THE BRITISH LOOK AT AMERICA DURING THE AGE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

The John Carter Brown Library
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AN EXHIBITION
WITH AN ADDRESS BY
HERMAN W. LIEBERT

PROVIDENCE
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MCMLXXI
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WHEN my good friend Tom Adams did me the honor to ask me to come and speak to you,* I was so pleased that I did what no friend should do: I concealed from him how specially disqualified I was by inheritance to talk about what our country looked like from the other side of the Atlantic. My mother was a Bradford, and immoderately proud of it, but when her pride in her 1620 roots swelled vocally beyond fit limits, my father, with justified respect for his forebears who came from Germany in 1848, was accustomed to observe that the Mayflower was a shipload of second-hand furniture and disgruntled servant girls.

My amalgam of Plymouth Rock and Ellis Island produces interior strains that would show up like a rainbow on our new color photographs of stress-weakness in alloys.

But, as Tom wisely knew, this had been somewhat tempered by what the vomitous new vocabulary would call “my own thing”—namely, the study and collection for more than forty-five years of the works of Samuel Johnson.

He is commonly believed to be the arch-Tory, the distilled essence of British anti-Americanism, a pensioned servant of the government who answered to the leash when it was pulled, and wrote attacks upon our founding fathers that were, though phrased with telling pungence (no one has denied him that gift) nevertheless mere hired venom.

I hope to be able to persuade you that neither Johnson nor any of his reasonable contemporaries deserves, on the evidence of their words, the pillories built for them in America. Indeed, I hope, even here in the Plantations, to suggest to you that all was not quite what some of us like to think it was in this country in 1775 when Johnson wrote his

* This was commissioned and written as an address; I have not attempted to turn it into a “paper” by the addition of apparatus. A copy deposited at the John Carter Brown Library is annotated to indicate sources.

[3]
most anti-American pamphlet, Taxation no Tyranny, and that he and his
English readers really did have a very clear and accurate picture of the
American colonies from the printed materials available to them in Lon-
don.

I say “American colonies” because I am defaulting on one aspect of
the exhibition since I am not qualified to judge it. The British view of
America represented in the exhibition comprehends all America, north
and south, the hemisphere. Of these areas, as well as of our country, the
age of Johnson was much aware and had much knowledge. Johnson
himself wrote the introduction of thirty pages for the twenty small vol-
umes of The World Displayed, issued between 1759 and 1761, which
was one of the most popular sources of information about the New
World, and was reprinted in a great many editions until as late as
1814. In his introduction, Johnson reviewed all the important voyages
of discovery up to Columbus. These voyages he always opposed with
vehemence, not because he disapproved of fresh knowledge, but be-
cause he knew how much sin and sorrow inevitably came in their train.
Of the voyages of Prince Henry the Navigator, he says in his intro-
duction:

What mankind has lost and gained by the genius and designs of
this Prince, it would be long to compare, and very difficult
to estimate. Much knowledge has been acquired, and much
wrongly been committed, the belief of religion has been very
little propagated, and its laws have been outrageously and
enormously violated. The Europeans have scarcely visited any
cost, but to gratify avarice, and extend corruption; to arro-
gate dominion without right, and practise cruelty without
incentive. Happy had it then been for the oppressed, if the de-
signs of Henry had slept in his bosom, and surely more happy
for the oppressors. But there is reason to hope that out of so
much evil good may sometime be produced, and that the light
of the gospel will at last illumine the sands of Africa, and
the deserts of America, though its progress cannot but be
slow, when it is so much obstructed by the lives of christians.

It is not improbable that Johnson worked with Oliver Goldsmith and
Christopher Smart in preparing the accounts in The World Displayed of
the various voyages after Columbus. He certainly knew and had access
to many of the important materials. He had in his own library, as we
know from the printed catalogue of its sale, copies of a number of the
books about this hemisphere displayed here: besides the voyages of his
friend Hawkesworth and Captain Cook, there were La Condamine on
South America, Hughes on Barbados, Browne on Jamaica, and Mickle’s
translation of the Lusiad. And then there was one item in that sale that
I would give almost anything to know more about. The sale catalogue
is as frustrating as most of its time: the very first item is “Eleven mis-

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tremely fond of society, and much given to convivial pleasures. In consequence of this, they seldom show any spirit of enterprise, or expose themselves willingly to fatigue. Their authority over their slaves renders them vain and imperious, and exposes them to many errors and prejudices, especially in regard to Indians and Negroes, whom they scarcely consider as of the human species; so that it is almost impossible, in cases of violence, or even murder, committed upon those unhappy people by any of the planters, to have the delinquents brought to justice: for either the grand jury refuse to find the bill, or the petit jury bring in their verdict, not guilty. The display of a character thus constituted, will naturally be in acts of extravagance, ostentation, and a disregard of economy; it is not extraordinary, therefore, that the Virginians out-run their incomes; and that having involved themselves in difficulties, they are frequently tempted to raise money by bills of exchange. . . .

And a little later:

Arts and sciences seem to have made a greater progress [in Massachusetts Bay] than in any other part of America. Harvard college has been founded above a hundred years; and although it is not upon a perfect plan, yet it has produced a very good effect. The arts are undeniably more forward in Massachusetts-Bay, than either in Pennsylvania or New York. The public buildings are more elegant; and there is a more general turn for music, painting, and the belles lettres. The character of the inhabitants of this province is much improved in comparison of what it was: but puritanism and a spirit of persecution is not yet totally extinguished. The gentry of both sexes are hospitable, and good-natured; there is an air of civility in their behaviour, but it is constrained by formality and preciseness. Even the women, though casiness of carriage is peculiarly characteristic of their nature, appear here with more stiffness and reserve than in the other colonies. They are formed with symmetry, are handsome, and have fair and delicate complexions; but are said universally, and even proverbially, to have very indifferent teeth.

Out of regard for my hosts, I will refrain from quoting the Rev. Mr. Burnaby on Rhode Island. Happily he did not visit New Haven. But I think one must admit that Johnson’s England knew America pretty well.

In our art gallery at Yale there is a painting by Colonel John Trumbull of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Though the scene it pictures is more than a year later than Johnson’s pamphlet, the prominent figures are by and large the same men who had been all along leaders in the movement toward independence. You can remember—indeed you cannot forget—the picture. It is a handsome room. As Henry James said of it, “What a wonderful place for a Declaration of something.” Presenting the document to the president of the Congress, John Hancock, are the members of the drafting committee: from left to right, John Adams, Sherman, Livingston, Jefferson, Franklin. In the background, among others, are Robert Treat Paine, Samuel Adams, and, with his hat on, Stephen Hopkins.* They look like English gentlemen—silk stockings, knee breeches, tailed coats, impeccable linen; Adams in stylish brown, Sherman in smart grey, Jefferson with a crimson waistcoat. If the arrangements of the figures and the setting were not so indelibly imprinted on our memories, we might mistake it for a painting of Lord North’s cabinet. But there is about these men that indefinable look of those aware of their great roles. In the eyes of all of them is that unfocused stare, passing through or above what is in front of them, and down the long corridors of time. That is typical, even in this day of photographs and television, of conscious participants in a great moment in history—and of users of drugs. But the Signers, surely, have the stuff of heroes.

And yet what they and their fellows said and wrote and did was not so temperate or decorous or Olympian. At other moments in these years they threw Hutchinson’s library into the street; they pelted soldiers with brickbats; they dumped $90,000 worth of property into the

* This identity has recently been questioned.
water. British soldiers then faced much the same conditions they face in Belfast today, or our National Guard faced last May and might face again next month.

These and many similar events were fully and on the whole accurately reported in London. General knowledge of the colonies through books was, as the exhibition so well demonstrates, very considerable, and in addition a flood of pamphlets, some fifteen hundred in twenty years, and a number of remarkably alert newspapers reported events very soon after they happened.

The picture of America in England was sharp and clear. The picture of England in America was not. It would otherwise be tempting to blame the trouble on separation by water, often a powerful and underappreciated force in history, and much more powerful than the effect of the same distance by land. It has been wisely observed that no picture of life at Calais is too ludicrous to be believed in Dover, and there is less understanding in Caracas of life at Key West than there is in Nome of life at Los Angeles, twice as far apart but on the same landmass. But the distance between London and Boston is the same in either direction, and yet knowledge seems to have traveled eastbound but westbound. The explanation lies, I think, not in geography but in consanguinity; there is usually, if not more ability or wisdom, at least more wish by the parent to understand the child than the other way around. And it was really this relationship which governed communication between London and Boston. George III was ready to show America, he wrote, "that the parent's heart is still affectionate to the penitent child." That is not an attitude any more likely to breed understanding in the 1770's than in the 1970's, and the unpublished pamphlet dedicated to King George and entitled Some Observations upon the Art of Comprehending Infants by Benjamin Spock, Dr. of Physick, would have done as much harm then as its counterpart has today. It was dogma in Boston then (as on the Washington Mall now) that there was a conspiracy of the Establishment to impose its will "at the price of chains and slavery." (The words are Patrick Henry's, and I shall reflect on them in a moment.)

