PUBLIC RELATIONS HISTORY

FROM THE 17TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY

SCOTT M. CUTLIP

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Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original may be apparent.

This book is dedicated to the memory of
Maj. Gen. L. Gordon Hill, USA
Soldier, Scholar

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Preface

This volume brings to print a research effort I began some 35 years ago. Fortunately, good history, like good wine, profits from time. I returned to this early research with a better perspective and increased knowledge gained through the intervening years. I had completed 10 of these chapters in rough draft when I accepted President Fred Davison's invitation—summons would be more accurate—to accept the deanship of the Henry W. Grady School of Journalism at the University of Georgia. This work was put aside as I tackled my administrative tasks. With the encouragement of friends, I returned to this original project in 1993 after completing *The Unseen Power: Public Relations*. That book, published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates in 1994, tells the early 20th-century history of public relations as revealed in the work and personalities of the pioneer agencies.

This volume, in a real sense, is a companion volume that documents events and practices that we in retrospect define as public relations practice—a decision with which many may quarrel. The term *public relations* did not generally come into our language until the late 19th century. A famous Yale University history professor once observed, "The way to get at the nature of any institution is to see how it has grown." This has been our goal in the study of the origins of public relations practice that today plays such a powerful, if often unseen and unscrutinized, role in our democratic society. This history opens in the 17th century with the efforts of land promoters and colonists to lure settlers from Europe—mainly England—to this primitive land along the Atlantic Coast. They used publicity, tracts, sermons, and letters to disseminate rosy, glowing accounts of life and opportunity in the new land. We close by describing the public relations efforts

of colleges and other nonprofit agencies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, thus providing a bridge across the century line.

Studying the origins of public relations can provide helpful insight into its functions, its strengths and weaknesses, and its profound, although often unseen, impact on our society. Early on in my teaching career, I saw the value of history in explaining this now influential vocation's place in society and its profound effect over time on the nation's political, social, economic, and cultural life. As I stated in *The Unseen Power: Public Relations*, initially when I embarked on this project in the early 1960s, I set out to trace the evolution of public relations practice from the colonial period to mid-20th century. The first 10 chapters brought me to the eve of the 20th century. Publication of this volume finally—some 35 years later—completes the work of a lifetime.

Earlier histories of public relations have usually telescoped and oversimplified a fascinating and complex story by tending to emphasize novelty and personalities. Exempted from this generalization is Alan Raucher's *Public Relations and Business 1900–1929* (1968). As this and its companion volume, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations. A History*, make clear, there is a great deal more to the evolving history of this powerful vocation, one that today employs 150,000 professional practitioners in the United States.

Public relations—or its equivalents, *propaganda, publicity, public information*—began when people came to live together in tribal camps where one's survival depended on others of the tribe. To function, civilization requires communication, conciliation, consensus, and cooperation—the bedrock fundamentals of the public relations function. I used to tell my students that public relations probably began when one Neanderthal man traded the hindquarters of a sheep to another for a flint. The Greek philosophers wrote about the *public will*, even though they did not use the term *public opinion*. The urban culture of the Roman Empire gave more scope to the opinion process. Certain phrases and ideas in the political vocabulary of the Romans and in the writings of the Medieval Period are not unrelated to modern concepts of public opinion. The Romans inscribed on their walls the slogan—"S.P.Q.R."—The Senate and the Roman People. Later, Romans coined the expression, "vox populi, vox Dei"—the "voice of the people is the voice of God." Machiavelli wrote in his *Discoursi*, "Not without reason is the voice of the people compared to the voice of God," and he held that people must be either "caressed or annihilated." The struggles to win in the public forum today may not be that brutal, but they are every bit as intense.

The communication of information to influence opinions or alter the behavior of others can be traced to the earliest civilizations. Archaeologists have unearthed farm bulletins in Iran dating from 1800 B.C. instructing farmers how to sow their crops, how to irrigate, how to deal with field mice, and how to harvest their crops—an effort not unlike the "how to" information

disseminated by our Land Grant Agricultural colleges over this century, information that has made U.S. agriculture the envy of the world. What is known today of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia (Iran) comes largely from recorded material intended to publicize and glorify the rulers of the day. Much of the literature and art of antiquity was designed to build support for kings, priests, and other leaders. Virgil's *Georgics* was written to persuade urban dwellers to move to farms to produce food for the growing city. The walls of Pompeii were inscribed with election appeals. Caesar carefully prepared the Romans for his crossing of the Rubicon in 49 B.C. by sending reports to Rome of his epic achievements as governor of Gaul. Historians have assumed that he wrote his *Commentaries* as propaganda for himself.

Rudimentary elements of public relations can be found in ancient India. In writings of that nation's earliest times there is mention of the king's spies, whose function included, besides espionage, keeping the king in touch with public opinion, championing the king in public, and spreading rumors favorable to the king. Public relations was used centuries ago in England, where the kings maintained Lords Chancellor as "Keeper's of the King's Conscience." These chancellors surely offer a historical counterpart of today's practitioners and ombudsmen. Long before the complexities of communication, there was acknowledged need for a third party to facilitate communication and mediate adjustment of conflicting interests between the government and its people. So it was with the church, tradesmen, and craftsmen.

The term *propaganda* was born in the Catholic Church in the 17th century when the Church set up its *Congregatio de propaganda* (congregation for propagating the faith). Although often used today as a pejorative term, propaganda is an essential part of the public relations function if the word is defined neutrally. Much of practitioners' endeavors are in propagating a doctrine, a cause, an institution, or an individual (e.g., candidates for public office). For today's practitioners to eschew the term propaganda in describing their work is either snobbery or sophistry. The propaganda that Sam Adams and his brave band used to bring their nation to Revolution and the Independence was not greatly different from that used in the Carter Administration to pass the Panama Canal Treaty by one vote or that used by President Clinton to win passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—only the millions of dollars expended, the multiple channels of communication and influence used, and the intensified lobbying efforts are different. Readers of the chapter "Propaganda Gives Birth to a New Nation," will find therein techniques of propaganda initiated by Adams that are in use today. Public relations in part, let's face it, is the propagation of a cause, a doctrine, a program or its opposite, defeat of a cause, a doctrine, a program (e.g., The Right to Life lobby vs. the Freedom of Choice movement). Systematic efforts to win support for causes, candidates, or corporations is part and parcel of life in a democratic society where public opinion prevails, at least much of the time.

