Republicans of Letters: The Early American Foreign Service as Information Network, 1775-1825

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Introduction

On September 22, 1817, newly-sworn-in Secretary of State John Quincy Adams entered his new office to find a table piled high with unopened letters.¹ In 1817 the United States had 134 diplomats, consuls, and special agents stationed abroad,² and their mail was going unread. As the most experienced diplomat of his generation, Adams was particularly sensitive to the importance of diplomatic and consular correspondence. Throughout his career he had composed carefully researched dispatches on the state of European politics and its probable effect on American interests. He had found himself in moments of crisis where he required new instructions from his government — he had once been unable to take up his post in Berlin until his credentials had been updated to name the new king, who had ascended to the throne just days before he arrived. Correspondence was the lifeblood of the Foreign Service, and it was stagnating on the State Department's table.

Adams's attempts to clear the backlog quickly ran up against the limited resources of the State Department in the early national period. The entire department consisted of eight people and their responsibilities extended far beyond foreign policy to take in a number of domestic issues.³ Simply logging the incoming letters was not sufficient. They had to be indexed according to subject mentioned and placed into a workflow that handled the often extensive

¹ John Quincy Adams Diary 30, 1 June 1816 - 31 December 1818, page 257 [electronic edition]. *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams: A Digital Collection*. Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2004. http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries Sun Oct 13 12:34:08 EDT 2013

² The Early American Foreign Service Database, ed. Jean Bauer, http://eafsd.org. ACCESSED Sun Oct 13 23:20:19 EDT 2013. 36 of those were appointed in 1817, so it is possible that there were only 98 in place at the time of Adams's appointment.

³ The early State Department was intended to oversee the entire nation state, and its original duties included conducting the U.S. Census, recording the laws passed by the Federal Government, and assigning patents among others.

research required before questions could be answered and new instructions approved. Two filing systems were created, one for diplomatic correspondence and one for consular. These filing systems allowed State Department officials to better use the information coming from abroad to formulate policy and to communicate and exert control over their officers.⁴ The filing system is one of Adams's credited achievements in organizing and reshaping the State Department.⁵ In modern terminology, John Quincy Adams had created a database.⁶

When studying the history of the early American Foreign Service, contemporary historians are faced with the same problem Adams encountered on his first day, only on a much larger scale. The scope of possible sources and the lack of organization in many contemporary archives reproduces the problem of unexplored and unknown materials. This dissertation uses a digital, relational database, custom built by the author, to study the early American Foreign Service as John Quincy Adams understood it to be: a global system held together by letters. These letters form an epistolary network that served to pass information and instructions. A foreign service is built on the movement of people and their ideas, whether through a permanent relocation to an overseas assignment or the carrying of letters between fixed points. *The Early American Foreign Service Database* (EAFSD) allows historians to explore, analyze, and visualize the systems used

⁴ JQA Diary 30, 1 June 1816 - 31 December 1818, page 353-4. http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries Sun Oct 13 12:33:53 EDT 2013

⁵ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1949); James E Lewis, *John Quincy Adams: Policymaker for the Union* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2001).

⁶ Although the term 'database' was not coined until 1955 ("Database, N.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 20, 2013, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/47411.), and is often associated with computational systems, databases are as old as record keeping itself and can take the form of any data structure. Historians have long used databases similar to Adams's to keep track of their sources, actors, and arguments. However, the increased sophistication of modern database management systems has finally allowed these databases to move beyond organization of sources or advanced note taking and they can now be used as a scholarly tool to model the world under investigation.

by the early American governments to represent the United States abroad and report information back home.

The data structure of the EAFSD⁷ unpacks the names and places mentioned in letters and assignment records to reveal the prosopographical, imperial, and geospatial relationships that shaped the early American Foreign Service. By placing these people, places, and organizations in their larger context and in relation to one another, the EAFSD allows historians to complement biographical analysis or micro-history with study of the Foreign Service on the levels of social network, institutional structure, and global placement. These four modes of historical analysis, biographical, social, structural, and geospatial, each illuminate crucial aspects of the inner workings and growth of the Foreign Service, and each mode is highlighted in one of the dissertation chapters.

Examining the Foreign Service as an information network in which people (biography) and places (geography) are connected by letters and assignments also gives historians a new way of approaching early American state capacity. State capacity in the realm of foreign policy has traditionally been determined by a nation's ability to protect and extend its interests abroad⁸, and has been measured through the success (or failure) of a nation's diplomats at negotiating treaties favorable to the national interest. As is made clear in the first chapter of this dissertation, the American government had little hope of protecting its interests, especially the rights of neutrals

⁷ The EAFSD runs on an open source software package, also designed by the author. The software is called Project Quincy in honor of John Quincy Adams. http://projectquincy.org

⁸ The literature on International Relations theory is too vast to be cited here. However, two works deal specifically with the issue of state capacity in pre World War II America: Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role (Princeton Studies in International History and Politics)* (Princeton University Press, 1999); David M. Golove and Daniel J. Hulsebosch, "A Civilized Nation: The Early American Constitution, the Law of Nations, and the Pursuit of International Recognition," *New York University Law Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 932.

and increased trade, during a period of general European war.⁹ What the United States government could conceivably have done was to establish a global network designed to assist Americans abroad and funnel crucial information about world affairs back to the home government. This dissertation employs close archival research within the framework of the EAFSD to determine how effectively American foreign service officers passed information through their networks to further American interests abroad.

Chapter 1: With Friends Like These: John Adams and the Comte de Vergennes on Franco-American Relations

In the summer of 1780, John Adams and the Comte de Vergennes crossed epistolary swords over America's status in the Franco-American Alliance. Understanding their irreconcilable policies explains how a minor dispute about paper money erupted into a fight over the control of post-war American commerce, which became a battle over the proper deployment of the French Navy in the New World, which led to mutual accusations of betrayal and treason. France thought the United States was its client state, bound to assist France against its enemies, particularly Great Britain. At the same time, American politicians followed the logic of the Model Treaty and the idea that "free ships make free goods" to claim America as a neutral state, free to sell its staple agricultural products to whomever offered the best price, including Britain. This difference underlies all the major conflicts of Franco-American relations through the end of the Napoleonic Wars and provides the primary constraint on American success in negotiating favorable treaties with its strongest political ally and its largest trading partner.

⁹ For more on the balance of power and how it threatened the rights of neutrals, see Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, *1763-1848* (New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1994).

This chapter focuses on the biographical mode of analysis. In the months that John Adams spent in France during 1780 he was completely cut off from his government. His social network was also drastically reduced. He received no letters from home, personal or political, and his only contact in England was the ineffective (or perhaps duplications) Edmund Jennings. Adams was the prototypical early American amateur diplomat — untrained and unrestrained. Even the close proximity of Franklin was not enough to keep this provincial trial lawyer from infuriating America's only military ally in the middle of the American Revolution and endangering the alliance.

Chapter 2: Republicans of Letters: the Adams-Jefferson Correspondence Network, 1785-1788

This chapter focuses on the social mode of analysis in studying the correspondence of John and Abigail Adams with Thomas Jefferson to show how early American Foreign Service officers gathered and shared information while posted abroad. The Adams-Jefferson network is a crucial link between the scattered diplomats of the Revolutionary War and the slightly more organized Foreign Service of the State Department. It is also a unique set of documents due to the almost inconceivable power-sharing arrangement between John Adams and Jefferson: every diplomatic action in Europe required both their signatures. As a result, these letters give a detailed day-to-day account of diplomatic missions. This power-sharing arrangement also brings the correspondence network into sharp relief. John Adams and Jefferson's correspondents had to be aware that both men would be responsible for any action taken, yet less than ten percent of these correspondents wrote to both diplomats. Once these letters are treated as a correspondence network there is clear indication of information pooling, the backbone of a successful foreign service.

Abigail Adams was an essential part of this network. While she is recognized as one of the great epistolary writers in American history, her contribution to American diplomacy has been previously overlooked. She was a crucial link as well as a sharp observer of British, European, and American political culture. She kept Jefferson informed of major trends in London and New England for which he had no equally reliable source. Her role in this network also highlights the important role played by many non-official diplomats, especially women, who were responsible for setting an appropriate space for negotiation and communication. The letters between Abigail Adams and Jefferson demonstrate her role as a source of information on English and New England customs, news and economic trends. The correspondence is also shot through with jokes, favors, personal advice, and social observations, which make the letters sparkle and show the deep trust among John Adams, Abigail Adams, and Jefferson. This trust influenced the sharing of professional information among the three correspondents, including newsworthy developments and political opinions. From this foundation of personal trust and information exchange, the geopolitical endeavors of John Adams, Abigail Adams, and Jefferson can be reassessed within their larger epistolary context through the social (and biographical) mode of analysis.

The chapter also uses information about a minor but illuminating international incident, the Stanhope Affair, to show how information moved through the network, and combines that close reading with high-level network analysis of all six thousand letters sent or received by Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Abigail Adams. The full network that emerges from the case study and the analysis was highly social and governed more by conventions of personal honor and unofficial friendships than diplomatic procedure or national interest. However, it was precisely

this social character that allowed information to be shared between the diplomats so that they could remain informed about events in Paris, London, Philadelphia, and Boston.

Chapter 3: Gatekeepers and Bottlenecks: The State Department and Jay's Treaty

This chapter charts the operational capacity of the State Department as an information-gathering and distributing institution at the beginning of the French Revolutionary Wars. Using social networking and geospatial methods, it will document the effort expended by Secretary of State Edmund Randolph to keep John Jay informed during his negotiations. Jay's relationship with then-Secretary of State Edmund Randolph has suffered in accounts of the treaty negotiation in favor of Alexander Hamilton's unsanctioned efforts to shape the negotiations. A structured examination of the letters sent to Jay during his months in England reveals the scope and limits of the office of the Secretary of State. This analysis will also show how Randolph's efforts failed, and ironically, how that American failure forced the British Government to admit its own confusion and begin a long-term process of international arbitration.

This chapter also shows how formal data structures and data visualization, when paired with close archival research, can illuminate major structural components in the early American foreign service. All the letters Randolph enclosed to Jay during this six-month mission to London are preserved in the Jay Papers, but they are not indexed in the larger papers project and were filed in a single folder containing five hundred sixty-four manuscript pages. Disentangling this archive provided crucial insight into the nature of the State Department and how it obtained information in the immediate aftermath of Jefferson's retirement as Secretary of State. Entering the letters in the EAFSD allowed them to both be used in network analysis and mapped, revealing a correspondence network that spanned all the "hot spots" in the crisis: Canada, the

Ohio back country, the eastern American seaboard, the Caribbean. It also showed sets of conversations among American and British officials and private citizens which found their way to Randolph in Philadelphia, only to be sent on to Jay in London. These information flows and blockages show the operational capacity of the State Department as an information clearinghouse in times of crisis. While Randolph's efforts to keep Jay informed show a marked improvement over Jay's own efforts as Secretary of Foreign Affairs with Adams and Jefferson in Chapter 2, it is clear that the system was far too slow and unreliable for the tasks at hand. However, the failures were equally important for understanding the larger system. The biographical treatment of the doomed diplomatic agent, Nathaniel Cabot Higginson, sent to inform Jay directly of events in the Caribbean, provides a necessary supplement to the larger picture of war and commerce.

Chapter 4: All Over the Map: The Too-Rapid Rise of the U.S. Consular Corps

This chapter pulls back to examine the "bird's-eye view." A foreign service is a spatial organization. People are assigned to locations primarily so that *someone will be at that location*. The most important revelation in the maps is more visual than geospatial. After 1792 the map quickly fills up with consuls, and then remains remarkably stable through the beginning of John Quincy Adams's presidency. The fixed pattern of officer distribution, especially in Europe, is determined within a few years of establishing the consular service. What this shows is the utter reliance of the early American state on the merchant community.

Outside of North Africa where consuls received a salary, consuls were little more than businessmen with an additional set of responsibilities, only invoked when needed. A consul's day-to-day responsibilities varied widely. To showcase this variety, the chapter will draw on

archival research into the letters of Sylvanous Bourne, one of the longest-serving American consuls in the early years of the Foreign Service.

Following the British model of consular representation allowed the Federal Government to quickly establish a global foreign service with little expense or oversight. At most of the ports at which American ship captains could trade, the new nation had an official representative. These spheres of representation remain remarkably constant over 30 years, despite drastic changes in the international arena. However, the vast, almost overnight expansion of the consular corps meant that it quickly outstripped the Federal Government's ability to manage the consular network in any coordinated fashion.

Chapter 5: Bringing it Home: John Quincy Adams at the State Department

The final chapter brings the dissertation full circle, from John Adams's amateur attempts at diplomacy to his son's highly successful tenure as Secretary of State. John Quincy became Secretary of State at a pivotal moment for the early American Foreign Service, as the chaos of the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812 subsided and regular communication could be established between the United States and the rest of the world. John Quincy Adams was the most experienced diplomat of his generation and the only American of his generation to actually be trained as a diplomat. As Secretary of State, it became Adams's to job to instruct others in the intricacies of diplomatic representation and the writing of diplomatic dispatches. Adams condensed his philosophy of diplomacy into a single letter to Richard Rush, his successor at the Court of St. James in London. Full of everything John Adams did not know when he sailed for France in 1778, the letter is an invaluable window into how the early American Foreign Service functioned on a day-to-day basis after the defeat of Napoleon. John Quincy Adams valued the

information that American diplomats and consuls sent back to the State Department. As Secretary of State he was the inheritor of the global information network created by his predecessors. By 1817 the State Department was flooded with daily reports from around the world, showing that the early American foreign service had become a robust information gathering network. However, the State Department itself remained underfunded and understaffed, and so the ability of the Federal Government to actually use that information remained limited. John Quincy also made strides in this area, creating indexes of incoming letters and attempting to put the filing system back into order after the burning of Washington, DC. As shown throughout the previous chapters, however, the main state capacity of the Foreign Service remained ahead of the domestic American government.

Appendix: Information and Power in the Early American Foreign Service

The appendix describes the theoretical foundations of *The Early American Foreign Service Database* as it relates to political theory, prosopography, intellectual history, and the Law of Nations. The EAFSD was created to allow historians to study the social, institutional and geographic aspects of the Foreign Service using the letters and assignments of the officers sent out by the American governments. The underlying data structures of the EAFSD reflect the earliest record-keeping systems of the State Department, including John Quincy Adams's file cabinets and diplomatic and consular cards.¹⁰ These systems have been enhanced to allow

¹⁰ Developed in the 1870s in preparation for the centennial of the Declaration of the Independence. For more on the history of State Department record keeping see Walter Burges Smith and Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs (U. S.), America's Diplomats and Consuls of 1776-1865: a Geographic and Biographic Directory of the Foreign Service from the Declaration of Independence to the End of the Civil War, Occasional Paper, No.2 (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Dept. of State: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1987), 39-47. What is missing from this account is a listing of the many diplomatic agents. That can be found in Henry Merritt Wriston, Executive Agents in American Foreign Relations, The Albert Shaw Lectures on Diplomatic History, 1923. (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press; London, H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1929).

historians to unpack the names, places, and titles recorded by the State Department into a rich set of biographical, prosopographical, organizational, spatial, and imperial relationships, thus recapturing the world of the Early American Foreign Service in a way that the contemporary records did not need to do.

The EAFSD also corrects a major flaw in Adams's original database: breaking the diplomatic and consular correspondence into two separate filing cabinets. Although the Diplomatic and Consular Corps were not merged into a single Foreign Service until the Rogers Act of 1924, in practice they were interlinked from the beginning, with diplomats and consuls working together to gather and share the information needed to better represent American interests abroad. The only real division came when their letters were cataloged back at the State Department where fewer staff members were responsible for the much larger consular corps.¹¹ The EAFSD reunites these two corps into the single overseas network that they were in practice. It also highlights the contributions of the consular officers and special agents who have, until comparatively recently,¹² been sidelined in the history of the Foreign Service in favor of their far fewer (and far better documented) diplomatic counterparts.

Understanding these structures on a theoretical and practical level gives historians a system-wide overview of diplomacy at the turn of the nineteenth century and allows for a nuanced reading of the many maps, graphs, and other data visualizations created from the system for the previous chapters. The visualizations are visual arguments, carefully-chosen data sets

¹¹ Charles Stuart Kennedy, *The American Consul: a History of the United States Consular Service*, 1776-1914 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

¹² Jolynda Brock Chenicek, "Dereliction of Diplomacy: The American Consulates in Paris and Bordeaux During the Napoleonic Era, 1804-1815" (Dissertation, Florida State University, 2008), http://etd.lib.fsu.edu/theses/available/etd-04112008-085336/.

laid out to convey a specific component of the analysis using color and position.¹³ Network graphs convey the social mode of analysis, and maps convey the spatial.¹⁴ When combined they can show patterns of institutional growth and structure. They also refer back to the underlying data structure that made them possible — the network graphs and maps used in this dissertation are the database made visual.

Conclusion

Historical network analysis has risen in prominence since 2010, following the development of more sophisticated software tools and widespread interest, in both popular and academic circles, in using the internet as an analogy for human social interaction. Brian Vick has shown the great value of network analysis as a mode of studying diplomacy during the Congress of Vienna. Vick describes the strong and weak social ties that characterized the Congress and shows that diplomacy as a profession and activity needs to be rethought by historians to include the larger social structures that surround the negotiating table — in his case the salons and the aristocratic women who held so much "soft" power in Vienna. However, Vick stops short of

¹³ Mark Newman, *Networks: An Introduction*, 1 edition (Oxford University Press, USA, 2010); David Easley and Jon Kleinberg, *Networks, Crowds, and Markets* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁴ Anne Kelly Knowles and Amy Hillier, *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship* (ESRI Press, 2008); Anne Kelly Knowles, *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History* (Redlands, Calif.: ESRI Press, 2002).

¹⁵ This has included major projects like Stanford University's ORBIS Project http://orbis.stanford.edu and *Mapping the Republic of Letters* http://republicofletters.stanford.edu, for more see the Historical Network Research website, http://historicalnetworkresearch.org/. This popularity has also lead to criticism from inside and outside network analysis circles, see David a Bell: "This Is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network," *The New Republic*, October 25, 2013, http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-network-metaphor; Scott Weingart, "Networks Demystified 8: When Networks Are Inappropriate," *The Scottbot Irregular*, November 5, 2013, http://www.scottbot.net/HIAL/?p=39600.

¹⁶ Brian E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014).

actually delineating the networks he describes, using network analysis more as a metaphor than a way to uncover new patterns.

What sets this dissertation apart is the system-wide approach made possible by the *Early*American Foreign Service Database as well as the particular nature of the Foreign Service itself.

The Foreign Service was deployed to act as an information distribution and retrieval network.

While this goal was more attainable for the United States than many of its foreign policy aspirations, the establishment of a reliable correspondence network took decades and was hampered by lack of funds, lack of political organization, and twenty years of general European warfare.

The Foreign Service grew from a small set of individuals to a global network by commandeering the energy and connections of the American merchant community. In this way, the Foreign Service should be added to the Postal Service¹⁷ and system of public credit¹⁸ which have revolutionized our understanding of the American state and shown it to be far more robust and organized than previously thought. What sets the consular service apart from either of these other major state building exercises is that it was conducted with almost no outlay on the part of the American government. The information network of the Foreign Service thus relied on another, inherently social set of structures which the United States used to bolster its own state capacity. By studying the intermediate stages — including personal friendships between officers posted abroad and a new Secretary of State desperate to inform a crucial diplomatic mission — as well as the structural changes John Quincy Adams made to enact a functioning network, we

¹⁷ Richard R. John, *Spreading the News the American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁸ Max M. Edling, *A Hercules in the Cradle: War, Money, and the American State, 1783-1867* (Chicago; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2014).

can chart the growing state capacity of the new government. Only by combining the biographical, social, institutional, and geographic into a single system can this larger framework emerge.

Chapter 1 — With Friends Like These: John Adams and the Comte de Vergennes on Franco-American Relations

On July 29, 1780, Charles Gravier, the Comte de Vergennes and Foreign Minister to Louis XVI of France, decided he was quite finished with John Adams. Adams had reached a similar conclusion about Vergennes two days earlier and was already on his way from Paris to Amsterdam. For five weeks the two men had crossed epistolary swords over America's status in the Franco-American Alliance, specifically the level of sovereignty to be enjoyed by the United States following the American Revolution. Once they had both become so angry with the situation in general, and each other in particular, they committed far more damning truths to paper than good sense or diplomatic convention would have otherwise allowed. Vergennes and Adams were among the primary architects and implementers of their nations' foreign policies. Their letters encapsulate the fundamental conflicts over American trade policy which kept the allies at (or near) each others' throats until 1815.

This fundamental and persistent disagreement points to a profound conflict between worldviews. Geopolitics in Europe (and the Atlantic World) in the eighteenth century adhered to

Strangely, these letters have never been subjected to any serious political analysis. Instead of appreciating this rich record of disagreement, historians have allowed Adams's famous temper to divert attention from the dispute. All discussions of this debate have centered on Adams's psychological state and ignored the geopolitical implications of both Adams's and Vergennes's positions. Orville Murphy and Jonathan Dull each give the episode one dismissive paragraph in their books. Orville Murphy, Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes: French diplomacy in the age of revolution, 1719-1787 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 328 and Jonathan Dull, A diplomatic history of the American Revolution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 118. Often the exchange is not even mentioned -- for example, Lawrence Kaplan, ed., The American Revolution and "a candid world" (Kent Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1977) nor Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., Diplomacy and revolution: the Franco-American alliance of 1778 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981). For examples of the pro-Adams view, see Page Smith, John Adams, (Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962), 474-480, John Ferling, "John Adams, Diplomat," The William and Mary Quarterly 51, no. 2 (1994): 227-52, and James Grant, John Adams: party of one, 1st ed. (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2005). For the anti-Adams view see James Hutson, John Adams and the diplomacy of the American Revolution (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1980). There is one exception. Samuel Bemis gives a brief but balanced account of the issues in two pages of The Diplomacy of the American Revolution. Samuel Bemis, The diplomacy of the American Revolution (1957 Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), 176-177.

the Balance of Power, a political philosophy that encouraged competing coalitions of great and small powers to prevent any one nation or empire from achieving total domination. The Balance of Power was designed to foster peace and cooperation among European powers. However, Paul Schroeder has shown in *The Transformation of European Politics*, 1763-1848 that it actually encouraged an almost constant state of war and left a long line of broken treaties in its wake as statesmen never stopped looking for a slightly better edge on their competitors, often abandoning, swapping, or even partitioning their weaker client states in the process.² As a new and fragile nation with an economy built around exporting agricultural products, the United States was at an extreme disadvantage in this system. Even so, at the outbreak of the American Revolution, many of the delegates to the Continental Congress believed that the new United States could leverage its agricultural exports and position within the British Empire to achieve independence.

The American Revolution set out to change the world with three documents, all drafted in the spring and summer of 1776. The most famous, of course, is the Declaration of Independence, which gave the ideas of popular sovereignty and right to revolution their famous formulation. The less-celebrated Articles of Confederation created the first republican government on such a wide scale. However, it was the almost-forgotten Model Treaty of 1776, drafted by John Adams, that the revolutionaries believed would give the American Revolution a fighting chance. The Model Treaty was designed to engage France in a war with Great Britain over the right to trade in continental North America without committing the new nation to the

Paul Schroeder, *The transformation of European politics*, 1763-1848 (New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1994).

European alliance system with all its myriad dangers.³ In the Model Treaty, Adams and his fellow patriots envisioned a world in which all powers (including Britain) would compete for America's staple crops, ensuring prosperity for the new nation and the blessings of peace and American commerce for all of Europe. This millennial vision seemed possible because British holdings in North America were *the* counterweight in the European Balance of Power. Even Vergennes's First Secretary, Joseph Matthais Gérard de Rayneval, predicted that should England subdue North America "she will prevent the Colonies from placing, if they were independent, a considerable weight in the balance of favor of some other power . . . by losing it she would suffer an inestimable injury which will also be permanent."⁴

However, Vergennes wanted all the benefits of American trade to belong to France and to France alone. When Franklin arrived in Paris with the Model Treaty, Vergennes refused it and would only consent to a commercial treaty if it was coupled with a military alliance.⁵ When the Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States was signed on February 6, 1778, the Model Treaty became a dead letter and the United States became France's client state. However,

For John Adams's role in drafting the Model Treaty see Gregg Lint, "John Adams on the Drafting of the Treaty Plan of 1776," *Diplomatic History* 2, no. 3 (1978): 313-320 and William Stinchcombe, "John Adams and the Model Treaty," in *The American Revolution and "A Candid World"* ed. Kaplan, 69-84. For the continuing influence of the Model Treaty and its ideal of neutral trade see Albert Bowman, *The struggle for neutrality: Franco-American diplomacy during the Federalist era*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974) and Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell address ideas of early American foreign policy*. (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961).

Joseph Matthias Gérard de Rayneval, "Reflections on the Situation in America" Versailles, April 1776 in Documents of the Emerging Nation: U.S. Foreign Relations, 1775-1789, ed. and trans. Mary A. Guinta (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1998), 24.

The literature on these negotiations is extensive and cannot be completely represented here. However, for a broad overview see Edward Corwin, French policy and the American alliance of 1778, by Edward S. Corwin,... (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1916); Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution; William Stinchcombe, The American Revolution and the French alliance (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1969); Jonathan Dull, Franklin the diplomat: the French mission (Independence Square Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1982); Stacy Schiff, A great improvisation: Franklin, France, and the birth of America (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); Hoffman and Albert, Diplomacy and Revolution.

the Alliance did not end the war; it only increased Britain's drive to reconquer its rebellious colonies.

The treaties of 1778 were signed soon after the auspicious American victory at Saratoga, but the war dragged on inconclusively. The Continental Army was essentially inactive for two years, the French navy confined itself to conquering British islands in the West Indies, and Spain made exorbitant demands before lending its lackluster support. By November of 1779 America needed peace as soon as possible. The Continental Congress decided that a minister should be posted in Europe and commissioned to treat with Britain on the intertwined subjects of peace and commerce, so that negotiations and trade between the United States and the British Empire could recommence as soon as the British government would relent. Adams was chosen for the post, in part because he had spent the previous year in France as an American Commissioner along with Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee. Adams set sail for France once again after three months at home, but this time he was presumptive Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James, and he was overflowing with a desire to end the war as quickly as possible. While in France, he was blocked at every turn by Vergennes's insistence that the war would not end until Britain could be forced into making the enormous concessions necessary for France to regain its former control over the Balance of Power.

In May of 1780, a month before the situation with Vergennes exploded, Adams wrote his wife that he "must study Politicks and War so that my sons may have the liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy." Vergennes was also profoundly invested in his country's success. In the words of one biographer, Vergennes "found personal gratification when Louis XVI won a victory or saw his prestige rise. He felt shame and indignation when Louis suffered

⁶ JA to AA. Paris, post 12 May 1780. L.H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlaender, and Mary-Jo Kline, eds., *The Book of Abigail and John: Selected Letters of the Adams Family: 1762-1784* (Boston: Northeastern, 2002) 260.

humiliation. Advancing the King's interests was, for him, a way of satisfying, both directly and vicariously, some of his own ambitions." This intense identification made both men extremely sensitive to attacks, real or perceived, on national honor or interest. However, Adams and Vergennes's problems went far beyond personal irritation. The United States and the French Monarchy had inherently conflicting goals for the American Revolution and its aftermath. Only by understanding these irreconcilable *policies* can historians explain how a minor dispute about paper money erupted into a fight over the control of post-war American commerce, which became a battle over the proper deployment of the French Navy in the New World, which led to mutual accusations of betrayal and treason. By July of 1780, these accusations were not without merit, since in a fit of rage Adams had revealed the inherent, pro-British attitude of American, free-trade patriots, while Vergennes had exposed France's determination to keep its ally under control – in war and in peace.

"The Affair of our Paper is sufficiently dangerous and critical"

On February 9, 1780, a very relieved John Adams finally arrived in Paris. He had left Braintree three months earlier only to have his boat spring a leak and be forced to dock in El Ferrol, Spain. Since he was the only American empowered by Congress to open peace negotiations, delay was inconceivable. Rather than wait a month for a ship to France, Adams chose what he thought would be the quickest route: he took his secretary, servant, and two young sons across the Spanish Pyrenees in the dead of winter on mules no less stubborn than he. The roads were terrible, the inns worse, and Spain had yet to officially recognize the independence of the United States, leaving Adams in a very difficult position should anyone choose to question

Murphy, Charles Gravier Comte de Vergennes, 219.

the papers he had been given in El Ferrol.⁸

Vergennes's strategy, upon learning of Adams's commissions, was to advise delay, at least until "the Arrival of Mr. [Conrad Alexandre] Gerard, because he is probably the Bearer of your Instructions." Adams was appalled. By all the conventions of eighteenth century diplomacy a diplomat's instructions were "a sacred Deposit" to be held inviolate. 10 These particular instructions stated precisely what the United States wanted to gain in their negotiations with Great Britain and what the United States was willing to concede. Because Adams believed that the success or failure of his mission would turn on Congress "keeping all discretionary articles an impenetrable secret," he concluded that Gérard could not have come by such knowledge honestly.¹¹ What Adams did not know was that, as the French Minister to the Continental Congress, Gérard had written the instructions. Moreover, Gérard intentionally weakened the American bargaining position by separating the interlocking issues of peace and commerce. At the peace negotiations Adams was to ask only for territorial acquisitions, and the Newfoundland fisheries were to be his only object in a commercial treaty.¹² Had the United States been truly independent, as Adams believed it was, this never would have happened. But in 1780 the United States remained completely dependent on French aid. Unless the delegates in Philadelphia

Details of the journey are recounted in Adams' diary and can be found in vol. 2 of ed. L.H. Butterfield, *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* (4 vols., Cambridge, 1961), hereafter cited as *Diary and Autobiography*.

Vergennes to JA. Versailles, 15 Feb. 1780. Diary and Autobiography, 4:245. Emphasis in JA's translation in the manuscript. This would have been particularly galling for Adams since he had sailed with Gérard, but had left him in El Ferrol waiting for a ship to France while Adams and his family made the grueling trip over the Pyrenees to save time.

¹⁰ ibid, 246.

¹¹ JA to the President of Congress. 4 November 1779. Francis Wharton, *The revolutionary diplomatic correspondence of the United States*, 6 vols. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1889), 3:400.

¹² For the text of JA's instructions, see *Diary and Autobiography* 4:178-180.

wanted to see their states recolonized and themselves hanged as traitors to the British Crown, Congress had to abide by France's demands.

Following Gérard's arrival, in the boat Adams had refused to wait for, Vergennes told Adams that only one of his commissions was to be published. The *Gazette of France* would report that a minister from America waited in France, fully empowered to negotiate a peace. As for the commercial treaty, Adams was "to make no communication of it to any person whatsoever, and to take all possible Precautions, that the English Ministry may not have any knowledge of it prematurely." Vergennes considered his motives in this matter to be obvious and felt an explanation would be "superfluous." Adams could not have disagreed more. Though neither Congress nor Adams had fully worked out what post-revolutionary America would look like, they all agreed that trade was crucial to the new nation's survival. American patriots dreamed of trade with all European nations and their colonies, but the British Empire would remain the largest market for their agricultural staples. To be politically independent of Parliament and the King, yet cut off from the trade routes they had so richly benefited from prior to the war, would have been economic suicide.

Though Adams chafed under these restrictions, he could not publish his commissions without Vergennes's explicit approval. By the end of March, the paragraph Adams had been promised in the official *Gazette de France* was reduced to a sentence in an unofficial journal, the *Mercure de France*. Since Adams's commissions were for Great Britain he had no official standing in France and no official business to conduct at court. In fact, there was no reason for

¹³ Vergennes to JA. Versailles, 24 February 1780. Translated by JA. *Diary and Autobiography*, 4:252. In his manuscript Adams underlined this entire quote.

¹⁴ ibid.

¹⁵ ibid, 254, n.3.

him to be in France at all.

Once he arrived in France, Adams received precious little news and no written guidance from Congress. It cannot be stressed enough how much Adams (and any other American diplomat stationed in Europe during the American Revolution) was cut off from his home government. Given the speed of transatlantic communication in the age of sail, it was practically impossible for advice to arrive in time. To further complicate the problem, the British Navy was determined to intercept all revolutionary correspondence. Even sending dispatches in triplicate on separate ships might not be enough to ensure the message got through. Policy decisions from Congress came too late and were based on outdated information. Congress devoted little time or thought to its representatives overseas, but even the most concerted effort to communicate might have fallen through. When official letters or newspapers did come Adams forwarded them to Vergennes with a polite and brief cover letter; Vergennes would respond in a similar style.

Sometimes the two men met at court. Suddenly, on June 21, Vergennes wanted Adams "to use all your endeavors to engage [Congress] to take steps to do justice to the subjects of the King." 16

The injustice Vergennes wanted Adams to correct involved a new congressional policy that revalued the Continental dollar at a ratio of forty to one.¹⁷ Vergennes demurred from questioning the wisdom of another nation's monetary policy, but insisted that French merchants should not be subject to the revaluation as it "overturns their calculations at the same time that it ruins their fortunes."¹⁸ Americans should bear the revaluation as a type of tax by which the

Vergennes to JA. Versailles, 21 June 1780. ed. Gregg L. Lint. Papers of John Adams. (11 vols, Cambridge, 1996) 9:458. Hereafter cited as Papers of John Adams.

¹⁷ This was an internal revaluation. The newly issued continentals were worth forty of the older bills. Although the Continental Currency had originally been pegged to the Spanish Dollar, by this point in the war inflation had destroyed any semblance of an exchange rate between American and European currencies.

¹⁸ ibid.

prices of all the goods they purchased were suddenly increased. French nationals, however, must be given an exemption or be indemnified for their losses since it was French merchants who supplied the American army with uniforms, guns, and ammunition. Any money they had made in this crucial trade would immediately be revalued along with the currency – an overnight loss of 97.5 percent of their profits to date. Vergennes also threatened that if Congress failed to indemnify French merchants it would never be able "to advance the credit of the United States, to inspire confidence in their promises, to invite European nations to run the same risks to which the subjects of his majesty have exposed themselves." ¹⁹

Vergennes closed the letter by informing Adams that France was seeking justice through his minister to Congress: "the Chevalier de La Luzerne has been ordered to make the strongest representations on this subject, and that the King is firmly persuaded that the United States will eagerly give him, on this occasion, a mark of their attachment by granting his subjects the just satisfaction which they solicit and expect from the justice and wisdom of the United States." Vergennes's request of Congress was perfectly reasonable by the standards of the day. Most European nations, including Great Britain, had long made a practice of treating foreign merchants differently from their own natives, and in wartime, a patron state could regulate its client's trade in far more invasive ways. In 1793, for example, Great Britain negotiated a truce with Algiers on behalf of its client Portugal. The Portuguese Navy had been pursuing a vigorous campaign against Barbary Pirates making the Mediterranean and North Atlantic much safer for unarmed merchant vessels, but was told by Britain to stand down and make its ships available for the British war effort against revolutionary France. The price of the peace was to be paid by the

¹⁹ ibid.

²⁰ ibid.

Portuguese government.²¹ As the United States was a client state of France it could hardly have expected to impose penalties on French nationals and escape rebuke.

Yet, if the goal was to ensure an exemption, Vergennes could not have chosen a worse correspondent, especially since he already had a highly trusted man at his disposal: Benjamin Franklin, the American Minister at Versailles. This is not to suggest, as Adams later would, that Franklin had "sold out" to the French and was no more than Vergennes's puppet. Rather, Franklin understood America's position as a client state and played the role of grateful supplicant to great effect. More importantly, Vergennes knew that Adams wholeheartedly supported the new American policy.

Vergennes wrote Adams on June 21. The previous day the two men had met at court to discuss the revaluation. That meeting had been arranged after Vergennes received a letter from Leray de Chaumont, a French merchant intimately involved in shipping military supplies to America. Chaumont gave a vivid description of Adams's strident defense of Congress's new monetary policy. From Chaumont's letter and Vergennes's own conversation with Adams, Vergennes certainly knew that Adams considered the policy "both very wise and very just, that those who complained were the agents or spies of the English who would have the injustice of treating the Europeans differently from the Americans." Even more alarming, however, was Chaumont's report "that Mr. Adams persists in believing, as I have often seen, that when France

For a description of the Portuguese Court's reaction to the truce between Portugal and Algiers, see To Secretary of State from Edward Church, U.S. Consul, Lisbon. Lisbon 22 September 1793 in Claude Swanson, *Naval documents related to the United States wars with the Barbary Powers*, vol. 1, 6 vols. (Washington: U.S. Govt. print. off., 1939), 44-50.

Leray de Chaumont to Vergennes. Passy, 16 June 1780. "Enclosure." Papers of John Adams, 9:433. Adams made similar accusations about the loyalty of those who complained when he wrote to Franklin and Congress; see JA to Franklin. Paris, 23 June 1780. ibid, 459 and JA to the President of Congress. Paris, 26 June 1780. ibid, 478.

finds itself at a peace conference it will be obligated to America for the achievement of its objectives and that it is honorable to publicly maintain such an opinion."²³

This was the one opinion Vergennes could not afford to tolerate. France could not allow its American client state to commission a minister who refused to acknowledge its subordinate status. It did not matter that Adams had never so much as hinted that he would ever depart from the Treaties of 1778 in his negotiations. Since Adams had publicly disavowed the client relationship between France and the United States, he could not be trusted when the war came to an end. If Chaumont had reported Adams's sentiments correctly, Vergennes could not permit Adams to negotiate with the British. The letter was, in fact, a test.²⁴

Adams received Vergennes's request on June 22, and it sent both Adams and his secretary, Francis Dana, into a flurry of activity which produced three letters in response. The first letter went to Franklin and asked for his help as this was "a matter of very great Importance. The Affair of our Paper is sufficiently dangerous and critical . . . so as to Endanger the public peace." Franklin, wrote Adams, should convince Vergennes not to send the orders to Luzerne "until proper Representations can be made at court; to the end that if it can be made to appear, as I firmly believe it may, that those Orders were given upon Misinformation, they may be revoked, otherwise sent on." A second, almost identical, letter to Vergennes, that the orders may be "delayed a little time, until his Excellency Mr. Franklin may have opportunity to make his

²³ Leray de Chaumont to Vergennes. Passy, 16 June 1780, ibid, 432.

²⁴ In *John Adams and the Diplomacy of the American Revolution* Hutson sees Vergennes's move as a trap, but I do not think Vergennes's mind was made up *before* he received Adams's response.

²⁵ JA to Franklin, Paris, June 22, 1780, Papers of John Adams 9:459.

²⁶ ibid.

Representations."²⁷ Though Adams stated in both letters that the responsibility of convincing the court lay with Franklin, he could not resist communicating his own opinions once again and promised "to write fully to your Excellency upon this Subject without loss of time . . . to demonstrate that the Plan of Congress is not only wise but just."²⁸ Franklin ignored Adams's request for help. Two days later, he forwarded Adams's letter to Vergennes with a note that Adams would make the representations himself.²⁹

Adams's third letter on the currency revaluation ran for twelve manuscript pages. Though the letter was written jointly with Dana (who contributed some of the most strident clauses) it was sent to Vergennes under Adams's signature alone. Adams's recent biographer, James Grant, compares the letter to a legal brief filed on behalf of Congress against charges that its inflationary monetary policy defrauded French merchants of their hard-earned profits.³⁰ In his role as Congress's defense attorney, Adams took as given that the Continental Currency was inflated: an exchange rate of forty to one would make that impossible for any lawyer to deny. However, rather than placing the blame on Congress (it printed too much money), Adams blamed everyone involved in the American economy who demanded more paper dollars for a good or service than it was worth in silver, particularly foreign merchants. Wartime scarcity allowed them to sell basic goods from Europe at ridiculously inflated prices, but usually they marketed tempting luxury goods to cash-strapped patriots who could scarcely afford them; they even engaged in

²⁷ JA to Vergennes. Paris, June 22, 1780, ibid, 460.

²⁸ Compare with his wording as retold in Chaumont to Vergennes. Passy, June 16, 1780, ibid. 433

This could have been very unfortunate for Adams since he suggested to Franklin that the King's request for special exchange rates would give ammunition to the Tories and currency speculators while disturbing the public peace. However, his own letter to Vergennes was so inflammatory that it hardly mattered what he wrote to Franklin.

³⁰ James Grant, John Adams: party of one (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2005), 246.

currency speculation: to give such people an exemption would be unjust.

Just two days before, Adams had expressed his regret to Vergennes that Congress had not been more forthright regarding its plans to devalue the paper money, but assured the Foreign Minister that the real damage was minimal. No intelligent French merchant would have held onto the inflationary currency for longer than was absolutely necessary: "the whole [loss] will be found much less than is imagined. [French merchants] have realized their property generally as they went along. Some may have purchased Land, others have purchased Bills of Exchange, others have purchased the produce of the Country which they have exported to St. Eustatia, to the French West India Islands, and to Europe."31 This drastic change in the tone and substance of Adams's remarks points to a deep and crucial disagreement between Adams and Vergennes.

Over the next month they would engage in a debate over the level of sovereignty to be enjoyed by the United States following the American Revolution. The contours of that debate can be seen in this early skirmish over revaluation.

Adams was enraged by two points that Vergennes pressed especially hard in his letter of June 21. First, the King of France expected to control the actions of Congress, the sovereign government of the United States. Adams detested any and all reminders that his nation could be controlled by another, but French interference in monetary policy was particularly galling. The ability to coin money was a critical aspect of sovereignty and traditionally the monarch's prerogative. Paper currency had been a constant source of tension between Britain and its American colonies, particularly because British trade policies had always kept specie in short supply. For the king of France to interfere with a republican congress in this manner was infuriating. Even so, Adams believed that Luzerne's instructions sprung from a simple

³¹ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 22 June 1780, Papers of John Adams 9:449.

misunderstanding about the nature of paper money, one that was easily dismissed with historical examples. After all, paper money was only printed when specie was in short supply, and was not used in Europe where merchants had easy access to coins minted at the monarch's request. The example he offered certainly addressed Vergennes's worst fears, but not in the way Adams intended.

Adams had already seen inflated paper money pay for dramatic military success. He had been ten years old in 1745 when New England troops had taken the great French fortress of Louisbourg during the War of Austrian Succession. The plan originated in Massachusetts, and it had been a daring undertaking. Louisbourg was the impregnable French fortress at the mouth of the Saint Lawrence River, almost nine hundred miles from Boston. Massachusetts and Connecticut militia were transported on local merchantmen and landed just south of the fortress. Joined by the British Navy which sailed up from the West Indies for the assault, the New Englanders besieged the fort and drove out the French. It was among the most spectacular British victories in the war and caused William Pitt to focus his attention on the North American Colonies eight years later when the Seven Years War broke out.³²

Adams chose the example of Louisbourg because the entire operation had been paid for by paper money issued by the government of Massachusetts Bay. By the time the British government got around to repaying the colonists for their military expenditures (a process which took five years), the currency had depreciated to a rate of seven and a half to one. When the gold

³² Eliga Gould, *The persistence of empire: British political culture in the age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill N.C.: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 62-63. For more on the construction of the fort and the battle see Robert Emmet Wall Jr., "Louisbourg, 1745," *New England Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1964): 64-83; George Rawlyk, *Yankees at Louisbourg* (Orono, Maine: University of Maine Press, 1967); For the larger context of the fort and the area it protected see A. J. B. Johnston, *Control and order in French colonial Louisbourg*, *1713-1758* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001).

and silver arrived: "the Legislature determin'd to redeem all the paper with it, at the depreciated Value. There was a similar alarm at first . . . but after the People had time to think upon it, all were satisfied."³³ Even the British merchants who had direct access to Parliament complied, and the only complaints came from currency speculators, which served to further validate the law.³⁴

Even with the extremely dissimilar rates of inflation, Adams's point was clear – great military feats were possible in America, even when financed by inflated paper money. It was a persuasive argument, but dangerous. In supporting American Independence, France was taking a great risk. Of all the possible outcomes the worst case (but quite likely) scenario was a reunified British Empire. Only two years earlier the Carlisle Commission had offered complete financial autonomy to the United States if they would rejoin the Empire. An Anglo-American union could turn on France and cause untold damage to what few colonial possessions the French still held in North America.³⁵ Reminding Vergennes of the French humiliation at Louisbourg would hardly have made Vergennes more willing to accept congressional sovereignty.

