Freneau's *State Gazette*.¹¹² He also corresponded

¹¹² Beresford's poems include *The Nuga Canorae: Consisting of a Few Minor Poems by the Author of A Plea for Literature* (Charleston: Harrison and Bowen, 1798). His literary journal is *The Vigil* (Charleston: Charleston Library Society, 1798). For the Enlightenment tradition of Timothy's gazette, founded, in 1732, under the instigation of Franklin by one of his printer-friends, Thomas Whitmarsh, quickly replaced by Lewis and Peter Timothy, in 1733 and 1738, respectively, see Jeffery A. Smith, *Printers and Press Freedom: The Ideology of Early American Journalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 124-126. The Timothy printers regularly published Enlightenment political philosophy, including writings by David Hume and English Whigs' Country Republicanism, such as *Cato's*

with Irish-South Carolinians, such as Butler, Burke, and Smith; and with Jefferson.¹¹³ In July 1793, he wrote a pamphlet requesting the United States to assist France and keep the alliance.¹¹⁴ Unlike the other pro-French rhetoric, Beresford's was moderate, subtle, and diplomatic. Other pro-French planters attempted to *confirm* the correctness of the already-held beliefs of Jeffersonians, which entailed vitriolic attacks on Hamilton and Washington, portrayed as flagitious politicians. In contrast, Beresford aimed at gently *persuading* Federalists of the need to support France.

Beresford never directly criticized Hamilton and Washington and even claimed to support the national government. Whereas other planters appealed to their audience's *emotions*, he appealed to their *reason*. He subtly exposed rational justifications for the United States's need to assist France and attempted to touch his audience's sense of logic. He also included the delicate stratagem of presenting his pro-French rhetoric as an appeal for universal education.¹¹⁵ He argued that learning for all, which he linked to the development of republican virtue, formed the

Letters. Their virulent attacks on British governors, including in behalf of Native Americans, led them to be prosecuted; yet, the juries found in their favor due to the belief that, in South Carolina, "liberty of the press was a right so justly contended for by our ancestors [and] must be preserved." See *South-Carolina Gazette*, 30/3/1747.

¹¹³ www.houseofnames.com/Beresford_family. Charles C. Pinckney to Arthur Middleton, 13/8/1782, editor's note, founders.archives.gov. In 1785, Beresford wrote *Moral Letters to the Young and Gay*: He advocated widows' marriage to young men to avoid melancholic solitude and told men of the possibility of felicity in such unions.

¹¹⁴ Richard Beresford, *A Plea for Literature, Especially in Free States* (Charleston: Harrison and Bowen, 1793). The publisher, Thomas B. Bowen, Cincinnati, had in the 1780s held important positions as administrator and envoy of the South Carolina Cincinnati; in July 1793, he was a founding member of the Republican Society and was an administrator of its Committee of Correspondence.

¹¹⁵ For planters' belief that education was crucial for the success of a republic, as it promoted private and public virtue among students, the future representatives of the people, see David W. Robson, *Educating Republicans: the College in the Era of the American Revolution, 1750-1800* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985). See also Peter S. Onuf, James Horn, Jan Ellen Lewis (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic* (Charlottesville: the University of Virginia Press, 2002), which discusses education as part of political philosophy dynamics of the 1797-1801 period under the presidency of John Adams. For the idea that Jeffersonian republican societies were central in establishing education in the political debate, see Foner and Vandepaer, *The Democratic-Republican Societies*, p. 15.

basis of free countries.¹¹⁶ France, unlike England, had achieved universal education through its revolutionary reforms.¹¹⁷ French children's learning of sciences and arts made them virtuous republicans. Even during wartime, French education emphasized literature, an intellectual field that "elevates the soul in the highest sphere."¹¹⁸ This constituted a model for the United States, as education in America was not universal and focused excessively on the material and practical rather than on republican civism. He might also have alluded to Hamilton, whom Jeffersonians criticized for being elitist and concentrating on materialistic concerns rather than abstract, idealistic principles. This was evidenced by the Secretary of the Treasury's Neutrality Proclamation. Furthermore, he argued that Federalists' material concerns led to their support of monarchies concentrating on commerce, such as Great Britain and, shockingly, even the *Ancien Régime* French monarchy.¹¹⁹

Beresford also denigrated the British political system, which he feared Federalists aimed to introduce in the United States, a fear he saw justified by their attacks on the French Revolution.¹²⁰ He claimed that the British system looked free in appearance but repressed the people: its "boasted constitution" established by the 1689 English Revolution and admired by Federalists led to the "inadequate representation" of the British people, who were, therefore, oppressed.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Beresford, *A Plea*, p. 17.

¹¹⁷ Scottish education in the 1790s was different than England's. See R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 55–72.

¹¹⁸ Beresford, *A Plea*, p. 84.

¹¹⁹ Beresford, *A Plea*, p. 7.

¹²⁰ Beresford, *A Plea*, p. 107.

¹²¹ Beresford, *A Plea*, p. 7..

Beresford argued that, in contrast to Britain, France had been made “purer” by its revolution and its concern with “idealistic” principles defended by French philosophers such as Rousseau and Voltaire.¹²² These French idealistic tenets led them to help free the United States. Through their example during the Revolutionary War, they also prompted France to gain its liberty.¹²³ In 1793, the new French Republic, with its education, literature, and republican virtue, formed a model for the United States. Its example benefited America, whose decade of peace and materialism had made it ignore republican principles, such as those defended by “Rousseau and Montesquieu.”¹²⁴ But support for France was not supported for the United States’ sake only. It was also urged for the sake of France, America’s sister republic, and the entire “suffering world,” which France was now struggling to make free “in the service of humanity.”¹²⁵

Beresford and other planters’ rhetoric against neutrality was not spoken into thin air. It was accompanied by concrete military assistance to France, violating American Neutrality. These violations were so widespread in South Carolina that a British gazette called the state a “French Palatinate.”¹²⁶ They occurred in two main ways: French privateering and the organization of a South Carolina army meant to overthrow the Spanish colony of East Florida and replace it with a

¹²² Beresford, *A Plea*, pp. 3-4, 54.

¹²³ Beresford, *A Plea*, p. 54.

¹²⁴ Beresford, *A Plea*, p. 69.

¹²⁵ Beresford, *A Plea*, pp. 5, 15-16, 107. In his pamphlet (p. 13), Beresford also discusses the ‘spirit of disobedience’ brought to the United States and France by their respective revolutions, a spirit that helps establish “virtuous and free republics.” He contrasts such spirit with the “flattering loyalty” and flagitious obedience” characteristic of monarchies (p. 5).

¹²⁶ Jackson, *Privateers*, p. 54.

French sister republic.¹²⁷ The three central institutions organizing South Carolina assistance for France were the state government, the Republican Society, and the local Society of the Cincinnati. In their effort, they were joined by local officials, such as mayors, Federal officials, and U.S. Senator Pierce Butler. The organization of French Privateering started when the federal government was mooting the last draft of the Neutrality Proclamation. On 8 April 1793, French Ambassador Genet, an international republican revolutionary, landed in Charleston. Genet's arrival to America via South Carolina rather than directly to Philadelphia violated diplomatic protocol: the French government had chosen Charleston as its hub for privateering and its planned conquest of East Florida and knew, through French consul Mangourit, of both the elite's pro-French sentiment and Charleston harbor's ideal location near Atlantic trade routes.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The only monograph on French privateering from Charleston is Melvin H. Jackson, *Privateers in Charleston, 1793-1796* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1969). Jackson stresses the extent and duration of French privateering in South Carolina and suggests strong support for France until at least early 1796. References to French privateering in South Carolina is also interspersed in Frederick Turner (ed.), "Correspondence of the French ministers to the United States, 1791-1797," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1903*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C., 1904). French and South Carolina discussions of the plan to invade East Florida can be found in Turner (ed.), "The Mangourit Correspondence in Respect to Genet's Projected Attack upon the Floridas, 1793-1794," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1897* (Washington, 1898): 569-579. Analyses of the French plan to create a sister republic in East Florida include Murdoch, Richard K. Murdoch, "Citizen Mangourit and the Projected Attack on East Florida in 1794," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 14 (1948): 523-540, R. R. Palmer, "A Revolutionary Republican: M.A.B. Mangourit," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 3 (October 1952): 483-496, and Robert J. Alderson, "The 1794 Projected French Invasion of Spanish East Florida and Atlantic History," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 88 (1), (Summer 2009): 54-82. All three authors agree that international republicanism was decisive in supporting South Carolina for the French invasion. However, there is no precise analysis of the social class of their officers. We are left with the impression that they came from the backcountry. However, its leaders, William Tate, Stephen Drayton, and John Hamilton, were elite South Carolinian planters. Also, Pierce Butler and Alexander and William Moultrie gave their full support. Furthermore, the American citizen who acted as liaison in Georgia was a former French aristocrat veteran who had stayed in America after 1783.

¹²⁸ Alderson, *The Bright Era*, pp. 20-21.

The pro-French sentiments of South Carolina elite members were confirmed in their fortnight-long celebration of Genet. As discussed in Chapter Two, the elite honoring Genet as “a paladin in the great crusade against tyranny and injustice” took shape with grandiose and exuberant fetes reminiscent of President Washington’s visit in 1791. Yet, during this very time, in Philadelphia, the federal government ordered Jefferson, its Secretary of State, to receive Genet with coolness and polite distance and was preparing to issue the Neutrality Proclamation.¹²⁹ In contrast to these northern Federalist plans for Genet’s reception, a number of South Carolina pro-French Federalists, such as Ralph Izard, had joined Jeffersonians in the festivities welcoming Genet.¹³⁰ In April 1793, many Charleston Federalists ideologically diverged from northern Federalists and the national government. With the tacit approval or solid encouragement of Governor Moultrie’s administration and local officials such as federal customs officer Isaac Holmes, federal marshal Isaac Huger, and Charleston’s mayor, John Bee, Genet offered navy/army commissions to South Carolina officers. These officers, all veterans of the Revolutionary War, complemented French funds provided for privateering and the East Florida expedition as the French government was nearly bankrupt. Consul Mangourit gratefully acknowledged this financial aid: “Like their commanders, the citizens taking part in [privateering and the East Florida expedition] were former officers in the American army who sacrificed their fortunes to serve the French Republic.”¹³¹

¹²⁹ For the celebration of Genet, see Jackson, *Privateers*, p. 6 and Thomas, *Reminiscences*, pp. 32-34. Jackson suggests that the exuberance of his welcome might have even surprised the French ambassador and prompted him to assume a more radical stance towards American neutrality while staying in Philadelphia. For Washington’s visit to South Carolina in May 1791, see Washington’s diary, titled “May 1791,” FO.

¹³⁰ Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 33.

¹³¹ Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit to Jean Antoine Fauchet, 30/3/1794, in Turner, *Correspondence*, p. 572.

Despite violating American neutrality, French plans proceeded before everyone's eyes and with the South Carolina elite's support. The ship that had brought Genet to Charleston was transformed into a privateer, making Charleston its base. The elite also funded four privateers, *Citizen Genet*, *Le Sans-Culottes*, *Le Republicain*, and *L'Anti-George*, *La Sans Pareille*, which were joined by a ship coming from France, *Le Vainqueur de la Bastille*. After entering service as privateers, all these ships came to Charleston to repair, recruit, and sell captured British and Spanish ships and their cargo.¹³² Among the South Carolina officers who joined the French Navy, the most notable was Simon McIntosh, the son of General McIntosh.¹³³ From May 1793, the Federal government took increasingly forceful actions against French privateering and the East Florida expedition. It prosecuted French-commissioned navy captains, sent circular letters to French consuls and federal customs officers ordering them to uphold neutrality, and, eventually, in December 1793, seemed to have pressured the South Carolina state house to indict the leading South Carolina officers participating in the French invasion plans of East Florida. Yet, the federal actions to uphold American neutrality did not affect Charleston: Neutrality infractions increased to reach their "heyday" from January 1794 to January 1795.¹³⁴

Indeed, the prosecutions of South Carolina captains Singleterry, Henfield, and Hooper had no positive effect except making Federalists realize the depth of involvement of the Charleston elite

¹³² Jackson, *Privateers*, pp. 6-8.

¹³³ McIntosh to Mangourit, 21/5/1793, AAE CC.

¹³⁴ Jackson, *Privateers*, p. 11.

in pro-French activities. For example, in May 1793, the commander of the impounded French privateer, *Sans Culottes*, Captain Hooper, was indicted in Philadelphia for accepting a French letter of marque. In his defense, he told the court that “the *great men of Charleston* led him to error, particularly the Governor.”¹³⁵ William Vans Murray, a Federalist witness, was shocked by this information and exclaimed that this was “incredible!”¹³⁶ Perhaps Vans Murray possibly used the exclamation, “incredible,” to mean that he believed that Moultrie was not actually supporting France but rather that Hopper had only said so to obtain leniency from the judge. In this case, Vans Murray showed that Moultrie’s support for France was so solid among state governors that South Carolina formed an exception that he could not make himself believe in and that it was even more radical than his state of Virginia.

All three South Carolina captains were found innocent. As we shall later see, according to David Ramsay, an eyewitness of the events and the first historian of South Carolina and the United States, no jury in America was ready to find guilty someone assisting France, a nation that had recently contributed to America’s independence and liberty. Furthermore, British officials’ testimony in court accusing American captains might have revived war memories among the juries and the South Carolina elite, prompting the former to find the defendants innocent and the latter to redouble their support for France.

¹³⁵ William Vans Murray to Alexander Hamilton, 8 May 1793, FO.

¹³⁶ William Vans Murray to Alexander Hamilton, 8 May 1793, FO.

Furthermore, the fact that there were only three prosecutions of South Carolina captains of French privateers based in Charleston does not mean that French privateering out of Charleston was scarce or only lasted for a short time. On the contrary, as mentioned above, privateering out of Charleston increased after the prosecutions, reaching its apogee after January 1794, lasting until December 1795, with about twenty privateers operating at any one time.¹³⁷ It is just that the Federal government and Federalist judges stopped the impounding of privateers and the prosecutions of their captains due to their understanding that no jury would prosecute them. The end of prosecutions was also likely due to the realization, such as displayed by Vans Murray, that the Charleston elite supported pro-French activities, and to antagonize it, especially war heroes such as Governor Moultrie, was terrible politics: it was the time when the Federal government was embroiled in a vicious political battle with Jeffersonians and when Jefferson, furious at neutrality, expressed, to Washington's regret, his intention to resign.¹³⁸

Whatever the case might be, French privateering out of Charleston continued unabated. French owners or captains, such as Jean Bouteille, made rich by selling captured British goods, organized sumptuous banquets attended by Charleston's elite, including the Governor, who made toasts to the French Republic and against Britain.¹³⁹ To stop this situation, the Federal government tried a new strategy: forbidding the selling of captured booty. Consequently, in August 1793, Hamilton sent a Circular Letter to federal customs officers, including Charleston Harbor's John B. Holmes.

¹³⁷ Jackson, *Privateers*, p. 11.

¹³⁸ Jefferson asked to resign in July 1793, but Washington convinced him to remain in office until the new year.

¹³⁹ For example, Mangourit to Genet, 15/2/1794, AAE CC; *State Gazette*, 14/2/1794; *Columbian Herald*, 17/2/1794.

It urged them to enforce the prohibition of privateering and, especially, the selling of captured prizes and cargo. Like the prosecutions, Hamilton's injunctions did not affect the South Carolina elite's flouting of neutrality. In June 1794, fourteen months after the Neutrality Proclamation and ten months after his circular letter, the Secretary of the Treasury, realizing that privateering and selling prizes were continued unabatedly, wrote a scathing letter to Holmes.¹⁴⁰ He remonstrated him for not informing the federal government about the persistence of French privateering and selling of captured goods and for doing nothing to stop them. He ranted that "an alarming state at Charleston interferes with the views relative to neutrality. I am perplexed with the circumstance of not having received any account of [French privateering] from you."¹⁴¹

A planter of Charleston's environs, Holmes, a Cincinnati member, had fought alongside French officers during the siege of Charleston. Like his French and American colleagues, he was confined to a British prison ship at the city's fall. After the war, he succeeded the radical Commodore Gillon as the state's lieutenant governor (1791-1792) under Charles Pinckney.¹⁴² Hamilton's remonstrance of Holmes did not affect French privateering, which continued to increase but also did not affect Holmes' reputation among planters. On the contrary, his popularity likely increased due to the elite's inveterate hatred toward Hamilton. Indeed, only three months after the remonstrance, the elite elected Holmes as Charleston's Mayor. Crucially, the fact that Charleston's federal officials, such as Holmes, had not informed Hamilton, after ten months, that privateering was continuing, despite his Circular Letter, shows the elite's reluctance to abide by

¹⁴⁰ Jackson, *Privateers*, p.11.

¹⁴¹ Alexander Hamilton to Isaac Bee Holmes, 2/6/1794, FO.

¹⁴² Editor's note, Alexander Hamilton to Isaac Bee Holmes, 2/6/1794, FO.

neutrality. It also reveals how little power the Federal government wielded over its federal officials in the early 1790s and its inability to have its decisions respected in South Carolina. This is likely because federal officials were appointed from among the local elite rather than out-of-state. Indeed, had Holmes been from another state than South Carolina, he would have been less loyal to the local elite and more inclined to enforce neutrality. Moreover, it demonstrates that in the early 1790s, nationalism in South Carolina was still weaker than republican solidarity.

Other federal officers in South Carolina also illustrated this display of feeble nationalism and robust internationalism. Like Holmes, they disregarded their duties as national government representatives that behooved them to enforce the Neutrality Proclamation. All native South Carolinians and veterans of the American Revolutionary War, like Holmes, they had the power to stop neutrality violations or at least inform their federal government about them, but they did not. These officials included General Huger, the federal Sheriff; Colonel Thomas Hall, the federal clerk; and Colonel Thomas Lee, the federal district judge. Remarkably, all three men were members of the Republican Society, which, as mentioned above, had been created to fight the very neutrality they were supposed to defend and enforce.

Worse, these three South Carolina federal officials were guilty, at least by association, as the Republican Society did not restrict itself to fighting American neutrality rhetorically. It actively helped the French consul and the state government to defy it. The Society's President was Stephen Drayton, Governor Moultrie's Private Secretary, who liaised Mangourit with the State Government's assistance for French privateers and plans to invade East Florida. During the year

that followed the Neutrality Proclamation, these federal officials in Charleston kept confirming their disregard for neutrality by symbolically and publicly showing their support for French revolutionaries, including those disgraced in the eyes of the federal government. In April 1794, Federal Sheriff Huger, alongside Governor Moultrie, accompanied Mangourit, *persona non grata* for violating neutrality, to his ship for France and praised him before the assembled crowd of well-wishers.¹⁴³ However, Huger's display of French support paled compared to that of Federal Judge Lee, which had occurred nine months earlier.

In July 1793, intent on reasserting Franco-American amity and alliance in the face of his federal government's Neutrality Proclamation, the federal judge organized a highly symbolic event. With the cooperation of the French consul and other planters in attendance, such as Samuel Prioleau, an American member of the French Patriotic Society, Lee symbolically married two French and American wives of American Revolutionary War officers. As a symbol of Franco-American unity, the women's robes were pinned together, and they pledged "that their children [would be] looked upon *as one family* while their mothers [would] show them *equal affection*."¹⁴⁴

The mention that these two women had "repudiated their husbands on account of ill-treatment" and that they now "conceived the design of living together "in the strictest union and friendship" cannot but refer to the developments of domestic politics in America and France and the relations between the two countries. In all likelihood, these wives symbolized the American and

¹⁴³ Mangourit to Genet, 1/5/1794, AAE CC.

¹⁴⁴ *City Gazette*, 20 July 1793.

French political factions favoring Franco-American amity, the Jeffersonians and the Girondins, being both mistreated by their respective governments, the wives' husbands. The American administration's mistreatment of Jeffersonians alluded to the Neutrality Proclamation, which was forced upon them. It also caused Jefferson to announce his resignation and caused an unprecedented uproar among Republicans. For its part, the French administration's mistreatment of the Girondins alluded to the fact that only two months earlier, they had been overthrown, imprisoned, and replaced by Robespierre's nationalist dictatorship. The children of these two women symbolized the French and American people, meant to be united "in a strictest union and friendship" and in a single Franco-American republican family, now well cared for by their mothers, the genuine French and American republicans who had separated from their oppressive and unrepublican husbands, their respective Federalist and Jacobin governments.

The fact that this marriage was referring to the Neutrality Proclamation and the elite's desire to have it repealed was revealed by the attendance of Charleston planters and the French consul. It was also evidenced by the presence of representatives of the four state organizations that took most at heart Franco-American amity and alliance: the Republican Society and the French Patriotic Society, represented by Thomas Lee; and the Charleston's regiments and the Society of the Cincinnati, represented by their officers.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, the wedding ceremony's *finale* emphasized the military nature of the event and, thereby, the Franco-American alliance, which the Cincinnati and the Charleston military, until neutrality, had considered perennial and their duty to uphold: Charleston's artillery regiment, which could only be ordered to assemble by its

¹⁴⁵ *City Gazette*, 20 July 1793.

Commander-in-Chief, Governor Moultrie, '*signed the contract of the* [Franco-American wedding and children's union] by the fire of its guns, and [by] thousands of huzzas [of] all their brothers-in-arms.'"¹⁴⁶

Other reasons also reveal the ceremony's political symbolism of Franco-American unity and opposition to neutrality. First, the wedding contract is symbolic of the Franco-American military alliance, as an alliance is contractual according to Vattel's theory on the laws of nations; also, because this contract was not signed by civilians but by the military, the prop, guarantor, and promoter of the Franco-American alliance, as stipulated by the Society of the Cincinnati's charter; next, planters considered contracts as sacred, and their signatures ratifying it constituted a pledge to uphold it. Moreover, the French consul's reaction to the celebration was also highly political: "his eyes overflowed with tears of joy, so feelingly touched at this so noble a scene."¹⁴⁷ Mangourit would have unlikely been emotional at the sight of a mere wedding but only at the signs of Franco-American amity he had unrelentingly worked toward. Charleston Federal officials' public display of political positions contradicting the national government also reveals how little ideology played a part in President Washington's appointment of officials. His correspondence on appointing South Carolina planters to federal posts only discussed their experience as American Revolutionary War officers, their reputation as people of integrity, personal relations, and evidence of appropriate skills. It never discussed the candidates' political ideology. He likely wished to govern above political factions and hire men only for their

¹⁴⁶ *City Gazette*, 20 July 1793.

¹⁴⁷ *City Gazette*, 20 July 1793. For a different interpretation of this event, emphasizing 1790s American and French women's emancipation due to their countries' new republican values, see Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 75.

administrative skills, as shown by his request that Jefferson postpone his resignation and his readiness to appoint Madison as Ambassador to France. Indeed, by these times, the president was fully aware of Jefferson and Madison's opposition to his policies and their encouragement of the vitriolic attacks directed at him and Hamilton by their protégés in the Jeffersonian press.¹⁴⁸

The Plans for the East Florida Expedition

In 1793 and 1794, Hamilton and Washington's incapability of preventing French privateering out of Charleston was matched by their incapacity of precluding French recruitment of an army in South Carolina, the *South Carolina Legion*, to invade Spanish East Florida and establish a French sister republic.¹⁴⁹ In April 1793, a plan by a South Carolinian planter and state representative (1787-1788), Major John d'Antignac, a former French aristocratic officer of the Revolutionary War, already existed. It offered funds to recruit a legion to fight in Europe alongside French forces.¹⁵⁰ Mangourit dismissed it as too complex and expensive in contrast to the intended sister republic in East Florida. This republic was to form the same political system as other French sister

¹⁴⁸ This apolitical appointment of Federal officials contrasts with future appointments by President Adams. Still, it resembles the political idealism of Pierce Butler, who in 1801 begged the new president, Thomas Jefferson, not to undertake to fire Federalist administrators but to keep those innocent of malfeasance.

¹⁴⁹ Another plan to invade Spanish Louisiana, a former French colony inhabited by people of French descent, which France had lost in 1763, quickly floundered after hesitations of the French government. For the plan to invade Louisiana, see Mangourit to Genet, 27/10/1793, AAE CC; Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 67, 129-130. For the East Florida expedition, see Richard K. Murdoch, "Citizen Mangourit and the Projected Attack on East Florida in 1794," *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 14, no. 4 (Nov. 1948), pp. 522-540, and Murdoch, *The Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1793-1796* (Berkeley: University of California, 1951), R. R. Palmer, "A Revolutionary Republican: M.A.B. Mangourit," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 3 (October 1952): 483-496, Richard K. Murdoch, "Correspondence of French Consuls in Charleston, 1793-1797," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 74, no. 1 (Jan. 1973), pp. 1-17, Charles E. Bennet, *Florida's French Expedition* (Pensacola: University Presses of Florida, 1989), Alderson Jr., *This Bright Era*, pp. 131-144, and Alderson, "Entangled Borderlands: The 1794 Projected Invasion of East Florida and Atlantic History," *Florida History Quarterly*, vol. 88, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 54-89.

¹⁵⁰ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 43-44.

republics.¹⁵¹ France wished to establish a privateer base to prey on British ships and replace its bases lost to the British in its Caribbean colonies.¹⁵² The expedition organizer, French consul Mangourit, portrayed it as a republican crusade of “friends of equality” participating in a “holy war of virtue versus vice” that would give “no quarter to kings and nobles.”¹⁵³ The plans for the expedition went smoothly despite Washington’s fury at it. In January 1794, he requested the French government to recall Genet and Mangourit for violating neutrality. However, the expedition was not annulled in April 1794 by the American or South Carolina governments but by Robespierre’s nationalist government. This cancellation came after two thousand men were ready to start the invasion of East Florida. They had assembled on an island between Georgia and East Florida, bought by Butler as a base outside American jurisdiction.¹⁵⁴

Under orders of the French government and the supervision of French Ambassador Genet, plans for an East Florida expedition lasted from April 1793 to April 1794. Mangourit organized them at the local level. Governor Moultrie, Moultrie’s Personal Secretary Colonel Stephen Drayton, Captain William Tate, and Lieutenant John Hamilton assisted him.¹⁵⁵ The three latter planters were joint members of the Society of the Cincinnati and the Republican Society; the first society enjoined, by its founding charter, to promote the Franco-American Alliance; the second was

¹⁵¹ Palmer, “A Revolutionary Republican,” p. 489.

¹⁵² Palmer, “A Revolutionary Republican,” p. 489.

¹⁵³ American Historical Association, *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1897* (Washington D.C.: Government Information Office, 1898), pp. 594, 623-624, quoted in Palmer, “A Revolutionary Republican”, p. 488.

¹⁵⁴ Jackson, *Privateers*, pp. 40-41. *South Carolina State Gazette*, 26, 28 March 1794, 8, 14 April 1794.

¹⁵⁵ Examples of assistance to Mangourit’s international republican plans by these five planters are discussed throughout the seven works cited in the preceding note, number 101.

established to combat the Neutrality Proclamation and defend Franco-American amity. These men had been repeatedly given responsibilities as Cincinnati administrators and had held essential functions at the National Cincinnati Society's annual meetings. In 1793-1794, Drayton and Tate held the respective offices of President and Secretary of the Republican Society.¹⁵⁶ Mangourit was an aristocrat from Brittany who had joined the French Revolution at its earliest hour. A moderate Girondin of anti-enslavement sentiment, he had left his Freemason lodge, believing it to have too many uneducated members. Extremely intelligent and speaking seven languages, he was appointed French Ambassador to the Russian Court, a post from which he was expelled after inciting revolutionary activities. He then undertook international republican actions in Italy, Greece, Spain, and Switzerland.¹⁵⁷ As French consul in Charleston, his charisma made him popular with Charleston's elite.¹⁵⁸ His friends included Isaac Huger, Governor Moultrie, Tate, and Drayton; the former two not disclosing his neutrality violations and publicly displaying their amity, and the latter three supporting his international republican plans. His plans and actions were known by the U.S. Army, which told him that "all federal officers wished him well."¹⁵⁹

Captain William Tate, a founding member of the South Carolina Cincinnati and Secretary of the Republican Society, was a wealthy Irish-American planter with lands in the Lowcountry and iron mines in the backcountry. As mentioned earlier, pro-British Native Americans had killed most of

¹⁵⁶ "Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice," 13/7/1793, Republican Society Papers, BPL.

¹⁵⁷ Palmer, "A Revolutionary Republican," p. 485.

¹⁵⁸ R. R. Palmer, "A Revolutionary Republican," pp. 485-486.

¹⁵⁹ American Historical Association, *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1897* (Washington D.C.: Government Information Office, 1898), p. 578, R. R. Palmer, "A Revolutionary Republican," p. 487.

his family during the American Revolutionary War. In 1780, he served as an officer of Charleston's artillery during the city's Siege and became a prisoner-of-war of the British army, upon its surrender. In 1789 and the early 1790s, Pierce Butler and Isaac Huger recommended him to President Washington for different international plans to benefit the United States commercially. Before neutrality was declared and when France was still at peace with Britain, he likely led Charleston's Irish Regiment in the capture of a British brig.¹⁶⁰ He might also acted as one of the leaders of other events in which Charleston's Irish-American artillery participated in 1793, such as the celebrations of French victories, the Franco-American wedding, and the capture of another British brig, organized by Edward Rutledge, another Irish-American.¹⁶¹ Dedicated to republican internationalism and Irish Independence, Governor Moultrie recommended him to Genet for the rank of Colonel in the French army.¹⁶² Mangourit also made him the primary recruiter for the East Florida expedition.¹⁶³ And as we shall discuss in Chapter Five, in 1797, he would become the commandant of Franco-Irish forces in the last military invasion of Britain.

Colonel Stephen Drayton, Cincinnati, was a scion of a powerful family that hailed back from the seventeenth century. Drayton was born at the Magnolia plantation on the Ashley River near

¹⁶⁰ PB to Alexander Gillon, 13/2/1790, PBP, SCL.

¹⁶¹ For the capture of the British brig in August 1793, see *State Gazette of South Carolina*, 9/8/1793.

¹⁶² Editor's note, William Tate to George Washington, 3/08/1789, FO.

¹⁶³ For William Tate's career as an international republican in the French army in America and Europe, see John D. Ahlstrom, "Captain and Chef de Brigade William Tate: South Carolina Adventurer," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 88, no. 4 (October 1987): 183-191, Christopher J. Tozzi, *Nationalizing France's Army: Foreign, Black, and Jewish Troops in the French Military, 1715-1831* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press): 109-120, and Tozzi, "Between Two Republics: American Military Volunteers in Revolutionary France," *Journal of the Western Society for French History*, vol. 39 (2011), and J. E. Thomas, *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797* (Gloucester, UK: Tempus Press, 2007).

