Introduction

> The *Americans* will have no *Center of Union* among them, and no *Common Interest* to pursue, when the Power and Government of *England* are finally removed. Moreover, when the Intersections and Divisions of their Country by great Bays of the Sea, and by vast Rivers, Lakes, and Ridges of Mountains; – and above all, when those immense inland Regions, beyond the Back Settlements, which are still unexplored, are taken into the Account, they form the highest Probability that the *Americans* never can be united ... under any Species of Government whatever. Their Fate seems to be – A DISUNITED PEOPLE, till the End of Time.
>
> –Josiah Tucker (1781)[1]

> What then is the American, this new man? ... He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds.
>
> –J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1782)[2]

America was born at the very moment that the definition of "nation" was being reimagined. In an age in which such a significant word was adopting new meanings, citizens in the newly established United States cultivated novel forms of national politics and federal belonging. This new sense of

[1] Josiah Tucker, *Cui Bono? Or, an Inquiry, What Benefits Can Arise Either to the English or the Americans, the French, Spaniards, or Dutch, from the Greatest Victories, or Successes, in the Present War, Being a Series of Letters, Addressed to Monsieur Necker, Late Controller General of the Finances of France* (London: T. Cadell, 1781), 117–119. (Emphasis in original.)

[2] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782; London: James Magee, 1783), 51–53.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

political order, they believed, would introduce a stable and consistent national society. America was destined, in Thomas Paine's famous words, "*to begin government at the right end*." This was a tumultuous process of anticipation, angst, and anxiety. Casting allegiance to a broader government and conceptualizing a larger culture was a trial-and-error project that produced as much disappointment as it did success. To form "America" as a political body, many believed it was first necessary to define "Americans" as a people.[3]

Among those most concerned about national identities was printer Noah Webster. In 1787, only four years after the Treaty of Paris confirmed America's independence, Webster bemoaned how "the people of every country, but our own ... bear a patriotic preference to their own laws and national character." America's troubles stemmed from the fact that they possessed "no pride in the glorious distinction of freemen, which elevates the American beggar above the despots of Asia." Two years later, while attempting to introduce a distinctly "American" language, he wrote, "every engine should be employed to render the people of this country national, to call their attachments home to their own country, and to inspire them with the pride of national character." To Webster, the lack of this identity was the cause of, and the implementation of it the remedy to, all of America's problems. In order to "fix the commencement of national corruption," he wrote in 1787, "we must first prove the national character throughout." These ideological seeds bore political fruits. The primary reason for the federal Constitution, he explained, was because "it was found that our national character was sinking in the opinion of foreign nations." He happily quoted David S. Bogart in 1790 that an education based on America's exceptionalism would better "inform us ... of the distinguishing traits in [our] national character."[4]

Webster was far from alone in his anxiety. James Madison argued in his *Federalist* essays that a major reason for America's struggles was the "want of a due sense of national character." He queried, "What has not America lost by her want of character with foreign nations; and how many errors and follies would she not have avoided?" An anonymous poem found in

[3] Thomas Paine, "Common Sense" (1776), in *Paine: Political Writings*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–46, p. 35. (Emphasis in original.)

[4] *The American Museum*, October 1787, LCP. Noah Webster, *Dissertations on the English Language: with Notes, Historical and Critical* (1789), in *Creating an American Culture, 1775–1800: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Eve Kornfeld (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 102–108, p. 106. *The American Museum*, September 1787, December 1787, December 1790, LCP.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The Columbian – another early American magazine focused on celebrating and defining "America" – wrote, "a love of liberty, a spirit of enterprise, fortitude in difficulties, and a military turn of mind, are conspicuous traits in the American character." And neither were Americans the only ones to address such a dilemma: as no less a figure than Rousseau had proclaimed, "the first rule which we have to follow is that of national character: every people has, or must have, a character; if it lacks one, we must start by endowing it with one." To advance to the status of other successful nations, America must discover and embrace its unique "character."[5]