Even so, in doing this, Adams was using a standard trope of American policy towards

France. Threatening to reunify with the British Empire was America's "ace in the hole" for

pushing France to continue supporting the revolution. Four years earlier, Congress had

specifically instructed Franklin, Lee, and Deane that "It is highly probable that France means not

to let the United States sink in the present Contest; but it will be proper for you to press for the

immediate and explicit declaration of France in our Favour, upon a suggestion that a reunion

³³ JA to Vergennes. Paris, June 22, 1780, Papers of John Adams 9:466.

³⁴ ibid, 467.

For a study of the Franco-American Alliance and Carlisle commission see Chris Tudda, "A Messiah that will never come: A new look at Saratoga, independence, and revolutionary war diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 5 (2008): 779-810

with Great Britain may be the consequence of a Delay."³⁶ Even so, the threat had very different connotations before and after the alliance had been signed.

Adams was also furious that Vergennes had charged the United States with breaking faith with France and ruining its credit in Europe. As he responded to Vergennes's accusations, Adams confessed that he could not "rest easy while my Country is supposed to be guilty of a breach of their Faith." Adams identified himself with America on the deepest level. As a minister plenipotentiary he represented his nation, but for Adams it was even more elemental than that: his hopes, dreams, and ambitions were all bound up in the fate of his country. His sense of duty and nationalism was so strong that throughout his adult life he sacrificed his desires for wealth, personal safety, time with his beloved wife and children, and popularity in order to further the interests of the United States. Adams believed that Congress had acted justly. Vergennes did not know it, and would not have cared either way, but in accusing Congress of bad faith he accused John Adams as well.

On an international level, when Vergennes threatened America's credit in Europe, he was threatening its very survival. The entire economy of Great Britain's Anglo-American colonies had been oriented towards the metropolis. The colonies existed to export raw materials and import manufactured goods. The American patriots assumed that this economic relationship would remain constant after the revolution. Great Britain and its West Indian colonies were the only market large enough to absorb American exports in sufficient quantities to sustain the economy, while English and Scottish financial houses were best equipped to provide insurance

³⁶ Guinta, Documents of the Emerging Nation, 13. This policy was continued after the Treaty of Alliance has been revoked; see Gilbert, Toward the Farewell Address for more on the triangular nature of American foreign policy in this period.

³⁷ JA to Vergennes. Paris, June 22, 1780, Papers of John Adams 9:463.

for American shipping. Adam Smith had made the same argument at the outbreak of the war. When *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776, he devoted the last pages to argue that war with the Anglo-American colonies was pointless for Britain. It would be cheaper to grant the colonies their independence and trade with the new nations on equitable terms. Great Britain would retain all the advantages of its former colonial trade without having to pay for colonial governors or colonial wars. In Smith's opinion, Britain had to get free of its current debt and another war would only serve to delay that necessary financial step, if not ruin the country's credit entirely.³⁸

In his defense of Congress, Adams applied theories about international trade that he had developed while writing the Model Treaty. At his most strident, Adams wrote, "Foreigners when they come to trade with a Nation, make themselves temporary Citizens." While still colonists in the British Empire, American merchants had been recognized as Englishmen under British law when they traveled to the British Isles or the West Indies. Now politically independent of the British Empire, the Americans wanted those same rights in all European and colonial ports. If a nation agreed to the articles of the Model Treaty, its merchants would have the right to trade as Americans when in American ports, but then Americans would have the right to trade as natives in that nation's ports. The Model Treaty envisioned an Atlantic World in competition for American goods outside of the traditional imperial systems that had turned America into a

Adam Smith, An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations, ed. Edwin Cannan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 471-486. Smith's primary concern was paying off the massive public debt Britain had accumulated in the Seven Years War. Putting down the tax rebellion by force would only waste needed money. His ideal solution was for Great Britain to combine the Anglo-American colonies and all the British Isles (including Ireland) into one great federated nation in which all subjects would share equal representation within Parliament and an equal tax burden. But if that proved impossible, independence and commercial treaties were the next best option. War was suicide.

³⁹ JA to Vergennes. Paris, June 22, 1780, Papers of John Adams 9:464.

political counterweight, and in the process driving up the price of agricultural staples, making manufactured goods from all over Europe easier to purchase. This world could only exist, however, if America refused to give out any special trading preferences: no legal distinctions could be made between native and foreign merchants.

But the Model Treaty was a dead letter in 1780. The Franco-American Treaty of Alliance clearly gave France the right to expect preferential treatment in American commerce. Adams's own instructions for negotiating a treaty of commerce with Great Britain forbade him from granting any concession to the British that was unavailable to the French. Preferential treatment in American ports was crucial to French post-war objectives. Not only would the former Anglo-American trade routes have been convenient for Americans, Britain had the most advanced home market and financial houses in Europe. If the Americans opened their ports equally to all nations, the French would never be able to compete. Some gains would have been realized from the American trade, but the relative gains of the British would have made France's investment in American independence worthless as the predominant Balance of Power would remain in British hands. Yet, if the Americans were cut off from trade with the British Empire, particularly the lucrative West Indian trade in foodstuffs, their independence would come at too high a price.

Adams's letter failed to convince Vergennes and Luzerne's instructions were sent, unaltered, to Philadelphia. At Versailles, Franklin received duplicate copies of the correspondence, one from Adams and the other from Vergennes. Vergennes wanted Franklin to pressure Congress for an exemption and undercut Adams's commission by forwarding their correspondence. Franklin never communicated Vergennes's wishes to Congress and waited until October to send Adams's letters across the Atlantic. On December 12 Congress officially commended Adams for his defense of their monetary policies; within five months five hundred

dollars of the revalued currency would be worth less than one piece of silver.⁴⁰

"The Naval Force is not sufficient to command the Seas"

On July 1, Adams wrote Vergennes that "I have the honor to agree with your Excellency in opinion, that any further Discussion [of the currency] is unnecessary."⁴¹ However, the war remained of the first necessity and twelve days later Adams wrote Vergennes on the very delicate subject of military aid. The Franco-American Alliance paired one of the strongest nations in Europe with a weak, peripheral partner. Even before the Treaty of Alliance was signed, France had been supplying the rebellious colonists with money, arms, ammunition, and uniforms. Until France officially entered the war, it was a comparatively localized conflict, essentially confined within the territories of the former British colonies. Once France and Great Britain were at war it was a pan-Atlantic conflict, as France attempted to regain the islands it lost in the Seven Years War, and perhaps permanently cripple the British Empire in the West Indies.

In such a war, naval strength would be the determining factor. The British Navy, though not yet at its pinnacle, was the single strongest naval force in the world. When the French and Spanish navies were combined they could command a force almost equal to that of Great Britain. For their part, the Americans had no real navy to speak of. Having been under the protection of the British navy for so long, the Americans could produce excellent seamen and possessed the raw materials and expert knowledge to build intimidating ships, but serious navies were expensive and the United States was a new and very financially strapped nation. As the former head of the Committee of War, Adams knew that Congress and several of the states owned a few

⁴⁰ ibid, 429.

⁴¹ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 1 July 1780. ibid, 496.

frigates (medium size vessels that carried between twenty and thirty long guns), but none of the massive floating batteries known as ships of the line. Moreover, the British had blockaded the American coast, putting a stop to shipping and ship building and keeping what few American vessels existed from putting to sea.⁴²

This state of affairs was all the more galling when there were so many British ships to be taken as prizes in the North Atlantic. When the United States declared independence they found themselves bookended by British territory – Canada to the North, Florida and the West Indies to the South – and the British Ministry exploited this imperial advantage to keep the Empire intact. Soldiers and supplies were ferried back and forth between the loyal and disloyal colonies by a chain of ships that stretched across the entire Atlantic seaboard. Early in the Revolution New England villages armed their merchant vessels and took several substantial prizes, and were even able to run aground and burn the British schooner *Diana*, 43 but the French fleet was located exclusively in the West Indies, where France planned to conquer the British sugar islands.

From Adams's perspective this amounted to a gross misapplication of resources, and on July 13 he told Vergennes that it should be corrected. The letter belongs to the same genre as his earlier defense of Congressional monetary policy. It too reads like a legal brief rather than a diplomatic communique, but on the subject of military strategy, Adams had even less reason to believe that Vergennes welcomed his thoughts. Adams began his assault by quoting from the Treaty of Alliance of 1778. In the treaty's preamble as well as its first and third articles, Adams found statements regarding the promise that "his Majesty and the United States agreed . . . to . . . aid each other mutually with their good Offices, their Councils and their Forces . . . to make all

For a recent account of the American Navy in the Revolution see George Daughan, *If by sea: the forging of the American Navy-- from the American Revolution to the War of 1812* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

⁴³ For the burning of the *Diana* and other early American successes see Daughan, *If by sea*, 5-27.

the Efforts in [their] Power against the common Enemy."⁴⁴ As long as the French fleet remained in the West Indies, Adams seriously doubted whether France was upholding the treaty.

Adams's doubts arose from his firm belief that a major victory on American soil would end the war. Such a victory was impossible without naval supremacy in the North Atlantic.

Adams built his case up until he asked for an entire fleet, consisting of eight ships of the line and twelve frigates, to be sent to the North American coast. This immense expenditure would give the allies undisputed control of the seas and allow for the destruction of the British army in North America. The audacity of his request underscored both his own fears of an imminent American defeat and his unshakable belief in America's geopolitical status -- the North American counterweight was more valuable than all the West Indian sugar islands put together. The letter was certainly flavored by Adams's unique style and fiery rhetoric, but the ideas, firmly based in the British tradition of a blue water empire, were a strikingly accurate assessment of American military prospects.

Quotes from the Treaty of Alliance only set the stage. The main body of Adams's argument began with three paragraphs, devoted to the English, French, and Spanish conduct in the war respectively. The comparison is striking. Adams asserted that the English Ministry was willing to sacrifice everything to recapture the American colonies: "the British Ministry are inflexibly determined to pursue the War another Campaign in America, to send more Troops and Ships there . . . and to put to hazard not only, the national Credit, but their maritime Power, and even their political Existence rather than give up their designs of domination." While the British were pouring resources into the North American theater the French were in the West

⁴⁴ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 13 July 1780, Papers of John Adams 9:520.

⁴⁵ ibid.

Indies and the Spanish were attacking Florida. Though both allies were making progress, Adams noted harshly that "it is not the loss of both the Floridas, nor all of [the British] West India Islands, in my Opinion, that will induce them to make Peace, and acknowledge the Independence of America in Alliance with France. They will see every possession they have beyond their Island lopped off, one after another, before they will do this."⁴⁶ In Adams's opinion the French were fighting the wrong war, and from a purely American perspective, they were.

However, France was not fighting to gain American independence, but rather to regain French power. On a strictly per acre basis, a West Indian sugar island was second only to a gold or silver mine as the most profitable real estate in all of the Americas. France had been allowed to keep its West Indian islands after the Seven Years War, but the French navy had been disabled or destroyed in the war and those islands were incredibly vulnerable to attack. When London began pouring military resources into North America in 1776 the French assumed that the West Indies were the target -- North America simply was not worth the expense of such a large invasion. Vergennes's first minister believed that an attack on the French sugar colonies was inevitable and that Britain would take them regardless of the rebellion's outcome: "the court of London might think it ought to attack our colonies . . . to avenge the help which she will assume we have given to [Britain's] Colonies . . . or . . . in order to compensate herself at our expense . . . for the immense expenditures she will have made in order to obtain satisfaction from her colonies."47 As Vergennes explained to the King: "Such is in fact the state of the Colonies of the two nations [France and Spain] that with the exception of Havana perhaps, not one is in a state to resist in any way at all the forces that England is sending to America, and the physical possibility

⁴⁶ ibid.

⁴⁷ Rayneval, "Reflections on the Situation in America" Guinta, *Documents of the Emerging Nation*, 28.

of conquest appears only too evident."⁴⁸ Once the French entered the war, naval reinforcements had to be sent to the West Indies, if only for defensive purposes. But, if the French could capture the British West Indian Islands, the French would be in possession of both the British sugar plantations and an economic alliance with an independent America, rendering the French trading empire unassailable. Adams wanted the war to end quickly. Vergennes did not want the war to end until the British empire was permanently crippled.

Yet, before Adams could fully indict the French for failing the United States, he had to defend the American military. If the French were not supporting the Americans as they should, the American army under George Washington had certainly failed to meet the expectations set by the victory at Saratoga. Since 1778, Washington's army had won no significant battles, and much of the time had not even met the enemy on the field of battle. This poor record since the signing of the treaties with France suggested that the Americans expected the French to fight for them. Rather than accept this explanation, Adams presented Washington's inactivity as a natural consequence of the lack of a French fleet in the North Atlantic. Following their defeat at Saratoga the British had retreated to New York, where they remained garrisoned under the protection of the British navy. As the British refused to take to the field, Washington could not engage them, nor could he have been expected to besiege so well fortified a city: "If our Army had been three times as numerous as it was, it must have remained inactive, without a Fleet to co-operate with it; for an Attack upon New York, without a Fleet, would have been only sacrificing the Lives of thousands of brave Men, without a possibility of succeeding."⁴⁹ After all, Louisbourg had only been taken with outside naval assistance.

Vergennes, "Considerations on the Affairs of the English Colonies in America" Versailles 12 March 1776. ibid, 21.

⁴⁹ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 13 July 1780. Papers of John Adams 9:522.

However, the British were no longer garrisoned in New York. In 1779 they had opened the Southern front, attacking Savannah and taking Charleston just two months before Adams's letter was written. Adams did not refer directly to the terrible damage being wrought on the Southern states, but he did mention "the dreadful sacrifices made at Charlestown and Penobscot, Sacrifices the Necessity of which would have been entirely prevented by a few ships of the line." This was the darkest hour of the war for the Americans, but Adams blamed it on French neglect. For, notwithstanding the massive losses in the South, Adams firmly believed that the British in North America "have been for these Two Years past absolutely in the Power of their Enemies . . . nothing will be wanting but attention to their situation, and a judicious application of the Forces of the Allies, to accomplish the entire Reduction of their Power in America." He was joined in this belief by the British cabinet and George Washington. In fact, the French had already blown one opportunity to end the war.

British strategy in the American Revolution depended on maintaining naval supremacy in the North Atlantic. This supremacy could not be challenged while America fought alone, and it was America's need for a strong naval ally that prompted Congress to ask France for assistance. When Franklin sailed for France he was instructed "to procure from that Court at the Expence of these United States either by purchase or Loan, eight Line of battle ships of 74 to 64 Guns, well manned, and fitted in every respect for Service." When France entered the war, the entire French navy was now, theoretically, available. In the Spring of 1778, France dispatched one of

⁵⁰ ibid, 524.

⁵¹ ibid, 522.

The Continental Congress: Instructions to Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee as Commissioners to France, ed. William B. Willcox, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (Philadelphia, 1959-) 22:624-630. Hereafter cited as *Franklin Papers* This particular quote comes from an addendum to the original instructions written by John Hancock on October 22, 1776.

its two naval squadrons, under the command of the Comte d'Estaing, from Toulon. The British failed to engage d'Estaing at the Straits of Gibraltar, thus allowing him free rein of the Atlantic.⁵³

The Toulon squadron contained eighteen ships of the line⁵⁴ and its escape caused panic and condemnation of Lord North's management of the war. Lord Germain, who had been the strongest proponent of stopping d'Estaing at Gibraltar, explained the situation to his fellow cabinet members in no uncertain terms: "The fate of the country evidently depends upon the preventing the Toulon Squadron from acting with success against our Fleet and Army and our possessions in North America; and there is every reason to believe it can have no other destination. If we are not able to resist France in this its first offensive operation, what have we not to dread when it shall be joined by the land and sea forces of the revolted provinces?" Fortunately for the British it took d'Estaing an unforeseen two months to cross the Atlantic.

When he finally reached Delaware on July 8, the British had already abandoned Philadelphia and pulled all their forces back to New York.

d'Estaing missed capturing the entire British force in North America by less than two weeks. George Washington was furious: "Had a passage of even ordinary length taken place, Lord Howe with the British ships of war and all the transports in the River Delaware must have inevitably fallen; and Sir Henry Clinton must have had better luck than is commonly dispensed to men of his profession under such circumstances if he and his troops had not shared at least the

For a political analysis of how d'Estaing got out of the Mediterranean without encountering any resistance see Gordon S. Brown, "The Anglo-French Naval Crisis, 1778: A Study of Conflict in the North Cabinet," *The William and Mary Quarterly: A Magazine of Early American History* 13, no. 1 (1956): 3-25.

⁵⁴ ibid., 8.

⁵⁵ Lord George Germain "A Protest from Lord George Germain" ibid., 16.

fate of Burgoyne [at Saratoga]."56 d'Estaing then sailed for New York and Rhode Island, but spent the late summer and fall without a decisive naval engagement; then he sailed for the West Indies on November 4. Washington and his troops were forced to take winter quarters in Valley Forge and would not have the chance to coordinate with the French Navy again until Admiral deGrasse sailed up from the West Indies to join the American and French armies at Yorktown, the joint French and American victory over the British Army *and Navy* that effectively ended the war. Adams had realized that the destruction of the British could only be done by sea, and agreed with Washington's assessment that by 1780 "Naval superiority [is] the pivot upon which everything [turns.]."57 So Adams presented Vergennes with his plan for cutting off the British from their supplies and naval support. The plan should have been familiar to Vergennes; Adams had proposed it once before.

The record of Adams's thoughts on the French Navy dates back to his first mission to Paris. On January 9, 1779, Adams, Franklin, and Lee presented Vergennes with a jointly written memorial on the subject of the French Navy entitled "The Commissioners to the Comte de Vergennes." Franklin's editorial decisions highlighted Adams's stance on Franco-American relations. Franklin removed almost all of Adams's thoughts on the Franco-American Alliance. In the deleted passages, Adams espoused the ideals of the Model Treaty, which Franklin had set aside in exchange for French recognition, trade, and support for the war effort. But, Franklin had approved of Adams's plan for naval reinforcements, and the most critical passage of Adams's draft went into the final copy with only a few cosmetic changes, all made by Adams. It was the same plan Adams would propose again in 1780. The British army in America relied on an

⁵⁶ A Mahan, *The major operations of the navies in the War of American Independence*. (1913 New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 62.

⁵⁷ George Washington to Benjamin Franklin, Franklin Papers 34:189.

unending stream of ships that traversed the coast and brought supplies to its troops: "if any one Link in this Chain was struck off – if their Supplies from anyone of these Places should be intercepted, their Forces could not subsist." By 1780 the British Navy had also given artillery cover to the garrisoned soldiers, transported divisions from New York to Georgia, and shelled Savannah and Charleston. Given the overwhelming advantage enjoyed by the British Navy, it is little wonder that Adams turned to the French Navy for help. Moreover, as a former Englishman Adams had grown up in a culture which looked to naval strength as the ultimate protector of liberty and peace.

As David Armitage has shown, the First British Empire thought of itself as being "protestant, commercial, maritime, and free," 59 with the British Navy enshrined as the protector of British liberties. This apotheosis of naval force went far beyond the defense of an island nation, for a sea-based protector made a standing army, that handmaiden of tyranny, practically unnecessary. 60 Standing armies were far from popular in eighteenth-century England, but popular outcry reached a fevered pitch during the reign of George II when troops from the King's electorate of Hanover were stationed in Kent to guard against invasion in 1756. 61 These Hanoverians, along with their Hessian counterparts, were nearly the undoing of the Ministry. The use of Hessian mercenaries against the North American rebels likewise helped escalate that conflict to outright revolution. By 1780, it was clear that French troops were needed to win the war, yet another foreign army on American soil made for a dangerous domestic situation and

⁵⁸ "Commissioners to the Comte de Vergennes." Passy. 9 January 1779 Papers of John Adams 7:307.

⁵⁹ Armitage, David. The Ideological Origins of the British Empire. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

⁶⁰ ibid. 144.

⁶¹ Gould, *The Persistence of Empire*, 35-38.

could have put the Alliance in jeopardy. In contrast, the French Navy caused fewer domestic disturbances. The ships would be at sea except when purchasing food and naval stores or selling captured British prizes in the port towns. In Adams's view, not only would the French Navy win the war sooner than the army, it would do so with much less disruption of daily life, and far fewer fears of invasion.

If Adams's defense of congressional monetary policy had been belabored and somewhat insulting, his demand for naval aid was simply ungrateful. Vergennes took seven days to respond with a short, two-paragraph note. Reinforcements were headed for the North Atlantic in the form of the naval and army detachments headed by the Chevalier de Ternay and the Comte de Rochambeau. Adams had mentioned these reinforcements in his letter and immediately dismissed them with the line "I have no hope for any thing decisive from their operations." Vergennes ignored this assessment and Adams's further requests for aid, but did mention that one of Adams's principal requests for the fleet had been ordered before the presumptive minister had committed pen to paper: "there is every reason that next winter they will take their station in North America if that shall be agreeable to Congress, and will employ the ships and troops under their command according to the plan that shall be settled between them and the American generals." Adams needed a pointed reminder that he could not dictate the military policy of either nation.

Nevertheless, questions of military aid brought Adams to a discussion of the core issues of the Franco-American Alliance and its inherent tensions. American patriots never dreamed that the French would join with them out of altruistic notions of freedom from tyranny; the French

⁶² JA to Vergennes. Paris, 13 July 1780. Papers of John Adams 9:521.

⁶³ Vergennes to JA. Versailles, 20 July 1780. Papers of John Adams 10:17.

monarchy was among the most absolutist in Europe. However, it is doubtful that in 1778 Americans, with the possible exception of Franklin, truly understood how disparate the war aims of the two allies were. When the rebels allied with France they raised the war to a higher level of conflict, and their own rebellion to a higher level of treason. Revolting against England was entirely different from allying with the ancestral enemy of all British subjects. The Americans did not make the alliance out of any appreciation for French government or the Catholic religion, but rather because only the aid of a major European naval power would make possible the expulsion of the British from North America. As Vergennes's agent in America had reported in 1775: "They are convinced that they cannot sustain themselves without a nation that protects them by sea; that only two powers are in a position to aid them, France and Spain."64 Likewise, Vergennes did not believe in a right of revolution, but he saw an opportunity to rebuild the greatness of France on the ashes of Great Britain and believed "that Providence has marked this moment for the humiliation of England."65 This conflict of interest was made particularly conspicuous in the deployment of France's limited military resources and the preference of the West Indies over North America.

In his letter Adams treated French military aid like a "blank check," drawing on America's ally for an unprecedented and completely unrealistic expenditure. The French navy had been in shambles at the end of the Seven Years War. When Vergennes became Foreign Minister, he began to rebuild France's navy in expectation of another war with Great Britain, and the American tax revolt proved to be an excellent opportunity. By 1775 the French were supplying the Americans with guns and ammunition through a fake government-sponsored

Achard de Bonvouloir to Comte Guines, Philadelphia 28 December 1775. Guinta, *Documents of the Emerging Nation* 10.

⁶⁵ Vergennes "Considerations on the Affairs of the English Colonies in America" ibid., 21.

company. As Jonathan Dull has shown, the naval buildup began in 1774, but by 1780 the French government was running out of money. Adams referenced the mounting British debt as a sure sign that the British would be unable to continue the war much further, but the French fiscal position was no stronger. The tax system was straining under the massive cost of the war and the monarchy would be bankrupt by 1789. Vergennes wanted to deploy as grand a navy as Adams requested regardless of the upstart diplomat's demands, but even Vergennes could not completely ignore financial restraints in his foreign policy.⁶⁶

Disparate war aims, unbalanced military strength, and disappearing resources created a crisis of confidence on both sides. By 1780 the French could easily have considered the Franco-American Alliance a grand mistake. On the other side of the Atlantic, the Americans were losing their war. Unwilling to blame his own nation in public correspondence, Adams blamed America's only ally for being remiss in its obligations. Though he cited loyalists and Tories as the chief enemies within America, spreading evil lies about France's neglect of its American ally and reviving Francophobia in the populace, Adams was clearly affected by similar fears. He even went so far as to claim that without French naval superiority the Franco-American Alliance was not only worthless but even dangerous: "I scruple not to give it as my opinion, that it will disunite, weaken and distress Us more than, We should have been disunited, weakened or distressed if the Alliance had never been made." Adams went on to describe the greatness of America and the American people "whatever European statesmen may think of them." but he remains a propose the propose of the propose of the American people "whatever European statesmen may think of them."

Gonathan Dull, The French Navy and American independence: a study of arms and diplomacy, 1774-1787 (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975) and Jonathan Dull "The Franco-American Alliance as Tragedy" in Diplomacy and Revolution ed. Hoffman and Albert, 73-106.

⁶⁷ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 13 July 1780. Papers of John Adams 9:527.

⁶⁸ ibid.

knew as well as Vergennes that the greatness was little more than hypothetical until the war was won. In a most telling omission Adams struck the last lines of his letter from the copy sent to Vergennes. His fears for himself and his family, whom he had left to certain poverty and perhaps death if the British re-conquered Boston, echoed the situation of his country and begin to explain the sheer audacity of his request: "I beg your Excellency to excuse this Trouble, because the State of things in North America, has really become alarming, and this merely for Want of a few French Men of War upon that Coast, and to believe me to be, with the greatest Respect Sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble Servant [,] John Adams."⁶⁹

"Terms honourable and advantageous to Great Britain"

As the war dragged on, the Americans and the French were not the only war-weary belligerents. The state of things in Great Britain had also become alarming. The national debt had reached unprecedented, staggering dimensions and taxes on daily necessities continued to rise. Neither popular nor elite opinion had been unanimous on the decision to put down the American tax revolt with armed force, and sympathy for American complaints grew as the war entered its sixth year. Associations sprang up around the British countryside, composed mainly of local gentry, that saw the American rebellion not as a civil war, but rather as an imperial crisis in need of an imperial solution. In an effort to save the British Empire, these associations called for a massive restructuring of the empire. The rebellious colonies would be granted autonomy and reincorporated into the British Empire by pledging their allegiance to George III. Trade could then resume and reinvigorate the British economy leaving the reunified British Empire free to focus all its military strength on destroying the true enemy of all Protestant, liberty-loving people – France – which had so recently dared to sunder the ties of blood and commerce between

⁶⁹ ibid. 528.

the island of England and its colonial brethren. They wanted to enact the plan Adam Smith had proposed four years before to no avail.

The goal of the associations, most of which existed from the spring of 1779 to the early summer of 1780, was to vote down the Ministry of Lord North in the 1780 election. This legal measure would then allow them to enact a legislative revolution in Parliament by restructuring of the empire and making overtures to the Americans. The leadership preferred peaceful, parliamentary avenues for these sweeping changes but often admitted that, if necessary, extralegal measures might be called for. By the spring of 1780 the associations had built up a base of support and were drafting declarations of intent. Then violence broke out in London and, from his seat in Paris, it looked to John Adams like the British Ministry was ready to fall and that peace was at hand.⁷⁰

Adams had no intention of returning America to the British Empire, but he saw in the associations a desire for peace and trade that might outweigh their desire for reunification, and he was the only man in Europe commissioned to bring both peace and trade back to England and America. It was certainly in America's interest that Lord North's Ministry fall, and Adams planned an attack on the ministry on two fronts; first in his capacity as the presumptive minister and second as an accomplished propagandist. The second he did without Vergennes's knowledge; the first needed Vergennes's consent.

While in Paris, Adams received as many newspapers and pamphlets from London as possible. One such pamphlet, "Cool Thoughts," was written by Joseph Galloway, a former delegate to the Continental Congress. Galloway had opposed American independence and fled to

Note That The Persistence of Empire, 164-178 for the an analysis of this movement. See also, Ian R. Christie, Wilkes, Wyvill and reform: the parliamentary movement in British politics 1760-1785 (London: Macmillan, 1962, 68-120.

England soon after independence had been declared. Now in London, Galloway wrote to stir up the British nation and subdue America. In Philadelphia the two men had often fought in Congress; now in Paris, Adams could not resist responding. The response took the form of twelve letters, to be published serially and anonymously in a London newspaper. Moreover, to conceal his identity and increase the efficacy of his arguments, Adams wrote as if he were a loyal British subject. This *nom de plume* feared for the continued existence of Great Britain and believed that the only way to avoid disaster was to grant the Americans their independence and then reestablish commerce with the former colonies on an equitable basis, through a treaty of commerce.

The only copy of the letters was sent to Adams's close friend Edmund Jennings, who resided in London. Due either to Jennings's extreme duplicity or ineptitude, they were not published until 1783, when the peace treaty was all but signed. Through these letters Adams argued that the British were fighting a needless war. Britain did not actually want to retain ownership of its former colonies, Adams wrote, but merely needed the trade to maintain its home market and naval strength. That the trade was lucrative, no one could deny. However, the extent to which Great Britain could benefit from that trade at the end of the war was entirely in its own hands, for the French and Americans had just as much reason (if not more) to fight for the spoils of war as their enemies did. The only way that Great Britain could ever truly lose its American markets was to incur the unending hatred of the Americans by pursuing a brutal and unnecessary war on American soil. The only sensible alternative was to make an honorable peace while one was still possible. Otherwise the British nation would collapse under the immense weight of debt and the most lucrative colonies remaining to Great Britain, the West Indies, would become the property of France. This argument was repeated and elaborated in twelve essays calculated

to hit just the right note of urgency, but it failed to reach the British public in time. When ten of the letters were finally published they were saddled with an unfortunate title, *Letters from a Distinguished American*, further obscuring Adams's original intent.⁷¹

If these essays had been published in 1780 they would have set the stage for the centerpiece of Adams's plan, announcing all of his commissions to Lord Germain. As he could not do this without Vergennes's explicit permission, he wrote to Vergennes once again on July 17. Adams began his letter by quoting Vergennes himself, specifically the letter Vergennes wrote Adams in February telling him that the time was not right to announce his commissions to the British. Adams questioned Vergennes's reasoning by making three arguments as to why the commissions should be published. First, it was inconsistent with the nature of the commissions for them to be kept secret. Second, publishing the commissions would make the British Ministry state its intentions towards the United States, thus clearing up any misunderstanding in England, America, or Spain as to the Ministry's designs. Third, it would counteract the mistaken apprehension in Britain that the United States had granted France exclusive trading privileges, and would show that America was ready to resume trade. Whether the ministry responded favorably or unfavorably was almost irrelevant for "the English Nation wou'd expect of the Ministers that some answer shou'd be given to me. If it should be an insolent one . . . At this particular time when an Election approaches, it wou'd throw the Ministry into some Embarrassement; for the People of England sigh for Peace."72

Adams was convinced that peace could be obtained at no cost to the Americans if only

Nee James Hutson's editorial comments on the published volume for more intriguing details, including the argument that Jennings may have delayed publication because he was a British spy. John Adams, Letters from a distinguished American: twelve essays by John Adams on American foreign policy, 1780, ed. James H. Hudson (Washington: Library of Congress, 1978).

⁷² JA to Vergennes. Paris, 17 July 1780. *Papers of John Adams* 10:2.

the ministry was voted out of office. He did not realize that the associations he had come to depend on were now melting away in the aftermath of the violent, anti-papist Gordon Riots that had swept through London. Though Adams believed it was only a "temporary relaxation," the movement was, in fact, at an end and the "many Persons of Consideration in England, who . . . now vote for Peace" had changed their minds. In a brilliant public relations move, Lord North connected the riots to the "extra-legal" activities suggested by the leadership of the Friends of America and the Ministry was able to make the election into a choice between anarchy and pursuing the war until law and order reigned throughout the Empire. Adams did not know it yet, but his window of opportunity had closed.

On July 17 he still considered his plan the way to end the war and wrote to Vergennes: "I know of no measure that will be more likely to encrease the opposition against Administration than communicating my Powers. It will at least show all the World, that the Continuance of the War, and the consequent Ruin of England, is their own fault, not that of the Americans, who are ready to make Peace upon Terms honourable and advantageous to Great Britain." The die was now cast. The American Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of George III had personally written to the French Foreign Minister that America was ready to realign itself within the British sphere of economic control. Vergennes's rage was terrible.

Ever since Adams arrived in Paris in February of 1780, he had been desperately trying to get Vergennes's attention. As of July 25, Vergennes's eye was fixed on Adams, but the results

⁷³ ibid.

⁷⁴ ibid.

⁷⁵ Gould, *Persistence of Empire*, 174.

⁷⁶ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 17 July 1780 Papers of John Adams 10:2-3.

were far from what Adams had hoped for. Vergennes's response on the twenty-fifth is the kind of document historians wish was written more often – a long and careful refutation of Adams's argument in which Adams's points are copied down with Vergennes's specific rebuttals written side by side. This was a marked departure from Vergennes's previous responses to Adams's requests for aid or permission. Usually Vergennes sent less than two pages, sometimes as little as two paragraphs. Now he reciprocated Adams's penchant for lecturing with all the expertise at his disposal. Vergennes was not ready for the Americans to signal for peace. Spain was giving France all the headaches Vergennes could handle by demanding Gibraltar and an invasion of England. Another upstart ally could unravel the coalition and lose the war.⁷⁷

The letter began like his response to Adams's defense of the revaluation law. Vergennes had an order to give: "I request and require you in the name of the King to communicate your letter and my reply to the United States and suspend, until you shall receive orders from them, vis-à-vis the English ministry, I shall, on my part, send my observations to America so that M. de La Luzerne may communicate them to the members of Congress." As the minister from a client state to its protector, Adams had overstepped his bounds and would now have to be held accountable to his home government. Neither the United States nor John Adams were allowed to act on their own. Previous disputes had been minor, not because of the subject matter, but because Adams lacked any authority or ability to impose his will on the situation – congressional monetary policy and French military deployments were not under his control. However, it was possible that Adams would announce his commissions to the British, even though he was required to do so only with Vergennes's explicit permission. Vergennes had not given his

Orville T. Murphy, "The View from Versailles: Charles Gravier Comte de Vergennes's Perceptions of the American Revolution" in ed. Hoffman and Albert, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 107-150.

⁷⁸ Vergennes to JA. Versailles, 25 July 1780. Papers of John Adams 10:38.

permission and Vergennes needed this to be made clear to Congress: "I am persuaded that that assembly will judge the opinion of the Minister of France worthy of some attention and will not fear that, by adopting it as the rule of its conduct, it is neglecting or betraying the interests of the United States."⁷⁹ Once again Vergennes reminded Adams that Congress had no choice but to accede to French demands.

Vergennes could have stopped his letter there, but Adams would still be in France until he was recalled and Vergennes wanted to make clear the grave danger Adams was flirting with both personally and geopolitically. Vergennes never directly addressed Adams's plan to change the Ministry in Britain; perhaps he already knew that the associations would not succeed. Either way, with Lord North's Ministry firmly in place, Vergennes saw nothing but catastrophe if Adams made peace overtures to the British. Vergennes's argument against Adams ran as follows. The British had no interest in American independence. If they did not recognize America they would not recognize America's minister, and until they were willing to discuss independence there could be no peace. Communicating the commissions would be a waste of time and would only serve to make the allies look weak. Finally, it would be ridiculous to suggest a treaty of commerce to a nation that has not yet agreed to independence. According to the law of nations, a treaty of commerce was an alliance. The war would have to go on until the British were willing to acknowledge the United States as a separate country. Once that was accomplished there could be peace, and only after the peace could a treaty of commerce be negotiated. The fact that Adams had three commissions did not mean that any of them needed to be announced immediately, nor did it mean that they needed to be announced simultaneously.⁸⁰ The British

⁷⁹ ibid.

⁸⁰ ibid, 38-40.

could consider the peace commission a sign of weakness and pursue the war with greater strength of arms and propaganda, both in Britain and in the United States, giving hope to the loyalists and Tories still in the rebellious provinces.

Even so, the greatest danger lay with the effects such an action would have on the Franco-Spanish Alliance. England hoped to disrupt the fragile Bourbon Family Compact and leave France to fight without recourse to any other European ally. Spain had always been noncommittal in regards to the war, had waited until the last possible moment to enter, and had demanded the return of Gibraltar and an invasion of the British Isles before committing any of its troops or ships. At the end of his letter, Vergennes sharply requested that, "Mr. Adams should be so good as to do the ministry of Madrid the justice to believe that it will have the necessary sagacity to discover the British designs and have sufficient understanding and prudence to determine the conduct it ought to pursue."81 However, Vergennes had great doubts about Spain's willingness to remain in a war that could endanger its own American empire. If Spain thought that the Franco-American Alliance was failing it might pull out of the war all together, a loss that France could not survive. Adams believed that the best way to uncover London's peace feelers in Madrid would be to counter them with a true offer of peace – a hopelessly *naïve* assumption.

But Vergennes went even further. He accused Adams of being a traitor, not just to the alliance, but to his country. His aim was to re-ally with Great Britain: "To propose a commercial treaty, which must be founded on confidence and a union equivalent to an alliance, at a time when the war rages in all its fury . . . [says] . . . that the United States incline towards a defection and that they will be faithful to their engagements with France only until such time as Great

⁸¹ ibid, 41.

Britain furnishes a pretext for breaking them."82 From Vergennes's perspective, Adams was a traitor, though Adams himself would have never seen it that way. Adams was a strident nationalist and had no intention of ever surrendering America's newfound political sovereignty, especially to its former colonial master. However, in *Letters from a Distinguished American* Adams attempted to push the conciliatory faction in England to see the logical conclusion of its plan for a federated empire; American independence with privileged trade would have exactly the same benefits for Britain. Vergennes correctly understood, but Adams failed to realize, that a return to pre-war trade with the British Empire would have reduced America to economic dependency on Britain. The United States would have been independent, but in name only. In reality, the new nation would cease to be a colony only to be a weak client state of Britain. Where Adams saw a wise economic policy, Vergennes saw betrayal.

Adams did not take kindly to being so insulted and wrote two pointed replies to

Vergennes's letter. Adams attempted to counter all of Vergennes's arguments in a letter on the
twenty-sixth of July. He would gladly refer all his correspondence to Congress and cease any
attempts to contact the British until further instructed, but perhaps Vergennes had not understood
his plan. He had no interest in changing the hearts and minds of the current Ministry. Rather, he
wanted to tap into the vein of public opinion against the war and force a change in the
government towards a ministry that would be willing to seek peace. Vergennes had not managed
to change Adams's mind but had only made him insist more loudly that "without any great effort
of Genius, I think it easy to demonstrate to any thinking Being, that by granting American
Independence, and making a Treaty of Peace, upon principles of perfect Reciprocity, England

⁸² ibid. 38.

would in the present circumstances of affairs make an honourable and advantageous peace."83

Adams did not wait for Vergennes to continue the argument before he sent off one final volley. On the twenty-seventh, Adams wrote a stinging rebuke to Vergennes, responding to Vergennes's earlier claim that the King was acting in America's best interest without prompting. Adams then listed the many times that he had addressed Vergennes (either as a commissioner or as a minister) on the subject of naval deployment, "But if it was only suspected by Congress, that a direct application from them to the King, was expected, I am assured they wou'd not hesitate a moment to make it."84 This was a blatant insult, and Adams knew it. However, his exasperation with the Franco-American Alliance, along with his fears over the war, had been growing for some time. Four days prior, Adams wrote Edmund Jennings, his friend in London, and completely disassociated himself from the Treaty of Alliance that Franklin had negotiated with France. Although the letter drips with wounded pride and self pity, it does show that Adams's philosophy of diplomacy had not altered from what he wrote into the Model Treaty. The French Alliance had become the danger he had warned against, and he now wanted nothing more to do with it. As for the Treaty of Alliance itself: "if my Life should be Spared I am determined Posterity shall know which was my Treaty and which was the other Peoples Treaty. I never was more mortified in my Life, than upon finding at my Return [from Braintree] to Congress, what they had done. I gave to the Gentlemen who had done it, my sentiments upon it most freely."85

Vergennes did not react well to being insulted by an upstart Yankee whose war was being fought in no small part with French money, arms, men, and ships. Upon receiving Adams's

⁸³ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 26 July 1780. ibid, 45.

⁸⁴ JA to Vergennes. Paris, 27 July 1780. ibid, 49.

⁸⁵ JA to Edmund Jennings. Paris, 18 July 1780. ibid, 10.

rebuke of the twenty-seventh, the Foreign Minister cut off all correspondence with Adams: "To avoid any further discussions of this sort I think it my duty to inform you that since Mr. Franklin is the only person accredited to the King by the United States, it is with him only that I ought and can treat of matters which concern them and particularly those which have been the object of your observations."86

Once again Franklin was the unwilling recipient of a copy of Adams's and Vergennes's correspondence, but this time he did write a cover letter to Congress explaining the origins of Vergennes's distrust. The two sets of letters, one on currency and the other on diplomacy, both arrived in America in December of 1780. Adams was honored and censured respectively, but Vergennes would take no more chances with France's troublesome client state. La Luzerne was unable to remove Adams completely from any future negotiations with Great Britain, so instead he diluted Adams's influence by adding four more ministers to the commission: Henry Laurens, Thomas Jefferson, John Jay, and Benjamin Franklin. This decision would actually strengthen America's hand at the bargaining table, but the second change to the commission undercut all hope of true peace between American and Great Britain: the newly commissioned ministers were denied a commission to negotiate a treaty of commerce. France simply could not afford even the possibility of a true Anglo-American economic reunion, so Vergennes made it impossible.

Conclusion

Adams and Vergennes deeply disagreed on the economic, military, and geopolitical nature of the American Revolution and its effect on the larger Atlantic World, but their fight quickly boiled down to the central tension between France and the newly United States of America.

⁸⁶ Vergennes to JA. Versailles, 29 July 1780. ibid, 57.

France thought the United States was its client state, bound by honor and law to assist France against all its foes, particularly its ancestral enemy and opponent in all the wars of the period, Great Britain. At exactly the same time, American politicians claimed that their country was due all the rights of a neutral (i.e., non-aligned) state, free to sell its coveted staple agricultural products to whomever offered the best price, and Britain almost always offered the best price. After 1783, whenever France asserted its perceived right to control American trade (and the foreign policy that supported it) the Americans considered such intervention against the Law of Nations and armed their merchants ships. Whenever America asserted its right to trade with British ports the French considered these policies a betrayal of trust and worthy of punishment. This difference underlies all the major conflicts of Franco-American relations through the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

In the summer of 1781, Admiral de Grasse finally left the West Indies and coordinated his operations with Generals Washington and Rochambeau in the North Atlantic. As Adams had predicted three years earlier, Cornwallis's unconditional surrender at Yorktown ended the war and gave France a chance to wring concessions from London. American independence was guaranteed, but the terms Great Britain was willing to give France's ally were less than favorable. Without a treaty of commerce to entice Great Britain, the American diplomats had only one card left to play – the separate peace they had been threatening since 1776. So Adams, Jay, and Franklin agreed to set aside the core tenant of the Franco-American Alliance in return for a far more generous settlement.⁸⁷ Vergennes's worst nightmare still came true, and Franklin told Vergennes so himself. But the Peace of Paris did not settle the larger issues to anyone's

Richard Morris, *The peacemakers: the great powers and American independence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), Ronald Hoffman and Peter, Albert J., eds., *Peace and the peacemakers: the treaty of 1783* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), Jonathan Dull, *The Treaty of Paris, 1783: its origin and significance* (Washington D.C.: National Committee for the Bicentennial of the Treaty of Paris, 1983).

satisfaction, and no treaty could have pleased both Britain and France. Following the peace,
Anglo-American trade skyrocketed back to its pre-war levels as the British home market and
financial centers easily overwhelmed the few commercial footholds the French had established in
American ports during the war.

The American Revolution was the final nail in the French Monarchy's financial coffin, 88 but the Republican governments that followed were no less resentful of American trade with the British Empire. The two allies went to (quasi) war in the late 1790s over trade in the West Indies. After the United States ratified Jay's Treaty with Great Britain, the French National Assembly declared that any ship bearing so much as a handkerchief to British Ports was to be seized and its sailors hanged: a punishment reserved for pirates. 89 When Napoleon took control of France he did not have the resources to continue fighting the American navy and privateers in the Caribbean so he accepted President John Adams's peace offer to annul the Treaty of Alliance of 1778. 90 However, the *detente* was short lived and Napoleon was furious that the United States refused to cooperate with his Continental Blockade or declare war on Great Britain to tie up British resources being used against France. American ships were impounded, leading in part to

⁸⁸ Jonathan R. Dull "France and the American Revolution seen as Tragedy," in *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Franco-American Alliance of 1778*, 73-106.

⁸⁹ Alexander DeConde, *The quasi-war: the politics and diplomacy of the undeclared war with France 1797-1801* (New York: Scribner, 1966).