These were essential and honorable callings in the beginnings of democracy as the people gained more and more power over their lives, and they are essential and honorable callings today, even though not all practitioners work in an honorable manner. From its rudimentary beginnings in the United States as described in this volume, the propagandist or public relations functionary has provided an important link in the free communications and debate on which this nation or any other democratic nation depends for its democracy, culture, cohesion, and solidarity. This role for the communicator and a free press was first seen by John Milton in 1644 in *Areopagitica*: "Let her [Truth] and falsehood grapple, who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter." This philosophy has been embedded in our political system by a series of brilliant Supreme Court justices and their decisions: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Louis D. Brandeis, Hugo Black, William O. Douglas, and William Brennan. A contemporary statement of this democratic faith is found in Justice Douglas' dissent in *Dennis v. United States* (341 U.S. 494, 584 [1951]: "When ideas compete in the market for acceptance, full and free discussion keeps a society from becoming stagnant and unprepared for the stresses and strains that work to tear all civilizations apart."

The propagandist from Samuel Adams to David Gergen plays an important if unseen role in public debate. He or she has the responsibility of making certain that the ideas, information, or cause of every individual, industry, or institution are heard in the public arena. In the roar of today's public forum with its hundreds of competing causes and its publicity outlets numbering in the thousands resembling the Tower of Babel, this functionary is essential to making our democracy work by disseminating information and mediating society's stresses and strains. What the U.S. Supreme Court termed *robust debate* in one decision often leads to rough no-holds-barred fights in the public arena. In "Public Relations' Magna Carta," Justice Hugo Black in a historic decision of 1961 upheld the rights of contestants in the public arena to have such battles. In writing the unanimous opinion of the Court in the *Noerr Motor Freight et al. v. Eastern Railroads Presidents Conference et al.*, Justice Black wrote: "We have restored what appears to be the true nature of this case—a 'no-holds barred' fight between two industries, both of which are seeking control of a profitable source of income. Inherent in such fights which are commonplace in the halls of legislative bodies, is the possibility, and in many instances even the probability that one group or the other will be hurt by the arguments that are made."

This volume is replete with such robust public struggles: the work of the Revolutionaries, led by the indomitable Sam Adams, to bring on the War of Independence that gave birth to a New Nation; the propaganda of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay in the Federalist Papers to win ratification of the U.S. Constitution, winning out against the propaganda of the Anti-Federalists led by Richard Henry Lee; the historic struggle between

the forces of President Andrew Jackson, led by Amos Kendall, and those of Nicholas Biddle and his Bank of the United States presaged corporate versus government campaigns common today; the propaganda work, led by Abraham Lincoln, that ultimately saved this nation as the outcome of our "First Public War"; or the classic presidential campaign of 1896 that pitted pro-Big Business candidate William McKinley against the Populist orator of the Platte, William Jennings Bryan. Or in the political struggles between the Hamiltonian Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans in which the nation's first campaign consultant, John Beckley, emerged. Today his successors dominate our political process. Of such struggles is history made and a nation is built.

Today, public relations plays a major supporting role in the marketing of goods or services by business firms and some nonprofit agencies, such as hospitals. Unfortunately there are scholars and practitioners who confuse the supporting role of public relations in marketing with the whole of marketing. This role of public relations today has its antecedent in the publicity of the railroads in the 19th century that was produced to promote the sale of the U.S. government-granted lands that subsidized the railroads as they moved West. Railroad publicity and promotion was also used to promote passenger traffic in support of the railroads' marketing programs.

These same years also saw the flowering of press agentry, promotion, and advertising with the U.S. circuses leading the way. The flamboyant showmen who produced our great circuses of the 19th century were the first major users of display advertising in newspapers and on billboards—common features of America today.

These then are the antecedents of today's flourishing, influential vocation of public relations whose practitioners make their case for their clients or their employers in the highly competitive public opinion marketplace. "Let Truth and Falsehood Grapple."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Two persons who contributed substantially to this volume are not, unfortunately, alive to read my words of profound gratitude. One was a former Wisconsin colleague, Oliver H. Knight, who last taught history at the University of Texas–El Paso. Professor Knight read the first 10 chapters when they were in draft form; he greatly improved them by his editing and also saved me from several errors of fact. The other deceased person is Major General L. Gordon Hill, who died a few years ago. General Hill was an undergraduate student of mine at the University of Wisconsin. I got him interested in the generally unsung work of Amos Kendall, an important 19th-century figure whose accomplishments have been lost in time—at least until this book is published. When General Hill retired from the U.S. Army,

in which he served a tour as chief of public affairs, he returned to the life of Amos Kendall. Before his death, he had completed three chapters as the result of his extensive research. When ill health caught up with him, he sent the chapters in rough draft and back-up research materials to me. He did not want his work wasted. General Hill's research and writing form the basis of the three Kendall chapters. Amos Kendall deserves a full-length biography; these chapters must serve until a more detailed one is written—if ever. Obviously, my debt to my friend and student is a large one indeed, and I freely acknowledge his contribution.

In chapter 1, I made extensive use of Hermine McLarty's master's thesis, written at the University of Georgia in 1984, *Eighteenth Century Communication: The Promotion of the Colony of Georgia.*

Chapter 2 is based on an article first published in *The Public Relations Review.* Before its publication it was read by a dear friend and a leading colonial historian, the late Merrill Jensen, who made many improvements in it.

For chapter 3 I benefited greatly from criticism provided by Merrill Jensen and by correspondence with Professor William Crosskey.

The John Beckley chapter is based in part on the research and seminar paper of Doyle Mote, a graduate student of mine at the University of Georgia. As a reading of the John Beckley chapter makes clear, I relied heavily on the research and writings of Edmund and Dorothy Smith Berkely, authors of the only full-length biography of Beckley.

