American Exceptionalism

Land and Prosperity

Edited by
Timothy Roberts

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

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AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

General Editors
Timothy Roberts and Lindsay DiCuirci

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Land and Prosperity

Edited by
Timothy Roberts

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

With the transnational turn in American scholarship in the last few decades, the history of 'American exceptionalism', or studies about the belief in America's unique role in human history, has emerged as a popular topic. In attempts to resist and revise an exceptionalist model of American history and literature, scholars have pointed to America's fundamental interconnectedness with the wider world, from the colonial period to the present. They argue that the globalized economy and culture that define twenty-first-century America likewise defined the early nation, and emphasize the similarities between American political and social conditions and those elsewhere. Critics of nation-state history and American exceptionalist arguments thus have argued that scholarship with a national focus misses Americans' historical connections with the world, as studies of colonial settlement patterns, transnational labour activities, environmental phenomena and internationalist organizations among elites, reformers and immigrants all reveal.[1]

Alongside such recent criticism, however, advocacy of American exceptionalism (if not an emphasis on the positive aspects of that exceptionalism) hardly declined by the early twenty-first century. Recent scholarship has traced the concept's continued shaping of American political culture, economic organization, social and domestic relations, and foreign policy.[2] Why has the myth of exceptionalism – characterized by a belief in America's highly distinctive features or unusual trajectory, based on the abundance of its natural resources, its revolutionary origins and its Protestant religious culture that anticipated God's blessing of the nation – held such tremendous staying power, from its influence in popular culture to its critical role in foreign policy?[3] This collection of primary source documents seeks to answer this question by reconstructing the roots of exceptionalist mythology across several discourses. Each deployment of the concept of exceptionalism, in discussions ranging from the economic to religious to cultural, reveals a distinct but potent thread in the complex tapestry of exceptionalist rhetoric in the United States.

The concept of American exceptionalism is often traced to its first usage by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* (1838): 'The position of the

Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one.'[4] Actual usage of the word 'exceptional' did not become common, however, until the 1930s, when progressive historians and socialists alike sought to identify components of a distinct 'American civilization'. These observers pondered why the United States, despite its industrialization, had not exhibited a strong class consciousness, much less a broad socialist political movement.[5] Yet while the word 'exceptional' has not always appeared in arguments for American exceptionalism, scholars have traced the influence of this concept from the time that Europeans first realized the existence of America as a landmass distinct from Asia and Africa. The concept's staying power was suggested by its consistent invocation in the 2012 presidential election-year debates.[6]

The notion of American exceptionalism served a rhetorical function long before John Winthrop ascribed biblical meaning to Massachusetts in expressing his vision of the Massachusetts Bay colony as a 'City upon a hill', perhaps the most famous metaphor in American intellectual and cultural history.[7] Typical of the sources' focus in Volume 1, the explorer John Smith wrote famously in *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* in 1624 of America's abundant natural resources. Similar exceptionalist discourse would serve many functions in populating the British North American colonies. The land, both in its primitive state before Europeans' arrival, as it was so characterized, and in its yield for colonists' sustenance and commercial trade, was evidence of God's revealing his plan to new Israelites. America was an exemplary place for all free people to occupy the same social status under the law and to enjoy equal opportunity, notwithstanding the restraints of gender, race and caste by which colonial society denied opportunity for women, Native Americans and unfree labourers. The colonial texts in this collection illustrate that more than a century before the American Revolution, colonists imagined that they were part of a unique venture, whether religious, social or economic.[8] Despite the geographic dispersion of disparate communities with unique national roots, ethnicities and religious creeds settling in the New World, they shared in common a sense of this land's exceptionality and the unique purposes to which it might be put. In the British colonies of North America, this unique purpose took the form of a radically new political arrangement.

By the mid-eighteenth century, British colonists asserted natural rights as justification for rebelling against England, rights that they believed all people retained even as they put themselves under authority of government. Though American ideology grew out of British Protestant dissenters' older sense of difference from a Catholic Europe, these ideas flourished through settlement on a new continent that provided not merely asylum but apparently unlimited abundance. Political and religious figures in this period believed that global destiny

hinged on Americans' fate in their war for independence, establishing it as an absolutely distinctive event in human history. No previous republics had long endured; as Thomas Paine wrote in *Common Sense* (1776), even the ancient Israelites, originally a republic of tribes, eventually called for a king.

Following the Revolution, American exceptionalism took on a political connotation, highlighting the new nation's unique form of government and its ability to maintain stability. The sources in Volume 2 trace changes in the Revolution's role in justifying exceptionalist arguments. The memory of the Revolution's accomplishment of a stable republic, without social and religious upheaval, shaped American politics through the nineteenth century and reinforced Americans' judgements of the shortcomings of popular uprisings around the Atlantic world. Other nations, including Haiti, the Latin American republics, Hungary, Poland, the city-states and principalities of Italy and Germany, and, especially, France, seemed to grasp after popular government rather than to deliberatively create it. In contrast, Americans generally emphasized that their revolutionary forebears had fought to preserve traditional rights to life, liberty and property, not to seize new ones. Other common problems to which American critics of foreign revolutionaries pointed were a background in Catholicism or atheism, enthusiasm for socialism and endangerment of private property rights, faith in a single individual, not 'the people', and rapid centralization of power or failure to separate powers of government. These justifications for the *unique* case of American revolutionaries – that their accomplishment could not be replicated – became equal to or more important than the *universalist* rhetoric of the revolutionary era – that the American Revolution would reverberate and be replicated globally. For many American observers using the American revolutionary example as a measuring stick, evidence of flaws in the background of other regimes' efforts to create democratic republics sealed their fates.[9] Such examples of failure made the American example seem all the more incomparable.

The ability to maintain a peaceful union despite a diverse and widely disseminated public further marked America as a nation apart and became a second important aspect of American exceptionalism by the mid-nineteenth century. The image of 'empty land', while present from the colonial period in exceptionalist rhetoric, particularly characterized arguments for American continental expansion shortly before and immediately after the Civil War. On one hand, land left uncultivated or ill-used represented its inhabitants' failure to act upon the land as a provision of God's providence. On the other hand, unoccupied territory represented a security risk, especially given the competition among European powers for colonial resources and settlement projects. Expansion would thus project democratic institutions into open space; the scarcity of others on the frontier, whether subjects of a European power, citizens of the Mexican republic or Native Americans, rationalized this discourse. This vision of a democratic empire extend-

ing into the world through migration of civilians and networks of merchants and missionaries, without either establishment of formal colonies or the military occupation that often characterized European colonization, typified writing on American foreign relations throughout the nineteenth century.[10]

Meanwhile, other exponents of American exceptionalism called not for expansion of American influence into the world as a function of national mission, but for the protection of American institutions from foreign influence to sustain national peculiarity. The paradox of American anti-colonial expansion was its proponents' demands for the full assimilation of any inhabitants of new territory into the national fabric. In contrast with European empires, which relied on colonial administrations to shield the metropolis from too rapid absorption of or responsibility for different colonized subjects, American ideologues professed a commitment to 'equality' among 'citizens' as the essence of American 'mission', thus heightening the stakes of American expansion. This ideology became especially vexed as actual settlement experience revealed that new land was *not* in fact 'empty', and when the United States acquired foreign territories in the late nineteenth century, whose occupants were not eligible for citizenship.