The spectacle of George III and Lord North huddled secretly together at Windsor to turn out shackles for the wrists of Sam Adams on the royal lathe (on which it has confidently been asserted that the king could produce buttons if he tried) is too ludicrous to believe. It is more likely that the pair should ride off, with a pack of poodles, to shoot foxes.

George III was in fact not a bad king, as kings go. He was certainly better than the two before or the two after him. Unlike his predecessors he could speak colloquial English without a German accent, however often punctuated with the nervous query, "What? What?" He worked doggedly, docketing his state memoranda with the exact moment of their perusal; he discussed with Lord North, in the winter of 1774, "the mode of compelling Boston to submit to whatever may be thought necessary" exactly at "46 min. pt. 6 p.m.," as he noted. George was a farmer, and the colonies were, he wrote, "like so many farms of the mother country." The claim of one of his farms to be consulted about its cultivation was difficult for him to understand.

Lord North had more pieces on his plate than the American colonies, however important the American piece appeared in Boston. In Washington today, how easy is it to rank the noisy claims about the Viet Nam war among the other, often inimical, claims of black power, national defense, ecology, the domestic economy, the exploration of space, and the campaign of 1972? North's chief concern was to maintain a majority in Parliament for his government; if he wavered on American taxation, he would not take ten members with him into the lobby. The king, the Whigs, the Tories, were practically all agreed on preserving the abstract right to tax colonies. If North had compromised, his government would have fallen.

To this must be added a factor not unfamiliar to us today. The cause of the colonies had become the cause of violence. In 1774 North had just been through the riots of Wilkes and the Middlesex elections. He had seen the London mob break up his carriage and heard the crash of glass as the stones came through the windows of his house. In what way different was the mob in Boston?

That Lord North, first minister of government, and George III, who had been taught he should be a king, but not taught how to be one,
should react by conditioned reflex to the American riots is hardly surprising. That their view should be shared by Samuel Johnson, as sturdily independent a man as ever lived, requires explanation.

More nonsense has been talked, probably, about Samuel Johnson than about any person since the Trinity. A historian as recent and as received as George Sherburn could write that Johnson was “blindly conservative,” that when he “could not stem the rising tide of democracy,” he “turned shuddering from such corruptions . . . to the impartial protective authority of the throne.”

This, of the man who said of Lord North that he was a fellow “with a mind as narrow as the neck of a vinegar cruet,” of his ministry that “Such a bunch of imbecility never disgraced a country,” and when North’s ministry fell, wrote in his diary, “The ministry is dissolved; I prayed with Francis [his black servant and later his heir] and gave thanks.” This, of the man who offered the toast, “Here’s to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies.” This, of the man who said, “If England were fairly pollied, the present king would be sent away tonight, and his adherents hanged tomorrow.”

History may or may not repeat itself, but it is certain that historians repeat each other. Until the recent advent of Sir Lewis Namier and his followers, the picture of politics in England in Johnson’s time was derived from the polluted sources of Burke and Macaulay, with an admixture of garbage from those Weems-like writers who suffered no clay in the feet of the heroes of our Revolution, and who therefore erected the straw demon of Tory government as a plausible antagonist.

We are now able to see that, from the accession of George I to the end of the century, no Tory, properly so-called, ever held a position of crucial power in the British government. Sir Robert Walpole, the elder Pitt, Lord North, Fox, Burke, and the younger Pitt were all, historically, Whigs, and the struggles for power among them were essentially battles within a party. Even the true Tories, the country members of the House of Commons, divided almost evenly on most of the votes related to the American issue. On the repeal of the hated Stamp Act, thirty-four of these Tories voted for repeal, thirty-nine against.

On the legality of general warrants, forty-one Tories voted on one side, and forty-five on the other. On the vote that brought down North’s ministry, fifty-one Tories voted against North and only seven for him. No vote of the House of Commons at this time should have been more of a shibboleth than Dunning’s motion “that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.” The country members, the simon-pure Tories, voted sixty-one for that motion, and nine against.

The truth is that, neither for Johnson nor for anyone else in his time, was a party label consistently meaningful. These neat artificial alignments were the invention of nineteenth-century historians, and we have only just begun to learn not to apply them, in spite of their convenience, to the people, and the issues, including America, for which they are not relevant.

Johnson was a radical, of a kind, almost as soon as he began to think, and, although the times and therefore the targets of his “radicalism” changed in the course of his life, he remained essentially a protestant against the current age.

It is almost always forgotten, for example, that Johnson’s two earliest original works in prose—Marmora Norfolciensis and the Vindication of the License of the Stage—are bitter attacks on the existing order of things, the first against the ministry of Walpole and George II, the second against the attempted suppression of a libertarian play. The conclusions of his famous night ramble with Savage were opposition to the government and determination to stand by the country.

Did something happen, then, to this youthful adversary to change him in his later life into the stout reactionary, the so-called Tory and anti-democrat which he is so often pictured as being? It would be natural to put this down to the slacking of youthful fires by the advent of maturity, or to that achievement of security which almost always converts its beneficiary to the status quo. But neither of these, in Johnson’s case, is more than the most peripheral and trivial of influences. The truth is only that Johnson remained, late as well as early, in protest against the prevailing forces of the day: Walpole in the 1740s, Revolution in the 1770s. The change which occurred was not so much a change in Johnson as a change in the temper of the times.
It may be sufficient, in order to obliterate the picture of Johnson as an archconservative, to refer to Taxation no Tyranny, which has furnished his detractors with their most dearly cherished evidence of his reactionary character. He opposed the American battle for liberty: is he not therefore a conservative beyond redemption?

Times change, and with them men’s opinions. In Taxation no Tyranny Johnson observed:

The argument [of the Americans] . . . is no more than this. Liberty is the birthright of man, and where obedience is compelled, there is no liberty. The answer is equally simple. Government is necessary to man, and where obedience is not compelled, there is no government . . . Society cannot subsist but by the power, first of making laws, and then of enforcing them.

Revolutionary enthusiasm confused this position with that of the intransigent reaction. The drivers of slaves who yelled loudest for liberty, and those in England who took fire at the cry, failed to discern the deeper and more fundamental egalitarianism of Johnson’s view.

Lord North’s decision on America, which Johnson supported, was, in fact, the same decision Lincoln had to make, and made, in 1861, to enforce the sovereignty of the central government by resort to arms. If it was right for the Southern states to be denied the power of secession in 1860, it was equally right for the American colonies to be denied the power of secession in 1776.

To repeat part of that last quotation from Johnson: “Society cannot subsist but by the power, first of making laws, and then of enforcing them.” In our time, Martin Luther King and Ralph Nader, the ecologists and the urban-renewalists, would cry, “Right on.”

Like them, Johnson was neither a conservative nor a radical. He was rather one who believed that the chief end of action was the good of society, and that to this end the principal concern was getting things done. It was more important for Johnson, at all times, to determine whether any given regime operated to improve human conduct and extend human happiness than to be concerned with its purely political character. The miseries of the world, Johnson remembered from his own experience, were painfully real, and it was interest in and ability to ameliorate these miseries, rather than any narrow party affiliation, that commanded his loyalty.

The political choices he made were those of the realist who elects the attainable good without illusion that it is the unattainable best.

In a longer view, both Johnson and our American heroes had, in fact, the same end in sight, though they sought to arrive at it by different means. It is not too much to say that the Happy Valley of Johnson’s Rasselas, the Utopia, the Declaration of Independence, and Lincoln’s “nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal” would be, if any of them were ever achieved, nearly congruent communities.

But Johnson was a realist, not a politician. His constant advice was “Clear your mind of cant.” And in the high-sounding words of the Americans, he correctly detected a lot of cant, or, to call it by a less polite name, hypocrisy.

He found it, first of all, in slavery. How could men who nobly proclaimed that men were created equal and had unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness continue to be holders of slaves? Patrick Henry would not purchase life at the price of chains and slavery under George III (who was busy making buttons) and yet Patrick Henry found that “the general inconvenience of living without slaves” was more than he could tolerate at the moment. Roughly one-third of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were slaveholders when they signed that instrument of freedom. One wonders where they caught the ringing phrase about the pursuit of happiness?