As indicated earlier, chapters 5, 6, and 7 are largely based on the work of the late General Hill.

For the history of the U.S. Navy's role in the Civil War, I am indebted to a former student and Naval officer, F. Donald Scovel, whose thesis, *History of the Development of the Public Affairs Function in the United States Navy, 1861–1941*, was written under my direction at the University of Wisconsin in 1968. Similarly, for the history of the Army's efforts to cope with the press in the Civil War, I am indebted to the late Colonel Bennett Jackson's thesis on the history of Army public affairs, also written at Wisconsin in 1968.

The role of George F. Parker in the three Grover Cleveland Presidential campaigns was researched and recorded by Colonel Gordon A. Moon for his master's thesis, written under my direction, at the University of Wisconsin in 1963. General Leonard Wood's story is based on a master's thesis by Colonel Peter J. Foss, *Power and Prominence Through Publicity: A Study of the Publicity Campaign of General Leonard Wood*, written under my direction at Wisconsin in 1968.

In chapter 13, the pioneering work in university public relations by President Charles R. Van Hise and Willard G. Bleyer of the University of Wisconsin is told in a master's thesis by Donald C. Bauder, *University of Wisconsin Public Relations Policies Under President Charles R. Van Hise*, written under my direction at Wisconsin in 1960. Bauder is now business editor of the

San Diego Union-Tribune. Another thesis used was that of Donald K. Ross, *W. G. Bleyer and the Development of Journalism Education*, written at Wisconsin under my direction in 1952. James Drummond Ellsworth's memoir, *Twisting Trails*, was given to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin by his daughter, Mrs. R. H. Scannell.

As these acknowledgments make clear, I, like most scholars, owe much of my inspiration and knowledge to bright, hardworking graduate students. This debt I have acknowledged widely and freely. Unfortunately, some professors do not do so. Readers of this volume as well as *The Unseen Power* will note that many of the graduate students quoted were military officers. This is because from 1947 through 1974 at Wisconsin it was my privilege to guide some 135 U.S. military officers, mostly U.S. Army, through their graduate programs—a program initiated by then Army Chief of Staff General Dwight D. Eisenhower on the recommendation of Arthur W. Page, an eminent public relations pioneer.

Once again I am indebted to William Gray Potter, director of the University of Georgia Libraries, for providing me with a convenient place to work and to his congenial staff for their unfailing help. Similarly, I owe a debt of gratitude to Hollis Heimbouch, Senior Editor, and Sondra Guideman, Production Editor, for guiding this book through publication.

And again sincere thanks to Sandra Gary who cheerfully and promptly typed this manuscript over 1993.

Scott M. Cutlip

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CHAPTER ONE

Hype for Colonies, Colleges, and the Frontier

Utilization of publicity and press agentry to promote causes, tout land ventures, and raise funds is older than the nation itself. In fact, the U.S. talent for promotion can be traced back to the first settlements on the East Coast in the 16th century.

The exaggerated claims that often characterize publicity began with Sir Walter Raleigh's ill-fated effort to settle Roanoke Island off the Virginia coast. When Captain Arthur Barlowe returned to England in 1584 from that desolate, swampy area, he reported to Raleigh: "The soile is the most plentiful, sweete, fruitful and wholesome of all the worlde . . . they have those Okes that we have, but farre greater and better, the highest and reddest Cedars of the world and a great abundance of 'Pine or Pitch Trees.' " He even described the Indians as "most gentle, loving, and faithfull, voide of all guile or treason."[1]

Even more glowing was the description of Raleigh's "lieutenant governor." Writing from Virginia in 1585, Ralph Lane trumpeted that the mainland had "the goodliest (s)oyle under the cope of heaven," and that "what commodities soever" France, Spain, Italy, or the East produced, "these parts doe abound with the growth of them all."

Contrary to the accounts of bolder settlers eagerly flocking to the newly discovered America given in grade school histories, it would appear that

[1]Richard Hakluyt (comp.), *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (12 vols.). Glasgow: (1903–1905) VIII, pp. 299, 303, 304, 305. Not quoted in sequence.

many came from Europe to the new land in response to exaggerated publicity claims. Lefler observed:[2] "The glorified advertising of every colony was the chief means of procuring money and men. The degree of success varied considerably from time to time and from place to place."

The first eyewitness description of the present United States, Thomas Hariot's *A Brief True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, was printed by Sir Walter Raleigh to aid in raising funds and men for another expedition before his charter expired. Publicity to lure settlers to Virginia was stepped up with the chartering of the London Company of Virginia in 1606. Lefler noted: "Virginia had the largest amount, the widest variety, the most exaggerated and perhaps the most effective of the promotional tracts of any colony."[3] The publicity placed much emphasis on moral sanction, missionary zeal, and imperialism in addition to greatly exaggerated claims about the resources of Virginia. Shortly after the founding of Jamestown, the Company started circulating publicity to encourage emigration, and the next several years "produced the largest crop of promotional tracts in Virginia's history." One of the first, *A true Declaration of the estate of the Colonie in Virginia, with a confutation of such scandalous reports as have tended to the disgrace of so worthy an enterprise*, was aimed at scotching reports of the hardships in the colony. The pamphlet's anonymous author argued that all the accusations against the colony were false. In a day of religiosity, it was inevitable that the clergy would be enlisted in these promotional efforts. These early promoters sensed the importance of credibility in communication. One, a Reverend Daniel Price, compared Virginia with distant lands, saying that Virginia was "not unlike to equalize Tyrus for colours, Basan for woods, Persia for oils, Arabia for spices, Spain for silks, Narsis for shipping, Netherlands for fish, Pomona for fruit, and tillage, Babylon for corn." Another clergyman, the Reverend William Cranshaw, denounced Virginia's critics by asserting that the enterprise to colonize the new land "hath only three enemies: 1. The Divell, 2. The Papists, and 3. The Players."[4]

Although it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of this promotional material, Lefler reported that a tract published by a layman, Robert Johnson, entitled, *Nova Brittania: Offering Most Excellente Fruites by Planting in Virginia*, published in 1609, did produce "a great increase in investments in the Company and in the number of people migrating to Virginia."[5] After the crisis caused by the Indian Massacre of 1622, there was another spate of publications intended to reassure prospective settlers. Then, "with the royalization of Virginia in 1624, the slow recovery from the Indian Massacre,

[2]Hugh T. Lefler, "Promotional Literature of the Southern Colonies," *Journal of Southern History, 33*, 1967, p. 24.