Thus, tension about America's global role, either to merely exemplify democracy, or alternatively to develop democratic institutions among other people through philanthropy or military conquest, emerged by the first part of the nineteenth century. Both arguments are grounded in American exceptionalist rhetoric, even as they support contradictory views of America's relationship to the world. Such contradictions, this collection makes clear, are ubiquitous in the archive of American texts that built, reinforced and challenged this myth.

Indeed, as this project's editorial apparatus will explain, arguments for American exceptionalism have shown several incongruous or at least varied emphases over time. Some sources illustrate a belief that exceptionalism is rooted in its ethnic or cultural diversity: America is exceptional because it is inherently cosmopolitan or transnational, averse to the narrow nationalism of other countries. In other examples, exceptionalism is rooted in the notion that the country was peculiarly unified in its religious outlook; a belief in the New World as a stage on which the end of times would play out held tremendous weight from the early seventeenth-century to the turn of the twentieth.

Likewise, the concept has emerged at the centre of debates regarding immigrant assimilation. Expectations of immigrants' assimilation into American society appeared as early as 1782 when J. Hector St John Crevecoeur, a French immigrant, asked rhetorically,

> What then is the American, this new man? ... He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds ... Here individuals of all races are melted into a new race of man, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.[11]

Crevecoeur wrote on the assumption that foreigners would become assimilated, but as texts in this collection concerning African–American colonization and the naturalization of foreigners suggest, counter-arguments arose that questioned racial or ethnic minorities' assimilation. While Europeans came to the United States in the millions in the nineteenth century without restriction, critics of ethnic diversity created by territorial expansion and liberal immigration policy argued that exceptionalism could best be maintained by isolation.

Of course American exceptionalism had its detractors, as emphasized by the texts in Volume 4. Some critics who were historically excluded from full citizenship in the nation pointed out the country's peculiarly stringent and discriminatory racial boundaries. In contrast to the US 'color line', a range of much more fluid 'races' emerged in the Iberian American colonies and the nations of Central and South America after independence. While racial categories still reflected a rigid caste hierarchy and left a legacy of racial division, it nonetheless became easier to 'pass' or cross from one racial category to another in South America even before the abolition of slavery.[12] In the British American colonies and their offspring the United States, however, a society of 'white' and 'black' Americans emerged, institutionalized by laws that provided for most immigrants to join the white majority while denying rights of citizenship to blacks, both foreign and native born, slave and free. Supporters of this binary construction of race hailed it for lending North America unusual social stability. But for critics such exceptionalism was a vice, not a virtue. If the nation was distinctive, it was because of its fatal 'sins' of institutionalized racism and refusal to acknowledge the contradictions inherent to a slave-holding democracy.[13]

Other critics opposed exceptionalist discourse by arguing that America's claim to uniqueness was itself a myth. These observers emphasized the commonalities between American development and historical patterns elsewhere. Shortly after the American Revolution, in fact, nationalist writers already began to warn against signs that America was falling into national decay, thus conforming to 'historical laws' that characterized the history of other nations. Some such alarmists noticed the decline of public 'virtue' after the achievement of independence, as Americans grew more interested in pursuing their own well-being than in maintaining vigilance about the safety of the republic. Others lamented the rise of land speculation, political corruption, unregulated immigration, women's political assertiveness (or lack thereof), frontier violence and removal of Native American tribes, the spread of slavery, or, alternatively, fanatical abolitionism and class antagonism between workers and masters. Conflicts arising over these issues seemed to foretell mediocrity, a surrender of the harmony that had once characterized the elusive American experiment. As indicated by texts in Volumes 3 and 4, millennialist reformers expressed a hope to 'perfect' American society to position or re-position the republic as the location of Christ's return to earth, necessitating the eradication of sin and error from the backsliding community.

Yet other critics of exceptionalism argued that whether or not the United States was beneficial or harmful to mankind, its development as an empire nonetheless contradicted its pretensions to national uniqueness. Such anti-exceptionalists highlighted the cost, often in human life and moral influence, of conquest and expansion, thus emphasizing the similarity between American imperial identity and historical and contemporaneous empires in Europe. Proponents of assertive diplomacy and threats of force across the Americas argued that such steps were necessary to secure self-government in a hostile world, and tended to shun history, arguing history's irrelevance to the American case. Anti-exceptionalists pointed out that creation of standing militaries for foreign deployment was a familiar marker of coercive empires since ancient times, citing historical examples of republics whose virtue was destroyed through imperial spending and foreign adventuring.

As a product of the antebellum republic's tolerance of slavery, the Civil War ironically punctuated rather than challenged Americans' assertions that their country lay outside the patterns of history. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, slavery declined in the world outside the United States under pressure of the British Empire, which abolished slavery in 1833 and encouraged or forced other countries to imitate its example largely through a crackdown on the international slave trade. Yet in American slavery's reliance on domestic reproduction of slaves, not importations from Africa or the Caribbean; westward expansion; profitability made possible for free Americans; and effective protection by the US Constitution's Fifth Amendment, the 'peculiar institution' was a powerful argument for national exceptionalism.

Both proslavery and antislavery writers believed this true. Their debates illustrate how exceptionalist arguments shaped America's sectional crisis. Alexander Stephens, Vice President of the Confederate States of America, for example, proudly declared the government of the Confederacy was 'the first, in the history of the world' to be based upon the 'great physical, philosophical, and moral truth' that 'the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition'.[14] For Stephens and other advocates of Confederate independence, the exceptionalism of slavery provided a means to correct the errant slide of history elsewhere in Western civilization, including in the United States since 1776, towards belief in racial equality. Proslavery advocates also fostered a belief in the special bonds that American slavery had forged through centuries of paternalistic 'care' for blacks, romanticizing the plantation as a space of long-standing kinship among slave and master. Not unlike the impulse that led to the establishment of missionary schools for Native Americans or other expressions of cultural imperialism, the language used to justify racism and enslavement was not always overtly dictatorial. Thus, the same

belief in exceptionalism that insisted on America's right to throw off the yoke of the British was here deployed to keep a population in chains.