William Stinchcombe, "The Diplomacy of the WXYZ Affair," The William and Mary Quarterly: A Magazine of Early American History 34, no. 4 (1977): 590-617 and William Stinchcombe, The XYZ affair (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Stephen Kurtz, "The French Mission of 1799-1800: Concluding Chapter in the Statecraft of John Adams," Political Science Quarterly 80, no. 4 (1965): 543-557 and Stephen Kurtz, "The Political Science of John Adams: A Guide to His Statecraft," The William and Mary Quarterly 25, no. 4 (1968): 605-613.

Thomas Jefferson's decision to embargo all American trade in 1808.⁹¹ It was not until the end of the Napoleonic Wars (and the War of 1812) that American merchants could achieve their original goal in the Model Treaty of safely trading with both France and Britain. This only became possible because the Napoleonic Wars had smashed the Balance of Power beyond repair.⁹² No longer considered a counterweight between opposing factions, the United States was free to trade as long as Europe enjoyed its hundred years of (relative) peace.

There has been very little written on Franco-American relations during the Napoleonic Era. The two most prominent works are Clifford Egan, Neither peace nor war: Franco-American relations, 1803-1812 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983) and Peter Hill, Napoleon's troublesome Americans: Franco-American relations, 1804-1815 (Dulles Va.: Potomac Books, 2005).

Paul W. Schroeder, "The 19th-Century International System: Changes in the Structure," World Politics 39, no. 1 (October 1, 1986): 1-26.

Chapter 2 — "I had rather receive it from you": The Adams-Jefferson Correspondence Network, 1785-1788

On October 19, 1785 Abigail Adams had to set the record straight. She wrote from the American Mission in London to Thomas Jefferson, then American Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Versailles, that "In your English papers you will find an extract of a Letter from Nova Scotia, representing the abuse said to be received by a Captain Stanhope at Boston, the Commander of the Mercury. The account is as false — if it was not too rough a term for a Lady to use, I would say false as Hell, but I will substitute, one not less expressive and say, false as the English." Abigail and her husband, John Adams, American Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James, had known about the "Stanhope Affair" for only a day before it hit the English press, thanks to a set of letters sent to John by the Massachusetts Governor, James Bowdoin. John was content to place the correspondence before the British Government (and in carefully chosen British newspapers) and wait for the slow course of justice, but Abigail was incensed and Jefferson came to share her disgust with the misrepresentations swirling through the European press which threatened, not only the honor, but also the commerce of the still newly United States.

¹ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 9 August 1786," Source: *The Adams Papers*, *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 7, January 1786–February 1787, ed. C. James Taylor, Margaret A. Hogan, Celeste Walker, Anne Decker Cecere, Gregg L. Lint, Hobson Woodward, and Mary T. Claffey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005, pp. 312–313, Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-07-02-0117-0001, ver. 2013-12-27).

² "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 19 October 1785," Source: *The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 6, December 1784 – December 1785, ed. Richard Alan Ryerson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, pp. 437–440, Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0137, ver. 2013-12-27).

Jefferson passed Abigail's information on to other American diplomats stationed in Europe and even wrote up a legal defense of Governor Bowdoin's actions, despite never receiving any instructions on the matter from the American Secretary for Foreign Affairs or any "official" representative of the American government in New York or Europe.

The social aspect of the early American Foreign Service should not be underestimated. With the American government in its infancy, American diplomats (and later consuls) had very little contact with their home government, so little that their ability to perform their duties came down to creating and massaging every possible source of information they could find on European and American political and commercial life. John Adams's transformation from a thorn in the Franco-American Alliance to the senior American diplomat in Europe had little to do with a change in temperament. He was still an an amateur diplomat, but he had gained years of experience in three European courts. More importantly, he had friends and contacts all over Europe. Adams on his own was a diplomatic disaster. Adams in a network was a trusted colleague. When Adams's friend and fellow diplomat, Thomas Jefferson, American Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court at Versailles, heard that John would be returning to Massachusetts he wrote: "I learn with real pain the resolution you have taken of quitting Europe. Your presence on this side of the Atlantic gave me a confidence that if any difficulties should arise within my department, I should always have one to advice with on whose counsels I could rely. I shall now feel bewidowed."³ Abigail Adams had joined her husband in Europe just before his appointment to London, and her departure was an equal blow, as Jefferson wrote to her "I have considered

³ "From Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 20 February 1787," Source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787, ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955, pp. 169–170. Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0176, ver. 2013-12-27).

you while in London as my neighbor, and look forward to the moment of your departure from thence as to an epoch of much regret and concern for me."⁴

In the Adams-Jefferson correspondence, we can see one of the first information networks created by diplomats posted abroad. By turns teasing and deadly serious, and with subjects ranging from the purchase of shoes to negotiating new commercial treaties, while discussing scuffles in the port of Boston, Shay's Rebellion and the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, the letters between John Adams, Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson are among the richest in the history of the American diplomatic corps. The many threads that made up their conversations give historians the early American diplomatic corps in microcosm.

Early American diplomacy was not sufficiently organized to have a "back channel." All communications to Foreign Service officers could potentially help in the performance of their duties. Furthermore, pre-revolutionary experience of the Committees of Correspondence meant that all the early American diplomats were well versed in the power of individuals pooling their information for collective political action⁵. It is therefore crucial to understand the social networks in which the officers moved and the range of their correspondents. Drawing on *The Early American Foreign Service Database*, this chapter is able to plot the epistolary networks of Abigail Adams, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson to show the range of their potential sources of information. The network itself is a relatively simple one, focused on the three key

⁴ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 2 February 1788," Source: *The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 8, March 1787 – December 1789, ed. C. James Taylor, Margaret A. Hogan, Jessie May Rodrique, Gregg L. Lint, Hobson Woodward, and Mary T. Claffey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007, pp. 223–224. Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-08-02-0100, ver. 2013-12-27).

⁵ William B. Warner, *Protocols of Liberty: Communication Innovation and the American Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 2013).

individuals, but it demonstrates how early American Foreign Service officers channeled information to each other, often bypassing the American government. By looking at the letters exchanged between John Adams and Jefferson in light of their far larger correspondence network we can see how this information pooling functioned on a day-to-day basis. These networks and connections are described in prose and shown in a series of data visualizations, designed to complement and enhance our understanding of how information flowed between these three crucial people. At the same time, Abigail Adams's correspondence with Jefferson shows the value of non-commissioned correspondents. Her contacts in New England and observations of court life in London and British politics in general were invaluable to Jefferson in Paris.

This larger correspondence network was funneled through two edges: John Adams - Jefferson and Abigail Adams - Jefferson. By studying these two edges in depth, we can see how the larger epistolary network of the early American Foreign Service functioned. The last thing a diplomat wanted to be (besides broke) was uninformed. Information was the currency of diplomacy and letters were the method of circulation. Of course, not all the letters received by these three individuals directly related to American interests. However, unlike most social networks, these individuals were so desperate for news from home and abroad that each contact held the capacity to contribute to negotiations or court conversation, where being informed about events generally was one of the most valued commodities. For example, Adams and Jefferson would ask each other to confirm (or disprove) court rumors, as when Adams requested official papers and information from the French court: "Pray send me the Arrêt against English Manufactures and every other new Arrêt, which may any Way affect the United States. It is confidently given out here that our Vessells are not admitted into the French W. Indias. Has there

been any new Arrêt, since that of August 1784?" Information was exchanged in three ways: enclosing newspapers or other letters, digesting information from multiple letters into a single report on an event, or giving personal opinion on an event or a series of events. Even the least personal of these, simply enclosing other texts, was enmeshed in a complex series of personal relationships and legal structures.

In these letters historians can watch John Adams, Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson decide what it meant to be an American diplomat and how those decisions affected their actions, their expenditures (personal and professional), and their relationships with their home and host governments. The letters are particularly rich in detail on issues of protocol and day-to-day management because the Continental Congress, always concerned about overly centralizing power, had given John Adams and Thomas Jefferson joint responsibility for all American diplomatic efforts in Europe. This protocol innovation (which was not repeated) caused innumerable headaches for the two diplomats but has left historians with an unimaginably detailed day-to-day accounting of affairs as they explained their actions to one another.

Evaluating American state capacity in foreign relations through information networks in this period is complicated. The Adams-Jefferson network was robust and far ranging, but it broke down at the point of contact with the Continental Congress. In the "critical period" between the end of the American revolution and the ratification of the Federal Constitution, American national government was almost exclusively the province of the diplomats. Posted in Europe, Adams and Jefferson had a far more national view of American interests than the narrow

⁶ "To Thomas Jefferson from John Adams, 4 August 1785," Source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785, ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953, pp. 340–342, Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0275, ver. 2013-12-27).

regional or state-based interests of their domestic political counterparts. In the absence of standard practices, external support, or sufficient funds, the Adamses and Jefferson were the heart of the early American Foreign Service, which was forming the nation.

ESTABLISHING THE NETWORK

John and Abigail Adams left France for England on May 22, 1785, leaving Jefferson as Benjamin Franklin's successor at Versailles. Once the Adamses and Jefferson found themselves on opposite sides of the English Channel their friendship began to show up in the epistolary record. Previously, John Adams and Jefferson had always collaborated from the same location, and now they were in a position to help each other with favors both political and personal. Abigail already had a long history of adding her husband's political allies, such as James Lovell, to her correspondence network. In their earliest letters following the move we can see how this three-way friendship found its footing and cemented the ties that would allow for smooth communication within this small corner of the early American Foreign Service.

Upon reaching London John Adams immediately wrote his friend Jefferson on a matter of great importance — wine. Adams had learned that, in England, diplomats were only exempt from paying import duties on wine for the first six hundred bottles they brought into the country. After that they would be charged six to eight shillings for every subsequent bottle. It is unknown just how many bottles Adams had planned to bring with him, but he said that his cellar from the Hague would barely be covered by the exemption, let alone the wine he was shipping

⁷ John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 25 May 1785. London. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. Barbara B. Oberg and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008. Canonic URL: http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN-01-08-02-0124 [accessed 19 Apr 2011]

from his home in Anteuil, and then there were another five hundred bottles of Bordeaux that he had purchased in France to round out the order (the latter would have cost him between £150 and £200 in taxes alone). Jefferson was entreated to do something before the bottles showed up in Dover and caused serious economic damage: "I am sorry to give you this Trouble but I beg you to take the Wine, at any Price you please. Let your own Maitre D'Hotel judge, or accept it as a present or sell it at Vendue, i.e. let Petit dispose of it as he will, give you an Account of proceeds and give me credit, and then order me to pay Stockdale or any Body here for you to the amount."

Transferring money between the Foreign Service officers was a non-trivial problem, especially for non-official business. Expenses incurred as part of their duties could be reimbursed from funds made available by Dutch bankers and typically required a letter of authorization from John Adams, who had negotiated the loans in the first place. Personal expenses had to be dealt with separately. Hence Adams's reference to John Stockdale, a bookseller in Picadilly Square with whom John and John Quincy Adams had stayed in 1783. Stockdale had supported the American revolution and been tried for sedition for printing materials sympathetic to the colonists. Over the next few years Stockdale would become Jefferson's publisher for *Notes on the State of Virginia* and Adams's *Defense of the Constitutions of the United States*. Adams knew Jefferson would be ordering books from Stockdale, and so

⁸ John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 25 May 1785. London. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*. Canonic URL: http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN-01-08-02-0124 [accessed 19 Apr 2011]

⁹ For more about Stockdale, see Eric Stockdale, 'Tis Treason, My Good Man!: Four Revolutionary Presidents and a Piccadilly Bookshop (New Castle, Del: Oak Knoll Press [u.a.], 2005).

offered to create a credit for him at the bookstore rather than send money across the Channel.

Jefferson was unable to purchase the wine, so the point became (temporarily) moot.

The first letter Jefferson sent to John Adams following Adams's arrival in London also involved a desire to avoid taxes: "Can you take the trouble of ordering me the two best of the London papers (that is to say one of each party) and by any channel which will save me postage and the search of government?" Embedded in this request are all the key aspects of an information network, namely the selecting and transmitting of relevant information from an overwhelming number of potential sources. Jefferson knew that Adams would keep him informed of major events at court, but he also needed to see for himself how the British public was responding to local and world events. Of course, this entire information stream was shot through with political constraints: not only were the papers political but the mail system was taxed and frequently searched by both the British and French secret services. While it was unlikely that the spies of either country would glean useful information from commonly printed material, the more people who opened the packages and handled the papers, the more likely they were to go missing along the route.¹¹

To fulfill Jefferson's request, Adams turned to Stockdale. However, it turned out to be a more complicated request than Jefferson first anticipated. While Stockdale was happy to send the papers and pamphlets to Jefferson in Paris — "All orders that I may have the honor to receive

¹⁰ "From Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 2 June 1785," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 8:172–174, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0134, ver. 2013-12-27. The postal rate from London to Paris was set in 1660 at 9 pence for a single sheet letter, 2 shillings for an ounce weight. O. R. Sanford and Denis Salt, *British Postal Rates*, 1635 to 1839 (Beckenham: Postal History Society, 1990), 55.

¹¹ For one example of letters going missing at a checkpoint, see "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 25 October 1785," *Adams Family Correspondence*, 6:441–442, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0139, ver. 2013-12-27.

from You shall be punctually executed,"¹² — it was more difficult to find a duty-free channel. Jefferson applied through multiple channels to have his papers delivered without paying postage. Adams had experienced the same problem when he lived in France and had only found a solution when he made a personal request to the Comte de Vergennes to have his newspapers exempt.¹³ In an interesting inversion from Adams's solution just a few years prior during the American Revolution, Jefferson ended up having his pamphlets sent through the British Embassy to France, courtesy of the British Ambassador, John Frederick Sackville, the third Duke of Dorset.¹⁴ Dorset took a personal interest in helping the new American ministers become settled in Europe. He visited the Adamses at Anteuil before they took up their new post in London, and offered to help with getting their luggage past English customs unmolested. He was so friendly that even Abigail liked him, and proclaimed him "vastly civil to Mr. A." Of course, there was no English Ambassador in France during the war. However, Dorset's assistance to both Adams and

¹² "To Thomas Jefferson from John Stockdale, 12 August 1785," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8:365, Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0291, ver. 2013-12-27).

¹³ Adams's exemption was handled by Edmé-Jacques Genet, then head translator for Vergennes and father of Edmond-Charles Genet (later French Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, also known as Citizen Genet). Edmond-Charles had succeeded his father's post and Adams suggested that Jefferson ask the son to continue his father's assistance."To Thomas Jefferson from John Adams, 16 July 1785," ibid, 297–298. http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0234, ver. 2013-12-27.

¹⁴ "From Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 22 June 1785," ibid, 246–247. http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0188, ver. 2013-12-27.

¹⁵ "Abigail Adams to Charles Storer, 3 January 1785," *Adams Family Correspondence*, 6:40–41. http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0013, ver. 2014-02-12.

Jefferson showed a personal dimension to diplomacy and diplomatic interaction, which can transcend, but rarely fundamentally alter geopolitical realities.¹⁶

Despite all the difficulties with transferring newspapers duty free across the English Channel, Stockdale was a particularly useful node in Jefferson's information network. He had access to a wide range of materials and was sufficiently knowledgeable about the United States (given his friendship with John Adams and his history as a publisher of Friends of America writings) to select noteworthy titles for Jefferson to read. He was also in the business of shipping materials, so once Jefferson took care of the diplomatic side of the transfer, Stockdale could send the pamphlets as a matter of course. Stockdale shipped orders to America for Jefferson, including books for James Madison, to be donated to Jefferson's alma mater, the College of William and Mary¹⁷. Francis Daymon, Librarian for the Library Company of Philadelphia from 1774 to 1777, provided a similar safe channel for materials in and out of the revolutionary city for Achard de Bonvouloir. Bonvouloir was agent for the French government in 1775, who requested that the Comte de Guines (then French Ambassador to London who sent Bonvouloir on his mission at the request of the Comte de Vergennes) send his letters to Daymon to ensure that they would not be found by the British government¹⁸. It is surprising that Jefferson did not

¹⁶ Dorset was not considered a great diplomat, but rather the kind of aristocrat who occasionally would be elevated to the Diplomatic Corps for reasons of birth rather than talent. See Jeremy Black, *British Diplomats and Diplomacy*, *1688-1800* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001), 8.

¹⁷ The order included classical greek and latin texts from the famed Scottish printer Robert Foulis, and two works of natural philosophy by the Newtonian popularizer Benjamin Martin."From Thomas Jefferson to John Stockdale, 28 July 1785," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 8:322–323, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0256, ver. 2013-12-27.

¹⁸ Achard de Bonvouloir to Comte de Guines, 28 December 1775 Mary A. Giunta, ed., *Documents of the Emerging Nation: U.S. Foreign Relations 1775-1789* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 10.

ask Stockdale for a selection of pamphlets referring to British politics in general, but for that he had Abigail Adams to summarize and enclose clippings.

Abigail Adams's first letter to Jefferson quoted three newspapers, either in the main body of the letter or in a separate enclosure. Most of them related to John Adams's diplomatic mission, but they all helped give Jefferson a sense of how the British public viewed the United States. She particularly dwelt on the the strongly anti-American Public Advertiser, which had the following to say on the event of John Adams's appearance at the court of St. James, "An Ambassador from America! Good heavens what a sound! This will be such a phenomenon in the Corps Diplomatique [sic] that tis hard to say which can excite indignation most, the insolence of those who appoint the Character, or the meanness of those who receive it. Beyond simply clipping newspapers, Abigail provided insightful color commentary on British life and the city of London. Her first impressions of London were somewhat favorable: "The figure which this city makes in respect to Equipages is vastly superiour to Paris, and gives one the Idea of superiour wealth and grandeur." but as she stayed longer and John Adams met with increasing

¹⁹ The newspapers were The Public Advertiser and The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser in "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 6 June 1785," *Adams Family Correspondence* 6:169–173, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0060-0001, ver. 2013-12-27. with a paragraph excerpted from the Public Advertiser that was almost identical to one that appeared in The Daily Universal Register "Enclosure: Extracts from Newspapers, 6 June 1785," no. 1, ibid, 173–174, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0060-0002, ver. 2013-12-27.

²⁰ Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 6 June 1785. ibid, 169-173, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0060-0001, ver. 2013-12-27.

²¹ Interestingly, Abigail did not write Jefferson about her times at Court. Those were sent to her sister, Mary Cranch. See "Abigail Adams to Mary Smith Cranch, 24 June 1785," ibid, 186–194, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0065, ver. 2013-12-27.

²² Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 6 June 1785. ibid, 169-173, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0060-0001, ver. 2013-12-27.

hostility, she began to focus on other aspects of city life: "to see Lads not more than ten years old striped and fighting untill the Blood flow'd from every part, enclosed by a circle and forceing every person from the circle who attempted to prevent it. Bred up with such tempers and principals, who can wonder at the licentiousness of their Manners, and the abuse of their pens."²³ Her intense dislike of the British people colored her views²⁴ (for which she had an equal in Jefferson), but she also noted the relative wealth of the city and was a shrewd appraiser of commercial goods.

Abigail and Jefferson's violent political distaste for the English sat uneasily in their correspondence next to their appreciation of English manufactures. In one letter, Jefferson moved within few sentences from considering the English little better than wild beasts — "I fancy it must be the quantity of animal food eaten by the English which renders their character insusceptible of civilisation" — to praising their linens — "From what I recollect of the diaper and damask we used to import from England I think they were better and cheaper than here [France] I inclose you a specimen of what is offered me at 100. livres for the table cloth and 12napkins. I suppose that, of the same quality, a table cloth ... and 20 napkins ... would cost 7. guineas." Abigail and Jefferson set up a small commercial exchange, where each bought

²³ "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 7 October 1785," ibid, 414–416, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0128, ver. 2013-12-27.

²⁴ For a good appraisal of how Abigail's views of the English biased her letters see, Edith B. Gelles, *Abigail Adams: A Writing Life* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

²⁵ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 25 September 1785," *Adams Family Correspondence*, 6:390–392, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0120, ver. 2013-12-27.

²⁶ Ibid. In a later letter, Jefferson gives the exchange rate as 24 livres to 20 shillings, which suggests a potential savings of over 70 livres. "Enclosure: Memorandum of Purchases, 11 February 1786," *Adams Family Correspondence*, 7:52, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-07-02-0012-0002, ver. 2013-12-27.

household goods for the other depending on the relative quality (and price) in London or Paris. Jefferson ordered table linens and shirts from London while Abigail requested shoes, lace, and statuettes from Paris. Musings on the relative economies of the two countries also gave rise to political commentary and political philosophy, as well as the character of a diplomat's role as entertainer and social figure.²⁷ Jefferson's response to Abigail's request for a set of four tabletop statuettes of classical deities demonstrates the intertwined nature of social performance and diplomatic negotiation:

With respect to the figures I could only find three of those you named, matched in size. These were Minerva, Diana, and Apollo. I was obliged to add a fourth, unguided by your choice At length a fine Mars was offered, calm, bold, his faulchion not drawn, but ready to be drawn. This will do, thinks I, for the table of the American Minister in London, where those whom it may concern may look and learn that though Wisdom is our guide, and the Song and Chase our supreme delight, yet we offer adoration to that tutelar god also who rocked the cradle of our birth, who has accepted our infant offerings, and has shewn himself the patron of our rights and avenger of our wrongs.²⁸

²⁷ For a discussion of how "taste" and dining intersected in Jefferson's thought see Lauren F. Klein, "Dinner-Table Bargains: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the Senses of Taste," *Early American Literature* 49, no. 2 (2014): 403–33, doi:10.1353/eal.2014.0034.

²⁸ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 25 September 1785." *Adams Family Correspondence*, 6:390–392, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0120, ver. 2013-12-27.

The social character of diplomacy required that the diplomat's house be a site of conversation, parties, and entertainment as well as a personal space.²⁹ When Jefferson requested tablecloths of a certain size, the conversation quickly ran to how large a dinner party one could be expected to host in London as opposed to Paris. Abigail could not find any tablecloths premade in the dimensions Jefferson requested to sit twenty people at one table and noted that "The Marquis of Carmarthan who occasionally dines the Foreign Ministers ... cannot entertain more than 15 at once, and upon their Majesties Birth days, he is obliged to dine his company at his Fathers the Duke of Leeds³⁰." The size of the parties indicated what type of event they would be, and the relative strain of entertaining on diplomatic finances. Abigail ran the American mission³¹ in London, on Grosvenor Square, but Jefferson had no hostess for his own house, although he had a French butler, Adrien Petite, as well as slaves brought from Virginia, including his late wife's half-brother and sister, James and Sally Hemings.³² Jefferson had many questions about the running of a diplomatic household, including what expenses could be rightly charged to Congress. These questions, including the financial ones, he addressed to Abigail not John. For example, in his first letter to Abigail after she arrived in London, Jefferson asked: "In stating my accounts with the United states, I am at a loss whether to charge house rent being convinced

²⁹ See Catherine Allgor, *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002) for examples in Early American domestic politics.

³⁰ "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 7 October 1785." *Adams Family Correspondence* 6: 414–416, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0128, ver. 2013-12-27.

³¹ Since Adams was a minister plenipotentiary rather than an ambassador, the United States had a mission rather than an embassy.

³² For a detailed and insightful look into how Jefferson lived in Paris, see Part II "The Vaunted Scene of Europe" in Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2009), 153–396.

by experience that my expences here will otherwise exceed my allowance. I ask this information of you, Madam, because I think you know better than Mr. Adams what may be necessary and right for him to do in occasions of this class."³³

Abigail's response was a microcosm of the economic difficulties faced by American diplomats attempting to establish households in European courts on the salaries approved by Congress. She began with renting a house sufficient for a diplomatic mission: "As to the House rent which you mentiond, neither you or Mr. Adams can do yourselves justice unless you charge it, and Mr. A is fully determined to do it." Then there was the custom of foreign diplomats presenting their host court's servants with pre-agreed sums of money as New Year's presents, which she called "perquisites" for The Hague, "Court taxes" for the Court of St. James, or "Etrennes³⁶" at Versailles. As Adams was stationed at all three courts that past year, he had to pay the "presents" several times over, which Abigail found infuriating: "all the servants and attendants from St. James came very methodically with their Books, upon which both the Names of the Ministers and the sums given were Specified. Upon the New Years day this is again to be

³³ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 21 June 1785," *Adams Family Correspondence*, 6:177–181, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0062, ver. 2013-12-27.

³⁴ "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 12 August 1785," ibid, 262–266, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0085, ver. 2013-12-27.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Abigail uses the French word in a letter to her financial manager back in Massachusetts, Cotton Tufts. "Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, 3 January 1785," ibid, 41–44, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0014-0001, ver. 2014-02-12. She also enclosed a list of the payments for Versailles which ran to 17 Louis D'Or, or 308 pounds sterling. "Enclosure: Account from the Salle Des Ambassadeurs, 3 January 1785,"ibid, 44–45, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0014-0002, ver. 2014-02-12. Account written out by John Quincy Adams. Currency conversion rates: 1 Louis D'Or = 24 livres following currency devaluation in 1740; Jefferson gives exchange rate of 24 livres to 20 pounds sterling "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 25 September 1785." ibid, 390–392, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0120, ver. 2013-12-27

repeated: and the sum this year will amount to not less than a hundred pounds, which will be thought very extravagant I suppose; but how could it be avoided?"³⁷

Abigail hoped that John Adams and Jefferson would educate the Congress on the nature (and expense) of diplomatic service, by charging more of their necessary financial outlays in their financial reports: "Our Countrymen have no Idea of the expences of their Ministers... All the prudence and oeconomy I have been able to exercise in the year past, has not enabled me to bring the year about; without falling behind hand..... these are considerations Sir which some times distress me. As I know you are a fellow sufferer you will excuse my mentioning them to you." These fellow sufferers, separated from friends, family, and government by an ocean, bonded together to survive (and attempt to thrive) in a geopolitical climate that would give them few chances at true success.

THE NETWORK IN PRACTICE

On November 1, 1785 Jefferson completed a legal defense of the Massachusetts

Governor, James Bowdoin, who had been accused in the European press of failing to protect

Captain Henry Edwin Stanhope, a British Naval officer who was punched in the face while

walking through Boston by an American citizen named Jesse Dunbar. Jefferson's legal article,

which he sent to be published in the *Gazette de Leiden* to counteract the English press accounts

and their echoes in the official French paper, the *Mercure de France*, was a careful argument.

Jefferson defended Bowdoin's actions in informing Stanhope that he could seek redress under

Masschusetts law but did not qualify for special protection beyond that. Jefferson drew on

³⁷ "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 12 August 1785."

³⁸ Ibid.

English legal history and a story involving General Rochambeau paying for damaged property during the American Revolution.³⁹ Jefferson's judicious use of the facts of the case, including the background of Stanhope's former prisoner and recent assailant, Jesse Dunbar, who had been extensively mistreated under Stanhope's charge during the American Revolution, were especially impressive given that Jefferson never received any direct word from an official American representative about the events which became known as the Stanhope Affair. Neither Bowdoin, nor Jay, nor John Adams ever wrote to Jefferson to tell him about the event. Elbridge Gerry, then a delegate to the Congress of the Confederation, passed on newspaper clippings from New York, but the real intelligence came from Abigail Adams.

Dunbar punched Stanhope on July 31 in Boston. Stanhope wrote Bowdoin the next day, asking for protection after "my life as well as that of one of my Officers been endangered by the violent rage of a mob yesterday evening without provocation of any sort. I trust it needless to recommend to your Excellency to adopt such measures as may discover the ringleaders of the party that assassinated me, and bring them to public justice, as well as protect us from further insult." Bowdoin responded the same day to say that he considered it a "great misfortune," and offered the following advice: "If you have been insulted, and your life has been endangered in manner as you have represented to me, I must inform you, that our laws afford you ample satisfaction. Foreigners are entitled to the protection of the law as well as amenable to it, equally

³⁹ "Jefferson's Account of the Stanhope Affair, [1 November 1785]," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 9:4–7, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-09-02-0002, ver. 2014-02-12.

⁴⁰ "Captain Stanhope to James Bowdoin. Mercury, Boston Harbor, 1 August 1785." Worthington C. Ford et al, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 1774-1789, vol. 29 (Washington, D.C., 1904), 641–2.

with any Citizen of the United States, while they continue within the jurisdiction of this Commonwealth."⁴¹

Stanhope's subsequent letter accused Bowdoin of lying to him: "When I had the honour of applying to your Excellency to discountenance the disgraceful attacks ... and to afford us your protection, it was upon your positive assurance to that effect in their presence How much your conduct contradicts both that and my expectation is too obvious either to satisfy me or even to do Credit to yourself."42 Stanhope went on to insult Bowdoin personally as well as the government of Masschusetts, "I never received a Letter so insulting to my senses, as your answer to my requisition of yesterday however well informed your Excellency may believe yourself, upon the laws and customs of Nations in similar cases, allow me to assure you there is not one, no, not even the Ally of these States, that would not most severely reprobate either the want of energy in government or disinclination of the Governor to correct such notorious insults to public characters, in which light only we can desire to be received."43 Bowdoin responded briefly to say, "I hereby let you know that as the Letter is conceived in terms of insolence and abuse altogether unprovoked, I shall take such measures concerning it as the dignity of my station and a just regard to the honor of this Commonwealth, connected with the honor of the United States in general, shall require."44 As Stanhope sailed out of Boston Harbor for Nova Scotia he fired off

⁴¹ "James Bowdoin to Captain Stanhope. Boston, 1 August 1785." Ibid., 29:642.

⁴² "Captain Stanhope to James Bowdoin. Mercury, Boston Harbor, 2 August 1785." Ibid., 29:643.

⁴³ "Captain Stanhope to James Bowdoin. Mercury, Boston Harbor, 2 August 1785." Ibid., 29:643–4.

⁴⁴ "James Bowdoin to Captain Stanhope. Boston, 3 August 1785." Ibid., 29:644. Bowdoin's invocation of honor is an excellent example of how the Code Duello shaped American politics in this period. For a full discussion of this see, Joanne B Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). This theme will be dealt with more fully later in the chapter.

one last epistolary salvo: "I shall most cheerfully submit to the worst conquences that can arise from our correspondence, which I do not conceive on my part to have been couched in terms of either insolence or abuse, which is more than I can venture to say of yours. And however exalted your Excellency's station is, I know not of any more respectable than that I have the honor to fill."

Governor Bowdoin became concerned that his conduct would be called into question, and took steps to defend his personal honor, and by extension the honor of the state of Massachusetts and the new United States. On August 8, Bowdoin sent a letter to the Massachusetts delegation to the Continental Congress⁴⁶ and included copies of his correspondence with Stanhope. He made the following observation: "I have only to observe, that it is conceived the honour and dignity of this Commonwealth, and through it the honour and dignity of the United States in general, are essentially wounded by the insolence of Capt. Stanhope towards the Chief Magistrate of the former; that unless it be properly resented, every british Officer of every british vessel, however insignificant, will whenever an opportunity shall offer, insult the government of every State in the Union; and that a tameness under insult must, in the estimation of all Foreigners, effectually destroy the national character and importance of the United States." ⁴⁷ Bowdoin asked that the matter be referred to Congress.

Two days later, on August 10, Bowdoin sent a second copy of the correspondence to John Adams in London. Along with the correspondence was a cover letter — clearly the first letter

⁴⁵ "Captain Stanhope to James Bowdoin. Mercury, Nantasket Road, 3 August 1785." Worthington C. Ford et al, *JCC*, 29:644–5.

⁴⁶ Elbridge Gerry, Samuel Holton, Rufus King see Ibid., 29:641.

⁴⁷ "Bowdoin to Massachusetts Delegation. Boston, 8 August 1785." Ibid., 29:640–1.

Bowdoin had written Adams since Adams was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary — another letter from Boston merchant Stephen Higginson who had compiled a report on the effect of postwar British trade policy on the economy of Boston, and a copy of Jesse Dunbar's deposition. The deposition was extremely important, because it gave the context of Dunbar's actions, and in particular accused Stanhope of having grossly mistreated American seamen (including Dunbar) taken prisoner during the American Revolution. Stanhope had denied Dunbar (and other American seamen) the consideration due to prisoners of war, and had them whipped. When Dunbar learned that Stanhope would be in Boston he traveled to the city to confront Stanhope and punched Stanhope in the face, but before the fight could escalate, the crowd separated Dunbar from Stanhope and they did not meet again.⁴⁸ Adams appears to have been the only confederal official who received the deposition. It was not sent to Congress, and it was not printed in the Boston papers. The letters between Stanhope and Bowdoin did not name Dunbar nor did they discuss his reasons for striking Stanhope. When Bowdoin wrote Adams he did not know what Congress would do, so he marked the information "Private," which meant that John Adams was honor bound not to make the information public until he heard otherwise. Adams received Bowdoin's packet of letters by October 4th.⁴⁹

Bowdoin's packet of letters to the Massachusetts Delegation arrived in New York by September 15⁵⁰ and was immediately referred to John Jay so that he could compile an official

⁴⁸ James Bowdoin to John Adams, "James Bowdoin to JA, Boston, 10 August 1785," August 10, 1785, Reel 365, *Papers of John Adams Microfilm*.

⁴⁹ Dated from Adams response to Higginson, see John Adams to Stephen Higginson, "John Adams to Stephen Higginson. Grosvenor Square," October 4, 1785, Reel 107, *Adams Papers Microfilm*. he didn't write Bowdoin back until 1786.

⁵⁰ Date based on Worthington C. Ford et al, *JCC*, 29:626n3 carried over from page 625.

report. Jay presented his report to Congress on September 18. Congress voted to accept it and passed a resolution against the conduct of Stanhope and requesting action, but not an official apology, from the British Government for their officer's insults to Governor Bowdoin.⁵¹ Jay did not write Adams about Congress's decision until September 6.52 Jay also enclosed Congress's resolution and a copy of the letters to be presented to Francis Godolphin Osborne, Marquis of Carmarthen, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. On October 14 the *Universal* Daily Register reported that "By private letters from Nova Scotia we are informed . . . That immediately after the Captain [Stanhope] and his officers left the Government house, they were insulted and stoned by the populace . . . And nearly killed Capt. Stanhope and two of his boat's crew with stones." The article went on to say that after an "evasive answer" from Bowdoin, Stanhope "in a very spirited and becoming manner, went on shore again and remonstrated with Governor Bowdoin, and assured his Excellency, that if any further insult was offered to the King's flag, or his officers, he would lay part of the town about his ears."53 Adams received Jay's letter on October 15, a day after the Stanhope Affair hit the English Press. On the same day, Abigail Adams Smith (Nabby) added another addendum to a letter she had been writing her brother, John Quincy Adams, for over a week while she waited for a ship that could take it to Cambridge where he was a student at Harvard. The October 15 addendum is entirely about the Stanhope Affair, letting John Quincy know that the news had hit the English press, but that "Pappa has a true account of the matter from Boston and orders from Congress, to represent it to

⁵¹ The resolution consisted of accepting John Jay's report on the letters. Jay's argument will be discussed later in the chapter. Ibid., 29:645–647.

⁵² John Jay to JA, New York, 6 September 1785,

⁵³ "Universal Register," *The Times*, October 14, 1785, *The Times Digital Archive*.

the Ministry here." and that "The Papers said to Day that He treated American Prisners in a cruel manner during the War. Every one who hears Jesse Dunbars story seem to regret that he did not have an opportunity to give Capt. S---- one blow."⁵⁴ John Adams clearly took the privacy so seriously that the deposition could not even be mentioned in family letters (which would most likely be intercepted by the British government en route to North America) until he had heard from Congress.

Four days later, on October 19, a Mr. Fox called on John Adams on his way from Philadelphia to Paris, carrying a letter of introduction from his fellow Quaker, Benjamin Rush.⁵⁵ John was sick and unable to write Jefferson, but Abigail took the opportunity to write Jefferson and communicate the latest news. Fox was going to stop at Stockdale's store for Jefferson's newspapers before leaving for Dover, and Abigail wanted to make sure her friend had the full story before he read the English account of Stanhope's treatment in Boston. Her disdain for English newspapers drips onto the page: "The account is as false — if it was not too rough a term for a Lady to use, I would say false as Hell, but I will substitute, one not less expresive and say, false as the English." ⁵⁶ but she quickly summarized, and in some cases quoted, Dunbar's deposition. And when the Bowdoin-Stanhope correspondence was printed in the English press at John Adams insistence, she wrote a cover letter for those newspapers as well: "A Dr. Rogers from America will convey this to you with the News papers, in which you will see the Letters I

⁵⁴ "Abigail Adams 2d to John Quincy Adams, 18 October 1785," *Adams Family Correspondence*, 6:432–437, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0136, ver. 2014-02-12.

⁵⁵ Benjamin Rush to John Adams, "Benjamin Rush to John Adams. Philadelphia, 16 June 1785," Reel 364, Adams Papers Microfilm.

⁵⁶ "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 19 October 1785."

mentiond in my last, between Govenour Bowdoin and Captain Stanhope."⁵⁷ Abigail's summary is the basis for Jefferson's own writing on the Stanhope Affair⁵⁸, and she kept him apprised of later developments as the British Government moved to censure Stanhope and removed him from the North American Station.⁵⁹ John Adams never wrote Jefferson about Stanhope, perhaps because he knew Abigail was following the issue closely, or perhaps because at particular moments he simply forgot to include it, which was Jefferson assessment: "You were right in conjecturing that both the gentlemen might forget to communicate to me the intelligence about captn. Stanhope. Mr Adams's head was full of whale oil, and Colo. Smith's of German politics, (—but don't tell them this—) so they left it to you to give me the news. *De tout mon coeur*, I had rather receive it from you than them."⁶⁰

Jefferson greatly appreciated her attention to the affair, which also interested him, and thanked her for her letter which allowed him to be a source of accurate information about Boston while living in Versailles: "I am to thank you for your state of Stanhope's case. It has enabled me to speak of that transaction with a confidence of which I should otherwise have been deprived by the different state of it in the public papers and the want of information from America. I have even endeavored to get it printed in a public paper to counteract the impressions of the London

⁵⁷ "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 25 October 1785."

⁵⁸ Compare "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 19 October 1785." and "Jefferson's Account of the Stanhope Affair, [1 November 1785]," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 9:4–7, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/ Jefferson/01-09-02-0002, ver. 2014-02-12 for identical phrasing such as AA "Having no weapon in his hand, he struck at him with his fist, upon which Captain Stanhope, stept back and drew his sword." and TJ "And, having brought no weapon with him, struck at him with his fist. Stanhope stepped back, and drew his sword."

⁵⁹ "Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 20 December 1785," *Adams Family Correspondence*, 6,:495–497,http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0162, ver. 2013-12-27.

^{60 &}quot;Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 9 August 1786," ibid., 7:312–313, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-07-02-0117-0001, ver. 2013-12-27.

papers and Mercure de France."⁶¹ In a later letter, Abigail teasingly threatened to stop writing about politics: "But as Mr. A writes you I will leave Politicks with which I really have no business, and talk of that which more properly belongs to me,"⁶² and Jefferson responded with the following request: "You refered me to Mr. Adams for news; but he gives me none; so that I hope you will be so good as to keep that office in your own hands. I get little from any other quarter since the derangement of the French packets,"⁶³ although he does not seem to have sent Abigail a copy of his essay for the *Gazette de Leiden*.

Jefferson did pass the information on to William Carmichael, American chargé d'affaires in Madrid. The letter is full of news from America: "Your intercourse with America being less frequent than ours from this place, I will state to you generally such new occurrences there as may be interesting, some of which perhaps you will not have been informed of."⁶⁴ It also includes a summary of Dunbar's deposition, "A fracas which has lately happened in Boston becoming a serious matter I will give you the details of it as transmitted to Mr. Adams in depositions ... This affair has been stated in the London papers without mixing with it one circumstance of truth."⁶⁵ Jefferson then goes on to speculate whether the Massachusetts courts would have truly given Stanhope the legal satisfaction he required: "You will doubtless judge

⁶¹ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 20 November 1785," ibid., 6:462–464, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0149, ver. 2013-12-27.

^{62 &}quot;Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 20 December 1785."

⁶³ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 27 December 1785," ibid,, 502–503, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0165, ver. 2013-12-27.

⁶⁴ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael, 4 November 1785," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 9:13–17, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-09-02-0010, ver. 2014-02-12.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

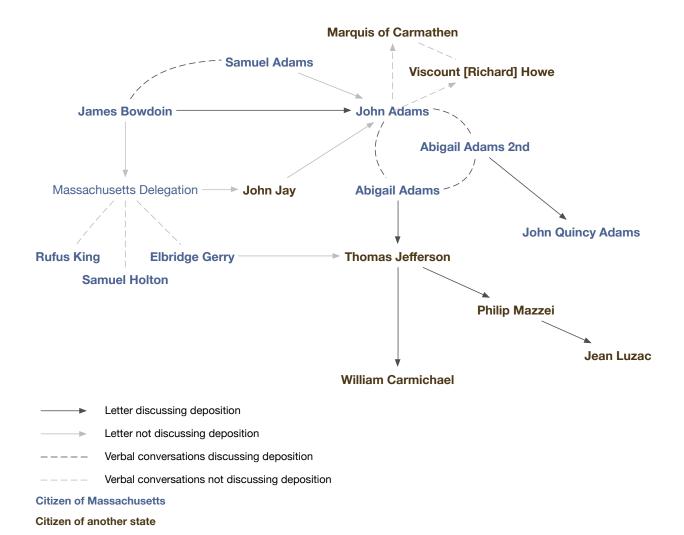
that Governor Bowdoin referred him properly to the laws for redress, as he was obliged to do, and as would have been done in England in a like case. Had he appl[ied] to the courts, the question would have been whether they would have punished Dunbar? This must be answered now by conjecture only; and to form that conjecture every man must ask himself whether he would not have done as Dunbar d[id] and whether the people should not have permitted him to return to Stanhope the 24 lashes?⁶⁶"

While the story of Stanhope's letters can be represented in prose (as was done above), it is a complicated narrative, with multiple strands of conversation occurring at different speeds. This is a frequent issue in studying American diplomatic and consular correspondence in the Age of Sail. The time delay for transit across the Atlantic is a well known problem, but one that is exacerbated by the way personal papers are recorded and published. The standard convention for papers projects is to print all the letters in chronological order by date sent. In an analog publishing world (whether paper or microfilm) this is the only sensible option, but it makes working with transatlantic correspondence into a kind of treasure hunt through published volumes or microfilm reels. In the digital world, the letters can be returned to their original object state, as discrete entities with established relationships that permit multiple threads of conversations to be present in the same document through hyperlinking.

In such instances, data visualization can help clarify the relationships and bring out aspects of the story which are difficult to convey in prose. Here visualization can be applied to draw out the social character of the information flow, by representing the letters as a network graph that connects people through the information they share with each other.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

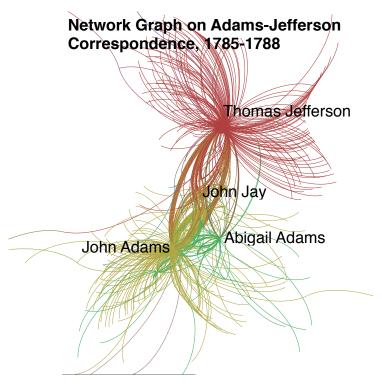
Information Flow of Stanhope Affair as Social Network Graph



Visualizing the network brings several aspects into sharp relief. First, the network is dominated by people from Masschusetts. The network only stretches outside of Massachusetts when it encounters the U.S. Foreign Service in the persons of John Jay, John Adams, and

Thomas Jefferson. The graph highlights the role of Elbridge Gerry, who was almost completely elided in the prose narrative because he did not encounter Jesse Dunbar's deposition. However, when the network is visualized, he emerges as Jefferson's other source of information on the Stanhope affair, although Gerry's letter came after Abigail's and contained less information than hers. Also, while Abigail Adams is a central figure in this network, *no one wrote to her*. She learned of the Dunbar deposition through a conversation with her husband, and then chose to inform Jefferson by letter, supplementing the inadequate, if official, information channels with the ties of friendship.

For a story as small as the Stanhope Affair the graph is rather easy to read. However, it should be noted that this is a very small subset of the total correspondence received and sent by Abigail Adams, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson during the thee years the Adamses spent in London. Their full correspondence encompassed approximately 889 discrete individuals, and over 6,000 letters. *The Early American Foreign Service Database* allows historians to take this micro-history treatment of the Foreign Service to a larger exploration of the entire correspondence network to determine if the salient features of this mini-network also hold true for the macro-network. In particular, the EAFSD can show if the core functions of information pooling and repeating can be found in the larger system.