Drayton Hall, built by his uncle William Drayton. Drayton Hall served as Charleston's foremost social venue. It exhibited paintings of Revolutionary War heroes and hosted elegant balls with hundreds of dancers. Washington had been delighted by one of these balls during his 1791 visit.¹⁶⁴ In 1777, General Moultrie appointed him the Southern Department's Deputy-Quarter-Master-General of the Continental Army and, in January 1793, as his Personal Secretary.¹⁶⁵ In October 1793, Drayton's international republicanism was further demonstrated when, in addition to the planned East Florida invasion, he asked Mangourit to organize another expedition, this time against the British in Saint Domingue. They had just invaded the island to restore enslavement and defeat the French republican forces. Significantly, Drayton, a planter, wanted to assist the French in St. Domingue, who had abolished enslavement on the island. Therefore, Drayton's anti-British sentiment and international republicanism seem to set aside his enslaver's interest and confirm La Rochefoucauld Liancourt's assertion that South Carolina planters' "inveterate hatred for England" prompted them to support the French Revolution.¹⁶⁶

The same anti-British feelings trumping planters' anxiety as enslavers can also be applied to William Moultrie, Drayton's long-time friend: In October 1793, as state governor, he was not only a committed friend to the French consul Mangourit, an emancipationist suspected of planning a slave insurrection in South Carolina, but he also refused St. Domingue refugee planters' request

¹⁶⁴ The Drayton family owned 100 estates. See <https://www.draytonhall.org/the-estate/people/>. Washington's visit of 1791 is in "[May 1791]," FO.

¹⁶⁵ Link, "The Democratic Societies," p. 274.

¹⁶⁶ La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Voyages*, pp. 158-159.

to help them return to the island and fight the ex-enslaved rebels.¹⁶⁷ His refusal is remarkable as it came upon the heel of a purported plan of an enslaved people's revolt in Charleston. This purported plan made French planters and their enslaved dependents' departure beneficial to the state's planters as French Black people were suspected to be the planned revolt's instigators. Charleston's French planters and local Federalists furiously denounced Moultrie's support for France as the cause for disregarding South Carolina planters' interests.¹⁶⁸

The Prosecution of the Leaders of the Florida Expedition

While the East Florida expedition was being organized, an anti-French South Carolinian planter informed the federal government about these plans in December 1793. The delator was U.S. Senator Ralph Izard, who had welcomed Genet to Charleston before neutrality was proclaimed, or U.S. Representative Jacob Read, who had refused to meet the French Ambassador.¹⁶⁹ From that point on, developments are no more precise. It is unclear whether Washington urged the South Carolina House of Representatives (also called the General Assembly) to take appropriate action or whether the House acted on its initiative to uphold neutrality in the state. Still, perhaps because it had no hope for a guilty verdict, the House did not act against French privateering, although it had grown extensively since the May-July 1793 Philadelphia prosecutions and was entering its apical stage.

¹⁶⁷ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p.95.

¹⁶⁸ For the rumored enslaved people's revolt and Federalists' criticism of Moultrie, see Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 93-109.

¹⁶⁹ Moultrie to Genet, 7/1/1794, AAE CC.

Washington “ordered [the State Governor] to end his support for France.”¹⁷⁰ Therefore, Moultrie likely had no choice but to ask the House to start prosecutions, especially as the northern Federalist press suggested he might be impeached for supporting neutrality infringements.¹⁷¹ The prosecutions ended the friendship between the South Carolina governor and the American president. Unlike his previous dignified letters, Moultrie’s letter informing Washington of the start of the prosecutions was so fawning to seem sarcastic.¹⁷² Unless his obsequiousness was caused by the apprehension of being impeached and by the possible fate of his brother, Alexander, who, as a founding member of the Republican Society, was also supporting France in infringement of neutrality. Whatever the case, this letter was the last ever written between the two men, ending a correspondence of twenty years.¹⁷³ They started in December 1793 and ended in October 1794. They were chaired by a specially formed committee that wrote “resolves,” also sent to President Washington, that summarized the aid to France by five planters: Stephen Drayton, William Tate, and John Hamilton, from South Carolina, and Abner and Samuel Hammond, from Georgia.¹⁷⁴ The resolves argued that “William Tate and al., under the subordination established to Mr. Genet, the plan’s author and the source of authority to the officers, entered service [for] the Republic of France.” They also said that Stephen Drayton and

¹⁷⁰ C. L. Bragg, *Crescent Moon over Carolina: William Moultrie and American Liberty* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013), 107., *State Gazette*, 15/1/1794 and 21/1/1794, and Ramsay, *Reminiscences*, p.35.

¹⁷¹ *State Gazette*, 15/1/1794.

¹⁷² Despite their supposed friendship (Bragg., *Crescent Moon*, p. 97), Moultrie’s letters to Washington had been polite but never warm, unlike Moultrie’s letters to Jefferson. See their correspondence in the National Archives, FO.

¹⁷³ Moultrie and Washington’s correspondence at the National Archives, FO.

¹⁷⁴ Cols. Tate, A. Moultrie, and Drayton respectively delivered the Fourth of July Cincinnati orations for 1790, 1792, and 1793. Unlike other pro-French orations of the 1790s, such as those of Cotesworth Pinckney, Thomas Pinckney, David Ramsay, and Thomas Tudor Tucker, they are lost. However, Drayton’s is described in *State Gazette*, 6/7/1793.

John Hamilton had “raised men for the service of France to act under the orders of M. Genet and avowed that they acted by the authority of Mr. Genet.”¹⁷⁵

These prosecutions must not be misinterpreted as reflecting a decrease in the elite’s support for the French Revolution but as even more evidence for it. The state government undermined the investigation and prosecution as its officials refused to testify. Consequently, in May 1794, the House, unable to proceed, passed on its judicial inquiries to the Federal government. Facing the same obstruction, federal prosecutors dropped all charges in October 1794.¹⁷⁶ A South Carolina jury would not have likely found the defendants guilty had the judicial proceedings continued if David Ramsay was correct when he asserted that that no jury in America would indict elite supporters of the French Revolution because of American gratitude for their ally’s aid during the Revolutionary War.¹⁷⁷ In May 1793, the jury of Captain Gideon Henfield of the Charleston-based French privateer, *The Sans-Culottes*, was found innocent by eleven to one vote, even after the U.S. Supreme issued the advice that Gideon had broken the law.¹⁷⁸ South Carolina prosecutors recognized such widespread affection for France: they lamented that “the attempt [to assist France] is the more dangerous as citizens have been seduced [by] their affection to the French Republic.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ South Carolina House of Representatives proceedings. Enclosure: Resolves sent to President George Washington, 6 December 1793. Founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson.

¹⁷⁶ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 150.

¹⁷⁷ Ramsay, *Reminiscences*, p. 36.

¹⁷⁸ Editors’ note from “*Memorial from Edmond Charles Genet*,” 27/5/1793, FO.

¹⁷⁹ South Carolina House of Representatives proceedings.

Furthermore, unlike privateer Captains Henfield, Hooper, and Singleterry in Philadelphia, the defendants were not imprisoned during their indictment. They also persevered in organizing the invasion plans of East Florida *contemporaneously with* the judicial proceedings. This continued violation of neutrality might also have happened because Governor Moultrie never recanted his support, and the organizers of the expedition also had the backing of influential leaders, not only in the state government but also outside it; for example, Lieutenant-Colonel Sumter, a hero of the Revolutionary War.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, judicial proceedings were confined to only three planters from South Carolina, although other elite members supported the plan. Neither Governor Moultrie was impeached, nor his brother Alexander and his elite colleagues in the Republican Society were ever prosecuted, except, as mentioned, its President, Drayton, and Hamilton. Additionally, the prosecutions were confined to those creating a French land army but not those aiding French privateering. For example, Commodore Gillon, U.S. Representative (1789-1794), who served as the leading recruiter for French privateers; General McIntosh, whose son, Simon, had joined a French navy ship; and John B. Holmes, the federal Customs officer, whose duty was to stop privateering, were all left alone.¹⁸¹ Remarkably, no proceeding was started against Moultrie, despite Washington's expressed order of May 1793 that had urged state governors to stop neutrality violations.¹⁸² The state governor even advised Genet that "the treaty of 1778

¹⁸⁰ For Sumter's support of the officers' recruitment for the French Revolutionary invasion plans of East Florida, Klein, *Unification*, p.217.

¹⁸¹ Jackson, *Privateers*, p.11.

¹⁸² Knox to Henry Lee, 23/5/1793, FO. Washington told the governors that "in your capacity of commander-in-chief of the militia of your state, you will put a stop to [violations of neutrality], and you will detain any vessel and will be pleased to notify [me] of the circumstances of the case and the steps which you may have taken,"

authorizes French war vessels to bring their captured enemy ships in American ports” and that he “could not prevent” privateers rearming in Charleston since no law forbade it.¹⁸³

The prosecutions also displayed the astonishing picture of what was happening at the same time that support for France, regarding both land army, invasion plans of East Florida, and French privateering, was occurring publicly. As discussed in the case of federal officials, this situation demonstrates the weakness of the federal government, and the Federalist South Carolinians, incapable of enforcing neutrality in the state. Had an overwhelming number of the elite, or even a majority, been anti-French Federalists, such an odd spectacle could not have existed. As mentioned, French privateering and the East Florida invasion needed the elite’s financial and logistical assistance. For all his talent and energy, the cash-strapped French consul would never have been able to proceed without such help.¹⁸⁴ He recognized this fact when he affirmed: “the end-good of our plans demands the agreement [of Governor Moultrie].”¹⁸⁵ He also praised planters spending personal funds toward the East Florida expedition.¹⁸⁶

The prosecutions offer additional insight. All defendants were Society of the Cincinnati founding members and among its top administrators in the 1780s and 1790s, demonstrating the society’s pro-French republican sentiments, as discussed in the case of other Cincinnati members, such as

¹⁸³ Genet to Jefferson, 27/5/1793, FO. My translation; the original: “Le Traité de 1778 autorise les vaisseaux de guerre français d’amener leurs prises dans les ports américains.” In French: “ne pouvait pas empêcher les dits armements.”

¹⁸⁴ Editor’s note, Alexander Hamilton to Isaac Bee Holmes, 2/6/1794, FO.

¹⁸⁵ My translation of “le bien de nos projets exige son [Moultrie’s] accord.” Mangourit to Genet, 9/10/1793, AAE CC.

¹⁸⁶ Mangourit to Fauchet, 30/3/1794, Frederick Turner (ed), *Correspondence*, p. 572.

Governor Moultrie and Isaac Huger.¹⁸⁷ Like Moultrie, they likely considered preserving the Society's honor paramount.¹⁸⁸ Conversely, the prosecution members, except Col. Anderson, held a weak Revolutionary War and Cincinnati background. Of the five prosecution members, only Anderson belonged to the Cincinnati; three of the other four members held junior ranks during the war, and one, John Drayton, Stephen's cousin, had remained a civilian.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, the prosecutions challenge the suggestion that the "leaders" and the government of South Carolina were anti-French Revolution Hamiltonian Federalists. It has been argued that Stephen Drayton "had declared war" against "the state of South Carolina" and "questioned its legitimacy."¹⁹⁰ It has also been stated that during the proceedings, the leadership of South Carolina consisted of Federalists and aimed "to strengthen the centralized republic that Hamilton hoped to create."¹⁹¹ However, it would be illogical that the South Carolina Governor's Personal Secretary, Stephen Drayton, defended by Moultrie's brother, Alexander Moultrie, acting as the defendants' attorney, was "waging war to the state of South Carolina," when he belonged to its government. If such a "war" had existed, Mangourit would have discussed it. On the contrary, he affirmed: "I formed a chain of patriotic Americans who vigorously [support French plans]. *These people are*

¹⁸⁷ For a list of members of the Society of the Cincinnati, see Bryce Metcalf, *Original Members, and Other Officers Eligible of the Society of the Cincinnati* (Charlottesville, VA: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1938). For a list of the original members in South Carolina, see Alexander Moore in *The Fabric of Liberty: The Society of the Cincinnati of the State of South Carolina* (Washington DC: Home House Press, 2012). For transcripts of the meetings and a list of founding members of the Society of the Cincinnati in South Carolina, see South Carolina Cincinnati Papers, Library of the American Revolution Institute, National Society of the Cincinnati. For the assertion of the French consul that his support in South Carolina came from veterans of the Revolutionary War, see Mangourit to Adel Fauchet, 30/3/1794 in Murdoch, p.77 and other letters of Mangourit in Murdoch, *Correspondence*, pp. 73-79.

¹⁸⁸ William Moultrie to Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, 28/7/1786, Moultrie Papers, SCL.

¹⁸⁹ For a list of the original members in South Carolina, see Alexander Moore in *The Fabric of Liberty: The Society of the Cincinnati of the State of South Carolina* (Washington DC: Home House Press, 2012); David D. Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, pp. 358, 473.

¹⁹⁰ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp.136-138.

¹⁹¹ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp.136-138.

the leaders of the state."¹⁹² Moreover, as demonstrated by its neutrality violations, support for French privateering and East Florida invasion plans, obstruction of the prosecutions, and the refusal of Holmes to obey Hamilton's injunctions, South Carolina planters disagreed with Hamilton's precepts of a centralized state. Hatred for Hamilton and his policies united the South Carolina elite, like other Jeffersonians, John and Abigail Adams, and some of Washington's friends, such as the Pinckneys. Aedanus Burke's challenge to Hamilton to duel was only one instance of the elite's obdurate antagonism toward the Secretary of the Treasury and his policies.¹⁹³ And they proved this by allowing, encouraging, and assisting neutrality-busting as long as the French wished it to occur.

Furthermore, Mangourit asked for the acquiescence from the participating officers that the French sister-republic would be a "pure democracy" under the rule of the French revolutionary authorities for the duration of the war with Britain, conditions that Federalists could have hardly accepted.¹⁹⁴ As discussed, democratic principles were anathemas to the Federalists but not to Jeffersonian members, such as Alexander Moultrie and Stephen Drayton, who wrote of their commitment to "democracy" and called themselves "citizens" in their correspondence.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, in 1794, William Tate was already planning to leave his plantations and iron to join

¹⁹² Murdoch, Correspondence, p.8.

¹⁹³ For Burke's challenge to duel Hamilton, because he thought that the Secretary of State's plan for the assumption of state debts centralized the United States by "throwing taxation power into the hands of Congress", see Meleny, *The Public Life*, pp. 191-195. In this fight against Hamilton, Burke was mainly assisted by Commodore Gillon.

¹⁹⁴ For South Carolina Federalists, such as William L. Smith, as speculators, see Ulrich. B. Philips, "The South Carolina Federalists II," *American Historical Review* vol. 14 (July 1909), p.732.

¹⁹⁵ Alexander Moultrie, *An Appeal to the People*, pp. 8-9.

the Jacobin army in France.¹⁹⁶ He was unlikely prompted by land speculation to do so when, in France, he plotted with Theobald Tone, the Irish nationalist, for an expedition against Britain, and when, in 1797, he led one despite the danger of being hanged, as Tone sadly experienced.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, Drayton unlikely thought about land speculation when, in 1793, he, and Tate, pressed Mangourit and Moultrie to let him lead a Franco-South Carolina invasion of St. Domingue where enslaved people had, by then, been officially emancipated and the land was ruined.¹⁹⁸

Conclusion

Chapter three revealed solid and widespread elite idealistic international republican rhetorical support for Revolutionary France among the South Carolina elite during the year that followed the Neutrality Proclamation. The Proclamation even boosted elite rhetorical support for France, a rhetoric which was put action by the transformation of Charleston into the American base for French privateers and French plans for an invasion of East Florida. Even the prosecutions of leading elite supporters of France did not dent the pro-French elite's castigation of American neutrality and its support for France. The federal government's failure to uphold the law regarding American neutrality demonstrates its weakness in the early 1790s. It also reveals the degree to which radical international republican South Carolinians felt more loyalty to their French allies than to the American national government. Six after the 1787 Federal Constitution

¹⁹⁶ John D. Ahlstrom, "Captain and Chef de Brigade William Tate: South Carolina Adventurer," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (October 1987), pp. 186-187.

¹⁹⁷ Ahlstrom, "Captain and Chef de Brigade William Tate," p. 192.

¹⁹⁸ These prosecutions also occurred at the time that national Jeffersonian leaders relentlessly reminded their audience of the need for gratitude for the assistance that France had provided during the American Revolutionary War, as well as the link between American and French liberty. See Ralph L. Ketcham, *From Colony to Country: The Revolution in American Thought, 1750-1820* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 200-201, and Ketcham., *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1990), p. 345.

and four years after establishing the United States as a country, allegiance to one's state and international republicanism outweighed nationalism among many elite South Carolinians.

Chapter Three also shows that South Carolina's elite support for France was not limited to a few democratically-oriented planters and Charleston's artisan and backcountry small farmers in an attempt to overthrow the state government. It revealed that elite French Revolutionary supporters pervaded and often controlled the most eminent political and governmental institutions of South Carolina, including the Society of the Cincinnati and the Republican Society, whose pro-French members, despite their democratic rhetoric, never spoke of overthrowing the South Carolina state or political system. Their support for the French Revolution came from abidance to idealistic international republicanism and Francophilic and Anglophobic sentiments. Yet, it must be importantly noted that such idealistic international republican pro-French Revolution rhetoric condemning the Neutrality Proclamation serendipitously matched the anxiety-driven, down-to-earth, self-interested, and materialistic concerns of pro-French planters. Their distaste for an overwhelmingly powerful national government that restricted their freedom to assist France matched their suspicion, expressed as early as the 1787 constitutional debates, that such national government could also circumscribe their autonomy to enslave laborers the way they wished. Therefore, it is likely that South Carolina planters' attacks on the Neutrality Proclamation, in addition to sincere feelings similar to those expressed by Jefferson and other international republican leaders, were used to cover in idealistic terms their planter anxiety vis-à-vis a potentially strong and emancipationist-leaning Federal government. Such cover in idealistic terms of anxious planters' prosaic concerns might have also prompted the

establishment, in Charleston, of the Republican Society of South Carolina, in 1793. Indeed, as we shall now see in Chapter Four, in its case-study and the prosopography of its elite members, the Republican Society, unlike what historians erroneously argue, was founded and controlled by planters rather than by artisans and middling classes, suggesting that planters' concerns must have been important, in addition to sincerely-felt international republicanism.

Chapter Four

The Republican Society of South Carolina

July 1793 – February 1795

“Apprehension [toward] the efforts of despotism to annihilate liberty have induced worthy citizens to form the Republican Society. We pledge to the world that we will contribute to the utmost towards liberty in respect to the French Republic.”¹

“It is at this shrine [of gratitude for France] that we are continually invited to sacrifice the true interests of the country.”²

The Republican Society of South Carolina was established in July 1793 as a direct response to the Neutrality Proclamation and to assist the French Republic. It was also created at the time when, in violation of the proclamation, the state elite and government supported French designs to invade Spanish East Florida and just after the prosecutions of French-commissioned commanders of Charleston-based privateers in Philadelphia. By July 1793, Governor Moultrie’s pro-French administration had been in power for seven months. As discussed in Chapter Three, Moultrie had disagreed with the Federalist national government’s anti-French policies and, notably, the Neutrality Proclamation. He supported Genet’s attempt to repeal American neutrality, allowing Charleston to become a base for French privateers. In his support for France, Moultrie was aided by other eminent officials of his government, such as Peter Freneau, the Secretary of State, and Stephen Drayton, his Personal Secretary, who liaised pro-French activities with Mangourit and Genet.

¹ “Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice,” 13 July 1793, Republican Society Papers, PBL.

² Alexander Hamilton [Pacificus,] “Pacificus IV,” *The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793–1794: Toward the Completion of the American Founding*, ed. by Morton J. Frisch (Indianapolis, 2007). Pacificus IV was published on July 10th, 1793.

In the summer of 1793, the French Republic's existence was threatened. It faced a precarious military situation: it was surrounded and attacked by five European monarchies, which had vowed its destruction. Great Britain was one of France's most implacable enemies, a fact that, as discussed above, made planters associate the French republican military struggle with their fight to establish an American republic a decade earlier. France was particularly affected by its conflict with Britain in the Caribbean. South Carolina, located relatively close to the West Indies compared to other American states and a state that traded significantly with the Caribbean islands, could observe first-hand Franco-British hostilities. In July 1793, the French Caribbean colony of St. Domingue was on the verge of being dispossessed by Britain and Spain, an eventuality France was determined to preclude as the island was its most valuable imperial possession: The colony constituted half of the French overseas imperial wealth through its immense production of sugar and coffee worked by enslaved people.³ In 1763, France considered St. Domingue so economically invaluable that it had preferred to keep it rather than Canada at the treaty ending the Seven Years War.

Charleston's proximity to the Caribbean island's sea routes made it ideally located to become a privateer base to disrupt British and Spanish plans against St. Domingue. After Savannah, the city was the closest among American towns to Spanish East Florida, which France planned to transform into a sister republic. Therefore, its strategic position likely contributed to the decision of French authorities to send Genet to the city on his arrival to America in April 1793. He asked

³ Jacques Cauna, *Au Temps des Isles à Sucre : Histoire d'une Plantation de Saint-Domingue au XVIII^e Siècle* (Paris: Karthala, 1987), pp. 51-54.

for the assistance of its elite and the South Carolina government for the French plans against Britain and Spain, an assistance which was enthusiastically offered. As we saw in Chapter Three, this assistance came in the form of French privateers, welcomed to Charleston's harbor and often financed, built, and operated by the city's planters or other Americans following their instructions. It also involved elite cooperation with the intended East Florida expedition. Stephen Drayton led this elite aid, occupying the ideal position of Moultrie's Personal Secretary. As the South Carolina Republican Society's President, Drayton cooperated with Consul Mangourit and Ambassador Genet. As discussed in Chapter Three, this assistance contravened the federal injunctions to respect American neutrality. Under Washington's pressure, the State House prosecuted three Charleston planters assisting France: Drayton, Tate, and John Hamilton. They were all administrators of the Republican Society. Historians have described the Republican Society as primarily composed of middling classes and artisans. However, this chapter offers a different picture. It argues that the Republican Society was mainly composed of, and fully controlled by, the South Carolina elite. Its members and entire administration came from the most powerful and well-connected families. Many had ancestors who had held the most critical posts in colonial South Carolina. They were also veterans of the American Revolutionary War. Finally, many had been or were presently serving in the highest positions of the state government.⁴

⁴ Eugene P. Link, in "The Democratic Societies of the Carolinas," *North Carolina Historical Review*, (vol. 18, no. 3 (July 1941), pp. 259-277), pp. 262-263 and Philip S. Foner and Elizabeth Vandepaer (eds.), *The Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800: A Documentary Sourcebook of Constitutions, Declarations, Addresses, Resolutions, and Toasts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), pp. 1-15. They contend that republican societies, including the Republican Society of South Carolina, were formed by "mechanics, tradesmen, and seamen" set up against "men of wealth and position." R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolutions*, p. 762, maintains that republican societies across America were formed by middling classes and craftsmen opposing planters "putting hair-powder, wearing silk stockings." Klein, *Unification*, pp. 204-205, argues that artisans, mechanics, and merchants formed the society to

Historians have also contended that the Republican Society's artisan membership meant it was hostile to the wealthy and supposedly conservative Society of the Cincinnati. However, Chapter 4 argues the opposite. It reveals the Republican Society as an offshoot of the Society of the Cincinnati due to the intersection of both societies. Republican Society members who were Cincinnati not only originated from this Society's general membership but controlled *both* societies' administrations. The Republican Society's Cincinnati members were also at the forefront of Charleston's assistance to France. Therefore, the Chapter challenges the view that the Society of the Cincinnati in America was conservative.⁵ Furthermore, it reveals another essential characteristic of the Republican Society. By presenting a prosopography that displays its elite members' wealth, power, and number, Chapter Four demonstrates that South Carolina planters opposing American neutrality were numerous and represented the state's wealthiest and most socially and politically eminent planter families. It also unveils the Republican Society members' elite status by analyzing their "aristocratic" genealogies, assessing their political positions in the state government or as federal officials, referring to their experience as Revolutionary War officers, and enumerating features of their wealth and social status. It discloses elite control over the Republican Society by revealing its hold on its administration. Furthermore, it displays the intersection of the society's administration with members or

"articulate long-standing grievances against coastal planters." Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 57, John D. Ahlstrom, in "Captain and Chef-de-Brigade, William Tate: South Carolina Adventurer," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, no.4 (October 1987): 183-191, p.186, and Michael L. Kennedy, "A French Jacobin Club in Charleston, South Carolina, 1792-1795," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 91, No 1 (Jan. 1990): 4-22, p.21, all reiterate Link, Foner, Klein, and Palmer's theories in their arguments about the Republican Society.

⁵ For the conservative nature of the South Carolina Cincinnati, see Alexander Moore, *The Fabric of Liberty*, pp. 47-52; for conservatism among American Cincinnati in general, see Hünnebmörder, *The Society of the Cincinnati*, pp. 79 et al. For the antagonism of the Republican Society towards the Cincinnati, see Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies*, p. 261. The requirement for joining the Cincinnati was to serve three continuous years as a senior officer (captain and above) during the Revolutionary War.

administrators of the Society of Cincinnati. Furthermore, it demonstrates the Society's elite international republicanism and support for the French Revolution. The chapter explores various primary sources, including the Society of the Cincinnati minutes, which reveal the extensive interconnection between the administrators of the Republican Society and the Society of the Cincinnati from the early 1780s to the early 1800s.

The Republican Society's Foundation date reveals it as a hotbed of planters' pro-French Revolution sentiment. In contrast to nearly all other republican societies in America, the South Carolina Republican Society was founded *after* the Neutrality Proclamation. This shows that, unlike the predominance of domestic political incentives for creating other societies, outrage at the Neutrality Proclamation's negation of republican solidarity with France constituted the main reason for establishing the Society in Charleston. This is further evidenced by the Society's writing of its founding document, "Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice," on the 13th of July, the eve of Bastille Day, an event Charleston's planters celebrated in the same intensity they did Independence Day.⁶ The Society's founding declaration honored the shared experiences and close affection between South Carolina planters and French veterans of the American Revolutionary War. The Republican Society's Cincinnati members likely believed that the Society enabled them to fulfill their goal of honoring, preserving, and consolidating the friendship and

⁶ "Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice," July 13th, 1793, Republican Society Papers, Boston Public Library. Thirty-five of the thirty-seven American republican societies were founded before the Neutrality Proclamation. See Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 204, footnote 9. For the exuberance of elite celebrations of Bastille Day, similar to the Independence Day celebrations, see Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 42.

alliance of America with France, an aim which they saw as being now betrayed by the Neutrality Proclamation.⁷

The Republican Society also issued a second founding declaration in August 1793. Significantly, this declaration, unlike the anonymous first, was signed by sixteen planters who pledged to the world that they would aid the French Revolution to the utmost of their abilities. Colonel Stephen Drayton, the society's president and Governor Moultrie's personal secretary wrote it.⁸ Stephen Drayton, who gave the 4th of July 1792 Cincinnati oration, wrote this second founding declaration in a lyrical style and with a universalist content that recalls Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. The declaration also recalls the 4th of July Cincinnati orations of Thomas and Cotesworth Pinckney in 1789 and 1791. The document's sending to Charleston's French consul and Ambassador Genet reveals its pro-French Revolution sentiments.⁹ The declaration asserted a commitment to international republicanism: the introductory paragraph not only showed devotion to the French Republic but also to the Republic of Poland:

We, the undersigned citizens of the United States, calling to our remembrance the League of Sovereign Princes against the Republic of Poland and the combination of European potentates against the French Republic, are impressed with an apprehension that the

⁷ "Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice."

⁸ Stephen Drayton, *Declaration of 20 August 1793 Addressed to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, French Consul at Charleston* (Charleston, SC: John Markland, 1793). The Declaration is also in the Republican Society Papers, BPL.

⁹ Drayton, Declaration of 20 August 1793.

utmost efforts of despotism [are] extorted to annihilate all ideas of liberty and national justice.¹⁰

This statement about the danger facing France and Poland refers to the European situation regarding international republicanism, which, in August 1793, was dire. The statement demonstrates not only a concern for France but for transatlantic republicanism. It suggested that Polish, French, and American freedom were intertwined as the European monarchs were set to destroy freedom everywhere. European monarchs intended to destroy republicanism in Europe in 1792 with the onset of war on the French and Polish republics. In August 1793, South Carolinians had learned that, under duress from occupying Russian troops, the Polish Parliament was about to lose its republican form of government, embodied in the May (1792) Constitution, and the loss of two-thirds of Polish territory to Russia and Prussia.¹¹ This news must have been particularly hurtful to South Carolina war veterans who regarded the Poles kindly. They had a particular cause to do so: international republican Pulaski had been killed in their midst while fighting the British army at the Battle of Savannah; international republican Kosciuszko had joined the cause of American independence at its very onset in July 1776. In 1781, he led South Carolina troops at the victorious Battle of Ninety-Six and blockaded Charleston in a daring attempt to free

¹⁰ Drayton, *Declaration of 20 August 1793*. The signatories: Col. Stephen Drayton, Lt. John Blake, Col. William Tate, Lt. James Kennedy, Capt. Thomas Hall, Capt. John Markland, Capt. Thomas Bowen, Capt. Simon McIntosh, Capt. Simeon Theus; Capt. W. Cunningham, Capt. George Cross, Capt. Dominick Geoghegan, W. Marshall, Francis Huger, Capt. C. Crowley, and O'Brien Smith.