Like Stephens, Abraham Lincoln also viewed slavery as a peculiarity, though its existence rendered America particularly hypocritical. In light of Thomas Jefferson's earlier proclamation of human equality, mid-nineteenth-century discrimination not only against slaves but 'negroes, foreigners, and Catholics' provoked Lincoln to speculate about 'emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty – Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure'.[15] Americans' slave-keeping rendered the republic unique in its hypocrisy; the rest of the world at least did not imagine itself free.

Lincoln more often emphasized the promise of American exceptionalism, however, not its duplicity. Like Stephens he argued that Americans were not simply a part of Western civilization. But for Lincoln the national role was to fulfil global aspirations for free labour democracy, not to show their falsehood. Thus as wartime president Lincoln proclaimed that the United States was the 'last best hope of earth', and its defenders should realize that the world would not forgive their failure to 'save the Union'. No place in the world other than the United States, Lincoln believed, offered the unique combination of open land, limited but effective government and market capitalism (though the United States relied on high tariffs to exclude foreign manufactured goods). If the Confederacy were successful it might spawn other regional separatist movements, and introduce or revitalize slavery throughout the Americas. Border wars and slave labour competition would kill the American free labour democratic experiment on behalf of the world. For advocates of Confederate independence, exceptionalism dictated resistance to pretensions to popular government and human equality. For champions of the Union, exceptionalism meant showing the world such pretensions were 'not an absurdity', but rather the best possible system under which to organize a heterogeneous people.[16]

Lincoln expressed a belief in the promise of the United States to fulfil the world's political destiny. As shown in Volume 3, other American exceptionalists before and during his generation emphasized the country's religious significance. Starting during the colonial era, millennial theology had galvanized American intellectual life; ministers interpreted historical events as steps towards or away from hastening the return of Jesus Christ to earth. Theologians and preachers expounded on Americans' success in their war of independence as a certain sign of God preparing the way to culminate all history, and the Revolution marked the emergence in millennial thought that Jesus would return to Earth only upon humans' 'perfection' of society, beginning in the United States and spreading elsewhere in the world. Various reform movements of the Second Great Awakening in the nineteenth century, for example, thus sought to cure social evils and to convert non-believers to Protestant Christianity to further establish necessary

conditions for the re-establishment of Zion, Jesus's holy city. Debate over where Zion would be located – generally, either the United States or Jerusalem – actually reflected American reformers' different understanding of the global role of American exceptionalism. Should focus be on perfection of American society itself first, or should American Christians carry their commission to other people, not only in Palestine but other infidel regions? Though they could argue over this question bitterly, reformers within and beyond American borders shared a common confidence in their special role in the unfolding of 'Progress', bringing conditions in the city of man in line with Jesus's command, 'be ye perfect'.[17]

The Civil War challenged many Americans' beliefs about the supernatural status and destiny of the country. The war dramatically called into question assumptions that the country existed outside the history of human fallibility and was called to lead the world in bringing about the triumph of Christian principles and establishment of a holy utopia. Instead, because of the sins of slavery and fratricide, God seemed to have abandoned the republic to the fate of other nations, marked by hubris, faction, warfare and dissolution. Yet as testimony to the strength of exceptionalist discourse, many wartime writers speculated that because Americans were – or worse, falsely presumed to be – a chosen people, their descent into chaos was a sign of special punishment. No ordinary, fallible people could expect to have to endure such catastrophic violence and social upheaval. Such a swing in exceptionalist discourse, from emphasis on God's special blessing to emphasis on His unmitigated wrath, provided a meaning for the war and helped Americans cope with its culture of death. A particularly idiomatic form of American discourse, the 'jeremiad', re-emerged during and after the Civil War. The jeremiad, a message brought to America by Puritan theologians, lamented the present-day suffering of the people and prophesied society's downfall, but also told of the coming redemption of society accomplished through individuals' willingness to repent their sins.[18] As the Bible assured Americans faithful to the church and the nation, 'The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death'.[19] Many Americans' sense of the country as a Christian nation strengthened, rather than diminished, through theological interpretation of the war.[20]

The Civil War's quelling secession and destruction of slavery accelerated the unification of the United States and spread of wage labour capitalism to the West in the post-war period. The North's wartime industrialization, if not its militarization, was maintained. While the war had temporarily curtailed immigration, the post-war period saw unprecedented numbers of Europeans as well as Asians arrive on American shores, once again affirming America's role as an asylum. Meanwhile the federal government, while willing and able to use its power to end slavery, proved reluctant to act on behalf of workers and consumers by regulating big business practices and output. These post-war developments magnified the emergence of permanent social classes in the United States and diminished the social

mobility and universal economic opportunity central to American exceptionalist discourse since the colonial era. In 1893 the historian Frederick Jackson Turner famously observed that with the exhaustion of 'open land' in the American West – and, implicitly, the annihilation of the Native American population, which reached its nadir in 1900 – the American 'frontier' was closed.[21] These daunting conditions offered a new challenge to apologists for American exceptionalism. Anti-exceptionalist critics announced the arrival of Old World social stagnation and class conflict on American shores as conclusive evidence of the dispelling of the 'myth' of immutable American differences from Europe.[22]

However, by the late nineteenth century many new 'social scientists' in economics, political science and sociology preserved or reconstituted rather than abandoned assumptions about American uniqueness in the world. They reiterated Americans' republican, liberal and Protestant millennial values. Writers of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era also evaluated social data 'scientifically' which suggested American dispensation from contingencies of secular time, in particular, class conflict. American workers' politicization, and the organization of unskilled labour, appeared less extensive than in Western Europe; commentators tended to take this as a sign of the evolution not decline of the country's uniqueness. Werner Sombart, a German social scientist, asked famously, 'Why is there no socialism in the United States?' Sombart believed that the success of capitalism led American workers, better off than their European counterparts in terms of wages, social status and geographic mobility, to identify their interests with the socio-economic status quo.[23] Alternatively, the United States was deemed the flagship nation illustrating historical changes precipitated by modernity: socialism, influenced by pre-existing American institutions, could become 'true socialism', and not precipitate class warfare. As the economist John Bates Clark wrote in 1879, 'True socialism is economic republicanism, and it can come no sooner, stay no longer, and rise, in quality, no higher than intelligence and virtue among the people'.[24] As annotations of documents in this collection from the later nineteenth century explain, the most intriguing aspect of American exceptionalism is its persistence across America's changing society and engagement with the world.