Perhaps from Johnson, who had written ten years earlier:

Society implies in its nature an interest common to many individuals, a pursuit of the highest degree of happiness that can be obtained and enjoyed by any number, great or small, which that society comprises. To the happiness of the whole, it will be frequently necessary to sacrifice the happiness of a
part... There is therefore a necessity of some governing power, by which those who are inclined to be happy at the cost of others may be compelled to their part of the general task—and of a public wisdom, by which private judgment shall be directed and controlled.

Jefferson, Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt! No—Samuel Johnson, the so-called Tory.

Johnson also found hypocrisy in the Americans' pose that they had established religious liberty. The situation 140 years before the Revolution need not be labored here, in the community founded by Roger Williams. But when in 1774 the Americans protested bitterly against one of the great milestones in the achievement of religious liberty, the Quebec Act, Johnson properly observed, "In an age when every mouth is open for liberty of conscience, it is equitable to shew some regard to the conscience of a papist... If liberty of conscience be a natural right, we have no power to withhold it; if it be an indulgence, it may be allowed to papists, while it is not denied to other sects." And when John Adams and the Massachusetts delegations to the Continental Congress were faced by the Quakers in 1774 with the lack of religious freedom in their colony, they had no sensible reply.

And then, ever and always, there was the issue of taxation. The king, the government, almost everyone in England, was willing to remit any specific tax to which the colonies objected, so long as the principle that the mother country had the right to tax the colonies was preserved. The representation issue was a red herring. It was a fact that, however bad the system, many Englishmen were taxed without being directly represented in Parliament (as I was today when, at your railroad station, I paid your Rhode Island tax on a package of cigarettes). The American civil and military establishment at the end of the Seven Years' War was £70,000 a year; in 1774, it was £850,000, and it was not improper that those who had been defended should pay some part of the burden. It hung, really, upon a point of law, that London had the right to tax the colonies, which the colonies denied. No Englishman, in London or Boston, would easily yield on a point of law, and so the fat was in the fire.

In Taxation no Tyranny Johnson was harder on the colonists about the taxation issue than King George and Lord North. His original draft of the pamphlet contained some passages so severe that the ministry struck them out. In one of these, he observed that the Americans "could with no solidity argue from their not having been taxed while in their infancy that they should not now be taxed, We do not put a calf into the plow; we wait until he is an ox."

The Americans, while they were complaining about taxation without representation, were, in one colony at least, levying their own taxes on those who had no representation. Baptists and Presbyterians in Massachusetts were taxed for the support of the established church although they had no representation in it. As the Calvinist minister of Newburyport sensibly asked at this time, "If this is not enslaving men in their most important interests, in the name of wonder, what is? ["Why should"] a province which holds an ecclesiastical tyranny beyond all her sister colonies... be foremost in her attempts for civil liberty?"

It was just this kind of question that Johnson also asked. He was, in everything except religion, a skeptic; he knew that men (and he was honest enough to put himself first) did not live so well as they talked or wrote or thought. The words in the Penitential Order of the Book of Common Prayer—"You that... intend to lead a new life"—were engraved on Johnson's heart, and those who pretended, like our founding fathers, to believe in liberty (but continued to hold slaves); to believe in religious freedom (but established their own sect); to believe in taxation only with representation (but taxed the unrepresented) seemed to him like hypocrites with whom he could have no patience.

For the kind of rhetoric that Johnson read in pronouncements from America, and even subsequently in the Declaration of Independence, he had little suffering. He knew that when the Americans accused King George and Lord North. Of establishing over them "absolute despotism" or "absolute tyranny" or of exercising "cruelty and perniciously paralleled in the most barbarous ages" (the phrases are from the Declaration) they were talking the same kind of political hot air that the supporters of Wilkes had recently talked in London, and others would a little later talk in Paris. Neither at home nor abroad did this inflated, untruthful, and, he had reason to suspect, hypocritical rodomontade im-
press him in the least. This, he well knew, was political cant, and he was not essentially a political creature, but determined his politics by reference to the good of society.

When Johnson kicked the stone he was not refuting Berkeley, in spite of what he said at the moment. He was rather attacking the fact which he always greeted with impatience: that in a world, in his own phrase, "bursting with sin and sorrow," man should wander in the endless labyrinths of metaphysics or politics when he might be improving the lot of others in this world or his own in the next. As a philosophical answer to Berkeley, or as a political answer to the Americans, his gesture is meaningless; as an emphatic assertion of the imperative reality of a world in which men live and suffer, it is the essential statement of Johnson's doctrine.

This insistence that it was the present and future happiness of man which should be the primary concern of all human activity extends into every part of Johnson's life and opinions, farther than it did into the life and opinions of most of the Signers. It entered fully into his professional code: he insisted that "it is always a writer's duty to make the world better" and that the ability to derive from an author's writings "a system of social duty" was the mark of excellence. "He that thinks reasonably," Johnson adds, "must think morally."

He did not believe that the Americans were thinking reasonably or morally and, whatever their provocation and however much I love this country of ours that they made, I cannot disagree with him.

If you are moved, by your background or opinions, to feel or to think otherwise, I make only a reasonable request—pause and consider.

INTRODUCTION

The years between Samuel Johnson’s young manhood and his death, 1720 to 1784, almost exactly parallel the final emergence of Great Britain as an imperial power—a process of which Dr. Johnson profoundly disapproved. Within the imposed space limitations this exhibition attempts to suggest the kinds of books published during those years to which an ordinary educated Englishman would have turned had he wanted to know something about America.

It is important to note that these books constituted a comparatively small part of the total number of books and pamphlets published each year. During the first thirty years, 1720–1750, they amounted to only about two percent. Starting in the 1750s the proportion began to increase until the Stamp Act Crisis in 1766 when the figure was thirteen percent. In the decade following it fell off until the period 1774 to 1779 when it rose to twenty percent, only to fall off again. During all of the sixty-four years under consideration only about ten percent of the new books, pamphlets, maps, and prints published in London were about America and of those almost sixty percent appeared after 1774 when for all practical purposes Great Britain had lost the bulk of her American possessions.

In the exhibition emphasis has been placed on descriptive writing rather than on the large literature relating to the political controversies between the mother country and the colonies. The latter group is illustrated by only one example—the pamphlets growing out of Samuel Johnson’s Taxation no Tyranny. We have been able to identify a number of American books with which he had some association, but no attempt has been made to document precisely the sources of his attitudes. It is interesting to note that perhaps the most readily available information concerned the Spanish, Portuguese, and French discoveries and explorations rather than the British mainland colonies of North America.
1. DANIEL NEAL. The History of New-England. London, 1720. 2 volumes. During almost the entire period covered by this exhibition, this was the most recent work on New England. It was derived from Cotton Mather’s weighty Magnalia Christi Americana, or, the Ecclesiastical History of New England, published eighteen years before. Neal, an Englishman, approved of the religious practices in the colony but does not hesitate to criticize its politics. Twenty-seven years later, in 1747, there was further demand for information about New England. All that was available was a revised edition of this book.

2. ROBERT BEVERLEY. The History of Virginia . . . The Second Edition. London, 1792. First published in 1705, this was the first general history of Virginia after Captain John Smith’s great work of 1624. Beverley was led to write this book because the Virginia section of Oldmixon’s The British Empire in America was so filled with errors as to misrepresent the people of Virginia “to the common people of England.” In the original version Beverley had a number of sharp things to say about the way Virginia was governed. In this edition he toned down that section.

3. [NATHANIEL CROUCH.] The English Empire in America . . . By Robert Burton. The Sixth Edition. London, 1728. Nathaniel Crouch produced an enormous number of these popular little books on a wide variety of subjects under the pseudonym “Robert Burton.” They went through many editions and sold for a shilling each. Many years later Dr. Johnson asked his bookseller to obtain a group of them for him “as they seem very proper to allure backward readers.” This one, compiled from many sources, begins with Columbus and repeats the standard version of the cruelty of the Spaniards to the Indians. First published in 1685, it went through seven editions by 1749. Plate 14.

4. ANTONIO DE SOLIS. The History of the Conquest of Mexico . . . Done into English . . . By Thomas Townsend. London, 1739. The heroic character of Cortés’s conquest of Mexico captured the imagination of all Europe. This account, written in epic form rather than simply as a chronicle of events, carries the story down only to the capture of Mexico City, thus omitting the latter story of the fate of the Indians. First published in Spanish in 1684, it went through upwards of fifty editions during the eighteenth century. This is the first English translation. A revised translation appeared in 1738.