[3]*Ibid.* p. 4.

[4]*Ibid.* p. 4.

[5]*Ibid.* p. 9.

and the gradual spread of population and of tobacco culture, publication of promotional literature came to an abrupt halt."[6]

MARYLAND

Virginia's early promotional efforts were matched in varying degrees by the later colonies of the South Atlantic region. When the settlement of Maryland was being planned, the imagination of Europe was not yet fired up with the vision of a new land rich with opportunity and romance. The Charles I edition of the "Charter of Maryland," printed in 1622, was the first promotional tract for that colony. Another tract, *Objections Answered Concerning Maryland,* appeared in 1663. *A Declaration of the Lord Baltimore's Plantation in Maryland* is dated February 10, 1633. Wroth wrote:[7] "There has always existed a conception of the Maryland settlements as the result of a dark and secret flight to sanctuary of persecuted Catholics. The mere fact of the appearance in print of a prospectus in 1633, however, shows that Lord Baltimore went about the recruiting of his expedition in the manner of colony promoters of all time, and in the note appended to the Declaration date and the port of departure of the 'Arke of Maryland' was advertised for all men to read."

Wroth thought, a tract, *A Relation of Maryland of 1635*, "is one of the most elaborate publications issued in the promotion of any English American colony." In addition to the brief account of the successful settlement of the year before, it contained a full description of the country and a prognostication of its certain reward to industry, the outline of a generous policy toward the Indian inhabitants, the conditions of land tenure, and detailed instructions taken almost verbatim from John Smith's *General Historie.* Smith instructed the new settlers on the matters of seed, blotching, arms, tools, and agricultural implements needed in the new land. Historians consider Smith a self-serving propagandist.

A decade after the 1635 pamphlet, another promotional tract was issued entitled, *A Moderate and Safe Investment.* This was an appeal to stave off repeal of the Maryland Charter by the House of Lords "until the yearly ship from Maryland, expected before June, could bring the information needed in the defense of Lord Calvert." It was, Wroth wrote, among other things, a plea to make the emigration of Catholics to Maryland easier. The Charter was heard no more of in Parliament. Wroth noted: "With this exceptionally

[6] *Ibid.* p. 12.

[7] Lawrence C. Wroth, "The Maryland Colonization Tracts," in William W. Bishop and Andrew Keogh, eds., *Essays Offered to Herbert Putnam.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929, pp. 539–552.

interesting writing, political documents such as the colonization tract, the promotional literature of Maryland comes to an end."

In Lefler's opinion, "The Maryland proprietary had less promotional literature than other Southern colony, and, with one notable exception, such material was less exaggerated and more specific in its appeals."

THE CAROLINAS

In Lefler's opinion, Carolina's publicity did not match Virginia in a variety of appeals or in media used. "There were no poems or officially inspired sermons, few broadsides, and only a minimum of prospectuses." Yet when the English settled Charles Town in 1670, they were encouraged by accounts of the country written by explorers such as William Hilton—for whom Hilton Head Island is named—and Robert Sandford. These explorations were made after King Charles II granted a charter to eight of his supporters in 1663. The accounts of these voyages are now Carolina classics—and as one writer noted, "classics in public relations history." The account was written by Robert Horne in 1664 and starts out: "Carolina is a fair and spacious province." His narrative told what wildlife and vegetation was to be found, what the lands and waterways looked like. All was laudatory with the consequence many settlers came to Carolina believing what they had read, but very quickly learning that they had been gulled, as would other colonists. The settlers' letters back home were filled with complaints about the fevers, the heat, the insects, the wild animals, and the rankness of the vegetation. As a writer for the *Charleston News and Courier* observed recently: "Far from being a land of milk and honey, they reported, the country was strange, unlike anything in England and France." The settlers, instead, found the Carolinas to be "a land of toil and tribulation, sickness and terror."

Nonetheless the proprietors continued to control the general public's perceptions of Carolina by publishing a steady stream of promotional literature. For example, T. A. and Samuel Wilson authored a pamphlet, *The Discourses of Many Ingenious Travellers*, which opened with this. "The Luxuriant and Indulgent Blessings of Nature (have) justly rendered Carolina Famous." The Wilson brothers wrote. "The coastal Indians way of life was being changed through prolonged contact with the English colonists." T. S. Wilson concluded his description by observing "that the Neighboring Indians are very kind and serviceable, doing our Nation such Civilities and Good Turns as lie within their power." No Indian scalpings here!

Beyond these narratives, there were four promotional efforts on behalf of Carolina from 1649 to 1651—an anonymous two-page article in a London newspaper, a pamphlet about Virginia that included a description of the Chowan River area, a book about Virginia that included a glowing account

of "a long neglected Virgin," the Carolina section, and a brochure to lure settlers to "Carolina." Over the next two decades, the Proprietors left the promotion of Carolina to their London agents.

GEORGIA

Georgia was unlike any other of the thirteen colonies—it was a colony for the settlement of the poor, the exiled, and outcast of England and Europe, financed by private donations and Parliamentary appropriations. Georgia's founders, led by Lord Oglethorpe, were motivated by the ideals of humanity, charity, and unselfish devotion by helping the less fortunate build new lives in America. Because of its dependence on charity and Parliamentary appropriations, the Georgia colony mounted an intensive, broad-scale campaign of promotion and persuasion that was not matched by any other colony. The trustees' promotional activities parallel many of present-day methods. Components of a modern promotional campaign for a non-profit organization such as fundraising, publicity, symbols, special events, and use of influential leaders all have counterparts in the Georgia campaign of the 1730s, 1740s, and early 1750s. Like many other such campaign, the exaggerations and high expectations raised in this campaign brought disillusionment and failure to the Georgia promotion. Exaggeration was the common trait of all colonial hype.