The entire network⁶⁷ breaks into three distinct communities centered on Thomas Jefferson (red), John Adams (brown), and Abigail Adams (green). There is also a central, shared connection between John and Jefferson, representing John Jay. While some segmentation is expected, there are really very few shared correspondents. Out of 889 people and groups who wrote John, Abigail,

⁶⁷ This graph, and all subsequent graphs were created with Gephi, Bastian M., Heymann S., Jacomy M. (2009). *Gephi: an open source software for exploring and manipulating networks. International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*.

This chapter looks at the correspondence network of Abigail Adams, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson from the Adamses arrival in England on May 26, 1785, until they set sail for Massachusetts on April 9, 1788. The data for this project came from two separate sources: the Online Adams Catalogue (http://www.masshist.org/adams/catalog/catalog.php) created and maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Society and the indexes to Volumes 8 through 13 of the Papers of Thomas of Jefferson (http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN.html). Once the letters were identified within the larger subset of documents, personal and corporate names were extracted. Because the letters were indexed by different institutions at different times in history, there were variations in names, which were reconciled into a master list of 889 unique names. This list is most likely not complete, nor are the two sources equal in their completeness. The Online Adams Catalog "represents every known Adams document held by the Massachusetts Historical Society as well as other public and private repositories." Found online at http://www.masshist.org/adams/catalog/catalog.php, Accessed March 19, 2013. The Papers of Thomas Jefferson index only records those documents the editors considered important enough to publish in print.

This master list was then applied to the sender and recipient names and a unified "sender, recipient" pairing was created for each letter. This list was used to create the network graphs shown below. Each node represents a person (or group) and the lines represent letters. When a letter had multiple senders or recipients, an effort was made to create multiple records for each letter. This was occasionally impossible, either because the designation left doubt was to who was included, such as "Francis Coffyn and Others," or when the same name was used for differing groups of people. "American Commissioners" could (and at different times did) refer to John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, or Jefferson and Franklin, or Jefferson and Adams. The thickness of each line indicates how many letters were sent. These lines might better be thought of as arrows, so when two people exchanged letters there will be two lines connecting them.

Many of the letters in the Online Adams Catalog are duplicates. These duplicates were retained as they show that interest in the contents of the letter was high enough for duplicates to be created. As the graphs will show, this does not significantly distort Adams and Jefferson's relative positions in the correspondence network.

and Jefferson, only 75 show up in both sets of correspondence, a less than 10 percent overlap. In contrast, John and Abigail share 29 correspondents, almost half of her 60 epistolary contacts.

She and Jefferson shared 11 contacts.

Some segmentation was to be expected. John Adams and Jefferson lived very different lives until they met in the Second Continental Congress and were stationed in different countries. However, in the three year period under study, John and Jefferson were the only two American Ministers in Europe and had joint responsibility for all American diplomatic endeavors in Europe and North Africa.⁶⁸ This made them highly reliant on each other for news and information. The strength of their information pooling is borne out by the fact that so few people wrote to both diplomats. If Adams and Jefferson were not communicating regularly, their correspondents would have noticed this and begun to write to them both. Instead, Jay was writing Jefferson requesting information about Adams's reception in England when Adams's voluminous letters back to Congress were delayed. For example, on July 13, 1785, Jay wrote to Jefferson saying, "We suppose but have not heard that Mr. Adams is in London. We are anxious to receive Letters from him, and to learn with certainty the Intentions of that Court" and a month later to say "The Letters I have received from Mr. Adams were written immediately after his Presentation and contain nothing of Business, so that our Suspence on certain interesting Points still continues."

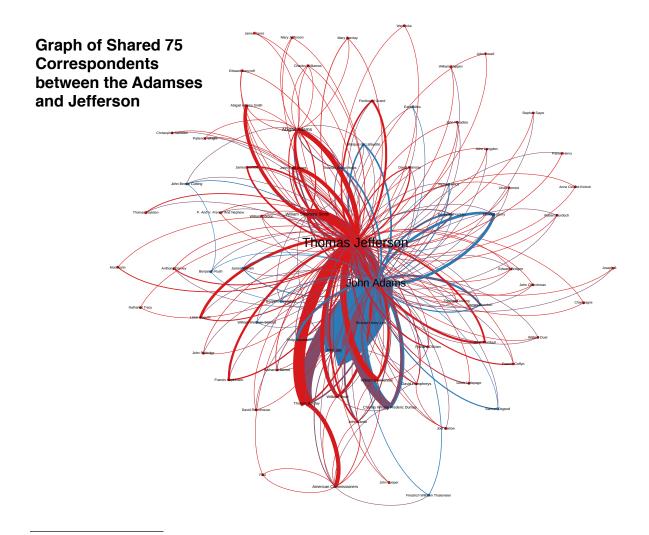
⁶⁸ William Carmichael was the *chargé d'affaires* in Madrid, but while he was the Chief of Mission, he was not on the same level as John and Jefferson, nor was his signature required on documents not pertaining to relations with Spain.

⁶⁹ "To Thomas Jefferson from John Jay, 13 July 1785," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 8:292–293, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0227, ver. 2014-05-09.

⁷⁰ "To Thomas Jefferson from John Jay, 13 August 1785," ibid,, 369–371, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0295, ver. 2014-05-09.

From the period between May 26 and August 13, 1785, John Adams had written Jay at least eight separate letters, but none of them had arrived.

The graph below shows a subset of the much larger network, specifically the 75 individuals and groups who appear in both the Adams and Jefferson papers. Everyone in this graph wrote to Thomas Jefferson and John or Abigail Adams. A community detection algorithm⁷¹ was then run over the graph, to see if certain individuals could be grouped by the strength of mutual connections.



⁷¹ https://github.com/gephi/gephi/wiki/Modularity ACCESSED ON 2015-07-17 13:58:46

Two communities emerge from the graph above, centered around Thomas Jefferson (still red) and John Adams (blue). Jefferson dominates the graph, showing that among their shared connections, Jefferson was the more frequent correspondent than John. The clear exceptions are John Jay and Elbridge Gerry, with whom John was the more frequent correspondent. John's level of correspondence with Jay is almost four times that of Jefferson's.

This graph also demonstrates the biggest pitfall of using letters to trace networks of information exchange —letters are written to exchange information at a distance.⁷² This explains why the algorithm places Abigail Adams in Jefferson's community and groups the Marquis de Lafayette with John Adams. While letters were exchanged between John and Abigail or Jefferson and Lafayette, most of their communication was verbal and has not entered the historical record. This is shown vividly in the Stanhope Affair, where Abigail is the key to sharing Dunbar's deposition with Jefferson, and yet she had the information from informal, unrecorded channels (visualized with bi-directional, dotted lines). Abigail's influence is also diluted by this graph, which privileges not only written correspondence but written correspondence in high volumes. As a private citizen, her correspondence network is easily swamped by the larger, public networks of her husband and friend. She did not have a secretary to write formal letters on her behalf, and her correspondents rarely overlapped with Jefferson. Within the 75 overlapping correspondents, Abigail had direct connections with 12 of them

⁷² The great exception to this is the genre of the diplomatic note, where a letter is sent in lieu of, or immediately following, a face-to-face conversation so that the decisions will be entered into the official government record. The next chapter, "Gatekeepers and Bottlenecks: The U.S. State Department and Jay's Treaty Negotiations" will discuss the diplomatic note.

James Stroke May 3 Mercon Edward Baggrot Chalce Milliams Ferdingan Strond Egis Stepher Sayre John Forest Ford Northern James Morning Strong John Brown Costing John Brown Costing P And V) Frendt Ford Northern John Brown Costing P And V) Frendt Ford Northern Thomas Morning Anthony Carlory Beganner Northern John Rown Costing Northern Morningers Anthony Carlory Beganner Northern John Rown John Rown

Abigail Adams's connections in the graph of Shared 75 Correspondents

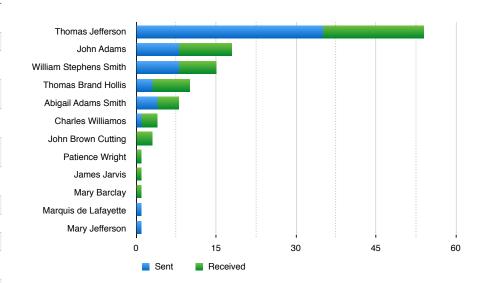
(colored in bright blue). However, through these 12 correspondents she had access to almost the entire network (secondary connections in duller blue).

Friedrich Wilhelm Thulemeier

However, a network graph is not the best way to show a subset like that. A bar chart works much better.

Abigail Adams's Direct Correspondents in the 'Shared 75'

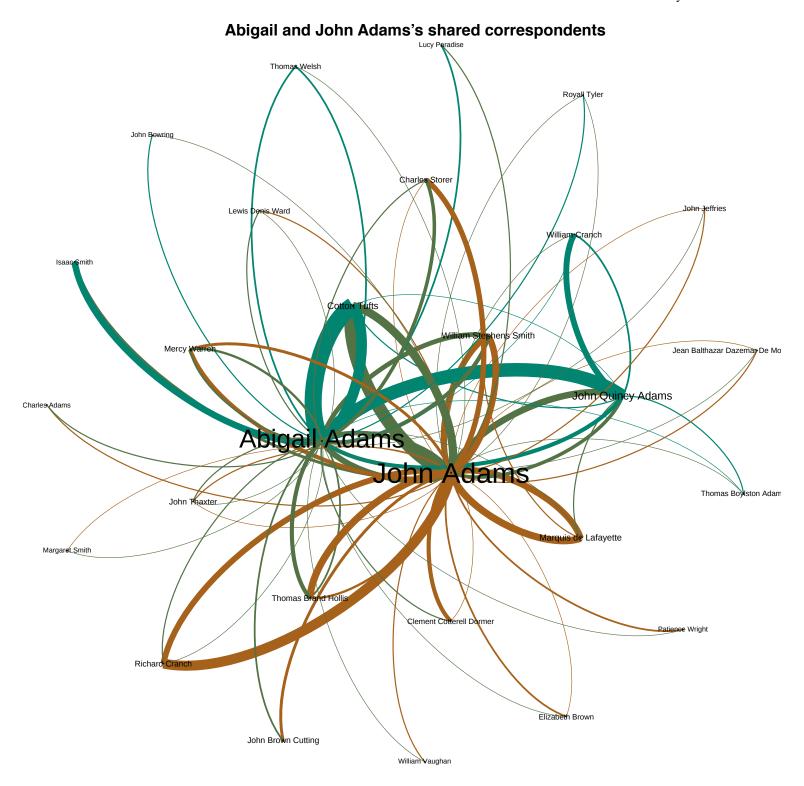
Correspondent	Sent	Received	Total
Thomas Jefferson	35	19	54
John Adams	8	10	18
William Stephens Smith	8	7	15
Thomas Brand Hollis	3	7	10
Abigail Adams Smith	4	4	8
Charles Williamos	1	3	4
John Brown Cutting		3	3
Patience Wright		1	1
James Jarvis		1	1
Mary Barclay		1	1
Marquis de Lafayette	1		1
Mary Jefferson	1		1



Abigail and John shared 29 connections, almost half of Abigail's direct correspondents.

The graph below [Abigail and John Adams's shared correspondents] shows 28 of their overlapping corespondents,⁷³ with a community detection algorithm once again dividing the correspondents based on frequency of letters exchanged.

⁷³ Thomas Jefferson has been removed from this graph for clarity, as his correspondence with the Adamses would swamp the visualization.



In the graph above, Abigail's community is in green, John's in brown. Many of their shared correspondents were family. All of Abigail's blood relations are in her community rather

than John's. The only two family members in John's community were Abigail's brother-in-law (and John's longtime friend) Richard Cranch and Adams's son-in-law William Stephens Smith, who was also John Adams' Secretary of Legation. Several key members of the family are missing from this graph. Nabby lived with her parents until her marriage, after which she stayed in London, so all communications with John and Abigial would have been verbal. Mary Cranch, Abigail's sister and confidant, is also missing because John did not write to her while he was in Europe, just to her husband, Richard.⁷⁴

Among their shared correspondents, John and Abigail both wrote Cotton Tufts the most frequently. Tufts, a Massachusetts physician and close friend, was their economic agent, charged with managing their affairs back home as Abigail had done for all of John's previous absences. These letters also include terms for purchasing Peacefield, which became the family home for four subsequent generations of Adamses. They both wrote to their joint friend, Mercy Warren, and although John wrote her more frequently (7 letters to Abigail's 3) they received an almost equal number of responses (John received 5, Abigail 4). While Abigail's community is mostly her family and close friends, it should be noted that she also communicated with John's professional contacts, including the Master of Ceremonies at the Court of St. James, Clement Contrell Dormer, and the French Ambassador, Jean-Balthazar Dazemar d'Montfalcon Adhemar, as part of her role as hostess and when she was presented at court.

⁷⁴ The presence of Abigail's letters to Mary also explains why she only wrote her brother-in-law once.

EVALUATING THE NETWORK

The Stanhope Affair worked its way through an information network that was highly social and personal. Examining the larger framework of the Adams-Jefferson Correspondence reveals a similar pattern of information pooling and deep engagement with friends and family. These characteristics have wide ranging implications for how historians should measure early American state capacity in the Foreign Service. The social aspect of information exchange has two major implications, both present in the Stanhope Affair. First, the social nature of the Foreign Service brings the concept of honor front and center in these exchanges. Second, the system worked best when supported by the private individuals who made up the social networks of the official Foreign Service officers.

Joanne Freeman has shown how the Code Duello functioned as a set of governing principles for the American government in the 1790s as elites from wildly differing societies had to work together in Congress. The Code also held sway in American diplomacy and the American government's self-representation to states outside of the Union. Applying the Code Duello to the Stanhope Affair explains a number of the oddities — especially in Bowdoin's actions.

The Stanhope Affair as a diplomatic endeavor began with Bowdoin. Sitting in Boston, Bowdoin had all the information at his disposal, but he divided it into two channels. The inflammatory letters, with a cover letter stating his actions, were sent to the Massachusetts Delegation in Congress. Jesse Dunbar's deposition went to John Adams in London. Both cover letters merged his personal honor with the honor of the state of Massachusetts, as if he were

⁷⁵ Freeman, Affairs of Honor.

asking Congress and Adams to be his seconds in a duel against Captain Stanhope's first letter contained a number of insults, but it was the implication that Bowdoin lied that truly bothered the governor: "The only part of this declaration it concerns me to notice is that, in which my conduct is said to have contradicted the assurance I had given him of my protection."⁷⁶ Bowdoin goes to great lengths to show that he never promised Stanhope any more protection than the law of Masschusetts: "I told him he might depend on every protection in my power to afford him; but that in this Country, as in England, the law is every man's protection, and that he would be as much entitled to it, during his stay here, as any man in the Commonwealth; and in conformity to this idea, my letter to him was written."77 Since Bowdoin had not broken a promise, Stanhope was completely unjustified in "giving the lie" to Bowdoin's conduct, even if the insult was only delivered by a private letter. It is on this basis that Bowdoin wrote to the Massachusetts Delegation in Congress that "the honor and dignity of this Commonwealth, and through it the honor and dignity of the United States in general, are essentially wounded by the insolence of Capt Stanhope towards the Chief Magistrate of the former . . . and that a tameness under insult must, in the estimation of all Foreigners, effectually destroy the national character and importance of the United States."⁷⁸ Bowdoin was arguing that if the United States backed down from the challenge issued by Stanhope it could be branded a coward in the eyes of the "candid world" the Americans had been trying to impress ever since the Declaration of

⁷⁶ Bowdoin to Massachusetts Delegation, 8 August 1785. Boston. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, *1774-1789*., vol. 29 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), 639, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89096838453.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Independence. In contrast, his letter to John Adams was much shorter and simply stated that "In our transactions with foreigners, especially british, it is necessary they should be made sensible, we have a spirit of resentment; & that it will he shewn when occasions offer" and that he hoped that Congress would agree with him.⁷⁹

Neither John Adams nor John Jay seem to have given Bowdoin's arguments much attention. Jay waited three weeks to even write John Adams about Bowdoin's request, and Adams took almost six months to respond to Bowdoin's letter, although he wrote back to Stephen Higginson almost immediately to thank him for the report on Boston shipping. In his report to Congress, Jay comes across as irritated that this matter was even brought to the national government, "a recurrence to a foreign Sovereign to resent and punish affronts to such Government, committed under its eye and within its jurisdiction, appear to your Secretary inconsistent with [a departure from] that self respect . . . except indeed where such indignities are offered by Ambassadors." However, the matter had been brought to Congress, so Jay, like any good second in a duel, sought to head off a confrontation by defusing the tension of the two parties through intermediaries.

"But as America and Britain are at peace, and in that sense friends, it is to be presumed that disrespect to one from Officers of the other must be offensive to the Sovereign of such Officers ... Under this view ... it would be proper to transmit these papers to the Minister of the United States at the Court of London, and to instruct him to communicate them to the British Minister, and to assure him,

1st. That nothing but a desire to avoid increasing the irritation which the late war [may have had left between produced in] the two Nations could have restrained the Governor from resenting the indecent conduct of Captain Stanhope in a severe and exemplary

⁷⁹"Bowdoin to JA, Boston, 10 August 1785."

⁸⁰ Report from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs John C. Fitzpatrick, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 29:645.

manner. and that he experienced the greater reluctance, lest such Severity might appear imputable in some Measure to that Irritation.

- 2. To assure him, that Congress are persuaded that such behaviour must give no less displeasure to his Majesty than it does to them; and that as all Sovereigns must in a certain degree be affected by the conduct of their Servants, Congress think that the justice due to his Majesty calls upon them to lay this information before him.
- 3d. That Congress flatter themselves that this instance of delicacy and moderation will be ascribed to its proper motives, and be considered as evincive of a desire to prevent animosity and promote mutual goodwill.⁸¹

Thus John Adams became the intermediary, charged with calming the situation. In contrast to his blustering at Versailles, Adams went about his task quietly, placing the letters before the British government, ensuring that the full content of the Stanhope-Bowdoin correspondence was printed in the English press, and telling particular individuals the full story of Jesse Dunbar's history with Stanhope. Adams did not even write about the Stanhope Affair to anyone except Jay, and Congress had the Bowdoin-Stanhope correspondence (and Jay's report) written into the "Secret Journal" rather than the main minutes of Congress. Further complicating the American response, Captain Stanhope was a cousin of the Earl of Chesterfield.

Bowdoin did not believe that Dunbar's situation required a Congressional response, but he did send Dunbar's deposition to John Adams in London. Adams was being called on to defend the honor of Massachusetts in London and therefore needed all the facts at his disposal to show Stanhope's true character: "Enclosed is a Copy of a deposition of one Jesse Dunbar, which will shew the nature & occasion, of the affront given to Capt Stanhope . . . Dunbar gave his Deposition on the assurance it would not be used to criminate himself or his Companions. Some

⁸¹ Report from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs ibid., 29:646–7. Strikethrough recorded in JCC.

use may be made of it to counteract Mr. Stanhope's declarations."82 This is certainly the tack taken by Abigail when she wrote Jefferson about the Stanhope Affair. The letters printed in the British press were not enough; Jefferson needed the whole story. The distinction being drawn is between the information necessary for protest as opposed to explanation. Congress had everything they needed to protest Stanhope's conduct. Bowdoin hoped that Adams would defend him personally, so he received the deposition — as if Adams were still a trial lawyer in a libel case rather than the American Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James.

The conventions of honor also affected the transmission of information. Dunbar had extracted a promise from Bowdoin that his deposition would not prove incriminating, which is the probable reason it was not sent to Congress. When Bowdoin wrote John Adams he marked the letters "private" which meant that Adams could not make the information public. Marking a letter "private" called on a different set of conventions than marking a letter "Classified."

Bowdoin was not relying on a system of state secrecy, the way the Committee of Secret Correspondence had done in the early days of the Revolutionary War. Instead Bowdoin was appealing to Adams's honor as a gentleman to keep particular information out of public knowledge. Given how quickly Nabby added the addendum to her letter to John Quincy it seems likely that John had already told his wife and daughter the contents of the letter, but had put them under a similar honor-bound silence. So, while Bowdoin's sense of personal honor elevated a fist fight on the streets of Boston to a diplomatic exchange in London, his honor also withheld the contextual (and most inflammatory) information: that a cousin of a peer of the realm had been guilty of war crimes less than a decade ago.

^{82 &}quot;Bowdoin to JA, Boston, 10 August 1785."

The inflammatory aspect did not escape Abigail Adams, whose pen dripped with fury over the insult to her home state of Massachusetts and fellow Bostonians. As she remarked to Jefferson at the end of her letter, "How mean and contemptable does this Nation [England] render itself?"83 Whatever effect Bowdoin had hoped Dunbar's deposition would have on John Adams, he found his champion in Abigail, who took up Dunbar's cause and made sure that the full story arrived in Paris before it could hit the newspapers, although she did mention that the information was sent privately: "Dumbars [sic] Deposition was comunicated in a private Letter by Mr. Bowdoin himself to Mr. Adams, so that no publick use can be made of it, but the Govenour was sensible that without it the truth would not be known."84 John Adams was moving through the long, diplomatic, code-duello-delimited process of presenting the letters to the British government and waiting for an official reprimand of Stanhope, which eventually came in the next year. Abigail cut short the entire system by writing to Jefferson, and Jefferson was grateful that she did.

Jefferson took a personal interest in the Stanhope Affair, as did his circles in Paris, where he was asked about the Affair several times. As he wrote: "I am to thank you for your state of Stanhope's case. It has enabled me to speak of that transaction with a confidence of which I should otherwise have been deprived by the different state of it in the public papers and the want of information from America." Evaluating the network rather than the Foreign Service is a more complicated affair. Without Abigail and Nabby's letters the deposition would not have

^{83 &}quot;Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 19 October 1785."

⁸⁴ Ibid.

^{85 &}quot;Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 20 November 1785."

traveled beyond John Adams's desk. He might have written Jefferson about it in Abigail's absence, but his lack of interest in keeping Jefferson informed as the affair moved through the British Ministry suggests otherwise. He was more interested in writing about joint policy decisions, such as the Whale Oil Duty or the Portuguese Treaty.

It is an interesting question whether a diplomat's family should be considered part of the Foreign Service or not. In traditional foreign policy analysis they would not be, but as aspects of an information network they are invaluable. The roles played by Abigail and Nabby Adams differ from the one Catherine Allgor delineates for Louisa Catherine Adams almost forty years later in John Quincy Adams's campaign for the Presidency.⁸⁶ In the Stanhope Affair, Abigail was not facilitating information exchange through social gatherings (although she was the hostess of the American Mission on Grosvenor Square), rather she functioned as a supplemental diplomat to her husband, using the same tool that he deployed — letters.⁸⁷ Nabby served as her father's secretary after John Quincy left Europe to attend Harvard, despite the fact that John Adams had an appointed secretary, (Nabby's future husband) Colonel William Smith, who was often on quasi-diplomatic missions of his own. Nabby kept the substitution cipher and decoded all the messages for her father. Jefferson acknowledged her efforts in letters to both her parents, writing to Abigail, "to present my respects to Miss Adams. I have no secrets to communicate to her in cypher at this moment, what I write to Mr. Adams being mere commonplace stuff, not meriting a communication to the Secretary¹⁸⁸ and to John, "When you transferred to her [Miss Adams] the

⁸⁶ See "Louisa Catherine Adams runs for the Presidency" in Allgor, *Parlor Politics*, p.147–189.

⁸⁷ For an analysis of Abigail Adams as a epistolary author see, Gelles, Abigail Adams: A Writing Life.

^{88 &}quot;Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 21 June 1785."

commission of Secretary, I well hoped the pleasure of her being the intermediate of our communications The following paragraphs are for her eye only. Be so good therefore as to deliver over the letter to her. The cypher I suppose to be in her custody."89

This type of invisible (and certainly unpaid) labor is exactly the type of expertise the early American governments counted on from their diplomats' (and consuls') families. Without money to pay for full embassies or full embassy staff, family members often filled the roles which in a more mature Foreign Service would be paid positions, even if they remained in the family as apprenticeships for the next generation to learn the diplomatic trade. Neither the Continental Congress nor the Congress of the Confederation could have counted on so many members of the Adams family in the American diplomatic service, but under the system established it reaped the benefits of Abigail, Nabby, and John Quincy Adams's assistance for the already shamefully low price of John Adams's salary and expenses.

The Stanhope Affair also shows the valuing, on the American continent, of state affiliation above the new confederal union. In contrast, the diplomats (and their families) had a far more national reaction. All of Bowdoin's direct correspondence was with people from Massachusetts. He wrote the Massachusetts delegation to Congress and John Adams, not John Jay, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. In both letters Bowdoin stressed the honor of Massachusetts first and only mentioned the confederal implications later. In Europe, the American diplomatic response is national rather than state-based. All the Adamses treated the Affair as an example of British distaste for America, rather than a Boston problem. Also it was

^{89 &}quot;From Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 2 June 1785."

⁹⁰ Among the members of Congress, Jay is the prominent exception (see Jay to JA October 14, 1785) but as Jay is a former diplomat and Secretary of Foreign Affairs, he is the exception that proves the rule.

Jefferson, a Virginian, who took up Bowdoin's cause in a far more visible form than either of his friends from Massachusetts. Jefferson's championing of Bowdoin divided into two categories: passing on the information from Dunbar's deposition and writing a formal, legal defense of Bowdoin for publication in the European press.

Jefferson took it upon himself to pass Abigail's information on to the American Minister in Madrid, William Carmichael. As Abigail wrote about each stage of the Stanhope Affair, Jefferson would repeat the information to Carmichael. Following on the pattern shown in the larger correspondence of pooling and repeating information, Jefferson made a conscious decision to keep Carmichael informed about events in America, "Your intercourse with America being less frequent than ours from this place, I will state to you generally such new occurrences there as may be interesting, some of which perhaps you will not have been informed of."91 The Stanhope Affair was only one such event in Jefferson's letter, which also included information about the probable length of the sessions of Congress, improvements in the post office, and information about his and John Adams's powers to treat with the Barbary States. In the middle of this information-rich document Jefferson repeats Abigail's information almost verbatim, indicating that he was most likely copying from her letter "A fracas which has lately happened in Boston becoming a serious matter I will give you the details of it as transmitted to Mr. Adams in depositions."92 Jefferson never mentioned Abigail to Carmichael, but when she wrote Jefferson with the news that Stanhope had been reprimanded, Jefferson told Carmichael that he had heard that, "Mr. Adams having made complaints to the court of London of the ill behavior of Capt.

^{91 &}quot;From Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael, 4 November 1785."

⁹² Ibid.

Stanhope, I am informed, tho' not from him, that they disavow his conduct and have severely reprimanded him, and given this official information to Mr. Adams."93

Jefferson's interest went further, though, than simply repeating news he thought could help his fellow diplomat to sound informed at court. As previously noted, Jefferson drafted a legal defense of Bowdoin for publication in the Gazette de Leiden, the leading political journal friendly to republican ideology, and probably enlisted Phillip Mazzei to help him convince the Gazette's editor, Jean Luzac, to print the essay. The essay was never printed.⁹⁴ However, the essay is well worth analyzing in the context of the Early American Foreign Service. It begins with another verbatim quoting of Abigail's summary of Dunbar's deposition, despite the fact that Abigail explicitly said that it was sent to John Adams privately, so that "so that no publick use can be made of it"95 However, the author of the Declaration of Independence opens his defense by observing that "The assault committed in Boston on Capt. Stanhope commander of the British frigate Mercury having been given in several European papers according to the London state of it, candour obliges us to present to the eye of our readers, the same transaction as stated in depositions on oath taken by the order of that government in which it happened."96 This is exactly what Bowdoin hoped would happen with the deposition, despite its being marked "Private." Jefferson then launched into a detailed history of the law regarding the treatment of

⁹³ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael, 13 January 1786," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 9:171–173, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-09-02-0162, ver. 2014-05-09.

⁹⁴ For more information on the non-publication history of Jefferson's essay see the Editors notes "Jefferson's Account of the Stanhope Affair, [1 November 1785]."

^{95 &}quot;Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 19 October 1785."

⁹⁶ "Jefferson's Account of the Stanhope Affair, [1 November 1785]."

foreigners on English soil. Bowdoin would also have been gratified when Jefferson echoed "A Summary of the Rights of British America" to state that "The American states having on their first establishment adopted the system of British law, it follows that the assault on Capt. Stanhope in Boston is punishable in the same way as a similar assault on any foreigner in England would have been; and the answer of Govr. Bowdoin to Stanhope was precisely the answer which the king of England must have given on a similar application." In the union of the several American states under the Articles of Confederation, the Governor of Massachusetts was a "head of state" on par with any crowned head of Europe.98

Ironically, American diplomats in the 1780s were the least accountable and yet the most nationally focused of all the officers under the Articles of Confederation. In fact, because the American government had so few options for holding diplomats accountable, they had to choose men who could be counted on to see beyond personal interests (Adams's own diplomatic career began because he was considered incorruptible after the embarrassment of Silas Deane), and beyond regional interests. In this way, the early American Foreign Service was completely dependent on the quality of officers chosen for their positions. But there is a more structural issue at work here as well. By pulling them away from their home states (with which Adams and Jefferson both strongly identified their entire lives) and thrusting them into foreign courts where they became, in a legal sense, the embodiment of their country, diplomatic service had a nationalistic effect on the officers who served. It also had a profound effect on their thinking

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ The historiography of Jefferson's political philosophy is far to vast to list here, but see Francis D. Cogliano, Emperor of Liberty: Thomas Jefferson's Foreign Policy (Yale University Press, 2014), Robert W. Tucker, Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), Peter S. Onuf, The Mind of Thomas Jefferson (University of Virginia Press, 2012).

regarding national power and national constitutions. Personally identified with their countries, they felt keenly the lack of American power⁹⁹ in the international arena, especially in trade. They were also representing a nation that only marginally existed, as the Congress failed to create a union out of the thirteen former colonies. It served to make them ever more reliant on their social networks, when their connections back to their home government were so tenuous.

CONCLUSION

While the social character of the early American Foreign Service was of great benefit to the American government under the Articles of Confederation, it was also an extremely fragile system: a government of men, not laws. It was imperative that both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were staunch nationalists who already had a much broader vision of American interests than Massachusetts or Virginia interests. The American state received another windfall in the Adams family's decision to bring Abigail to Europe. Her presence steadied John in a new environment, and one much less suited to his temperament than that of the Calvinist, republican merchants of Amsterdam, with whom he had partially repaired his diplomatic reputation after the disaster with Vergennes. Nabby was also an unexpected (and certainly unpaid) assistant. Finally, and from their perspective regrettably, these two commissioned amateurs were granted an undesired reprieve. The geopolitical climate of Europe in the late 1780s meant that neither the British nor the French government were inclined to give them any serious tasks to undertake — a commercial treaty for example. Even so, if John Adams and Thomas Jefferson had not been

⁹⁹ David M. Golove and Daniel J. Hulsebosch, "A Civilized Nation: The Early American Constitution, the Law of Nations, and the Pursuit of International Recognition," *New York University Law Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 932.

such good friends in the 1780s or if Abigail Adams had not taken such a liking to Jefferson in the few months they all spent in France, the overly co-dependent system put in place for diplomatic decision making could have easily ground to a terrible and screeching halt. Instead these three friends forged an information network that allowed them to enhance the meager organization and power of the United States government by pooling their many sources of information into political and polemical protests on behalf of their country. The strength of this system has been visualized and analyzed in the social network graphs drawn from their letters, which demonstrate how the salient features of the Stanhope Affair echoed throughout their three years of information pooling. The Adams-Jefferson network could not overcome the geopolitical realities of the British-French rivalry, but it allowed John Adams and Thomas Jefferson to speak with greater confidence and build their own skills for negotiation which would be brought into the Presidency.

This hodgepodge system did not disappear under the Federal Constitution of 1787 nor the State Department created by the first Federal Congress. The great challenge faced by early Secretaries of State was to direct the stream of personal influence toward the goals of the new nation as defined by the President and Congress rather than the individual Foreign Service officers. As American diplomacy developed a canonical channel for information with the creation of the State Department, the great task was to transition and deploy the preexisting social network into a trustworthy backchannel. The next chapter will watch as Edmund Jennings Randolph, fresh into the State Department as Jefferson's reluctant replacement, attempted to keep John Jay sufficiently informed about events in North America to stave off another war.

Chapter 3 — Gatekeepers and Bottlenecks: The U.S. State Department and Jay's Treaty Negotiations

On August 16, 1794, Charles Williamson found himself in real trouble. Williamson was an agent for the Pultney Association land speculation group, and he was scouting potential roads and settlement areas on the south shore of Lake Ontario, when a group of British soldiers crossed the water, and declared that he was in Canada, not New York. After a tense discussion, including drawn pistols on both sides, Williamson knew he needed more help. On August 19th Williamson hired a post rider and dispatched him to Philadelphia with a detailed letter addressed to "The Secretary of State." Edmund Randolph, Thomas Jefferson's successor in the office of Secretary of State, received the letter, had it copied, and forwarded it to John Jay, who was then in London negotiating a new treaty with the British Empire.

Williamson's actions show that the State Department, while only five years old at this point, had already established itself as an information-gathering institution. Williamson also shows how precarious the new United States's position was in the international order. Jay had been in London for over three months before Williamson was confronted with British soldiers. In that time, Randolph had forwarded over seventy letters to Jay to keep him informed of the events happening in North America that would require adjudication in the new treaty. America's issues with its former colonial master stretched all around the new country's borders: a disputed border with Canada, continued British military presence in the Western forts, and the potentially hundreds of American merchant ships illegally seized in the Caribbean in the winter and spring

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¹ Charles Williamson to Edmund Jennings Randolph. Bath, August 19, 1794, *The Papers of John Jay*. http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=477 As this dissertation was being filed, *The Papers of John Jay* were in the middle of changing their online presence. All of links to this site were valid as of 30 July 2015.

of 1794. Without a navy to protect American shipping from the British and French navies who were battling the French Revolutionary wars in North American waters, the Federal Government turned to diplomacy, hoping to resolve their issues with Great Britain and avoid another war before the new nation was ready to do battle with the British Empire.

Jay's mission burdened the overtasked State Department which was rapidly building a new American Foreign Service, while the British and French governments razed the international order in the flames of the French Revolutionary Wars. When the Constitution of 1787 went into effect with the inauguration of George Washington, the American government had 12 foreign service officers worldwide. Three years later, when Thomas Jefferson resigned as America's first Secretary of State, there were 47 officers worldwide. This rapid increase has gone unnoticed in the historiography because the growth of the American Foreign Service was almost exclusively in the Consular Service, and the chaos of the French Revolutionary Wars of the 1790s made effective communication with these foreign service officers nearly impossible.

Communication was not improved by the level of staffing allowed to the State

Department (which had a number of domestic duties, including the census and only six clerks to run the entire department). Even so, Randolph was able to send 101 letters to Jay during the five months of Jay's mission. Of those letters, only three people wrote Randolph unsolicited. Most of these letters were enclosures — information Randolph sought out to assist Jay in his negotiations. Randolph also sent a Special Diplomatic Agent, Nathaniel Cabot Higginson, to the Caribbean to report directly to Jay in London on the extent of British seizures and the disposition of the British Admiralty courts to declaring illegally seized American merchant ships as lawful prize.

² The Early American Foreign Service Database, ed. Jean Bauer, http://eafsd.org. ACCESSED Sun Oct 13 23:20:19 EDT 2013.

This chapter will use social network analysis and geographic information science (GIS) to explore the information network available to both Randolph and Jay during Jay's time in London. Social network analysis operates on the principle that any social system can be abstracted to the people involved (called nodes) and the connections between them (called edges). In this instance, the nodes are the correspondents and the edges, the letters they exchanged. Network analysis is used to identify the clusters: groups of nodes/people that share a higher number of connections with each other than the group average. In this study, clusters indicate epistolary conversations.

Using network analysis on the letters sent to Jay during his negotiations offers two immediate benefits. First, it enables historians to reconstruct the conversations that found their way into Randolph's correspondence with Jay as enclosures. Second, it establishes a heightened role for the Secretary of State in a story which, in the historiography to date, has privileged Alexander Hamilton. Pairing social network analysis with mapping technology allows historians to see how these conversations were distributed geographically, including Jay's many direct correspondents throughout Great Britain and the European continent. The spatial component is crucial. The Anglo-American conflict was not confined to the Caribbean, but encompassed border issues with Canada and the American western frontier, while the West Indian seizures inflamed residents in all the major port cities on the eastern American coast.

This type of network analysis allows diplomatic historians to break away from the question which so often haunts the study of any diplomatic negotiation: "what did they know and when did they know it?" Information is the currency of diplomacy, but focusing solely on the negotiators exacerbates a teleological push toward the final, ratified treaty, and relegates any

piece of information which did not make it to the negotiating table to a status lower than a "red herring" in a mystery novel.

This chapter will chart the operational capacity of the State Department as an information-gathering and -distributing institution at the beginning of the French Revolutionary Wars and compare it with Jay's personal information network, instead of focusing on Jay in his unintentional isolation. Using social network and geospatial methods, it will demonstrate the effort expended to keep John Jay informed during his negotiations, and what new strengths and continued weaknesses that effort exposes in the U.S. Foreign Service information network under the State Department and Federal Constitution. In particular, it will show that, while the State Department had become comparatively effective at gathering information, it was not good at redistributing it out to other officers of the U.S. Foreign service. In the terms of network analysis, instead of functioning as a gatekeeper (straddling multiple communities and passing information between them), the State Department of the 1790s had become a bottleneck.

ESTABLISHING THE NETWORK

On March 11, 1794, Oliver Ellsworth, Senator from Connecticut, met with President George Washington to present the proposals of a group of senators³ for responding to the latest news from Great Britain. Along with strengthening the defensive capabilities of the nation, Ellsworth recommended that "a suitable person should be sent to the West Indies for the purpose of ascertaining the true situation of our Property seized in the English Islands, and assist our

³ Ellsworth, Rufus King (NY), George Cabot (MA), Caleb Strong (MA)

Mariners, and Merchants in defending their Rights. That further, an Envoy extraordinary should be appointed, and sent to England to require satisfaction for the loss of our Property."4

The situation in the West Indies was the direct result of the French Revolutionary Wars, which had been raging for over a year. After the execution of Louis XVI on January 21, 1793, France declared war on the crowned heads of Europe before they could declare war on grounds of regicide. As the British Navy attempted to conquer the French sugar islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Saint Domingue, the restriction on American ships was lifted to provide the necessary supplies for invasion and securing of territory. On June 8, 1793, the Privy Council declared that all shipments of grain in neutral ships headed to French ports were to be intercepted and taken to British ports where the grain would purchased at the price expected in the French port. In direct response, the number of American ships bearing grain rose dramatically over the summer and fall of 1793, since American merchants believed they would be paid the same price, regardless of whether their ship was seized by the British Navy or made it safe to a French port. Then the Privy Council changed its mind.

Less than five months later, on November 6, the Privy Council declared that all ships carrying French produce, manufactures, or headed to a French port with the intention of selling their cargo were to be seized as lawful prize. This order was rescinded on January 8th, but not before it caused considerable damage to American shipping. The November 6th order was meant as a temporary measure only, but the extreme secrecy which surrounded the order and its exclusive dissemination to British naval and privateering captains prevented anyone from knowing this. The repeal was, of course, welcome news, but following so quickly on the heels

⁴ Rufus King's notes, March 10 - May 4, 1794 (D, Hamilton Papers, Library of Congress) found in *The Papers of* Alexander Hamilton, ed. Harold C. Syrett, (New York: Columbia University, 1792), 16:133.

of the first order it simply created more confusion. Merchants base their business on assessments of risk and reward. With the Privy Council changing its mind every few months, those assessments became worthless and threatened to plunge all of American shipping into chaos. Clearly something had to be done. Within a month, Nathaniel Higginson was chosen as the "suitable person" and John Jay as the "envoy extraordinary."

Higginson is mentioned by name in Jay's instructions from Randolph as the source of much-needed information on the West Indies, but because his reports did not reach Jay until the negotiations were in the final stages, his mission has been completely ignored. Samuel Flagg Bemis does not mention the name of the agent sent to investigate claims of unlawful seizure of American vessels by the British navy and privateers.⁵ The Jay Papers editorial notes at one point misspell Higginson's name, calling him H.C. Higginson.⁶ This misspelling is repeated in Charles Ritcheson's *Aftermath of Revolution*, in which he remarks that the failure of Higginson's mission marks yet another occasion when an American diplomat in London lacked the information necessary to fulfill his mission.⁷ Ritchenson's complaint, while valid, misses the point. Even the attempt to get more information directly to the diplomat is a major step forward for the fledgling foreign service.

The two men recommended for the position of Special Agent, Robert Ralston and Nathaniel Cabot Higginson, were both from Philadelphia, and had strong connections to the

⁵ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy*, 2nd Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 275 n. 37.

⁶ This occurs in the abstract listing all the enclosures sent by Randolph to Jay while Jay was in London. *The Jay Papers Online* http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.00888. To be fair, in the clerk's handwriting the N and H do appear indistinguishable.

⁷ Charles R. Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States*, 1783-1795 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1971), 324.

merchant community. Ralston was a merchant, and Higginson was a lawyer from a family of merchants. The Higginsons were an old Salem family, wealthy and well connected. Higginson's father, Stephen, had been a privateer during the American Revolution, a delegate to the Continental Congress, and was active in Massachusetts politics at the time of his son's appointment.⁸ In particular, Stephen Higginson was a correspondent of Alexander Hamilton's, keeping the Secretary of the Treasury informed regarding the economic and political climate of Boston. He was also known to John Jay, who recommended him for the position of Claims Commissioner following the ratification of the Jay Treaty, although he did not receive the post.⁹ Nathaniel Higginson's knowledge of both law and commerce (and his family connections) made him an attractive choice for the position of Special Diplomatic Agent. Higginson was not the oldest son, which may explain his decision to study law and move to Philadelphia rather than enter the family business as a merchant in the Boston area.

Nathaniel Higginson was twenty-six the year he left Philadelphia for Barbados. His first known venture into politics was on January 22, 1794, when he gave testimony against Albert Gallatin being allowed to sit in the U.S. Senate on the charge that Gallatin did not meet the citizenship requirements. This may have been an attempt to curry political favor with Hamilton. Three months later Higginson was appointed as Special Agent, so the plan, if that is what it was, worked.

⁸ For a biography of Stephen Higginson, including a brief genealogy of the family, see his grandson, Thomas Wentworth Higginson *Life and Times of Stephen Higginson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1907).

⁹ Jay to Washington. 26 January 1796. New York. *Jay Papers Online*. http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.10657

¹⁰ Senate, United States Congress, George S. Taft, George P. Furber, George Machan Buck, and United States Congress Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections. *Compilation of Senate Election Cases from 1789 to 1885*. (G.P.O., 1903), 165.

Higginson received the appointment on the strength of Hamilton's recommendation. On April 2, Hamilton wrote Washington that Higginson was "the most competent, & would probably be in all respects acceptable."11 Washington instructed Randolph to make the offer to Higginson and Randolph did so that evening. Higginson took the evening to think the proposal over. He was not eager to take the position, but agreed to go if his conditions were met: "I am persuaded that the assumption of the proposed task would be attended on my part with some certain and perhaps other unforeseen disadvantages. The result of my reflection is that I will accept the proposed agency with a compensation in a sum not less that 2500 Dollars, admitting the term of absence to be for four months only." Higginson also insisted that his daily and incidental expenses be paid for by the Government.¹² Two weeks later, Hamilton finalized Higginson's financial arrangements, setting Higginson's compensation at two thousand dollars for four months, with personal expenses set at thirty dollars a week. A ship had been hired for him and he could draw on the Treasury for up to an additional seven thousand five hundred dollars for the business costs of his mission. 13 Time was of the essence. Jay had to be informed as soon as possible regarding the state of American shipping, so no delays could occur while Higginson tried to find the cheapest means of conveyance around the Caribbean. Also, since any successful appeals in the British Admiralty courts would greatly assist Jay's negotiations, money was set aside to speed those processes as well.

¹¹ Hamilton to Washington. 2 April 1794. Philadelphia. *Papers of Alexander Hamilton* 16:237.