5. ANTONIO DE HERRERA Y TORDESILLAS. The general History of the vast Continent and Islands of America . . . Translated into English by Capt. John Stevens. London, 1725–1726. 6 volumes. Gracefully written though Solis’s history may have been, it told only part of the story. The most accurate and complete account, that of Herrera, whose Historia General, in eight parts, had first been published in Spain between 1601 and 1615, carried the story down to 1655. Although there had been numerous editions in Spanish, Latin, French, German, Italian, and Dutch, it had not been available in English until the 1720’s. Captain John Stevens, who undertook to remedy this situation, omitted a large section of the original and introduced a number of errors. Reissued in 1760, it remains to this day the only attempt at an English translation of Herrera’s important chronicle.

6. CHARLES BROCKWELL. The Natural and Political History of Portugal . . . To which is added, The History of Brazil. London, 1736. An Englishman interested in the Portuguese colony of Brazil would have been hard put to find anything on the subject. Apparently the only readily available description was the second part of this history of Portugal by an English historian. His material was assembled from Portuguese, English, Spanish, Dutch, and French writers. The picture he paints is of a small primitive country with undoubted wealth but still awaiting full development, a matter of some interest to British merchants.

7. LOUIS ARMAND DE LOM D’ARCE, BARON DE LA HONTAN. New Voyages to North-America . . . Done into English. The second Edition. London, 1735. 2 volumes. When an Englishman’s interest turned to New France he found two unreliable accounts of explorations of the interior of North America: Father Louis Hennepin’s, which was published in 1697; and La Hontan’s, which appeared in
1709. Hennepin's work was translated into English in 1698, but apparently was not reprinted. La Hontan, upon returning to France, found himself out of favor and had to flee to Holland. From there, through friends in England, he arranged for a London edition in 1709. Thirty-one years later, when this edition appeared, it was still the only source of information about that part of North America over which Great Britain and France waged war for the next quarter century.


This book was published as Britain was preparing to join Austria in a war against Spain. The English had long eyed the Spanish colonial empire. The commercial implications are indicated by the fact that a separate chapter is devoted to "the contraband trade carried on by the Spaniards in the West Indies." A second edition appeared in 1755 just as the Seven Years' War was beginning.


The search for El Dorado in the Amazon basin held a special fascination for Englishmen, but first-hand knowledge was meager. A Frenchman, La Condamine, went to South America with a scientific expedition in 1735. He chose to return home via the Amazon and published his account in 1745. One of the questions which fascinated Europeans was the existence of a female nation from which the river took its name. He made a special effort to determine the truth of the matter, and concluded that if Amazons ever did exist they had probably been conquered long before. Samuel Johnson picked this up in The Idler, no. 87, in which he discusses the Amazon. Whether he read about them in the original French or this English abridgment is not clear.


Although England captured Jamaica in 1655, the island remained in a disturbed state for many years. It is interesting that this, the earliest general historical account of Jamaica, should have appeared first in Scotland in a period
THE AMERICAN TRAVELLER:
OR,
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT STATE, CULTURE and COMMERCE
OF THE
BRITISH COLONIES in AMERICA,
And the further IMPROVEMENTS of which they are capable;
WITH
An Account of the Exports, Imports and Returns of
each Colony respectively,—and of the Numbers of British
Ships and Seamen, Merchants, Traders and Manufacturers
employed by all collectively;
TOGETHER WITH
The Amount of the Revenue arising to Great-Britain therefrom.
In a SERIES of LETTERS, written originally to the
Right Honourable the Earl of *********
By an OLD and EXPERIENCED TRADER.

LONDON:
Printed for E. and C. DILLY, in the Poultry, and J. ALMON, Piccadilly.
MDCCLXIX.
when that country was still going through unsettling adjustments to her union with England. The following year saw three more editions of the book—two in London and another in Edinburgh. In 1741 there was a Dublin printing and a French translation.


Barbados, settled in 1627, was the first major English colony in the West Indies. Although a book concerning it had been written in the seventeenth century, this one appears to be the first attempt at an historical treatment of the subject in the eighteenth century. The author, a native, first published his book of the island in 1741. His purpose was an “endeavour to remove Wrong, and fix true Notions of the right Constitution of this Island: and a view of preventing all Disputes between Branches of our legislature.” To the English reader the governments of West Indian islands seemed thoroughly unstable.

12. TABAGO: or a geographical Description, natural and civil History. London, [ca. 1760].

Tobago, situated off the northeast coast of Trinidad, was discovered by Columbus, and belonged at various times to the English, Dutch, and French, before passing finally into British hands in 1798. France claimed it when this little book was published, about 1760. Compiled from a number of earlier writers, it appeared just a few years before the war which eliminated France as a power in the New World. The author calls Tobago “a poor, little, abandoned Island that lies, few people can tell where, and belongs to hardly anybody can tell who,” and then goes on to demonstrate Britain’s title to it.


Although Oldmixon never visited America, his book was for many years the standard account of Britain’s American colonies. The map illustrating it shows more detail in the West Indies than along the coast of British North America. Originally published in 1708, the book was based on a large number of authorities and was intended to show the advantage to England of her American plantations. This, the second edition, was brought up to date on the basis of the many works on America which had appeared in the intervening years.

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Here Englishmen are first introduced to an American of whom they were to hear a great deal more. In 1758, Washington was sent to Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburgh, with the demand that it be evacuated by the French. Governor Dinwiddie felt this journal was so important that he prevailed upon Washington to have it printed in Williamsburg in 1754. It is of some significance that this London reprint of the same year was brought out by Thomas Jefferys, who specialized in maps and geographies, rather than by one of the men who published more general works.


With this book the English reading public had before them for the first time an account of America by a man who knew just what he was talking about. Arriving in Boston in 1718, with a medical degree from Utrecht, he immediately became involved in the New England inoculation controversy. As the years went by he took part in a wide range of the colony's affairs and wrote with vigor on a number of different subjects. This book was first published in Boston in 1747–1751. It included New England, the Middle Colonies, and Virginia. Douglass died before he could complete the work. He used a map of French derivation, much more accurate than the one in Oldmixon. Britain's cartographical knowledge of her own colonies was only just beginning to reach a respectable level.


Britain's possessions in Hudson's Bay received little attention during the first half of the eighteenth century. The monopoly which had been given the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 was used solely to trade in furs, with no effort to exploit any of the other resources of the area. Other British merchants came to resent this arrangement, and in 1749 they vainly attempted to break the monopoly. The author of this book was one of the men called upon to testify against the Company. He makes a forceful case by emphasizing the untapped riches of the area and the ease with which the natives could be persuaded to part with them. Little wonder Dr. Johnson regarded colonial merchants as a rapacious lot.


An interest in natural history characterized many educated Englishmen in the eighteenth century, and they produced a number of books about the unfamiliar plants and animals of the New World. Our particular interest in this one lies in the fact that a copy of it was a part of Dr. Johnson's library at his death. In addition to the handsome colored plates that appear throughout, the book contains a small, engraved view of Bridgetown.


This is essentially the same sort of treatment for Jamaica as Hughes's for Barbados, except that here there is a short opening section on the government and state of civil affairs. It was by way of being an extension of Hans Sloane's Natural History of Jamaica, which had appeared in two volumes in 1707 and 1725. Dr. Johnson, in reviewing Browne's book in The Literary Magazine for August of 1758, alludes to Sloane's work and other natural histories, indicating that he was thoroughly familiar with that literature.


Perhaps the most popular form of literature for Englishmen who were interested in America was the collection of voyages as assembled by editors like Richard Hakluyt in the 1600's and later by printers and booksellers as business ventures. The eighteenth century saw a number of these stately folio volumes. This one has an indirect connection with Samuel Johnson. It was based on books in the library of Robert and Edward Harley, the Earls of Oxford, which was purchased by Thomas Osborne, the bookseller, in 1742. Johnson, together with the antiquarian William Oldys, was retained by Os-
borne to compile a catalogue of the books. It is said that Johnson's primary responsibility was the Latin works, but this does suggest that while still in his thirties, Johnson was exposed to a substantial collection of American books.


At the end of the Seven Years' War Britain emerged as the most powerful force in Europe. Her largest single acquisition was France's colonial empire in America. Englishmen wishing to know something about their new possessions could have turned to this authoritative work. At the beginning of the period embraced by this exhibition, English mapmakers were appallingly ignorant of the geography of North America. Thomas Jefferys, who was appointed royal geographer to George III, had begun publishing his excellent maps in the 1730's, and by mid-century his work became the chief influence in a renaissance of English cartography.

21. WILLIAM SMITH. The History Of the Province of New-York, from the First Discovery to the Year M.DCC.XXII. London, 1757.