Studies of exceptionalist ideology outside the United States suggest that while its meanings and consequences have differed across national boundaries, the concept has not been the sole province of American nationalist sentiment.[25] Nations with imperial interests from ancient times to the Cold War often rationalized expansion on the basis that benighted nations would receive enlightenment through conquest. Different nations have claimed 'republicanism' as their distinctive national ideology, and various developing nations have emphasized their special prudence in conserving selected pre-republican institutions, in order to build the new regime's credibility.[26] 'Anti-American' criticism

is distinguished by its insistence on the unusual or incomparable nature of American power to destroy. However, the United States is not the only target of criticism pointing out its extraordinary failures.[27] Thus, expressions of American national distinctiveness are often, but not always, evidence of *American* exceptionalist discourse. This collection focuses on that discourse's changing contours, rather than elements shared with other nations' exceptionalist claims. Nonetheless, it offers a rich opportunity to study exceptionalism from a comparative perspective, a topic that has received little attention, despite Michael Kammen's acknowledgement in the late twentieth century that 'the time is now ripe for some sort of transnational team to undertake a comparative history of various national "exceptionalisms"'.[28]

In short, this collection illustrates the ways in which American exceptionalism became an unquestionable and entrenched ethos that dominated economics, politics, religion and culture from the colonial period through the early twentieth century. In its chronological and thematic scope it allows study of sources – pamphlets, sermons, funeral orations and newspaper, magazine and academic articles – not previously widely known or available, or whose contribution to American exceptionalist discourse has not been emphasized. Together this collection shows common threads in such arguments from early modern history to recent time. This collection thus historicizes the development and contours of American exceptionalism over three centuries, and allows scholars, as Ian Tyrrell has recently called for, to map 'American exceptionalism as a set of ideas in cultural history'.[29] By presenting the evolution of these ideas across time and through distinct communities, the collection deconstructs this monolith and reveals the extent to which American exceptionalism is a fluid concept, changing in its scope and application even now.

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INTRODUCTION

Hannah Arendt observed that it was American prosperity, not its revolution or republicanism, that had the greatest effect on Europe.[1] At times the pursuit of prosperity, in its encouragement of intense competition, selfishness and erection of hierarchies, was perceived as a threat to public morality and the national 'mission', and thus the health of the nation as a whole. These fears became most acute in debates over the strength of republican government, which, in the absence of a strong executive or central authority, was assumed to depend on the participation of a civic minded public. But over time economic prosperity and social mobility accomplished with minimal government assistance or regulation became a key to understanding Americans as a 'people of plenty', in the phrase of the historian David Potter for a post-World War II study of American 'national character'.[2]

Europeans' first interpretations of their discovery of land in the Americas emphasized its sheer abundance. The land's apparent limitlessness gave rise in the sixteenth century to the association of America with a lost paradise, where problems of Europe had been resolved or had not yet developed. Sir Thomas More's 1516 *Utopia*, which critiqued Europe's social deprivations and political failures, probably was sharpened by his reading of Amerigo Vespucci's American explorations and the Italian's observations that American Indians did not hold private property.[3]

Indeed, many colonial projects, including in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Georgia, reflected a utopian ambition to provide escape from Europe's social deprivations, political failures and religious wars.

Already by the seventeenth century, however, America's abundance became reinterpreted, metaphorically, from a paradise or asylum to a fallow plantation. Genesis 2:15 and 3:17–19 taught that God gave people the land to 'keep', although, after the fall of Adam and Eve, the fruit of their custodianship would be yielded only by toil and sweat. Passages such as Deuteronomy 8:7–9, a sermon of the prophet Moses to Israelites en route to the promised land of Canaan, served as a prophecy for what awaited Europeans in the Americas:

> For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley,

> of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones *are* iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

The land's development became a Christian duty, by civilizing America's apparent chaotic wilderness and its native people. Perhaps particular to Calvinists' understanding, labour, which had been imposed on fallen man as a curse, became transformed into a means of serving God's glory. Thus despite Europe's corruptions, settlers still believed that America should be shaped in a Christian European image. As Karen Ordahl Kupperman has written, the continent was 'uncultivated, unsettled, and unclaimed, and therefore a just prize for any who would productively mingle their labor with the land, assert their property rights, and start off on the road to commerce and civility'.[4]

Sometimes, Europeans witnessing or imagining the uniqueness of American opportunities highlighted the continent's human population. American Indians were observed to be different from Europeans, and some writers conceptualized these differences to illustrate the idealized indigene, the 'noble savage', as a reproach to European war-making.[5] But those differences typically functioned as sources of animosity, justifying strategies for either military conquest or transformation of Indians towards more European cultural characteristics through religious conversion and commercial interaction.[6]

More often, however, Europeans focused on the opportunities of abundant land in the Americas. While there may have been more people in the Americas than in Western Europe on the eve of Columbus's arrival in the New World, European jurists and settlers concluded that the American land was sparsely populated or empty, and that the native peoples resident in the Americas had left the land in a primitive state.[7] Spanish settlement happened in areas generally more densely populated and developed than in areas of European projects elsewhere. But even in North America 'empty land' was available because of the effects of disease epidemics that accompanied European settlers, which could wipe out native populations. A 1620 New England patent invoked the 'wonderfull Plague' that God had visited upon the 'Savages and brutish People there, heretofore inhabiting', as a bounty releasing 'those large and goodly Territoryes, deserted as it were by their natural Inhabitants' into the hands of 'such of our Subjects and People as … shall … be directed and conducted thither'.[8] Under the theory of *vacuum docilium*, Indians were migratory and semi-sedentary, or 'prestate', therefore their land was legally vacant, which justified its possession by Europeans.[9] The early exceptionalism of America meant the unique opportunities of its resources, not the unique qualities of the native peoples.

Thus writers from the seventeenth century onwards emphasized the numerous cases in which European colonists, rather than achieving idealized

communitarian societies, had, through access to America's resources and self-initiative, improved their material lives. This was perhaps especially the case among British settlers, who, most among the different European groups, apprised the American landscape as more than a mere marketable commodity, useful for yielding gold, fish, furs, or other forms of wealth. The land could serve as a home, not only an asylum but a livelihood.[10] In 'Discourse of Western Planting', Richard Hakluyt emphasizes that on American plantations 'All sortes and states of men' could 'finde themselves' and 'be raised againe' by finding 'work and thereby … made able by their owne honest and easie labour'.[11] Another account describes how some settlers initially

> maintain themselves the first year, like the Indians, with their guns, and nets; and afterwards by the same means with the assistance of their lands; the labour of their farms, they perform themselves, even to being their own carpenters and smiths; by this means, people who may be said to have no fortunes, are enabled to live, and in a few years to maintain themselves and families comfortably.