¹² Nathaniel Higginson to Edmund Randolph. 3 April 1794. Philadelphia. Records of the Department of State: Communications from Special Agents. Volume 1, April 3, 1794 - October 30, 1811. The National Archives. RG 59. No. 37. Roll 1.

¹³ Hamilton to Higginson. Philadelphia, 16 April 1794. Papers of Alexander Hamilton 16:289.

The instructions written for Higginson and Jay show the intertwined nature of the two missions. However a comparison of the style of each document illuminates each mission's perceived difficulties. Higginson's primary mission was to travel all around the Caribbean to inspect all the British ports to determine where American ships were being held, and on what terms. He was sent down with a list of known captured ships, the same list sent to London with Jay. Higginson was to verify and correct the list as necessary. He was also to determine the status of American cases, and determine at what point the Orders of November 6 and January 8 had become widely known in the Caribbean and what, if any, effect this had on Admiralty Court rulings. He was to report to Jay on everything he saw and learned. This was the first way in which Higginson's and Jay's missions related to each other. One of the key points of Jay's negotiations would hinge on the British Government compensating Americans whose ships had been seized. No reasonable discussion could occur over a sum, however, until both sides had a clear understanding of the number of ships involved.

Higginson, however, had a second component to his mission. He was to enter pleas on behalf of Americans whose ships had been seized under the Order of November 6, and act as their advocate in the British Admiralty Courts. Thus, Higginson was the government-appointed lawyer for American captains whose ships had been taken prize by the British Navy and were awaiting adjudication in the British Admiralty Courts. The role of the Admiralty Courts was central to the American attempts to receive compensation for spoliation claims. Just because an American ship was taken by a British Naval or privateering ship did not mean the ship or its contents were necessarily lost to their American owners. First the ship and freight had to be assessed by an Admiralty Court and determined lawful prize. The entire spoliation issue could,

¹⁴ Edmund Randolph's instructions to Higginson, dated April 11, 1794, are in RG 59, Domestic Letters of the Department of State, Vol. 6, January 2–June 26, 1794, National Archives.

theoretically, have been resolved in the West Indies, if the Admiralty Courts had simply refused to declare the American property lawful prize.

The problem, for Jay's mission, was that no one in Britain or America knew precisely what was happening in the Admiralty courtrooms. Of primary concern was the fate of American ships seized under the Order of November 6 in the British Admiralty Courts. The British government claimed, through their Minister Resident George Hammond, that the order had been revoked and no more ships would be seized. However, no one knew precisely how the Admiralty Courts were ruling with regards to the Order of November 6, and whether the courts would restore the captured ship and cargo (or value thereof) to their American owners.

Higginson's mission was designed to restore, if not confidence, then at least information to the American government and merchant community. Perhaps because Randolph could not be certain what Higginson would encounter in the Caribbean, his instructions to Jay were a complete mess. Higginson's tasks were laid out in clear, concise form. Jay's instructions consisted of rambling, often broken sentences with lists of desired outcomes sprinkled throughout the document — more a grab-bag than a blueprint. In particular Randolph practically trips over himself to let Jay know that his instructions are suggestions not binding orders: "Such are the outlines of conduct which the President wishes you to pursue. He is aware, that at this distance, and during the present instability of public events, he cannot undertake to prescribe rules which shall be irrevocable. You will therefore consider the ideas, herein expressed, as amounting to recommendations only, which in your discretion you may modify as seems most

¹⁵ Hamilton, Alexander. "Enclosure: Points to Be Considered in the Instructions to Mr. Jay, Envoy Extraordinary to G B, [23 April 1794]," April 1794. Source: *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 16, February 1794–July 1794, ed. Harold C. Syrett. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, pp. 319–328. Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-16-02-0252-0002 [last update: 2014-10-23]).

beneficial to the United States."¹⁵ Never before, or since, has an American diplomat been sent out with such broad discretionary powers.

Jay's own background and experience contributed to the loose instructions as much as the gravity of the situation did. He had been part of the team (along with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Henry Laurens) who negotiated the Peace of Paris, much of which furnished the later disputes between the two countries. As Secretary for Foreign Affairs under the Articles of Confederation he had also worked on the issues that arose from implementing the terms of the Peace of Paris. The Washington Administration was criticized for sending the sitting Chief Justice on a diplomatic mission, with some opponents claiming this was unconstitutional. However, under the circumstances, Jay was a natural choice. Given the lack of information regarding the situation on the ground, it made sense to send the person with the most experience dealing with these specific issues, who could improvise solutions with full knowledge of past actions.

In the choosing and sending of Higginson and Jay on their missions, historians can see the new Federal Government feeling its way through new procedures for handling foreign relations. Just as with domestic governance, the Constitution provided a framework for action, but it was up to the individual statesman to create a new and functioning system. The missions originated in the Senate, the branch of the government that had to confirm all diplomatic appointments and ratify treaties. The senators then chose a representative to speak to the President — the executive branch being responsible for appointing all diplomats and having complete authority to appoint special agents (or at least, those who do not require a commission

to fulfill their missions). After consulting with his cabinet, the President chose the diplomatic agents and the details of their missions were left to the Secretary of State.

Higginson and Jay were only two of the 28 foreign service appointments that Randolph made during his first year as Secretary of State. Following Jefferson's negotiation of the 1792 consular convention, the U.S. Foreign Service, especially the Consular Service, grew exponentially. Unfortunately, the staffing of the State Department did not. And, as previously noted, Randolph only had six staff to assist him, and foreign policy was not the only task of this small department. Along with managing the foreign service, the early State Department had been created to handle the business of the entire State — or at least the business that was not assigned to the Department of War, the Department of the Treasury, the Attorney General, or the Postmaster General. Luckily for Randolph, Jay's negotiations did not take place during a census year. Yet, though avoiding war with Great Britain was top priority of the Department, the day-today business of the government did not stop. Congress requested information, federal land had to be sold, and the other 26 new foreign service officers had to processed and sent off to their new postings. While the rapid growth of the U.S. Foreign Service is the subject of the next chapter, that expansion was an important check on the effectiveness of the information network that Randolph attempted to pull together, since the number of clerks available to copy incoming letters for transmitting to Jay limited how quickly those letters could be forwarded on to London.

THE NETWORK IN PRACTICE

The geographic distribution of the information sent to John Jay during his stay in London is striking.16

¹⁶ For information on where and how this data was collected see the Appendix: Data Gathering and Data Loading.

The letters originate from as far west as Greenville (modern Ohio) to Nijmegen in Holland, and from as far north as Edinburgh in Scotland to Bridgetown in Barbados.¹⁷ The letters come from all the flash points of the conflict between the United States and Great Britain. There are letters from the disputed Canadian border, sent by Charles Williamson in Sodus, New York, and from General Anthony Wayne's campaign against American Indian tribes, whom he suspected of having British military backing, a campaign which culminated in the Battle of Fallen Timbers in Greenville on August 20, 1794. Higginson sent letters from the West Indies, where British captures of American merchant ships had pushed the two nations to the brink of war. Letters were sent to Jay from most of the major cities on the eastern seaboard of the United States, including the capital in Philadelphia. And in Europe, letters came to Jay from the capitals of England, France, and the Netherlands, along with Ireland, Scotland, and other cities all around the British Isles.

¹⁷ The letter sent to Halifax represents a best guess as to its likely destination. The letter was sent from Sandy Hook, New Jersey to the Rear Admiral of the North American Fleet, which was headquartered at Halifax, although at that particular point in time, the Admiral's flagship could have been anywhere in the North Atlantic.

The 296 letters, of course, were not evenly distributed among the 37 locations. 133 letters were sent from Philadelphia alone, with another 60 originating in London. Philadelphia's prominence in the correspondence is due to several factors, some more obvious that others. First, as the seat of the American government and largest city in the United States at the time, many of the people who wrote Jay directly resided in Philadelphia, including his most frequent overseas correspondent, Secretary of State Edmund Randolph. Second, through a series of intended and unintended consequences, Edmund Randolph forwarded a number of letters to Jay from Philadelphia, and even if his accompanying letter in these instances was little more than a cover sheet, it counts as a letter in its own right. Finally, a number of the letters forwarded to Jay were conversations of record between Randolph and other members of the Philadelphia diplomatic and merchant community, most notably George Hammond, then the British Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. Hammond and Randolph's conversations alone accounted for 32 of the letters sent to Jay. 18 In the British capital city, the situation was similar; most of the people Jay dealt with in the course of his negotiations resided in London. He also had a number of friends from his earlier diplomatic trips, including former politicians, who wrote to welcome him back to England.

¹⁸ Also a number of the letters sent from Philadelphia were duplicate copies.



The spatial distribution of letters sent directly to Jay is not as dramatic. Of course, all the European locations are still in evidence, but North America is represented far more sparsely. All the letters from America come from large cities on the Atlantic coast. The letters from New York were written by Jay's family and one merchant requesting a business reference. 19 Almost all the letters from America were written by personal acquaintances, or American merchants sending Jay information about vessels they owned which had been seized by the British. Given Jay's long career in American politics, many of his close friends now held office in the Federal or State governments, making it difficult to tease out the difference between personal and official correspondence, a distinction that was rarely made in diplomatic correspondence at this point in American history. This blending of personal and professional information is particularly noticeable in letters written by Alexander Hamilton and George Washington. The one exception was Edmund Randolph, who was not a close friend, so his letters were exclusively professional in tone.

¹⁹ Mathew Clarkson to John Jay. New York, August 1, 1794. The Papers of John Jay. Stable URL. http:// wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.09797 ACCESSED 2012-04-27 16:19:14 EST.

Of the 82 letters written directly to John Jay from Europe, only 8 were sent from the continent. Jay received letters from the newly arrived American Ministers Plenipotentiary at The Hague and Paris when they took up their posts (John Quincy Adams and James Monroe, respectively) and from Sylvanus Bourne, American Consul at Amsterdam. Adams and Bourne transmitted news of the war and American shipping, and James Monroe wrote to offer personal assistance with any unfinished business Jay might have had from his previous stay in France.²⁰ Jay also received requests for official positions from the Anglo-Swiss scientist Rodolf Vall-Travers and someone named "W. Jackson" from Amsterdam. Jackson appeared to completely disregard Bourne's presence as consul when he stated that the American government was in need

²⁰ John Quincy Adams to John Jay. The Hague, November 14, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item? mode=item&key=columbia.jay.00047, Sylvanus Bourne to John Jay. Amsterdam, June 27, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.04362 (sent duplicate copies), and James Monroe to John Jay. Paris, September 19, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item? mode=item&key=columbia.jay.13602. Last Accessed 2012-04-28 18:41:41. The Monroe letter is misdated by the Jay Papers as November 19.

of representation in that city.²¹ The last continental letter came from a French aristocrat who hoped to relocate to England or the United States on the strength of his claim to be a relative of John Jay.²²

The remaining 74 letters were sent from the British Isles, with 59 of those originating in London. Twenty-six letters were sent from Grenville, Jay's negotiating partner. Thomas Pinckey sent another four. The Baron Loughborough, then Lord Chancellor, wrote twice to Jay, as did Henry Dundas. Jay also received two letters from the Baron Stowell, William Scott, a lawyer retained by Jay to look into the financial claims put forward by American merchants. All the other letters were social in nature, even if they were sent by former politicians (including William Petty, formerly Lord Shelburne and now Marquis of Lansdowne). Of course, Jay could have had extremely informative conversations at the events these letters invited him to, so the absence of specific information in those letters is not the sole indication of their value. There were also several requests for help from people in distress in France, including emigres and others imprisoned by the French Governments; Jay forwarded those requests on to James Monroe.

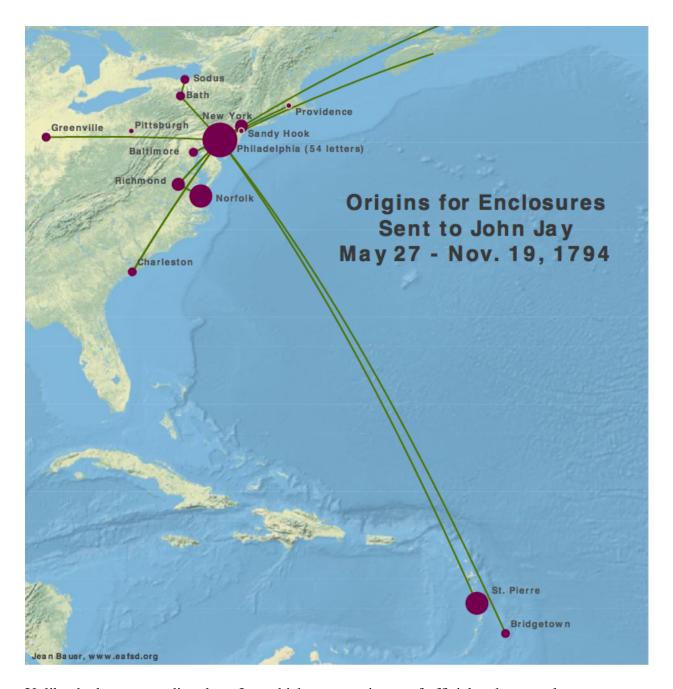
²¹ From *The Papers of John Jay*. Rodolf Vall-Travers to John Jay. The Hague, October 28, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.07214 and W. Jackson to John Jay. Amsterdam, July 8, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.08636. Last Accessed 2012-04-28 18:41:41. Vall-Travers mis-stated John Quincy Adams's imminent arrival at The Hague, supposing him to be Samuel Adams, unconsciously repeating the question put to John Adams when he landed in France in 1779, where his dinner partners wanted to know if he was "*le fameux*" Adams? (*i.e.*, Samuel Adams). See *Diary of John Adams* vol 2, 11 February 1779. Found online at *Founding Families: Digital Editions of the Papers of the Winthrops and the Adamses*, ed.C. James Taylor. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2007. http://www.masshist.org/publications/apde/portia.php?&id=DJA02d438 Accessed 07 May 2012.

²² Chevalier Du Jay to John Jay. Nijmegen, October 29, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item? mode=item&key=columbia.jay.08560. Jay responded to say that they were not related. See John Jay to DuJay. London, November 14, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.08915

All the other letters sent from the British Isles were from old friends expressing good wishes or from people requesting help or information from America. John Paul Jones's sister²³ wrote from Dumfries to ask about her late brother's property in America, and a master cider brewer from Herefordshire asked about possibilities of employment in the United States.²⁴

²³ Mary Ann Lowden to John Jay. Dumfries, July 1, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item? mode=item&key=columbia.jay.06914.

²⁴ Edward Gardiner to John Jay. Herefordshire, July 9, 1794. http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item? mode=item&key=columbia.jay.90018



Unlike the letters sent directly to Jay, which were a mixture of official and personal correspondence, all the letters Edmund Randolph forwarded to Jay were directly related to the negotiations. Of the 296 letters sent to Jay, 101 were forwarded to Jay through the State Department.²⁵

²⁵ This number, of course, includes duplicate copies, but the presence of duplicates indicates the importance of the letter in question.

Of the 101 letters Randolph forwarded to Jay, 47 were written before Jay sailed for England, but Randolph could not get them together in time, and so they were sent to England after Jay left. For news of the interior and potential issues with British-held western forts, Randolph had General Anthony Wayne's dispatches copied from the War Department.²⁶ He also forwarded copies of his correspondence with Hammond and various U.S. District Attorneys dealing with a series of incidents in March and April in which mobs in Charleston, Norfolk, and Baltimore harassed British consuls appointed to those ports. Hammond's complaints to Randolph occasioned a flurry of letters to the U.S. District Attorneys for South Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, who responded with letters of their own to local governments and the consuls requesting further information. At length, Randolph was able to provide Hammond with sufficient proof that the Federal Government could guarantee the safety of the British consuls. All 40 letters were then sent to Jay, in case he needed to make those assurances directly to the British government.

After Jay left for England, reports continued to come into the State Department.

Complaints of British depredations on American shipping were also sent to Philadelphia by the Governors of New York and Rhode Island. Governor George Clinton sent his letters to George Washington,²⁷ who then passed them onto Randolph. Governor Arthur Fenner wrote to Randolph directly.²⁸ Charles Williamson wrote from upstate New York, detailing his tense

²⁶ Collins to Anthony Wayne. ?, February 2, 1793 and Anthony Wayne to Henry Knox. Greenville, March 20, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=154 While Jay was in London another letter arrived from Wayne and it too was copied and forwarded on. Anthony Wayne to Henry Knox. Greenville, July 7, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=449

 $^{^{27}}$ George Clinton to George Washington. New York, September 9, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=75

²⁸ Arthur Fenner to Edmund Jennings Randolph. Providence, May 16, 1794. http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=340

encounter with British troops who had crossed Lake Ontario, claiming the southern side of the lake as belonging to Canada.²⁹ When word reached Randolph of the talks with leaders of the Whiskey Rebellion in Pittsburgh, he forwarded that correspondence on as well.³⁰ And then there was Nathaniel Higginson, sent to the West Indies and instructed to inform Jay directly of any information he could obtain.

Higginson received his official instructions and letters of credit on April 16. He set sail for Barbados on the 20th in the brig *Molly*. Almost from the beginning, everything about Higginson's mission went wrong. For reasons unknown, the *Molly* took thirty-three days to travel from Philadelphia to Barbados, approximately twice the time usually required for such a voyage. Once in Barbados, Higginson lost no time in determining the state of American shipping. The day after he arrived, Higginson sent a report back to Randolph saying that there were eight American ships condemned by the Admiralty Court. No appeals had been filed, but he would begin the process immediately.³¹

Higginson spent the next three weeks on Barbados acting as the lawyer for American interests, and as it turned out the situation truly called for a lawyer, not a merchant. As he wrote to Randolph, explaining the situation, the Admiralty Court initially required a surety in the amount of two thousand dollars *per ship* to be entered with the court before the appeals process could begin. As this would have amounted to sixteen thousand dollars for the ships in Barbados alone (more than twice the amount Higginson had been authorized to spend on appeals for the

²⁹ Charles Williamson to Edmund Jennings Randolph. Bath, August 19, 1794. http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=477

³⁰ Commissioners to Edmund Jennings Randolph. Pittsburgh, August 21, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=110

³¹ Higginson to Randolph. Barbados. 23 May 1794.

entire mission), this precedent could not stand. Higginson then began a long process of attempting to convince the judge that since the American merchants had lost their property, they could hardly be expected to put up a guarantee against losing the case. If anything, the British subjects who currently enjoyed the property in question should have to place bonds with the court to pay the restitution if the decision was reversed. The court did not agree. Higginson then sought to secure surety for two vessels as test cases, and appealed to several Americans in the area to give their word to the court, but none would agree, even after seeing Hamilton's signed letter promising to pay court expenses.³² Without the requisite surety no appeals could be lodged. When Higginson then asked for the court to release all documentation regarding each seized ship, he was informed that the documents could not be released until the court fees had been paid. After further wrangling, Higginson was forced to pay the court for copies made of the case proceedings, and they ended up charging him eight times what he expected by affixing a seal to each separate case rather than to the file as a whole.³³

Once Higginson had the information he was requested to collect, he could not send it on to London. The fog of war which prevented the American and British governments from determining how many ships had been taken since November 6, 1793, still hung heavily over the Caribbean. While Higginson was on Barbados the British and French navies battled for control of the sugar islands, Guadeloupe and Martinique, which had placed themselves under British protection until the French monarchy could be restored. In consequence, no ships were leaving for London and Higginson could not send his information directly on to Jay and Pinckney. He

³² Two of these letters were forwarded on to Randolph, who in turn sent them to Jay. See *The Jay Papers Online* Nathaniel Cabot Higginson to John Prettijohn. Bridgetown, June 5, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/ image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=493 and John Prettijohn to Nathaniel Cabot Higginson. Bridgetown, June 6, 1794. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=494

³³ Higginson to Randolph. St. Pierre. 23 June 1794. RG59 M37 Roll 1.

therefore included the documents in his report back to the Secretary of State and proceeded on to Martinique.³⁴

In Martinique Higginson experienced the same delays. Fifty vessels had been seized at Martinique and St. Lucia alone since the islands had been taken by the British. Several ships had been in the harbor when the island was occupied, and thus they were detained. Others were detained coming into the harbor after the British had occupied, despite the fact that they could not possibly support the French war effort by sailing to a British-held port. American seamen had been put in prison ships or impressed into the British Navy. Goods had been sold off the ships before they had come before a prize court. In short, nothing could be done quickly: "I regret exceedingly that a prompt and perfect execution of the business of my mission is put out of my power by the irregularity of the proceedings and the confusion of the scene." On Martinique Higginson had no better luck in finding a ship headed for England, and thus sent his information back to Philadelphia for Randolph to re-route to Jay.

From Martinique, Higginson went on to Roseau, Dominica, where he caught yellow fever. He wrote his will on July 12 and died shortly thereafter.³⁶ The same day that Higginson had his will notarized, his father, Stephen Higginson. wrote to Alexander Hamilton regarding an injudicious business venture Nathaniel had entered into in the West Indies. During his three-week stay in Barbados, Nathaniel had gone into business with an American merchant named Nathaniel Vincent (or Vinson) Hutchins. Together they had bought a shipment of sugar and hired

³⁴ Higginson to Randolph 12 June 1794. *The Papers of John Jay*. http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image? key=columbia.jay.00888&p=487

³⁵ HIgginson to Randolph. 24 June 1794. *The Papers of John Jay*. http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.00888&p=480

³⁶ Wills: Abstracts, Book X - Part I: 1794 - 1795: Philadelphia Co, PA. Found online http://files.usgwarchives.net/pa/philadelphia/wills/willabstrbkx1.txt. The precise date of Higginson's death is unknown.

a boat to take the cargo back to Stephen Higginson in Boston. Unfortunately, the ship, now owned by a British captain, had previously been owned by a local merchant and was immediately recognized by the people of Boston: "She was known at once to have belonged to Mr. Brown of Newbury by people who saw her & were in Barbadoes when she was condemned."³⁷ Stephen Higginson reported the fate of the ship: "The Jacobins seized the occasion & made the most of it. A large mob was last night collected when they drove the Capt. & people out of her, they cut her rigging, unhung her Rudder, took down her topmasts & yards."³⁸ The *Philadelphia Gazette* would later report that the ship was then "hauled in for adjudication" in Boston.³⁹

Although upset with his son and the situation the shipment created, Stephen Higginson stopped short of condemning the entire idea. Consuls often engaged in precisely these same business ventures; in fact they were expected to set up business connections abroad and ship materials back to the United States to support themselves. What set Nathaniel Higginson's actions apart, besides the fact that he was being paid for the mission, was the peculiar circumstances of the ship he and Hutchins chose to hire. Therefore, while Stephen Higginson apologized to Hamilton he also defended the principle of his son's actions: "Nat took a share in it to my mortification. Not that it was wrong, but it was inexpedient, will invoke a Noise & may incur censure upon him with some people."

³⁷ Stephen Higginson to Hamilton. 12 July 1794. Papers of Alexander Hamilton, 16: 593.

³⁸ Stephen Higginson to Hamilton. 12 July 1794. Papers of Alexander Hamilton, 16: 594.

³⁹ "By This Day's Mail. New-York, August 1," *Philadelphia Gazette*, 4 August 1794, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Stephen Higginson to Hamilton. 12 July 1794. *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 16: 594.

Stephen Higginson's letter drips with embarrassment and displeasure at having to inform Hamilton of his son's actions: "I have mentioned this, because I expect you may hear & see much about it; for our Anarchists will improve on the opp[ortunit]y I know to run upon me & him, they will represent it as a main Object of his going, & charge me with cementing this business to make money between us." His political acumen was proved when three days later father and son were denounced in the local paper. In a section that struck at the heart of early American diplomatic representation, the authors charged: "An agent and merchant in this instance are incompatible. For in the former character, he ought to use his utmost endeavors to preserve the property from *adjudication*: but as a merchant who is to receive a benefit from the sale, is it not for his interest that every vessel should be condemned?" 42

It is the clearest example of the reign of confusion over the Caribbean that neither

Nathaniel Higginson nor his partner knew that the ship they had hired had originated in America,
but had been seized and declared lawful prize. Apparently even the schooner's new captain did
not know the origin of his vessel, or he would never have agreed to sail it back under British
colors to its home port!

As the furor over the condemned schooner swirled around Boston, Higginson's first letters reached Randolph in Philadelphia. Randolph first heard of Higginson's arrival in Barbados during the first few days of July (probably when Higginson's letter of May 24 arrived).⁴³ The

⁴¹ Stephen Higginson to Hamilton. 12 July 1794. *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 16:593.

⁴² Messrs. Adam & Larkin, "From the Independent Chronicle" *Salem Gazette* 15 July 1794, p. 2. This article may have been reprinted from the *Independent Chronicle* but the original paper has not yet been found.

⁴³ Randolph does not mention when he first heard of Higginson's arrival, but the *General Advertiser* announced on 3 July 1794 that "Letters from the West-Indies inform that Mr. Higginson who was sent on public business by the Executive of the United States, arrived at Barbados." "Philadelphia" (*Philadelphia*) *General Advertiser*, 3 July 1794. p. 3

first list of captured ships (sent from Barbados) came about a week later and Randolph could not help but be disappointed that they were not sent on directly to Jay, since the list had taken over a month to reach Philadelphia, by which point it could have already been in London. However, he forwarded them on to London with a basic cover letter.⁴⁴ Higginson's letter from St. Pierre suffered an even worse delay.

Higginson's body accompanied his final letters to Randolph back to Philadelphia.

Because he had died of yellow fever, the disease which had swept through that city the previous summer, the Board of Health did not allow the *Molly* to dock in port until the quarantine period had passed. Apparently the quarantine in this case was longer than the typical forty days, because the *Molly* arrived in port on August 9⁴⁵, but Higginson's last letter, dated June 24 from Martinique, did not reach Randolph until October 24, although it sat in the harbor, tantalizingly out of reach.⁴⁶

Higginson's death only increased the government's confusion regarding American shipping in the West Indies. After Higginson died, Randolph could not find another agent willing to finish the mission. Finally, in mid-October, Randolph wrote to two brothers, James and William Perot, who were maritime insurance agents stationed on the island of Bermuda. Following Higginson's issues regarding travel and inconvenience by the court system, the Perot

⁴⁴ Randolph to Jay. 18 July 1794. *The Papers of John Jay*. http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item? mode=item&key=columbia.jay.00605

⁴⁵ (*Philadelphia*) General Advertiser. 9 August 1794. p. 1. This obituary is rather strange. It claims that Higginson's brother-in-law, Ebenezer Rhae, accompanied Higginson as his secretary and died on the passage back from the West Indies. However no mention of Ebenezer is made in Higginson's arrangements with Randolph or Hamilton, nor does Higginson speak of a secretary in his letters (all of which were written, in his own rather bad handwriting). Rhae is not mentioned as a witness to Higginson's will, although he is listed as "Brother-in-law." The article also states that Higginson's wife, Sarah, went out to meet the ship and became sick on board. This seems highly unlikely.

⁴⁶ Hamilton to Randolph. 5 September 1794. Philadelphia. *Papers of Alexander Hamilton* 17:199.

brothers were given much simpler instructions. They were to gather all documents relating to the seizure of vessels in Bermuda (not other islands) and transmit those documents to London. Noticeably absent from their instructions were any requests that they travel to other islands (despite all the places Higginson failed to reach) or enter any appeals.

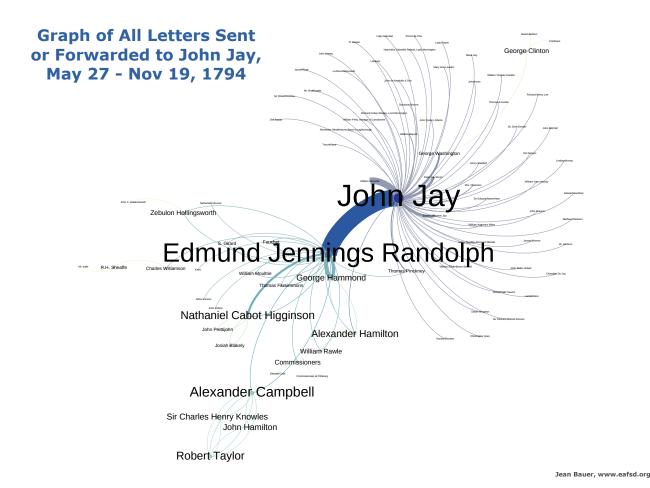
Randolph could not have known, but by mid-October Jay and Grenville were deep into negotiations, with the final treaty less than a month from completion. He also did not know that three of letters he sent to Jay in July never reached London.

EVALUATING THE NETWORK

Having looked in detail into the letters sent to Jay during his negotiations with William Grenville, it is instructive to pull back to an Atlantic World perspective and view the network in its entirety once more. Jay was sent information from every "hot spot" in the Anglo-American conflict: the western posts, the disputed American-Canadian border, the sea towns, and the Caribbean. This comprehensive geographic coverage was made possible by Randolph's efforts in the State Department. All the locations represented in the Americas had at least one letter that was sent to Jay by way of Philadelphia and State Department.



Of course, the geospatial distribution of these letters does not tell the entire story. Many letters were sent within a particular city, and the relationships between the letter writers is rarely clear on the map (with the possible exception of the letters sent from Europe). A network graph using the correspondents as nodes and the letters as edges helps tease out the complexity of the forwarded letters.



The network graph and the maps have a visual similarity because almost everyone who wrote Jay directly was based in Europe, while most (though hardly all) of the letters Jay received from America came through Philadelphia. So, the shape of the network graph is somewhat reminiscent of the map showing the origin of all letters sent (or forwarded) to Jay,⁴⁷ with a radial structure surrounding Jay (in London) and a series of lines converging on Randolph (Philadelphia), then the two points connected by a single line. The left and right sides of the network graph also loosely conform to the American and European letters, although people who

⁴⁷ It should be noted that the two visualizations are not displaying precisely the same data, as neither graphic shows all 296 letters. The maps do not contain the seven letters where the sent or received location is unknown. The network graph excludes the two letters with unknown authors or recipients. One letter Coxe to ?. ?, March 20, 1794, is not displayed on any of the visualizations for this chapter.

wrote only to Jay from America are found on the right side of the graph, surrounded by Jay's European correspondents.⁴⁸ It does reinforce the point that Jay had two information networks during his negotiations — his own network of correspondents and the network Randolph created on Jay's behalf.

The names were sized based on how many letters a person received, thereby highlighting particularly active nodes in the correspondence network (people who not only sent letters, but forwarded them on as well). By this calculation, Randolph was a nearly equal partner with Jay. Alexander Campbell, the U.S. District Attorney for Virginia, looms particularly large due to the twelve letters sent between him, the Mayor of Norfolk (Robert Taylor), the British Consul in Norfolk (John Hamilton), and Sir Charles Henry Knowles, captain of the British ship Daedalus, in Norfolk Harbor — all forwarded back to Randolph. Other names are prominently displayed on the graph, particularly George Hammond and Alexander Hamilton (who handled Randolph's correspondence for a few days in May during the kerfuffle over British consuls in American ports). The U.S. Attorneys for Maryland (Zebulon Hollingsworth) and South Carolina (William Rawle) are visible. The final prominent node is Nathaniel Cabot Higginson.

Each of these prominent nodes is the focal point of a subgraph. In network theory, graphs often break down into subgraphs. These subgraphs were used purely for visual distinction in the Adams-Jefferson Correspondence, to color-code the graph by Abigail, John, or Jefferson's more frequent correspondents. Here, the graph of Randolph's enclosures breaks down into a number of subgraphs that represent the separate epistolary exchanges that happened outside Philadelphia

⁴⁸ George Washington and George Clinton are the most visible American names on the left side. This placement, particularly of Washington, is simply an artifact of the data collected for this study. Washington wrote extensively to Randolph and Hamilton during these months, but those letters were not sent on Jay and thus not included in the graph. There is not even a cover letter for George Clinton's letters to Washington (presumably Washington simply handed them to Randolph for copying). If they had been, Washington would be positioned equidistant between Randolph and Jay, with George Clinton farther along that same trajectory.

and were then sent (often as enclosures themselves) to Randolph, who then decided to send them on to Jay. Along with highlighting prominent names in the story, the graph also shows a key function of Randolph's enclosures to Jay — Randolph forwarded epistolary conversations to Jay. The looped lines between each node indicate that letters were sent from both nodes to each other, a two-way conversation. Randolph did not just forward his conversations with other people (for example, Hammond), but other people sent Randolph entire conversations they had with third parties that bore on their letter to Randolph. This mirrors Governor James Bowdoin's original letter packet to the Massachusetts Delegation of the Continental Congress regarding the Stanhope affair, in which Bowdoin included all his letters to and from Captain Stanhope. The difference here is that, while in the 1780s Jay was the unwilling recipient of Bowdoin's letters, Randolph sought out this information, and employed key figures to gather it for him, and then to send all the letters back to Philadelphia. Higginson was not Randolph's only deputized information gatherer, just the only one who was asked to travel. Everyone else was already in place.

One area where historians can see a major improvement in American state capacity is in Edmund Randolph's handling of the complaints brought by British consuls against the mobs that threatened them in Charleston, Baltimore, and Norfolk. It was nine year after the Stanhope Affair had become a major diplomatic incident. In 1794 Randolph was able to demonstrate to both the British consuls and the British minister to the United States that the Federal Government could protect British consular officers in the country. To do this, Randolph called on his contacts in the Federal Judiciary by writing the Attorneys General of Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina. In a change from Massachusetts Governor James Bowdoin's role in the Stanhope Affair, Randolph relied on *federal* appointments in the judiciary rather than the state

governments, even though the state governments were far more powerful than the new federal judiciary.

Randolph's decision to use the federal judiciary is important for two reasons, one institutional, and the other personal or social. First, the treatment of foreign consuls was the responsibility of the federal government, so the federal government needed to respond. It allowed Randolph to assert federal control over the situation rather than relying on the state governments. Thus Randolph presented a unified government response to Hammond's complaints, and showed the effectiveness of the new government and its commitment to peace, even though American citizens were agitating for war. There is also a social aspect to this institutional decision. Randolph was the first Attorney General of the United States, and in that position had spent four years building the federal judiciary. Only three months out of his old job, Randolph turned to the men he had worked with in the judiciary to help him with his first international incident on American soil.

Almost all of the information Randolph sent on to Jay he sought out himself. There were three exceptions: Governor George Clinton, Governor Arthur Fenner, and Charles Williamson. Clinton and Fenner both wrote the Federal Government to complain about British depredations on American shipping. In a telling division, Clinton sent his letter directly to his old friend George Washington (who then forwarded it to Randolph) while Fenner wrote directly to the Secretary of State. Williamson, however, was a different matter.

As an agent for the Pultney Associates land speculation group, Williamson had cultivated a number of contacts in the new Federal Government, starting when he arrived in Philadelphia in 1791. Among those contacts was Alexander Hamilton, who met with Williamson before Williamson traveled to upstate New York to inspect the lands the Pultney Association had

purchased. Hamilton had been sufficiently impressed with Williamson to write him letters of recommendation to help Williamson establish himself in Albany before heading west.⁴⁹ Two letters of introduction do not indicate a very close connection between Hamilton and Williamson, but there is no indication that Williamson ever met Edmund Randolph at all. Williamson spent the winters in the eastern cities, especially Philadelphia, cultivating connections with potential buyers and political supporters. However, when Williamson found himself in a standoff with British troops, who landed on the southern shore of Lake Ontario at what is now called Sodus, New York, and claimed that they were in Canada (rather than New York State), Williamson sent off a post rider, not to his contact Alexander Hamilton, but to "The Secretary of State." In such a moment, sending the information to the appropriate federal department was more important that working through social channels, and under the circumstances who was Secretary of State when the letter reached Philadelphia was less important than the fact that someone was Secretary of State, and that a State Department existed to deal with the problem. Williamson's letter thus gives historians information about an important moment in the development of federal bureaucracy and the move away from the personal and social connections of the 1780s.

Williamson was able to send a post rider from Bath, New York, because two years earlier he had won the postal contract for the route from Albany to British-held Niagara, the first land-based international postal route in the United States.⁵⁰ In fact, the whole of Randolph's network

⁴⁹ See "From Alexander Hamilton to John Tayler, 18 February 1792," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-11-02-0045 [last update: 2014-12-01]). Source: *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 11, *February 1792–June 1792*, ed. Harold C. Syrett. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966, pp. 39–40. and "From Alexander Hamilton to Abraham Ten Broeck, 18 February 1792," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-11-02-0046 [last update: 2014-12-01]). Source: *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 11, *February 1792–June 1792*, ed. Harold C. Syrett. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966, p. 40.

⁵⁰ Helen I Cowan, *Charles Williamson*, *Genesee Promoter; Friend of Anglo-American Rapprochement* (Clifton, N.J.: A.M. Kelley, 1973), 52.

in continental North America was channeled through the Post Office, which was also undergoing a massive restructuring since it had been subsumed under the new Federal Government. So, while the State Department lacked sufficient naval support to keep communication open with its overseas diplomats, the federal government as a whole was becoming more closely connected thanks to the Post Office.⁵¹

In contrast to the institutional growth of the State Department, face-to-face diplomacy remained an inherently social activity. When Jay got to England he was welcomed back by his friends and sought out by many in Europe who wanted a connection back to the United States. For an American diplomat he had a robust epistolary network. He had friends in the country he was sent to (England), as well as connections to other American foreign service officers on the continent (although fewer with the expanding consular corps than his diplomatic counterparts had). He could get news of the war in Europe and learn about the temperament of the British government to his mission.

In contrast to Adams and Jefferson's close connections during the 1780s, Jay had very little contact with other American foreign service officers while in London. However, Jay was only in London for a short time, and as previously mentioned, the information he really needed to negotiate the treaty could only come from North America, not Europe. John Quincy Adams arrived at the Hague just as Jay was completing his negotiations (November 6th), although he did write a substantive letter detailing the news from the Netherlands. Sylvanous Bourne sent Jay a report on American shipping, but primarily asked for Jay's help in matters outside of the scope of Jay's instructions. Monroe's letter contained no news, and Jay did not receive letters from the

⁵¹ 1. Richard R. John, *Spreading the News the American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

American consuls in Europe aside from Sylvanous Bourne. Jay did not even get a letter from the American Consul General in London, Joshua Johnson (future father-in-law of John Quincy Adams), although it is possible they met socially. It does not reflect well on the new Consular Service that none of them sent the new Envoy Extraordinary any reports from their position. However, it is also possible that the consuls did not write to Jay because they were newly arrived themselves, as almost all the positions were appointed in 1793 and it could take up to a year before a consul made it to his new post.

What Jay's contacts could not provide for him were specifics from any of the "hot spots" in the Anglo-American conflict. Americans were not having problems with their former colonial masters in Europe; the problems were in North America, which Jay had to leave in order to negotiate a settlement. Those areas — the US-Canadian Boarder, the area of the Western British forts, and the Caribbean — were outside of Jay's network, and in all cases quite dangerous. He needed help. He needed a State Department to pull the information together for him.

Randolph believed that a large part of Jay's mission would succeed or fail based on the quality of the information Jay could bring to bear on the issue of the British seizures of American ships in the Caribbean. Higginson was supposed to be the lynchpin to the entire network.

Instead, Higginson was thwarted by three factors: the British Admiralty court's refusal to turn over records, the lack of civilian ships going to London, and yellow fever. In Higginson's mission, as in the resulting treaty signed by Jay in London, the state capacity of the U.S. government barely seemed to register. Higginson was thwarted at every turn, shamed his father and embarrassed Alexander Hamilton, and then died. Jay was unable to wring any real concessions from the British government regarding American trade in imperial ports or really resolve any of the issues that sent him to London in the first place. But what happens when

historians look, not at the outcomes of the missions, but rather at the information network Edmund Randolph put together to support John Jay?

The three networks described above (Jay, Higginson, and Randolph) show the emergence of something like an information clearinghouse for diplomacy in the State Department.

Randolph had information from all over North America — all the hot spots Jay was sent to London to calm. Aside from the recalcitrance of the British Admiralty courts, the limiting factor was not accessing the information, but getting it to Jay. Letters had to be copied (with the woefully understaffed State Department) and ships found to take them to London. It was on this last leg of the journey that the state capacity failed. Without a navy to convoy ships, there was no way to guarantee lines of communication would remain open during wartime, even a war the U.S. refused to fight in.

CONCLUSION

The failure of Higginson's mission crystallized the chaos in the Caribbean in a way that his reports never could have done. The entire Admiralty court system had broken down. In such a case the British government had to reimburse the Americans whose property had been seized, a point which even Grenville admitted in his first meeting with Jay. Unfortunately, there was no way to specify a bulk sum or even establish basic procedures. Every case had to be investigated separately, but the time and effort necessary to do so were far beyond the capabilities of Jay and Grenville's negotiations. From this chaos came a new way of channelling and assessing information: the claims commission established in Article 7 of the Jay Treaty, which established a five-man commission to review all the claims. The commissioner's decisions would be final as to the verdict and amount of compensation. Instead of chasing down all the people who had

bought or sold the condemned property, much of it foodstuffs and therefore already consumed, and demanding restitution, the British government would directly compensate the shipmasters in specie. It was a simple and elegant solution to a previously intractable problem, and along with the Boundary and Debt Commissions established by Articles 5 and 6 respectively, created the first instance of international arbitration in the Law of Nations. If Jay had been in possession of all the information he needed, Article 7 would not have appeared in the final treaty; rather, the British government would have paid the necessary reparations.

In light of the simple and elegant solution achieved in the treaty, Randolph's frantic efforts to provide Jay with the information everyone thought was necessary could appear irrelevant. However diplomatic history should encompass much more than unpacking the final text of a treaty into its constituent parts. Randolph's efforts on Jay's behalf show a growing network of communication within the United States of America, one which would in time knit more territory together than the Republic of Europe. Where Jay and Randolph's networks broke down was, ironically, the Atlantic Ocean, which had once bound each of the colonies of British North America more closely to England than to each other. As the United States developed into a nation state, it could afford to develop the state capacity to enhance its internal communication through the Post Office. As the maps and graphs show, Philadelphia (and particularly Edmund Randolph) became a crucial node in the information network that sprang up to support Jay's mission on London. What the State Department could not do, without a navy, was ensure the safety of its letters across the ocean while Europe was at war.

Unfortunately for the State Department, that chaos did not abate for over twenty years.

The French Revolutionary Wars became the Napoleonic Wars, and the high seas remained treacherous for American merchants and mail ships alike. This state of perpetual war helps

explain why American diplomatic correspondence remained decentralized. Without a large navy to escort convoys or deliver government documents, the lines of communication between Philadelphia (later Washington, DC) and London were frequently broken. The rest of the explanation rests in the continual understaffing of the State Department. Unlike their European counterparts, American diplomats and consuls could not rely on a well-funded, well-staffed, and well-organized institution like the British Foreign Office or the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One Secretary and four to five clerks were charged with running the entire Foreign Service as well as a number of domestic duties, including the census. This backlog is illustrated by the 47 letters Randolph was unable to copy for Jay *before* he left for England. The geographic scope and institutional centrality of the network displayed is truly impressive. The information it succeeded in conveying was not.

APPENDIX: DATA GATHERING AND DATA LOADING

The data displayed on the maps and graphs shown in this chapter were gathered from *The Papers of John Jay*,⁵² an online image database and indexing tool provided by Columbia University Library, and then loaded into *The Early American Foreign Service Database* (EAFSD). Two groups of letters are referenced here: letters sent directly to John Jay in London and letters which were forwarded to Jay while he was in London. The letters sent directly to Jay were located by searching the index provided by *The Papers of John Jay*, which provided the names of sender and recipient and the initial date of the letter. The names in the index were not standardized (for example, both "Grenville" and "Lord Grenville" existed as separate entries), which prevented an automated loading process.

The Papers of John Jay also includes a number of duplicate letters. For the purposes of this analysis, duplicate records were retained when there was evidence that multiple copies of the letter were in fact sent during the time period under study. Most of the duplicate letters were those that had to be sent across the Atlantic. The fact that duplicates of such letters were sent highlights both the importance of the information they contained and the difficulty of assuring that they arrived at their intended destination. However, there were also many duplicates which clearly arose from copying after the fact. In such cases, only one copy was recorded in the EAFSD.⁵³

⁵² http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/jay/

⁵³ The most obvious example is the multiple copies of Jay's correspondence with Grenville. Since both men were in London for the negotiations the only clear reason for duplicating their letters comes from archiving the correspondence afterwards.