In his Preface, the author says, "Whoever considers the Number and Extent of the British colonies . . . must be convinced of their vast Importance to Great-Britain; and be at a loss to account for the Ignorance concerning them, which prevails in those Kingdoms, whence their Inhabitants originally sprang." The author was a native New Yorker, and a leading lawyer and a judge in the colony. The fact that this book was specifically addressed to Englishmen and published in London rather than New York suggests that he was among those colonial leaders who saw the danger in Britain's ignorance of her American colonies.


Cadwallader Colden was perhaps the most learned administrator ever to serve in the British colonies. A successful governor of New York, he corresponded with the leading European figures of the day, including Linnaeus and Samuel Johnson. Colden's writings included treatises on botany, mathematics, medi-
icine, and philosophy. Out of his experiences in upper New York with the
Iroquois, he wrote this account, first published in New York in 1727. The
first English edition was much revised and expanded, and aroused enough
interest to justify a second London printing in 1750.

The Preface begins: “The affairs of America have lately engaged a great deal
of the public attention. Before the present war there were but a very few who
made the history of that quarter of the world any part of their study.” The
author is critical of colonial writers, saying: “Whatever is written by the
English settlers in our colonies, is to be read with great caution . . . few of
them write without a bias.” Although the book is generally attributed to Ed-
mund Burke, there is evidence that he was helped by his cousin, and perhaps
by his brother. In any case it was popular. By 1778 it had gone through seven
London editions, one in Dublin, another in Edinburgh, and translations into
French, German, and Italian.

This book shows how difficult it was to get accurate information about Amer-
icca. Stith had originally intended to tell the story of Virginia from the begin-
ing to his own time, but he carries it down only to 1624. He did, however,
make heavy use of the manuscript records of the colony, and he had an im-
portant influence on later writers. The book’s immediate impact in England,
however, was probably slight. It was printed in Williamsburg in 1747. What
we have here is not a London printing but the same book with a London title
page substituted for the Williamsburg title page. The London publishers ap-
parently did not believe it worth while to bring out a genuine English edition.

25. THOMAS THOMPSON. An Account of two missionary Voy-
geages . . . The one to New Jersey in North America, the other from
America to the Coast of Guiney. London, 1758.
The entry in Dr. Johnson’s diary for Sunday, January 15, 1765, indicates that
on that day he read this pamphlet to his blind friend, Miss Anna Williams. It
is doubtful that Dr. Johnson was much interested in Thompson’s activities in
New Jersey. He would have been more drawn to the section dealing with

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Africa. Johnson felt strongly about the institution of slavery. Indeed, there are those who contend that his dislike of America stemmed from the enslavement of both the native American Indians and the Africans by Europeans in order to get cheap labor to exploit the riches of the New World.


Although attributed to Benjamin Franklin, this was written by an English lawyer named Richard Jackson from materials which Franklin provided. In every other respect, however, the book owes its existence to Franklin. Sent to England in 1757 as a colonial agent, he set about mounting a propaganda campaign against the Penn family and their governing of the colony. Franklin edited and paid for the publication of this book which is concerned with the internal bickerings of Pennsylvania. One can understand why many Englishmen regarded the colonies as children who needed discipline.

27. LEWIS EVANS. Geographical, Historical, Political, Philosophical, and Mechanical Essays... Containing an Analysis Of a General Map of the middle British Colonies. Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, and D. Hall... And sold by R. and J. Dodson, in Pall-Mall, London, 1765.

The appearance in London of this pamphlet describing Evans's map (No. 115) elicited one of the most striking statements Dr. Johnson ever made about America. In his review in The Literary Magazine he says: "...there is no reason to doubt that the time is approaching when the Americans shall in their turn have some influence on the affairs of mankind." He also alludes to a number of developments which gave him reason to believe that Americans were developing civilized communities. Among these were the electrical experiments in Philadelphia. One wonders whether he made the connection between them and the fact that it was Benjamin Franklin's shop which printed this pamphlet.

28. THE WORLD DISPLAYED; or, a curious Collection of Voyages and Travels, Selected from The Writers of all Nations. London, 1759-1761. 20 volumes.

The twenty volumes which went to make up this collection of voyages were probably the most widely circulated descriptions of the New World in eighteenth-century England. The work was reprinted many times in England, Ireland, and America until as late as 1816. Oliver Goldsmith and Christopher Smart may have prepared the text, but we do know that Samuel Johnson wrote the thirty-two-page Introduction where he states his views with customary vigor: "The Europeans have scarcely visited any coast, but to gratify avarice, and extend corruption; to arrogate dominion without right, and practise cruelty without incentive."

From the collection of Mr. Herman W. Liebert. PLATE 1(b).


The purpose of this book is stated in the first sentence of the Preface: "Florida being an acquisition likely to become of much future use and consideration to us, as Britons, it was thought a proper subject of present animadversion." The peninsula had just been acquired from Spain. In 1766 Dr. Johnson observed about the war in North America: "no honest man can heartily wish success to either party...it is only the quarrel of two robbers for the spoils of a passenger."

30. PIERRE FRANÇOIS XAVIER DE CHARLEVOIX. Journal of a Voyage to North-America... Containing The geographical Description and Natural History of that Country, particularly Canada. London, 1761. 2 volumes.

The first comprehensive history of New France was written by a Jesuit who had access to official archives and spent time in America inspecting missions in Canada, along the Mississippi, and in Louisiana. First published in Paris in 1744, it went through a number of editions and was translated into both German and Italian. This English translation includes only a part of the original work. Two years later there was another English translation of the portion dealing with Louisiana. Both books have all the earmarks of being publishing ventures designed to meet an existing market demand created by the war in North America.

31. JORGE JUAN and ANTONIO DE ULLOA. A Voyage to South-America: describing at large The Spanish Cities, Towns, Provinces, &c. on that extensive Continent. London, 1758. 2 volumes.
This was the most accurate and up-to-date account of South America available to Englishmen at the end of the Seven Years' War. The authors had been sent to South America to participate in scientific observations and to make inquiries into the social and political conditions of the colonies. The result was four folio volumes published in Madrid in 1748. This English translation was followed by six more English editions during the next fourteen years, giving British merchants the best picture they had ever had of the untapped commercial possibilities in the Spanish colonies.

32. ANTOINE SIMON LE PAGE DU PRATZ. The History of Louisiana, or of The western Parts of Virginia and Carolina. London, 1763. 2 volumes.

In the year in which this work was published, France ceded to Spain the vast territory known as Louisiana, and with it control of the mouth of the Mississippi. The original French edition, by a man who had lived in Louisiana for many years, had appeared five years earlier. This English translation is both an abridgment and a distortion of the original. In the Preface is a discussion of the advantages of British southern colonies over the northern ones where the inhabitants had to spend so much time surviving cold winters that they could produce little that was useful to the mother country.


Like the Amazon basin, the north coast of South America held a special fascination for Englishmen ever since Sir Walter Raleigh's search for El Dorado a century and a half before. The author of this account, Edward Bancroft, was a man of many talents: naturalist, chemist, a friend of Priestley and Franklin. He paid a number of visits to both North and South America. In his book he drew attention to the fertility of the soil and, by implication, the opportunities for British exploration of the area.

34. JAMES GRAINGER. The Sugar-Cane: a Poem. London, 1764.

Dr. Johnson's connection with this book is a curious one. He was acquainted with the author, a doctor who went out to the West Indies. He thought that Grainger had the makings of a very good poet, but he disapproved of this poem. He did not feel the subject lent itself to poetry. He did, however, partici-
This is one of the earliest of many accounts of British America written by foreign visitors. The emergence of the Spanish empire in South America in the sixteenth century excited the interest of Europeans. Likewise, Britain's final victory over France aroused their interest in North America.

Peter Kalm was a pupil of Linnaeus, who had recommended that naturalists be sent to America and Siberia to seek new seeds which might flourish in Sweden. Kalm was chosen, and left for America in August of 1768. During the next three years he visited Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and southern Canada. His book was published in Stockholm between 1758 and 1761. It was not until England became concerned about the discontent in her American colonies that this translation appeared.


The author, who paid his first visit to America in 1764, described himself as a merchant who during more than thirty years "traversed the Coast of America from Lat. 68° North (northern Hudson's Bay) to Cape Florida." It is said that this book was written under the auspices of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, in order to emphasize opportunities presented by the newly enlarged empire, for which Pitt was in large measure responsible. PLATE II.

89. PHILIP PITTMAN. The present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi. London, 1770.

This is another of those works designed to inform Englishmen of the nature and extent of Britain's newly acquired territories in America. It was originally written for the information of the secretary of state for the colonies by an army officer who spent five years exploring and surveying the country. Up-to-date firsthand accounts such as this began to appear as the relations between England and America began to deteriorate.