In another case 'a new settler … took his abode for some time in a decayed tulip tree', yet 'lived to become a considerable and wealthy planter'.[12] America sped up and multiplied people's fortunes and families. One writer estimated it took a mere five years for a new immigrant to achieve 'all the Necessaries of Life in plenty' as well as 'Conveniences', including 'clean Houses … Furniture, commodious Barns, and a sufficient stock of Horses, Cows, Hogs, Poultry, &c.' Another guaranteed that ten acres in South Carolina generated 'more Profit than Twenty Acres' in England'.[13] And in a popular if controversial pamphlet Benjamin Franklin calculated that Americans married and had children at double the rate of Europeans.[14]

Sometimes writers confirmed it was not necessary to work the land to gain access to America's opportunities. Especially in colonies south of Pennsylvania white settlers' prosperity depended increasingly on black slave labour. The availability and variety of slave labour became well publicized as an advantage to American settlement. In the early eighteenth century a London pamphleteer explained slaves were employable 'in any sort of Labour, either in Town or Country, in whatever their Masters, or Owners, have occasion to be done'. More important, slaves afforded free men who might once have had masters to themselves become 'masters and Owners of Plantations, Stock, & Slaves, on which they Live very plentifully, without being oblig'd to Labour themselves'. Like the Indians, blacks appeared to whites to be 'naturally of a barbarous … nature', thus their exclusion from American opportunities did not seem incongruous or wrong. Even in 1792 Thomas Paine proclaimed there were no 'poor and wretched people' in America, and 'no other race of men … but the people', in contrast to Europe, its hereditary governments a 'species of slavery'.[15] Even after the American Revolution, slavery's adaptability and profitability especially with

the deployment of the cotton gin strengthened proslavery arguments not only about its morality but also its congruence with American prosperity. Backed by statistics showing the wealthiest Americans were large slave-owners and the slave South's per capita income growth rate a third higher than the North's after 1840, a southerner affirmed that without the profits of slavery

> there can be no accumulation of property, no providence for the future, no taste for comforts or elegancies, which are the characteristics and essentials of civilization … Where good government and … domestic slavery are found, there are prosperity and greatness.[16]

Although under increasing attack by antislavery advocates in the North, southerners also believed in the promise of prosperity, and many believed slavery a morally justifiable way to wealth. As many historians have emphasized, democratic freedoms in the expanding American 'empire of liberty' before the Civil War needed the guarantee of property rights in slavery.[17]

Slavery's profitability not only for the South, but, through trade in cotton, the whole of the United States, strengthened data supporting beliefs about American prosperity for its free citizens. Still, the racial boundaries of American prosperity become clearer in consideration of the absence of a politically powerful abolitionist movement in the 'four score and seven years', following the American Revolution, in President Lincoln's words at Gettysburg. To be sure, after the Revolution slavery's existence in the republic seemed increasingly incongruous, to the point that some observers acknowledged whites' and blacks' experiences in America were exact opposites. Whereas Europeans had found 'an asylum from persecution' declared William Pinkney in 1790, Africans had discovered only 'an eternal grave'.[18] The Revolution had declared all people were 'entitled to the privilege of acquiring and enjoying property', but slaves were 'dispossessed of all property and all capacity of acquiring any', acknowledged a Kentucky abolitionist.[19] Slavery's degradation of blacks, enslaved and free, was assumed so severe that even the mainstream antislavery group the American Colonization Society encouraged black emigration to Africa as a co-requisite of emancipation. Liberal American policy-makers like James Madison and Abraham Lincoln, both of whom supported colonization, worried about the 'stain' left by slavery on the American republican example to the world.[20] However, the exceptional quality of free white Americans' prosperity depended on and was produced by an exceptionally rigid and comprehensive system of slave labour. In this case, America's exceptionalism as a revolutionary nation was diminished by the success of its exceptionalism as a prosperous nation.

Another controversial labour-free means to wealth in America was simply investment or speculation in land development and trading companies. Various joint-stock 'India' companies were responsible for much of the colonial invest-

ments of Britain, the Netherlands and France. By the early seventeenth century investments in joint-stock companies could be bought in exchanges. The first joint-stock companies to be implemented in the Americas were the London Company and the Plymouth Company. George Washington fought French troops in 1753 in defence of the Ohio Company, organized for speculative investment to back settlement by Virginians in the Ohio Country. Benjamin Franklin's 'way to wealth' came through long (and, as he noted, publicly conspicuous) hours in a printing shop as well as networking with his Junto mutual aid club partners, other investors, customers, journeymen franchisees and government backers. Franklin secured himself a long and successful career by producing and circulating scientific, diplomatic and popular information. He was tied to the land only tangentially, through his several speculative investment undertakings. But risk-taking lay at the heart of beliefs about America's exceptionalism. As scholars of speculation and commerce in early American literature have shown, an ethos of risk-taking and borrowing, particularly to support commerce and the social mobility it offered, was eventually understood as the peculiar product of American daring and nation building.[21] In the later nineteenth century the American icon Ragged Dick, the boy hero of the novels of Horatio Alger, regularly found fame and fortune through moral rectitude, hard work and risk-taking, the same attributes normalized by success writers of the early republic. However, Ragged Dick also needed good luck, or 'chance', which often took the form of recognition by a man of wealth and affluence at a moment of crisis, who saw and rewarded Dick's bravery and potential, even if, or because, Dick was not already progressing towards prosperity. Dick's need for 'chance' suggested that the ideal of achievement of prosperity was modified in the era of the Gilded Age's formation of a business class and the decrease of self-employment.[22]

A popular anecdote tells of Franklin's answer at the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 to a question of what kind of government the Founders had just established, a monarchy or a republic. 'A republic', Franklin said, 'if you can keep it.'[23] Franklin's warning signals his ambivalence about separation of powers and popular participation in the newly established US government. His words also suggest the uncertainty he shared with other American ideologues about whether a changing America could encourage both sacrificial citizenship and the rewards of private enterprise.

Hannah Arendt rightly emphasized that over time Americans' 'prosperity' has had great global significance. But as reflected in Franklin's career of public service and private industry, and in his concern for the new US government in 1787, Arendt suggested a false dichotomy among three attributes of America's impact on the Old World – its prosperity, its revolution and its republicanism. In fact these three phenomena were interdependent. 'Republicanism' during the war years of the Revolution, as Gordon Wood has written, required com-

munitarian 'sacrifice of individual interests to the greater good of the whole'.[24] Fears of a British conspiracy to tax and choke off Americans' unique chance for prosperity had sparked not only armed rebellion but a new framework of government, dependent on the participation of the people to prevent a return of despotism. However, an important outcome of the American Revolution was its enshrinement of rights of property and labour, the opening of land to the west, the virtues of free trade and sanctification of minimal government. These legacies of the war shaped beliefs about America's economic opportunity for succeeding generations. As a Boston orator said at the end of the Revolution, 'the object of public virtue is to secure the liberties of the community'. But more to the point, 'a security of liberty admits of every man's pursuing, without molestation, the measures most likely to increase his ease'.[25] Americans' jealousy about their prosperity stemmed from the fragility of the Revolution's achievement in both giving birth to the country's unique republican destiny and enhancing individual opportunity for 'ease'.