¹¹ Simon Schama S., *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (London: Penguin Press, 1989), p. 590. Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland. The Origins to 1795* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 394.

the city from British occupation.¹² In 1792, Kosciusko was Commander-in-Chief of the armies defending the Polish republican constitution against the invading Russians. In August 1793, when the founding document of the Republican Society was written, Kosciusko was in exile in France, trying to coordinate French support for Poland. He believed that the Polish Republic's survival depended on French aid. So did the South Carolina planters in the society, as they suggested the world was now set in a battle of forces for and against liberty.¹³ This universal fight between liberty and despotism prompted Charleston "planters" to establish the Republican Society: 'such considerations have induced a number of worthy citizens of Charleston to form themselves into a society which they have denominated the Republican Society of South Carolina.'¹⁴ The quote also reveals that the South Carolina planters or "worthy citizens" created the Republican Society, not middling and artisan classes. The label "worthy Citizens" is significant as it shows the Republican Society founders' marked consciousness of belonging to the elite class, the only one worth belonging to, in their opinion. In the late Eighteenth-century, "worthy citizens" meant being of good repute, wealthy, educated, and following a code of honor.¹⁵ In South Carolina, the term also meant being a planter or an unusually eminent non-planter, such as David Ramsay. Still, it excluded the wealthy merchants who, disdained for being engaged in business and

¹² For S.C. veterans' admiration for Polish revolutionaries, see PB to Andrew Pickens, 2/2/1793, PBL, and Thomas Pinckney, *Oration*. For Pulaski's death at the Battle of Savannah and the South Carolina elite's high regard for him, see Thomas Pinckney to Elizabeth Pinckney, 31/10/1779, Pinckney Family Papers, RDL-UVA; for Kosciusko's service in South Carolina, see John Buchanan, *The Road to Charleston: Nathaniel Greene and the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), pp. 145-150, 159-161.

¹³ For Kosciusko's service in America, see Francis Kąjenczyński, *Thaddeus Kosciuszko: Military Engineer of the American Revolution* (Hedgesville, OH: Southwest Polonia Press, 1998), p. 87; for his leadership against Russia, Davies, *God's Playground*, p.535; for his stay in France, Davies, *God's Playground*, p. 317.

¹⁴ Stephen Drayton, "Declaration of 20 August 1793."

¹⁵ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, pp. 55-58, who affirms, p. 57, that "with the exception of the learned professions, no pursuit which wielded income from personal effort or employment was respected" by Charleston's planters.

commerce, were shut out of elite society.¹⁶ Importantly, elite worthiness in the 1790s also signified patriotic participation in the American Revolutionary War.¹⁷

The founders of the Republican Society felt the need to emphasize that they were “worthy citizens,” distinct from being merchants or artisans. As a nod to planters outside the Society, they wished to make clear that elite members established the society. Unlike artisans, they did not threaten the state’s social and political order. Therefore, pro-French Revolution supporters’ emphasis on elite worthiness negates the theory of a sharp division pitting a pro-French Revolution urban artisanry and rural backcountry against a Lowcountry set against Revolutionary France.¹⁸ It also contradicts the view that the Republican Society wanted to establish democratic reforms in South Carolina or overthrow its system. Indeed, the Society’s documents discuss national rather than state politics; and republicans versus monarchists rather than democrats versus conservatives. Moreover, the society’s planters referred to France by reiterating the danger France faced in its fight against numerous and powerful tyrannies: “France is contending amidst several powerful, arbitrary despots and tyrants who oppose her in establishing her political freedom. She is now fighting by herself for the very cause of freedom which she so freely bled but ten years past to establish [in America].”¹⁹ This quote suggests that the Republican Society viewed the Neutrality Proclamation as unjust since it led America to ungratefully abandon

¹⁶ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 57-58, who affirms that “even the wealthy merchants were excluded.” (p.57); Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 34, also says that “the aristocracy was carried to that extent that it was held disreputable to attend to business.” He adds that the anti-slant against merchants also came from the fact that they hailed from the northern states or Britain. For other evolving characteristics of planters in America and Britain, see Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries*, pp. 1-3. Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 51, gives another definition of “worthy citizens” or planters: “those of talents, education, and morals with the adventitious advantages of fortune.”

¹⁷ All letters of recommendation and applications for federal posts include the idea that the candidate is worthy of the post due to, among other things, his Revolutionary War activities: see Chapters Two and Three.

¹⁸ Klein, *Unification*, p. 5.

¹⁹ Drayton, “Declaration of 20 August 1793.”

its ally and friend who had freely bled” only a decade past to defend America’s freedom, the freedom France was now defending “alone.” Unsurprisingly, this rebuke of the abandonment of friends, especially friends who had assisted America, came from the Republican Society founders who were all veterans. They had served in the Revolutionary War and, as shall be developed, were nearly all members of the Society of the Cincinnati, whose goals included honoring the Franco-American alliance and friendship. Then the Declaration proceeded:

Aristocratic ambition has already manifested itself in the conduct even of some Americans and has lately been more strongly marked by its whispers of dissatisfaction with the cause of France and Mankind; we do, therefore, intend our signatures to be an avowal of different political sentiments.²⁰

This quote reveals that the Republican Society’s planters linked non-support of republican France and republican “Mankind” to “aristocratic ambition.” It suggests the impossibility of being *both* republican *and* anti-French Revolution: the planters saw the Neutrality Proclamation as anti-republican and anti-French. This argument reflected those of South Carolina and national Jeffersonians when they attacked the Neutrality Proclamation, as seen in Chapter Three. Therefore, South Carolina planters in 1793 should be described as Jeffersonians rather than Federalists. Furthermore, the Declaration concluded in a way and style that would have reminded their audience of the American Revolutionary War’s Spirit of ‘76:

²⁰ Drayton, “Declaration of 20 August 1793.”

We do hereby declare, pledging ourselves to each other and the world, that we will contribute to the utmost of our ability towards the support of equal liberty and national *justice*, as well *in respect to the French Republic* as in the United States, against tyranny and iniquitous rule.²¹

This conclusion reveals South Carolina planters' commitment to the world to help republicanism in France and America. Remarkably, although speaking to an American audience, they mentioned their assistance to the French Republic before that toward the USA. They likely wished to unequivocally assert that the fight for freedom of France and America was inextricably linked, and one could not succeed without the other succeeding. Furthermore, their use of the Declaration of Independence's tropes, such as "pledging ourselves to each other and to the world," shows that they saw their international republican fight in 1793 as a continuation of their struggle for freedom and republicanism during the American Revolution. As Freneau exclaimed in his attack on the Neutrality Proclamation mentioned above: "The Spirit of 1776 is again roused!"²²

The Republican Society's planters honored their pledge to support the French Republic: They took concrete action on behalf of France. As seen in previous chapters, they led parties that disarmed British ships and enrolled in French privateers. They also cooperated with the French

²¹ Stephen Drayton, "Declaration of 20 August 1793."

²² Veritas [Peter Freneau] to President George Washington, second letter, 3/6/1793, FO.

consul and the state government in the planned creation of a French sister republic in East Florida, and some would even enroll in the French army in Europe.²³ Furthermore, the planters of the Republican Society showed their international republicanism by their contact with other international republican societies in France. They applied for and gained affiliation with both *La Société de l'Égalité et la Fraternité* in Bordeaux and the *Club Jacobin* in Paris. They also directly sent letters to the French revolutionary government, which pledged their solidarity with and assistance to republican French and their commitment to keep corresponding.²⁴

The Administration of the Republican Society

South Carolina planters wrote the Republican Society's founding declaration and formed the entire group of its pledged signatories. They also controlled the Society's entire administration: they held the Presidency and Secretariat and all seats in its Standing Committee and Committee of Correspondence. This elite control unequivocally proves that the Society was planter-controlled and not middling-class/artisan-controlled. First, elite control of the Society is revealed by the planters at its administrative apex: President Stephen Drayton and Vice President John Blake. Drayton's and Blake's ancestry shows they were not artisans but of the highest social class. Drayton's South Carolina planter family wielded power from the colony's foundation in 1670. It

²³ For the disarmament of British ships, Jackson, *Privateers*, p. 22, and the *State Gazette of South Carolina*, 9/8/1793. For recruitment of French-commissioned troops, see founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson. For the society's cooperation with the French consul, see Adelson, *This Bright Era*, p. 57. William Tate's joining the French military is described in Christopher J. Tozzi, *Nationalizing France's Army: Foreign, Black, and Jewish Troops in the French Military, 1715-1831* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), pp. 109–120; see also Tozzi, "Between Two Republics: American Military Volunteers in Revolutionary France," *Journal of the Western Society for French History*, 39, on <https://quod.lib.umich.edu>. Stephen Drayton to Thomas Jefferson, 20/6/1801, FO.

²⁴ Adelson, *Privateers*, p. 57.

included a state governor, William Bull, a chief justice of East Florida, William Drayton, and the founding father, William Henry Drayton, educated at Balliol College, Oxford, and a friend of the Pinckney family. Drayton knew all the luxury of his class: he was born on Magnolia's plantation's Drayton Hall, which served as Charleston's foremost social venue. It hosted its gallery exhibiting paintings of his ancestors and local heroes. It also hosted elegant balls with scores of dancers, including the dazzled and ravished President Washington when he visited South Carolina in May 1791.²⁵ Like Drayton, John Blake came from an influential family of ancient lineage. In England, the Blakes had been part of the highest aristocracy, including his great-uncle, Admiral Robert Blake, considered the Royal Navy's founder. In South Carolina, the Blakes produced two governors, Joseph Blake and Joseph Morton, and their Beaufort plantation was located near their aristocratic friend, Senator Butler's.²⁶ Second, Drayton and Blake's ancestry and curricula vitae reveal an international republican background which, in affinity with the Society's ideology, suggests anti-British monarchy and pro-French republican sentiments. During the American Revolution, Drayton's uncle, William H. Drayton, was a Founding Father who, in 1774, wrote an anti-British pamphlet, *American Claim of Rights*. During the Revolutionary War, under his friend General Moultrie's supervision, Stephen Drayton held the critical position of Deputy-Quarter-Master-General of the Continental Army's Southern Department, responsible for military supplies and logistical organization. In January 1793, Governor Moultrie appointed him as his

²⁵ The Drayton family owned 100 estates. See <https://www.draytonhall.org/the-estate/people/>. Washington's visit to the South Carolina elite is in "[May 1791]," FO.

²⁶ Langdon Cheves, "The Blake of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* (April 1900), pp. 153-166, who also mentions that Robert Blake has a memorial stone at Westminster's Abbey. On Blake's lieutenancy, see "John Blake," Gibbesmuseum.org.

Personal Secretary, a post from which he coordinated the Republican Society's and the State Government's pro-French policies.²⁷

Like Drayton, Lieutenant John Blake fully participated in the Revolutionary War. Alongside French officers like Army Engineer Pierre L'Enfant, he participated in the defense of Charleston in May 1780, after which the British imprisoned him. British authorities allowed him and his father to provide food to other POWS, which alleviated their hunger and other sufferings, and for which Charleston people would consider him a hero. His portrait also reveals his martial vigor and international republican connections. It is exhibited at Charleston's Gibbes Art Museum, which also displays paintings of Jeremiah Theus, the Huguenot Swiss father of Simeon Theus, Blake's administrative colleague in the Republican Society.²⁸ It was painted by Henry Benbridge, an artist who traveled to Corsica to paint Pasquale Paoli, President of the Corsican Republic (1755-1769). Paoli's 1755 Corsican Constitution was the first republican constitution of modern times. Voltaire and Rousseau praised it for its enlightenment principles, including its unprecedented female franchise. The American Founding Fathers also praised and analyzed, as a possible republican model, Paoli's Constitution. Perhaps in his honor, Jefferson named his plantation after Paoli's village of Monticello. Blake's grave lies at Charleston's Magnolia Cemetery, among other

²⁷ Link, "Democratic-Republican Societies," p. 263.

²⁸ 'Simeon Theus,' Frickarchives.org; Gibbesmuseum.org. The museum is named after Anne Gibbes, Governor Gibbes' granddaughter and Lieutenant-Governor Ladson's daughter. Ladson, a Republican Society member, is the European Union Commission President Dr. Ursula van der Leyen's direct ancestor. See "Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice," 13 July 1793, Republican Papers, PBL and the *Columbian Herald*, 7/9/1793.

American Revolutionary War veterans and members of the Republican Society.²⁹ Like Drayton and Blake at the apex of the Republican Society, all other administrators' ancestry and curricula vitae displayed powerful and elite ancestry and international republican background. Colonel William Tate held the position of the Society's Secretary. A wealthy Irish-South Carolinian planter and industrialist, he owned land in the Lowcountry and the backcountry's largest iron mines. His assistant secretary was Lieutenant James Kennedy, an Irish-American planter and friend of U.S. Senator Butler. The Huguenot Swiss planter Major Simeon Theus held the post of Treasurer. His portrait, exhibited at the National Gallery of Art, was painted by the famed American painter Samuel Morse, the pro-French Revolution inventor of the Morse Code.³⁰

Similarly to these planters in the Society's top administration, those in the Committee of Correspondence and the Standing Committee displayed elite ancestry and international republican background. In the Committee of Correspondence, Captain Dominick A. Hall, Senator Butler's correspondent, was an attorney-at-law; Captain George Warren Cross, a merchant, was the brother-in-law of Peter Trezevant, a Society member. Trezevant had become one of the United States and Britain's wealthiest merchants through his trade with Britain. His influence was also revealed when the United States Supreme Court reviewed one of his legal cases; Captain John Markland was the publisher of the Republican Society's founding declaration and other addresses. He also printed the 4th of July Cincinnati orations of the Pinckney brothers and the

²⁹ Benbridge also painted Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. See "Blake," Findagrave.com. After the American Revolutionary War, Blake became a General Assembly member and the Bank of Charleston's first president. 'Simeon Theus' at Frickarchives.org.

³⁰ 'Simeon Theus.' Frickarchives.org.

pamphlet of Alexander Moultrie, the State Governor's brother, a Society's member and attorney of the pro-French Revolution defendants of the 1793-1794 prosecutions discussed above.³¹ The Committee of Correspondence included other eminent planters. Francis Huger, one of the five Huger brothers, heroes of the Revolutionary War, was a scion of one of the most influential and celebrated planter families. As discussed in Chapter One, the Huger family had come to the colony in 1685, only fifteen years after its founding. Huger's brother, Daniel, employed and paid the pastors of the Huguenot church. Two brothers of Francis, Isaac and John, were, respectively, South Carolina federal marshal and Charleston's mayor. Francis Huger's fourth brother, Benjamin, had hosted Lafayette at the family plantation after the nineteen-year-old had landed there in 1777. Francis's mother and sisters originated the plan for Lafayette's deliverance from Austrian prison in 1794, undertaken by Francis' nephew, Francis K. Huger, who married Elizabeth Pinckney, the American ambassador to Britain's daughter.³²

The Standing Committee included the planters, Captains Thomas B. Bowen and Simon McIntosh. Bowen was one of Charleston's three publishers, alongside Peter Freneau and his Republican Society colleague, John Markland. He published books, gazettes, and planters' pamphlets.³³ Simon McIntosh was Revolutionary War hero General McIntosh's son. The general, who

³¹ Findagrave.com and email correspondence with Trezevant's descendant, Robert Jallenaga to Benoit Leridon, 09/12/2020, Findagrave.com.

³² Elizabeth Huger, *Statement of the Attempted Rescue of Lafayette from "Olmutz,"* (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans, and Cogswell, 1881).

³³ See the advice of Pierce Butler to Peter Freneau on political strategies he must use in his Gazette of South Carolina: Pierce Butler to Peter Freneau, 21/12/1794, PBL, SCL. See also the letter of Freneau to Jefferson about his help in the presidential election campaign of 1800 in South Carolina, Freneau to Thomas Jefferson, 2/12/1800, founders.archives.gov.

introduced himself as a “planter of Charleston,” killed the Signatory of the Declaration of Independence, Button Gwinnett, in a duel. Simon joined a French privateer in 1793; his capture by the British greatly unnerved his father, who requested Mangourit’s help to gain his freedom.³⁴ It also consisted of Captain Charles Crowley, a hero in the defense of Charleston in 1776 under General Moultrie; therefore, alongside four other Navy captains, he was offered the honor of welcoming George Washington at Charleston’s harbor in May 1791. During his visit, the President gave him his miniature portrait in honor of his “warm personal friendship;” an oil painting showing both men’s portraits is also exhibited at the Gibbes Museum of Art. Crowley held membership of the Hibernian Society alongside South Carolina Chief Justice Aedanus Burke, US Senator Pierce Butler, and O’Brien Smith. He was interred at Charleston’s oldest Catholic cemetery, Saint Mary of the Annunciation, where Commodore John Cassin is buried.³⁵ The Standing Committee also included the Irish Presbyterians and Navy Captains Dominick Geoghegan and William Cunnington, Justice of the Peace, who had also been heroes of the 1776 defense of Charleston and welcomed Washington in 1791. They also aided the French Navy in early 1794.³⁶ Irish planter and U.S. Congressman (1789-1800) O’Brien Smith was also part of this committee. Pierce Butler’s very wealthy friend, he, alongside Washington’s cousin William Washington and George Kershaw, was honored to welcome the President for an overnight stay at his plantation during the 1791 visit.³⁷

³⁴ In 1800, O’Brien Smith, a colleague in the Standing Committee, would recommend him to Madison for the Federal Commissioner of Bankruptcy post.

³⁵ Gibbesmuseum.org. Robert Mills, “George Washington’s Southern Visit of 1791,” Robert Mills Papers, South Carolina Historical Society. John C. Meleny, *The Public Life of Aedanus Burke* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, for the Hibernian Society, 1989), pp. 31, 109, 205. “[May 1791],” FO. Findagrave.com.

³⁶ Jackson, *Privateers*, p. 22 and State Gazette 9/8/93.

³⁷ [May 1791],” FO; Findagrave.com.

This analysis of the Republican Society administration reveals a different picture than those of historians. It shows their elite status and international republican background. Their number and administrative positions also contradict the theory that Charleston's planters formed a tiny group because, as a whole, the elite was uniquely conservative. However, it shows that Charleston's elite was at least as international republican as those of other states. Furthermore, it reveals the strong presence of Irish South Carolinians. The fact that Ireland, their native or ancestral land, was also contemporaneously fighting for its liberty must have played a role in their commitment to international republicanism, as seen previously in the case of Butler and the Rutledge family. Moreover, the extensive presence of Revolutionary War veterans demonstrates a strong remembrance of the war. It suggests that martial values and cooperation with French international republicans must have also played a role in these planters' participation in an organization meant to advance republicanism and repay France for its past military assistance.

General Membership

Even if all non-administrative members of the Republican Society had come from artisan and working classes, the fact that planters controlled the society would have still been significant. They referred to themselves as the policy-makers in all their declarations, addresses, and letters. Non-administrative members are never referred to.³⁸ This reflected the deference of their

³⁸ The list of general, non-administrative members, include first and last names, showing they were no women. There were mixed-race members, as we shall see, but most unlikely enslaved Africans.

“natural superiors” by the working and middling classes that still existed in early-1790s South Carolina. According to Thomas and Ramsay, this deference was displayed because elite society gave its “tone” to the other classes of the state, who followed their leaders politically.³⁹ The writings of planters attacking the Neutrality Proclamation or reminiscing on the American Revolutionary War discussed planters’ views and experiences, not those of non-planters. For example, both *A Citizen of Charleston* and William Moultrie used expressions showing they accepted the leadership of South Carolina planters when they mentioned “most respectable citizens” and “most respectable planters.” Similarly, Charles Fraser, David Ramsey, and Aedanus Burke emphasize the deference of the artisan/small farmer and middling classes for South Carolina planters when discussing mobilization against Britain during the American Revolution or Charleston artisans’ positive reactions to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.⁴⁰ The artisan and middling class political ferment, which Gary B. Nash discusses for the northern urban centers of the American Revolution, took place in an urban, proto-industrial, and proto-capitalist context, which was very different from South Carolina Lowcountry’s plantation society. Even the 1767-1769 Regulator Movement of the South Carolina backcountry had been led, with the “sympathy” of Lowcountry planters, by frontier landowners against the British government.⁴¹

³⁹ Thomas, p. 42, Ramsay, p. 67. Ramsay interestingly suggests that the 1787 constitution was accepted by Charleston’s artisan people out of their deference to the planter class.

⁴⁰ For deference in America in late Eighteenth-century, see Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York, 1976), pp. 52-53, 286; David Hawke, *In the Middle of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 187, 187n, 422, and J.G.A. Pocock, “The Classical Theory of Deference,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 81 (1978): 516-523.

⁴¹ Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. P., 1979); Rachel N. Klein, “Ordering the Backcountry: The South Carolina Regulation,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 661-680.

Contrary to what modern historiography argues, the Republican Society of South Carolina was dominated administratively by planters and principally composed of planters among its general membership. Far from proportionally reflecting Charleston society as argued by some modern historians, the society's membership was primarily an intersecting group of planters, merchants, attorneys, and federal and state government officials.⁴² Of the 108 general members of the Republican Society, fifty-five consisted of elite members, thirty-six of uncertain status, and only seventeen were middling-class or artisans. Therefore, the society's general membership mainly consisted of gentlemen while only one-sixth of artisans. The fifty-five gentlemen consisted of twenty planters, sixteen merchants, ten attorneys, eight government officials (four state and four federal), two publishers, who edited two of the three Charleston's Democratic-Republican gazettes, and two physicians.⁴³

The librarian of the South Carolina Library Society was logically a gentleman as this library was the South Carolina equal of Pennsylvania planter Benjamin Franklin's Library of Philadelphia. A wealthy cabinet maker, whose house became a museum, he might also have attained elite status by "adoption," like Alexander Hamilton, who became a gentleman through his merits, presidential favor, and marriage but only came from a middling-class family background.⁴⁴ Therefore, the South Carolina Republican Society was not an artisan and middling class society, nor represented in equal proportions the class structure of Charleston. On the contrary, it was

⁴² Klein incorrectly argues that representation in the Republican Society reflected proportionally Charleston's demographics. Klein, *Unification*, pp. 204-205.

⁴³ The number add up to more than fifty-five because some planters could also be lawyers and state/federal officials.

⁴⁴ The exact proportions: 52% gentlemen, 33% unclear status, 15% middling and artisan.

mainly an elite society of planters, with a small minority of artisans, merchants, and middling classes. It included planters of various professions, such as state and federal officials and attorneys.

The Republican Society of South Carolina also included many gentlemen, who formed its most numerous and vital group. Gentlemen dominated both in number and power the society's administration, as we saw above, as well as the general membership. They formed the highest elite strata of Lowcountry society, sharing the same social status as other famous planters outside the Republican Society, such as the Federalist planters Ralph Izard, William Loughton Smith, and Jacob Read. Therefore, planters of the Republican Society of South Carolina prove that support for international republicanism and the French Revolution was not linked to social status. As described above, the Society's president, Stephen Drayton, was a scion of the most ancient and powerful planter family. Likewise, planters such as Benjamin Legaré, Jacob de Veaux Jr., Daniel Horry, and Thomas Lehré came from the oldest and most prominent families. They owned large plantations worked by dozens or scores of enslaved people.⁴⁵ The planters in the society also included William Moultrie Jr. and Alexander Moultrie, the respective son and brother of Governor Moultrie. For their part, William Tate and O'Brien Smith were among the wealthiest planters in the state. Smith owned 164 enslaved people. James Ladson Sr. is another significant example: A childhood friend of the American ambassador to Britain, Thomas Pinckney, a friend

⁴⁵ J. de Veaux Jr., sometimes spelled Deveaux, owned a plantation near Pierce Butler's, his friend, political representative, and business associate. His particle "de" makes a scion of the French aristocracy. Other planters with old and powerful ancestry include P. M. and Isaac Neufville, Francis Huger Jr., and William Mayrant.

of Lafayette, and a South Carolina Lieutenant-Governor, he owned 142 enslaved people.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as discussed previously, the society included planters who descended from the English aristocracy, such as John Blake and Thomas Tudor Tucker.⁴⁷

Some of the merchants of the Republican Society were also gentlemen. Compared to the twenty planters of the society, their relatively small number of ten might be explained by the fact that most Charleston's trade was still managed in the early 1790s by British merchants. Peter Trezevant was the most important and influential among the society's merchants. He arranged his daughter's marriage with Britain's wealthiest man, John Farquhar.⁴⁸ Trezevant's brother-in-law was John Cross, another merchant in the Society.⁴⁹ P. M. and Isaac Neufville, friends and factors of Butler, also came from eminent merchant families. Huguenots from Dutch families, they traded with Amsterdam and Britain. Their family had also secured loans from the Dutch government during the American Revolution.

Most South Carolina merchants did their commerce with Britain. Some planters also exported to Le Havre, France. However, a clear association between support for the French Revolution and exports to France in a planter society that overwhelmingly exported to Britain does not seem to exist. For example, Ralph Izard, leader of the anti-French faction, had business interests in France,

⁴⁶ For Ladson's friendship with Lafayette: James Ladson to Thomas Pinckney, 7/9/1794, Pinckney Family Papers, RDL-UVA.

⁴⁷ In December 1800, Thomas T. Tucker was appointed by Jefferson Treasurer of the United States, a position he held for twenty-six years, a historical record.

⁴⁸ Findagrave.com.

⁴⁹ Findagrave.com.

while Butler, leader of the pro-French planters, exclusively exported his goods to Britain. Perhaps the presence of merchants in the Republican Society reflected their wish to integrate into the planter society. Shut out of planters' artistic, sports, and intellectual societies such as the respective societies of Saint Cecilia, the Jockey Club, and the Ugly Club, merchants might have seen the common pro-French ideology of the Republican society as a way to frequent planters socially, away from business transactions, and ingratiate themselves to them.⁵⁰ Perhaps merchants dealing with exports wished to know French ship captains in the Republican Society who could bring important news about sea routes and positions of the British navy.⁵¹

The Republican Society also consisted of planter-lawyers. They included Alexander Moultrie, who, as mentioned earlier, was the State Governor's brother and the longest-serving Attorney-General in South Carolina history. Although he was heavily involved in pro-French revolutionary plans, he escaped prosecution, likely because of his powerful brother, who was deeply involved in helping French Revolutionary plans but likely untouchable through his status as a war hero.⁵² Another eminent lawyer was Thomas Lee, who married a female Franco-American couple, as discussed in Chapter Three. Another lawyer, Thomas Hall, was a senior judge in South Carolina.⁵³

⁵⁰ Although the Jockey club was closed to non-planters, horse races, which lasted for a week, were opened to all and so popular that schools were closed and everyone attended, even "clergymen and physicians." At the end of the week of races, a ball was organized. Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 62.

⁵¹ In South Carolina's pre-capitalist society, merchants (factors) dealt not only with planters' exports but also with all their financial transactions at a time "before the days of banks," when "all credits were annual and dependent on crops; merchants supplied planters with "groceries and articles throughout the year." Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 63.

⁵² Adelson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 1171-172.

⁵³ Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies*, p. 263.

The Republican Society also included eight government officials, four employed by the Federal government and four by the State government. This reveals the interaction between the State of South Carolina and the Republican Society in their support for the French Revolution. It also shows that the Republican Society's Federal government members, as discussed in Federal Marshall Huger's case, fought the Neutrality Proclamation inside the Society. This identification of state officials as members of the Republican Society challenges the idea that the state government was Federalist in the 1790s. It also underlines the planters' lack of respect for Washington as the American president had appointed the Society's Federal government officials.

The Society's Federal government officials were connected with Charleston's harbor. This fact made them even more guilty concerning the Federal government and the Neutrality Proclamation, as Charleston harbor formed the most conspicuous location of privateer activity. Furthermore, the Federal officials were responsible for respecting and enforcing the Neutrality Proclamation. As we saw above, in the early 1790s, Alexander Hamilton wrote a comminatory letter criticizing a South Carolina federal official for not enforcing neutrality.⁵⁴ In addition to Federal Clerk Thomas Lee, Republican Society's Federal officials included Navy Captain Jacob Milligan, Charleston's Harbor Master. A hero at the 1776 Battle of Fort Sullivan, he became a Society of the Cincinnati founding member in 1783. He was appointed Harbor Master by President Washington on the recommendation of US Senator Pierce Butler.⁵⁵ For his part, Edward

⁵⁴ Alexander Hamilton to Isaac Bee Homes, 2/6/1794, FO.

⁵⁵ Papers of the South Carolina Society of the Cincinnati, the American Revolution Institute, Society of the Cincinnati, Washington DC. Also, Pierce Butler to George Washington, 8/8/1791, PBL, SC.

Weyman, also appointed upon Butler's recommendation, was Federal Surveyor and Inspector of Charleston's Harbor Customs (1793-1813). In this regard, Weyman should have been the first to alert Federal authorities regarding French privateering and should have impounded them as federal officials did in Philadelphia.⁵⁶ In 1801, Aedanus Burke, in a letter to James Madison, would praised Weyman as "a man of Republican Principle who never quitted the [Republican] ground."⁵⁷

Regarding Republican Society's South Carolina government officials, James Ladson Sr. is the most conspicuous in his position of lieutenant governor. Other notable officials include Gilliam Aertson, City Sheriff, and William Cunningham, Justice of the Peace.⁵⁸ Cunningham violated neutrality not only as a Republican Society member but also as Commander of Charleston's troops. In August 1793, the Republican Society became furious when Charleston's Federal authorities did not disarm the British sloop-of-war, *Advice*, which had arrived from Jamaica. It took matters into its own hands, and "under Captain Cunningham's troops and a battalion artillery in their uniforms" boarded the ship and disarmed it.⁵⁹

The membership of these state and federal officials in the Republican Society and their disregard for Federal government policies reveal the outstanding degree of support for the French

⁵⁶ Link, "Democratic-Republican Societies."

⁵⁷ Aedanus Burke to James Madison, 13/9/1801, FO.

⁵⁸ "Gilliam Aertson," and "William Cunningham" in Findagrave.com.

⁵⁹ State Gazette, August 9th, 1793, cited by Jackson, p. 22. Captain Cunningham was a hero of the Battle of Fort Sullivan and was one of the ten navy captains to welcome Washington to Charleston in 1791.

Revolution among South Carolina planters. Had most planters not supported the French Revolution, these Federal and State officials, out of fear of prosecution or dismissal, would not have violated their duties. And, even if reluctantly, they would have impounded French corsairs and prosecuted French-commissioned captains, as their counterparts did in the other American states. South Carolina's Federal and State officials must have been aware of the French cause's popularity among international republicans in the South Carolina government and other administrative positions. They must have rationalized that, even if indicted, their prosecutions would collapse since juries would likely find them innocent, as happened in all the prosecutions of neutrality violations that had already taken place. Indeed, no violator of the Neutrality Proclamation was ever found guilty by a jury in 1790s America.

The Republican Society also included nineteen South Carolina Society of Cincinnati founding members. The South Carolina Cincinnati formed a branch of the National Society of Cincinnati, established in 1783 to honor and assist the veterans of the American Revolutionary War. Members of South Carolina Cincinnati, such as its president and vice-president, William Moultrie and Isaac Huger, and the founders of Charleston's Republican Society, also wished to maintain and strengthen Franco-South Carolina and Franco-American friendship. The analysis of the intersection between the Republican Society and the Society of the Cincinnati challenges modern historiography, which unanimously describes the Cincinnati and the South Carolina government as conservative. The control by the Cincinnati of the Republican Society's and the State government's administrations sheds new light on South Carolina's History: It reveals strong pro-

French Revolution international republicanism among the South Carolina Cincinnati, the government of William Moultrie, and South Carolina planters.