Yet conceptions of "character" were inherently problematic. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* defined it both as "personal qualities" and as a "particular constitution of the mind." Webster's own dictionary, not completed until 1828, defined it as "the peculiar qualities, impressed by nature or habit on a person, which distinguish him from others." Thus, to presume a *national* character is to assume both homogeneity and consistency within a larger group of people – a belief that the entire nation shares a "particular constitution of the mind" or "peculiar qualities" despite geographic, economic, gender, or racial differences. Such a belief promised to overlook and downplay distinctions within the broader culture, whether consciously or not. As one historian has noted, any depiction of a "national character" is an imaginative construction and "requires the constant suspension of disbelief because it is at once defined as general and as a distinctive concept of identity." This was a task bound for contestation.[6]

This was especially the case in America, where diversity was perhaps the defining feature of the early republic. Not only did geographic distance promulgate drastically competing visions of society, but deeply contextual indicators like class, race, and gender instilled varying experiences for the many residents of the new nation. Much of this diversity was masked by a fractured print culture that limited exposure to these contrasting people and voices, but it was also systematically ignored through a willful

[5] James Madison, "Federalist #63," in *The Federalist*, ed. Cass R. Sunstein (1788; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 411–420, p. 411. *The Columbian*, October 1786, LCP. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right* (1762), quoted in Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), 75.

[6] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language, Vol. 1* (London, 1766), cf. "character." Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (Hartford, CT: Sidney's Press, 1828), cf. "character." Martin Brückner, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 171.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

suspension of knowledge that enabled elites to imagine that they could conceptualize the best interests for all American residents. The very absence of this shared cultural character was what drove the deep anxiety to create one in the first place.[7]

These national debates had a transnational context. Ideas concerning national belonging underwent revision throughout the Atlantic world during the eighteenth century. Swiss jurist Emer de Vattel's *The Law of Nations* (1758), one of the earliest and most influential attempts to capture the shifting meaning of political bodies on the cusp of the Age of Revolutions, exemplified the nebulous relationship between society and government. "Moral persons who live together in a natural society," Vattel explained, were expected to construct sovereign governments that were based on "the law of nations" and also reflected a society's "state of nature." That is, political structures were meant to adhere to international legal codes as well as fulfill society's inherent purpose; law was exterior to but also dependent upon the body of the governed. "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive" to these inalienable rights, Thomas Jefferson penned in the Declaration of Independence, "it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it." The idea that national allegiance and federal structures were malleable was a revolutionary concept, and it led to both political upheaval and cultural anxiety over the tenuous balance between government and society.[8]

This tension was amplified with modernity's democratic promise. This new political idea introduced an added dimension of representative government as citizens expected those who govern them to properly reflect their own interests. When a nation is meant to match the ideas, assumptions, and cultures of those within its borders, then conceptions of that government, and the principles it is meant to promulgate, are essential to its political practice. The evolution of the idea of nations from something

[7] For competing accounts of the different regional cultures in place since the colonization period, see David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Daniel Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Pasts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[8] Emer de Vattel, *The Law of Nations, or, Principles of the Law of Nature, Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns* (London: J. Newberry, 1760), 5–7. Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence," in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 235–241, p. 235. See also David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Eric Slauter, "Rights," in Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 447–464.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that was inherently stable and outside the reach of the populace to something that was manmade and culturally constructed – or deconstructed – by humans through political free-will transformed the exercise of nationalism: rather than being something that vindicated the government body, it was now a tool through which citizens could assent to or protest against their national institutions. In short, nationalism became a political practice fraught with political possibilities.[9]

Given that United States independence came at the cusp of what Benedict Anderson called the origins of "imagined political communities," the development of American nationalism has been a common focus for scholars. Yet while historians have dissected and interred the notion of a homogenous identity, many have perpetuated the nationalist assumption that correlates cultural nationalism with the political nation-state. In other words, scholars have retained a connection between nationalist expression and the federal government. However, the unexamined combination of the two is a contemporary phenomenon, and it merely perpetuates an ideological construction that was certainly present, but far from dominant, in these early-modern debates. Indeed, a "nation" during this period could, at various times, describe a community, a state, a mindset, and of course, a federal body. It was hardly ever systematic and was rarely consistent. Nations emerged both within and without a federal state, and states often emerged within a coherent nationality.[10]