This was obviously a book published to satisfy a growing interest in the subject. The author is unknown. A contemporary reviewer points out that it is merely a compilation from several previous histories, but is superior to several other similar attempts to take advantage of the demands of the market place.

41. JOHN HAWKESWORTH. An Account of the Voyages undertaken... for making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere. London, 1773. 3 volumes.

This is not, strictly speaking, a collection of voyages because it does not reprint the original texts. Rather, they are edited and rewritten by Hawkesworth so that "the narrative should be written in the first person, and that I might... intersperse... observations as my subject should suggest." Hawkesworth was well acquainted with Samuel Johnson and an imitator of his style, but Johnson commented rather unfairly: "Hawkesworth can tell only what the voyagers have told him; and they have found very little, only one new animal I think." A rather surprising statement when one realizes that the book contains the first printing of Captain Cook's Journal of his first voyage in the Endeavour into the Pacific.

42. CONSTANTINE JOHN PIPPS. A Voyage towards the North Pole undertaken By His Majesty's Command 1773. London, 1774.

Following the Peace of 1766, there was a renewed interest in exploring. In 1773 the Admiralty decided to attempt a passage across the North Pole. The expedition was placed under the command of Constantine John Phips and included, as one of the midshipmen, young Horatio Nelson. Although the expedition failed, it brought back new information and resulted in this, one of the handsomest books on eighteenth-century exploration. Upon hearing of the plans for the voyage, Dr. Johnson wrote, "I do not much wish well to discoveries, for I am always afraid they will end in conquest and robbery."

43. [ANDREW BURNABY.] Travels through the Middle Settlements in North-America, in the Years 1759 and 1760. With Observations upon the State of the Colonies. London, 1775.

Two years out of Cambridge, this young clergyman made an extended tour through North America. That his observations should have been published fifteen years later is explained by the growing tensions between the colonies and the mother country. The author's thesis is that the colonies should be encouraged to improve their agriculture and manufacture in order to become self-sufficient. As he saw it, their future importance to the British empire lay in the growing size of their population, not their economic support of the mother country. PLATE III.
44. JAMES ADAIR. The History of the American Indians; particularly Those Nations adjoining to the Mississippi, East and West Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina, and Virginia. London, 1775.

The author of this book went to America at just about the same time Samuel Johnson arrived in London. Most of Adair’s life, from about 1740 to about 1770, was spent among the Indians in the southern colonies as a trader, diplomat, and soldier. He was a well-educated man, and the book is still of value for the data it contains about the tribes of the area. We know Dr. Johnson owned a copy because in May of 1775 he said he would also obtain a copy for Mrs. Thrale. That Dr. Johnson was interested in it is to be expected. Throughout his life he showed sympathy for the American Indian.


This Portuguese epic of the great Age of Discovery has long stood at the pinnacle of the literature of that nation. First printed in 1572, it has been reprinted and translated regularly since it first appeared. This English translation by a well-known poet attracted the attention and support of over six hundred subscribers, among them “Samuel Johnson, LL.D.”

Johnson had assisted with the manuscript, but could not help injecting his opinions into the proceedings. He wrote Mickle: “It had been happy for the world, Sir, if your hero Gama, Prince Henry of Portugal and Columbus, had never been born, or that their schemes had never gone farther than their own imaginations.”

46. WILLIAM ROBERTSON. The History of America. London, 1777. 2 volumes.

With its publication this work became, for Europeans, a standard history of America. Within a year it appeared in French, German, Italian, and Dutch. During the next seven years, twenty-one editions in six languages, including Armenian, were published. The author planned to write about the Spanish, Portuguese, and British colonies, but these two volumes on the Spanish colonies were the only ones to appear. He gave as his reason for postponing the British story the “civil war” in America, because “In whatever manner this
unhappy contest may terminate, a new order of things must arise in North America." Robertson was a friend of both Boswell and Johnson, and entertained them during their visit to Scotland. The latter did not think much of Robertson's style. However, at Johnson's death he owned three copies of the book: this edition, another English edition, and a German translation. Robertson was not gentle with the Spaniards for their treatment of the Indians, a view Johnson shared.

47. JONATHAN CARVER. Travels through the interior Parts of North-America, in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768. London, 1778. Jonathan Carver explored the vast territory to the west of the Great Lakes, his goal being the Pacific. Although he never got there, Carver came back with a great deal of important information which in 1769 he laid before the Board of Trade. They seemed interested, but allowed him to sell his notes and journals to a bookseller. Apparently they later realized their mistake, and ordered that all the material be turned over to them. The story then becomes complicated, but as a result Carver's important narrative was not available until ten years later in the middle of the war. It went through a large number of editions in Great Britain, the United States, Germany, and France.

As early as 1758 Dr. Samuel Johnson was expressing doubts about the European occupation of the New World, and by the 1760's he was saying that the conquest of America had not even been lawful. A formal examination of this negative and pessimistic doctrine about America was made in 1768 by a Dutch scholar, Cornelius De Pauw, whose work went through a number of editions in various European languages, but not English. His ideas reached Great Britain through the work of a popularizer, the Abbé Raynal, who first published in 1770 a six-volume account of America drawn from many sources. The appearance of the first edition of an English translation in 1778 was followed by a large number of editions and abridgments.

Between 1774 and 1783 Britain came to understand that the American colonies were not immature settlements but well-developed societies. To most Englishmen, Benjamin Franklin was the leading example of the civilized American. The publication of this, the first collected edition of his writings, in the midst of the war (a few months earlier France had allied herself to the United States) suggests that there was in England a good deal of sympathy for the colonies. The reviews of the book were favorable and dwelt particularly on Franklin's effort to avert war.

50. A COLLECTION of interesting, authentic Papers, relative to the Dispute between Great Britain and America; shewing the Causes and Progress of that Misunderstanding, from 1766 to 1775. London, 1777.

Generally known as the "Prior Documents," this book is a documentary history of the causes of the American Revolution. Beginning with early reactions to the suppression of smuggling, it includes newspaper accounts; proceedings of various colonial assemblies, the Continental Congress, and Parliament; as well as orders to and communications from colonial officials. For the first time Englishmen were given a chronology of how it all began. The publisher, John Almon, had begun in 1775 the series of annual volumes which he called The Renowned, in which he did the same sort of thing for the years from 1775 to 1784. This volume provides the necessary background for that series.


This has been called the first history of South Carolina. The author, a Presbyterian clergyman, arrived in Charleston in 1765, became a loyalist, and returned to Scotland about 1775. He notes the fact that Douglass's Summary (No. 10), published thirty-four years earlier, had covered the British settlements only as far as Virginia, providing nothing on the southern colonies. He apologizes for his "rough draft" because he did not have access to all the material he needed. Even at this late date, firsthand knowledge was coming chiefly from sources basically unsympathetic to the colonies.


Peters, like Hewat, was a loyalist and a clergyman, but an Episcopalian instead of a Presbyterian. He was born and educated in Connecticut and had a parish in Hebron. His open support of the Crown led to his abrupt departure for England in 1774, where he wrote the first history of Connecticut, published in the year Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

53. JAMES COOK. A Voyage towards the South Pole, and round the World. Performed in His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Adventure, in the Years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775. London, 1777. 2 volumes.

For most Englishmen, it was not political disputes such as those with the American colonies which captured their imaginations; it was the dramatic achievements of Captain James Cook. His circumnavigation of the world between 1768 and 1771 placed Great Britain in the forefront of scientific exploration. This book is the account of his second and most important voyage during which he made extensive exploration of the Antarctic. Equally important, he lost only one man through sickness—the usual death rate was more likely to be half the crew.

Dr. Johnson was among those whose interest was aroused by these events. In the year the Voyage was published he arranged for a copy to be sent to his old friend, Miss Lucy Porter of Lichfield. Another copy was in his library. From the collection of Miss Mary Ann Lippitt and Mr. Frederick Lippitt.

54. JAMES COOK. A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean. Undertaken, by the Command of His Majesty, for making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere. To determine the Position and Extent of the west Side of North America; its Distance from Asia; and the Practicability of a northern Passage to Europe. London, 1784. 3 volumes.

Dr. Johnson's interest in Captain Cook's achievements continued, and six months before he died he wrote his bookseller, asking for a copy of this work as soon as it was published. "Cook's Last Voyage" was, of course, not completed by the Captain because he was killed in the Sandwich Islands in 1779. He had, however, completed his exploration of the northwest coast of North America. A particularly interesting American overtone of this voyage was the "passport" issued by Benjamin Franklin to all American privateers. On March 10, 1779, American ships acting under commissions from Congress were in-
structed to give the ships of Cook's expedition every possible assistance in returning to England.