The connection between the Republican Society and Cincinnati was likely higher than the sources reveal, as only the founding Cincinnati members' list survives. James Haw has noted that Charleston's artillery battalion was dominant in the Republican Society.⁶⁰ However, Navy officers were also well-represented in the society. They were likely admitted after the foundation of the Cincinnati in 1783. as would have been the following five navy captains: Thomas Connolly, John Conyers Jr., Charles Crowley, John Dickenson, and Philip Moore.⁶¹ These captains had attained hero status after the Battle of Sullivan in June 1776. They had eminently contributed to this victory, saving Charleston from British occupation. Alongside a few veteran heroes like Butler, William Moultrie, and Cotesworth Pinckney, they were honored to welcome Washington in Charleston during his presidential visit of May 1791.⁶² Captain Stephen Drayton and General Lachlan McIntosh were the two Republican Society's most prominent Cincinnati members and, likely, the two who best illustrated the international republican interaction between the Cincinnati and the Republican Societies. In December 1792, Governor Moultrie appointed him his Personal Secretary. In his dual role as President of the Republican Society and the Governor's Personal Secretary of the governor, Drayton assisted the French plan to create a republic in East Florida. As discussed in Chapter Three, due to this Neutrality Proclamation violation, the State

⁶⁰ James Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge of South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), p. 241.

⁶¹ Moore, *The Fabric of Liberty*, p. 16.

⁶² Mills, "George Washington's Southern Visit," p. 67.

General Assembly indicted him. After the prosecution collapsed due to the South Carolina government officials' refusal to testify, he traveled to Paris and joined the French Revolutionary Army.⁶³

General Lachlan McIntosh was one of the three founders of the National Society of the Cincinnati, along with General Washington and Alexander Hamilton. In his youth, he had tried to join the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion to fight the British monarchy. During the American Revolutionary War, he fought alongside French international republicans such as Lafayette at Valley Forge and Casimir Pulaski at the Siege of Savannah. In 1793, violating the Neutrality Proclamation, he enrolled his son Simon, a Republican and Cincinnati member, for service in the French Navy.⁶⁴ McIntosh requested that Simon start his service from the lowest rank, suggesting strong moral ethics. His commitment to the French Revolution was also seen in his awareness of the danger his son ran as part of the American crew in the French navy at war with Britain could face. Fearing that, after his capture by the British Navy, Simon could be hanged, an occasional punishment for Americans joining French ships, he implored Charleston's consul, Mangourit, to help free him.⁶⁵

The Republican Society's interface with the Cincinnati is also demonstrated in the following way: Not only all the first eight members, but two-thirds of the twenty-two members, cited first-of-

⁶³ Eugene P. Link, p. 277.

⁶⁴ Lachlan McIntosh to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 25/12/1793 in R. K. Murdoch (ed.), "Correspondence of French Consuls in Charleston, South Carolina, 1793-1797," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 74., no. 1 (January 1973).

⁶⁵ Lachlan McIntosh to Michel-Ange Bernard Mangourit, 05/07/1794, in Murdoch (ed.), "Correspondence."

place at the top of the Founding Members” list, belonged to the Cincinnati. Additionally, the entire top administration, namely, the President, Captain Drayton, the Secretary, Captain Tate, the Assistant Secretary, Lieutenant Blake, the Treasurer, Captain Theus, and the Assistant Treasurer, Samuel Beekman, were Cincinnati Founding Members.⁶⁶ This list of top administrators reveals that the Republican Society was a Cincinnati offshoot. Therefore, it shows that South Carolina Cincinnati was not conservative and anti-French Revolution as recent historians, such as Robert Alderson Jr. and Alexander Moore, and Aedanus Burke in 1784, contended.⁶⁷ At least in South Carolina, a significant group of the Society of the Cincinnati adhered to Jeffersonianism and displayed pro-French Revolution sentiments. Other eminent Cincinnati members of the Republican Society included Alexander and William Moultrie Jr., respectively brother and son of the Founder and President of the South Carolina Cincinnati and South Carolina Governor, William Moultrie.

In addition, Major Thomas Bowen, Captain Thomas Hall, Captain John Markland, and Captain St. Marie Levacher belonged to both the Society of the Cincinnati Standing Committee and the Republican Society’s Standing and Correspondence Committees. U.S. Surgeon David Ramsay, also of the Cincinnati Standing Committee, who gave the 4th of July 1795 Cincinnati pro-French oration, was not a member of the Republican society. Still, his brother, Joseph Hall Ramsay, was

⁶⁶ For the names and official positions of planters who were both Cincinnati members and Republican Society members, see Minutes of the South Carolina State Society of the Cincinnati, American Revolution Institute, Society of the Cincinnati, Washington D.C., Republican Society Papers, Boston Public Library, Alderson, *This Bright Era*, Appendix A, p. 184, Clarkson Hamilton Palmer, *The Threads of Liberty: the Propositi of the Society of the Cincinnati* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), and Alexander Moore, *The Fabric of Society*, p. 33.

⁶⁷ Hünneimörder, *The Society of the Cincinnati*, Moats, *Navigating Neutrality*, Cassius [Aedanus Burke], *Considerations on the Order or Society of the Cincinnati* (Charleston: W. P. Young, 1783).

in the society's general membership. Furthermore, one of the two delegates sent to the Cincinnati National Convention in Philadelphia in 1793 was Simeon Theus, the Republican Society's Treasurer.⁶⁸ The interaction between the Republican and the Cincinnati Societies is also evidenced in the Fourth of July Independence Day Orations. Three Republican Society members, all Cincinnati members, were selected by the South Carolina State Society of the Cincinnati to give these orations: Captain Stephen Drayton in 1792, Captain William Tate in 1793, and Army Surgeon Thomas T. Tucker in 1795.⁶⁹

The Cincinnati's extensive representation in the Republican Society is logical. The Society's motto, "Esto Perpetuo," or, in English, "to be perpetual," reveals the desire to perpetuate the Franco-American Alliance, one of the Society's founding charter's goals. As seen in Chapters Two and Three, South Carolina Cincinnati reminded their audience of the Franco-American amity and alliance during the American Revolutionary War and in contemporary times. In February 1794, Aedanus Burke told French Ambassador, Edmond Genet, that veterans formed the vanguard of the state's support for France: It had "the veneration and affection of that great body of men who, in our great conflict for overturning Royalty, have on many honorable and hard trials, given good proof how warm was their love for Republican Liberty."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ South Carolina State Society in Society of the Cincinnati Papers, The American Revolution Institute. Bryce Metcalf, *Original Members, and Other Officers Eligible to the Society of the Cincinnati, 1783-1938: With the Institution, Rules, and Lists of the Officers of the General and State Societies* (Strasburg, VA: Shenandoah Publishers, 1938).

⁶⁹ Gibbesmuseum.com. See also C. O. Paulin, *The Naval Administration of the Southern States during the Revolution*, 1902. A fourth Cincinnati member of the Republican Society, Alexander Moultrie, gave the 4th of July address in 1824. Drayton's and Tate's addresses are lost, but that of Tucker is in *Early American Imprints* and discussed in Chapter 5.

⁷⁰ Burke to Genet, 16/2/1794, Genet papers, LOC.

The close relationship between Cincinnati and the Republican Society might also be interpreted differently. The Republican Society, established by Cincinnati members in July 1793 as a response to the Neutrality Proclamation, might have derived from the notion that pro-French members of the Cincinnati needed a new institution that would allow them to express their support for France and violate neutrality freely. This would suggest that the State Society of Cincinnati was not overwhelmingly pro-French or, at the minimum, did not wish to violate the policies of the American President, who was also the President of the National Cincinnati. Indeed, it must be remembered that Washington constituted a target of the Republican Society. Therefore, for all their Francophilia, some Cincinnati members likely viewed attacking their President as a red line not to be crossed. They were Washington's former officers who had revered their former Commander-in-Chief. But the jury is open on this question as the South Carolina Cincinnati had also elected as their respective President and vice-president, William Moultrie and Isaac Huger, both violating neutrality or doing nothing to enforce it.

The Republican Society's inclusion of mixed-race members (free people of Black and white descent) of the Brown Fellowship Society also indicates the openness of some South Carolina planters and further challenges their label as archconservatives.⁷¹ For example, both Emmanuel

⁷¹ Mixed-race people were usually illegitimate children of planters and enslaved women who were emancipated, usually at the death of the planters. Interestingly, these people changed race upon their emancipation, as a concept of mixed race people did not exist for the enslaved. All enslaved were black as legally, any child of an enslaved woman was defined as black. Therefore, an enslaved black person changed race and became a mixed-race person (black and white) upon emancipation.

Pinciel and J. Reid were members of both societies. The Brown Fellowship Society was founded in 1790 by a Republican Society member, George Bampfield, and by planters who attended St. Philip's Episcopalian Church, an international republican planters' venue, along with St. Michael's Episcopalian Church. The Brown Fellowship Society was created to assist the mixed race people in need and help them be buried in their own cemeteries.⁷² The Society also included a non-Christian: The Jewish planter Abraham Sasportas, who supplied weapons to French privateers and whose nephew, Isaac, would be hanged by British authorities, in 1798, for planning to instigate a slave revolt in Jamaica.⁷³ Alongside Sasportas, John H. Mitchell, a Master General during the war and a Cincinnati, might have been a member of the Brown Fellowship Society, although he was a white planter. Mitchell was the son of Moses Mitchell, Governor Charles Pinckney's planter friend and neighbor. He studied Classics and Law in England as a protégé of Pierce Butler's friend, John J. Pringle. In England in the early 1790s, he befriended the pro-French Revolution radical Dr. Joseph Priestly. In 1801, President Jefferson refused Mitchell's candidacy for the United States Mint directorship, considering him as excessively radical.⁷⁴

The interesting, but unexpected, Republican Society's welcome of mixed-race and Jewish people, and the fact that white members joined a mixed-race society, seems paradoxical in South Carolina's color-conscious culture. It may reflect French discussions of including mixed-race people from Saint Domingue in the French National Assembly. This issue was pressed by *Les Amis*

⁷² Not to be confused with the caritative institution, the Fellowship Society of Charleston.

⁷³ Mangourit to Genet, 11/1/1794, AAE CC; Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 107. Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 107.

⁷⁴ Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies*, pp. 264-265. Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 164, suggests that Mitchell may have been a Brown Fellowship Society member. See also Scottishrites.com.

des Noirs members, mostly Girondins, who, as we have seen, interacted with the Republican Society in the person of the French consul in Charleston.⁷⁵ Perhaps the French Revolution's occasional better treatment of free blacks and mixed-race people in France and Saint Domingue influenced some pro-French Revolution planters more amenable to frequent and associate with mixed-race people or allowed them freedom which they would not have given non-whites otherwise. For example, the Republican Society encouraged enslaved Black people to denounce their Federalist enslavers. As mentioned above, Freneau also tolerated his enslaved employees working at his printing press to read news of the French Revolution discussed in his gazettes.⁷⁶

Furthermore, the joining by white planters of the mixed-race Brown Fellowship Society may indicate an attempt at building bridges between ethnicities and social classes in institutions that shared the same values, in this instance, freedom and pro-French international republicanism, as we saw in the case of the usually ostracized merchants joining the elite Republican Society and be welcomed in it by pro-French planters. It perhaps also indicates some unease about enslavement. As we saw in chapter one, members of slave-owning families, like the Laurens, Grimké, and Ramsay, questioned enslavement. In the Republican Society, Alexander Moultrie berated the plight of "the poor [enslaved] negroes," and the society also appealed to the enslaved to denounce Federalist planters guilty of "undemocratic intrigues."⁷⁷ Pro-French, anti-British, and hateful sentiments towards American Federalists had led Jefferson to affirm that he

⁷⁵Carl Ludwig Lokke, "Malouet and the Mulatto Question in 1793," *The Journal of Black History*, vol. 24, no. 4 (October 1938), pp. 381-389.

⁷⁶Mangourit to Genet, 5/9/1793. Genet Papers, LOC.

⁷⁷Mangourit to Genet, 5/9/1793. Genet Papers, LOC.

preferred that the world be destroyed rather than the French Revolution fail. Jeffersonians of the Republican Society were, therefore, less radical than him in making the step of greater tolerance to non-whites in their common aims at supporting the French Revolution and defeating Federalism in the United States. Anti-British and pro-French sentiments overcoming racial prejudice, planter anxiety, and full support of the plantation system, were also revealed when, as we saw in Chapter Two, Stephen Drayton, the Republican Society's president, and William Tate, its secretary, had asked Governor Moultrie and Charleston's French consul, Mangourit, to let them lead an expedition intended to fight on the side of the French and ex-enslaved republican forces against the pro-British royalist French planters' and the British attempt to (re-)conquer St. Domingue and restore its plantation system. Indeed, just like Jefferson had claimed that he was ready to see the world, therefore, his own plantation, destroyed for the sake of the French Revolution, some very radical republicans in the Republican Society, seemed to have been prepared to put their planter interest and anxiety at stake in behalf of pro-French sentiment and international republicanism: Even in the late 1790s, both men abandoned South Carolina's plantation world and risked their lives by joining French forces in Europe, Tate famous for the unparalleled feat of having been the last foreign commander to undertake an invasion of Britain, as we will see in Chapter five.

In the late Eighteenth-century, Charleston was the most ethnically diverse city in the United States.⁷⁸ The leading national groups, besides the Anglo-Americans, consisted of the French, the

⁷⁸ Fraser, *Reminiscences*, p. 76; David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, The South Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World Series (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), pp. 12-17.

Irish, and the Scottish. Each group's planters adhered to the societies of their national origin: the Anglo-Americans interacted in St. George's Society, the French in the Huguenot Church and the French Patriotic Society, the Irish in the Hibernian Society, and the Scots in St. Andrew's Society. As we saw in Chapter Two regarding the French Huguenots and Irish South Carolinians, French Revolution supporters identified with their country of national origin.⁷⁹ In the 1790s, many Irish nationals in South Carolina, as many of their peers in Ireland, welcomed the French Revolution. This welcome was built on centuries of Irish desire for reform in Ireland and extensive participation in the American Revolutionary War. Since the 12th century Anglo-Norman invasion, Irish people had reeled under oppression and injustice. By 1789, they had tried to reform, or overthrow, English Rule in eight different rebellions. South Carolina Irish planters who had suffered from British oppression in Ireland included Aedanus Burke, when, as mentioned above, he had been forced to attend the French university of St. Omer since Irish universities were closed to Catholics. Such oppression caused many Irish planters view the American and French Revolutions as inspirations for their revolutionary movement.⁸⁰

Indeed, Irish in French contingents and Irish-Americans, born in Ireland and second-generation, took a leading role in revolutionary activities during the American Revolutionary War. For example, the Irish native John Rutledge Sr. became South Carolina President in March 1775. He

⁷⁹ Moore, *Fabric of Liberty*, p. 99, names three Hibernian Society members: O'Brien Smith, Pierce Butler, and Aedanus Burke, who incidentally were all born in Ireland. Burke was buried on the society's grounds.

⁸⁰ Burke went to the University of St.-Omer in France. James Donnelly, "Propagating the Cause of United Irishmen," *Studies: an Irish Quarterly Review*, 69 (273): 5-28, 8; Jonathan Burdon, *A History of Ireland in 250 episodes*, (Dublin: Gill and McMillan), pp. 286-288.

organized the victorious battle of Sullivan Island in June 1776 along with Moultrie. During the Battle of Savannah (1779), Admiral d’Estaing’s Irish Battalion fought alongside South Carolina planters. Butler’s friend and a Republican Society member, Irish American Lieutenant John Mayrant, served under Jean-Paul Jones, the American Navy’s founder. Waiting at Brest harbor to sail against British ports, their ship was the first in American History to be saluted by the French navy.⁸¹ Richard Beresford and Pierce Butler, natives of Ireland, also exemplify native Irishmen who fought for the American cause. Beresford fought in the South Carolina First Regiment under General Isaac Huger. As South Carolina Adjutant-General Pierce Butler trained the state’s militia, the only surviving force after Charleston’s fall in 1780. The successful completion of his task immensely helped the eventual Patriots’ victory in the state. French Major-General de Kalb, who was killed in South Carolina at the Battle of Camden, explained this Irish participation in the war: “All the world is aware of the hatred cherished by the Irish against the English. France has had no more trusted soldiers who served her with [the] greatest zeal and efficiency.”⁸²

In the 1780s and 1790s, Irish Americans, who later supported the French Revolution, also impacted the South Carolina and American national scenes. The most crucial political pamphlet of early 1780s South Carolina and U.S. History, *Considerations on the Society or Order of Cincinnati* (1783), was written by Aedanus Burke. Irishmen Rutledge Sr. and Butler also formed half of the South Carolina delegation to the 1787 Constitutional convention. In May 1791, O’Brien Smith was one of two planters, the other being William Washington, the president’s cousin, to

⁸¹ Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, pp. 77-79; “John Mayrant,” Findagrave.com.

⁸² Quoted In Lyons, *Six International Volunteers*, p. 143.

host overnight at his plantation, George Washington, in May 1791. Similarly, Pierce Butler was one of two planters to be honored with a private dinner with President Washington.⁸³ By July 1793, during the Neutrality Proclamation debates and the Republican Society's establishment, South Carolina Irish nationals were in every position of power or central debating figures. Butler was a U.S. Senator, elected unanimously in December 1788 and quasi-unanimously in December 1792. John Rutledge Sr. was the South Carolina Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and Aedanus Burke was a South Carolina Supreme Court Justice. Former Lieutenant-Governor Richard Beresford, the deciding vote in the Confederation Congress for The Treaty of Paris and one of the wealthiest planters, wrote in 1793 the only pro-French Revolution pamphlet.⁸⁴

As we have seen with the evidence presented throughout the thesis, five of the most radical pro-French Revolution planters of America were Irish South Carolinians.⁸⁵ As mentioned earlier, throughout the 1790s, the leader of Jeffersonians in South Carolina and the U.S. Senate was Pierce Butler;⁸⁶ in 1795, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Rutledge affirmed he would rather Washington "die" than ratify the anti-French Revolution Jay Treaty;⁸⁷ in 1793-1794, Aedanus Burke publicly encouraged young South Carolina men to enlist into Europe's French armies;⁸⁸ in

⁸³ [May 1791], FO. The other gentleman was Governor Pinckney.

⁸⁴ Richard Beresford, *A Plea for Literature, Especially in Free States* (Charleston: Harrison and Bowen, 1793). He published Charleston's literary magazine, *The Vigil*, and composed Virgilian-style poems called the *Nugae Canorae*, translated as "melodious non-sense."

⁸⁵ Outside South Carolina, Philip Freneau and Benjamin Franklin Bache were in the same league.

⁸⁶ Butler and the Republican Society also tried to buy Amelia Island located between Georgia and Spanish Florida to safely allow recruitment for the French army and refurbishment of French privateers outside U.S. sovereign territory.

⁸⁷ Rutledge's precatory wish is in Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p. 249, and *South Carolina Gazette*, 17/7/1795.

⁸⁸ Aedanus Burke to John Loockock Cusack, 10/12/1794 and *Charleston Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 22/5/1795, which includes Burke's panegyric of the French Revolution and Cusack's enlisting in the French army; see also Meleny, *The Public Life of Aedanus Burke*, p. 215.

1797, Richard Beresford published the longest two, most radically scathing, and most thoughtful pro-French Revolution pamphlets; and, in the same year, William Tate, as a French Navy commander, led the last invasion of Britain in European History when he landed Franco-Irish troops in Wales to divert British forces away from Ireland, where Irish revolutionaries were making their final plans for the Irish Rebellion of 1798.⁸⁹ Moreover, two of these Irish planters demonstrated support for the Republican Society. In cooperation with it, Butler tried to buy Amelia Island on behalf of France. For his part, Burke strongly supported Ambassador Genet, whom Washington detested and blamed for the creation of the republican societies. Yet, Burke assiduously defended him, even after he was recalled by France on the U.S. government's request, and called Jefferson "half-republican" for his criticisms of the French ambassador.⁹⁰

In the Republican Society, three Irishmen need to be more significantly discussed. The first, James Kennedy, was a planter with land near the Ashley River, where the plantations of the most eminent planters were located. He was also a neighbor and friend of Pierce Butler and, as Sheriff of Charleston in 1787, was a correspondent of the influential planter F. W. Grimke. The second, John H. Mitchell, a Society of the Cincinnati member, served as a colonel during the American Revolutionary War. As the Orphanage of Charleston's manager, he took care of children of the military killed during the war and welcomed Washington to this caritative institution in May 1791. The third, William Tate, served as Captain during the Revolutionary War when pro-British Native

⁸⁹ Richard Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics* (Charleston: W.P. Young, May 1797) and *Aristocracy: The Bane of Liberty: Education its Remedy* (Charleston: W. P. Young, December 1797). Ahlstrom, "Captain and Chef-de-Brigade, William Tate," pp. 188-191.

⁹⁰ Meleny, *The Public Life of Aedanus Burke*, p. 215.

Americans killed his family. In 1793, Tate recruited for the French-commissioned “Legion of South Carolina,” which he was supposed to command after the start of military operations against East Florida. As discussed in Chapter Three, Tate was prosecuted for such action.⁹¹ In 1795, French authorities gave him command of troops sent to support the Irish Revolutionary Rising.⁹² It must also be noted that, in the 1790s, not a single Irish South Carolinian Lowcountry planter expressed support for the principles of Hamilton with regards to the French Revolution.

Alongside Irish nationals, other Republican Society members supported France. The Republican Society was suspected to be a product of French Consul Mangourit. The founding declaration’s immediate sending to him and his correspondence with Stephen Drayton, which account for twenty percent of the Society’s surviving letters, confirm this suspicion. Mangourit’s cooperation with, or influence on, the Republican Society members is also revealed by his affirmation to Genet: “I prepare the Republican Society to do what you desire.”⁹³ Furthermore, Stephen Drayton and Alexander Moultrie were extensively involved in helping French plans intended to conquer East Florida. They recruited for the expedition and supported Butler’s attempt at buying Amelia Island to give the French and their American supporters a safe extra-territorial haven outside the United States from which to launch the invasion.⁹⁴ Other Republican Society

⁹¹ In January 1794, the legion numbered 2,000 men. It was not disbanded despite the prosecutions. Tom Abernathy, *The South in the New Nation* (Lafayette, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), p. 50-52.

⁹² J. E. Thomas, *Britain’s Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797* (Gloucester: Tempus Publishing, 2017), p. 67; Christopher Tozzi, *Nationalizing France’s Army: Foreign, Black, and Jewish Troops in the French Military, 1715-1831* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), pp. 109–110; Christopher Tozzi, “Between Two Republics: American Military Volunteers in Revolutionary France,” *Journal of the Western Society for French History* (39), p. 21.

⁹³ My translation from French. Quote in Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 216, note 6.

⁹⁴ Link, “Democratic-Republican Societies,” p. 264.

members had connections with French revolutionaries in Charleston. For example, Attorney-at-Law Colonel Thomas Lee, Cincinnati, was in the city's French Patriotic Society member. He was the court clerk who celebrated the Franco-American wedding discussed above. Huguenot planters also constituted a significant component of the Republican Society. They included members from seven powerful families, including the Deveaux, Legaré, and Lehrs. This French connection is also evidenced by the fact that Jean-Paul Coste's correspondence is located in the Republican Society Papers.⁹⁵

Furthermore, the Republican Society included Frenchmen who were Revolutionary War veterans, such as Saint-Marie Levacher, Cincinnati. Other non-elite members of the Society were veterans who settled in Charleston after the war. In 1793, they became shipmasters of French privateers, for example, Captains Jean Bouteille and Henri Hervieux. They organized sumptuous banquets, which included golden cutlery, and at which Charleston's planter guests celebrated Franco-American amity and international republicanism. For example, Henri Hervieux, captain of *Le Vainqueur de la Bastille*, organized a dinner in February 1794. Its guest of honor was Gouverneur Moultrie, who offered toasts to a "Universal Republic" and to "President Robespierre." Other Charleston planters joined Moultrie in singing the radical revolutionary song "*Ça Ira*." Like Tate in 1797, Hervieux led a pro-Irish Revolution French expeditionary force in 1796.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Republican Society Papers, BPL.

⁹⁶ Editor's note, Cotesworth Pinckney to Thomas Pinckney, 12/8/1793 in Pinckney Family Papers, Rotunda Digital Library, University of Virginia. City Gazette, 2/13/1794, quoted by Wolfson., p. 79. At another banquet in Philadelphia, a French captain from Charleston, Jean-Baptiste-Francois Bompard, organized a banquet at which the

Conclusion

Chapter Four has offered more evidence of the extent of international republican and pro-French Revolution support amongst the elite of South Carolina. More than any other chapter, it has shown the significant range, number, and high level of pro-French planters' social and political status. It offers a new picture of the Republican Society: a society not primarily composed of, and not at all controlled by, middling and artisan members. It comprised the most important planters in South Carolina's social and political world. They formed the entire administration and the entire group of signatories of "worthy citizens," affixed below the Founding Declarations and the entire correspondence of the society. Therefore, the elite nature of the Republican Society, the prime instigator of pro-French Revolution support after the Neutrality Proclamation, reveals that the state elite extensively backed France. Furthermore, by showing the close relationship of the Republican Society to local Federal officials and the South Carolina government, the chapter not only revealed the American national government's weakness in its ability to control its federal officials but also explained how elite support for France, such as in privateering and plans to invade East Florida, could proceed uninterrupted despite the Neutrality Proclamation and the prosecutions of 1793-1794. Key members of the South Government and public officials in Charleston and its harbor, as members of the anti-Neutrality Proclamation and pro-French Revolution Republican Society, did not act against but instead let happen or assisted French

poet Philip Freneau, the Jefferson-protégé editor of the *National Gazette* and brother of Peter Freneau, South Carolina Secretary of State, recited French poems in French and sang in a chorus with other planters French revolutionary songs. Similar occurrences likely happened in the Charleston banquets organized by the French navy captain-planters of the Republican Society. See "Philip Freneau" at Gutenberg.com, p. 67.

revolutionary activities. Moreover, Chapter Four revealed a picture of the Society of Cincinnati in South Carolina that does not fit the historiographical description of the national Society and individual state Societies. Rather than conservative or even reactionary and keen to support American neutrality, the South Carolina Cincinnati in the Republican Society revealed themselves as pro-French Revolution citizens who were even more radical than Jefferson, who supported neutrality. Among these most radical planters, a few even seemed prepared to be ready to sacrifice the state's plantation system and their very lives in support of pro-French Revolution sentiments and international republicanism. The chapter also noted the strong presence of Irish-American and French revolutionaries inside the Republican Society, practically all veterans of the American Revolutionary War, and, in some cases, future leaders of pro-French revolutionary armies in Europe. Therefore, it placed the South Carolina elite in the continuum of the late Eighteenth-century's world revolutionary struggle.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN DID SUPPORT FOR THE FRENCH REVOLUTION END?

“[Revolutionary France], destructive of good government, makes Mankind, of all descriptions, unhappy. Carolina [might fall] victim to the Rights of Man, which [apply] to persons of all Colors. [But] a considerable number of my friends think very differently.”¹

“[S. Carolina] politicians have espoused the opinions & prejudices of the [national] opposition.”²

“I use all my power to make a peace with France and put you in the [President’s] Chair.”³

Historians consider 1794 the turning point regarding South Carolina’s elite support for the French Revolution.⁴ They argue that anxiety about repercussions in South Carolina of the Haitian Revolution, French abolitionism, and Jacobin Terror made the pro-French South Carolina elite turn away from the French Revolution as they judged it a menace to the political and social order of the state. Despite fully acknowledging the very deep anxiety of South Carolina planters, and in line with historians focusing their scholarship on the Haitian Revolution and the experience of southern enslaved people, Chapter Five challenges this theory as the chronology of French abolitionism and the Haitian Revolution simply does not match the decline of international republican planters’ support for Revolutionary France. Therefore, it argues that support for France did not decline in 1793/1794 for reasons of planter anxiety, despite such anxiety being extremely strong, but, in 1796/1797, for reasons of economic self-interest, nationalism, and, paradoxically, international republicanism, due to the pro-French planters’ disappointment at

¹ Ralph Izard to Thomas Pinckney, 12/8/1793, PSP, RDL-UVA.

² Robert Goodloe Harper to Alexander Hamilton, 4/11/1796, FO.

³ Charles Pinckney to Thomas Jefferson, 3/12/1800, FO.

⁴ Klein., *Unification*, pp. 2-3, 5-6, 8, 210-212-, 218, 221. 234. Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 36-37, 58-60, 92, 136, 137, 139-140.

the way the French Revolution was reneging its republican principles and moving towards a de facto military dictatorship.

In its first part, Chapter Five reveals the persistence of pro-French Revolution support from July 1794 to the end of 1795, including as part of the 4th of July Society of the Cincinnati orations. These orations reflect a significant component of the elite's political outlook, demonstrating, contrary to historians' contention, that, in 1794-1795, the South Carolina Cincinnati, as a whole, remained pro-French international republicans. In its second part, the Chapter investigates the continued elite's support for the French Revolution in the context of the 1795 Jay Treaty debates.⁵ This analysis discusses the deterioration of American foreign policy towards France when, two years after the Neutrality Proclamation, Washington's administration, with the Hamilton-inspired Jay Treaty, chose Britain rather than its official French ally to become America's principal commercial and strategic partner and, de facto, terminated the Franco-American alliance.⁶ The chapter's third part explores the decline in pro-French support in 1796 and 1797. It applies to South Carolina Elkins' and R. R. Palmer's theory concerning the northern United States, Britain, and the transatlantic world: Namely, that, by 1797, many international

⁵ Todd Estes, *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2006), argues that the treaty, in its question of whether the United States would favor Britain or France, contributed to forming the American party system and establishing the importance of public opinion. Amanda C. Demmer, "Trick or Constitutional Treaty? The Jay Treaty and the Quarrel over the Diplomatic Separation of Powers," vol. 35, no. 4, *Journal of Early American History* (Winter 2015): 579-598, contends that the treaty debates concentrated on constitutional issues, especially on whether the President or Congress would control foreign policy. Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 405-450, stressing the treaty debates within the context of a public opinion overwhelmingly supporting France over Britain, also provide essential insights. See also Jerald A. Combs, *The Jay Treaty: Political Background of the Founding Fathers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022).