Lord Oglethorpe's effort to found the Georgia colony was not the first. Scottish baronet Sir Robert Montgomery launched in 1717 the first major attempt to establish another Southern colony. The rudiments of Georgia promotional literature lie in Montgomery's pamphlets boasting the exaggerated virtues of his proposed colony, "Margravate of Azila." Montgomery's effort prompted his published *A Discourse Concerning the design'd Establishment of a New Colony to the South of Carolina in the Most Delightful Country of the Universe* to entice prospective settlers and investors. Montgomery was seeking settlement by the landed gentry. He met with no success and his grant expired in 1720.[8]

Concurrently, Oglethorpe, a young member of Parliament, became concerned with the conditions of English prisons. McLarty wrote: "Oglethorpe's concern for the less fortunate as well as his awareness of the Spanish threat to Florida stirred his interest in the settlement of a new colony to meet both needs." He and a few associates petitioned King George II for a charter that was granted on June 9, 1732. The trustees saw that they had two publics

[8]This account of Georgia's promotional campaign is based on Hermine McLarty's master's thesis, "Eighteenth Century Communication: The Promotion of the Colony of Georgia," written at the University of Georgia in 1984.

to persuade for support of this settlement—the financial supporters of the philanthropic colony and the potential settlers. Georgia was not restricted to charity cases; people could settle in the colony at their own expense. Through the terms of the charter, no trustee could receive a salary or own land in Georgia, therefore their duties lay in raising money for the colony and accepting applicants as settlers. Contrary to a historical myth, no debtors in prison were actually released to be sent to Georgia. The settlers sent at the trustees' expense were charity cases although some may have spent time in prisons for debt.

Given their need to raise money to finance the Georgia colony, the trustees knew that they had to establish a favorable public opinion for their enterprise. These sagacious Trustees realized that they must respond to the public's self-interest and show how contributions could help the colonists and themselves.

A Broad-Scale Campaign

The decision was made to take the colony's case to the people of England through advertisements and pamphlets and to avoid negative publicity. The Trustees resolved at their very first meeting:[9] "that measures be taken to prevent the publishing in the newspapers anything relating to this Society, that shall be disadvantageous to their designs; and that Mr. Oglethorpe be desired to take the said measures to cause such paragraphs to be published in the said newspapers as may be proper for the promoting of the said designs."

Although Oglethorpe directed the flow of publicity, he apparently wrote none of the pamphlets. Benjamin Martyn, an author and scholar, was chosen as secretary of the Trust and wrote most of the promotional literature. Because no authors were cited on title pages of the pamphlets, many assumed Oglethorpe to be the author. Records later established that Martyn was the author. The first pamphlet written by Martyn, *Some Account of the Designs of the Trustees for Establishing the Colony in America*, was published in 1732. Its target was potential benefactors. The two folio editions, one containing elaborate engravings and a map, described the plight of the unfortunate and explained the plans for the colony and the ways donations would be handled. The pamphlet stressed that America had so much to offer for the poor of England and the Protestants of Europe if they only had money for their passage. The trustees promised annual reports to the Lord High Chancellor of their receipts and expenditures.

Another promotional pamphlet, *A New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia*, published in 1732, lauded the

[9] *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, Vol. II, p. 30.

generosity and humanitarianism of the trustees. Several chapters covered various areas about South Carolina and Georgia and was marked by effusive praise—the air described as "always serene, pleasant and temperate, never subject to excessive heat or cold, nor to sudden change." The pamphlet promised that the poor would not be bound in servitude from donations and would receive only passage fare and supplies to begin new lives in Georgia. That same year Oglethorpe compiled *Selected Tracts* as a device to use respected sources to endorse and promote the colony. This subtle pamphlet uses the essays to meet the objections some English had concerning the new colony and instead to promote favorable public opinion for the enterprise.

The next year, 1733, Martyn wrote a pamphlet, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, detailing the economic benefits to Great Britain and announced establishment of a silk growing industry in Georgia. Thirteen hundred copies of this one were printed and copies were sent to each member of Parliament. Martyn played on the bandwagon technique in this tract. Thus began production of a steady stream of propaganda pamphlets emphasizing the lofty aims of the colony and the attractions of this new promised land.

The Georgia Sermons

A main component of the Georgia publicity—and one of the most profitable—was the anniversary sermons preached by well-known clergymen, including John Wesley. The ministers preached the sermons at the annual meeting of the Georgia trustees. The texts were later published to raise money and advertise Georgia. George Watts' 1735 sermon appealed for support for relieving the poor of their misery by "turning the wilderness into a fruitful, well-watered habitation for them." A prescient fear of many English people at the time was that the colony would prosper and then seek its independence of Britain. Watts assured his audience that this would not happen. He may have been a great preacher but he was a poor prophet. He said on this occasion:[10] "[Even] if their affection to the Mother County; if their gratitude, their interest, their love of their present happy Government and fear of change, does not prevent any attempts of this kind, these several Provinces, cannot all be supported to join and assist in one Design."

The final Georgia sermon, given in 1750 by Rev. Thomas Franklin, manifested the undying optimism the clergy had for success in Georgia although the rosy promises of the propaganda were already turning to disillusionment.

[10]George Watts, "A Sermon Preach'd Before the Trustees for Establishing the Colony in America, March 17, 1737" (London, 1737), p. 68.

The pamphlets, sermons, and newspaper advertisements apparently were effective; contributions for the first full year were over 3,700 pounds—big money in the 18th century. A total of 11,502 pounds, 19 shillings and 3 pence were donated between 1733 and 1734, the period in which most of the promotional effort was made. During the first year of the colony, more than 113 pounds was spent on printing and advertising, again a big sum for its time. Comparable amounts were spent in 1735–1736 and in 1741–1742. As the result of the trustees' campaign, almost 500 persons accepted the trustees' charity and came to Georgia the first 2 years. In the design of the Savannah settlement, each colonist received 50 acres of land, 45 outside the township for farming, 5 acres in town for a house and garden.