This was a common problem throughout the Atlantic empires during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Britain, three nations (England, Scotland, and Ireland) produced proud and competing conceptions of the "nation" within a single nation-state. In Germany, numerous independent political bodies that were stretched across different empires and sovereignties struggled to find a cultural form of nationalism that they still held in

[9] See David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 199–200. For the debate over deciphering a nation's interests, see Gordon S. Wood, "Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution," in *The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 127–170.

[10] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991), 11–12. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 6–7. See also Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence*, 19–20. For the general trajectories of nationalisms within these various national contexts, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Hagen Shulze, ed., *The Course of German Nationalism: From Federick the Great to Bismark, 1763–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

common. In France, an energetic and deadly rejection of a particular form of nation gave way to another – and then another. Nationalities were more often divorced from their political sovereignty than married to it.

Further, the very dichotomy between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalisms, categories which have been used to explain Western political development, has been challenged of late. "Civic" nationalism typically focused on citizenship, political rights, and individual obligations within a broader federal body, and had often been associated with France, Britain, and the Netherlands. "Ethnic" nationalism, on the other hand, often referred to myths of historical ancestry and the organizational power of common cultures in the face of polyglot empires, and was embodied in Germany, Italy, and Russia. Given its British political lineage and disparate cultural communities, America has traditionally been understood to fit within the "civic" category. Yet recent work has disintegrated the distinctions between these two categories, as scholars have located strands of ethnic capital in Western countries and sophisticated civic commodification in Eastern nations. This book will show similar convergences in the early American political experience. New Englanders at the start of the nineteenth century, for instance, appealed to both hereditary and natural rights as they tried to conceive of a national body capable of representing their interests. In tracing the inchoate and inconsistent process of nationalism during the Age of Revolutions, the United States thus provides a potent case study for this broader phenomenon.[11]

American Nationalisms examines how this process took place in three specific contexts – Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina – between the conclusion of the American Revolution in 1783 through the Nullification Crisis in 1833. Though some historians have argued that the "American Revolution, in short, gave birth to whatever sense of nationhood and national purpose Americans have had," nationalism was never a set of static, self-dependent principles that were agreed upon by a majority of citizens. Rather, conceptions of national identity – and even the "nation" itself – varied dramatically during the early republic period, and a homogenized understanding distorts a dynamic and diverse reality. American nationalisms should therefore be understood as plural. These theoretical constructions of nationalism were often tethered to personal backgrounds, regional cultures, parochial concerns, and localized political

[11] For the scholarly challenge to the "ethnic" and "civic" division in nationalist studies, see the various essays in Timothy Baycroft and Mark Hewitson, eds., *What Is a Nation? Europe 1789–1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

systems. While interregional and international connections indeed influenced many ideas, events, and policies, they were still interpreted, appropriated, and understood within a predominantly provincial framework. They also went through constant revision. New England was home to the earliest formulations of a sectionalized nationalism that critiqued federal control, only to witness a reversal decades later when they condemned South Carolina for doing the same thing. By focusing on the local culture for these productions, cultural continuity is more easily comprehensible.[12]

Further, by contextualizing these debates with those that were taking place across the Atlantic Ocean, both the unique and concomitant elements of America's political discourse take on a new light. These foreign examples are not used as determinative sources, but as a reminder of the porous boundaries between nations during the Age of Revolutions. Thinkers from this period may not have exemplified a cohesive "republic of letters" assumed by a previous generation of transnational historians, but they were responding to many of the same cultural tensions that urged change at the eve of modernity. Developments in Europe, the Caribbean, and Latin America provided touchstones, examples, and threats to America's sense of self.[13]

It is impossible to find examples that perfectly represent these broader cultural tensions. It is especially misguided to posit cultural elites – who are most often white, educated, and male – as indicative of wider societal ideas.