⁶ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 405 ff. See also Jefferson to Madison, 22/6/1797, TJP.

republicans judged that France had recanted its international republicanism regarding domestic politics and foreign nations. In the persons of Mary Legaré and Elizabeth, Gadsden, it also shows that persistent French Jacobin atheism was another cause for the weakening of pro-French Revolution support. In its fourth part, the Chapter reveals that, despite its overall decline among the international republican elite, notable pro-French South Carolina leaders, both self-proclaimed Jeffersonian and moderate Federalist, persevered in their support for France. This continued support foreshadowed South Carolina's election of Jefferson at the 1800 presidential elections and the 1810 constitutional reforms granting universal white male franchise.

As mentioned earlier, Klein and Alderson Jr. argue that the French abolition of enslavement in St. Domingue, in 1793, and in all French colonies, in 1794, constituted the major cause, alongside French Jacobin Terror, for the pro-French South Carolina planters' turn against Revolutionary France. However, Chapter Five, although acknowledging the ubiquitous and deep anxiety felt by the state's enslavers, suggests a different chronology and distinct reasons for collapse of pro-French South Carolina planters' support for Revolutionary France. Planters continuously studied the developments of Revolutionary France and should have been aware that the official French abolition of enslavement was only the legalization of the *fait-accompli* in St. Domingue and the realization that, similarly to that island, it could no longer safely maintain enslavement in its other French Caribbean colonies. The universal abolition of enslavement on the French colonial island was expediently passed as a prosaic response that ratified the abolition the local French commander had decided a few months earlier, when he had judged that France could no longer

crush the formerly enslaved rebels.⁷ Indeed, St. Domingue's plantation system had already completely collapsed and, in fact, had been, de facto, dead by 1792. So, why would South Carolina pro-French planters wait for two full years, until 1794, before associating their deep planter anxiety with Revolutionary France and turning against it?

As we discussed in Chapter Two, Charleston's planters received news of the French and Haitian Revolutions from two main sources:⁸ St. Domingue French planters who first arrived as refugees in September 1791 and the St. Domingue's legislature. Furthermore, they heard of developments in the island colony and France through British gazettes. However, as we saw in the case of the Pinckney, Rutledge, and Butler families, they suspected British news was biased against France. Also, we saw in Chapter One that they obtained information from ship captains or French gazettes. Ship captains must have been particularly apt at spreading news since most ships trading with Charleston came from Europe.⁹ All their information about the French Revolution was printed in Charleston's gazettes. As Jeffersonian planters controlled these gazettes, perhaps French news was adulterated to present a pro-French picture. Thomas affirms that "the distinguished men of South Carolina fly to the aid of the press, not leaving Editors, as in most places, to sustain the {French} cause alone."¹⁰ Moreover, the South Carolina elite obtained their news from American factors and shop-keepers who resided in St. Domingue and from Franco-

⁷ He also wished to win over the ex-enslaved African-St. Domingans' support against the British and Spanish royal troops who were then trying to take over the island.

⁸ For a description of French and St. Domingue news sources coming to the United States, see Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, p. 62.

⁹ Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 81.

¹⁰ Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 36. Italics in the text.

South Carolinians, such as the barber called Vieux, who visited France to witness the Queen's execution.¹¹ As mentioned earlier, they also got their news from St. Domingue planters who lived in Charleston and blamed the French Revolution for the rebellion in the French colony. Therefore, it would be surprising that three years would pass before South Carolina's pro-French planters would turn against France in reaction to the Haitian Revolution and abolitionism.

Indeed, there is no evidence that supports the idea that pro-French planters recanted their support for France before 1796. Historians only present evidence for the link between planter anxiety and anti-French feelings in 1793-1794 by Hamiltonian planters who had always been against Revolutionary France, such as the Manigault and Middleton families. Ralph Izard is the only exception: He supported France in early 1793 but turned against it by mid-1793. However, he clearly stated that his shift, due to his anxiety as a planter, was exceptional and that the pro-French elite as whole, despite their strong anxiety as planters, generally refused to abandon their pro-French sentiment as their international republican idealism blinded them to the danger that French anarchy and abolitionism posed to South Carolina's plantation system.¹² In August 1793, he told Thomas Pinckney: "[Revolutionary France], destructive of good government, makes Mankind, of all descriptions, unhappy. Carolina [might fall] victim to the Rights of Man, which

¹¹ The Franco-American Saint-Domingue mistress of Aaron Burr, Leonora Sansay, mentioned these American factors and shopkeepers in her fascinating memoirs. See Leonora Sansay, *The Horrors of St. Domingo in a series of Letters* (Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1808).

¹² Occasionally, the Haitian Revolution was reported in the South Carolina press, sometimes denouncing it as violent and a threat, but usually reporting the facts, reiterating the descriptions of French refugees and saying how unfortunate these refugees were and encouraging people to aid them, while also giving encomiastic tributes to the city of Charleston and the state government for helping them. See, for example, *City Gazette*, 18/10/1793 and 15/12/1793, *State Gazette*, 21/11/1793, *Columbian Herald*, 29/01/1794.

[apply] to persons of all Colors. [Yet,] a considerable number of my [pro-French planter] friends think very differently.”¹³ These new anti-French Revolution sentiments of Izard also led him to reject his son George’s wish to join the French republican armies. In the same letter to Pinckney, he exclaimed: “[George] has expressed me a desire of entering the French army, to which I cannot consent because I disapprove of the proceedings of France.”¹⁴ Still, as we shall see below, the fact that pro-French planters did not generally turn against France in late 1793-early 1794 was further proved by the elections of November 1794 when both pro-French self-proclaimed Federalists and Jeffersonians achieved their best results ever, sweeping out of office or strongly challenging anti-French office-holders. On the contrary, the marked shift in support of Federalists opposing, or questioning, the French Revolution only occurred at the elections of 1796 and 1798.

Therefore, Chapter Five suggests that, as planter anxiety-ridden Izard himself argued, despite their very strong planter anxiety, neither the Haitian Revolution nor French abolitionism constituted significant causes for antagonism against the French Revolution among pro-French planters in the early 1790s. Rachel Cleves suggests the same contention for pro-French southern planters in general by maintaining that, despite a real and universal anxiety as planters vis-à-vis prospects of enslaved people’s rebellions, Hamiltonian planters used the Haitian Revolution and French Jacobinism as stratagems to attack southern Jeffersonians.¹⁵ However, she also adds that northern Federalists used the Haitian Revolution not only to undermine southern

¹³ Ralph Izard to Thomas Pinckney, 12/8/1793, PSP, RDL-UVA.

¹⁴ Ralph Izard to Thomas Pinckney, 12/8/1793, PSP, RDL-UVA.

¹⁵ Cleves, *The Reign of Terror*, pp. 146-152.

Jeffersonianism, but also the southern plantation system.¹⁶ Therefore, this would make South Carolina pro-French Jeffersonians to be hesitant to similarly express fears about the Haitian Revolution and French abolitionism since it would play in the hands of Federalists and northern emancipationists. Such hesitancy by South Carolina's pro-French planters would similarly make sense, especially in 1793-1794 when a State Assembly's Federalist committee was prosecuting five pro-French Jeffersonian elite leaders. Indeed, Alderson Jr. concurs with this view when, agreeing with Cleves, he portrays South Carolina Federalists as "gifted opportunists" who, in alliance with St. Domingue French royalist refugees, "manufactured" rumors of slave revolt to attack the international republicans, Charleston's French consul and the State's Jeffersonian governor, William Moultrie, and his administration, that then included the radical Republicans Peter Freneau, Simeon Theus, and Stephen Drayton, the latter two also members of the Republican Society of South Carolina, and the pro-French Lieutenant-Governor, James Ladson.¹⁷

Remarkably, despite their anxiety as slaveholders, even the pro-French planters who believed that French Revolutionary meddling in South Carolina was harmful to the state's plantation system did not turn against the French Revolution in 1793-1794 because of planter disquiet at possible enslaved people's revolts. For example, Butler, who had been the strongest defender of enslavement in South Carolina and the United States at the 1787 Constitutional convention, upon hearing of the killing of a neighbor-planter, Mr. Heyward, by an enslaved man, strongly expressed his planter anxiety and his wish that his French revolutionary friends would not meddle into

¹⁶ Cleves, *The Reign of Terror*, pp. 104 ff.

¹⁷ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 104-105.

enslavement issues in South Carolina: “Our French friends will do no good to our blacks. I wish they would mind their own affairs.”¹⁸ However, despite his evident and anxious belief that French revolutionaries harmfully involved themselves in enslavement issues and his strong injunction that they should refrain from doing so, he still abided by his pro-French international republicanism. His worry about the rumored death of a planter at the hand of an enslaved laborer and his deploring of French anti-enslavement meddling offered him an excellent opportunity to blame France for its abolitionism and for the Haitian Revolution. Yet, he did not: On the contrary, he concluded his discussion of his rumored neighbor’s rightful demise at the hand of an enslaved laborer by reiterating his staunch international republican support for Revolutionary France in the second part of his letter.¹⁹

Similarly to Butler, other instances demonstrate that in 1793/1794, pro-French international republicanism took precedence about ubiquitous and deep planter anxiety among pro-French planters. Butler’s close friend, Aedanus Burke, a committed international republican whose planter anxiety, which he expressed as early as 1782 when he lamented that northern abolitionists “secretly wished for a general emancipation,” never let such anxiety turn him against

¹⁸ PB to Thomas Young, 28/10/1793, PBP, SCL.

¹⁹ PB to Thomas Young, 28/10/1793, PBP, SCL. For Governor Moultrie’s similar deportment during the rumored enslaved people’s revolt of August 1793, and this, despite the arrival of ten thousand French planter-refugees in Charleston only two months earlier, after the burning of Cape-Français by the forces of St. Domingue’s formerly enslaved freedom fighters, see editor’s note 1, LPB, p. 265. Furthermore, Butler, like Charles Pinckney in 1791, believed that French planters in St. Domingue were “monarchists.” See PB to Nathaniel Hall, 16/9/1793, LPB. Yet, in the same letter, he deplored the “eternal disgrace” of the British privateers despoiling monarchist-planter refugees on their way to America: It seems his Anglophobia was so strong that any occasion to disparage Britain was good, even when discussing previously disparaged pro-British planters.

France.²⁰ He rather kept his international republican focus on supporting the French Revolution: In December 1794, three years after the eruption of the Haitian Revolution and ten months after the French decree of universal abolition, he encouraged young planters, such as James L. Cusack, to enlist in French armies.²¹ Furthermore, in September 1793, an anonymous writer, most probably a planter, self-named “Native American,” warned, in the same way as the earlier-quoted Izard, that South Carolina Government leaders’ pro-French sentiment prevented them from acting to counter the Haitian Revolution’s and the Lowcountry’s enslaved people’s immense threat to South Carolina’s plantation system. He asked planters to “recollect the fate of St. Domingo – be grateful to France, but remember self-preservation.”²² In December, another writer, “A Black,” identifying himself as a “free black,” expressed the same argument. He criticized Governor Moultrie for not acting strongly enough against “[emancipationist] enemies to the Northwards” and rumors of enslaved people’s plots in Charleston due to his support for the French Revolution.²³ He affirmed that Moultrie’s lack of appropriately strong response to the eventuality of an enslaved people’s revolt was due to his devotion to the French Revolution: “Do not let your attention be directed to Frenchmen alone.”²⁴ Remarkably, such focus on supporting the French Revolution despite the elite’s very considerable planter anxiety at the prospect of an enslaved people’s rebellion is confirmed by Alderson Jr. who argues that Charleson’s enslaved people were fully aware of the Haitian Revolution and, therefore, created extremely strong

²⁰ AB to Arthur Middleton, 25-1-1782, “Correspondence of Arthur Middleton,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 26, no. 4 (October 1925): 182-213, p. 194.

²¹ AB to James Cusack, 10/12/1794, GP-LOC.

²² “A Native American,” *City Gazette*, 21/9/1793, quoted by Alderson, p. 96.

²³ “A Black” to William Moultrie, 10/10/1793, South Carolina Records of the General Assembly, Governor’s Messages, 1792-1795, cited by Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 94.

²⁴ “A Black” to William Moultrie, 10/10/1793, South Carolina Records of the General Assembly, Governor’s Messages, 1792-1795, cited by Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 94.

planter anxiety.²⁵ Paradoxically, he also argues that urban artisans joined Hamiltonian Federalist planters in their emphasis of the danger of enslaved people's revolts: He argues that Charleston's artisans perceived enslaved people as job competitors and, therefore, by playing up planters' terror at possible enslaved workers' rebellion, pressured the state government to pass laws regulating the enslaved workforce more strictly.²⁶

All historians of the Haitian Revolution agree, as we mentioned earlier, that planter terror at possible enslaved people's rebellions only translated into anti-French Revolution sentiment among the pro-French southern and South Carolina elite only in the early 1800s and, especially, after 1822. As the feminist historian, Gerda Lerner, in her biography of the South Carolina abolitionist Grimke sisters, argues: "[In the 1790s,] Denmark Vesey had not struck terror and fear into Charleston society."²⁷ Indeed, as we shall see below, only in 1822, after the Denmark Vesey's Uprising, did a former French Revolution supporter, Thomas Pinckney, lament that the Haitian Revolution constituted a menacing model for an enslaved people's revolt in South Carolina. In fact, Deborah White suggests that Denmark Vesey's conspiracy transformed the existing planter anxiety into paranoia.²⁸ Yet, despite his persistent and extremely strong anxiety as a

²⁵ Mangourit to Genet, 11/10/1793, AAE CC. Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 98-104. See Alderson in David Geggus (ed.), *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

²⁶ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 104, who sees Charleston's mechanics and hairdressers as the artisans expressing the most virulent anti-enslaved workers' rhetoric.

²⁷ Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, p. 37. Lerner is also the founder of Women's History Month.

²⁸ Thomas Pinckney, *Reflections on the Late Disturbances in Charleston* (Charleston, SC: A. E. Miller, 1822). For a discussion as to whether Denmark Vesey's conspiracy was a real fact or did not actually occur but was imagined as a result of planters' paranoia existing in the 1820s, see Edward B. Rugemer, "Slave Rebels and Abolitionism: the Black Atlantic and the Coming of the Civil War," *Journal of the Civil War Era*, vol. 2, no. 2 (June 2012): 179-204. For the analysis of Thomas Pinckney's pamphlet discussing the Denmark Vesey's Uprising, see Deborah White, *Freedom on my Mind* (Boston: Medford St. Martin's Press, 2013), pp. 240-244.

planter, Pinckney, unlike Ralph Izard, did not express publicly anti-French Revolution sentiment linked to the threat of an enslaved people's revolt, in the 1790s. In 1794, he was as pro-French as ever, rejoicing in French successes and his international republicanism made him assist or correspond with and support international republicans, even well-known for their emancipationist sentiments: As earlier discussed, with the cooperation of Francis K. Huger and a German international republican, he tried to help Lafayette, whose hatred for enslavement would make him refuse a Florida plantation in the 1810s, to escape from Austrian imprisonment and expressed his support for other emancipationist international revolutionaries, such as Kosciusko, who had just abolished serfdom in Poland; in 1795, he also sent his two young daughters, and those of Edward Rutledge, to a boarding school in abolitionist France owned by the sister of the former French ambassador to the United States, the emancipationist, Edmond Genet.

Rather than Lowcountry pro-French elite turning against France due to their existing, and very profound, planter anxiety because of the Haitian Revolution and French abolitionism, the first supporters of the French revolution who eventually turned against it were smaller farmers who hailed from the backcountry. Indeed, according to Elkins and McKittrick, backcountry anti-enslavement leaders who, like Robert G. Harper, were Hamiltonian Federalists, became the first contingent in South Carolina to turn against the French Revolution in late 1795 due to their support of the new anti-French Jay Treaty, which they found beneficial to South Carolina's economic interest, especially the state's commerce with the British Caribbeans, that the treaty

augmented.²⁹ Meanwhile, low-country planters castigated this backcountry development in anti-French sentiment in the gazettes of Charleston.³⁰ Indeed, not 1793 nor 1794 but 1797 was a pivotal year for the decline and fall of French Revolution elite support but for other reasons than planter anxiety, although real and extensive, due to the Haitian Revolution and French abolitionism. In 1822, Thomas Pinckney regretted that such planter anxiety had not already made pro-French planters turn against Revolutionary France and make them take greater measures to ensure the safety of the plantation system and prevent an enslaved rebellion as occurred in 1822. He complained that, in the 1790s, enslaved people had gained too much agency, power, and freedom, including obtaining paid employment outside the plantations and their ability to read and write.³¹ Peter Freneau also exemplified Pinckney's belated concern toward the 1790s South Carolina elite's inability to translate their deep planter anxiety about the impacts of the enslaved people's agency, the Haitian Revolution, and French abolitionism on South Carolina plantation system. A committed supporter of the French Revolution to the very end, and despite being a convinced and fully committed planter and notorious slave trader, he employed enslaved people in his printing press and. Although furious at it, he, yet, tolerated their reading of his pro-French gazettes which discussed the revolutionary developments in France.³²

²⁹ Robert G. Harper, *An address from Robert Goodloe Harper, of South Carolina, to his constituents; containing his reasons for approving of the treaty of amity, commerce and navigation with Great Britain* (Boston: Young and Minns, at the press of rational federalism, 1796).

³⁰ "A Farmer" and "Americanus," respectively, in *City Gazette*, 24/7/1797 and 27/7/1797.

³¹ Thomas Pinckney, *Reflections on the Late Disturbances*, pp. 14-15.

³² Peter Freneau to Ralph Izard, 1/5/1794, Ralph Izard Papers, Charleston Library Society.

Persistence of pro-French Revolution Sentiment in 1794 and 1795

Robert J. Alderson Jr. suggests that such an impact led the Society of Cincinnati members to turn against France. He judges that a Cincinnati's mention, in late 1793, that the 'storms assailed the noble fabric of freedom [in France]' constituted "an unmistakable condemnation of the French Revolution" by the Society of the Cincinnati. However, David Ramsay's and Thomas T. Tucker's respective Cincinnati orations of 1794 and 1795 contradict this interpretation.³³ The South Carolina State Society of Cincinnati selected them to give their pro-French orations during the annual Independence Day celebrations of the Fourth of July. Ramsay and Tucker delivered their speeches in July 1794 and 1795. Originally from Pennsylvania, Ramsay served in South Carolina during the Revolutionary War and settled in the state in its aftermath. A physician, he integrated into the elite society, marrying Martha Laurens, the daughter of Henry Laurens, a signer of the American Declaration of Independence, and sister of John Laurens, an emancipationist hero of the Revolutionary War. Ramsay was elected to the state senate (1790-1798), whose president he became from 1792 to 1797.³⁴

Ramsay's Fourth of July 1794 Cincinnati speech is significant. As mentioned, it contradicts the present theories about the dates and reasons for the decline of French Revolution support. If the elite had withdrawn their support in 1793 and 1794 due to the enslaved people's revolt in St. Domingue and because of French abolitionism, they would not have appointed a pro-French

³³ Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 36-37, 58-60, 136, 137, 139-140.

³⁴ For Ramsay's bibliography, see Arthur H. Shaffer, *To Be an American: David Ramsay and the Making of the American Consciousness* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

Revolution orator such as Ramsay who, furthermore, did not exploit enslaved people as he was not a planter, but questioned the plantation system. On the contrary, they would have asked a planter committed to enslavement who would have taken the excellent opportunity to criticize the French Revolution as a cause for the Haitian Revolution and emphasized elite anxiety about the solidity of the plantation system. By selecting an emancipationist, the planters of the Society of the Cincinnati showed that their commitment to international republicanism could, at times, trump their planter anxiety, similar to Moultrie when he refused, as earlier discussed, to depart from his support for Revolutionary France, in response to the rumored enslaved people's revolt of 1793. Furthermore, Ramsay delivered his oration of July 1794, five months after the French general abolition of enslavement, chronologically showing how the deep planter anxiety felt by Society of the Cincinnati members did not weaken their international republican support for Revolutionary France. Additionally, selecting a pro-French Revolution orator demonstrates that the Society of Cincinnati was neither as conservative nor Federalist in 1794 as historians depicted it to be but shows that it was still supportive of the French Revolution. Moreover, it reveals that the Cincinnati were not alarmed about the Jacobin Terror, which was then reaching its apogee.³⁵

Ramsay's pro-French Revolution oration reflected, as all orations do, the views of his audience. He might even have given it to the Cincinnati in advance for perusal or approval, as Thomas Tudor Tucker would do in 1795.³⁶ The oration was published in 1795 by a British international republican in London: "citizen Daniel Eaton, bookseller to the *Supreme Majesty of the People*."

³⁵ Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 822-835.

³⁶ Tucker, *Oration*, p.1.

Eaton spent three months in jail for radicalism in 1793 and, after his acquittal, continued to print revolutionary pamphlets, including Paine's *Age of Reason*.³⁷ We do not know if the Cincinnati or Eaton initiated contacts for the publication of Ramsay's pamphlet. Yet, Eaton's London publication reveals another Cincinnati international republican dimension. The international republican dimension of Ramsay's oration was pervasive. He argued that France's fight for republicanism, as a "great and mighty nation," was essential for world republicanism as her revolutionary success would create a domino effect. Indeed, he believed that France "bravely struggling for the rights of man is assigned the task of defending republicanism by arms." As "the eyes of the world are fixed" upon the French Revolution, people worldwide would follow France's example, and "revolutions will follow revolutions till despotism is banished from our globe."³⁸

In addition to this revolutionary internationalism, Ramsay presented the French Revolution as an example to bolster the American people's sense of forming a single nation. He believed that "the unity and indivisibility of the republic is an essential part of the French constitution." Similarly, he contended that America should consider "the people as forming one whole, the interest of which should be preferred to that of every part."³⁹ This support of French and American nationalism shows that Ramsay was a rational moderate who could abide by Federalist views. He reconciled the apparent dichotomy of nationalism and international republicanism. For example,

³⁷ Paul Keene, *Revolutions in Romantic Literature: An Anthology of Print Culture, 1780-1832* (London: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 215.

³⁸ David Ramsay, *An Oration delivered on... July 4th... to the inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina* (London: Daniel Isaac Eaton, 1795), pp. 5, 7, 13.

³⁹ Ramsay, *An Oration*, p. 21.

although he supported American independence as a nationalist, he also rejoiced at the global benefits of such independence, considering himself a humanist. Discussing how the American Revolution, via the French Revolution, led to humanity's improvement, he argued that "the enlarged philanthropist must not only rejoice in the benefits acquired by America from its independence but *still more* in those which are likely to flow to the oppressed *of every country*."⁴⁰

Therefore, combining internationalist and nationalistic sentiments, Ramsay reflected the views of French Revolution advocates such as Butler and the Republican Society as they related their support for France to internationalism and nationalism. They supported America as a nation and professed allegiance to America and South Carolina but never championed sectionalism: they attacked the policies of the national government, not America as a nation. Like Jeffersonians, Ramsay criticized Hamiltonians and the Federal government. He blamed Hamiltonians for trying to discredit the French Revolution by falsely associating it with anarchy. He contended that the Federalists, by "anxiously looking for opportunities to discredit the new doctrines of the Rights of Man, represent them as leading to confusion and anarchy." To oppose such policies, he asked American people to refute the Federalists through "orderly conduct [to] disappoint their wishes and give the lie to their calumnies."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ramsay, *An Oration*, p.5.

⁴¹ Ramsay, *An Oration*, p.22.

Regarding Human Rights, Ramsay's audience would have remembered Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*, which Hamiltonians considered radical but was read by South Carolina planters, as seen in Chapter Two. Unlike Federalist pessimism about the French Revolution, Ramsay argued that the French people would eventually create a stable government when peace was reached. He trusted that they "will discover as great abilities in planning and executing a good new government as [they have] hitherto done in destroying an ancient bad one" and "[France's] enlightened rulers will furnish a new and strong proof of the connection between liberty and happiness."⁴² By this quote, Ramsay demonstrated that he believed the French people should be excused for not having a stable republican government as he trusted they would have one after the restoration of peace. He judged the French Revolution was not completed due to its ongoing war. Therefore, it was not the French "enlightened" revolutionary leaders' fault or because the French Revolution was wrong.⁴³ Therefore, he differed from Federalist members of the South Carolina elite, such as Jacob Read and William Loughton Smith, who never supported the French Revolution and judged it intrinsically flawed and its leaders inept. Also, in contradiction to Hamiltonians extolling the British political system and wishing to reproduce it in America, he spent three pages, 15% of his pamphlet, to remind his audience of its nefariousness.⁴⁴

However, Ramsay's support for the French Revolution also differed from the views of the more radical Jeffersonians: he extolled Washington and supported the Neutrality Proclamation. This

⁴² Ramsay, *An Oration*, pp. 5, 14.

⁴³ Ramsay, *An Oration*, p. 22.

⁴⁴ Ramsay, *An Oration*, pp. 10, 14-17.

difference marked the fault line between radicals, such as Butler and the Republican Society, and those, such as Ramsay and the Pinckney brothers, who did not support the French Revolution to the extent of attacking Washington, joining France in its war with Britain, or act against the President's wishes by violating American law. Therefore, Ramsay's views corresponded to those of the elite, such as the Pinckney brothers and John Rutledge Jr., who, from 1794, considered themselves both pro-French Revolution and moderate Federalists. Indeed, Ramsay mixed support for American neutrality with praise for Washington. He extolled the President by arguing that "to all the advantages of neutrality, we are entitled by the laws of nations, nature, and God." And, therefore, he gave "many thanks to our worthy president for his honest endeavor to preserve for us the blessing of peace."⁴⁵ Alongside his extolment of France and his criticism of Britain, support for neutrality forms the central theme of Ramsay's oration. It is likely that in July 1794, when war with Britain seemed a strong possibility, and planters like Freneau and the Republican Society complained about neutrality that prevented them from assisting France militarily, he wanted to remind his more martial Cincinnati colleagues in the Republican Society and the South Carolina Government that he considered peace more beneficial to the United States than war. As an army surgeon, he likely saw the horrors of war to a greater extent and the glory of battle to a lesser degree than his radical pro-French Revolution colleagues.

This was also logically the majority view of the Society of the Cincinnati in 1794, as they had selected Ramsay to give the oration. In 1792 and 1793, they appointed Alexander Moultrie and

⁴⁵ Ramsay, *An Oration*, pp. 10-11.

Stephen Drayton. This latter choice preceded the virulent attacks against Washington after the Republican Society was founded. Ramsay's election to the presidency of the South Carolina Senate, the legislative branch most thoroughly controlled by planters, also suggests that, in 1794, Ramsay's moderate ideology that allowed support for both the French Revolution and Washington was the majority view of the elite. In conclusion, Ramsay's oration reveals that the Society of the Cincinnati's pro-French members were generally divided into two groups: A moderate that respected Washington and his injunctions for American neutrality and a radical that attacked Washington for abandoning the French revolutionaries and supported military action in their support. This latter Cincinnati group constituted the Republican Society and the South Carolina State administrations.

Perhaps these two distinct pro-French groups address the idea that the Cincinnati displayed seemingly contradictory characteristics upon their founding in 1783: on the one hand, they supported egalitarianism and solidarity among their members; on the other, they displayed hierarchical sentiments concerning the larger American society.⁴⁶ Ramsay's oration, just as their establishment of the Republican Society and their pro-French actions, also confirms that the Cincinnati believed in their right and, perhaps, the duty to help shape American politics.⁴⁷ Such duty or right was especially relevant concerning the French nation, which included Cincinnati officers and whose alliance and amity the Society was obligated to preserve and enhance. In any case, in 1794, the Society of the Cincinnati, at least in South Carolina, was not the reactionary nor

⁴⁶ Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries*, p. 23.

⁴⁷ Cutterham, *Planters Revolutionaries*, pp. 23-24.

even the monarchist institution portrayed by modern historians and was not antagonistic to the French Revolution. In the early 1780s, the state society positively responded to Aedanus Burke's criticisms and enacted reforms. Burke recognized this fact and, after 1784, never criticized the Cincinnati anymore and even befriended Cincinnati members, such as Governor Moultrie and O'Brien Smith.⁴⁸

As in 1794, elite support for the French Revolution remained steadfast in 1795. On 4 July 1795, the Cincinnati asked a pro-French planter, who also served in the administration of the Republican Society, to deliver the oration celebrating American Independence: Thomas Tudor Tucker. Tucker gave his speech in the context of the Thermidorian reaction in France that had in the previous year overthrown Robespierre and ended the worst excesses of the French Revolution. The Thermidorian regime established a greatly more moderate, humane, and stable republican system that promised a long-awaited completion of the revolution.⁴⁹ He was also writing when, in South Carolina, as we saw in Chapter Three, privateering was reaching its apogee and when, in America, the fight between Federalists and Jeffersonians was reaching a level unseen since the debates on neutrality in the summer of 1793. His oration was delivered eleven

⁴⁸ For the Society of the Cincinnati as determined opponents of the French Revolution and staunch supporters of the Neutrality Proclamation, see Sandra Moats, *Navigating Neutrality: Early American Governance in the Turbulent Atlantic* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2021). For the reforms of the South Carolina Society of the Cincinnati and Burke's reconciliation with the Society, see Robert Bell (ed.), *Considerations on the Society or Order of the Cincinnati* (New York: Third Street Press, 1956).

⁴⁹ Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 836-847.

days after the Jay Treaty debates exploded throughout America after Pierce Butler leaked the secret deliberations of the Senate, suspected of being pro-British.⁵⁰

Tucker's oration presents a different picture than Ramsay's. It displays greater Jeffersonian radicalism and French Revolution support. Although, like Ramsay, Tucker ranted against Britain regarding its record during the Revolutionary War, its faults as a social and political system, and as constituting a pernicious model for American Federalists, he also blamed Anglophilia as a product of the Federalist administration and, therefore, indirectly criticized Washington.⁵¹ He not only praised the French Revolution as a philanthropic international republican example for the world, primarily through its war against monarchies, but he also extolled it as a countermodel that, as early as 1789, prevented America from becoming a monarchy. He argued: "At this critical period [1789] when republicanism was the jest of fools in America, [the] wonderful [French] revolution struck the world with astonishment and changed the state of affairs in this country."⁵² In other words, like other Jeffersonians, he believed that the French Revolution had saved America from Hamilton's plans of transforming it into a monarchy. He reiterated this belief by arguing that "as the progress of the [French] Revolution evinced the probability of its success, even the sticker for British principles of government began to soften in his note and glide back with the tide of public opinion."⁵³ Indeed, elected in 1789 as an anti-administration United States

⁵⁰ Lipscomb (ed.), *The Letters*, pp. xxxiii, 158.