Oglethorpe and his associates were well aware of the value of the staged event to attract public attention—the *pseudo-event* is a *sine qua non* of today's promotion. In 1734, Oglethorpe returned to England to rally for support and brought with him Tomo Chichi, the Chief of the Yamacraws, and a few of his warriors. The Indians created quite a stir in England. Tomo Chichi met both the Arch Bishop of Canterbury and King George II. All this received wide press coverage, generating free publicity for the new colony. Oglethorpe returned to Georgia in 1736 with two shiploads of colonists, some of whom settled Frederica on St. Simon's Island.

The propagandists also used poetry to extol the glories of Georgia. Alexander Pope, James Thomson, and other lesser-known English poets enlisted in their talent in the cause. *The Gentleman's Magazine* printed much of this poetry, and in 1735, it sponsored a poetry contest, which kept Georgia in the news for more than 2 years.

Disgruntlement Sets In

Like many a propaganda campaign before and since, the high, unrealistic expectations created by this unprecedented campaign for its time turned to bitter disillusionment. In the 1740s disgruntled colonists began writing back to England about true conditions in the colony. These letters to England centered on the prohibition of rum and slaves in the colony and the system of land tenure and were filled with attacks on Oglethorpe and the trustees. This resulted in a pamphlet war between Benjamin Martyn and William Stephens, the trustees' secretary in Georgia, defending the colony and trustees, and Thomas Stephens, a colonist and William's son, carrying the torch for the disillusioned settlers. In 1741, Martyn wrote a pamphlet, *An Impartial Inquiry in to the State and Utility of the Province of Georgia.* A thousand copies of the pamphlet urged Parliament to investigate the colony with the hope that this would persuade the government to appropriate annual support. But at the same time the unhappy colonists' publication, *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony in Georgia in America* was circulating in Charles Town, and

Thomas Stephens soon found a book seller in England to reprint his tract. The trustees denounced the Stephens pamphlet as "libelous."

The hard fact was that colonists began leaving Georgia in the late 1730s, crossing the river into South Carolina where there were no restrictions on rum or on owning slaves. The population dropped significantly. The silkworm "industry" had proved a flop. A report was sent to the trustees reported that there were more houses than people in Savannah. The disillusionment from all the rosy promises made in the trustees' propaganda is summed by this letter from a former colonist who had moved to South Carolina.[11] "The inhabitants are scattered over the face of the earth, her plantations a wild, her towns a desert, her villages in rubbish, her improvements a byword, and her liberties a jest; an object of pity to friends and of insult, contempt, ridicule to enemies."

The final blow to the Georgia Trust occurred in 1751 when Parliament refused to appropriate more money, and George III refused to help the colony unless the crown controlled it. This well-promoted 20-year experiment ended on June 23, 1752, when the Georgia Charter was surrendered to the King.

Lefler thought Georgia was "subject to more unfair attacks by malcontents than any other province." He concluded: "The promotional propaganda of the Southern colonies would compare favorably in quality, quantity, and results with that of other English colonies, with the possible exception of Pennsylvania and New Jersey."

FLORIDA

Nor did the English lose any time in promoting Florida after it was acquired under the terms of the Peace of Paris in 1763. The official British proclamations offering land "described the great salubrity of the climate and the longevity of former inhabitants and referred to the fertility of the soil."[12] From then on, there appeared several books and pamphlets in what Mowat described as a "vigorous and prolonged campaign of publicity." Effusiveness is not a new characteristic of Florida's sustained publicity efforts dating to this day. In 1766, a Dr. William Stork authored an *Account of East Florida* which told of the wonders and beauties of this sunny clime, although it is probable that the author had not been to Florida when he wrote his pamphlet. Some claim the Stork account was inspired by the British Government but Mowat did not put much stock in the claim. A later edition of the Stork

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[11] *Colonial Records of Georgia*, Vol. XX, Part 2, p. 394, as quoted in Miles Lane, *General Oglethorpe's Georgia.*

[12] Charles L. Mowat, "The First Campaign of Publicity for Florida," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 30,* 1943, p. 363.

book included a heavily distorted version of a botanist's journal covering a trip up the St. John's River. The botanist, John Bartram, had a generally unfavorable opinion, but a typical edited entry reads: "fine warm morning, birds singing, fish jumping, and turkies gobbling."[13]

FUND-RAISING FOR CHARITY

The English also knew the value of publicity in raising funds for charitable causes. What was probably the first fund-raising campaign for education in North America had its origins in the latter part of October 1621 when a Patrick Copland approached the London Proprietors of the Virginia Company with an offer to raise money to build a school in Virginia. Copland had just returned from the East Indies and hearing of the "wondrous prosperity of the plantation called Virginia" voluntarily raised 270 pounds from "gentlemen and mariners" of the East India Company. He then set about to raise additional sums for a school in Charles City, Virginia, but after the Indian Massacre in 1622, the money was diverted to fortifications. The school was never built.

The first systematic effort to raise money on this continent was for Harvard College, founded in 1636. In 1641, the Massachusetts Bay Colony sent a trio of fundraisers to England to raise money for Harvard so that it could, among other endeavors, "educate the heathen Indian." Some suspect that the purpose was more to get desperately needed capital for the Massachusetts Bay Colony than to provide an education—a commodity then not in great demand in Massachusetts. Samuel Eliot Morison, Harvard historian wrote:[14] "The Weld-Peter begging mission, which one may call, in modern terms, the first concerted 'drive' to obtain income and endowment for the College, began early. On June 2, 1641, the General Court entreated their respective churches to release Hugh Peter of Salem, Thomas Weld of Roxbury, and William Hibbens of Boston, to go to England upon some weighty occasion for the good of the country."