The enclosures sent by Edmund Randolph exist online in one large, undifferentiated image file,⁵⁴ although there is also a partial typescript list of its contents.⁵⁵ The typescript was transcribed and then checked against the contents of the image file. Each letter in that file was reviewed and the relevant information was entered into the database, along with the precise position of that letter in the larger set of page images. Letters were not the only items sent to Jay. Ship manifests and other documents necessary to apply for reparations were also sent, both by individual merchants and by Randolph. Since they often lacked specific geographic information these documents were not mapped. If a letter was enclosed with a main letter, that relationship was also recorded in the database.

While it was almost always possible to retrieve sender, recipient, and initial date information from the text of a given letter, obtaining location information was more complicated. Most letters referenced their place of origin in the text of letter, but not all letters referenced their intended destination. However, since almost all the letters in this subset were sent to Edmund Randolph or John Jay, their destination was inferred to be Philadelphia or London, respectively. When letters were sent to other individuals, the letters were part of a conversation (represented later on as clusters in the network graph). Where a letter was a response to a previous communication, its recipient was inferred to have remained in the same location from which the

⁵⁴ Edmund Randolph, "Documents, 1794 June 5 to November 4", *Jay Papers* Online http://www.app.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item?mode=item&key=columbia.jay.00888. Accessed 06 May 2012. It should be noted that enclosures have not traditionally been included in print editions of personal papers, with the editors more interested in using their limited page counts to reproduce letters written by the historical actor or sent directly to him (or her). The less stringent space constraints of online publishing are beginning to open the way for enclosures to be published alongside the main letters. This is particularly important in the case of Jay's mission to London, where Randolph's letter was often little more than a cover sheet for the information he was passing along.

⁵⁵ "List of Papers to Mr. Jay." *The Jay Papers Online* http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/item? mode=item&key=columbia.jay.00625. Accessed 06 May 2012

earlier letter was sent. As new locations were added to the database, geographic coordinates were added for each location.

Once all of this information was loaded into the EAFSD, it was extracted in two ways. To create the maps, the full letter record (along with related information in the locations table) was extracted and loaded into ArcGIS, where the locations were mapped using the geographic coordinates recorded in the location table and lines were drawn to represent the letters as information transfers between those locations. To create the network graph, the names of sender and recipient were extracted from the EAFSD and loaded as an edge table into Gephi, an open source network analysis tool.

Chapter 4 — All Over the Map: The Too-Rapid Rise of the U.S. Consular Service, 1775-1825

In the final days of 1815, Sylvanus Bourne, American Consul General at Amsterdam, could not keep himself from complaining. In a long letter to President James Madison, Bourne claimed that the life of an American consul was financially untenable. Unsalaried and unable to compel ship owners to pay their fees, American consuls, according to Bourne, were doomed to spend their time in the service of their country going broke.¹ Bourne's complaint was not unusual, but his career was. In a consular service with an average tenure of seven years, Bourne served in Amsterdam for 23 years, from 1794 until his death in 1817. His entire career was punctuated with complaints sent back across the Atlantic requesting a salary or transfer out of Amsterdam to any recently vacated position which he felt would be more lucrative. He claimed he was continually on the verge of bankruptcy, and in 1791 requested leave from his appointment as consul to the then-French colony of San Domingue due to straitened financial circumstances.² However, Bourne never resigned his commission in Amsterdam, despite being unable to pay for a clerk and only able to afford office space in the back room of a carpenter's house.³

The consular service was a crucial component of early American state capacity abroad. If the foreign service under the Articles of Confederation had been almost exclusively a diplomatic

¹ Sylvanus Bourne to James Madison, 20 December 1815, Despatches from United States Consuls in Amsterdam, Netherlands 1790-1906, RG 59, National Archives of the United States.

²"To Thomas Jefferson from Sylvanus Bourne, 29 December 1791," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-22-02-0433 [last update: 2014-12-01]). Source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 22, *6 August 1791–31 December 1791*, ed. Charles T. Cullen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 468.

³ Bourne to Madison, 20 November 1816, Despatches from United States Consuls in Amsterdam, Netherlands 1790-1906, RG 59, National Archives.

affair, that changed under the Federal Constitution. In 1790 the entire American foreign service was replaced and nineteen new appointments were made. Of those nineteen all but three were consuls. From 1790 to 1825 there was only one year when more diplomats were appointed than consuls.⁴ The consular takeover of the foreign service was in many respects a quiet affair. Outside of the Barbary States in North Africa, consuls were unpaid by the Federal Government, making them a cheap alternative to diplomatic representation. As a new nation dependent on foreign trade for financial viability, it was crucial that the United States be able to offer assistance and protection to its merchants and seamen in foreign ports. The nation also needed an official channel for assisting Americans who moved or traveled abroad for education, pleasure, or financial benefit. Consuls served all of these purposes, for the low price of being able to charge fees for their services. The consular service provides historians with two ways of looking at early American state capacity. First, the presence of foreign consuls in a nation or empire was governed by treaty, just like diplomatic representation. However, since there were so many more consuls than diplomats, the placement and rank of consular officers is an indication of America's geopolitical standing. Second, the appeal of representing the American government abroad, even without direct compensation, is testament to the political and economic potential of the new nation — at least one third of American consuls were not American citizens, but local merchants who offered to assist the new nation without salary.

This chapter will look into these aspects of American state capacity in the consular service, while further examining the geographic distribution of the foreign service. Geographic distribution is particularly important for the study of a foreign service, since representatives are

⁴ 1814, the year treaty negotiators were appointed to Ghent.

appointed to a given location specifically so that there will be an officer at that location. Unlike previous case studies in this dissertation, which focused on discreet episodes in diplomatic history, the geographic distribution of the foreign service is best understood over the full fifty years; a shorter time span would obscure patterns in the distribution of foreign service officers. Because the legal aspect of foreign service postings is closely tied to the geographic distribution of the officers, the first section of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the *forty-five* separate titles used to accredit American foreign service officers from 1775 to 1825. Twenty of those titles can be grouped under consular functions,⁵ but it is useful to compare the variation in consular titles with those of their more closely regulated diplomatic counterparts.⁶

The second section of this chapter will use the life and career of Sylvanus Bourne to show how a consul operated on a day-to-day basis. Placed in a European port city for the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, as well as a few years of peace, Bourne's career spanned the U.S. Embargo and several invasions of the Netherlands. Along with his frequent complaints back to Philadelphia and then Washington, DC, Bourne maintained a lively correspondence with Americans and merchants all over Europe. His personal and business papers comprise 34 bound volumes of over 200 pages each in the Library of Congress, and provide an astonishing level of detail on the life of an American merchant abroad.

⁵ Compared with 16 diplomatic titles and 9 for support staff.

⁶ All figures and percentages come from The Early American Foreign Service Database, http://eafsd.org ACCESSED ON 2015-07-17 15:45:37

⁷ Sylvanus Bourne papers, 1775 - 1859. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009055 ACCESSED ON 2015-07-17 15:45:37

The final section will focus on the geographic distribution of foreign service officers over the entire fifty-year period. This geospatial network gave the American government a potential connection to trading ports all over the world and rich sources of information on local policies and commodity prices. The rapid expansion of the foreign service, however, has to be kept in perspective as the State Department hardly kept abreast of the increased overseas presence. Only two clerks were assigned to read all of the mail that came in from the consuls. Bourne was a far more frequent correspondent than many of consuls posted abroad — many wrote a single letter a year. However, the amount of information would still have swamped the foreign service, just as Edmund Randolph's attempts to keep Jay informed strained his limited resources.

This chapter will be less concerned with information flows than with geographic distribution; however, the implications for the information network are clear once projected onto maps. The consuls were merchants, men who depended for their livelihood on being informed. Yet they rarely received any information from their government, even less than their diplomatic counterparts. Each dot on the map should thus be seen not just as a sphere of consular influence, but as the hub of another epistolary network centered around a deputized merchant.

ESTABLISHING THE NETWORK

When developing a consular service in the last quarter of the eighteenth century the Americans had two potential models: the British consular service and the French consular service. While both empires had established men in major trading ports to protect commerce and citizens traveling abroad, these two consular services worked in very different ways, and

displayed different methods of dealing with non-diplomatic extraterritorial authority. The British consular service was a far looser, more community-based effort while the French system gave a great deal more official authority to its consuls as representatives of the crown. While the American consular system ended up being much closer to the British model than the French, the Americans created a more top-down operation than their British counterparts.

The British consular service dated back to the seventeenth century, when British merchants in foreign ports began to choose representatives from amongst themselves to treat with the local authorities. This process mimicked the traditional origin story for consular representation in western Europe, dating from the ancient Greek merchant community in Naxos, which appointed its own delegate to deal with the Pharaoh's government. By the eighteenth-century, British consuls had become official representatives of the government, but their community-based roots persisted, as did charges of inefficiency and corruption. Essentially British consuls were merchants who were supposed to act on behalf of their fellow merchants and countrymen, but served without pay. Some were undoubtably conscientious in the performance of their duties, but the system was basically unregulated until the first major consular reform in 1825.8 In contrast, the French consuls, at least under the monarchy, held almost complete authority over French merchants in a foreign port. If a French merchant was behaving in a way that endangered French interests in the region, the French consul could ban

⁸ For more on British consuls see D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service; British Consuls since 1825* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1971) and John Dickie, *British Consul: Heir to a Great Tradition* (London: Hurst, 2007).

the merchant from trading in the port. French consuls were also salaried and considered officers of the crown.⁹

Having neither the funds nor the authority to follow the French model, the American government opted to have an unsalaried consular service. While there were a number of applicants for consular positions, the consular service was not considered part of the patronage system until Andrew Jackson's presidency. Consuls were expected to make their own living and, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "These appointments are given to gentlemen who are satisfied to perform their duties in consideration of the respect and accidental advantages they may derive from them. When the consideration ceases to be sufficient, the government cannot insist on a continuance of services, because this would found claims which it does not mean to authorize." While American consuls were only loosely tied to the American government, which could not compel them to do much from a distance, they were regulated by their host country and by international treaty.

The Franco-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1778 allowed for the exchange of consuls between the United States and the French Monarchy. However, only six men were appointed in the consular service before the creation of the Federal Government and only two were given the commissioned title "Consul:" Thomas Barclay in Paris (later Consul General) and Samuel Shaw in Canton. There were also four Consular Agents and a Vice Consul. Between

⁹ Stéphan Béguad, Aux Origines d'une alliance improbable: le réseau consulaire français aux Etats-Unis, 1776-1815 (Paris, Direction des archives, Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2005) and Marc Belissa, Fraternité universelle et intérêt national (1713-1795): les cosmopolitiques du droit des gens (Paris: Kimé, 1998).

¹⁰ "From Thomas Jefferson to Sylvanus Bourne, 14 August 1791," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-22-02-0035 [last update: 2014-12-01]). *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 22:40–41.

1775 and 1825 the various American governments sent members of the consular corps abroad under twenty separate titles. The proliferation of titles used in the consular service gives historians a window into the complex negotiations involving sending and hosting a consular representative at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Of the twenty titles used by consular officers, only four required congressional commissions: Consul, Consul General, Commercial Agent, and Consul/Claims Commissioner. The last title was only given to one officer, Isaac Cox Barnett, who served under the title in Paris from 1814-1833. Typically agents were not commissioned officers, but while Napoleon held the title of First Consul in France he required that all foreign consuls be retitled, so the title Commercial Agent was used for American consular officers in France and French imperial ports from 1801 through the end of the Napoleonic Wars, when many of the positions reverted to the title of consul. Also, the title of consul was supposed to be reserved for American citizens, thus requiring any local merchants given the position have the title Consular Agent or something equivalent. However, the rule was not applied with any real consistency and American citizens were sometimes given the title Agent despite having permanent positions, while local merchants sometimes called themselves consuls. With agents not requiring congressional approval, which could take up to a year, it was also easier to send someone abroad as an agent rather than as a consul.

The other reason for the proliferation of titles is that the primary consular titles also had a temporary version: Acting Consul, Acting Consul General, Acting Commercial Agent, etc. Due

¹¹ For more on American consuls in France during Napoleon's rule see Jolynda Brock Chenicek, "Dereliction of Diplomacy: The American Consulates in Paris and Bordeaux during the Napoleonic Era, 1804-1815" (Dissertation, Florida State University, 2008), https://etd.lib.fsu.edu/theses/available/etd-04112008-085336/.

to be temporarily absent from their posts or to take a long time to reach their appointments. A sitting consul could appoint an acting consul during his absence or until his successor arrived. Unlike their diplomatic counterparts who could be commissioned for short durations to conclude treaties, consular offices were intended to be permanent, even if their occupants moved around a great deal. So while diplomatic titles only included one "acting" version of a regular title (chargés d'affairs a.i.) — typically used while higher ranking diplomatic officials were absent from the capital, consuls had six. Also, while in diplomatic circles the term 'Agent' typically denoted a temporary, often fact-finding mission (like Nathaniel Cabot Higginson's to the West Indies), a consular agent was a permanent position. No matter what the title, however, a consular officer could only operate out of a foreign port with the consent of the local government.

While the consular corps did use twenty separate titles between 1775 and 1825, it should also be noted that the title of Consul was far and away the most popular, accounting for 329 out of the 539 appointments. Even the use of temporary titles, while showing the high level of mobility amongst the consular corps, should also been viewed as a move toward the overall stability of the system, as an attempt to keep consular services from being interrupted in a given city due to temporary absence or to time between official appointments.

Of course the great exception to the consular service was the north coast of Africa and the consuls sent to represent the United States to the Barbary States. The city states of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli owed nominal allegiance to the Ottoman Empire, but in practice operated as independent piratical states whose leaders financed their territorial control through the sale of seized goods, the ransom of captured and enslaved European sailors, and through the highly

lucrative treaties they negotiated with European governments to enforce a temporary peace.

Literally contracts for paying protection money, the treaties involved expensive presents to the Dey personally as well as other court favorites and then included cash payments to keep the corsair fleets from attacking trade. Consuls in North Africa were the only members of the consular corps to be paid a salary, as these were considered full-time positions, leaving no time for earning a living as a merchant. Even full-time salaried consuls, however, were not given the authority to conduct major negotiations, although several of the treaty negotiators sent to the Barbary States became the resident consul once their negotiations were concluded. American naval officers were also commissioned as negotiators to conclude new treaties after successful military actions against the Barbary states. In this way North Africa provided a more fluid transition between the diplomatic and consular corps than other regions.

The American consular corps was less regulated or supervised than its diplomatic counterpart. Often serving without clerks or additional support (unless family members or another member of the merchant house could provide those services without federal salary), a consul was supposed to be a part-time job. All of these conditions would suggest that the consular corps would be the most volatile branch of the early American foreign service, with merchants coming and going from different cities or simply going out of business. While there was a great deal of change on the level of individual appointments, the consular corps was actually by far the more stable of the two branches of the early American foreign service. As will be shown in the next two chapter sections, the lack of pay insulated consuls from budget cuts or concerns about status in foreign courts. Also, it is unlikely that a port which could support an American consul would only have one American merchant on location, providing a

source of additional people to take the position should the current occupant choose to resign his post.

The Network in Practice

In January of 1789 the United States was in the process of creating the Federal Government, and Sylvanus Bourne needed a job. Following his education in Concord, Massachusetts, Bourne had thought of studying law, but eventually followed his father in the merchant trade. Only twenty-eight years old and eager for advancement and new opportunities, Bourne sent letters to everyone he could think of in the new Federal Government, starting with the Vice-President Elect, John Adams. Bourne had met Adams nine years earlier during Adams's brief stint at home which coincided with the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1780 and Adams's writing the primary draft of the document (which still remains the oldest written constitution in continual use). Bourne must have made a positive impression on Adams, because he offered the young man a position as his law clerk. However, Adams was almost immediately sent back to France to wait for a peace offer from the British. Adams never reestablished his law practice, and was therefore unable to hire Bourne.¹²

¹² Sylvanus Bourne to John Adams, 28 January 1789, Microfilm edition of the Adams family papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Reel 372. Hereafter cited as Adams Papers Microfilm.

Bourne also wrote George Washington¹³ and Thomas Jefferson¹⁴ in his quest for a consulship, Alexander Hamilton for a position in the Treasury Department,¹⁵ and probably to Henry Knox about a position in the War Department. In the early American Republic salaried positions of comparatively high social standing were rare, and federal employment was one of the few options for such employment. Given how intensely Bourne pursued the possibility of a consulship, it seems likely that he did not realize the position would not have a salary.

Interestingly, Bourne wrote to Adams not just before Adams could take office, but even before the State Department existed. When Bourne wrote in 1789, the U.S. had only six consuls abroad, but he assumed that creating many more would be one of the first orders of business for the new government: "I have in Contemplation to adopt the favourable [lines] which will present under the operation of the new Govt. to solicit a consulship or some commercial errand abroad; presuming that the establishment of Persons as the guardians of our Interests in foreign ports will be esteemed necessary upon the plan of regulating our future Commerce & to obtain accurate information of the relative importance of their trade with us to the accomplishment of my wishes." To George Washington he suggested establishing a central clearinghouse for

¹³ "To George Washington from Sylvanus Bourne, 22 May 1789," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-02-02-0262 [last update: 2014-12-01]). Source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 2, *1 April 1789–15 June 1789*, ed. Dorothy Twohig. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987, pp. 364–367.

¹⁴ "To Thomas Jefferson from Sylvanus Bourne, 2[4?] March 1790," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-16-02-0141 [last update: 2014-12-01]). *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 16:264–265.

¹⁵ "To Alexander Hamilton from Sylvanus Bourne, 1 November 1789," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-05-02-0278 [last update: 2014-12-01]). Source: *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 5, *June 1788–November 1789*, ed. Harold C. Syrett. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, p. 492.

¹⁶ Bourne to John Adams, 28 January 1789, Adams Papers Microfilm, Reel 372.

commercial information, similar to the British Board of Trade: "I feel confidence equal to the attempt would venture to intrude a few Ideas upon the public in support of a Board of Trade or some permanent establishment of the kind at the seat of Govt in order to collect into one focus all that information from abroad & from the several States which will serve to extend our future Commerce." Such a group could then suggest how to best regulate the commerce of the new nation to improve interstate and international trade.

Bourne was eventually given one of the earliest consular appointments under the Federal Government. He had hoped to go to Lisbon, but instead was appointed Consul in Cap François in the French colony of San Domingue. Three weeks after his appointment he wrote James Madison to suggest that Congress approve a stipend for consuls to be paid by merchants who trade in that port. "I am led to request the exercise of your influence in support of such a gratuity as may not have a tendency to burthen the trading Interest—which consequence I think cannot arise from a small contribution chargeable on each Vessell according to its size—and a specific regulation of the fees which Consuls shall have a right to demand in the exercise of their offic[i]al Duty." Bourne argued that this stipend would be required to defray the expenses of the consul: "It must be intuitively obvious to one of your extensive information (without a particular analysis of the Subject) that any person clothed with public Authority in a foreign Port will be necessarily & unavoidably exposed to many expences resulting exclusively from that

¹⁷ "To George Washington from Sylvanus Bourne, 22 May 1789," Founders Online, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-02-02-0262 [last update: 2014-12-01.

¹⁸ "To James Madison from Sylvanus Bourne, 28 June 1790," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-13-02-0182 [last update: 2014-12-01]). Source: *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 13,20 *January 1790–31 March 1791*, ed. Charles F. Hobson and Robert A. Rutland. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981, pp. 257–258.

situation; and that a sufficiency should be allowed them at least to counterbalance such expences, from those, whose Interests they are sent to guard & protect." Bourne did add a postscript to his appeal that encapsulated the issue of consular salary: "PS—Upon the Issue of the Question above alluded to, it will depend—whether a Consuls Commission will confer public honour & personal ease or the reverse of the two Cases." 20

In Bourne's case his first consular appointment went wrong almost from the beginning. He was appointed on June 7, 1790, but was not able to leave for Hispanola until spring of 1791, and did not arrive in Cap François until March. Upon arrival, the local government refused to accept his credentials, and he reported "being constantly put off by the most equivocal and evasive Conduct on their part. One Day am informed that the Convention does not extend to the Colonies—the next that as my Commission is unacompanied by a letter from the Secy. of State, they cannot acknowledge its authenticity, and again that as the Convention has never been transmitted to them from France they are not bound to notice it. I am sent from the assembly to the Govr. to the assembly without obtaining satisfactory answer from either." Bourne attributed the recalcitrance of the French colonial government to a desire to see American merchants unprotected in case their vessels were seized, and to a belief that the presence of an

¹⁹ "To James Madison from Sylvanus Bourne, 28 June 1790," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-13-02-0182 [last update: 2014-12-01]). *The Papers of James Madison*, 13:257–258.

²⁰ ibid.

²¹ "To Thomas Jefferson from Sylvanus Bourne, 29 April 1791," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-20-02-0081 [last update: 2014-12-01]). *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 20:324–325.

American consul would cause the government to "lose fees which they are ever ready to extort from our Countrymen."²²

Bourne also fell afoul of the general confusion in the French West Indies following the advent of the French Revolution. As the National Assembly took power, colonial governors were unsure which international regulations still held sway. Also, the Americans were unable to win the right to have consuls in British imperial ports until the 1820s, which meant that the French colonial authorities did not have that precedent to rely on either. Bourne was never able to get the French colonial government in Cap François to accept his commission and he was forced to return to Philadelphia less than one year after arriving in San Domingue. While back in the United States he served as clerk in the Treasury Department for two years,²³ until he was appointed as Vice Consul in Amsterdam.

Once in Amsterdam, where he did not have any difficulties with his commission, Bourne began to establish his merchant house and work as a consul. Bourne's extant correspondence really begins in Amsterdam. All of his papers before 1794 fit into two bound volumes, each holding approximately 240 page images, including envelopes and ledgers. Once Bourne reached Amsterdam a bound volume holds approximately the correspondence and associated papers of a single year. Most of Bourne's correspondence deals with his merchant business, with some family letters. His monthly reports were sent in regularly, far more than the required annual letter. He also kept a weekly log of prices paid for common American exports (rice, cotton,

²² ibid.

²³ "From Alexander Hamilton to Sylvanus Bourne, 10 May 1792," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-26-02-0002-0334 [last update: 2015-02-20]). *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 26:670.

indigo, pitch, tar, etc) in the port of Amsterdam.²⁴ In February of 1797 he entered into partnership with a Dutch merchant, Johann Wilhelm Lange, to create the firm Lange and Bourne. In the circular letter announcing their new partnership Lange and Bourne cited "the importance of that intercourse which is daily increasing between Holland & the United States" as their reason for creating the firm "for the purpose of transacting the buisness of our American friends." The letter also noted that "The continuance of the war, now decided upon, give us ever reason to believe, that our markett will continue to be the best in Europe for West-India produce, Tobaccoes, Rice, &c. &C."²⁵

Although Bourne retained his commission in Amsterdam until his death in 1817, he was not always present in the city. He made several trips to nearby cities, and traveled back to the United States in 1797, during which he got married to Rebecca Haslett of Baltimore, Maryland, who then accompanied him back to Amsterdam. He also made two other trips, which lasted long enough for him to appoint an acting consul, Herman Hendrik Damen. In short, he functioned as a merchant in the city — establishing ties where he could to further his business, which was continually in flux. His partnership with Lange did not last, and in 1803 he attempted to form a partnership with Damen, but that fell through.

As a merchant, Bourne also experienced the hardships of trade during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. In 1797 one of his ships was captured by the British Navy and declared lawful prize. According to the British government, Bourne was considered a citizen

²⁴ Sylvanus Bourne papers, 1775 - 1859. For more on how merchants used epistolary networks see Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

²⁵ Sylvanus Bourne papers, 1775-1859. 2:8598.

of Holland despite his consular status.²⁶ Even the personal attention of Rufus King in London was not enough to get his property restored. It is unclear whether Bourne's partnership with a Dutch merchant was to his detriment in this particular case. However, it is also an excellent example of the uncertain legal status of consuls in the late eighteenth-century. Bourne himself unsurprisingly found the entire situation extremely unfair: "It appears clear to me that if I am esteemed a Dutchman in my *own wrong* I ought also to be regarded as such in my own right and that of course my being concerned in privateering on British property would be perfectly *Justifiable*—but in such a case what would be the opinion of the British Govt? what the construction of my own? the first would probably be that I was committing the neutrality of my Country, and the latter that I ought to be punished for it—I just mention this for sake of argument & to illustrate the peculiarly hardship of my Case."²⁷

As consul, Bourne was also charged with assisting distressed American seamen. This could often require a significant outlay of funds. Although the Federal Government in principle reimbursed consuls for such expenses, the process was slow, and Congress frequently required more documentation than the consuls themselves collected. The following line from the Journal of the House of Representatives, May 5, 1796, speaks volumes to this issue:

"Mr. Goodhue, from the Committee of Commerce and Manufactures, to whom was referred the memorial of Sylvanus Bourne, by Edward Jones, his attorney, made a report, which was read and considered: Whereupon, Resolved, That the accounting officers of the Treasury be authorized and directed to settle the account of Sylvanus Bourne, Vice

²⁶ Bourne to John Adams, 20 May 1798, Adams Papers Microfilm, Reel 388.

²⁷ ibid

Consul of the United States at Amsterdam, for advances by him made for the relief of the master and crew of the ship Washington, which was wrecked on the coast of Holland, in **November last** [emphasis added]; and that the amount thereof be paid him out of the Treasury of the United States."²⁸

As a commissioned officer of the United States, Bourne had to send his expense reports *to his attorney* to be voted on by Congress, six months after the initial financial outlay.

This system was partially improved by the 1803 supplementary to the Act Concerning Consuls and Vice-Consuls, with established a fund for distressed seamen in each port. The money came from American ship captains who discharged American seamen in foreign ports. If the vessel was sold or a seaman voluntarily left his ship, the captain paid three months wages to the consul for each seaman discharged. The consul then paid the seamen two months wages each, and retained the third month's wage to pay for distressed seamen. The act therefore served both to provide a fund for distressed seamen and as a disincentive for American captains to dismiss their crew in European ports, where they could hire ship hands at much lower wages than in the United States. And to facilitate returning sailors to the United States, the act also required American ship captains to take no more than two distressed seamen on as crew if they were headed back to the United States.²⁹ Even with the funds now at their disposal, the need of distressed seamen often exhausted those funds.

On December 21, 1810, Congress asked the Treasury for a report on funds dispersed to distressed American seamen. The resulting chart, provided by Albert Gallatin on January 11,

²⁸ Journal of the House of Representatives 2:540.

²⁹ The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America: From the Organization of the Gov. in 1789, to March 3,1845 (Little, Brown, & Company, 1845), pg. 203–204.

1811 speaks to the general confusion of the consular service. In many instances the account balanced, but Sylvanus Bourne's was completely unaccounted for. He received \$3,436.29 in funds but disbursed \$10,129.02. When asked what balance remained due from the United States, the figure was only \$976.48, with a note that "Accounts settled to the treasury to th 18th March 1808."30 Bourne's account is the only one on the sheet so completely out of balance, but in 1811 only 31 out of 86 consuls (or vice consuls) had their accounts tallied. A note at the bottom of the report brings this into perspective: "The foregoing statement embraces the accounts of such consuls or agents only as appear to have made collections under the law. Other accounts, to a considerable amount, have been received at the Department of State, where they are for the present, retained."31 The lack of clear record keeping or rapid repayment (even for those consuls who were following the laws) show that the United States was putting its consular officers in a precarious situation by charging them with helping distressed seamen and not providing sufficient funds to do so. Given the frequent risks and margins of uncertainty merchants dealt with in the eighteenth century, when it could be months before they learned whether a particular commercial venture proved profitable, these types of cash outlays would have been very difficult for them.

Sylvanus Bourne spent his entire career in Amsterdam hoping that the United States government would put him on salary. That never happened, and as Jefferson had made quite clear in 1790, was unlikely to ever happen. Bourne never gave up arguing that his services

³⁰ American State Papers, House of Representatives, 11th Congress, 3rd Session. Commerce and Navigation: Volume 1:827.

³¹ ibid.

deserved regular pay, but he also never gave up his commission, even when he claimed to be in serious financial distress due to his status as consul. It is unlikely that Bourne continued his service through sheer patriotism, although he showed great interest in politics, writing occasional reports on the state of events in Europe. Whereas Bourne sent over one hundred letters into the State Department during Madison's tenure as Secretary of State, Madison wrote Bourne approximately five times, and only once directly recirculated Bourne's information back out to other foreign service officers.³² The greatest benefit Bourne seemed to provide, at least to James Madison, was regular copies of the Leiden Gazette: "I have had the pleasure to receive a number of Letters from you, giving details of public events, occasionally enclosing the Leyden Gazette. That paper being so valuable as a compendious and faithful repository of important occurrences, I request you not only to continue to send it to me, by the opportunities which offer from time to time, but to subscribe in the name of this Department for two additional sets, to remain with the Editor until the close of each year, then to be bound up and forwarded by different opportunities."33 This is not to suggest that Bourne's role was unappreciated, especially when Bourne requested permission to return to the United States for a visit in 1802. Jefferson agreed to the request but insisted that the visit be a short one: "The United States having no longer a public minister in Holland, the great commercial intercourse which our Citizens have with that Town, must render your presence there on that account the more necessary: and you will for this

³² "From James Madison to John Armstrong, James Bowdoin, and James Monroe, 13 May 1805," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/02-09-02-0392 [last update: 2015-02-20]). *The Papers of James Madison*, Secretary of State Series, 9:344–345.

³³ "From James Madison to Sylvanus Bourne, 25 January 1802," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/02-02-0602 [last update: 2015-02-20]). *The Papers of James Madison*, Secretary of State Series, 2:417–419.

reason appreciate the motive of the President for coupling a condition with the permission he gives you to visit this Country during the next autumn."³⁴

Bourne's career opens another aspect of state capacity in the U.S. Foreign Service: the ability of a government to reap benefits without paying for them.

EVALUATING THE NETWORK

Spatializing Foreign Service appointments shows new patterns in the placement of officers. The following graphic shows the location of all assignments in the early American Foreign Service between 1775 and 1825. Even without overlaying the dots on a map, geographic features are clearly visible. The locations of early U.S. Foreign service officers traced out the continents of Europe, South America, along with the Windward Islands, and much of the Caribbean. Of course, not all these locations were staffed at the same time, but the spatial distribution is surprisingly consistent over the years.

³⁴ "From James Madison to Sylvanus Bourne, 13 April 1802 (Abstract)," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/02-03-02-0153 [last update: 2015-02-20]). *The Papers of James Madison*, Secretary of State Series, 3:127.



Of course, the geospatial relationships become clearer when they are overlaid on an actual map. One basemap was chosen for all the maps displayed in this chapter, the watercolor map from Stamen Studios.³⁵ The watercolor basemap was chosen because it emphasizes the abstracted nature of the geospatial renderings. It is an artistic (if georeferenced) rendering of landmass and water.³⁶ This is a map designed to give the impression of geospatial relationships, but not one where distance or scale should be measured precisely, especially since any two-dimensional projection distorts distance on the globe. As described in the appendix, "Information and Power," *The Early American Foreign Service Database* has a clear theoretical position on geographic representation. Locations are given latitude and longitude values for the purposes of mapping, but those points in space are purely symbolic, not actual representations of the places they reference. The watercolor basemap accentuates this important point. The dots

³⁵ http://maps.stamen.com/ ACCESSED ON 2015-07-24 20:33:33.

³⁶ Tobias Isenberg, "Visual Abstraction and Stylisation of Maps," *Cartographic Journal, The* 50, no. 1 (2013): 8–18, doi:10.1179/1743277412Y.0000000007.

are positioned based on the city or town where a foreign service officer was stationed. However, the dots do not scale to the city boundaries and in the case of some Caribbean islands, obliterate the island completely. Also at the global level, the basemap does not show modern political boundaries which would be anachronistic at best and politically fraught at worst in the changing imperial and revolutionary times this dissertation focuses on.

This next map uses the start_year and end_year fields in the Assignments table (described in the Appendix) to calculate how many full person-years each location was staffed.

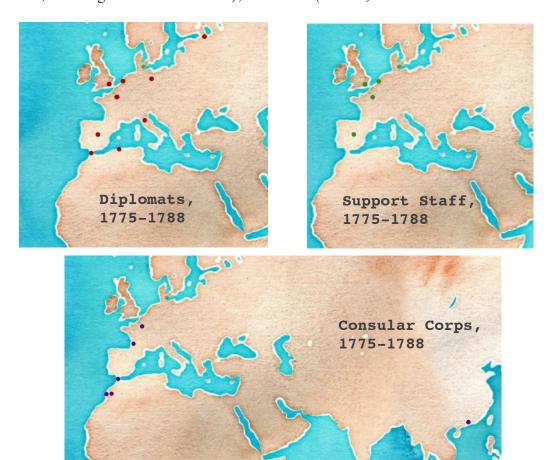
Automatically removing assignments that only lasted a few months (where start_year and end_year would be equal), this map shows which locations maintained a consistent presence in the U.S. Foreign Service deployment. Some locations had several officers stationed there simultaneously, creating a sum of years greater than 50 (London and Paris were both staffed for 119 person-years during this period).



The distribution of the dots represents the availability of official U.S. representation. Within the area of a dot, an American abroad would be close to a government representative.

These zones are typically found along the coastline, where international trade occurs and where merchants, shipowners, and sailors would be most likely to require help. Representatives in Asia were similarly found in the trading ports open to Americans. Heading further inland, be it in Europe or South America, travelers would be moving outside of the zone of representation and into the center of the local legal and political regimes. The early American Foreign Service did not "stop at the water's edge," but that is where it was most likely to be found.

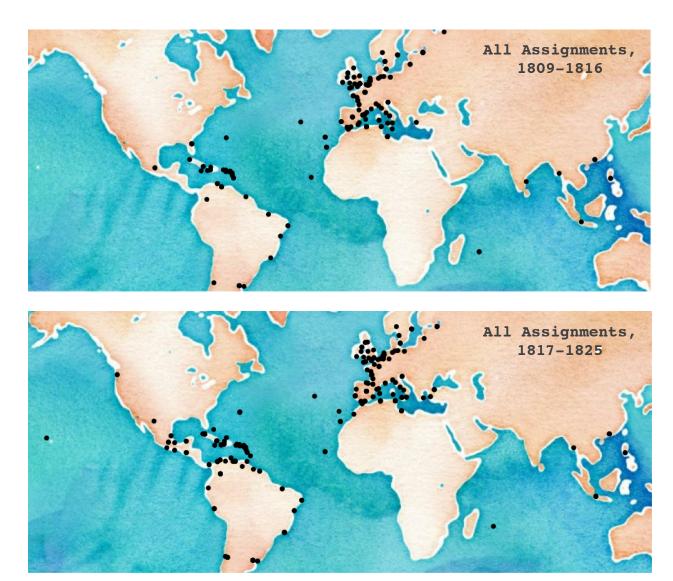
This distribution does not emerge until the creation of the Federal Government and the State Department. The years under the Articles of Confederation and the Congress of the Confederation have far fewer representatives stationed abroad. Even then, diplomatic missions had been established in London, Paris, Madrid, and The Hague, and agents had been sent to Morocco. Consuls were also appointed in France (Paris and Bordeaux), Morocco (Tangier, Marrakech, and Mogador now Essaouira), and China (Canton).



However, once the State Department had been established, the pattern in Europe and the Caribbean holds steady, while the service expanded into South America and, to a lesser extent, Asia.







This is not to suggest that all foreign service officers had equivalent roles. The three types of roles in the Foreign Service, diplomatic, consular, and support staff, each have their own distribution.



This map shows the distribution of consuls, diplomats, and support staff over all fifty years. Consuls are represented by purple dots, diplomats red, and support staff green. Given the relative numbers of appointments, consuls are the bottom layer, diplomats middle, and support staff top. Therefore a red dot may be layered over a purple one, and a green dot may be layered over a red or purple dot (or both).

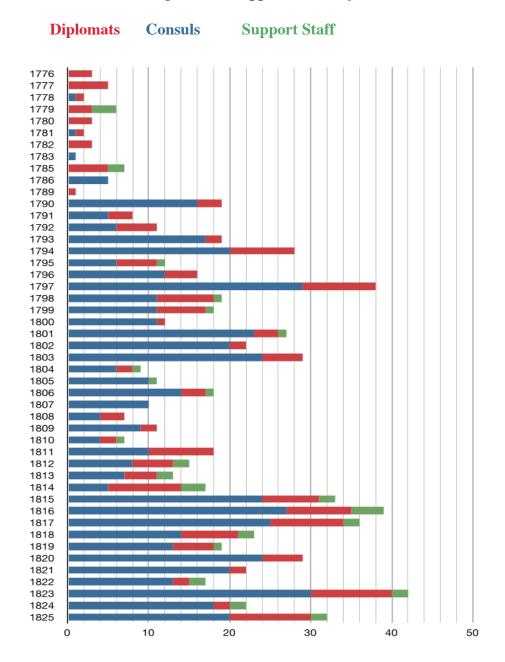
Support Staff were almost always assigned to diplomats, with every Minister Resident (or higher) having a Secretary of Legation, and a secretary given to major negotiating delegations such as the negotiating team in Ghent. A few consuls, mostly Consul Generals, were also given a government financed clerk or chancellor. However, most support staff were not paid by the government but out of pocket by the minister or consul, and therefore do not appear in the records of the State Department. The support staff in these maps therefore only represent the locations where the Federal Government was willing to pay for a secretary, which does give some indication of the perceived importance of the mission.

Aside from the drop during the Jefferson Administration, the diplomatic corps maintained a core presence in the major capitals of Europe, with diplomatic agents sent to North Africa, the

Caribbean and South America (replaced with ministers after the Monroe Doctrine). Support staff were typically assigned to commissioned diplomats or the consul in Algiers.

The foundation of the pattern is the consular corps. Following the creation of the Federal Government (and the ratification of the Consular Act of 1792) consular appointments exceed diplomatic and support staff every year, often by more than a 2:1 ratio; except in 1814, when five treaty negotiators were sent to Ghent to negotiate the end of the War of 1812.

Number of Foreign Service Appointments by Year



The establishment of the Consular Corps allowed the U.S. Federal Government to bootstrap its representatives utilizing the Atlantic merchant community. Members of the consular corps averaged 7 years in their positions, compared with 3.2 years in the support staff

and .35 years in diplomatic posts.³⁷ Though Thomas Jefferson's presidential administration is credited with a "consular turn" in U.S. representation abroad, he appointed, on average, fewer consuls per year than his predecessor John Adams, although Jefferson did appoint fewer diplomats.³⁸ Using the merchant community to serve as a base for its consular representation gave the U.S. Government a huge advantage in deputizing representatives around the globe, whether American citizens or not. Outside of North Africa, consuls were unpaid in this period, thus maps of the U.S. Consular Corps show locations of interest to American merchants and the growth of American trade over the 50 year period.



The consulates trace out the coastline of western Europe, as well as islands in the Caribbean and some of the north coast of South America. There are also a few consulates in Asia.

³⁷ Diplomats were mostly special agents or negotiators, sent to a place for less than one year

³⁸ Adams 62 consuls in 4 years, Jefferson 111 consuls in 8 years.



Pattern is almost unchanged, except for one more consulate in South America and Asia.



The consul in Cape Town left and was not replaced. Fewer in Iberia(temporarily) More consuls in South America (pattern continues below, where the is also a new consul in Hawaii and consuls return to Iberia).



The predominance of the consular corps in the early American Foreign service raises serious questions about the standard narrative of American diplomatic history (including the work in the early chapters of this dissertation). American diplomats are often portrayed as isolated and unsuited to their aristocratic surroundings. As John Adams in Versailles shows, success in American political circles hardly prepared a politician for the courts of Europe. However, the American merchant community was comfortable in foreign ports, and often the American consul was chosen from the local inhabitants rather than an American deployed overseas. Despite the many complications in the American consular service, being a merchant was good training for being a consul. You needed to know local customs, local laws, and have wide ranging connections. Without any of these skills it would be difficult to operate as a merchant, let alone a consul.³⁹

The stability and growth of the consular service is also an important counterpoint to the volatility of the diplomatic corps. Immune to budget cuts, the Federal Government could afford to expand the consular service under any circumstance. New consuls were even appointed during the Embargo, when trade was (supposedly) at a standstill. In this instance, consuls join the two other great expansions of Federal influence: public credit and the Post Office. Unlike those two expansions, consuls were free and thus did not immediately require an increased domestic state capacity. As consuls proliferated, the State Department grew slowly, with less than five additional positions added to the State Department between 1789 and 1825. Even

³⁹ For more on the world of Atlantic merchants see, David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community*, *1735-1785* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

considering the part-time nature of (most) consular work, the external representation of the U.S. government dwarfed the domestic capacity to manage it.

The consular service also raises questions about what constitutes state capacity. Consuls were certainly considered representatives of the government, but they served without pay or oversight. Consuls did not technically have diplomatic immunity and were certainly answerable to their host country's laws, although it was more common practice to deport a problematic consul than to jail him. However, Sylvanus Bourne was willing to serve as American consul in Amsterdam even though he claimed it was his financial ruin. This is another side of state capacity, the ability to leverage resources without paying for them. And it has implications for family members of foreign service officers (like Abigail and Nabby Adams), but also for state building. The ability of the American Federal Government to get this amount of work out of consuls at no additional cost, shows that the government was an idea with international resonance. Everywhere the United States had a consul, their status as a nation was recognized. Everywhere the United States had a consul, there was sufficient American commercial activity to warrant placing an officer. Bourne repeatedly asked for more regulations and that the Federal government find ways to compel ship captains to comply with consular regulations. However, the fact that ship captains paid consular fees, turned over manifests, and contributed to the distressed seaman's fund when they discharged crew in foreign parts, at all, shows the value of the consular service to American trade and commerce.

CONCLUSION

Examining the consular corps of the early American foreign service shows that the breadth and effectiveness of the entire system needs to reevaluated. Unlike their diplomatic counterparts, American consuls could be consistently qualified for their jobs. As merchants they were well suited to consular work — namely, assisting other merchants in a foreign port. This is not to say that all consuls were effective, either as merchants or as consuls. But being a merchant was better training for becoming a consul than being a lawyer or planter trained American politicians to become diplomats.

Visualizing the geospatial distribution of the consular service also shows a consistent pattern which would be difficult to determine from the written record. While diplomatic historians have focused on the diplomats, they are the tip of the iceberg regarding U.S. foreign service presence abroad. If someone outside of the territorial United States was going to interact with an American government official, it was going to be a consul. Reinforcing the commercial nature of American foreign policy, abroad the United States government was represented by its private merchants.

A foreign service is an inherently geospatial institution. It is, in large part, defined by it's spatial distribution, and only works if it covers the areas in which the nation has interests. In establishing the consular corps, the Federal Government turned a potential weakness — highly distributed trading routes and far flung commercial interests — into a strength by co-opting the very community which needed the service the most. American ship captains and merchants were the primary clientele for consular services, and the ones who paid for them. The distressed seamen also claimed time and resources from the consuls, and it could be considered a point of

national honor to ensure that all Americans who traveled abroad had not only the right to return, but the means to do so.

Unrestrained by financial considerations, the consular service may have been the only branch of the Federal Government in the early national period that came close to representing the breadth of American interests, rather than the constraints of federal funding. Max Edling has described the financial situation of the United States in this period as "Hercules in the cradle." In the global distribution of consuls, historians can see just how extensive American financial interests were. The fact that men like Sylvanus Bourne were willing to serve as consul for fees alone bears out this impression of a rapidly growing financial power. American consuls (outside of North Africa) were not paid until 1855, but they bet on the new nation anyway, and with every financial transaction, they sold the idea of federal government to a new set of customers.

⁴⁰ Max M. Edling, *A Hercules in the Cradle: War, Money, and the American State, 1783-1867* (Chicago; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2014).