Some republican writers of the late eighteenth century insisted that since the exigencies of the war had diminished, vigilance against government rulers taking ordinary Americans' hard-earned wealth for self-indulgent living or to pay off insiders, aristocrats and bureaucratic hangers-on, was even more critical. Avarice and greed dismayed republicans as the self sacrificing civic virtue of the war years gave way to more profit-oriented forms of individualism. Conspicuous consumption and refinement, common markers of prosperity, could be taken as tell-tales of the kind of decay known among Americans to be sinking Europe to be descending upon the new United States. Already in 1780 John Adams wrote, 'How much should We deplore, that Spirit of Dissipation, Vanity, and Knavery, which infects so many Americans and threatens to ruin our Manners and Liberties in Imitation of the old World.'[26] But Adams's fellow New Englander Ezra Stiles expressed post-war Americans' confidence in their ability to reconcile the competition or contradiction of personal prosperity and national virtue. 'Let us have all the means possible of subsistence and elegance among ourselves if we would be a flourishing republic of real independent dignity and glory.'[27] Hector St John de Crevecour likewise held up Americans as 'new men' because they could function as both 'possessors of the soil they cultivate' and as 'framers of their own laws, by means of their representatives'.[28]

Americans' focus on their own well-being, not on the health of the commonwealth, also drew the attention of Alexis de Tocqueville, one of the first observers to note the rise of 'individualism' in American society. Tocqueville distinguished between feudal and democratic society, in emphasizing, based on his observations in America, the latter's absence of institutions to maintain people's involvement in public affairs. Tocqueville wrote,

> Individualism is a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows and to draw apart with his family and his friends, so that after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself … individualism is of democratic origin, and it threatens to spread in the same ratio as the equality of condition … Among democratic nations … [as] social conditions become more equal, the number of persons increases who, although they are neither rich nor powerful enough to exercise any great influence over their fellows, have nevertheless acquired or retained sufficient education and fortune to satisfy their own wants. They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.[29]

Tocqueville observed that 'associations', such as religious and political societies and newspapers, were important institutions that drew Americans together and combated the atomizing tendency of individualism. Still he pointed out, as a peculiar American national characteristic, the self-absorbed pursuit of wealth that John Adams had detected a half-century earlier.

John Adams's concerns about Americans' individual pursuit of wealth in its erosion of the country's distinctive collective liberty echoed throughout the nineteenth century.

One response to what a journalist termed in 1815, an 'almost universal ambition to get forward' was the utopian socialist impulse of the nineteenth century, through which planned communities based on collective property-holding, or no property-holding, dotted the US landscape from Massachusetts to Washington.[30] The land's immensity and reformers' alienation from capitalist enterprise encouraged religious and social experimentation to try to reorder or reverse aspects of the developing American society. Many of these utopian groups, such as the New Harmony experiment of Robert Owen and the 'phalanxes' modelled on the ideas of Charles Fourier, took inspiration from European socialists. But their search for well-being in the remote areas of the American landscape linked them with Henry David Thoreau's personal declaration of independence and experiment in self-reliance at Walden Pond, and hippie communities of the 1960s. These Americans, counter to mainstream Euro-American conceptions of the land as divisible property, emphasized small-scale usage of the land to preserve its function, or mythology, as an asylum.[31]

More extensive critiques of liberal capitalism as the best means to prosperity developed among American farmers and urban workers across the nineteenth century. Historians have shown that 'republican ideology' shaped labourers' demands for egalitarian workplaces and relationships with land and industry owners, and calls for government protection of workers' rights to economic opportunity. These included late eighteenth-century New England farmers who opposed mill operators' taking of public land in America's first industrial conflicts, pre-Civil War urban workers' efforts to achieve ten-hour days and the

right to organize trade unions, the Knights of Labor's demand for eight-hour days and development of democratically managed worker-owner cooperatives, and the Populist Party's opposition to the power of banks and railroads, and call for anti-trust regulation.[32] Working-class advocates built on the Revolution's fears of centralized financial power to criticize those who accumulated property without following a productive trade, such as bankers, lawyers and speculators, who accumulated land without actually using or occupying it, who concentrated wealth in corporations, and who sought to treat labour merely as a marketable commodity, rather than as a worker's property and the sole basis of wealth. Few American workers came to condemn private property wholesale, but they did emphasize social and corporate responsibility for the rights of independent individuals of small means. An 1836 trade union report of New York City workers condemned emerging industrial conditions that threatened America's promise of both individual and national prosperity: labour employers and masters had begun taking 'upon themselves the affixing of a price of our labor … these men have always endeavored to make the laborer work for low wages, without any reference to the prosperity of the country'.[33]

A second ideology, 'free labour', emerged in the 1840s as a response to signs of class inequality developing in the United States, which seemed disturbingly similar to workers' conditions in Britain.[34] Free labour theorists and policy-makers sought to reassert the identity of interests and possibility of prosperity for all in the American economy. A representative statement of free labour doctrine appeared in an 1844 address by a Virginian, Alexander Stuart:

> Here we see no class of our population subsisting on wages of sixpence or a shilling a day! Here we have no necessity for factory bills, or a system of legislative police to guard the operative against the exactions of his employers. Here a competency is within the reach of every man who is disposed to exercise ordinary industry and frugality, and the labouring population is prosperous and happy.

Stuart asserted that America as a place of virtue, independence and equality, was a uniquely classless society, in which workers and masters should recognize a mutually beneficial interest. All Americans of industrious habits, according to free labour doctrine, could better themselves, therefore policy should not redistribute the property of the rich, but open the avenues of social advancement to all labourers. And comparing labour conditions in American and Old World cities, American wage earners were relatively prosperous; therefore strikes and worker demonstrations, as a newspaper reported during the financial panic of 1857, were not perceived to 'represent the real feelings of the working classes … Their style of proceedings and spirit have a flavor of communism about them; they suggest a foreign origin.' Free labour doctrine expressed a particular means of maintaining Americans' belief in individual and national prosperity shared

by a large middle class in an era of the entrenchment of wage labour and class formation.[35]