This was 17th century circumlocution for seeking money. The Rev. Hibbens returned before the year was out, bearing some 500 pounds for the college and the colony. Fundraisers Weld and Peter sent back an urgent request for "literature" to play up the best "selling points" of New England. In response to this request came *New England's First Fruits*, written in Massachusetts but printed in England in 1643. This surely was the first of millions of fund-raising brochures. Morison described it as a "promotion pamphlet," adding, "one half expects to find in it a return postcard." This

[13] *Ibid.* pp. 365–369.

[14] *The Founding of Harvard College.* Cambridge: 1935, p. 303.

pamphlet was intended to show that Harvard College was a going concern, not a paper college "like the Virginia institution for which so much money had been collected twenty-five years before."

New England's First Fruits, a tract of 26 pages, carried a glowing picture of that region's natural resources and "wonder-working providences," an account of Harvard's work, and "a moving description of the benighted state of the Indians, and their desire to hear the Gospel." This promotional pamphlet provides much of our knowledge of this period in Massachusetts. Historians owe a debt to these early publicists. As Lefler observed: "The promotional tracts would not measure up to standards of modern historical scholarship, but they conveyed the full flavor of early America."

COLLEGES TAKE THEIR CUE

From the start, America's early colleges were hard pressed for funds to keep going because then, as now, student fees paid only a small part of the cost. Consequently, these pioneering educators were compelled to see the need for publicity. In 1758, King's College, now Columbia University, staged the first college commencement in New York City. The officials of King's College sensed the value of a staged public event in dramatizing its work, thus they sought to publicize this event. Someone at King's College—his identity lost in time—sent identical news releases to the publishers of the New York *Gazette*, the weekly *Post-Boy*, and the New York *Mercury* with a June 26th release date. The handouts quaintly said: "Mr. Printer Please insert the following in your next paper."[15] Surely this is one of the earliest examples of college publicity.

Princeton also pioneered in publicity methods suggestive of those used in more recent times by college publicists. One historian noted:[16] "Newspapers were supplied with information about the affairs of the college, particularly those which would interest parents of prospective students. Alumni of other institutions, granted degrees by Princeton, carried home a warm regard for their second alma mater. Trustees were drawn from various churches and colonies."

In this colonial period of 1745–1775, appeals to the general public from the hard-pressed colleges relied mainly on subscription lists and lotteries. Both had to be promoted and publicized. Occasional bequests brought in a bit more. Such funds usually went to meet recurring deficits. McAnear said that with the exception of King's, all the existing colleges of the time were

[15]Meyer Berger, *The New York Times*, June 6, 1958.

[16]Nelson R. Burr, *Education in New Jersey 1630–1871*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942, p. 135.

operating on deficit budgets after 1770.[17] Often necessity is the mother of publicity. McAnear concluded, "The colleges were saved by the development of widespread popular interest in higher education."

THE DANIEL BOONE LEGEND BORN OF FRONTIER HYPE

Just as publicity was used to lure settlers to the United States' primitive lands, so was it used to lure their offspring to move West, first to the Alleghenies, thence to the broad prairies of the Middle West, and finally, to the shores of the Pacific. The legend of Daniel Boone, today woven deeply in the fabric of our culture, was the creation of a land owner promoting settlement in the bluegrass land of Kentucky. More than any other U.S. folk hero, Daniel Boone epitomizes the United States' incurable romance with the bold adventures of the Westward migration against hardship and receding lines of Indian warriors. Dixon Wecter, in his *The Hero in America*, said:[18] "The winning of the West is the great fantasy of our Republic. It is the epic which the folk mind has looked upon as more truly American than the settlement of Jamestown and Plymouth, the spacious life of the old plantation, or the building of stone and steel." The very word, West, connotes excitement and enchantment. The publicist selling lands for the railroads and land speculators played a key role in fabricating this epic, one being constantly replayed on our motion picture screens and television.

Because the Daniel Boone legend was created to sell land in Kentucky, it has grown to fabulous dimensions, magnified many times over by historians and the imaginative writers for today's television. The Boone story was told by his publicists as one of hair-raising adventures in Chateaubriand-like prose to Americans and Europeans alike almost as soon as the Indian wars in Kentucky were over. Even though in his declining years Boone was a failure as a tavern keeper, horse breeder, trader, and land speculator, he remains the nation's first popularly acclaimed hero—thanks to his publicists. Boone owes his place in the United States' Pantheon of Heroes largely to John Filson, whose purpose was not to glorify Daniel Boone but to sell land in Kentucky. He saw the Boone tale as a means to that end because Boone was the best known man in the West at that time.

As John Mack Faragher wrote, much of the Boone legend is folklore because "facts come inextricably entwined with the legend." Nonetheless, the Boone legend has its roots in a chance meeting in a little log cabin in Lexington in 1783 between two men "who were destined to grace the pages

[17]Beverly McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies, 1745–1775," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 42* (June, 1955), pp. 24–44; and "The Raising of Funds by the Colonial Colleges," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 38* (March 1952) pp. 591–612.

[18]New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1941, p. 182.

of many an unwritten text and story." The men were Daniel Boone, intrepid frontier scout, and John Filson, a school teacher from the Brandywine in Pennsylvania. Boone, now in his 50th year, had been leading the settlers' struggles against the Indians defending their hunting lands from white invasion.

Little is known of the birth and youth of John Filson. He is thought to have been born on the waters of Brandywine Creek, near what is now Chester, PA. Filson had spent the war years teaching school near Wilmington, DE. Caught in the excitement of the westward movement and the vision of making money in land speculation, Filson came to Kentucke (with an *e* not a *y*) on a river barge from Pittsburgh down to Louisville and then by land to Lexington. Filson later wrote:[19] "When I visited Kentucke, I found it to so far exceed my expectations, although great, that I concluded it was a pity they had not adequate information about it. I conceived that a proper description and a map of it, were objects highly interesting to the United States." Out of this project would come Daniel Boone's lasting fame.