[12] Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York, 2003), xiii. Bernard Bailyn similarly claimed that the "American Revolution not only created the American political nation but molded permanent characteristics of the culture that would develop within it." Bernard Bailyn, *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence* (New York, Vintage: 1992), 200.

[13] As Rachel Hope Cleves has written, "early national citizens viewed themselves as participants in a transnational community, drawn together by sinews of trade, migration, and information." Rachel Hope Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Antislavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3. See also Joyce Chaplin, "Expansion and Exceptionalism in Early American History," *Journal of American History* 89 (March 2003): 1431–1455; most especially, Chaplin notes how an Atlantic framework helps the scholar to avoid historiographical exceptionalism because "an illusion of uniqueness" is most often the result of "ignorance of what is going on in parallel fields" (1433). Rosemarie Zagarri similarly wrote that it "challenges the [early American] field's basic organizing principle: the primacy of the nation-state." Zagarri, "The Significance of the 'Global Turn' for the Early American Republic: Globalization in the Age of Nation-Building," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (Spring 2011): 1–37, p. 5. For the broader Atlantic context of these national discussions, see, especially, Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); David Armitage, "The Declaration of Independence and International Law," *William and Mary Quarterly* 59 (January 2002): 39–64.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Historians of the past decades have successfully unearthed the practices, beliefs, and anxieties of everyday Americans through a variety of sophisticated approaches. *American Nationalisms*, however, will focus on a series of individuals and groups who, while not especially illustrative of the common citizen, are particularly adept at displaying the concerns and apprehensions of political belonging during the Age of Revolutions. Their ideas concerning the "nation" were born out of a particular political culture that was rooted in a specific societal context. Therefore, their words depicted the state cultures that simultaneously created and were created by their efforts. These individuals sought to speak for state and national bodies, an activity that required imaginative creativity and contextual sensitivity. Tracing the intricacies of this dialogue, then, while not able to capture the entirety of the early American experience, still reveals many of the deeper cultural underpinnings. Determining the mindset of a larger range of people in early America is indeed a very worthwhile project and has been ably mined by the most recent generation of nationalist scholarship, but for this book to do so would require fundamentally different interpretive and research methods. The focus of this study is to capture the *process* through which those who attempted to think nationally (and internationally) coped with these new problems posed by an important shift in American politics.[14]

The particular case studies chosen for this project are highlighted for a number of reasons. First, they were individuals who left textual remnants of their ideas. People who did not write as much are no less important, of course, for history in general or nationalist cultivations in particular. Yet for comparative purposes, it is helpful to draw from individuals who consciously participated in a political discourse captured in the evolving print culture. Further, those who receive critical engagement here, from Benjamin Rush to John C. Calhoun and from Thomas Branagan to James Forten, were either participants in or critics of a particularly nationalist dialogue that consciously engaged America's role as a federal body within a broader Atlantic network

[14] As Daniel Walker Howe has explained, a study of political culture looks at "not only the explicit [political] analyses and proposals … but also the mood, metaphors, values, and style" that represents much more than just political action or belief. Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 1–2. See also J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660–1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For works on nationalism that skillfully incorporate common Americans' perspectives, see David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of nation-states. None of them were fully representative of their local affiliations, let alone their respective states, and though they attempted to depict a homogenized American "culture," they failed on that front, as well. But they were each influential to varying degrees, and what they do reveal is a process of struggling with national and cultural questions that was shared by a much larger number of individuals. It is in that attempt, rather than their finished products, that make them important to this story.