From the collection of Miss Mary Ann Lippitt and Mr. Frederick Lippitt.

55. JAMES ANDERSON. The Interest of Great-Britain with Regard to her American Colonies. London, 1782.

James Anderson was one of Scotland's most celebrated economists. In this book he takes the position that Great Britain would be much better off to recognize the colonies' independence and concentrate her energies on improving domestic prosperity, a sentiment which Dr. Johnson would no doubt have shared even though it came from a Scotman. PLATE IV.


In this celebrated work, America is presented as "the union of virtue and enlightenment." The author, a Frenchman who had lived a number of years as a farmer in Orange County, New York, returned to his native land in 1781. It is interesting that the book should have appeared first in this English version, and only later in 1784 was there a French edition. With the peace negotiations beginning, those Englishmen who saw the war as one which pitted a corrupt government against an innocent people no doubt welcomed the sentiments expressed here.


This book had a strange history. It was an attack upon the British government for its vacillating policy toward the American colonies. The author, who had spent the years 1769 to 1775 in Maryland, became the agent in England for American loyalists. A lawyer, he had already written a history to show how Britain had failed. Political Annals of the Present United Colonies, published in 1780, a carefully researched piece of work. Then came the surrender at Yorktown. Apparently that and the opening of peace negotiations so angered Chalmers that he sat down and wrote this attack. It was pointed out to him, however, that the book would damage his position as a loyalist dependent on the good will of those in power. He never allowed it to be published, and destroyed all but about a dozen copies. The book opens with the question, "Whether...Columbus introduced the greatest good or evil, by discovering a new world." PLATE V.

58. [SAMUEL JOHNSON.] Taxation no Tyranny; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. London, 1775.

Between 1764 and 1784, about fifteen hundred pamphlets were published relating to the conflict between Great Britain and her colonies. Many of them were parts of exchanges in which the issues were thoroughly debated. Back in 1744, Samuel Johnson had said of this kind of writing: "From Pamphlets...are to be learned the Progress of every Debate; the various State, to which Questions have been changed; the Artifices and Fallacies, which have been used; and the Subterfuges, by which Reason has been eluded. In such Writings may be seen how the Mind has been opened by Degrees, how one Truth has led to another, how Error has been disentangled, and Hints improved to Demonstration." To illustrate this body of literature, we have chosen Dr. Johnson's strong defence of the Ministry, Taxation no Tyranny, and have added a selection of the pamphlet literature which grew out of it.

59. TYRANNY UNMASKED. An Answer to a late Pamphlet, entitled Taxation no Tyranny. London, 1775.

The author takes the line that discussion about the right of Parliament to tax the colonies has in "truth and fact" been resolved in favor of the colonies. All Taxation no Tyranny has done is to reconfirm that fact. Although he does not speak of him directly, it is clear that he knows the author is Dr. Johnson.

60. THE PAMPHLET, ENTITLED, "TAXATION NO TYRANNY," candidly considered and it's Arguments, and pernicious Doctrines, exposed and refuted. London, [1775].

This reply rejects the argument that the colonies had virtual representation in Parliament. The copy shown in the exhibition belonged to the author and contains his emendations for a second edition. His identity is still not known.


This author opens by regretting that a man of such eminence and sense as Dr.
Johnson should have allowed himself to sink to the kind of arguments he used in attacking the Americans. He asserts that the real enemies of Great Britain are those ministers who would insist on the absolute right of Parliament to tax the colonies.

69. RESISTANCE NO REBELLION: in answer to Doctor Johnson’s Taxation no Tyranny. London, 1775.
The writer attacks Dr. Johnson by quoting his principal arguments and then refuting them point by point.

63. AN ANSWER TO A PAMPHLET, entitled Taxation no Tyranny. London, 1775.
This reply begins by taking issue with the very title of Johnson’s pamphlet, “No man ever said that taxation is, in itself, tyranny; nor will.” The issue is whether the British Parliament can properly and constitutionally tax the colonies.

64. JOHN WESLEY. A calm Address to our American Colonies. London, [1775].
One man who was impressed by Dr. Johnson’s argument in Taxation no Tyranny was John Wesley. He “extracted the chief arguments from that treatise, and added an application to those whom it most concerns” and published them in an inexpensive format which went through at least thirteen editions. In this edition Wesley did not acknowledge Johnson as his source. However, Johnson was not offended and actually wrote Wesley thanking him for his pamphlet. By Johnson’s own admission, Taxation no Tyranny did not have a large sale, and he was probably pleased to see his ideas reach a wider audience. Wesley himself says that fifty or one hundred thousand copies of A Calm Address were dispersed throughout Great Britain and Ireland. There also were editions in German and Dutch. Even more concrete evidence of their effect is the replies to it and the replies to replies, among which were the following publications, Nos. 65–78.

65. [AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY.] An old Fox tarr’d and feather’d. Occasioned by what is called Mr. John Wesley’s Calm Address to our American Colony. London, 1775.
This reply endeavors to demolish Wesley by proving that he plagiarized from Dr. Johnson.

66. A CONSTITUTIONAL ANSWER to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley’s Calm Address to the American Colonies. London, 1775.
Wesley is attacked here for concealing the fact that his pamphlet was taken from Johnson, “a declared enemy of civil and religious liberty.”

67. [THOMAS STANLEY.] A cool Reply to a Calm Address, Lately Published by Mr. John Wesley; the second Edition. London, 1775.
In this tract Wesley is accused of being in the pay of the Ministry.

68. RESISTANCE NO REBELLION. In which The Right of a British Parliament to tax the American Colonies, is fully considered, and found unconstitutional . . . and The infamous Fallacies in John Wesley’s Address to the American Colonies, exposed and censured. [London], 1775.
The author states that the wide circulation of Wesley’s pamphlet was done at government expense and chides him for stooping to become involved in the controversy.

The argument here is that John Wesley could not possibly have written the Calm Address because it insists on the complete power of the “Sovereign’s will,” a doctrine which harks back to the Roman Catholic absolutism of the Stuarts.

70. [CALEB EVANS.] A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, Occasioned by his Calm Address to the American Colonies. Bristol, 1775.
This, the best-known reply to Wesley, attacks him on his own grounds. The author opens by condemning Wesley for asserting that not only does Parliament have the right to tax the colonies but that the king has the right to tax all Englishmen “with or without their consent.”

In this edition Wesley adds a Preface in which he acknowledges his debt to Taxation no Tyranny and also replies to Evans's Letter, saying that many people in England are not represented in Parliament, among them Wesley himself, because they have no freethold and therefore cannot vote.


In replying to Wesley's "New Edition" of the Calm Address, Evans attacks him for having used Johnson's ideas without acknowledgment in the first place.

73. THOMAS OLIVER. A full Defence of the Rev. John Wesley, in answer to the several personal Reflections cast on that Gentleman By the Rev. Caleb Evans, in his Observations on Mr. Wesley's late Reply prefixed to his Calm Address. London, 1776.

This reply to the "New Edition" of Caleb Evans's Letter is primarily devoted to defending Wesley against the charge of plagiarism.

74. JOHN FLETCHER. A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's "Calm Address to our American Colonies:" In some Letters to Mr. Caleb Evans. London, [1776].

This defence of Wesley against Caleb Evans's Letter attempts to place the arguments about the right to tax on religious grounds, saying the king derives his power from the Scriptures.

75. THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER'S Arguments, contained in his "Vindication of the Calm Address" in Defence of the assumed Right of the British Parliament to tax America, considered. London, 1776.

The anonymous author of this reply to Fletcher's Vindication, while holding that Caleb Evans had been too harsh on Wesley, also feels that Fletcher has gone too far in giving the government absolute power over citizens.
76. CALEB EVANS. A Reply to the Rev. Mr. Fletcher’s Vindication of Mr. Wesley’s Calm Address to Our American Colonies, Bristol, [1776].

Evans here becomes further involved by replying to John Fletcher, defending himself against Fletcher’s Vindication, saying that by liberty he did not mean “lawless liberty” but “British Constitutional Liberty.”


By the time we get to this, the fifth pamphlet in this series of exchanges, another work favorable to the colonies had appeared, Richard Price’s Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty. Therefore, Fletcher combines a reply to both in one pamphlet.

78. CALEB EVANS. Political Sophistry detected, or, brief Remarks on The Rev. Mr. Fletcher’s late Tract, entitled “American Patriotism.” Bristol, 1776.

Caleb Evans had the last word with this tract by saying that everything had been said on the subject, and then goes on to use thirty-six pages to say it.