⁵¹ Thomas Tudor Tucker, *An Oration delivered... in commemoration of American Independence by the Appointment of the South Carolina State Society of Cincinnati, published at the Request of that Society and also of the American Revolution Society* (Charleston: Timothy and Mason, 1795).

⁵² Tucker, *An Oration*, p. 6.

⁵³ Tucker, *An Oration*, p.7.

representative, he recalled the ideas of Federalists who, like Hamilton and Adams, had already condemned the French Revolution as too radical during the second American Congress (1791-1793). He challenged this Federalist view and the idea that the French Revolution should have limited itself to duplicate the British political system. He also argued that the very radical nature of the French Revolution uncovered American monarchists: “Had the French been content to reform actual abuses [and] copy the British government, they would never have alarmed the friends of monarchy.”⁵⁴ He also argued that had the French Revolution copied the British system, it would have failed in its unique service to humanity and America as a beacon of republicanism. He contended that had the French revolutionaries restricted themselves to being pro-British moderates, “they would never have been able to enlighten the world by a noble and grand experiment. The friends of republican government felt the French Revolution as a cordial that revived their hopes that the principle would yet be cherished and settled by impartial reason.”⁵⁵

In addition to Ramsay’s and Tucker’s orations, Major William Jackson provides another example of a Society of the Cincinnati member devoted to the French Revolution in 1794-1795. Born in England, Jackson emigrated to South Carolina in the 1760s as an orphan and, raised in an elite family in Charleston, he became friends with the greatest planters, such as the Pinckneys. During the Revolutionary War, after enlisting at sixteen, he served under Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Christopher Gadsden. As a personal secretary, he also accompanied his friend John Laurens to Paris, as he impeccably spoke French. During the French Revolution, he returned to Paris in

⁵⁴ Tucker, *An Oration*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Tucker, *An Oration*, p. 10.

December 1793, undeterred by Robespierre's Terror. In danger of being guillotined during his one-month imprisonment in a Jacobin jail, he criticized American Ambassador Morris for his opposition to the French Revolution.⁵⁶ Staying in France for months after his imprisonment, he sent to his friend Thomas Pinckney, the American ambassador in London, long letters full of revolutionary zeal, sophisticated thoughts, and colorful descriptions about developments in France. He told Pinckney: "France exhibits scenes at once splendid and awful. This extraordinary people, resolved to be free, decided to literally 'live free or die.' The happiest Nation on the globe." And despite having lived through the Terror, he kept his optimism about the French Revolution: "There are shades [that] proceed less from native defect than accident and may be softened [or] entirely removed."⁵⁷

Similarly to pro-French elite men's, female support for the French Revolution remained steadfast among the elite in 1794 and 1795. For example, Sarah Butler expressed her support nine days after Jackson's letter. She rejoiced "in the successes of the French" and sympathized "in their misfortune." She affirmed that America was "infinitely indebted to their unequalled gallantry." Similarly to Ramsay and Tucker, she also expressed the universalist sentiment that French revolutionaries would "ameliorate the conditions of the oppressed in all countries" and were "advocating the cause of all people, the holy cause of Liberty."⁵⁸ A year later, another woman, Alice Izard, joined Sarah in her support for Revolutionary France. Upon hearing the outcome of

⁵⁶ Editor's note, William Jackson to TP, 14/08/1794, PREPS, RDL- UVA.

⁵⁷ William Jackson to TP, 14/08/1794, PREPS, RDL- UVA.

⁵⁸ Sarah Butler to Thomas Butler, 25/8/1794, LD.

the Battle of Quiberon, she wrote to her Hamiltonian Federalist husband, Ralph Izard, that she was delighted at the news of the French republican army's victory over the invading British forces.⁵⁹

Response to the Jay Treaty, 1795

The Jay Treaty debates reveal further evidence of South Carolinian Jeffersonians and moderate Federalists' support for Revolutionary France after 1794, when historians argue it was defunct. In 1794, the U.S.A. and Great Britain negotiated a reconciliation treaty known as the Jay Treaty. The treaty was finalized in November 1794, discussed in secret proceedings by the American Senate in early 1795, and divulged to the South Carolina government and the public in mid-July 1795. By the 12th of August, it had been approved by the U.S. Senate and ratified by Washington; it became effective on the 1st of March 1796. Its main goal was to avert war with Britain, which prospect was feared by many and hoped for by a few. Within the context of the Franco-British naval war, Americans were furious that the Royal Navy disrupted their trade, seized their ships trading with France, impressed American sailors found on French privateers, and forced them to fight against France.⁶⁰

Additionally, many Americans were angry due to other unresolved issues from the Treaty of Paris and Britain's fight against America's only ally and sister republic, France.⁶¹ Notably, Southern

⁵⁹ Alice Izard to Ralph Izard, 07/12/1795, *Izard Family Papers*, Francis Marion University.

⁶⁰ Charles R. Ritcheson, "Thomas Pinckney's London Mission, 1792-1796, and the Impressment Issue," *International History Review*, vol. 2, no.4 (1980):523-541, p.533.

⁶¹ Sean Wilentz, *Rise of American Democracy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp.67-68; Paul Finkelman, *Slavery, and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2014), pp.171-172.

planters, including those of South Carolina, such as Edward Rutledge, had been enraged for years by Britain's unwillingness to return enslaved people who had joined the British during the American Revolutionary War, or financially compensate for them.⁶² Edward Rutledge "glowed with anger" at this British intransigence and opposed any commercial treaty with Britain that did not enforce British payment for the planters' loss of their enslaved workforce; and he fumed at other South Carolina planters, such as Ralph Izard, and at planters in other states and at the national level, who were ready to forgo British indemnities for the wartime damage done on southern plantation system to bolster trade with Britain: Expressing his "affliction and mortification" at the pro-British planters' "temporary expedients and partial and local interests," he feared that any accommodation with Britain from a position of weakness would prevent planters who had lost enslaved labor to "never obtain from her" the indemnities "we are most justly entitled to."⁶³ He believed that Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney concurred with his views on British compensation and he both exerted his power and asked for Jefferson's aid to enlist planters who did not share such views and called him "mad."⁶⁴

Paradoxically, Rutledge was using the rhetoric of liberty to support his demands towards Britain as a South Carolina planter and ask people to be re-enslaved and, if not possible, be compensated, ironically, for their acquisition of freedom. This confirms historians' argument,

⁶² Edward Rutledge to Thomas Jefferson, 7/10/1791, FO. George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: United States Foreign Policy since 1776* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 73, 78; Gerald Combs, *The Jay Treaty*, p.77.

⁶³ Edward Rutledge to Thomas Jefferson, 7/8/1791 and 7/10/1791, FO.

⁶⁴ Edward Rutledge to Thomas Jefferson, 7/8/1791 and 7/10/1791, FO.

such as propounded by Furstenberg and Olwell, that planters' usage of the image of liberty was linked to their enslavement of other people. To some extent, therefore, the rhetoric of liberty on behalf of France, associated with the American Revolutionary War's fight for freedom, and against the anti-French British and American governments, can likely be interpreted in this light. Indeed, just as pro-French planters connected the "Spirit of '76" to their support of France, Rutledge associated the American Revolutionaries' love of liberty and his demands as a planter. Lamenting that such a love of liberty could no longer be found in South Carolina's pro-British planters, he decried that "if the sentiments which are now current [for reconciliation with Britain] in the years 1775, 6, and 7, the Lovers of Liberty would have died on the gibbet or perished in the wilderness and the rest of our Fellow citizens would have been [enslaved to] the most insolent set of beings that today inhabit the Earth."⁶⁵

Moreover, Tucker associated his support for Revolutionary France with his demands against Britain: "I glow with resentment when I think that we give our old [British] Enemies as many advantages in commerce as we do to [the French] who were and are our Friends."⁶⁶ Therefore, like many other pro-French planters, and despite French abolitionism, he judged that Britain and pro-British American leaders were more inimical to the South Carolina's plantation system than Revolutionary France. Indeed, he also contrasted French amity with South Carolina to Britain's

⁶⁵ Edward Rutledge to Thomas Jefferson, 7/10/1791, FO.

⁶⁶ Edward Rutledge to Thomas Jefferson, 7/10/1791, FO.

antagonism, through its refusal to offer any compensation for the enslaved workforce who had decided to join the British and gain their freedom during the American Revolutionary War.

Like the extensive evidence for considerable planter anxiety among the pro-French Revolution elite, already discussed in the thesis, Tucker's planter anxiety contradicts the historians who suggest that, overall, southern planters' opposition to the Jay Treaty did not primarily, or even significantly, derive from concern over their hold of the plantation system. Indeed, it confutes Elkins" and McKittrick's theory that the Jay Treaty's non-compensation of planters for the people who had escaped enslavement during the Revolutionary War played no significant role in planter opposition to it. The two historians even emphasize that Jefferson called the Treaty's omission of such compensation "a bagatelle."⁶⁷ However, the thesis has shown that these issues, linked to their planter views, were, on the contrary, evidently no "bagatelle" for the South Carolina elite.

Still, even if Elkins and McKittrick were correct for southern planters as a whole, it would only mean that South Carolina's planter anxiety was much stronger than in Virginia and in the rest of the South. Furthermore, and in line with François Furstenberg's convincing argument that planters used the rhetoric of liberty and justice to defend their planter power, it would partly explain, in addition to the reason of international republicanism, why pro-French South Carolinians were the most anti-Jay Treaty of any American elite, as both northern Federalists and Jefferson, indeed, contended. Jefferson rejoiced that "J. Rutledge, [Charles] Pinckney, and others

⁶⁷ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, p. 415, pp. 411 ff.

of that Southern constellation, have pronounced themselves more desperately than any others against the Treaty.”⁶⁸ As we shall develop below, Northern Federalists shared Jefferson’s opinion about South Carolina planters, whose pro-French members they called “Jacobins.”⁶⁹

In addition to their inquietude about the plantation system, pro-French Revolution planters felt slighted by Thomas Pinckney’s overpassing as negotiator of the Jay Treaty. Pinckney was the United States Ambassador to Britain (1792-1796), who was extremely popular in South Carolina and had also served as its governor (1787-1789). Hamilton, considering Pinckney too pro-French and anti-British for negotiating a reconciliation with Britain, had selected John Jay.⁷⁰ Hamilton’s discourteous slight of Pinckney must have been particularly disagreeable to the South Carolina Society of the Cincinnati, who had honored him with the delivery of the Independence Day oration only two years earlier, and to Jefferson, who was his friend and trusted his pro-French credentials. The Jay Treaty also angered members of the pro-French South Carolinian elite because the American national government had kept its discussions about ratification secret. Enraged by such secrecy, Butler, risking expulsion from the U.S. Senate, leaked a copy of the treaty to his pro-French friend, Aedanus Burke.⁷¹ Furthermore, as mentioned above, the Treaty was seen as a violation of the 1778 Franco-American alliance and a de facto Anglo-American alliance, both features seen, furthermore, as evidence of Federalist of monarchism and anti-

⁶⁸ Jefferson to James Monroe, 6/9/1796, TJP.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, “Lamentation,” in Matthew Carey (ed.), *The American remembrancer; or, An impartial collection of essays, resolves, speeches, &c. relative, or having affinity, to the treaty with Great Britain* (Philadelphia: printed by Henry Tuckniss, for Mathew Carey, [August] 1795), pp. 180-181.

⁷⁰ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, pp. 73, 78. Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 431 ff.

⁷¹ Lipscomb (ed.), *Letters*, pp. xxxiii, 158.

republicanism.⁷² All these factors further increased the gaping divide between Federalists and Republicans, some of whom, such as Jefferson, Madison and William Moultrie, never forgave Washington for it and never again spoke or met with the President. The Treaty also helped with creation of more political organization on the part of the Republicans as it led them, in order to respond most forcefully, to consolidate ideological cohesion and coordinate their policies concerning it with the Jeffersonian leadership of the individual states to of the Republicans.⁷³

Contradicting the historiography on 1790s South Carolina arguing that support for France was defunct by 1795, Elkins and McKittrick argue that opposition to the Jay Treaty originated preponderantly from Jeffersonian ideological support for the French Revolution: Antagonism to the Treaty did not arise from “the actual terms of the Treaty” but from a well-founded fear that an “understanding with Britain would somehow contaminate the fraternal attachment between the Americans and the people of France.”⁷⁴ Jefferson, in a letter to Edward Rutledge, agreeing with his South Carolina friend of the Treaty’s menace to Franco-American relations and its pro-British bias, reiterated this idea most clearly: “I join with you to think that the treaty an execrable thing. [It] is nothing more than a treaty of alliance between England and the [American] Anglomen.”⁷⁵ A month later, Jefferson assured the new French Ambassador, Pierre Auguste Adet, that, despite the Treaty, Americans took “a general interest in all successes of your republic. In

⁷² William Weeks, *Building a Continental Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p.23.

⁷³ Don Higginbotham, “Virginia’s Trinity of Immortals: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and William Henry: the Story of their Fractured Relationship,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol.23, no.4 (Winter 2003), p.541. William N. Chambers, *Political Perspectives in a New Nation: the American Experience, 1776-1809* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), p.80. Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, p. 415.

⁷⁴ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, p. 415.

⁷⁵ Jefferson to Edward Rutledge, 30/11/1795, TJP.

this, no one joins with more enthusiasm than myself, an enthusiasm kindled by my love of liberty, by my gratitude to [France] who helped us to acquire it, by my wishes to see it extended to all men and first to [Frenchmen] whom we love most.”⁷⁶

Pro-French members of the South Carolina elite played a prominent role in this fight against the Jay Treaty in support for Revolutionary France. Radical Jeffersonians, such as Pierce Butler and John Rutledge Sr., and members of the Republican Society, were joined by moderate Jeffersonians, such as Charles Pinckney and Christopher Gadsden, and moderate Federalists, such as John Matthews and Edward and John Rutledge Jr., in such fight. The debates about the Treaty demonstrate considerable political fluidity and nuances as they reveal significant divisions in the pro-French elite stance against the treaty. Whereas the radicals, like John Rutledge Sr. and writers of gazette articles, attacked Washington, the moderates, such as Charles Pinckney and Edward Rutledge, spared Washington and only directed their invectives towards Hamiltonians, such as Hamilton himself, and John Jay.

John Rutledge served as United States Supreme Court Chief Justice at the time of the Jay Treaty and, as recognized by Jefferson by putting him first in his list of South Carolina opponents to the Treaty, he was the most vociferous voice against it.⁷⁷ As Governor of South Carolina (1775-1780) during the American Revolutionary War, he had been considered, alongside William Moultrie,

⁷⁶ Jefferson to Pierre Auguste Adet, 14/10/1795, TJP.

⁷⁷ Jefferson to James Monroe, 6/9/1795, TJP.

the coadjutor of the epic victory of Fort Sullivan (1776), which had prevented Charleston from falling to the British.⁷⁸ Conservative in domestic politics, he resigned in 1780 due to his opposition to the new state constitution, which he considered too democratic. A lifelong friend of his Irish co-nationals, Pierce Butler and Aedanus Burke, he, like the rest of his prestigious family, felt “embittered” towards Britain due to its exactions during the Revolutionary War.⁷⁹ Anticipating Pierce Butler by five years, his resentment towards Britain and his amity towards France led Rutledge to attempt the replacement of the British purchasers of his crops by French importers. In 1787, he wrote that “by directing our commercial people’s attention to France, we gain the satisfaction of withholding a benefit from our *real enemies* and aiding *our real Friends*.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, during the early years of the French Revolution, he stayed connected with its developments through his son, John Jr., and his nephew, Charles Rutledge, who resided then in France and Britain.⁸¹ Upon hearing of the U.S. Senate’s ratification of the Jay Treaty, he returned to Charleston and was one of the leaders to speak against it, form a committee on the treaty, and write a report about it which was sent to President Washington. He argued that it harmed the American diplomatic relationship with France and praised French military successes.⁸² He also affirmed that he “had rather the President should die than sign that instrument” and would “prefer war to an adoption of it.”⁸³ Furthermore, he believed that the Jay Treaty proved that the

⁷⁸ Terry W. Lipscomb, *South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles: The Carolina Low Country, April 1775-June 1776, and the Battle of Fort Moultrie* (Columbia: The South Carolina Department of State Archives Press, 1994), pp. 9-14.

⁷⁹ John Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge* (Columbia, S.C.: The University of Columbia Press, 1992), p.170, 228.

⁸⁰ John Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p. 180. Italics in the text.

⁸¹ John Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p. 228.

⁸² John Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, pp. 248-249.

⁸³ *The Independent Chronicle* (Boston), 13/8/1795. Rutledge’s speech is also in Maeva Marcus and James Russell Perry (eds.), *The Documentary History of the Supreme Court of the United States, 1789-1801* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 780.

Washington's administration had started to dismantle the 1787 American Constitution. Quoting the Roman republican Cicero during his fight against anti-republicans, he asserted that he "would that the government had not fallen into the hands of men who desire not so much to reform as to abolish the constitution."⁸⁴ Amazingly, he signed his diatribe against the Treaty as "Jean-Jacque Rutledge," certainly as a reference to the radical republican, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the French revolutionaries' idol, who had been praised by Thomas Pinckney in 1779, as mentioned above, and who had just been entombed in the Pantheon, the resting place of French heroes.

Northern Federalists were furious at Rutledge for this attack on Washington and, especially, for doing so in his position as Supreme Court Chief Justice and for having delivered his speech "in front of the common people."⁸⁵ They called him a "popular demagogue" and accused him of "exciting to do what would destroy all government and defeat our representative system entirely."⁸⁶ Therefore, Federalists of the United Senate voted against his confirmation as Chief Justice and initiated a vicious campaign against him that forced him to resign from the United States Supreme Court.⁸⁷ The fact that Rutledge supported France during the debates against the Jay Treaty shows another division between pro-French Revolution supporters in the South Carolina elite. Rutledge shows that a planter could be both conservative *and* pro-French Revolution. This category also includes the Pinckney brothers and Rutledge's brother, Edward,

⁸⁴ John Rutledge Papers, SCL. Cicero's text in Latin is: "Atque utinam Respublica in homines non tam commutandarum rerum quam evertendarum cupidos incidisset." See Cicero, *de Officiis*, lib. II, caput VII.

⁸⁵ Anonymous, "Lamentation," in Matthew Carey (ed.), *The American remembrancer; or, An impartial collection of essays, resolves, speeches, &c. relative, or having affinity, to the treaty with Great Britain* (Philadelphia: printed by Henry Tuckniss, for Mathew Carey, [August] 1795), pp. 180-181.

⁸⁶ Anonymous, "Lamentation," pp. 180-181.

⁸⁷ Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p. 255.

and his sons, Rutledge Jr. and Charles, whose pro-French Revolution stances were discussed in Chapter Two. It also shows that one could be a conservative *and* a pro-French Jeffersonian, as John Rutledge Sr. ran in such capacity for the U.S. House of Representatives elections of December 1796. His son, John Rutledge Jr., competed in a neighboring district as a moderate Federalist in these same elections. Yet, Rutledge Jr. expressed strong anti-British and pro-French sentiments during the pro-Jay Treaty debates.⁸⁸ However, unlike his father, he proclaimed himself a Federalist and never criticized Washington. Therefore, father and son demonstrated another significant difference among South Carolina planters: Those who considered themselves pro-French Federalists refused to attack Washington, whereas many Jeffersonians attacked him.

Similarly to his friend, John Rutledge, Charles Pinckney abided by very radical views with regards to his opposition to the Jay Treaty based on his pro-French sentiments. This is in line with his earlier radical republican views which we discussed earlier in Chapter One and Two when he was serving respectively as South Carolina delegate at the 1787 constitutional convention and as South Carolina Governor in 1791. It must be interestingly noted that three of the four representatives at the 1787 convention, who included not only Charles Pinckney, but also Pierce Butler, and John Rutledge, opposed the Jay treaty; the fourth delegate at the 1787 Convention, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney did not express his views, certainly restrained by his brother's position as the American Ambassador in London. Similarly, it is a fascinating to observe that all seven South Carolina governors, for the twenty-four years between 1776 and 1800, with the

⁸⁸ Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p. 255.

single exception of Arnoldus Vanderhorst, a Hamiltonian Federalist, publicly and vociferously, opposed the Jay Treaty. With the exception of the very anti-French Revolution, Rawlins Lowndes, the most anti-Hamiltonian of them all, they also all significantly referred to the French alliance and gratitude for its assistance during the American Revolutionary War, in their reasons for opposing the Treaty.⁸⁹

Charles Pinckney delivered a speech at Charleston's anti-Jay Treaty meeting of 14 July 1795. He went even further than John Rutledge in underlining the anti-French goal of the treaty. He opposed it for three reasons regarding the French Revolution: His gratitude and "devotion to France," his attachment to the Franco-American military alliance, and his belief that Jay had agreed to the treaty only due to his anti-French bias. He argued that Jay's dislike for the French was so great that "he would have acquiesced to any British measures and endeavored to render [us] as unfriendly as he could to the French and brand our councils with ingratitude." He asserted that Jay had "displayed all his resentment to the only truly useful and valuable ally we have ever had."⁹⁰ However, in a significant difference from John Rutledge Sr., he spared Washington, expressing confidence that the President would realize Jay's error and eventually refute the Treaty. While he accused Jay of being "an abject statesman" who had been tempted by "British

⁸⁹ These seven governors were, in chronological order of their first governorship: John Rutledge, Rawlins Lowndes, John Matthews, Thomas Pinckney, William Moultrie, Charles Pinckney, and Edward Rutledge. Forbidden in his diplomatic position as Ambassador to Britain, Thomas Pinckney did not express his views on the Treaty. However, his 1795 enlisting, immediately after the Treaty's clauses were publicly revealed, of his and Edward Rutledge's four daughters into the Parisian boarding school of the sister of the Hamiltonian-detested Edmond Genet, strongly suggests, in addition to his international republicanism and gratitude for France, that he quietly opposed the Treaty.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Marty Matthews, *Forgotten Founding Father: The Life and Times of Charles Pinckney* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 90-91.

gold,” he proclaimed that Washington “would make the right decision. [He] possesses too much honor to consent to such a treaty. We know we can trust him.”⁹¹ Yet, he still threatened the President, in a way that Federalists would never do, by warning that Washington “would forever link his name to so injurious and degrading a measure if he betrayed [people’s] trust and signed the treaty.”⁹²

South Carolina Lowcountry Hamiltonian Federalists, such as Ralph Izard and Jacob Read, believed Charles Pinckney’s speech would be his political undoing because it would create “universal abhorrence and contempt.”⁹³ However, instead of criticizing Pinckney, the elite who had stayed at their plantations during the speeches showed their support for those who berated the treaty. They sent a “resolution” to Charleston that stated that they supported “their fellow citizens in Charleston [in] opposing the impending Jay Treaty.”⁹⁴ That members of the silent elite supported pro-French protestations of the vocal planters reveals the vast extent of support for France. Indeed, whereas neither Pinckney nor other pro-French orators suffered retribution in South Carolina, pro-Treaty did: Jacob Read had to wait for six months before returning to his residence in Charleston, which was nearly set on fire by a “crowd” on the evening following the speeches.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Matthews, *Forgotten Founding Father*, pp. 90-91.

⁹² Matthews, *Forgotten Founding Father*, pp. 90-91. Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p.35, and *The City Gazette*, 13/7/1795.

⁹³ Matthews, *Forgotten Father*, pp. 90-91.

⁹⁴ Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, pp. 90-91.

⁹⁵ Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p.256.

The anti-Jay Treaty orations were delivered at Saint Michael's church, the locus of planters' political life and of their pro-French July 4th Cincinnati orations. Also, in August, half of the South Carolina Senate, the legislative chamber elected through the state's most restrictive franchise, congratulated Senator Pierce Butler for his opposition to the Jay Treaty. This Senate's congratulation shows that the great planters were divided in the middle between pro-French and anti-French adherents, but those with the highest political positions in the state's institutions were overwhelmingly pro-French, as proved by the list of pro-French orators, almost to a man, all former governors and delegates at the 1787 Convention. The link with the Cincinnati also reveals that support for the French Revolution occurred in the socio-political institutions representing, and led by, the South Carolina's elite most forcefully.⁹⁶

The resolution attesting to the elite's support of the anti-Jay Treaty speeches was addressed to John Matthews, Signer of the Declaration of Independence and Governor of South Carolina (1783-1784). In July 1795, Matthews was a State Judge at the Court of Equity. He was one of five anti-Jay Treaty orators alongside John, Edward, John Jr. Rutledge, and Charles Pinckney. In 1798, he would wed Sarah Rutledge, the sister of Edward and John Rutledge.⁹⁷ Sarah Rutledge was also the aunt of another Sarah Rutledge, 'sally,' the daughter of Edward Rutledge. During these debates, Sally attended, alongside Thomas Pinckney's daughter, Elizabeth, a boarding school in France. Thomas Pinckney's choice of a French school in Paris, rather than a British school in London, for his and Rutledge's daughter when he was the American ambassador in London

⁹⁶ Matthews, *Forgotten Founding Father*, p.89.

⁹⁷ United States Congress, "John Matthews," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress.

suggests that he also had strong misgivings about the Jay Treaty. These misgivings are implied to an even greater degree because the boarding school was owned by Madame de Campan, the sister of ex-French ambassador Genet, the anti-British international republican who, during the Genet Affair, had caused mayhem by organizing French privateering and the projected invasion of East Florida and had slighted Washington who hated him, as previously discussed.⁹⁸

Furthermore, the debates on the Jay Treaty demonstrate that members of the South Carolina elite were ready to support Jeffersonian political stances regarding the French Revolution. Northern Federalists even accused the South Carolina elite of being “Jacobins” (sic) who, influenced by “French Revolutionary ideas, threatened the ‘stability of the republic’ through their “democratic fury.”⁹⁹ Concurring with Joanne Freeman that the “code of honor” was a “way of life” and “sacrosanct” for political leaders of the 1790s, John Haw argue that the debates in Charleston also reveal that the planters’ pro-French Revolution stance significantly derived from ethical and social values. He suggests that, in South Carolina, “a planter’s most precious possessions were his reputation and honor.”¹⁰⁰ Indeed, elite speeches were replete with accusations that the Jay Treaty harmed America’s honor, especially regarding its French ally.¹⁰¹ For his part, a Jeffersonian writer in Philadelphia’s *American Remembrancer* affirmed that the significant presence of French people in Charleston was responsible for the city’s fury at the Jay

⁹⁸ Sarah Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, 1/9/1795, Edward Rutledge Papers, SCL.

⁹⁹ Anonymous, “Lamentation,” in Matthew Carey (ed.), *The American remembrancer; or, An impartial collection of essays, resolves, speeches, &c. relative, or having affinity, to the treaty with Great Britain* (Philadelphia: printed by Henry Tuckniss, for Mathew Carey, [August] 1795), p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge.*, pp.247, 257.

¹⁰¹ Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge.*, pp.247, 257.

Treaty. He argued that the interactions of Charleston planters with French people had made them “share the same Jacobin principles” and that they “had an attachment to French principles favorable to America.”¹⁰² In another article of the same publication, “A Christian,” an anti-French Revolution writer agreed with his Jeffersonian opponent about the Charleston elite’s politics in 1795. Although it consisted of the most upper-class and wealthy cosmopolitan group in the United States, he described them as “enraged Jacobins.” In his opinion, the elite’s “blinded partiality” to France reflected their “hatred” for Britain through their experience during the Revolutionary War. First, the South Carolina elite “wanted revenge” upon Britain because of their imprisonment after the Fall of Charleston in May 1780. For example, he attributed the former Governor Matthews’s pro-French and anti-British sentiments to the fact that he had been ‘sent in irons to S Augustine where [he was] kept for six months in a dungeon.’¹⁰³ Secondly, he argued that John Rutledge’s pro-French sentiments were due to his anti-British exactions as South Carolina governor during the war: “John Rutledge is afraid of being hung (sic) if the British came to South Carolina as [he] hung (sic) all the British he could catch.”¹⁰⁴

The anti-Jay Treaty orations occurred only one month after another scare of an enslaved revolt in Charleston, on 13 June 1795. Charles Fraser Jr. said this scare did not result in any official

¹⁰² Anonymous, “Lamentation,” in Carey Matthew (ed.), p.60.

¹⁰³ A Christian, “Our Parson Says,” in Carey Matthew (ed.), pp. 67-77. Interestingly, the writer called himself “A Christian” likely because Jeffersonians were considered Deists, irreligious, or atheists, like French revolutionaries; although he did not condemn the pro-French South Carolina elite with respect to religion, it was believed that, except for the Huguenots, South Carolina planters only abided to religion in the most perfunctory way, at least outwardly. However, significant religious feelings are revealed in the private letters of the Rutledge, Pinckney, and Butler families. Martha Ramsay’s famed religious meditations were popular and published into the late 19th century.

¹⁰⁴ A Christian, “Our Parson Says,” pp. 67-77.

inquest but was large enough for the need of being hushed by “one prominent Charlestonian,” likely the new state governor, Arnoldus Vanderhorst. He also reveals evidence of planter anxiety as he asserts that “suspicions [of an enslaved people rebellion] arose from the affrighted imagination of the people.”¹⁰⁵ Yet, the fact that pro-French support came on the heel of a fear of slave revolt again challenges the idea that the pro-French Revolution elite, despite their strong planter anxiety, equated danger to the plantation system with the French Revolution and that, by 1794, support for Revolutionary France had collapsed. Indeed, the pro-French elite’s planter anxiety seems to have more greatly originated from apprehension at northern emancipationism rather arose from fear of French abolitionism. Fraser Jr. relates that the apprehension at the possibility of an enslaved revolt had originated from the talk of itinerant Methodist ministers who, while visiting Charleston, had called for the immediate emancipation of all the state’s enslaved people.¹⁰⁶

In addition to the elite debates, international republican anti-Jay Treaty articles were published in Charleston’s gazettes, which, as we discussed earlier, were owned or controlled by Charleston’s elite. For example, on the 1795 Bastille Day, Freneau’s *City Gazette*, on the left of such article, published the undertakings of the Irish republican Reverend Jackson who had met in Paris the Irish revolutionaries, Archibald Rowan and Theobald Wolfe Tone, and Charleston’s planter, William Tate, to plan an invasion of Britain through Franco-Irish forces. The British executed Reverend Jackson for spying for France before the plan when into effect but, as we shall

¹⁰⁵ Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston!*, p. 184 and note 17, p. 473.