An additional, essential aspect of free labour ideology and practice was the country's storehouse of land in the West. This land's productive organization, settlement and usage would further ensure equal economic opportunity and relieve surplus labour in the East. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided citizens or immigrants intending to become citizens 160 acres of land in the public domain, if they would live on the land for five years. Although mainly eastern farmers, not urban wage earners, were able to take advantage of the offer of free land, its promise became the basis for understanding the United States as an exceptional frontier democracy, hailed by the historian Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893. Turner conceived of the famous metaphor of a 'safety valve' to describe the function of 'the vast unoccupied domain that stretched from the borders of the settled area to the Pacific Ocean ... No grave social problem could exist while the wilderness at the edge of civilization opened wide its portals to all who were oppressed, to all who with strong arms and stout heart desired to hew a home and a career for themselves.'[36] For Turner the frontier provided not only the assurance of prosperity but a solvent of political radicalism; the homestead movement was hardly socialistic. Ironically, Turner made his address in 1893 to note the 'closing' of the frontier and to ponder how American identity would necessarily change given the exhaustion of territorial expansion. Taking note of Turner's declaration, based as it was on the finding of the US Census of 1890, some Americans decided that with the frontier gone and the arrival of a corporate state, in which work shifted decisively from agriculture towards manufacturing, the nation's uniqueness would fade.[37]

Many industrial and agricultural workers of the late nineteenth century sought to maintain the exceptionalist prospect of equal prosperity of Americans, but in doing so they rejected another aspect of what Seymour Lipset called 'the nation's ideology' of exceptionalism, laissez-faire.[38] As has been frequently emphasized, America differed from Europe in its lack of a labour political party, the conditions for whose formation seemed auspicious in the era of the great strikes of the 1870s to 1890s.[39] However, as demonstrated in their efforts to unionize for collective bargaining as a basis to confront corporate power, for example, industrial workers realized that individual effort and self-reliance were perhaps simply suited to the earlier republic. Likewise, farmers of the South and Midwest who formed the backbone of the People's Party moved away from laissez-faire attitudes in demanding that the federal government adopt a graduated income tax, government ownership of railroads and telegraphs, and public work provided for unemployed workers. These shifts in emphases on what aspects of the creed of national exceptionalism were actually still within reach, and what

aspects of that creed were merely instrumental or expedient, mark an important evolution in exceptionalist discourse.

Meanwhile, the Civil War's destruction of slavery and the following Reconstruction amendments to the US Constitution provided for citizenship to black Americans in terms of civil rights to freedom, equality under federal law and voting rights guaranteed against prohibition on the basis of race. Neither federal nor state governments, however, saw fit to protect freedmen's rights to other aspects of citizenship. Namely, governments did not provide access to means of economic development and prosperity, especially property rights in land, opportunities to compete for that which most white Americans took for granted. In a famous address of 1865, 'What Does the Black Man Want?' Frederick Douglass encouraged Americans to allow former slaves to simply fend for themselves: 'If the negro cannot stand on his own legs, let him fall also. All I ask is, give him a chance to stand on his own legs! Let him alone!' Douglass here invoked the traditional assumption of American citizens' ability to prosper if not impeded by government restraint. By the same philosophy, Congress defeated an attempt by Radical Republicans in 1866 to extend homesteading to cover forfeited estates of Confederates to the pool of available land to enable access by former slaves, on grounds it violated the sanctity of private property. Meanwhile racial discrimination became a national institution in the late nineteenth century, which black civil rights assailed by comparing their conditions to class and religious inequalities in other lands, including European layers of nobility and the caste system of India. Racial discrimination violated the American precept of prosperity because, in the words of the black Congressman of South Carolina Alonzo J. Ransier, it prevented blacks from enjoying 'an equal chance in the race of life'.[40] The advent of the multi-racial republic after the Civil War would require a reinterpretation of the promise of 'free labour', which guaranteed individuals' opportunity to prosper by freedom from government. With the movement from liberal to social democracy around the turn of the twentieth century, Americans of different backgrounds would gradually accept the role of the federal government to enhance or ensure Americans' prosperity not by leaving them alone but through economic and social regulation.[41]

Several assumptions have interacted over time to produce Americans' sense of their unique opportunity. These include the great availability of land not subject to government possession or regulation, at least after it had been acquired from any previous inhabitants; the social fluidity and equality of opportunity afforded by access to land and/or performance of self-reliant 'free labour'; and entrepreneurial risk-taking. As the texts reproduced in this volume show, however, conflicts emerged among these concepts. National prosperity and individual Americans' equal access to wealth were not both achievable. Government power was often necessary for the British colonies and their successor the United States to acquire

land for settlers interested in escaping such authority. Self-reliant free labour remained a paradigm after dependent wage labour, unattached to the land and reliant on collective action by workers, became reflective of actual American experience. Yet while the means to achieving the 'American Dream', a phrase coined by the historian James Truslow Adams in 1931, changed over time, the possibility of its accomplishment remained firmly part of the national imagination.[42]

Notes

1. H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1987), pp. 22–6.
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3. J. Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How Native Americans Transformed the World* (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 157–9.
4. K. O. Kupperman, *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 63.
5. J. D. Bellin, *Demon of the Continent: Indians and the Shaping of American Literature* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 39–70.
6. J. Greene, *Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 20–2.
7. C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (New York: Vintage, 2006), p. 108.
8. Quotation from C. Tomlins, *Freedom Bound: Law, Labor, and Civic Identity in Colonizing English America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 23.
9. J. Muldoon, 'Discovery, Grant, Charter, Conquest, or Purchase: John Adams on the Legal Basis for English Possession of North America', in C. L. Tomlins and B. H. Mann (eds), *Many Legalities of Early America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 25–46, on p. 42.
10. J. Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 138.
11. R. Hakluyt, *A Discourse Concerning Western Planting* (1584), ed. C. Deane (Cambridge: John Wilson & Son, 1877), pp. 39, 160.
12. [An American], *American Husbandry: Containing an Account of the Soil, Climate, Production and Agriculture, of the British Colonies in North-America and the West-Indies; with Observations on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Settling in them, Compared with Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 vols (London: J. Bew, 1775), vol. 1, pp. 122, 378.
13. [Roscommon], *To the Author of those Intelligencers Printed at Dublin* (1733), quoted in Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America,* pp. 102, 70.
14. W. Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), p. 150. Franklin also called for allowing only English and Saxon Germans to come to America, because no other European or African group was 'white'.
15. Quotations from Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America*, pp. 73, 94, 134.
16. R. W. Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: Norton, 1994), pp. 89, 436; W. Harper, *Memoir on Slavery* (1838), quoted in J. Oakes, 'The Peculiar Fate of the Bourgeois Critique of Slavery', in W. Jordan (ed.), *Slavery and the American South* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), pp. 29–56, on p. 43.