**CARTOONS**

The political cartoon was a popular and forceful means of expression in England in the second half of the eighteenth century, becoming ever more significant as the form developed. Some of the cartoons are simple and direct, needing only a caption to make their meaning clear. Most of them, however, require some explanation of their relevance to the involved and sometimes obscure issues of the day. Although most were published separately, some were also reprinted in magazines, often with a full-page explanation so that readers could ponder them at leisure and appreciate their humor, which varied greatly in kind, quality, and intensity.
Seventeen cartoons referring to American matters were chosen for the exhibition from the Library's extensive collection. The numbers following the notes refer to the British Museum Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires, Volumes III–V.

79. BRITISH RESENTMENT or the French fairly Coopt at Louisbourg. 1755.
Refers not to the conquest of Louisbourg, which took place later, but to the victory in 1755 of Admiral Boscawen over a French Fleet which took refuge in the St. Lawrence River, leaving Louisbourg without its usual naval protection. (BM 8392)

80. WITHOUT. 1757.
Shows the problems confronting England in the Seven Years' War, among them the colonies, represented as defenceless against the French and Indians. (BM 9695)

81. A COURT CONVERSATION. 1757.
Concerns the controversy over the execution of Admiral Byng. Spider webs on the map of North America represent neglect of the American colonies by the home government. (BM 6409) PLATE VI.

82. MERIT TRIUMPHANT OVER FACTION. 1761.
Concerns the resignation of William Pitt, crediting his leadership with British victories in American and India. (BM 3615, variant)

83. THE REPEAL. Or the Funeral Procession of Miss Americ-stamp. 1766.
Satire on the repeal of the Stamp Act. (Cf. BM 4190)

84. AN ATTEMPT TO LAND A BISHOP IN AMERICA. 1768. From The Political Register.
Concerns the colonists' objections to the extension of episcopal authority. The effort to appoint a bishop for the colonies was one of the sources of irritation with Great Britain. (BM 4227)

85. THE BOSTONIANS IN DISTRESS. 1774.
Represents, with exaggeration, the shortage of food resulting from the closing of the port of Boston resulting from the Boston Port Bill. (Cf. BM 5841)

Discussions in the House of Commons a few months prior to the outbreak of the Revolution, showing the map of North America on the wall bursting into flames. (BM 5281)

87. THE SCOTCH BUTCHERY. BOSTON. 1775.
A symbolical representation of the situation in Boston, blaming supposed atrocities on the influence of the Scottish Earl of Bute. (BM 5287)

88. THE YANKIE DOODLES INTRENCHMENTS NEAR BOSTON. 1776.
A British view of the Continental army during the siege of Boston, certainly not favorable to the "Yankie Doodles." (BM 5829) PLATE VII.

89. POOR OLD ENGLAND endeavoring to reclaim his wicked American Children.—And therefore is England main'd & forced to go with a staff. 1777.
The idea that the American colonies were still children was widely held in England. (BM 5897) PLATE VIII.

90. THE BOTCHING TAYLOR Cutting his Cloth to cover a Button. 1779.
George III, whose hobby was button making, surrounded by his advisers and cutting up a piece of cloth which represents the colonial empire. The figures are, from left to right: the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies; Lord North, First Lord of the Treasury; the Earl of Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice; George III; Lord Bute, Secretary of State for the Northern Department; Pope Pius VI; and Charles Edward, the Pretender. (BM 5572) PLATE IX(a).
91. THE ROYAL HUNT, or a Prospect of the Year 1782.
Implies that George III was not concerned about the loss of the American colonies provided that he could still go a-hunting. (BM 5961)

92. THE AMERICAN RATTLE-SNAKE presenting Monsieur his Ally a Dish of Frogs. 1782.
The rattlesnake used to represent America in numerous British cartoons was suggested by the Revolutionary flag with the motto: "Don't tread on me." (BM 6039) PLATE X.

93. A POLITICAL CONCERT. 1783.
Britannia, America, and various political figures, among them Benjamin Franklin and Benedict Arnold, who is labeled "Benedick Rattle Snake." (BM 6178)

94. PEACE PORRIDGE ALL HOT / The best to be got. 1783.
Satirizes the complex peace negotiations with France, Spain, Holland, and the United States. (BM 6172, variant) PLATE XI.

95. SHEL—NS SACRIFICE. 1783.
Blames Lord Shelburne for abandoning the American loyalists in drawing up the peace treaty. (BM 6171) PLATE IX (2).

PRINTS

Pictorial impressions of America and the Americans were derived by eighteenth-century Englishmen from occasional prints published in London. The record includes scenes of the city and the wilderness and portraits of individuals, a few of them Indians. A romantic image of America and its native inhabitants was made available by the London printmakers. The wars involving the colonies stimulated the production of prints showing battles on land and sea as well as portraits of the
military leaders. The expedition of Wolfe, which culminated in the surrender of Quebec during the French and Indian War, especially captured the imagination of the British people. Later a good many prints showing scenes, battles, and generals of the Revolution were published in response to popular demand.


98. ROBERT POLLARD. Lady Harriet Ackland. London, 1784. Engraved by the artist, aquatint by Francis Jukes.


100. WILLIAM VERELST. Tomo Chachi Mico or King of Yamacraw, and Toonahowi his Nephew, Son to the Mico of the Echitas. [London, ca. 1735.] Mezzotint by John Faber, jun. PLATE xii.

101. GEORGE ROMNEY. Joseph Tayadaneega called the Brant, the Great Captain of the Six Nations. [London], 1779. Mezzotint by John Raphael Smith.


104. HERVEY SMYTH. A View of the City of Quebec, the Capital of Canada. [London], Thomas Jefferys, 1760. Engraved by Peter Paul Benazech.


110. ROBERT DODD . . . the gallant Defense of Capt Pearsan in his Majesty's Ship Serapis . . . against Paul Jones's Squadron. London, John Harris, 1781. Line engraving by John Petto.

MAPS

111. HERMAN MOLL. A New & Correct Map of the Whole World . . . 1719. London, [ca. 1730].

This map of the whole world, which appeared in several editions, was generally available to Englishmen at the beginning of the Age of Johnson. Among its notable features are the indication of trade winds and monsoons, an inset showing the variation of the compass, and a polar inset showing presumed possibilities for the Northwest Passage. The British-American colonies are rather generalized and not up to date. A symbolic American Indian appears in the cartouche.

112. LEWIS EVANS. A Map of Pensilvania, New-Jersey, New-York, And the Three Delaware Counties. [Philadelphia], 1749.

Evans's first attempt at a map of the Middle Colonies was engraved in Philadelphia in 1749. Because it was not reprinted in England it had no far-reaching influence. It is known, however, that some copies of it were sent to England and reached the hands of people especially interested in Pennsylvania.

113. LEWIS EVANS. A general Map of the Middle British Colonies, in America. Philadelphia, 1755.

This map by Lewis Evans, published six years later with his Geographical Essays (No. 27) was copied in England and printed many times in several versions throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. His work was the chief source used by most of the British mapmakers for the area of the Middle Colonies. PLATE XIV.


A large map in six sheets showing the Americas and their surrounding oceans, first published in 1758 and reprinted with revisions fifteen years later. John Green, alias Bradock Mead, was an eccentric individual who happened to be one of the best geographers of his generation in England. He printed on the face of the map a good deal of information concerning his sources—French, Spanish, and English—thereby courageously inviting comparison as to his judgment and accuracy.
115. [JOHN GREEN.] A Map of the most Inhabited part of New England. [London], 1756.

Green’s map of New England was reprinted many times in the years following its first publication in 1756. It was also frequently copied in reduced form so that a good many eighteenth-century Englishmen must have derived from it their ideas of this part of the country. The relative accuracy of Green’s geography was certainly superior to that of the picture in the cartouche which shows the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620. Palm trees growing near Plymouth Rock represent only one of its inaccuracies.


Dr. John Mitchell’s map of North America has been called “the most important map in American history.” Compiled officially for the Board of Trade from information available to them in 1766, it influenced almost all the later maps of North America for more than a generation. It was referred to in peace negotiations and boundary disputes throughout the rest of the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century.

117. JOSHUA FRY and PETER JEFFERSON. A Map of the most Inhabited part of Virginia. London, [1755].

The first printed map of Virginia made by Virginians was drafted in 1751 and engraved on four sheets in London, where it was several times reprinted. This example is of the third state, 1756, containing additions on the two western sheets. One of the surveyors was the father of Thomas Jefferson.


This handsome map of North Carolina was the basis for most maps of the province until many years after the Revolution. The final draft was the work of a Swiss engineer, trained in France, but much of the information about the interior was collected and compiled by a native surveyor, William Charton, who worked for twenty years in the Granville area near the Virginia border.

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