Daniel Boone lived in a log cabin on the Kentucky River with his wife and extended family. For 15 years he had worked and fought to settle and defend this land. Faragher wrote: "it was understandable that Boone looked forward to the opportunity for retreats to Filson's room, where he reflected on his Kentucky adventures for a sympathetic listener." Faragher continued: "Boone rambled, but as Filson accumulated the details he began to sense the dramatic possibilities in these stories that might transform his work into something more than the compleat guide he had at first envisioned writing."[20]

Although Filson loudly disclaimed any financial motive for this writing project, it was to sell some 12,000 acres of land that he had acquired through land warrants bought with depreciated currency he had acquired from his share of his father's estate. It is clear his purpose was to sell land, not settle and develop it with axe and plow. Filson knew that the more people he could lure to Kentucke, the more his large land holdings would be worth.[21] "For gain he plunged into arduous schemes, sued and was sued, and endured all the hardships of an incredibly savage frontier."

Though he was living in a wilderness, Filson knew the value of publicity. Thus, he set about writing a guide to Kentucke—its geography, rivers, soil, climate, and its flora and fauna. He next prepared a detailed map with the help of Boone and other experienced surveyors—all the product of hard travel and countless interviews. His was the first map of this region, thus

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[19] John Filson, *The Discovery, Settlement and present state of Kentucke* with foreword by William H. Masterson. New York: Corinth Books, 1962. Quote from preface.

[20] John Mack Faragher, *Daniel Boone the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992, p. 3.

[21] William Masterson in Introduction to Corinth paperback edition of Filson's book, *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke.* New York: 1962.

John Filson has some claim as a pioneer cartographer, though his first map of Kentucky was far from accurate and lacked perspective. The promoter understandably described the new land in the purplest of prose, asserting Kentucke was "the most extraordinary country that the sun enlightens with his celestial beams."

But it was in the second section of the book that Filson waxed eloquent and poetic in creating the legend of Daniel Boone—"The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boone," taken down from his mouth. Filson saw that this epic would promote interest in his book. As it indeed did. He used Boone's words to sing the glories of Kentucke. He quoted Boone: "I surveyed the famous Ohio River that rolled in silent dignity, marking the western boundary of Kentucke with inconceivable grandeur. At a vast distance I beheld the mountains lift their brows and penetrate the clouds. All things were still. I kindled a fire near a fountain of sweet water and feasted on the loin of a buck, which a few hours before I had killed."

Boone was passably literate in the manner of his time, but this lofty language was that of Filson. For example, the old scout had once carved on a tree, "D. Boon cilled a bar." He also had carved on his rifle, "Boons best fren." Contrast this simplistic language with the opening sentence in the Boone narrative: "Curiosity is natural to the soul of man, and interesting objects have a powerful influence on our affections."

Or ponder this bit of philosophizing by Boone: "Felicity, the companion of content, is rather found in our own breasts than in the enjoyment of external things; and I firmly believe that it requires but a little philosophy to make a man happy in whatsoever state he is." Here is the natural man, innately good, freed from the tensions of society and from the shackles of convention. Even though few believed that these were Boone's words, many did think them his thoughts. Rather they were the thoughts and words of Filson, the land promoter, who made the roughhewn Boone speak as a pedant.

The fact was that Boone, son of a Reading, Pennsylvania, blacksmith, was able to write little more than his own name. Early in his youth he took to hunting, fishing, and in exploring the wilderness as an agent of the Transylvania Company who became—thanks to Filson—the flesh-and-blood symbol of the free-lance frontiersman "ordained by God to settle the Wilderness." Wecter described Boone as "a brave, kindly, honest soul, too simple for the complexities and knaveries of civilization. Robbed, cheated, disposed, he moved farther and farther west, pathetically seeking a fortune with which he never caught up."[22] The real life Boone bore little resemblance to Walt Disney's Daniel Boone, played by Fess Parker in the 1960s.

Filson finished his book in 2 months. There was no printing press west of the Alleghenies at this time, so in the late spring of 1784, Filson carried

[22]Wecter, p. 182.

his manuscript to Wilmington, DE, where it was published by James Adams under the title *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke.* The map was engraved and printed in Philadelphia. The Boone saga was printed as an appendix. Fifteen hundred copies of the book and map were printed in the first edition. The next year, the book was published in Paris and in Frankfurt, Germany. Soon reprints were appearing in London and New York. Only 33 pages of the book were given to the Boone narrative, but it was this heroic tale that caught the public's fancy—here and in Europe. Filson's idea had paid off; soon the book was known as "Filson's Boone." A year after the initial publication Europeans knew as much about the Boone exploits as did Americans. This prototype of the U.S. hero, who embodied many of the virtues of the European natural man, caught the public's imagination and has held it in a tight grip ever since. Even Lord Byron, in his *Don Juan*, praised Boone as:

> Not only famous, but of *good* fame,
> Without which Glory's but a tavern song—

Filson's great grandson, John Walton, had observed:[23] "Boone has directly and indirectly inspired many of the characters in American fiction. One of the first writers who became indebted to this legend was James Fennimore Cooper, whose Leatherstocking bore unmistakable similarities to Boone." Cooper's Leatherstocking represented the essence of old-fashioned U.S. enterprise. The hold of the Boone epic on the literary mind of Europe was reflected in a news dispatch from Paris to *The New York Times* on April 6, 1917, appropos the United States' entry in the war: "Old Leatherstocking still slumbers in the depth of the American soul. Wait till the lion wakens. Don't believe he will go at it half-heartedly; it is not his nature." The Boone chronicle has been republished many times, often without due credit to Filson whose press agentry is available today as a paperback.

For example, in 1786, it was plagiarized and condensed to 12 pages by John Trumbull of Norwich, CT, and published as a paper-covered pamphlet. This version can be found in *The Boone Narrative* by Willard Rouse Jillson, published by the Standard Printing Company, Louisville, KY, 1932. Filson's first edition sold fairly well in the United States, but he found no demand for a second edition.

How much land Filson's promotional publicity sold is not known, but historians have concluded that the book "did speed the settlement of the state."

Eventually Filson returned to Kentucky and variously tried fur trading, school teaching, and more land speculation. He had no further contact with

[23]John Walton, "Daniel Boone," *American Heritage* (October 1955), p. 11.