Chapter 5 — Bringing It Home: John Quincy Adams at the State Department

On September 22, 1817 John Quincy Adams, the newly sworn-in Secretary of State, walked into the State Department to find a table piled high with six months of unread mail.¹ Eight years later, when Adams left the State Department to become the sixth President of the United States, the State Department had a standardized filing system for letters and a workflow for handling research requests and Congressional appeals which allowed the information contained in those letters to be recirculated through the Foreign Service and the rest of the Federal Government. John Quincy Adams is typically credited as the greatest American Secretary of State, primarily for the major treaties he negotiated to expand the Union, including the Transcontinental Treaty, and for his authorship of the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted American interest and protection over the entire hemisphere.²

While all of these policy triumphs, something not often seen in early American diplomatic history, are crucial components of Adams's legacy, the work he did to streamline processes at the State Department also deserves notable attention. Adams inherited a 134-member foreign service, but only 8 clerks. Without a major budget expansion he was able to clear the backlog of letters and create new processes for making sure such a backlog did not

¹ John Quincy Adams Diary 30, 1 June 1816 - 31 December 1818, page 257 [electronic edition]. *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams: A Digital Collection*. Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2004. http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries Sun Oct 13 12:34:08 EDT 2013 Hereafter cited as *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*.

² Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1949); Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*. (New York: Knopf, 1956); James E Lewis, *John Quincy Adams: Policymaker for the Union* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2001); Fred Kaplan, *John Quincy Adams: American Visionary* (Harper, 2014); Charles N. Edel, *Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014).

happen again. An incredibly meticulous and self-documenting individual, John Quincy Adams not only kept a daily diary, he regularly excerpted those entries into a separate "line a day" diary — or an index of his life. In his many years of diplomatic service he wrote extended dispatches on European and world affairs. The thought of such carefully constructed reports going unread for months must have been horrifying to him.

Adams did not fundamentally transform the early American foreign service with his reforms. Instead he built up the second half of the American foreign service, the State Department, to deal with the far larger section of the foreign service - the many diplomats, consuls, and agents deployed around the globe. That pile of letters awaiting Adams when he took office should be viewed a major victory on the part of the previous Secretaries of State. A network had now been deployed that was sufficiently large to be swamping the home government, and not just in times of extreme crisis like the negotiations for Jay's Treaty, but simply on a day-to-day basis. The United States had jury-rigged a large and communicative consular service based on the American merchant community and now had to deal with the results of its own success. It was an embarrassment of riches, and it was completely disorganized. As the world has rediscovered in the age of computation and the internet, being deluged in information is almost the same as having no information at all.

In a letter to his mother, Abigail Adams, months after John Quincy took office, he offers a glimpse into the amount of information daily arriving at the State Department (not counting the backlog of letters): "Business crowds upon me from day to day requiring instantaneous attention, and in such variety that unless everything is disposed of just as it occurs, it escapes from the

memory and runs into the account of arrears." This amount of information needs more than a simple listing: it requires a workflow, an archive, and organization so that it becomes part of the knowledge base for handling questions in future letters, whether they are factual reports or requests for information or guidance. What is required is a database: not an anachronistic digital system, but a data store designed to facilitate retrieval and research, not unlike a library card catalog or the 3x5 cards used to organize research materials and footnotes. This is what John Quincy Adams brought to the State Department: a serious commitment to organizing these information flows into a system that could provide the basis for responsible policy decisions, as well as informed responses to questions for diplomats, consuls, and Congress.

Unfortunately, while historians do not doubt that Adams made structural improvements at the State Department, those improvements left a faint trail through the archival records of the State Department. Even in Adams's own diary, where he does mention designing a new workflow, he does not go into great detail. In many cases, Adams simply rearranged existing filing systems in the State Department, so there are not even good indications of which filing systems came into existence under Adams's tenure at State. Because of this paucity of information, this chapter will not be an in-depth archival exploration of the specific ways that Adams changed the filing system at State. Instead, this chapter will explore Adams's reforms in light of the information network already established by 1817 and compare it with the system John Adams or John Jay used to communicate with their home government.

³ John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams. Washington, 2 November 1817. Writings of John Quincy Adams, ed. Worthington Ford (New York: Macmillan, 1913-7) 6:228. Hereafter cited as Writings of John Quincy Adams.

John Quincy Adams's tenure as Secretary of State is typically considered a major advancement in state capacity for the United States. Not only were major sections of the North American continent determined (in the eyes of European powers) to belong to the United States, but also the "Era of Good Feelings" saw a renewed interest in infrastructure and projects like harbor fortifications following the disastrous burning of port cities in the War of 1812. These state capacity advancements are typically considered within the context of domestic affairs (for what is territorial expansion, but making foreign policy into domestic policy?). However, Adams's efforts to organize the extra-territorial posts of U.S. state capacity in the foreign service also deserve to be looked at as part of this larger growth. As with the rapid rise of the consular service, seen in the previous chapter, this expansion does not cost the United States government a great deal of money, but that makes it all the more impressive.

In From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role,⁴ Fareed Zakaria puts forward a variation on classical international relations school of realism, called state-centered realism. In this modification of realism, he contends that the effectiveness of a nation in its foreign policy is not simply based on the resources and potential of the country, but also on the ability of the state to harness those resources to achieve policy ends. For example, if a country had a thriving economy, but the government did not have effective methods of collecting taxes, the country could be rich but the government would remain poor. In the same way, if a foreign service was generating information at a rate that it could not be absorbed by the home home government, the home government would still be uninformed.

⁴ Fareed Zakaria, From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role (Princeton Studies in International History and Politics) (Princeton University Press, 1999).

Adams's workflow improvements need to be seen as a database. In fact, they form the backbone of the underlying data structure that enabled all of the visualizations and data analysis in the previous chapters. I named Project Quincy after John Quincy Adams for this very reason. Of all the members of the Early American Foreign Service and the State Department that deployed them, Adams alone understood the organization of information as an overriding goal of the State Department, without which it would be impossible to make informed decisions. His own experiences as a dispatch writer as well as a diplomat in desperate need of advice from his home government certainly gave him a level of concern for the diplomats and consuls posted abroad. Adams wrote all letters and instructions to foreign service officers personally; he did not use a clerk to write out a final copy or even a preliminary draft. Adams's own uncommonly good handwriting allowed him to forego the use of a clerk, but the importance of receiving a personal document should not be underestimated, especially for an officer who received so little information from his home government.

John Quincy Adams had the advantage of taking office after the Napoleonic Wars. In fact, he was the first Secretary of State to take office when Great Britain and France were not at war. In 1817 no one could have predicted that Europe was headed into a century of, if not strictly peace, at least the absence of general war. This lack of European hostilities had several immediate benefits for the U.S. Foreign Service. First, as American ships could no longer be suspected of carrying contraband to enemy ports, American shipping was unlikely to be intercepted by a foreign navy. Also, the threat of the British Navy taking American ships as prize became moot, and American merchants were no longer the target of privateers. Removing both of those threats meant that correspondence had a much higher likelihood of reaching its intended

destination. Of course, any transport of letters in the Age of Sail had a nontrivial chance of failure, but during periods of general European war (and especially the War of 1812, which made Americans direct belligerents of the British Navy) correspondence across the Atlantic was especially hazardous. So, John Quincy could send dispatches and instructions with a level of confidence in their arrival higher than any of his predecessors in office.

As Secretary of State, Adams was also charged with helping the United States

Government fulfill the Treaty of Ghent as well as the first commercial treaty with Great Britain.

As Adams had served as a negotiator on both treaties, it meant that he already had intimate knowledge of all the clauses, as well as the compromises that had been struck to arrive at the wording — he knew both the letter and the spirit of the law.

This does not mean that Adams's tenure as Secretary of State was not difficult. He took office as Europe was reassembling itself after twenty years of war. Boundaries had been redrawn all over Europe at the Congress of Vienna, and new governments were establishing themselves across the continent. All of this meant that new letters of credential and new instructions had to be issued to preexisting foreign service officers to ensure that they were accredited to the proper authorities. Governments were in transition as they struggled with new national boundaries and an accumulated war debt that threatened to halt any rebuilding efforts. Twenty years of warfare had also further destabilized the European colonial system, especially in New Spain, and there were serious threats of European military intervention to restore imperial government. In this reconfigured Republic of Europe, the United States was still very much on the periphery.

EXPERIENCE

John Quincy Adams was the most experienced diplomat of his generation. Prior to becoming Secretary of State he had served as Minister Plenipotentiary at The Hague, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and London. He had also been a member of the negotiating delegation at Ghent, which ended the War of 1812. Adams spoke seven languages and had friends and colleagues throughout the European diplomatic corps.

Adams was also the only American diplomat to receive formal training in diplomacy in the Early Republic or early National Period. Since diplomacy was an apprentice system there were no schools to learn diplomatic protocol. Instead young aristocrats who wanted to enter the diplomatic service were apprenticed, often to family members already in the service, at a young age serving as clerks until they were sufficiently experienced to move onto a commission of their own. John Quincy Adams's diplomatic education began at the age of 11 when John Adams took him to France in 1778. While John Quincy did not serve as a clerk at that time, he quickly learned French (well enough to help the new French Minister Plenipotentiary to Philadelphia learn English on the voyage back to the United States in 1779) and became familiar with court life and the people who visited his father, Benjamin Franklin, and Arthur Lee in Passy. John Quincy and his brother Charles accompanied their father back to France in 1780 while John Adams waited for a chance to use his diplomatic credentials in England (see Chapter 1). When Adams had to leave France for the Netherlands, John Quincy and Charles accompanied him to Amsterdam and were put into school. In 1781, John Quincy received his first diplomatic assignment from the United States when he traveled to St. Petersburg as Francis Dana's

secretary, part of the first American mission to Russia. He was only fourteen. Catherine the Great refused to treat with the American delegation, and when John Quincy returned from Russia he served as his father's secretary in London until he left to begin his studies at Harvard.

Along with John Quincy's own deep experience in the diplomatic corps, his father-in-law, Joshua Johnson, was the first American consul in London, giving him close ties to the merchant community and insight into the inner workings of the consular corps. Johnson was a very successful merchant, which may have colored Adams's opinions about the advantages of serving as an American consul. However, he also stayed in close contact with American consuls at each of his appointments: Sylvanus Bourne during Adams's time at The Hague, Levett Harris in St. Petersburg, and Thomas Aspinwall (London), James Maury (Liverpool), Thomas English (Dublin), Nathaniel Ingraham (Plymouth) and William Davy (Kingston Upon Hull) while serving in London. During his time in Berlin he was the only American Foreign service officer in Prussia and therefore had to conduct several pieces of consular business. So by the time Adams became Secretary of State he had worked in almost every capacity available in the U.S. Foreign Service: as a secretary, a special negotiator, a resident minister, and an unofficial consul. He had lived in every capital where the United States had a diplomatic embassy, except for Madrid, and was acquainted with many members of the European diplomatic corps as well as the heads of state.

DISPATCHES AND CONSULS

Given Adams's extensive diplomatic experience, it is important to know how he understood the role and responsibilities of a diplomat. Luckily for historians, Adams explained

his entire understanding of diplomacy in a single letter. Adams's recall from London left a diplomatic vacancy which needed to be filled rapidly. President Monroe chose Richard Rush, a close advisor of James Madison, and then serving as both U.S. Attorney General and Acting Secretary of State. Rush was a successful and highly competent politician and had also served as Comptroller of the Treasury. He had met Adams at his house on the morning Adams was sworn in as Secretary of State and had given Adams his first tour of the State Department.⁵ Rush was the son of Benjamin Rush, one of John Adams's closest friends and his frequent correspondent, giving the two sons an immediate basis for trust and friendship.

Rush was intimately acquainted with U.S. policy towards Great Britain, having already negotiated the Rush-Bagot treaty which demilitarized the American-Canadian border along the Great Lakes while Adams was en route from London. However, Rush had never been a diplomat posted abroad. When Monroe appointed Rush to John Quincy Adams's former post, Adams took the opportunity to lay out for Rush in a single letter his vision of an ideal diplomat, as well as the day-to-day administrative and procedural tasks required at the Court of St. James. In manuscript form the letter runs for nineteen pages, and is the kind of document historians wish was written more often. The bulk of the letter is taken up with policy discussions in which Adams gives his take on the current state of relations between the United States and Great Britain, as well as his observations on British opinion toward the United States as he experienced it in London. Rush was given a commission to negotiate a commercial treaty with Great Britain, and Adams laid out potential strategies and negotiating positions should the British finally be willing to treat on the

⁵ John Quincy Adams Diary 30:257. The Diaries of John Quincy Adams Sun Oct 13 12:34:08 EDT 2013

⁶ John Quincy Adams to Richard Rush. Washington, 6 November 1817. *Richard Rush Papers*, Box 8. Princeton University.

subject of commerce. However, Adams saw little hope that Britain would agree to negotiate: "Having had access to all the correspondence on this subject also, you are well acquainted with the reluctance manifested by the British government against contracting any further engagements with regard to the commercial part, and their uniform refusal to even treat upon the political part of this proposed negotiation."

On the subject of commerce, Adams gave Rush his first fact finding mission. While in Ghent, Adams had helped negotiate a commercial convention between the United States and Great Britain. Signed in 1815, it was only stipulated to last four years, and thus would be expiring within a year of Rush arriving in England: hence the urgency in negotiating an official (and hopefully permanent) commercial treaty. The Convention declared that the United States and Great Britain could not charge each other fees and duties on imported goods that exceeded the fees and duties charged to other nations. With the Convention so close to expiring, Adams needed to know whether this was really saving American merchants money when they conducted business in the British Home Islands.

Adams need this information so that he could better inform policymakers in the Federal government about how to proceed if the convention came up for renewal. In particular he needed to present the information to Congress: "It will then be very desirable that the executive should be enabled to furnish Congress with all the information that may be necessary or useful to enlighten their judgement, and to present the subject to them in all its bearings." What Congress needed was accurate, numerical data to show whether American merchants were actually

⁷ John Quincy Adams to Richard Rush. Department of State. 6 November 1817. Writings of John Quincy Adams, 6:241

⁸ ibid, 6:237-8.

benefiting from the lower duties: "You will therefore direct your immediate and constant attention to obtain exact statements of the extra duties, whether of import, export, tonnage, light money, port charges, or others, which have ceased to be paid in the British ports upon shipping and merchandise, in the commercial intercourse between the United States and British dominions, and which will revive at the expiration of the convention."

This was no small request. However, Adams also made clear that he did not expect Rush to personally collect the information. Instead, he was to rely on the network of American foreign service officers already in the British home islands: "The consuls of the United States, and particularly those at London and Liverpool, will give you much of the information desired on this head, and to their reports you may find it useful to add the result of inquiries, made of intelligent merchants in those places connected with American trade. You will probably find it not difficult to ascertain from these sources the amount of duties actually repaid in conformity to the terms of the convention, after having been levied under the revenue laws existing before its commencement." 10

In 1817 the United States had twelve consuls in the British Home Islands,¹¹ and any consul who had been paying attention to American trade for the past few years would already have a good idea of how much money was being saved — especially for their own merchant house. All that Rush had to do was request the information from the consuls and collate it into a

⁹ ibid, 6:238.

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ Aside from London and Liverpool (by far the largest ports for American trade), the U.S. also had consuls stationed in: Bristol, Cowes, Falmouth, Kingston on Hull, Plymouth, Milford Haven, Leith, Belfast, Cork, and Dublin.

report. Not a simple job, but infinitely easier than the kind of fact-finding mission Nathaniel

Cabot Higginson had tried to undertake in the Caribbean with no consular support. Adams did

not want a single definitive report, but instead regular updates in case anything changed

regarding American trade: "This and all other information analogous to it which you may collect

you will from time to time communicate to this Department, with which it is hoped that your

correspondence will be as frequent and regular as your convenience will permit."¹²

The consuls also constituted a major part of the American minister in London's responsibilities. While the American minister in London could rely on the American consuls for assistance in information gathering, he also had a close financial relationship with the consuls that needed to be carefully managed. As Adams explained to Rush: "The expenditures for the relief of destitute American seamen, are made by the consuls of the United States under the direction and superintendence of the minister. They are of so serious amount that some control upon the discretion of the consuls is indispensable." This was the arrangement set up under the Act for Distressed Seamen discussed in the previous chapter. All consular expenditures had to be approved by an American minister (assuming there was a diplomatic post in easy reach). As the British isles were one of the largest markets for American goods, and the only part of the British empire in Europe or the New World that accepted American ships into harbor, the amount of trade was high. This was coupled with the fact that American captains could hire crews for far less in British ports than in American ones, giving them a high incentive to discharge their crew upon reaching England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland.

¹² ibid, 6:237-8

¹³ ibid, 6:249.

The American minister in London was therefore responsible for approving the expenditures of all twelve American consuls stationed in the British isles. The two largest ports were Liverpool and London, and they required special handling: "The accounts of the consuls at London and Liverpool for this subject will be regularly transmitted to you, with their vouchers, from quarter to quarter, and their payment will be made by your orders upon the Brothers Baring and Co., the bankers of the United States in London."14 Rush would need to make contact with both men, as well as the bankers, shortly after arriving in London to make sure this process continued to function smoothly. Adams had a very high opinion of the consuls at London and Liverpool, which makes sense given the very large (and lucrative) responsibility that came with each of these ports. His letter to Rush therefore functioned as a personal recommendation for Adams's former colleagues: "These accounts have hitherto been kept with perfect regularity by Colonel Aspinwall and Mr. Maury, the consuls at those two principal ports, and I am happy to have this opportunity of recommended both those persons to your particular kindness, and of assuring you that you will receive from them every assistance for the discharge of your duties, for which you may have occasion to call upon them, and which it may be in their power to bestow."15

However, Adams's opinion of the American consuls was not uniformly positive. Aside from Aspinwall and Maury, whose accounts apparently did not require a close review, the rest of the consuls needed to be kept under close watch: "The expenditures of the other consuls upon the same object are of comparatively trifling amount; but you may find it necessary to repress, at

¹⁴ ibid.

¹⁵ ibid, 6:249-50.

least by declining the allowance of unusual charges, a perpetual tendency to universal expense, which you will soon discover in most of the consular accounts."¹⁶ Adams's phrasing suggests that this inflation of accounts was not unique to the British isles, but something he had encountered throughout his diplomatic career.

Diplomats were thus the check on consular expense, and the intermediary between the consuls and the American government's bank account. While consuls were intended to be the link between the government and the merchant community, diplomats held the pursestrings and were accountable for the final expenses. Rush would also have to make regular reports regarding consular expenses, as well as any other draws on the American account: "You will be careful to transmit at the end of every quarter together with your own accounts, a statement of all the drafts you have made upon the bankers of the United States during the quarter, specifying the amount of each draft, the person in whose favor it was drawn, and the fund from which you will have directed it to be paid." This was also unchanged from the 1780s when John Adams had to approve all the funds drawn on the Amsterdam bankers. However, the fact that the Americans now had English bankers as well as Dutch shows the growth of American finance and a diversity of funding sources not present in those early days.

Adams also gave Rush detailed instructions on the type of correspondence he expected from diplomats posted abroad. Although it is a long passage in the letter, it deserves to be quoted in full to show how Adams saw the relationship between a single court and the whole system of European politics.

¹⁶ ibid.

¹⁷ ibid.

Besides the subjects immediately interesting to the relations between the United States and Great Britain which will naturally form the principal topics for your correspondence with this Department, you will be aware of the importance at all times, of the momentous consequence at particular periods, of observing with an attentive, and impartial eye, the political condition of the country where you are to reside; and of noting with accuracy the actual state and the occasional change of its policy towards the other principal European Powers. It will advisable even to extend your views to the general state, and foreign policy of those nations themselves. Beside the general connection subsisting between the European States, their present condition exhibits them in aspects very different from those of ordinary times. Europe may be said to have recently new modeled, and its principal governments are leagued together for the purpose of maintaining through all its borders the state of things which they have established. The operation of this system in all its parts, the resistances which it has to encounter, as well as the internal struggles of each of the allied nations, as in the elements of discord never extinguished between the parties to the compact themselves, its effect upon the civil liberties of the individual subjects, and upon the political independence of each of the nations thus associated, are deserving of the most careful and scrutinizing observation. An active though discreet correspondence with the other ministers of the United States abroad, and a friendly intimacy with the diplomatic representatives of European powers at the court where you reside, will give you great facilities for this kind of information.¹⁸

Back in the United States, Adams needed to know what was happening in the world around him. He encouraged Rush to consider his role as a information gatherer as broadly as possible. British policy toward the United States was the tip of the iceberg of the information Adams required of the American minister in London. At the nerve center of an empire, and at a court that gathered diplomats from across the world, Rush was perfectly situated to survey the rebuilding of Europe following the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna. Rush would have access to newspapers, conversations, and first hand accounts of events that could make all the difference to effective American foreign policy. Adams needed Rush to do what Adams himself had striven to do in his diplomatic dispatches - not just distill the information but present informed and logical opinions about the trends he was seeing.

¹⁸ ibid, 6:247-8.

Of equal value for historians, Adams did not simply give Rush a monumental task and leave him to flounder, he taught Rush how to accomplish what Adams had requested. Rush was to talk with other diplomats, and not just the other diplomats at the Court of St. James, but the American diplomatic corps in Europe. Despite all of the changes in the United States government and European affairs since the 1780s, the information-gathering strategies of a diplomat remained the same for Richard Rush as they had for Thomas Jefferson and John Adams — maintain correspondence with as many people in as many places as possible. But with more diplomats stationed in Europe, including at the capitals — The Hague, Paris, Madrid, Stockholm, and St. Petersburg — Adams did not just want letters from each American diplomat posted abroad with news of their host government and its policies. He wanted synthetic views of European politics from multiple vantage points. These views could then be usefully compared because the diplomats were sharing information and not simply writing out of their local context. While these synthetic views would be helpful to Adams back at State, they would be even more useful to the diplomats themselves, who could then discuss policy changes with their host countries in light of larger trends.

CHANGES

John Quincy Adams's wide-ranging experience with the Foreign Service makes his changes to the State Department especially worthy of discussion by historians, who have typically glanced over them on the way to the major foreign or domestic policy issues he participated in as a member of Monroe's cabinet. As already stated, Adams had almost thirty years of experience with the Foreign Service, and with the national government, having intimate

knowledge of the his father's difficulties as President as well as his own time in the State Senate of Massachusetts and a brief term in the U.S. Senate.

First, it is interesting what he does not change. Adams did not attempt to put American consuls on salary. From his correspondence with consuls while abroad, it seems clear that he felt consular fees and enhanced visibility within a port were sufficient remuneration for standard consular activity. He did express disappointment when Congress refused to provide salaries (at \$2,000 each) for the two proposed Agents for Claims and Seamen to be stationed in Madrid and Amsterdam. The salary for Madrid was intended for L.L. Brent, already serving as Secretary of Legation, but was never paid. Adams was able to convince Congress to pay John Parker in Amsterdam a one-time sum of \$1,500 since the news that his salary had been revoked could not have reached him until late in the year.¹⁹ Adams considered this parsimony unnecessary, declaring that "You see Congress are determined we shall have a great revenue - magnum vectigal parsimonia. Yet they have been bountiful to the remaining warriors of our revolution; and for my own part, when I consider the principles by which they were actuated both in their economy and their liberality, I think them honorable to the legislature and to the country."²⁰ If the choice really was between paying American veterans and American consuls, Adams could not fault the legislature for their choice.

Adams's reforms were quieter and more achievable than professionalizing the Foreign Service. He spent his energy on creating workflows, establishing regulations, and increasing access to necessary information. Of course, foreign policy was not the only job of the Secretary

¹⁹ John Quincy Adams to Richard Rush. Washington, 29 May 1818. ibid. 6:340.

²⁰ ibid.

of State in the early National Period, and Adams also oversaw printing of government documents and a variety of other unrelated activities. A theme, however, arises from Adams's reforms, the new filing system, and workflow for research questions. Adams wanted to concentrate and refine the information available to the State Department, and by extension the Executive and Legislative branches of government. Adams's own career in the foreign service consisted in large part of writing long, informed dispatches back to the Secretary of State (or his father during John Adams's presidency, when John Adams felt Timothy Pickering could not be trusted). He wanted to make writing such dispatches a common practice for all members of the foreign service and to ensure that they knew the responsibilities and limits of their often undefined jobs, especially in the consular service.

Stepping into the role of Secretary of State in 1817, Adams found himself the inheritor of the documentary chaos left in the wake of the British Army's burning of Washington, DC, during the War of 1812. Not all the files had been saved, by Dolley Madison or any other dedicated federal employees. Those files which had been saved were being returned piecemeal and out of order. To this day the State Department records prior to 1815 are disorganized and difficult for researchers to locate. Edmund Randolph's papers, for example, only exist in the papers of his correspondents. No single cache of his professional correspondence remains.

This confusion was compounded by the fact that the State Department had been without out a Head Clerk for six months. There had also been no official Secretary of State for over six months, although Richard Rush had been serving as a temporary head of the department. Adams took the oath of office on September 22, 1817. Monroe had vacated the office to become President of the United States almost seven months earlier on March 4, 1817. As this chapter

opened, Adams literally walked into a office piled high with documents waiting his attention, and the situation did not improve over time.

In May of 1818, Adams found himself still dealing with the lack of organization and the way it affected his own ability to fulfill his duties. As he described in his diary, "Prepared a dispatch I found it necessary to read over eleven dispatches ... all received since the adjournment of Congress. Several of these reference to his prior correspondence which it became necessary to have looked up at the office - As however the despatch must be forwarded as soon as possible, I made the draft; leaving the subjects upon which my information is incomplete to be taken up hereafter in another letter." This was not an uncommon occurrence, and given the level of information Adams expected from his diplomats was, from his perspective, completely unacceptable. He was encouraging the diplomats to bring their concerns to the government and to provide him with detailed information. The fact that he could not even access the previous correspondence must have been galling.

Adams does not give a great deal of detail regarding his attempts to organize the State Department files, but he does give the following description in his diary (from the day before his complaints about answering Russell's dispatch): "The Correspondence of the Department is in great confusion for want of a proper system of order in conducting it. I found none established, and when I entered the Office no minute was kept even of the Letters received from day to day." This level of confusion seems to have been unusual in the State Department, especially compared with John Jay or Edmund Randolph's ability to enclose letters or copies to diplomats.

²¹ JQA Diary 30:354. Diaries of John Quincy Adams. Sun Oct 13 12:33:53 EDT 2013

²² ibid.

However, Adams was also dealing with a foreign service two to three times larger than it had been during Randolph's tenure at State. Given the vagaries of transatlantic travel, and how hard it was for letters to get to Washington, DC, it would have been all too easy for a clerk to never notice that a letter had actually made it to the State Department.

Adams started organizing the correspondence by simply logging all the incoming letters. As he wrote, "I began soon after by having such an entry made in a Book, every day, and find it a very useful record, but is not sufficient." The simple arrival of a letter hardly conveyed the importance of its contents. Adams found himself completely overwhelmed by the day-to-day business of the State Department. Adams also insisted on reading and responding to all the diplomatic dispatches himself; he did not use a secretary to draft responses, which added to his workload. He could not keep what he had just read in his memory long enough to respond to a given letter: "I am constantly receiving notes from Foreign Ministers residing here and dispatches from the Ministers of the United States abroad, on an immense variety of Subjects many of which require measures to be adopted before answers can be given and various delays. Whenever a subject is postponed the multiplicity of affairs occurring from day to day expels it from the memory and without some thread by which to return to it, no recollection of it is returned."24

The fact that Adams did not delegate any of this work may help explain why there was no larger system in place sooner. The more people who handled a letter, the longer the paper trail that would have been required to keep track of it. However, it also underscores the importance

²³ ibid.

²⁴ ibid.

Adams placed on dispatches and the people who sent them. Adams valued the information contained in diplomatic dispatches, even if they did not live up to the high standards he had set for Rush. As a former diplomat he also understood how cut off American foreign service officers felt from the central government. He had seen first hand the effect such isolation had on his own father's early diplomatic career, and also had his own share of waiting for necessary instructions. Writing to each diplomat personally rather than giving that task to a clerk was one way of attempting to maintain a close connection between the federal government and its overseas representatives.

Handling all the dispatches himself did make Adams's initial forays into organizing the material slightly easier, although the organizational practice may not have made it into larger practice at the State Department. Adams's solution to his difficultly in handling the information coming from American and foreign ministers mimics his treatment of his own diary — he created an index: "I began by reading over all Rush's dispatches and made a short minute of their contents. It has suggested to me the idea of keeping an index of diplomatic correspondence in which each despatch from every Minister abroad shall be entered as it is received, and a minute of its contents and enclosures added, preparatory to its being answered. Also similar Register for the Consular Correspondence, and for that with the foreign Ministers here." Unfortunately, this index does not appear to have been retained in the State Department records. There are no itemlevel finding aides for diplomatic or consular correspondence. So, if the indexes were retained, they were dispersed throughout the filing system with the original letters, which defeats the purpose of keeping a reference index. It is also instructive that, despite his close connection with

²⁵ ibid.

American consuls while serving abroad and the reciprocal relationship he outlined to Rush, Adams still saw consular and diplomatic dispatches as being sufficiently different to require separate filing systems.

The filing system John Quincy Adams established left a great deal to be desired from the perspective of historians trying to study the foreign service. Letters were separated into separate cabinets based on whether they were diplomatic or consular correspondence. There all the letters from London's foreign service officers were automatically shunted into two separate locations based on whether the correspondent was the Minister Plenipotentiary or the Consul, even though they could be writing about the same events or concerns. Second, departmental responses to letters were filed separately from the letters themselves, splitting the conversation between the State Department and its overseas representative into two sets of one-sided set of monologues. This type of archival filing makes the use of network analysis and network visualization all the more important in American diplomatic history. The data work required to create a network graph of epistolary correspondence requires the historian to fully rethread the conversation in all of its back and forth, rather than treat it as a linear progression of documents (or a scattered collection of disconnected manuscript pages).

Even though the separation makes research difficult for historians, it is not hard to imagine that a State Department clerk might want to only look for the letter sent abroad, or the letter received from an officer, rather than sifting through the interleaved letters to and from that would constitute a conversation. Also, many of the consular reports were not answered, they were only cataloged. Letters were only answered when questions were asked by the officer or if additional information was required by the State Department. It could, therefore, have been very

easy to lose the official State Department responses in the midst of a voluminous correspondence like Sylvanous Bourne. The workflows developed at State were for day-to-day interactions first, and for the ease of historians second (if at all). The fact that so many of the letters exist to this day is a testament to their careful preservation. For example, John Quincy Adams describes the following failure of the international postal system, writing on November 4, 1817,

On the very day of my arrival from Europe at New York, which was the 6th of August, Mr. Coles likewise arrived there from Liverpool, whence he had sailed about a week after our departure from Cowes; and he delivered to me your letter of the 14th of June, and a large packet containing your letter of the 8th of May, 1812, which I then saw for the first time at least as a whole. Some small and disconnected parts of it I had indeed received at St. Petersburg, but in shreds and patches from which it had been impossible for me to collect its argument or its purport.²⁶

While this was an extreme case, it was the kind of failed communication that easily happened during times of general European war when letters had to cross both an ocean and a continent. It also underscores the point that diplomats did not always remain at their posts, and once they were recalled or moved to another position it became nearly impossible for letters to catch up with them in a timely fashion, even if the letter had not been sent to St. Petersburg during Napoleon's invasion of Russia.

All of John Quincy Adams's major reforms at the State Department were aimed toward making the Department a better clearinghouse for the information that was flowing in on a daily basis. Adams inherited a foreign service eleven times larger than that of Thomas Jefferson and the system was generating letters, reports, questions, and concerns faster than the small and overtasked State Department could process, let alone respond to it. With almost no money to pay

²⁶ John Quincy Adams to George Joy. Washington. 4 November 1817. Writings of John Quincy Adams. 6:230.

for diplomatic missions or consulates, the United States had managed to deploy an information gathering network that was literally burying its home government in information.

This is not to suggest that the U.S. Government had all the information it needed for policy decisions in 1817. Letters were delayed, letters went missing, and not every consul was as frequent or politically minded a correspondent as Sylvanus Bourne. Still, given Washington, DC's geographic separation from European capitals, and the complications of establishing regular mail service to the Caribbean or South America, the amount of information is impressive.

This need to channel and recirculate that information is the thread that ties all of Adams's reforms together. Letters had to be read immediately. The information would already be weeks or months old by the time it reached Washington, so if there was a time-sensitive issue or question it had to be addressed right away. Letters had to be kept for reference, either for later instructions, reports to Congress, policy decisions in Monroe's cabinet, or a mixture of all three. When questions were asked by foreign service officers, State Department clerks needed reference material and previous dispatches to help find answers. If Congress needed to be consulted, that long and complicated process had to begin immediately, because a response to a question would take weeks to months to reach the person who originally asked (perhaps 6 to 9 months previous). This sorting, cataloging and reusing of information took the form of a paper database that became the foundation of the State Department archives.

It is telling that Adams kept all of this work to himself, rather than spreading it out among the various clerks of the department. This left him as the single gatekeeper of all the diplomatic information that came into the State Department, a position of considerable power within the Federal Government and Monroe's cabinet. As Secretary of State Adams could therefore control

the flow of information from American diplomats and consuls to the rest of the executive branch and even to Congress.

CONCLUSION

Under John Quincy Adams the State Department and the Foreign Service did not professionalize. That term cannot be applied until the 1890s and the introduction of the foreign service exams. What Adams was able to accomplish was an establishment of routines and practices that persisted throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. If under Edmund Randolph the State Department had been a bottleneck, throttling crucial information despite the best efforts of everyone involved to get that information where it was most needed, under Adams the State Department became both an information hub and a library — in our modern terminology, a database.

Conclusion

This dissertation posits four methodological lenses for the study of history: biographical (or micro history), social, institutional, and geographical. Most historical studies confine themselves to one or two of these lenses, as the potential source bases rise exponentially when an effort is made to combine them. However, the early American Foreign Service takes on very different characteristics when viewed through each of these lenses, and diplomatic history in particular has been limited by its overemphasis on a discrete number of commissioned individuals. Rather than see diplomacy as the highest echelon of established politics, and diplomats as a new American political aristocracy, this dissertation argues that the establishment of a Foreign Service was an integral component of American state building, and in fact predates the establishment of domestic state capacity. While the dissertation does focus on a select group of individuals, after the first chapter it moves beyond biography and micro history to place those individuals into the larger systems and structures that they contended with, or helped to build.

The first and last chapters of the dissertation are traditional diplomatic, intellectual history pieces using a small number of letters to unpack an individual's worldview and then evaluate how that worldview influenced the diplomat's actions, and by extension, American foreign policy. The father and son bookends to the dissertation show both the growth and limitations of the early American Foreign Service. John Quincy Adams was only able to receive the training he needed because of his family connections. His apprenticeship was therefore unrepeatable, and as Secretary of State he found himself having to explain basic diplomatic and consular procedure to a man who would take up the most important diplomatic post in the entire U.S. Foreign service. While Richard Rush had a level of overseas and domestic support

completely unavailable to John Adams, the diplomatic corps had to be reestablished with every new diplomat.

Even so, the U.S. Foreign Service did grow dramatically during the forty years between John Adams's first mission to France and John Quincy taking over the State Department; and its growth quickly outstripped the usefulness of biography as frame of analysis. Chapter two uses network analysis to show how even three Americans posted abroad could deploy an information network far broader and deeper than the sum of its parts. The Adams-Jefferson correspondence is rich in details, but it was the information pooling between John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Abigail Adams that allowed for the diplomats to receive and exchange the information necessary to handle the day-to-day work of representing the United States in Europe. While the information network certainly served a political purpose, the fundamentally social character of that network cannot be ignored. Social conventions, especially personal honor, had profound effects on what information flowed through the network and who was allowed to see what should have been official documents. Showing the social character of the diplomatic information network also reveals the crucial role played by family members, especially women, who formed crucial nodes in the network but were neither compensated by the American government nor typically counted as members of the foreign service.

Moving back across the Atlantic, Chapter three focused on the domestic state capacity of the foreign service. Unlike most other American diplomats posted abroad, John Jay could not gather the information he needed to complete his mission from his overseas contacts. While Adams and Jefferson would have been grateful for a much more robust connection to Philadelphia, Jay was unable to negotiate on key loci of Anglo-American friction without specific information he could only get from the new world. The chapter focuses on Edmund

Randolph's attempts to marshall all the resources of the State Department to get that information to Jay. This snapshot of early American state capacity during the Washington administration is impressive. The Secretary of State was able to gather information from all the geographic hotspots of Anglo-American relations and mobilize the development of federal power by using the State Attorneys General to inform Randolph of the Federal Government's actions to maintain the safety of British consuls in American ports. However, the power of the government stopped at the water's edge. Nathaniel Cabot Higginson was unable to get even basic information from the British admiralty courts, and the general confusion of the French Revolutionary wars in the Caribbean prevented even that limited information from getting back to Philadelphia, let alone to London where it was really needed. The failure of the State Department to push its information back across the Atlantic does diminish the fact that the state's capacity for gathering information had increased. Given the range of people Randolph called on for information (States Attorneys General, governors, private citizens, War Department clerks, etc.) it is clear that in a crisis the Federal government, although less than five years old, already had institutional capacity that could be exerted when necessary. The lack of a navy to convey mail ships was hardly the fault of the Secretary of State.

The final lens, geography, is particularly important in the study of a foreign service. Diplomacy is an inherently spatialized activity, with maps literally drawing the boundaries of power and influence. The global distribution of American foreign service officers shows a pattern of state capacity increase and growth in trade. While diplomatic missions remained few in number, under the federal government the consular service expanded so rapidly it quickly outstripped the ability of the State Department to manage it. The explosive growth of the consular service was unusual for the federal government, because it was able to have men in

position all over the world without paying them. The lack of pay or oversight, however, does not remove U.S. Consuls from being part of the American state. If anything, it makes them the ideal way to discuss early American state capacity. While the federal government could not afford to pay its consuls, by the end of the Napoleonic Wars its global trade was sufficiently lucrative to sustain approximately one hundred unpaid consuls in any given year, each willing to work for the added visibility and the ability to charge fees. The consular service was bootstrapped on the back of the preexisting merchant community which gave it a geographic stability which would have been impossible for the Federal government to sustain any other way.

Thus the early American foreign service as an information network is visible through every methodological lens. Individual diplomats are effective to a great deal in proportion to their ability to take part in a larger conversation. John Adams's transformation from an embarrassment at Versailles to a trusted diplomatic colleague cannot be explained through any other means. While he had additional experience, it was the ability to have people he could draw on for support and advice that turned him from a loose cannon into a source of advice for Jefferson. The State Department, small and underfunded as it was, also emerges as the locus of information and gains a new dimension to its role in American foreign policy — helping to collate and recirculate the information received from abroad. This task was certainly monumental, especially by the time the full consular network was deployed following the Napoleonic Wars, but it was not outside of the realm of possibility for the clerks employed to create a basic filing system and be able to place diplomatic and consular dispatches in conversation with previously acquired information. Finally, the geospatial distribution of the consular service shows the extent of the network and how many people were deployed (or deputized) overseas to handle American global trading interests.

While visible through each of the methodological lenses, the early American Foreign Service as an information network does not look much like a formal government department. Instead, the foreign service is a collection of friends, family, commercial connections, and unpaid representatives who support the larger mission of the United States. The process of building the early American Foreign Service is not one of creation, but co-option, with the new government reaching out to anyone and everyone who might be willing to give it an overseas presence. This lack of control has been extensively discussed elsewhere, especially in the chaos of the consular corps and its unreliability, however, the fact that there even was a consular corps to be considered unreliable is an achievement in of itself, given the resources of the Federal government and the geopolitical confusion of the last eighteenth and early nineteen centuries.

All of this analysis is intimately connected with the Early American Foreign Service

Database and its underlying software package, Project Quincy. Named for John Quincy Adams,
the data structure built to conduct this analysis is a literal unpacking of the State Department
records on assignments and letters, the core of the early American service as an information
network — the movement of people and the movement of ideas. Chapters two, three, and four
rely heavily on the EAFSD to reveal the network in a series of data visualizations that made the
connections between people manifest. However, the connection between the dissertation and the
database goes even deeper.

The four methodological lenses of history have clear affiliations with each other. Social structures are created from the interaction of individuals. People's location in space and their comparative distance have profound implications on their ability to function smoothly.

Institutions help bridge the gap between far-flung individuals, while also having their own social conventions. However, historical analysis rarely uses all four lenses to analyze a particular

subject of interest, unless its is confined to the realm of micro history where the source base is small enough for a single scholar to master. The early American Foreign service, especially when treated as an information network, explodes the number of potential sources or methodologies that any one scholar could master unaided. Therefore, I wrote a software package and created a data structure to allow the results of archival research to be put in conversation with larger patterns in the distribution of people and ideas around the globe. Creating this data structure, which is described in detail in the appendix following this conclusion, required modeling the world of diplomacy in the long eighteenth century. This modeling allowed for particular events and patterns to be found in the sources, choosing the relevant case studies to showcase the four lenses of history and the different aspects of the foreign service's information network and its relationship to early American state capacity.

Network analysis and geospatial analysis both provide radical, but powerful, simplifications of historical sources and events — literally turning people into single points whose meaning comes from their relationship to each other in an analytic framework. The challenge and promise of digital history is to find the balance between the level of abstraction at which quantitative methods can give us analytical purchase without removing the sources from the historical context that gives them meaning. Project Quincy was designed to be that bridge between quantitative and qualitative methods for diplomatic history and any other historical projects that value locating networks and institutions across time and space. However, the database and the quantitative methods are of little use without the archival research and the narrative prose that connects them back to events.

What the database, and the data visualizations that make it visible, provides to the chapters above is an analytic backdrop for the archival stories. It is all too easy for micro history

to become enamored with the particular qualities of its subject, or for intellectual history to abstract itself from the lived experience of men and women in the larger society. For a subject as broad as the first fifty years of the early American Foreign Service, it would be impossible to construct a narrative that even began to deal with all the complexities of the topic without a database to give a broader perspective to the stories and to demonstrate the true interconnectedness of the diplomats, consuls, clerks, and family members who represented the new nation abroad.

Appendix — Power and Information: Retracing the Epistolary Network of the Early American Foreign Service

A foreign service succeeds or fails based on the quality of its information, and how that information is passed within the service. Foreign services in the Age of Sail transferred information by moving people. Some individuals were posted abroad permanently, more were sent for time-limited and occasionally secret missions. Many more people carried letters to and from the designated diplomats, consuls, and their support staff. Through these outposts, the early American state attempted to shape its role in the European Republic of Nations and the global system of (mostly) European imperial expansion.

John Adams's experiences at Versailles in 1780 continue to be useful for historians as they reveal the profound gaps in organization in the early American foreign service. During his entire time in France, Adams never received a single letter from Congress or from Abigail. No one in North America had the slightest idea of what he was doing to the Franco-American Alliance until months after he had left France in disgrace. Adams's isolation made that episode an excellent candidate for an article-length treatment of the intellectual worldview of an early American diplomat and the future consequences of that worldview. However, the eight letters exchanged between Adams and Vergennes over the Spring and Summer of 1780 raise more questions about the nature of the early American foreign service than they can answer. In Adams and Vergennes's exchange, historians see the early American foreign service at one of its most broken (but methodologically manageable) moments. Adams's inability to integrate into the social world of Versailles, to navigate the political realities of court and diplomatic

engagement, or even to be present in the country where his credentials would have given him political standing, created an impossible situation which Congress chose to ignore when they offered him the appointment.

Thirty-seven years later, John Quincy Adams began his eight-year tenure as Secretary of State, committed to fixing the kinds of problems he (and his father) had faced during their diplomatic careers. To analyze the foreign service as an institution as it attempts to grow with and ahead of the new American nation-state requires adding the methodological lenses of social network analysis, geospatial analysis, and institutional structure, to the biographical lens used in the first chapter. As said in the Conclusion, this stereoscopic vision of the early American foreign service brings additional source bases and levels of depth and complexity to the argument, which move the research into quantitative as well as qualitative methods. Managing these sources and structuring them in such as way to allow this stereoscopic methodology requires a custom data structure that enables quantitative analysis while not stripping the archival sources of their context or eliding the theoretical decisions necessary to unpack the historical source base into a model of the larger world.

Shifting the focus of the dissertation from the worldview of John Adams to the world of the early American foreign service only became possible because of The Early American Foreign Service Database (EAFSD). Building the data model from scratch allowed me to rebuild my argument and to discover the foreign service as an information network. This appendix will explain the theoretical and methodological systems that informed the creation of the data structure, while also enabling network analysis and geospatial analysis.