17. E. S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003).
18. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America,* p. 188.
19. Ibid.
20. D. B. Davis, *Revolutions: Reflections on American Equality and Foreign Liberations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 74.
21. J. J. Baker, *Securing the Commonwealth: Debt, Speculation, and Writing in the Making of Early America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2005); K. A. Weyler, '"A Speculating Spirit": Trade, Speculation, and Gambling in Early American Fiction', *Early American Literature*, 31:3 (1996), pp. 207–42.
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23. J. A. Smith, *Franklin and Bache: Envisioning the Enlightened Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 18.
24. G. Wood, *Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 53.
25. J. Warren, *An Oration, Delivered July 4, 1783,* quoted by R. L. Bushman, 'Freedom and Prosperity in the American Revolution', in L. R. Gerlach (ed.), *Legacies of the American Revolution* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1978), pp. 61–83, on p. 77.
26. J. Adams to M. O. Warren, 9 December 1780, in *Founding Families: Digital Editions of the Papers of the Winthrops and the Adamses*, ed. C. J. Taylor, Massachusetts Historical Society, online at www.masshist.org/ff [accessed 30 July 2012].
27. E. Stiles, *The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor* (1783), in J. W. Thornton (ed.), *The Pulpit of the American Revolution* (Boston, MA: D. Lothrop & Co., 1876), p. 432.
28. J. Hector St John de Crevecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer* (1782) (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005), pp. 26, 34.
29. A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. H. Reeve (1838), 2 vols (New York: Colonial Press, 1900), vol. 2, pp. 105–6.
30. *Niles' Review*, quoted in S. Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 101.
31. *America's Communal Utopias*, ed. D. E. Pitzer (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); H. D. Thoreau, *Walden, or, Life in the Woods* (Boston, MA: Ticknor & Fields, 1854); D. Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).
32. A summary of historians' study of 'republicanism' in the early United States is D. T. Rodgers, 'Republicanism: the Career of a Concept', *Journal of American History*, 79:1 (1992), pp. 11–38.
33. Quoted in Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, p. 244.
34. On the unexceptional aspects of American labour conditions see S. Wilentz, 'Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790–1920', *International Labor and Working Class History*, 26 (1984), pp. 1–24.
35. Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, p. 303; E. Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 19, 25, 32. On the eve of the Civil War Stuart, as a leader of the Constitutional Union Party, attempted to dispel the sectional crisis by arguing that the country's greatest profits would be gained from the maintenance both southern slave labour and northern free labour; as 'diverse economic systems' they were complementary, not com-

petitive, and created a 'unity of interest'. P. Knupfer, 'Crisis in Conservatism: Northern Unionism and the Harpers Ferry Raid', in P. Finkelman (ed.), *His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1995, pp. 119–48, on p. 127.

36. Turner quoted in Cullen, *The American Dream*, p. 142.
37. Two different views of American exceptionalism and the contribution of Turner's argument are M. Kammen, 'The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration', *American Quarterly* , 45:1 (1993), pp. 1-43; and I. Tyrrell, 'American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History', *American Historical Review*, 96:4 (1991), pp. 1031–55. On Americans' 'anxiety' about the closing of the frontier, see D. M. Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993).
38. S. M. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 31.
39. K. Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 245–9; L. Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press ,1983), pp. 219–30.
40. E. Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863–1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 67.
41. Ibid., p. 534. J. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
42. J. T. Adams, *Epic of America* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1931), p. 415.

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ROSIER, *A TRUE RELATION OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS VOYAGE MADE THIS PRESENT YEAR 1605 BY CAPTAINE GEORGE WAYMOUTH IN THE DISCOVERY OF THE LAND OF VIRGINIA*

James Rosier, *A True Relation of the Most Prosperous Voyage made this Present Year 1605 by Captaine George Waymouth in the Discovery of the Land of Virginia* (London: George Bishop, 1605).

James Rosier (1573–1609), graduated from Cambridge University in 1596. He became a Roman Catholic around 1602, the same year he possibly sailed to Maine for the first time with Bartholomew Gosnold, a prime organizer of the Virginia Company, chartered by James I to establish a colony roughly from the Chesapeake Bay to the modern US–Canadian border. Gosnold's ship the *Concord* landed at Port Elizabeth, Maine, but all settlers on this expedition returned to England because of insufficient provisions. At this time Rosier also met Thomas Arundell, a Roman Catholic commended by the Holy Roman Empire for military service against the Ottoman Empire. Arundell may have sponsored the expedition of Captain George Waymouth as a first attempt to found an American colony that would be an asylum for English Catholics. Rosier served as head merchant and reporter for the voyage. Waymouth led the expedition on the ship *Archangel* from 5 March to 18 July 1605.

In the essay below Rosier describes the exploration of Maine, particularly a journey along a 'great river,' possibly the St George's River or Penobscot River, and encounters with some of the Abenaki people of northeastern North America, of the Algonquian language group. Rosier's compilation of Abenaki words would prove useful to traders, and the impact of the five Indians whom the expedition kidnapped for the return journey to England fired others' imagination and ambition to cross the Atlantic. The colonial entrepreneur Ferdinando Gorges kept three of the Indians and declared that their representations about Virginia were the means, 'under God, of putting on foot and giving life to all our plantations'.[1]

Most important, Rosier's inventorying of timber resources, wild plants, abundant clay for brickmaking, fish and shellfish stirred interest in the economic

potential of the northern coast of Virginia. The narrative followed the 1584 essay of Richard Hakluyt, *Discourse of Western Planting*, a seminal argument for English entry into American colonization. Hakluyt had argued that North America, or Virginia, as the English called the vast region, could, if turned into plantations, supply England with every commodity it then obtained from the Mediterranean and other parts of Europe; ensure England would not slide backwards 'into beggery' and national insignificance; challenge enemies of the realm of England, especially the Spanish (ironically, Rosier in 1608 joined the Society of Jesus in Rome); and relieve England's under-employment as a destination for emigrants.[2] English emigrants, said Hakluyt, could 'be raised againe' given opportunity in America.[3] Hakluyt's argument for emigration – perhaps the first articulation of 'the American dream'[4] – was more explicit than Rosier's, but the latter was compelling for its provision of hard evidence of perhaps limitless opportunity.

There were three versions of Rosier's account: a now-lost journal; a manuscript that appeared in abridged form in 1625 in Samuel Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes*, 20 vols (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1906), vol. 18, pp. 335–59; and the essay below, which has been reprinted in *Sailors Narratives of Voyages Along the New England Coast, 1524–1624*, ed. G. P. Winship (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin & Co., 1905), pp. 101–51; *Early English and French Voyages, Chiefly from Hakluyt, 1534–1608*, ed. H. S. Burrage (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), pp. 353–94; *English New England Voyages, 1602–1608*, ed. D. B. Quinn and A. M. Quinn (London: Hakluyt Society, 1983), pp. 248–354; and *Voyage of Archangell: James Rosier's Account of the Waymouth Voyage of 1605, a True Relation*, ed. D. C. Morey (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, 2005).

Notes

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2. See J. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity From 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 36–46.
3. R. Hakluyt, *A Discourse Concerning Western Planting*, ed. C. Deane (Cambridge, ME: J. Wilson, 1877), p. 160.
4. The phrase was probably coined by James Truslow Adams in *Epic of America* (1931).