¹⁰⁶ Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston!*, p. 184.

see later, the French government appointed Tate the invasion forces” commander. Also, a discussion of Tadeusz Kosciuszko’s republican struggle against Russia stood on the right of the anti-Jay Treaty article, showing it even more as linked to international republicanism.¹⁰⁷

Persistence of Support after 1795

After the Jay Treaty debates, persistent support for the French Revolution continued, despite a transient Federalist interlude that occurred from 1796 to 1799. It foreshadowed Jefferson’s victory in South Carolina at the 1800 presidential elections, and a consolidation of Republicanism that endured for decades. Pro-French support after 1795 also reveals moderate Federalists, such as the Pinckney brothers and John Rutledge Jr., in a different light than usually displayed. It shows them, according to their own opinion, as Francophile politicians battling extreme nationalism and impatience at French fatuity, on the one hand, and excessive anti-British and international republican solidarity, on the other hand, and trying to find a middle way between those of Jeffersonians and Hamiltonian Federalists that put American interest above all others.

In 1797, two years after the debates on the Jay Treaty, South Carolina Jeffersonians, such as Richard Beresford, Pierce Butler, and Aedanus Burke, could still not reconcile themselves with the treaty, considering it a menace to American republicanism and Franco-American relations. To address the Jay Treaty and the worsening Franco-American relations, Beresford, as he had

¹⁰⁷ City Gazette, 14/7/1795. It can also be observed that Kosciuszko’s emancipation of Polish serfs did not worry the gazette’s publishers.

done in 1793 in his fight against American neutrality, once more withdrew from his Arcadian retirement and wrote two pro-French Revolution and anti-Jay Treaty pamphlets of two-hundred-page pamphlets each.¹⁰⁸ Written under the impulsion of Butler, the pamphlets critically reflected not only the concerns of the former U.S. Senator and the State Republicans, but also ideas that became predominant only three years later, as proved by the 1800 election results. Like his 1793 pamphlet, they consisted of well-articulated facts and reasonings advocating Franco-American friendship and the maintenance of the 1778 Franco-American alliance. They also showed continuity in their vigorous defense of the French Revolution and their virulent attacks on the British social and political system. However, they differ in the level of viciousness with which the author attacked individual Federalists: Whereas, in 1793, he had attacked the Federalist government's policies in general terms and in a politic and moderate tone, in 1797, he vented his rage on the new president, John Adams, who had taken his functions at the beginning of the year, alongside the new vice-President, Thomas Jefferson. In 1797, his pamphlets even argued that war against Britain was preferable to maintaining anti-French policies and war with France.

Indeed, Beresford's pamphlets were published in the context of an imminent war threat between the USA and France. With the commencement of the Jay Treaty's implementation in March 1796, as Edward Rutledge had predicted to Jefferson in September 1795, French revolutionary authorities furiously stopped their benevolence towards America and started to attack U.S.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics* (Charleston, SC: W.P. Young, May 1797) and *Aristocracy: The Bane of Liberty: Education its Remedy* (Charleston, SC: W. P. Young, December 1797).

merchant ships that traded with Great Britain.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, northern Federalists, including gazetteers and Adams' government officials, openly supported an American declaration of war against France.¹¹⁰ Jefferson addressed these bellicose calls in a letter to his friend Aedanus Burke. He argued that America and France were "two nations who love each other affectionately" but had been "brought by the ill temper of their executive administrations to the brink to embrace their hands on the blood of one another." He also denounced Adams' hypocritical pretension "to wish to negotiate with the Directory" when "*war is intended*."¹¹¹ In 1796, Washington's administration and, from March 1797, Adams's government were suspected of preparing armed hostilities against France and the November 1796 recall of the American ambassador to France, James Monroe, famous for his 1794 impassioned republican speech at the French National Assembly, reinforced these suspicions.¹¹² Furthermore, Jeffersonians viewed Washington's March 1797 valedictory oration, advocating American disentanglement from Europe, and Adams' May 1797 anti-French speech, advocating for a military build-up, as calling for the end of the Alliance with France and even war. Finally, Monroe's replacement, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, considered not sufficiently pro-French by Republicans, Jefferson except, was refused accreditation by the French government.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Edward Rutledge to Thomas Jefferson, 8/9/1795, TJP.

¹¹⁰ John Ferling, *John Adams: A Life* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee, 1992), 353. PB to Aedanus Burke, 1/4/1796, PBP, SCL. William Cobbett and John Fenno were the two most forceful advocates of war with France.

¹¹¹ Thomas Jefferson to Aedanus Burke, 17/6/1797, *Aedanus Burke Papers*, WL, UNC-CH. Italics in the text.

¹¹² Ferling, *John Adams*, p. 353. Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, p.538.

¹¹³ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 538, 546-555, 566-571. TJ to TP, 29 /5/1797, FO, and TJ to Elbridge Gerry, 21/6/1797, TJP, where Jefferson tells Gerry that he and Pinckney will "give a preponderance" to pro-French sentiments in the American diplomatic delegation. When Pinckney was renominated in July 1797 as a diplomat to France, Jeffersonians were again infuriated; while moderate critics of the French Revolution, now including John Rutledge Jr., thought that Pinckney was excessively pro-French; John Rutledge Jr. to William Rhett Smith, 15/8/1797, JRP, WL, UNC-CH. Adams had nominated Pinckney as a moderate compromise to balance Elbridge Gerry, a Jeffersonian, and John Marshall, a strongly anti-French Federalist.

Beresford's pamphlets were composed in response to these developments. They were also written when, in South Carolina itself, pro-French Revolution moderate Federalists, like Edward Rutledge, distanced themselves from unequivocal support for Revolutionary France or, like John Rutledge Jr., started to moderately but publicly attack its worst features. Meanwhile, backcountry anti-French Hamiltonian Federalists, such as Robert Goodloe Harper, began to call for outright war with France.¹¹⁴ These Federalists were invigorated by the 1796 U.S. House elections, which saw Republican John Rutledge's defeat and his Federalist son's victory.¹¹⁵ The pamphlets contain three main arguments, which would become crucial during the debates during the elections of 1800: The Jay Treaty nefariously caused the collapse of Franco-American relations; therefore, it must be destroyed to restore Franco-American amity; this friendship can be maintained as Americans will understand its beneficence if they are properly educated through universal and free education.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Robert Goodloe Harper, *Observations on the dispute between the United States and France, addressed by Robert Goodloe Harper, ... to his constituents, in May 1797* (Dublin: P. Byrne, 1798).

¹¹⁵ www.ourcampaigns.com/South_Carolina. Rutledge Jr. won with 87% of the vote. In 1788 and 1790, 2/3rd of U.S. Representatives for the state's Lowcountry were elected as Federalists; in 1792 and 1794, only 1/3rd, but the entire slate in 1796 and 1798. In 1796, they formed 2/3rd of the Lowcountry U.S. representatives compared to 1/3rd in 1794.

¹¹⁶ For planters' belief that education was crucial for the success of a republic, as it promoted private and public virtue among students, the future representatives of the people, see David W. Robson, *Educating Republicans: the College in the Era of the American Revolution, 1750-1800* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985). See also Peter S. Onuf, James Horn, Jan Ellen Lewis (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), which discusses education as part of political philosophy dynamics during the presidency of John Adams. For the idea that Republican Societies were central to establishing education in the political debate, see Foner, *Democratic-Republican Societies*, p. 15.

Beresford considered the Jay Treaty nefarious because he associated its attack against republican France with the Federalist attack, as he saw it, against republican America. He argued that the two republics were harmed because the Treaty “prostrated at the feet of [Britain] the honor and interest of America, and the interest of France, and put at hazard the future services of so firm a friend.”¹¹⁷ Indeed, France had treated America very amicably, from the time of the 1778 Franco-American Alliance to the start of the implementation of the Jay Treaty in March 1796. Notably, and to the happy surprise of many Americans, France had not asked anything for itself at the Treaty of Paris of 1783 and, unlike Britain, had not attacked American ships nor impressed American sailors. He now feared the treaty would turn France into “a virulent and most powerful foe.”¹¹⁸ Believing that Britain had negotiated the Treaty with the view of destroying both French and American republics, Beresford wrote in the context of the historical situation of 1797 when, in Britain itself, the British government was at the height of its suppression of British international republicanism and support for France, and was prosecuting dozens of republicans and closing pro-French Revolution societies, such as the London Corresponding Society, with whom South Carolina Jeffersonians had corresponded and invited its leaders to the state.¹¹⁹

Beresford saw the British war with France in the same light. He contended that “the object of the present bloody war with the French republic [is to preclude] the introduction into [British]

¹¹⁷ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p 13.

¹¹⁸ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 13.

¹¹⁹ For the evolving British reactions to the French Revolution, see David Blindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1989) and Marilyn Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1998).

dominions, [of] principles of republican government.”¹²⁰ He argued that, just as it aimed to destroy it in France, Britain wished to destroy republicanism in America. He also viewed Britain as holding a terrible historical record in treating English republicans, such as the famous Algernon Sidney, and was, therefore, untrustworthy to make a treaty with a republican country.¹²¹

As other Republicans, Beresford denounced an Hamiltonian clique, which he called “the British faction,” and perceived as having infiltrated John Adams’ administration, which he still hoped would prove less anti-French than the former Secretary of the Treasury. However, when he published his first pamphlet, in May 1797, he was unaware of Adams’ anti-French speech of May 16th.¹²² Still, he berated Federalists as constituting a fifth column of Englishmen at heart. He exclaimed: “Away then forever with these English ministers! The men in iron masks whom no one but the keeper [Hamilton] knows and knows them for their mischief.”¹²³ He also labeled the Jay Treaty and the Federalists’ attacks against France “unnatural,” as it turned republican America into a friend of a monarchy, Britain, and an enemy of a republic, France. Worse, he also viewed it as “unnatural” because the Treaty was concluded with America’s enemy and against the benefit of America’s ally, a fact continuously repeated by the pro-French South Carolina elite. He exclaimed that America had “entered into the treaty with our enemies against the interests of our abandoned friends.”¹²⁴ He judged Britain as America’s “implacable” foe,¹²⁵ which also

¹²⁰ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 10-11.

¹²¹ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 2, 34.

¹²² Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 2, 34.

¹²³ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 34.

¹²⁴ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 7-8.

¹²⁵ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 23.

could not be trusted with the Jay Treaty due to its exactions during the Revolutionary War, and argued the lack of logic to make a treaty with such a foe, exclaiming that Americans “have entered into a treaty with our enemies who have already cut the throats of 100,000 of our fathers and brothers.”¹²⁶ He, therefore, reflected the opinions of other South Carolina elite members who regularly mentioned Americano-British enmity, British exactions during the American Revolutionary War, and the idea that Britain could be no more trusted in the 1790s than in the 1770s.

Furthermore, Beresford added two other interrelated reasons for the Jay Treaty’s oddity. First, it could provoke the “ruin” of one of the contractual parties by the other as Britain threatened American republicanism and independence through it. He exclaimed that the treaty “tends to the utter extirpation of republican principles” and was “a cursed compact” in the downfall of “American independence” as its “oppressive bonds bind America’s hands.”¹²⁷ He then compared the treatment of Britain towards America with the warm wishes that France entertained for his country by quoting from the 1778 Franco-American Treaty of Alliance. He reminded his readers that “the essential end of the present defensive alliance is to maintain the liberty, sovereignty, and independence, absolute and unlimited of the United States effectually.”¹²⁸ He considered France as America’s best friend as revealed by their alliance, which entertained “the direct purpose [of having] the establishment of the independence of America [while Britain held] the

¹²⁶ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p.7.

¹²⁷ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 12.

¹²⁸ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 11-12, quoting Article Two of the 1778 treaty of alliance.

manifest, unequivocal, systematic design [for] its destruction.”¹²⁹ He also believed that France, in 1797, continued to wish that America maintain its republicanism and independence.¹³⁰ Therefore, he advocated for the maintenance of the Franco-American alliance as the United States “gained immensely” from it by its guarantee of American independence. He even called for American military and financial assistance for France, and he raged at America’s refusal to help its ally. He fumed that the national government’s reply to France’s request for arms stated that “[it] would not be supplied so much as a single pistol.”¹³¹ Indeed, the American government had sharply turned against France after August 1795 when Edmund Randolph resigned as Secretary of State. Randolph’s replacement, Timothy Pickering, called for war against France and refused to work to liberate from prison, South Carolina’s son, Francis K. Huger, after he had heroically tried to rescue Lafayette from his confinement in Austria.¹³²

Beresford also argued that America’s surrender to the Jay Treaty and its reluctance to fight Britain originated from a loss of “character” and asserted that war with honor on behalf of a long-lasting friend and ally was preferable to a dishonorable peace. Therefore, he called for a revival of “the spirit of ‘76.” He believed this revolutionary spirit demanded “an insurrection” against the national government because of the Federalists’ “designs against the most precious rights of American citizens to trade with France or expatriate themselves and enroll in foreign armies.”

¹²⁹ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 12.

¹³⁰ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 12.

¹³¹ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 12.

¹³² Thomas Pinckney expressed concern about his future son-in-law’s imprisonment; it was, however, the Polish international republican Count Mitrowsky who enabled Huger’s release. Pickering’s stance against France was even harsher than Adams’, who preferred peace to war. It prompted Adams to dismiss him in 1800. See Gerard Clarfield, *Timothy Pickering and the American Republic* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 1980), pp. 142-143.

Equating peace with “infamy,” he concluded that “better had it been to have war” than not assist France.¹³³ His calls of insurrection could not threaten him with accusations of treason since he published his pamphlet anonymously, as it only mentioned that the author was “a member of the Old Congress.”¹³⁴ His allusion to this “Old” Confederation Congress (1774-1789), which had led the American Revolutionary War, made his audience contrast the Patriots’ heroism with the present Federalist pusillanimity who, in dread of British retaliation, did not dare to assist their ally. Indeed, his allusion to the Revolutionary War reflected his South Carolina Jeffersonian colleagues’ views about a Federalist betrayal of revolutionary principles. Aedanus Burke told Jefferson that the Federalists no longer “adhere to the principles of the Revolution. The fruit of our war with Britain is again in jeopardy.”¹³⁵ Beresford, however, described this betrayal in more colorful ways than his cautious judicial colleague, claiming that the Federalists had destroyed the freedom “earned” and “reared upon the bones and cemented with the blood of patriots. The gorgeous fabric of liberty is tottering to its fall.”¹³⁶ Similarly to Beresford, Butler had used similar imagery when he proclaimed that, due to the Federalists’ anti-republicanism, “the blood of Patriotism has been shed in vain.”¹³⁷ Furthermore, Beresford held sanguine optimism that a war would be won against Britain, reminding that America and France had defeated Britain in 1783 and would again do so: “No nation, baffled and confounded as Britain has been in her attempts

¹³³ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 18. 26-27.

¹³⁴ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, title page.

¹³⁵ Aedanus Burke to Thomas Jefferson, 21/6/1797, FO.

¹³⁶ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p.1.

¹³⁷ Butler to Aedanus Burke, 31/3/1796, PBP, HSP microfilm, SCL.

to crush the germs of liberty both in America and France, has ever better reason to dread [their] smiting hands.”¹³⁸

Beresford’s bellicose arguments significantly differed from those of South Carolina’s pro-French moderate Federalists, such as Edward Rutledge, who, by this time, argued that French attacks on American ships forced him to favor his country as his loyalty towards it was more substantial than his affection for France.¹³⁹ However, unlike Rutledge, Beresford did not believe that French exactions excused choosing America over France: He asserted that the French were justified in their attacks as they thought Americans, who “loved them no more, gave them no substantial proof of affection.”¹⁴⁰ He also replied to those who rebuked the French government for refusing to accredit Charles Cotesworth Pinckney as ambassador to France. He believed that it had sufficient reason to do so. He assumed the role of the French government, speaking to Pinckney: “You give us words, but words are air, you wish to give us more words, but [the British,] you uphold with deeds; nay, us, you agreed to starve.”¹⁴¹ In this statement, he referred to Pinckney’s assurance to the French that America was their friend when the Jay Treaty proved harmful to them: By preventing American food exports to France and endorsing British capture of ships provisioning France, it was contributing to the starving of the French population. Indeed, Jefferson and Madison had also referred to this issue, wishing to provision France with food, even

¹³⁸ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 27.

¹³⁹ Edward Rutledge to Thomas Pinckney, 24/10/1797, Edward Rutledge Papers, SCL.

¹⁴⁰ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁴¹ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, pp. 14-15

for free, if necessary.¹⁴² For Beresford, the charge that France was anti-American because it refused to accredit Pinckney was “frivolous.” On the contrary, he saw France as still pro-American despite America’s unfaithfulness: “[France] so long continued to love us [despite our betrayal]. The French love us.”¹⁴³ He also refuted the Federalist accusation, which he deemed “false from first to last,” that France “plundered [American] trade.” He compared French attacks on American shipping with those of Britain, arguing that France did not harm American commerce significantly. It did not impound ships trading with Britain: “American vessels with British goods are allowed to depart, as soon as British property [is] seized, with full compensation for freight, and no detention [of the crew.]”¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, he contended that “the French government never authorized the cruisers” spoliation of American commerce.” He also concluded that French attacks were insignificant compared to Britain’s: “[They constitute] a small inconvenience, appearing as the teasing of a fly compared to the ravening of a tiger.”¹⁴⁵

In his December 1797 pamphlet, Beresford discussed the Jeffersonian ideas on education to attack Federalist policies against France. He contended that Americans could only wake up to anti-republican schemes through free and universal education. He asserted that Federalists used popular ignorance to push through their policies: “the [Federalist] wretch treaded upon the helpless neck of innocence and imposed upon the credulity of honest men who have not the

¹⁴² Madison to Jefferson, [], FO.

¹⁴³ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁵ Beresford, *Sketches of French and English Politics*, p. 14.

capacity or means of information.”¹⁴⁶ In his opinion, lack of education, whether in *Ancien Régime* France or under the American Federalist government, resulted in the situation where:

The unthinking, witless multitude have confided themselves into the merciless hands of ambitious champions, like sheep into the gripe of tigers. [But the French revolutionaries, through] the labors of literary patriots, defunct but still immortal, have redeemed their freedom [and created a] system of liberal and enlightened legislation which emanated from the volumes of Montesquieu, Voltaire, and their coadjutors.¹⁴⁷

This emphasis on popular education reflected the Enlightenment’s belief, especially that of the Encyclopedists and Rousseau, by which the elite South Carolina Revolutionary War generation abided, that learning was crucial to build and strengthen republicanism. As mentioned in Chapter One, in 1770, planters, including the Pinckney brothers and future members of the Republican Society, had established the College of Charleston, which was free and open to all adult men. Indeed, Beresford believed that “the best means to perpetuate the liberty we may yet be said to hold is the *information of the whole mass of the people*.” He was dazzled by the fact that, in the middle of a terrible war, French revolutionaries still emphasized education: “The French nation has sedulously cultivated the arts of peace amid the roar of war and warbling of the muses” lyres blended with the bray of cannon. The committee of public instruction published Le Brun’s odes in the heat of revolution, and apartments assigned him in a palace.”¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, he affirmed

¹⁴⁶ Beresford, *Aristocracy: The Bane of Liberty: Education its Remedy*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴⁷ Beresford, *Aristocracy: The Bane of Liberty: Education its Remedy*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴⁸ Beresford, *Aristocracy: The Bane of Liberty: Education its Remedy*, pp. 4-5. Le Brun was the Girondin poet-minister of Foreign Affairs who had devised the project plan for the East Florida invasion. See Genet to Lebrun, 16/4/1793,

that, in contrast to these French educational policies, the Federalist government was doing the opposite: Rather than instilling patriotism and heroism among the people, it only promoted mediocre and venal works. He sarcastically asked a rhetorical question: "Among rulers of the American republic, what books have this band of scholars, statesmen, and patriots consigned to the perusal of the citizens of the United States? Cocker's arithmetic and the Merchant's Vademecum!" Therefore, he argued that the Federalist government shunned education because it wanted the people's complete and unthinking obedience, believing that there was nothing 'so worthless or wicked as information in the body of the people: The duty of the nation [was] to confide its business with implicit confidence to the constituted authorities."¹⁴⁹ Through this affirmation, Beresford alluded to the above-discussed debate between Federalists and Jeffersonians about whether sovereignty lay with all citizens or only the educated few, called "natural aristocrats." Arguing that "the sovereign of a free government is the people," he asserted that, as in France, American popular sovereignty could only become a reality through universal education.¹⁵⁰

Like Beresford, John Rutledge steadfastly supported France after 1797. In 1798, he dismissed the uproar generated by the XYZ Affair as anti-French propaganda. Dismissing the Federalists' sanctimonious criticisms against the French government for its attempt at bribing the American envoys, he relativized French corruption by asserting that French authorities did "no more than

"Correspondence of French Ministers to the United States, 1791-1797, *Annual Report of the American History Association for the Year 1903*, Vol. 2 (1904), quoted by Alderson, *This Bright Era*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁴⁹ Beresford, *Aristocracy: The Bane of Liberty: Education its Remedy* p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Beresford, *Aristocracy: The Bane of Liberty: Education its Remedy*, p. 6.

what often happens in [royal] courts.” He asserted that American revolutionaries had been equally corrupt: he contended that “Vergennes was undoubtedly bribed by Franklin” in 1778 when the American envoy tried to persuade France to become America’s ally. He advised the American administration to do the same as Franklin had done and, to an even more significant amount than the French government desired, to ensure a durable restoration of Franco-American relations.¹⁵¹

Meanwhile, John’s friend and relative, Charles Pinckney, as South Carolina Governor, confirmed his determination to preserve the best Franco-American relations possible, in his valedictory speech to the State Congress of December 1798.¹⁵² This demonstrates Pinckney’s political continuity in his pro-French sentiments: Seven years earlier, already as South Carolina Governor, he had unsuccessfully advised Washington not to send military aid to St. Domingue’s royalist planters to help them crush the Haitian Revolution, in order to not disrupt Franco-American relations, as we discussed in Chapter One. Two years later after his speech to the South Carolina Congress, in October 1800, he again remained ideologically consistent when he told Jefferson that he was dedicated “to use every exertion in my power to make a peace with France.”¹⁵³ Meantime, as U.S. Senator, he gave a long speech, later published as a pamphlet, advising the Senate to help a reconciliation with France by opposing a bill that would have further restricted

¹⁵¹ Quotation in Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p. 269.

¹⁵² The brother of Pinckney’s wife, Mary Laurens, had married John Rutledge’s daughter.

¹⁵³ Charles Rutledge to Thomas Jefferson, 3/12/1800, PTJ.

commerce with France.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, alongside Peter Freneau, he served as Jefferson's campaign manager in South Carolina: He wrote twenty-four pro-Jefferson articles published in Freneau's *City Gazette*, signing them as "A Republican" or "A Republican Farmer."¹⁵⁵ In addition to Rutledge, even the South Carolina elite, which considered itself Federalist after 1797, expressed uneasiness at some of the national government's anti-French policies. Only three weeks after President Adams officially abrogated the 1778 Franco-American Treaty of Alliance in July 1798 and authorized American ships to attack French privateers, Edward Rutledge castigated the anti-French Revolution Alien and Sedition Acts.¹⁵⁶

Furthermore, like other moderate Federalists such as the Pinckney brothers, Edward Rutledge opposed war against France or an alliance with Britain.¹⁵⁷ Likewise, his nephew, John Rutledge Jr., despite his criticisms of the French Revolution after 1796, advocated a *modus vivendi* between France and America. In December 1799, discussing the unsuitability of the new American embassy to France, which he deemed not "Frenchified" enough, he asserted that harmonious Franco-American relations should be restored.¹⁵⁸ He suggested Adams had gone too far in its

¹⁵⁴ Charles Pinckney to Thomas Jefferson, 12/0/1800 and 16/10/1800, TJP. See also in Charles Evans, 'speeches of Charles Pinckney, Esq, in Congress... On the Intercourse Bill with France,' *American Bibliography: A Chronological Bibliography of all Books, Pamphlets, Periodical Publications Printed... from 1639 to 1820* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, and Worcester, MA: The American Antiquarian Society. 1903-1959, 39 vols.). Also in *Early American Imprints, Series 1 [1622-1800, Evans Collection]*, no. 38270, Readex.

¹⁵⁵ Charles Pinckney to Thomas Jefferson, 12/0/1800 and 16/10/1800, TJP.

¹⁵⁶ Edward Rutledge to John Rutledge Jr., 29/7/1798, JRP, SC, UNC. The Alien and Sedition Acts were enacted undiplomatically on Bastille Day of 14 July 1798.

¹⁵⁷ Haw, p. 271. Although the XYZ had affected Cotesworth Pinckney, to whom the French bribes had been supposedly offered, his wife, Mary, while in Paris with her husband, still entertained good sentiments towards the French Revolution, asserting that "the present government seems very humane," Mary Pinckney to ?, 1/7/1797, RDL-UVA.

¹⁵⁸ John Rutledge Jr. to Robert Rhett Smith, 7/12/1799, JRP, UNC-CH. For similar reconciliation wishes and attacks on the Alien and Seditious Acts, see Charles Pinckney to the South Carolina Congress, 12/4/1798, PFP, RDL-UVA.

anti-French policies as “the President’s late conduct has done much harm in dissolving natural alliances.”¹⁵⁹ He affirmed that it was natural for France and America to be allies as both were republics.¹⁶⁰ He also “deplore[d] the former *modus rei* which has laid the roots of bitterness” and hoped that causes for the two countries’ estrangement would soon be resolved as it “behoove[d] another attempt at an accommodation with France.”¹⁶¹ Furthermore, he wished reconciliation with France for pragmatic reasons, apprehending that France and Britain might ‘secretly’ make some mutual agreement detrimental to the American national interest. However, he believed a rapprochement of America with France would prevent such an eventuality since the two countries “need mutual aid to accomplish an object common to them.”¹⁶² Therefore, Rutledge was consistent with his assertions, which we discussed above, that he was not anti-French Revolution but put the American national interest above all.

In sharp contrast to these moderate Federalists accepting that the French Revolution could sometimes be rightly criticized, but like their national leader, Jefferson, South Carolinian die-hard supporters of France did not countenance any criticism of France. Butler was a prime example. In March 1798, distressed at the new anti-French sentiments in his home state and with the United States and France moving towards war, he passionately wrote to Aedanus Burke:

Is there no such thing as National Gratitude? An Otis and a Harper would answer there is no such a thing. I leave them in possession of their moral principle. I suspected the new

¹⁵⁹ John Rutledge Jr. to Robert Rhett Smith, 7/12/1799, JRP, UNC-CH.

¹⁶⁰ John Rutledge Jr. to Bishop Robert Rhett Smith, 7/12/1799, JRP, UNC-CH.

¹⁶¹ John Rutledge Jr. to Bishop Robert Rhett Smith, 7/12/1799, JRP, UNC-CH.

¹⁶² John Rutledge Jr. to Bishop Robert Rhett Smith, 7/12/1799, JRP, UNC-CH.

doctrine would have advocates, but I did not apprehend that any considerable portion of the citizens of South Carolina would countenance such a heresy. The Human race has many obligations to the French. I think they have saved more than one from despotism. Our last account from Europe impresses the belief that the French are determined on an invasion of England. It is a bold attempt that none, but Frenchmen would undertake.¹⁶³

Decline of Support after 1795

Despite this persistence of elite support for France after 1795, pro-French sentiment sharply declined after the American people reconciled themselves with the Jay Treaty in 1796. 1796 also marks when some South Carolina pro-French supporters started to turn away from France. On the one hand, the elite, like the rest of America, became reconciled with the Jay Treaty due to realizing its economic benefits. On the other hand, France began to hurt American national and South Carolina interests by capturing U.S. ships trading with Britain. Therefore, influenced by economic self-interest and nationalism, some elite chose America over France. Elkins and Kitrick argue that, from the start of its implementation in March 1796, public sentiment towards the Jay Treaty underwent a pronounced shift by radically moving away from its determined opposition of 1795. They contend that the American people were now “insisting that the Treaty be carried into effect based on exalted and even crass considerations of national and individual self-interest.”¹⁶⁴ Despite being a strong supporter of the French Revolution, James Monroe

¹⁶³ PB to AB, 17 /3/1798, PBP, HSP microfilm, SCL. Since Butler’s elegy was addressed to his long-time friend Burke, Burke Likely shared the same feelings at this time. For the essential need of common political ideology for friendships in late Eighteenth-century South Carolina, see LD, p. 184.

¹⁶⁴ Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, p.415.

recognized the advantages of the treaty for American commerce. He reiterated its economic benefits, benefits which South Carolina Federalist leaders, such as Ralph Izard and Robert G. Harper, also stipulated.¹⁶⁵ Monroe indeed argued that “free *trade* to the [Caribbean] *islands* under the protection of the *all-powerful* British flag [and] England” would no longer ‘support Spain in favor of [blocking] the *Mississippi* [to American merchants.]’¹⁶⁶ Indeed, the opening of the British and French West Indies and the Mississippi to American traders benefited South Carolina planters, as the state was located midway between them and, except Georgia, closer to these two regions than any American state. In addition to his remorse for having shunned him from the 1794 treaty negotiations with Britain, this fact likely prompted Washington to give Thomas Pinckney the honor of making a treaty with Spain about the opening of the Mississippi, which sine qua non was British agreement as stipulated in the Jay Treaty. Additionally, South Carolina planters should have welcomed the protection of the British navy in their trade with Britain and the West Indies. Britain was their primary crop importer, and the Caribbeans constituted a welcomed market after the loss of their markets in the French West Indies due to the Haitian Revolution and the Franco-British naval war, as well as due to the danger that the British navy posed for trading with France.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ For example, Robert G. Harper, An address from Robert Goodloe Harper, of South Carolina, to his constituents containing his reasons for approving of the treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with Great Britain (Boston: Young and Minns, at the press of rational federalism, 1796).

¹⁶⁶ Quoted by Elkins and McKittrick, *The Federalist Era*, pp. 514-416. Italics in the text.

¹⁶⁷ For the importance of South Carolina-British trade in the 1780s, see Huw David, Huw David, *Trade, Politics, and Revolution: South Carolina and Britain's Atlantic Commerce, 1730-1790* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2018). No study on the state's trade with Britain has been published for the 1790s.