Network analysis and geospatial analysis are two very powerful tools for historians seeking to reveal patterns hidden in large sets of distributed data sets. Paradoxically, their power comes from a radical simplification of reality down to points, lines, and their attributes. Social network analysis algorithms are designed to analyze relationships between people, but only once those relationships have been abstracted down to "edges" (connections between people) and "nodes" (historical actors). Similarly, geographic information systems require points and polygons for algorithmic placement in a particular spatial coordinate system. The EAFSD was designed to provide the information necessary for these analyses while keeping the larger context front and center.

This dissertation is a blend of quantitative and qualitative analysis. There are long prose analysis sections, almost identical in method and tone to the first chapter. There are also a number of maps, graphs, and charts that make the quantitative analysis visible through data visualization. The visuals are carefully constructed visual arguments, drawing data from the EAFSD and employing methods from network analysis, geographic information science, and information design. This appendix uses a number of information design visual elements to explain the data structure of the EAFSD and its underlying software, Project Quincy. The sister project to Project Quincy is a software tool also built by the author called DAVILA, which allows database designers to create color-coded, annotated, and (in a web environment) interactive diagrams that contain all the technical information required to build (or rebuild) the database while allowing non-technical readers to understand the essential features of the database and its methodological interventions. Understanding the data structure of the EAFSD allows the

reader to evaluate all the other visual arguments made in this dissertation, and their relationship to the prose-based arguments.

Relational Databases

Good database design involves breaking the metadata description of a data set (and therefore its logical organization) into the smallest viable components and then linking those components back together to facilitate complex analysis. This process, known as normalization, helps keep the data set free of duplicates and protects the data from being unintentionally deleted or unevenly updated. These components are known as entities, and the links are called relationships. Each entity represents something in the "real world" which is modeled in the database. Entities contain fields, discrete pieces of data, each with a designated name and datatype (ex. "start_year" "integer"). Entities are sometimes referred to as tables, and fields are also called attributes.

Good relational database design also calls for naming elements after the real-world entities and attributes that they are modeling. In an effort to be clear when the text is referring to a specific entity in the EAFSD, the name of every entity will be represented in SMALL CAPS. For example, "letters" simply refers to types of documents exchanged in epistolary correspondence, whereas LETTERS refers to the specific data model of letters used in the EAFSD to trace information flows through the early American foreign service.

¹ For a solid overview of relational databases, see Stephen Ramsay, "Databases" in Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth, eds., *A Companion to Digital Humanities* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/index.html.

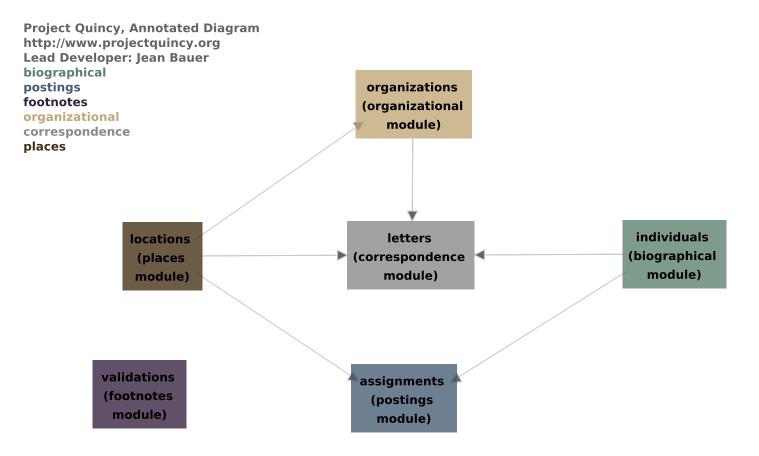
Once decomposed through normalization, the full model is only constructed through the combination of the entities and the relationships implied by their shared attributes. Relationships connect entities, and entities are constructed based on how they relate to each other. But while the analytic power and stability of relational databases comes from their basis in relational algebra, the conceptions can be hard to grasp in the abstract. To facilitate understanding of relational databases, the communities of practice and theory have developed a series of technical diagram conventions to convey the underlying structure. Most of the visual arguments in this chapter are actually modified Entity-Relationship Diagrams. In each of these diagrams an entity is represented as a rectangle, and the relationships are arrows.²

Technical diagrams are wonderfully compact ways of conveying information about extremely complex systems. However, they only work for people who have been trained to read them, and unfortunately, most historians never see the technical diagrams that underlie the systems they work on, reducing their ability to make realistic plans or demands for their software needs. True collaboration requires documentation that can be read and understood by all participants. This is possible even for technical diagrams, but not without additional design elements or explanations. Using the principles of information design, these diagrams can be enhanced through color coding, positioning, and annotation to make their meaning clear to non-

² For more technical readings on databases and relational algebra see E. F. Codd, "A Relational Model of Data for Large Shared Data Banks. Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery" 13(6): 377–87. C.J. Date, *The Database Relational Model: A Retrospective Review and Analysis*. (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 2001). Elmasri, R. and S. Navanthe, *Fundamentals of Database Systems*. (Redwood City: Benjamin/Cummings, 2004)

³ These diagrams are also available online at http://eafsd.org/explore ACCESSED ON 2015-07-24 20:33:33

technical readers.³ These diagrams have been generated with DAVILA, a software program I wrote to help explain relational database structure to historians.⁴



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Generated with DAVILA

⁴ This section borrows heavily from Jean Bauer, "Do You See What I See?," *Packets: Musing on Information Exchange: Historical, Digital, and Otherwise*, November 22, 2010, http://packets.jeanbauer.com/2010/11/22/do-you-see-what-i-see/. and Bauer, Jean, "Fielding History (unpublished)," in *Writing History in the Digital Age*, ed. Jack Dougherty and Nawrotzki, Kristen, 2011, http://writinghistory.trincoll.edu/data/fielding-history-bauer/. Both ACCESSED ON 2015-07-24 20:33:33

Time in Digital History

While the digital model of the EAFSD presents a number of necessary affordances, representing history in a digital model has many technical complications. For example, as a work of history, the EAFSD must be able to record events and the passage of time. However, representing historical dates is a fundamental weakness for modern computing.⁵ Every computer has a "system clock" for recording time. The system clock measures time by counting up from a set starting point, also known as an epoch.⁶ This counting results in a number called the "system time," which is literally the number of seconds that have elapsed since the epoch.⁷ The system time can easily be converted into a calendar date for display,⁸ but a much larger problem remains. System time imposes an anachronistic hyper-precision on any historical date entered into a database. Standard software libraries were not built to the handle imprecision born from a gap in the historical record. There is no gap in system time.

Even so, the EAFSD does use system time for its internal record-keeping. Every entity in the database has two fields that are automatically filled by the system clock: created_at and updated_at. These fields give a precise account of when a record was first created and the last

^{5 &}quot;Date conventions before the 19th century make for interesting reading, but are not consistent enough to warrant coding into a date/time handler." This is the final line of PostgreSQL's Documentation on DateTime Datatypes, found online at http://www.postgresql.org/docs/8.4/static/datatype-datetime.html, Accessed on 2015-07-24 20:33:33. Lines like that make me laugh, because the only other option is crying.

⁶ The date of the epoch varies from operating system to operating system. Microsoft uses January 1, 1601. Apple uses January 1, 2001, and UNIX starts on January 1, 1970.

⁷ In the Microsoft operating system it is the number of nanoseconds.

⁸ For example, in UNIX system time 1,000,000,000 equals September 9, 2001 at 1:46am and 40s

time it was updated. These fields are hidden from the general user and only available to users with administrative privileges. While their primary use is to identify records for mass correction or deletion, the created_at and updated_at fields could be analyzed to provide a rough chronology of data entry into the system.

For the historical data, however, system time is worse than useless. Historical dates require additional data modeling to be recorded in an intellectually honest fashion. This is a known problem in computer science, which has given the names "partial dates" and "fuzzy dates" to the types of information computers do not record automatically. Partial dates are dates with missing information (January 1797), while fuzzy dates are date ranges (July 8 - 12, 1812). In the EAFSD most date ranges are simply represented as start_year and end_year fields, each a 4 digit integer. Though this necessary representation requires that we do without the benefits of built-in date arithmetic, we can perform simple calculations (like subtraction to determine how many years a person lived in a given location). Subtracting integers is a trivial use of a relational databases's power when it comes to calculating dates. Unfortunately, to take advantage of those calculations the date entered into the system must be valid, and partial dates (because they are incomplete) are not valid.⁹

Ironically, partial dates are recorded in the EAFSD by adding additional information to a date. Along with the standard date field (which has space for recording a month, day, and year), three yes/no (also known as boolean) options are added to the date record: day_known, month_known, and year_known. The historian enters all the components of the date that she

⁹ There are many other reasons why entering valid data is important, If the data is invalid it cannot be verified when the database is transferred to another computer, thus introducing a potentially cascading error into the system.

knows and marks those boolean flags with the appropriate value. For the unknown components, the historian can enter a value of 1 and mark the month, day, or year as unknown. The date is thus valid, but unknown date parts can be hidden from visitors and taken into account when the database runs calculations on the date.

For example, much of Chapter 4 explores the ill-fated mission of Nathaniel Cabot Higginson, who died in the West Indies while attempting to inform John Jay on the number of ships taken by the British Navy. Higginson's birthday is known: February 12, 1768. He died sometime between July 12 and 15, 1794. The EAFSD would record these two dates as follows

Birth_date: 1768-02-12	Death_date: 1794-07-13
Birth_day_known: TRUE	Death_day_known: FALSE
Birth_month_know: TRUE	Death_month_known: TRUE
Birth_year_known: TRUE	Death_year_known: TRUE

And display them as follows:

Birth Date: 12 February 1794	Death Date: July 1794
------------------------------	-----------------------

This solution allows historians to enter full and partial dates into the same fields, which mimics how we use partial dates in our own analysis. Precision in historical dates is a sliding scale, not a sharp divide. As this chapter moves through the six modules of the EAFSD, it is crucial to evaluate the model not as a perfect replication of archival content or source documents, but as a meaningful abstraction of core elements and a reasonable set of compromises necessary to take advantage of the quantitative methods afforded by using a relational database to model the information flows of the early American foreign service.¹⁰

¹⁰ A standard library of historical date objects with related comparison and arithmetic methods would be a valuable contribution to the field. As would a standardized way of handling the dates of larger events: wars, journeys, etc.

Assignments Module

The ASSIGNMENTS MODULE is based on the diplomatic and consular cards held by the State Department and published in William B. Smith II's *America's Diplomats and Consuls of 1776-1865: A Geographic and Biographic Directory of the Foreign Service from the Declaration of Independence to the End of the Civil War*. The diplomatic and consular cards were the State Department's primary record keeping system until the 1960s. The cards were assembled in preparation for the 1876 centennial from the State Department archive, and then maintained until the 1960s when the State Department changed its system.¹¹

The diplomatic and consular cards are 5"x8" pieces of card stock, divided perpendicularly by pencil lines to create a basic tabular structure, in essence a pencil and paper database. More free form information was occasionally added on the back of the card. Organized by location, and listed in chronological order by date of appointment, each card had columns for recording:

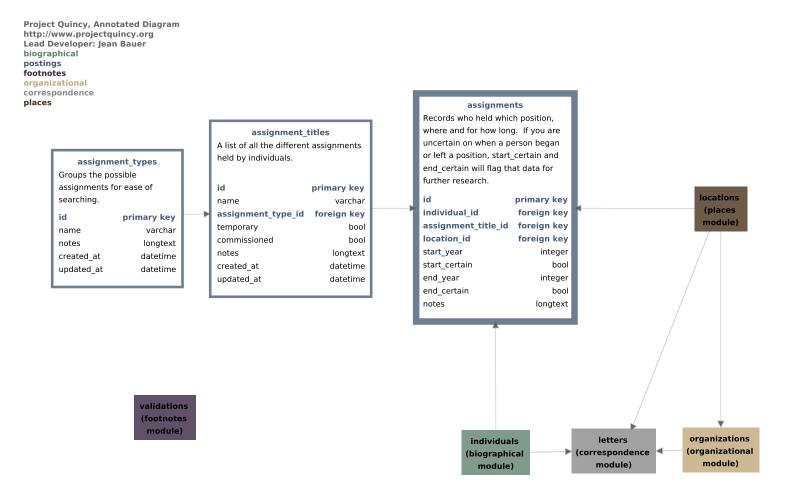
- 1."Prev. Office" [Previous Office, if any]
- 2."Name" [Full Personal Name]
- 3. "Office" [Title ex. consul]
- 4. "Allegiance" [Citizenship not always filled out, or known]
- 5. "Where born" [Birthplace not always filled out, or known]
- 6. "Whence Appt." [Location where person received appointment]

¹¹ Walter Burges Smith and Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs (U. S.), *America's Diplomats and Consuls of 1776-1865: A Geographic and Biographic Directory of the Foreign Service from the Declaration of Independence to the End of the Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Dept. of State: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1987), 39-47.

- 7. "Date of Appt." [Date of Appointment is not the same as date assumed post]
- 8. "Remarks" [often had end of appointment date, possibility additional information, especially if the officer died at his post]

As the EAFSD is a much more complex database than the cards, some of this information has been moved to other entities and some has been expanded, but the cards are the original inspiration and data source. One example of how the EAFSD expands on the record keeping of the State Department is shown in the recording of official titles. The early American governments sent officers out under so many titles that the titles have been grouped into types for ease of searching, but also to make clear the types of missions each of the more obscure titles indicates. The ASSIGNMENT TITLES are: diplomatic (negotiators and fact finding missions as well as ministers and commissioners), consular (anyone who dealt with primarily commercial/ trading interests, but not on the level of treaty negotiations), and support staff (secretaries and clerks). The ASSIGNMENT_TITLES entity holds each title given to a Foreign Service Officer. Titles in the foreign service can be grouped along two axes: commissioned and permanent. Commissioned titles required Senate confirmation, and permanent positions were long-term appointments (as opposed to fact-finding missions or specific treaty negotiations). The forty-five separate titles used by the American governments between 1775 and 1825 are a prime candidate for basic data visualization. These visualizations feature heavily in Chapter 5.

Returning to the importance of dates in the EAFSD, an ASSIGNMENT brings together an INDIVIDUAL, a LOCATION, and an ASSIGNMENT_TITLE for a span of years. Due to problems with



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Generated with DAVILA

early record keeping in the Foreign Service it is necessary to note how confident I am that the years entered are correct.

Letters Module

Correspondence is the lifeblood of the foreign service. While a foreign service is established through assignments, it is maintained through letters. Letters exist to fix and transmit information over time and space, and while they now pile up in archives and papers projects, they contain the physical record of their author's intentions, and occasionally, their recipient's memory. As the internet continues to expand and twenty-first century historians find themselves living in increasing sophisticated networks of information, there has been increased interest in earlier communication networks. Konstantin Dierks has looked at the close connections between letter writing and the rise of the merchant class. Examining communication technology a hundred years later, Tom Standage refers to the telegraph as the Victorian Internet, and David Nickles investigates the technological shift in *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy*. In the Internet of the In

Digital Humanities as a community of practice and theory¹⁵ has also taken up this connection as an object of study and a source of analogies. For example, Jermone McGann's

¹² Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America*, Early American Studies. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

¹³ Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers*, Second Edition, Revised edition (Bloomsbury USA, 2014).

¹⁴ David Paull Nickles, *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy*, 1ST edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ See Part I: Defining the Digital Humanities Matthew K. Gold, ed., *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2012), http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates., Anne Burdick et al., *Digital_Humanities* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012). *A Companion to Digital Humanities*.

book A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction. Mapping the Republic of Letters at Stanford is one of the most visible Digital Humanities

Projects developed in the past five years, garnering attention in the New York Times and as well as in scholarly publications. The EAFSD was developed in parallel and in conversation with Mapping the Republic of Letters, but with the goal of unpacking a correspondence network deployed on behalf of a nation-state, rather than one which developed to disseminate knowledge more generally. Chapter 2, "I had rather receive it from you" showed that the early American foreign service behaved more like a social, intellectual network than a formalized or even routinized government department, albeit one which only rose to the intellectual heights of the larger Republic of Letters in the person of Benjamin Franklin, and to a lesser extent Thomas Jefferson.

This dissertation analyzes letters in two very different, but complementary ways. Letters are analyzed as texts deeply networked within themselves, which require historians to "unpack" their multi-layered meanings and reveal the worldview and mindset of their authors. This first method, familiar to intellectual, political, and cultural historians, requires a close reading of individual letters, or a conversation between two individuals. This close reading method was applied in the first chapter to unpack the worldviews of John Adams and the Comte de

¹⁶ Jerome McGann, *A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014).

¹⁷ Patricia Cohen, "Digitally Mapping the Republic of Letters," *New York Times*, November 16, 2010, http://arts-beat.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/16/digitally-mapping-the-republic-of-letters/ Accessed on 2014-11-11 19:34:36; Caroline Winterer, "Where Is America in the Republic of Letters?," *Modern Intellectual History* 9, no. 03 (November 2012): 597–623, doi:10.1017/S1479244312000212.

¹⁸ Winterer, "Where Is America in the Republic of Letters?"; Douglas L. Wilson, "Jefferson and the Republic of Letters," in *Jeffersonian Legacies*, ed. Peter S. Onuf (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 50–76.

Vergennes, and by extension the inherently disparate post-Revolutionary War aims of the United States and the French Monarchy. In subsequent chapters, this close reading was supplemented

Place of Writing, Date of Writing

Salutation (with or without a name)

Updates on health: Wishes for good and/or restored health of recipient, health news from sender. This can take the form of a prayer.

List of earlier letters sent and received (if any), usually referenced by date and sender, and occasionally, place.

Main body/ text of the letter, this will vary widely depending on the purpose and intended recipient of the letter as well as when the letter was written. While specific types of letters have their own format (letters of introduction, official government or corporate documents, letters intended for publication, etc.) you often find personal, business, and general news mixed together.

Renewed wishes for good health. Anticipation of a response.

Sign off,

Signature

Date and place of letter's composition often found underneath

Name of recipient

Expected location of recipient

Addendum, with second date, often because the letter could not be sent immediately, or because something crucial (battle, business deal, health crisis) occurred between original composition and sending. Can have several of these in one letter. More likely to occur in letters that will be in transit for a long time.

Enclosure, can contain letters from other people, newspaper articles, official pronouncements, images, etc.

Envelope (if kept), Should have, at minimum, name and place where letter was sent, can usually tell if the letter was sent through an official postal system or delivered by hand.

Additional Dates, often letters are marked with date received (or viewed) and date docketed (date record entered into an official archive).

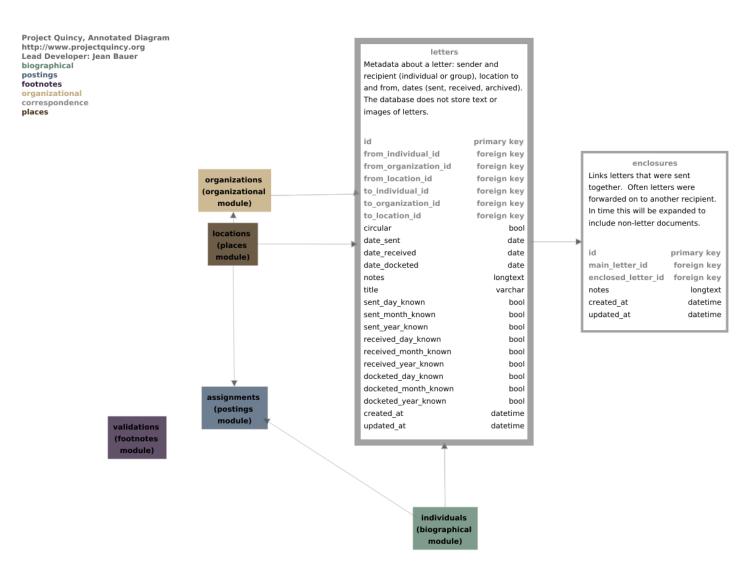
and enhanced by analyzing the letters as evidence of a connection between two people (or two groups). This is possible, because while letters can have dense and interlocking prose, they also contain the metadata of the origin and destination.

It is on this level, the level of abstracting out the people, groups, places, and dates contained in letters, that the EAFSD operates. As modeled in the EAFSD, LETTERS are written either by INDIVIDUALS or ORGANIZATIONS (groups of individuals with a common purpose). They can be sent to other INDIVIDUALS or ORGANIZATIONS. LETTERS have an origin and a destination: these LOCATIONS are also recorded. Sometimes a letter is a circular — a letter sent to multiple individuals and designed to be forwarded on. Circular letters were common in the Mediterranean, when information about changes in the politics of a Barbary State needed to be conveyed to all American consuls in the region.

As letters traveled through space they also traveled through time. The dating system recorded in Letters uses the most detailed version of historical date recording available in the EAFSD. Letters often contain the date when they were sent. The recipient may also write down the day the letter was received, or make reference to having received the letter in his response. Where the receive date is known, it can be possible to compute the time a letter took to transmit its information, which in the Age of Sail (and often during wars) can be much longer than standard transit time. In Chapter 3 there was be a packet of time-sensitive letters that is held up by a yellow fever quarantine. If the letter was entered into an archive there may also be a date docketed, indicating bureaucratic timing.

Letters can also transmit more information than their own text. Letters were often enclosed with other letters. The ENCLOSURES ENTITY tracks which letters were enclosed in other

letters, a crucial but often overlooked component of epistolary correspondence. Papers projects traditionally only print letters written or sent by the person around whom the project is structured. But for Foreign Service Officers who were desperately trying to piece together enough information to do their jobs, the most important people in their correspondence networks may very well be the ones who collate information from many places and forward it on. In Chapter 3, the argument turns on a folder of undifferentiated enclosed letters from the Secretary of State, Edmund Randolph, to John Jay in London. By untangling these enclosures, historians can see a new way of understanding the role of the Secretary of State in the 1790s, as a primary relay of crucial information in a crisis. Of course many more things can be enclosed in letters,



including newspapers, books, dry goods, and, in the case of Thomas Jefferson and Abigail Adams (as seen in Chapter 2), shoes and statuary.¹⁹ In time the data model will be expanded to handle this richer sense of information exchange, commercial relations, and friendships between Foreign Service Officers and their connections.

One of the primary affordances of the EAFSD is recording epistolary metadata so that it can be visualized and analyzed as literal network graphs. Graph theory describes relationships between pairs of objects, and network theory analyzes those graphs to discover patterns. The relationships are called "edges" and the objects are called "nodes." Almost any field of knowledge can be represented as a graph; however, certain types of historical interactions are more fruitful for graph theory and network theory than others. A subset of network theory is Social Network Analysis, which specifies that all the 'nodes' in a graph must be people.²⁰ The network graphs created from the EAFSD and displayed as visual arguments in Chapters 2 and 3 are all social network graphs, with LETTERS as the 'edges' between INDIVIDUALS.

Biography Module

The INDIVIDUALS MODULE relies on the methods of prosopographical scholarship as it models the occupations, residences, and social network of people in or related to the early U.S.

¹⁹ "Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 25 September 1785," Source: The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 6, December 1784–December 1785, ed. Richard Alan Ryerson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, pp. 390–392, Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-06-02-0120, ver. 2013-12-27).

²⁰ For a far more in-depth introduction to network analysis and graph theory see Mark Newman, *Networks: An Introduction*, 1 edition (Oxford University Press, USA, 2010); David Easley and Jon Kleinberg, *Networks, Crowds*, and *Markets* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Foreign service.²¹ In the EAFSD, a person's life story is told through their relationships to other people, types of employment, and locations. The system also allows for patterns and networks to emerge from the paths traced by individual historical actors.

INDIVIDUALS records basic information about a person: their name, sex, birth and death dates (if known), if they are an American citizen or not, and their "home state" - the STATE in the system they are most associated with. This is particularly important for Americans, as immigration, western expansion and other factors mean that a politician may be associated most strongly with a state where they were neither born nor died. A person in the foreign service (or National government) may have actually spent very little time in their home state. A person's name is entered as a full string and is not broken into components.²² Women's names include their maiden name and all married names in order of marriage, whenever possible, to preserve that component of their life history even if other information has been lost.²³

²¹ Lawrence Stone, "Prosopography," *Daedalus* 100, no. 1 (January 1, 1971): 46–79. Scholars in digital humanities have reinvented prosopography in the 21st century. For a sampling of this work see: John Bradley and Harold Short, "Texts into Databases: The Evolving Field of New-Style Prosopography," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 20, no. Suppl 1 (January 1, 2005): 3–24, doi:10.1093/llc/fqi022., Arianna Ciula, Paul Spence, and José Miguel Vieira, "Expressing Complex Associations in Medieval Historical Documents: The Henry III Fine Rolls Project," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 23, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 311–25, doi:10.1093/llc/fqn018., Martin Andert et al., "An Optimized Platform for Capturing Metadata of Historical Correspondence," *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, June 26, 2014, fqu027, doi:10.1093/llc/fqu027., Alison Booth, "Recovery 2.0: Beginning the Collective Biographies of Women Project," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 28, no. 1 (2009): 15–35.

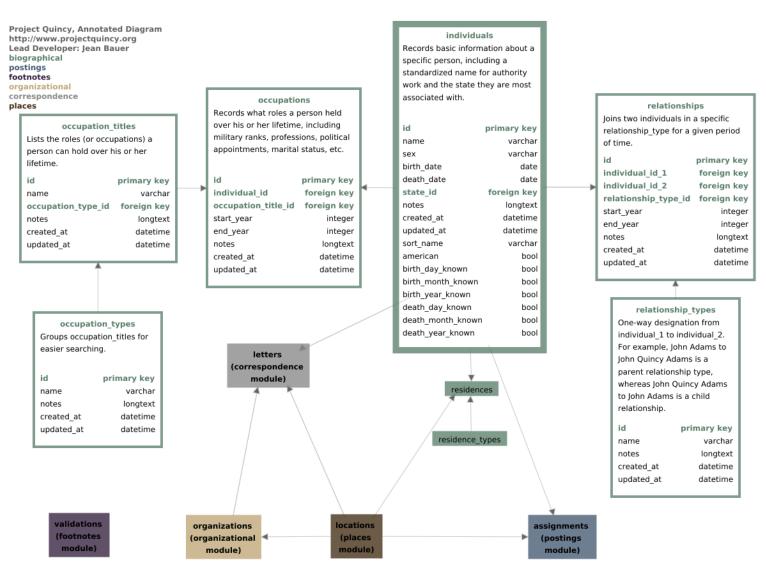
²² This is only one of several ways to record personal names. For a very different approach see TEI Consortium, ed., "13.2.1 Personal Names," in *TEI P5: Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange*, Version 2.7.0. Last updated on 16th September 2014, revision 13036 (TEI Consortium), accessed October 30, 2014, http://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ND.html#NDPER. There is also Encoded Archival Context - Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (EAC-CPF). Project Quincy was developed in tandem with the beta version of EAC-CPF in the hopes of future compatibility. See http://eac.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/ accessed on 2015-07-26 13:59:16.

²³ Future expansion of the system will include linking the person name to Authority Controls such as the Virtual International Authority File (http://viaf.org). This capacity will be built into the system when time is available to determine which individuals can be added to existing name authority lists, which lists will be most beneficial to the project, and which have a clear procedure for adding new names.

Interpersonal relationships are also recorded, with start and end years as appropriate. All RELATIONSHIPS are designated as "one-way" from INDIVIDUAL_1 to INDIVIDUAL_2. John Adams is the PARENT of John Quincy Adams (the reverse value is CHILD). This holds true even when the relationship is symmetrical — John Adams is the SPOUSE of Abigail Smith Adams (the reverse value is also SPOUSE). Relationships can also be grouped into RELATIONSHIP_TYPES: familial, commercial, political, etc. Through these simple relationships the system can reconstruct an entire family tree or political patronage system.

A person's work history is recorded through the occupations they have held over their lifetime; start and end years are recorded to indicate changes in profession or overlapping careers. Occupations are grouped by occupation_type for ease of searching and to maintain period language: for example, barrister, lawyer, judge, and justice would all have an occupation type "legal." Positions within the Foreign Service are not entered in this table, having their own module (ASSIGNMENTS) to avoid duplicating information.

A person's travels and homes are recorded in the RESIDENCES entity which connects an INDIVIDUAL to a LOCATION for a span of time. A RESIDENCE can be designated as a birth place and/or a death place. RESIDENCE_TYPES allow to the system to record whether this was a temporary stay (Congressmen in New York, then Philadelphia, or Washington, D.C. for a few months a year) or a permanent residence. Foreign residences are not recorded for Foreign Officers on assignment; that information will be held in the ASSIGNMENTS MODULE. However, family members staying with the Officer may have RESIDENCES recorded in the system to show whether they came abroad or stayed at home.

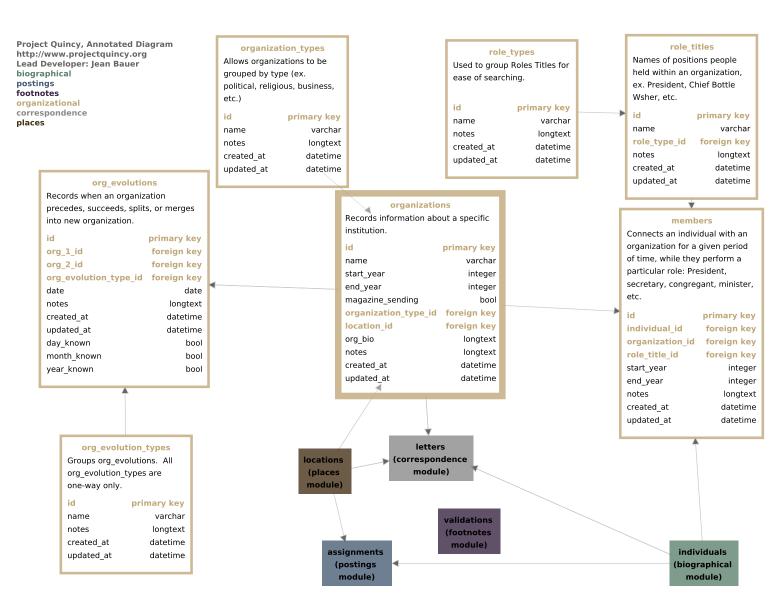


Organizations Module

Along with a person's one-on-one connections, a crucial component of prosopography is determining group identity and to which groups a person belonged. In the EAFSD, an ORGANIZATION is any group of INDIVIDUALS. ORGANIZATIONS range from legal firms with two lawyers to the U.S. House of Representatives. Since ORGANIZATIONS cover such a wide range of human activities, ORGANIZATIONS can be grouped into ORGANIZATION_TYPES (political, social, religious, commercial, etc.). INDIVIDUALS are associated with ORGANIZATIONS through the MEMBERS entity. MEMBERS connect an INDIVIDUAL to an ORGANIZATION for a span of time with a given ROLE (President, Secretary, Delegate, Partner, etc). ROLES can be grouped into ROLE_TYPES (leadership, support, etc). The ORGANIZATIONS themselves have start and end years, as well as a space for a brief organizational biography. ORGANIZATIONS are modeled to allow for two affordances: they provide a means of connection between INDIVIDUALS — people know each other because they are both members in an organization. ORGANIZATIONS also provide a communal identity which can correspond with other ORGANIZATIONS or INDIVIDUALS (see LETTERS MODULE). ORGANIZATIONS may also publish regular reports or magazines which they send to members. If so, they are actively engaged in creating and maintaining correspondence networks.

As suggested by the fact that ORGANIZATIONS can have a biography, it is important to recognize and model that ORGANIZATIONS can evolve over time. There is an ORG_EVOLUTIONS Entity that records when organizations merge and split, or when an organization changes its primary mission but keeps its name, or changes its name but keeps up its previous activities.

ORG_EVOLUTIONS can also be used to keep track of Committees in Congress, as they are suborganizations of the larger Committee of the Whole.



Places Module

The LOCATIONS MODULE models the physical and conceptual spaces relevant to the study of political history. The past fifteen years have seen a significant number of historians turning to cartography and geospatial analysis to uncover hidden patterns in past events.²⁴ This "spatial turn" has been enabled by the development of increasingly sophisticated and comparatively easy to use Geographic Information System (GIS) software.²⁵ A foreign service is an intrinsically spatial organization. Diplomats and consuls are sent to specific cities so that the nation will have a representative at that location. However, the spaces of diplomacy are not simply measured by physical distance, but also by political influence, which could result in radically different legal and commercial situations 'on the ground' in two cities almost next to each other on the map.

The module focuses on three conceptions of space which stack into the geopolitical landscape of the long eighteenth century: the LOCATION, the STATE, and the EMPIRE. LOCATIONS are the site of diplomacy, STATES and EMPIRES determine the contours of that diplomacy.

Different imperial trading systems meant different commercial regulations for American trade and different consular treaties. Having STATES and EMPIRES separate creates several affordances for studying the history of the Foreign Service. As locations were reorganized into different

²⁴ Jo Guldi, "The Spatial Turn in History," in *What Is the Spatial Turn?*, accessed November 7, 2014, http://spatial.scholarslab.org/spatial-turn/the-spatial-turn-in-history/index.html.

²⁵ For some of the most sophisticated work in this area see: Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole, and Alberto Giordano, eds., *Geographies of the Holocaust*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); Anne Kelly Knowles, ed., *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History*, 1st edition (Redlands, Calif: Esri Press, 2002); Amy Hillier and Anne Kelly Knowles, eds., *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship* (Redlands, Calif: ESRI Press, 2008).

states and states were conquered, thus changing imperial affiliation during the Napoleonic Wars, American rights in different ports changed as well.

While most of the Locations Module deals with political affiliation, LOCATIONS can also be grouped into REGIONS. A REGION is a catch-all term which is used to model linguistic and geographic categories. For example, which LOCATIONS fell into the REGIONS of "Anglophone World," the Mediterranean Basin, or the Old Southwest?

Each LOCATION corresponds to a single place, typically a city or town. The LOCATIONS entity records minimal information about this place: just its name, a notes field, and latitude/ longitude coordinates. For cartographic purposes LOCATIONS are modeled as a single geometric point. The module also contains a table for recording the COORDINATE_SYSTEMS used to plot the latitude and longitude of each location. These points are for visualization only; they are a highly abstracted view of where a location was located. In most cases, the lat/long is taken from the mid-point of the modern city. This does not take into account the ways in which 18th century cities were growing or that in some cases specific addresses might be known within a city (the location of the American Minister's residence in London on the western side of Grovenor's Square in London as opposed to Westminster Hall), but information like that is scarce and can not be relied on for all locations. Therefore there is one coordinate point for London. The majority of this system deals with communication between locations, rather than within them. When there is a large amount of intra-city communication, for example in Chapter 4 when the argument relies on both the inter- and intra-capital communication networks between and within Philadelphia and London, network analysis is employed to tease out interpersonal relationships, outside of their spatial distribution through the urban landscape. However, for the high level

overview of all diplomatic, consular, and support staff appointments that is the subject of Chapter 5, this is the only level of specificity that made visual and practical sense.

LOCATIONS are grouped into STATES. To account for political fluctuations, the same LOCATION can be grouped into multiple STATES over time. In the EAFSD, a STATE is defined as the largest continuous unit of local administration. Though within the data model STATES only contain disconnected "points" of their constituent LOCATIONS, they should be considered a conceptual blanket that encompasses surrounding farm land and any towns or cities not yet listed in the database. These states are not necessarily "nation states," but rather groups of locations that can be said to have the same governing apparatus. Some states are "nations" (France, Spain), some are closer to city-states (Algiers is the only location in Algeria), and even more are colonies like Martinique or Massachusetts. In this way the data model merges two principle definitions of the state. These states share a common source of legitimate force, 26 but are also "imagined communities," 27 held together by a belief that they are connected to each other.

A STATE is located on a CONTINENT²⁸ and has a name and notes field. While LOCATIONS have an XY coordinate for mapping purposes, STATES do not have associated digital boundaries (also called shape files). No boundary lines exist in the system. This is less a technical than a

²⁶ Max Weber et al., *The Vocation Lectures: Science As a Vocation, Politics As a Vocation* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co, 2004), George F. Kennan and John J. Mearsheimer, *American Diplomacy: Sixtieth-Anniversary Expanded Edition*, Enlarged edition (Chicago; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2012).

²⁷ The classic formulation of this idea is Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London; New York: Verso, 1991); For an example of how it has to be negotiated in a republic see David C Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

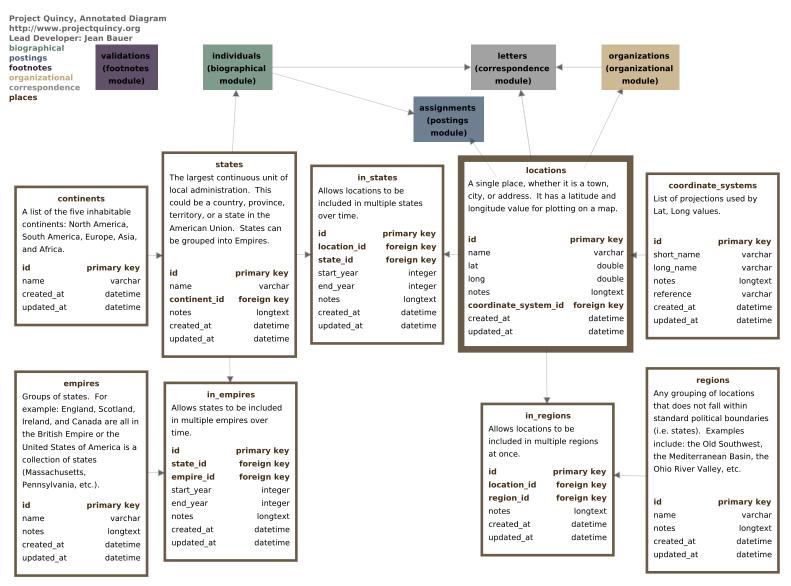
²⁸ One continent per state works in almost every instance. The only exception is Russia, which straddles Europe and Asia, although in the 18th and early 19th century it was much more a European power than an Asian one. But this is a perfect example of why every entity (except Continents) has a notes field.

theoretical decision. While it would be difficult to find historical boundary lines for many of the STATES in the EAFSD and time consuming to version them as wars and treaties re-made the map of Europe several times over, it would not be impossible. The greater concern is assigning boundary lines to territory contested between European empires and local populations. I am unwilling to draw boundary lines through contested borderlands, though future versions of the system will probably use historical maps as artifacts of how certain Europeans and Americans viewed the space of their time.²⁹

In the EAFSD STATES are really the building blocks of EMPIRES. STATES can be grouped into different EMPIRES over time, and an EMPIRE is simply a group of STATES. These states can be geographically continuous for a land empire, or discontinuous for a sea empire. "Empire" has become a loaded term in twenty-first century politics, but the EAFSD uses empire in the long eighteenth-century sense of the word, a super-collection of territories, colonies, trading posts, and nations. In this model the United States is an empire, being a collection of several states in the union. Imperial structure is an imperfect fit within a relational databases, because relational databases have no hierarchies, only groupings and relationships. All entities are on the same "level" as far as the system is concerned: Wales and England, in this model, have equal importance.

²⁹ James E Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood the United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire*, 1783-1829 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), http://site.ebrary.com/id/2001280, Peter J Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), J. C. A Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier*, 1776-1821 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

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Citations Module

Footnotes are the distinguishing mark of modern scholarly historical prose, connecting the newest argument back into the larger historiography and archival record. As Anthony Grafton has shown, footnotes have a history of their own and serve a multitude of purposes beyond fact checking, allowing the historian to communicate everything from the relevant intellectual genealogy of a particular idea, to a secondary argument, to satirical asides — all available to anyone willing to look outside the main body of the text for additional information.³⁰ This dissertation contains over 363 footnotes, but databases with their arguments implicit in the data structure as well as in the information recorded in the record are more complicated to "footnote."

Footnotes in the EAFSD take two forms. First, every entity³¹ in the EAFSD has a 'Notes' attribute — a free form text field that can be used to explain editorial decisions about the information that has been entered into a particular record. For example, one of the INDIVIDUALS named William Smith has the following note attached to his record: "It looks like there are (at least two) William Smiths conflated in this record, as the same person could not have been in Rio de Janeiro at the same time that he was in Naples and Constantinople. More research is required."³²

The EAFSD is also capable of linking any record in the database to a cited source. This capability was built into the system to ensure that scholars using the database for their own

³⁰ Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

³¹ Except CONTINENT

³² http://eafsd.org/individuals/318/ Accessed on Thu Oct 23 22:34:28 EDT 2014

research could trace the information back to archival documents and secondary sources. This module is called the CITATIONS MODULE. As this chapter has shown, relational databases typically require pre-determined links between entities. However, footnotes cut across this requirement, because while not every record in the database will require a citation, any row might need to be footnoted.

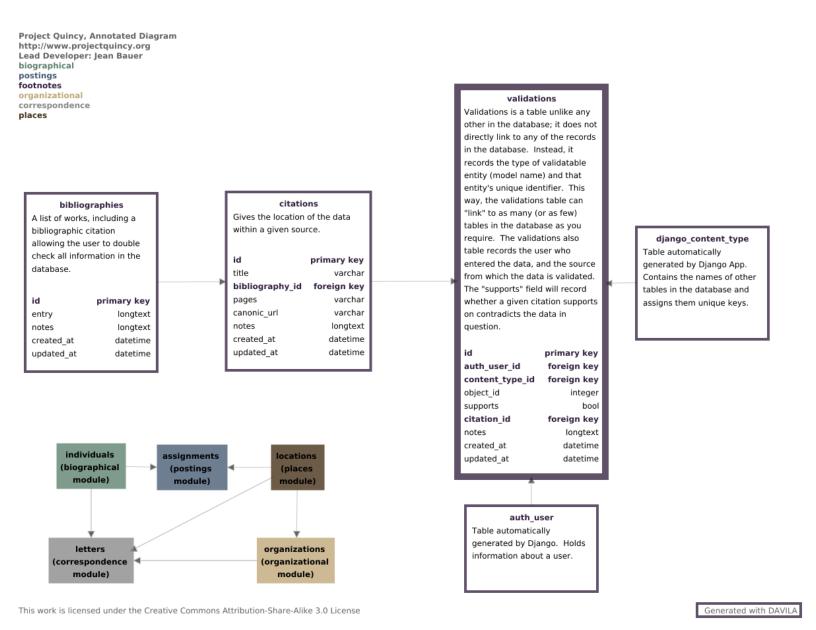
In order to accomplish this flexibility Project Quincy uses a construct from its underlying software framework, Django, called a Generic Relation³³ to potentially connect the CITATIONS ENTITY with any other entity in the database which has a record that requires additional verification. The VALIDATIONS ENTITY provides a space for recording which records in any table the citation is associated with. The VALIDATIONS table also records two other crucial pieces of information: which user created the validation and whether the citation supports or contradicts the record in question. Too many systems only provide positive citations; it is important to say when sources contradict each other and why one account is more plausible and thus presented in the system as the record.

There is a BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTITY that records a full bibliographic entry. This full entry is then linked to from the Citation Entity which records exactly where in the source the information was found — thus mimicking the relationship between footnotes and works cited in a traditional monograph.

The AUTH_USER table is a built in table in the Django Framework and records minimal information about the users: their username, password, email, and permissions in the system. In later versions this table will be expanded to include biographical information so that users can

³³ https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/1.6/ref/contrib/contenttypes/#id1 Accessed on 2015-07-26 13:59:16.

create scholarly profiles in the system or link to external profiles and thus show their credentials for adding information and sources to the larger database.



Project Quincy

The data model and visualization system described here can be used for many historical topics, not just the American Foreign Service. While certain aspects (the ASSIGNMENTS MODULE, components of the PLACES MODULE) are more adapted to political history, the underlying prosopography and geospatial analysis as well as correspondence networks have a number of applications. In fact, sections of the data model pre-exist their application to the Foreign Service, having their origin in the *Dolley Madison Social Events Database* and an early data model for the *People of the Founding Era: A Prosopographical Approach*.

For this reason, the code has always been open sourced under the name of Project Quincy. I hope that in the future other historians can make use of the code to map other correspondence networks. This is the other reason the data model is so modular: it allows scholars take components of the data model while easily tweaking other aspects to better fit their source base. The EAFSD is the first instance of Project Quincy, and hopefully, a model for other systems in digital history and digital prosopography.

Conclusion

The Early American Foreign Service Database has been designed to faithfully model the primary source bases for America's diplomats, consuls, and special agents and allow historians to discover how information flowed through the early American foreign service. The body of this dissertation shows and analyzes this information flow and analyze its effects on the power structures of the new American state and the oft-shifting political alliances within the Balance of Power.

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