From August 1795, the French administration had become infuriated at the anti-French stance of the new Secretary of State, the Anglophile Thomas Pickering. Pickering had replaced the Francophile Edmund Randolph, expelled from Washington's government for handing over American state secrets to French revolutionaries. It was also livid at the implementation of the Jay Treaty, which had started on February 29th, 1796. Until then, France hoped the treaty might be annulled as it had witnessed its opposition by Jeffersonians. In March 1796, France started to capture American ships trading with Britain. Effectively, France became the aggressor. Indeed, if the Jay Treaty had a pro-British bias and hurt French interests, it did not make America attack French ships. Due to the French aggressive actions, Americans started to prepare for a defensive war with France.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, from 1796, South Carolina moderate pro-French supporters, who described themselves as Federalists, either became quieter regarding their support of the French Revolution, like the Pinckney brothers or became overtly critical of France, like John Rutledge Jr. This change of the moderate elite from pro- to anti-French Revolution was reflected in the results of the 1796 elections. For example, John Edwards, the Jeffersonian mayor of Charleston who had allowed French privateer activities to reach their peak in 1795, was replaced by the Federalist William Henry de Saussure.¹⁶⁹ South Carolina Federalists also improved their U.S. House representation in the Lowcountry from one-third to two-thirds. William Loughton Smith won 85 percent of the votes in Charleston, compared to 52 percent in 1794 when he ran against two pro-French Revolution candidates. Despite his hero status in this election, the Jeffersonian John Rutledge Sr. was not elected, unlike his son, the Federalist John Rutledge Jr., who won by a large

¹⁶⁸ Wells, *South Carolina History*, p. 9. For the unavoidability of war, see editor's note, "Robert Sheffield," FO.

¹⁶⁹ www.ourcampaigns.com. Jackson, *Privateers*, p. 92 and p. 91 note 12. Edward was the brother of John B. Holmes, the gentleman berated by Hamilton for not informing of French privateering in Charleston in June 1794.

margin in Beaufort.¹⁷⁰ In contrast to the 1794 elections, Rutledge Jr. had become an anti-French Revolution leader by November 1796 and won Beaufort's circumscription with 87 percent of the votes.¹⁷¹ A violent man whose career ended after he assaulted a U.S. Senator in 1803, he coruscated pro-French Revolution planters. In 1796, he called them "low-class republicans," even though they descended from European aristocratic or South Carolina elite families.¹⁷²

In addition, there was also a transformation of the Society of the Cincinnati from solid support to enmity for the French Revolution. Whereas from 1792 to 1795, supporters of the French Revolution, such as Drayton and Tucker, had been selected to give the 4th of July orations, long-time anti-French Revolution Federalists, such as William Loughton Smith and William Henry de Saussure, were chosen from 1796 onwards.¹⁷³ This turn-around of the Society of the Cincinnati seems logical given the shift towards accepting the Jay Treaty and the start of French attacks on American shipping. Until then, it supported France as the constitution of the Society obligated, and because of their past friendship with French officers and a belief that the military alliance was beneficial against Britain. However, once the United States' interests were at play and France became a potential military foe, the compulsion to be amicable with France disappeared.

¹⁷⁰ www.ourcampaigns.com. The site gives the number of votes for each candidate. I calculated the percentages. John Rutledge Sr., who had said he preferred to see Washington dead than sign the Jay Treaty, got 2% of the vote.

¹⁷¹ www.ourcampaigns.com.

¹⁷² www.ourcampaigns.com. Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge*, p. 268. For John Rutledge Jr. becoming a leading anti-French Revolution Federalist in 1797, see Elizabeth Cometti, "John Rutledge, Jr., Federalist," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (May 1947), p. 190. For Federal Elections in South Carolina, see Gordon DenBoer (ed.), *Documentary History of the First Federal Elections* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), pp. 208-210.

¹⁷³ William Loughton Smith, *An oration, delivered in St. Philip's Church, before the inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina, on the fourth of July 1796, in commemoration of American independence* (NL: Gale Sabin Americana, 2012) and William Henry de Saussure, *An oration... Cincinnati* (Charleston: W. P. Young, 1798).

As military men, the Cincinnati's first duty was defending their country. Consequently, they could hardly remain on good terms with France, which was attacking American ships and commerce. In other words, the Cincinnati had to choose between support for France and republican internationalism or American nationalism and antagonism towards France. They chose the latter. Edward Rutledge illustrates this dilemma. He argued that he was not against France but put America first. From 1796, he criticized pro-French South Carolinians who, in his opinion, put French interests above Americans.”¹⁷⁴ When war with France was possible, the Cincinnati followed the trend of some self-proclaimed pro-French Revolution supporters turning against the French Revolution.

In May 1797, the anti-French Revolution sentiment of some elite members augmented when they heard that their favorite son, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, had been refused accreditation as American ambassador to the French Republic. In 1796, Pinckney still entertained warm wishes for the French Revolution, as displayed by his optimism, mentioned above, that the French problems, which he saw as inevitable in all revolutions, would be remedied. As mentioned earlier, Jefferson admitted Pinckney's pro-French Revolution stance, whereas Hamilton, suspicious of Pinckney's pro-French sentiment, had tried to prevent his diplomatic appointment. However, in May 1797, many in America judged Pinckney's non-accreditation to constitute a slight to America's honor and interests. His non-accreditation also provoked President Adams to initiate a debate about having the House of Representatives pass a Defense Act directed against France.

¹⁷⁴ Haw, John and Edward Rutledge, p.267.

During the discussions about Pinckney and the Defense Act, Adams spoke vehemently against the French Revolution. Some members of the South Carolina elite displayed their new anti-French feelings by acquiescing with Adams. Two-thirds of the state's representatives voted for the Defense Act. In addition, Charleston's gazettes, which had all been hitherto Jeffersonian, started to publish anti-French articles.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, after 1797, departing to some extent to their previous depth of international sentiments, moderate Federalists, such as Edward Rutledge, alluded to their nationalistic feelings. Rutledge had been sufficiently pro-French Revolution to support Jefferson in the presidential elections of 1796.¹⁷⁶ However, in late 1797, criticizing the continued French mistreatment of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, he switched his discourse and railed against Jeffersonians. He accused them of "looking unpatriotic" by refusing to support military defenses against France and putting French interests above those of the United States. He felt "hurt" by this lack of nationalistic feeling and contrasted it with his own. Although he still entertained "goodwill" for the French Revolution, he put "American honor and interests first."¹⁷⁷

In addition to reasons of self-interest and nationalism occasioned by the implementation of the Jay Treaty in 1796 and its French military reactions, the fact that the French Revolution in 1797 paradoxically ceased to be revolutionary also revolted some former pro-French Revolution supporters.¹⁷⁸ The French government stopped following republican principles domestically and internationally and drove away from France many transatlantic international republicans, such as those in the northern United States and Britain.¹⁷⁹ 1797 constituted a turning point for the

¹⁷⁵ Annals of Congress for the Year 1797, pp. 54, 234, quoted by Wolfson, *Democracy*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁷⁶ Haw, John and Edward Rutledge, p.265.

¹⁷⁷ Haw, John and Edward Rutledge, p. 267.

¹⁷⁸ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411.

¹⁷⁹ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411.

French Revolution and how the international republican community judged it.¹⁸⁰ Domestically, France became de facto a dictatorship in 1797, when its government overturned the results of the legislative elections in what became known as the coup-d'état of Fructidor.¹⁸¹ The coup d'état of Fructidor violated republican principles. The French government unconstitutionally called the army to Paris and arrested three of its members in a self-coup. Two of them were sent to penal colonies of Guyana, where the chance of long-term survival was minimal; about one hundred legislators were also imprisoned. In addition, military tribunals were instituted to judge political defendants and people accused of common crimes, such as highway robbery. Freedom of opinion, the press, and religion were also terminated, with nearly one thousand five hundred journalists, publishers, and priests arrested and sent to penal colonies in France and its overseas territories. In 1797, dictatorship and oppression returned for the first time since Robespierre. To some former pro-French supporters, it seemed that, after eight long years, the French Revolution could not reach a satisfactory conclusion.¹⁸² As Benjamin Rush told Jefferson, the French Revolution had now been “dishonored by [its] follies and crimes” and no longer represented or defended true republicanism as understood by American Republicans.¹⁸³

Similarly to Benjamin Rush, the French Revolution's movement towards anti-republicanism and even dictatorship must have unsettled South Carolina's pro-French republicans, whether

¹⁸⁰ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411.

¹⁸¹ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411; William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 330. For the involvement of the military in the coup, see Ramsay W. Phipps, “The Coup d'Etat of Fructidor,” *The Armies of the French Revolution*, Vol. IV (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), pp. 230-347.

¹⁸² Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411.

¹⁸³ Benjamin Rush to Thomas Jefferson, 6/10/1800.

moderate Federalists of Jeffersonians. Actually, for some politically moderate pro-French South Carolinians, the new dictatorial regime originating from the Fructidor coup was judged the worse possible kind of government. In their view, the French absolute monarchy and Robespierre's Terror of 1793-1794, despite all their faults and crimes, had been ruled by civilians. Reacting to the new French military regime, Thomas Pinckney exclaimed: "At present, [France] appears to be threatened with *the worst of all despotisms: military government!*"¹⁸⁴ As a de facto military dictatorship, the French Revolution had paradoxically become what Jeffersonians were excoriating Hamilton and Adams for wishing to implement in America. As previously discussed, in 1793-1794, they had attacked Hamilton's plans to establish a permanent standing army, which they thought was confirmed by his perceived pleasure in crushing the Whiskey Rebellion.¹⁸⁵ In 1796-1797, they also feared that an event similar to the Fructidor coup of 1797 would take place in America: That Adams would annul the elections in case of Jeffersonian victory.¹⁸⁶ They also objurgated the president for his Defense Act, which they judged as another example of militarism.¹⁸⁷ As de facto a military regime, France had also become worse than the British Constitutional monarchy, whose institutions Jeffersonians had constantly attacked and accused Federalists of intending to establish in America. And despite their attacks against it, they acknowledged that the British political system contained redeeming features.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ TP to Edward Rutledge, 24/11/1797, TP Papers, SCL. See also an elaborate evaluation of the coup in John Rutledge Jr. to Benjamin Rhett Smith, 23/11/1797, John Rutledge Papers, Southern Collections, Wilson Library, UNC-CH. For the Jeffersonian national leaders' concern that Bonaparte might become a military dictator, see Peregrine Fitzhugh to TJ, 15/10/1797, TJP, in which Fitzhugh hopes that the French general will be assassinated like Caesar, if it happens.

¹⁸⁵ For the Federalists' unrelenting plans of a strong military, see Richard Kohn, *The Eagle, and the Sword: the Federalists and the Creation of the American Military Establishment, 1783-1802* (New York: Free Press, 1975), pp. 280 ff. Kohn concludes that the fears of the Jeffersonians about the Federalists' militarism were well-founded.

¹⁸⁶ Kohn, *The Eagle, and the Sword*, p. 180, ff.

¹⁸⁷ Kohn, *The Eagle, and the Sword*, p. 180, ff.

¹⁸⁸ For example, Beresford, *A Plea for Literature*, p. 21.

In addition to this new de facto military regime, the French Republic's treatment of foreign nations it occupied reneged on its proclaimed views of universal republican solidarity and brotherhood, which South Carolinian republicans had so admired, and which formed a justification for their support of the French Revolution. An example of French exactions towards foreign nations included increased taxes, uncompensated requisitions, conscription, and quartering, all similar to British actions in the 1760s and 1770s, which had prompted the onset of the American Revolution, and actions negating the international republican hopes that the Cincinnati Fourth of July orators, such as Cotesworth and Thomas Pinckney, had expressed in their paeans of French revolutionaries as the harbingers of European liberty and happiness.¹⁸⁹ Many international republicans judged the French treatment of the Republic of Venice as particularly egregious.¹⁹⁰ A millennium-old state, the Republic of Venice, had been analyzed as a possible model for the 1787 constitution of the United States. Thomas Pinckney had praised it as part of his eulogy of international republicanism in his 1791 Cincinnati oration.¹⁹¹ Ironically, the Republic of Venice had withstood attacks from monarchies for a millennium for now being destroyed by the French Republic, the supposed herald of universal republican liberty; and, in a Machiavellian way, it was now handed over to the Austrian Empire, an absolute monarchy that

¹⁸⁹ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411.

¹⁹⁰ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411. For a contemporaneous account of the French treatment of Venice, see J. Hatchard, *An Accurate Account of the Fall of the Republic of Venice, and of the Circumstances Attending that Event: In which the French System of Undermining and Revolutionizing States is Exposed* (Madrid, Spain: Hard Press, 2018). For a detailed modern account, see Walter Panciera, *The Republic of Venice in the Eighteenth-century* (Venice: Viella Editrice, 2021). For an account of Irish republicans turning away from France because of its egregious treatment of Venice and other countries, see Nancy J. Curtain, *The United Irishmen: Popular Politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791-1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 262-263.

¹⁹¹ TP, *Oration*, p. 21. For a different opinion that regards Venice as a "detestable" aristocratic republic, see PB to John McPherson, 6/11/1792, PBL, SCL.

persecuted international republicans.¹⁹² Furthermore, these French violations of republicanism seemed to duplicate Imperial Russia's 1794 destruction of the Polish Republic. This "crime of the century" had been decried by pro-French South Carolinians, such as Butler and Thomas Pinckney, looking at the French Revolution to remedy this injustice.¹⁹³ Poland had produced international republicans, such as Pulaski and Kosciuszko, the former having fought alongside Butler and Pinckney at the Siege of Savannah and died there a heroic death, admired by Pinckney.¹⁹⁴

As discussed earlier, South Carolina older French Revolution supporters in South Carolina, either themselves joined the French military, such as Stephen Drayton and William Tate, or had encouraged, such as Lachlan McIntosh and Aedanus Burke, the state's youth to join the French Republican military forces fighting for liberty. Therefore, for all these older and younger generations who had not only spoken about but also put into practice their international republican ideal, at times at the risk of death for themselves or their sons and friends, it must have been extremely challenging to observe this French recantation of republicanism and led to

¹⁹² Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, pp. 347-411. For the Venetian Republic's ability to maintain, from A.D. 697 to 1797, its political republican freedom from domestic and foreign monarchists, see Filippo Sabetti (ed.), *The Republic of Venice: De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* (New York: Lorenzo Da Ponte Italian Library, 2023).

¹⁹³ For Pinckney's hope that revolutionary France would help Poland's liberty and republicanism, see Thomas Pinckney, *Oration*. For Butler's recriminations of the Russian Empress, whom he vows to eternal damnation, for her destruction of republican Poland, "the crime of the century," see PB to John Ewing Calhoun, 26/9/1792, PB to John Hunter, 28/9/1792, and PB to Robert Shuttleworth, 27/10/1792, Lipscomb (ed), *Letters*. For South Carolina veterans' admiration for Polish revolutionaries, see PB to Andrew Pickens, 2/2/1793, PBL.

¹⁹⁴ For Pinckney's admiring description of Pulaski's death, see TP to Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 17/10/1779, Pinckney Family Papers, RDL-UVA. 2/2/1793, and Thomas Pinckney, *Oration*. For Kosciuszko's service in South Carolina, see John Buchanan, *The Road to Charleston: Nathaniel Greene and the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2019), pp. 145-150 and pp. 159-161. For his service in America, see Francis Kąjenczyński, *Thaddeus Kosciuszko: Military Engineer of the American Revolution* (Hedgesville, OH: Southwest Polonia Press, 1998), p. 87; for his leadership against Russia, Davies, *God's Playground*, p.535; for his stay in France, Davies, *God's Playground*, p. 317.

weakening of their support for France. The Gadsden and Legaré families illustrate such decline in pro-French sentiments from 1797 onward. Elizabeth Gadsden, the daughter of Christopher Gadsden, who had demonstrated so much enthusiasm during Charleston's January 1793 pro-French celebration, expressed similar condemnation of French atheism, in May 1797.¹⁹⁵ As discussed in Chapter One, Thomas and Elizabeth Legaré, had sung French songs in praise of the French officers whom they visited, during their prison-ship internment off Charleston, during the American the Revolutionary War.¹⁹⁶ As also referred to, in Chapter Two, their closest relative, Benjamin Legaré, had also been a pro-French Revolution dinner host of Charleston's French consul, Mangourit, in January 1793.¹⁹⁷ However, in May 1798, their daughter, Mary Legaré, expressed anti-French sentiment when she presented a Charleston regiment with a standard to be displayed in case of French attacks on the city's harbor. After giving the flag, she denounced revolutionary France as having transformed into "a nation of atheists" whose "designs" were turned against the United States.¹⁹⁸ Interestingly, the reason of French atheism that formed part of Gadsden and Legaré's anti-French sentiments reveals that the French Revolutionary strategy to enlist elite's support for the French Revolution based on their religious feelings had failed; it also demonstrates that the French Revolutionary authorities' persistent anti-religious policies after 1797, as well as French Revolutionary Deism, as discussed, in Chapter Two, with regards to

¹⁹⁵ *State Gazette*, 17/1/1793. Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston!* p. 57.

¹⁹⁶ Fludd, *Biographical Sketches*, p. 101.

¹⁹⁷ *City Gazette*, 6/2/1793; Benjamin Legaré to Mangourit, 17/1/1793, Papers of the Republican Society, BPL. See also Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p.46, and p. 46, note 18.

¹⁹⁸ *City Gazette*, 5/1/1799.

the Huguenot Church French pastor, Jean-Paul Coste, constituted other causes for some South Carolina elite members to turn away from Revolutionary France.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ *City Gazette*, 6/2/1793. See also, Alderson, *This Bright Era*, p. 46.

CONCLUSION

“[The French] are fighting for glory & freedom, brother! They are magnanimous and brave.”¹

The thesis has improved understanding of South Carolina History in the Early American Republic: It has fundamentally changed our knowledge about the elite’s pro-French Revolution sentiments in the 1790s. Contrary to what historiography advances, it has revealed that elite enthusiasm for Revolutionary France was highly idealistic, massive, pervaded all state and extra-governmental institutions and, except from 1796 to 1799, persisted during the entire decade as pro-French Revolution sentiment did not weaken nor end in late 1793/early 1794 but continued until Jefferson’s election to the presidency in 1800.

Although egregiously never including the cruelly-oppressed enslaved population, the South Carolina elite’s pro-French Revolution sentiments significantly originated from idealistic precepts. The state’s international republican tradition had started with the founding of the colony in 1670 and continued, under its liberal constitution, as a de facto republic, which served as refuge for the persecuted anti-monarchists from Britain and France. Additionally, the Enlightenment and the American Revolution reinforced the elite’s international republicanism by considerably integrating it in the late Eighteenth-century’s transatlantic revolutionary movement. Furthermore, and especially among South Carolina veteran officers, participation in the American Revolutionary War alongside French and other international revolutionaries also

¹ Pierce Butler to Aedanus Burke, 17/3/1798, PBL, PHS.

created sentiments of gratitude for the former companions-in-arms who were in their turn, joining the international republican movements. This gratitude was particularly felt for French, Polish, and Irish officers who had been especially present, and had sacrificed themselves for American liberty, in all main battles that had occurred in South Carolina; and it followed the idealistic precepts of the pro-French elite concerning personal and national honor and duty, which they believed had a rightful place in relations among nations and states.

Therefore, pro-Revolutionary France idealistic sentiments reflected a strong desire on part of the elite for the success of the Revolution for its own sake and for the benefit of the French people. The Revolution was studied, analyzed, and defended, in detail and according to the Enlightenment's political and social precepts and the experiences of the American Revolution. It was all judged as the providential harbinger of a new world order, the *Novus Ordo Seclorum* hoped for so long by American Revolutionaries and engraved as the motto of their country's Great Seal. French republicanism would not only strengthen or save American republicanism but would also allow the establishment of republics throughout Europe, thereby ameliorate the conditions of humankind. These idealistic philanthropic international republican sentiments were especially expressed on behalf of countries the South Carolina elite was particularly attached to, or with which it had strong national and cultural relations, such as France, England, and Ireland.

Moreover, once France became a republic and engaged in a war with Great Britain, South Carolina's former and present enemy, the French Revolution took the added and welcomed

dimension of a sister-republic fighting the same fight against the same detested enemy as the pro-French South Carolina elite had a decade earlier. Therefore, the pro-French elite's enthusiastic concurrence with the French revolutionaries" demands for international republican solidarity. Even at the risk for their political career, social consideration, imprisonment, and even life, pro-French South Carolina planters established Charleston as the hub of pro-Revolutionary France activities and, most idealistically of all, encouraged their sons to join, or themselves enlisted into, the French military forces. South Carolina elite members pressured ship-builders and navy captains to build and command French privateers. They could also be found fighting, or ready to fight British forces on behalf of France, independently, or as officers of the French Navy, the French land armies, and pro-French forces, in the Caribbeans, Britain, and South Carolina. And they did so despite the American government's official policy of neutrality, from before their prosecutions for violating national policies towards France, with the arrival of French Ambassador Genet in Charleston in 1793, to the de facto end of the French Revolution, in 1797.

These idealistic international republican sentiments of the pro-French elite in support of the French Revolution were widespread and concerned all sectors of elite society, branches of the state administration, and non-governmental institutions. The pro-French elite youth and women, ignored by historians but who had crucially, and romantically, during the Revolutionary War, witnessed as children and young girls, French international republican cooperation with their parents and future husbands, shared their elders' sentiments: They not only attempted to proselytize their siblings and cousins but also risking their lives in pro-French revolutionaries' activities, such as enlisting in French armed forces and rescuing French revolutionaries from

prison. Their exercise of strong personal agency in their consideration of Revolutionary France foreshadows their autonomy in choosing their professions and spouses in the early 1800s, even at the immense personal cost of infuriating their parents and losing their inheritance.

The fact that pro-French Revolution sentiment pervaded South Carolina society can also be seen in its penetration of all the South Carolina governmental institutions. The executive branch, the governorship, was held by all pro-French Revolution planters from 1789 to 1801, with the only exception of 1795-1797, when the Hamiltonian Federalist governor still allowed French privateering to proceed, against the expressed and infuriated injunctions of the Washington's second administration and the former American Secretary of the Treasury. The legislative pro-French sentiment was significant enough to elect, for five years as the Senate President, and for the entire decade international republican House Speakers and U.S. Senators, one of the latter serving as the two undisputed leaders of the Federal Congress" Jeffersonian pro-French faction. The state judiciary included many international republicans, including State and Federal Supreme Court Chief Justices and French Patriotic, Cincinnati, and Republican Societies" members.

The thesis has also made two other very significant contributions to the historiography of South Carolina in the 1790s and, by extension to that of the United States Early Republic: It has revealed that the State's Society of the Cincinnati and Republican Society were very different than presently suggested: First, the Cincinnati were not anti-French conservatives unequivocally supporting their beloved former Commander in-Chief and present national President, and his

Federal administration's policies. With regards to Washington's policies towards France, no other elite sector in South Carolina attacked and violated the Neutrality Proclamation more disloyally, radically, and longer, and showed more commitment to assist Revolutionary France, than the State's Cincinnati members, including its famous President and vice-President. Pro-French Cincinnati members, including some of its key founders and powerful administrators of the 1780s and 1790s, formed, practically to a man, all top international republican South Carolina leaders of the Republican Society, the French Patriotic Society, the Government of William Moultrie, the contingent of the pro-French South Carolina Legion, the defendants in the Neutrality Proclamation prosecutions, and the volunteers who enlisted in the French armed forces in America, the Caribbeans, and France. At different times, they also served as the pro-French Revolution heads of the American diplomatic missions in Great Britain and France. Additionally, in a defiant, quasi-insulting, way, they even publicly displayed their amity to French diplomats whom Washington had hatefully castigated and expelled from America.

Secondly, in a systematic and exhaustive prosopography of its members, and notably of its individual founders, leaders, and administrative committee members, the thesis has revealed that the Charleston's Republican Society of South Carolina was not formed, controlled, and constituted by urban artisans and middling classes, as present historiography incorrectly argues, but by wealthy, and socially and politically powerful, planters. It also has showed that the Republican Society was an offshoot of the Cincinnati State Society and that it included important members, or family relatives, of the South Carolian government. Additionally, it has shown that the Society's international republicanism was not mere idealistic rhetoric: Some of its key

members, or their sons, implemented the principles of its founding documents proclaiming that it would defend by any means possible the French Republic. Similarly to the larger Society of the Cincinnati, some of them violated American Neutrality by joining the French armed forces and recruiting for the French Republic. Indeed, all the Neutrality Proclamation prosecutions' defendants were not only Cincinnati but also Republican Society members.

More than any other evidence, this interface between pro-French sentiment and South Carolina institutions incontrovertibly reveals the incorrectness of the seemingly ceaseless litany calling the Palmetto State's elite thoroughly Federalist, archconservative, and anti-Revolutionary France, and exceptionally united ideologically in its support for a strong national government, especially President Washington's. The opposite is true. Therefore, the thesis has also altered the historiography on the Early Republic which calls South Carolina the southern states' Federalist exception. Indeed, the opposite is again true: Although the thesis is not a comparison of South Carolinian with other southern states, it has shown historians of Virginia that the Palmetto State was more pro-French and Republican than Jefferson's state, whose governments and non-governmental societies, such as the Cincinnati, were not equally made of pro-French planters.

It is important that note that the thesis fully acknowledges the very profound anxiety of pro-French planters with regards to the enslaved population's powerful agency and concerning the autonomy and strength of their hold on the plantation system. As discussed throughout the chapters, the elite who supported Revolutionary France, even the most radical among them, such

as Charles Pinckney and Pierce Butler, expressed deep worry and lamented about the extensive power or potential power of former and actual enslaved people, as displayed by the significantly successful Haitian Revolution and rumors of rebellious plots in Charleston and of the executions of neighboring planters. However, based on hard but hitherto ignored evidence that does not rationally allow any alternative interpretation, the thesis has also convincingly shown that this deep and unrelenting planter anxiety did not lead the pro-French elite, except in a few cases, to turn against their support against Revolutionary France.

In fact, such planter anxiety might have strengthened their pro-French sentiments as they could use, as modern historians seem to have persuasively posited, the French Revolutionary rhetoric of liberty to justify their own freedom as slaveowners to autonomously maintain their egregious control of the state's enslavement system, free from interference from a potentially overreaching national government. It is in this light of deep planter anxiety that the thesis suggests a link between the elite's commitment to be able to exercise its freedom to support France and its attacks on the national government, which through such policies as the Neutrality Proclamation and the Jay Treaty, could circumscribe such freedom presently and could equally later try to limit South Carolinians' liberty over enslavement.

This issue pitting the pro-French elite against the national government, concerning their liberty as planters, foreshadows its early 19th century similar fight that led to the state's Nullification Laws, which enabled the cancellation of federal laws the elite saw as harmful to planter

autonomy. Therefore, it is quite likely that pro-French planters did not persist in their support for Revolutionary France because they had no anxiety; they have immense planter apprehension; but because the rhetoric of liberty they used to strengthen their planter power matched their international republican rhetoric of freedom on behalf of France. Their planter self-interest did not contradict, and was probably aided, by their international republican idealism: The best of all worlds, indeed, when egotistical goals fortuitously concur with altruistic principles.

Consequently, the thesis challenges historians' chronology for the pro-French South Carolina elite's decline and fall of their international republican sentiments in support of Revolutionary France. If the present historiographical theory that associates such decline and fall with planter anxiety, especially with respect of the Haitian revolution and French abolitionism, in addition to fear and disgust at Robespierre's Jacobin Terror, was correct, then the period of late 1793/early 1794 could be reasonably ascribed for the end of pro-French support. However, the historians' evidence presented to corroborate such theory is invalid both concerning its nature and chronology. It shows planter anxiety by planters who had been always anti-French Revolution rather than a depiction of original pro-French support collapsing in 1793/1794. However, the thesis has revealed that South Carolina elite pro-French support did not weaken in 1793/1794, but even reached its apogee in these two years, despite planter anxiety, but circa 1796/1797, in line with modern transatlantic and Caribbean historiography. This weakening was due to reconciliation with the Jay Treaty, an increase of nationalism, exacerbated by France's exactions on American commerce, its treatment of American and South Carolina diplomats, and the French

Revolution's recantation of genuine republicanism, when it became de facto a military dictatorship violating popular sovereignty domestically and in the states that it had conquered.

As we discussed, Ebenezer S. Thomas concurred with the present Thesis that revealed the 1790s South Carolina pro-French elite's massive international republican sentiments on behalf of Revolutionary France. By 1840, he welcomed that the South Carolina's socio-political system had drastically changed from the time of the 1790s. The old Revolutionary War generation had passed away allowing democratization for white men that had been foreshadowed, partly, by the considerable elite support for Revolutionary France and, partly, by the elite's significant abidance by Republican ideology, both culminating in the South Carolina's election of Jefferson to the national presidency in 1800, and the state's 1810 constitutional reform allowing white male universal franchise, regardless of wealth or class. Admiring French revolutionaries, whose sepulchres he had reverently visited, Thomas likely concurred with Butler's extolment of Revolutionary France which encapsulated the great enthusiasm that many in the South Carolina Lowcountry elite had felt for this epical event:²

That Spirit which fired the Athenian Soul when Aristides led forth his legions seems to animate [French Revolutionaries]. They are fighting for glory! They are fighting for freedom, brother! They are magnanimous [and] brave. They fight for Glory. Benevolence prompted [France] to relieve the hopeless and shed the tear of fellow feeling!³

² Thomas, *Reminiscences*, p. 67-70.

³ Pierce Butler to Aedanus Burke, 17 March 1798, PBP, HSP microfilm, SCL.

Appendix: Fifty-Five Eminent Planter Families and the French Revolution

Pro-French Revolution Planter Families (34) or 62% NB: Ramsay: not a planter	Planter Families with both pro and anti-Revolutionary France Members or with Ideological Fluctuation over Time (7) or 13%	Anti-French Revolution Planter Families (14) or 25%
Pinckney	Butler	De Saussure
Rutledge	Izard	Loughton Smith
McIntosh	Drayton	Read
Moultrie	Huger	Manigault
Burke	Gadsden	Lowndes (5)
Smith	Vanderhorst	Middleton
Beresford	Grimké (7)	Washington
Freneau		Proveaux
[Laurens-Ramsay]		Gist
Ladson (10)		Gaillard (10)
Tucker		Guérard
Tate		Matthews
Hamilton		Colhoun
Hall		Faucheraud (14)
Lee (15)		
Theus		
Reeves		
Mitchell		
Levacher		
Neufville (20)		
Markland		
Gillon		
Weyman		
Beekman Horry (25) Kershaw Trezevant Legaré Lehré De Veaux (30) Bowen Blake Reeves Lynah (34)		

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