Nationalism was more than just cultural rhetoric, a political by-product, or a partisan tool, though it certainly played all of those roles at various times. More than that, it was also a hermeneutical springboard for thinking about community, a cultural framework for viewing political union, and an ideological instigator for policy and action. Individuals struggled to define an American nation just as they sought to implement national policies. This book, then, focuses on how specific individuals in particular contexts grappled to define America, and how the resulting definitions had tangible consequences. How one conceived America to be, or how one conceived America *should* be, led directly to political conflict and sowed the seeds for later sectional discord. Indeed, tracing the evolving notions of national union connects the "legacies" of the Revolution with the "origins" of the Civil War. How did South Carolina politicians evolve from condemning the Hartford Convention's sectionalism in 1815 to cultivating their own state-based federalism less than two decades later? While a wide array of elements or, as one historian put it, "catalysts" factored into how distinct regions within the United States moved culturally apart from each other during the early nineteenth century, a growing chasm between how various states understood "nationalism" and "union" was a crucial component. In order to understand national fracturing, then, it is important to chart the early contestations over national belonging.[15]

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[15] Edward Ayers has argued for historians to become more conscious of cultural "catalysts" for sectionalism in *What Caused the Civil War: Reflections on the South and Southern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 133, 138. See also Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789–1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 3–5. For nationalism as cultural rhetoric, see Jay Fliegleman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, National Language, and the Culture of Performance* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993). For nationalism as a political by-product, see Richard Beeman, Edward C. Carter, and Stephen Botein, eds., *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). For nationalism as a partisan tool, see Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There is a large and expansive literature on nationalism, both on the practice and theory in general as well as the American experience in particular. No book has been more influential than Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, which argued that the growth of print culture in the mid-eighteenth century introduced "unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars," which he posited as a development that laid the foundations for modern conceptions of nationalism. "The convergence of capitalism and print technology," he wrote, "created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation." The American Revolution was the first movement to take advantage of this development and served, as Anderson put it, as a "Creole pioneer" for the rest of modernity to follow. This connection of print culture and nationalism, what Anthony Smith has termed "classical modernism," has become the standard framework for understanding the rise of nationalist sentiments in the Western hemisphere.[16]

Yet this general thesis has been challenged of late. Understanding the nation as a collective reflection of modernity, some historians have argued, oversells the success of nationalist propaganda. It is more fruitful, explained Prasenjit Duara, to "view national identity as founded upon fluid relationships; it thus both resembles and is interchangeable with other political identities." Any conception of "nationalism," Duara continued, is "rarely the nationalism of the nation, but rather represents the site where very different views of the nation contest and negotiate with each other." Similarly, Rogers Brubaker has argued that "we should refrain from only seeing nations as substantial, enduring collectivities," but to instead "think about nationalism without nations" in order to see "nation as a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening." Nationalism, then, is a form of "practice" of print culture, not a result. Other historians have even questioned the centrality of print to the construction of nationalism. Such arguments force historians to

[16] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 44, 46, 47. Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 3. Nationalism in Eastern contexts has taken a somewhat different approach; see Kosaku Yoshino, ed., *Consuming Ethnicity and Nationalism: Asian Experiences* (Richmond, VA: Curzon Press, 1999).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

examine individual and local particulars on their own terms rather than as examples of a universal whole.[17]

Further methodological developments that emphasize the practice, rather than merely the result, of nationalism highlight the cultural continuity throughout revolutionary change. The "process of nation-formation," according to Anthony Smith, is "not so much one of construction, let alone deliberate 'invention,' as of *reinterpretation* of pre-existing cultural motifs and of *reconstruction* of earlier ethnic ties and sentiments." Such a perspective helps make sense of racial and gender restrictions that are perpetuated within new nationalist conceptions, even when they are anachronistic to supposedly revolutionary national ideals. This framework is bolstered by the concept of "everyday nationalism," a scholarly approach that seeks to engage the cultural sentiment *behind* print discourse. In the most systematic defense of the approach, Jon Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss have argued that nationalism is produced through ordinary actions and milieu, in at least four central ways: "talking the nation" (the discourse citizens invoke), "choosing the nation" (individual choices and decisions), "performing the nation" (arts, literature, and performance), and "consuming the nation" (material and consumer goods). The categories for nationalist expressions have become varied, indeed.[18]

Further, the growing literature of postcolonial theory adds new dimensions to studies of nationalism. While most work in postcolonialism has focused on areas like the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – colonies of

[17] Prasenjit Duara, "Historicizing National Identity, or Who Imagines What and When," in *Becoming National: A History*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 151–178, p. 151–152, 161. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For arguments that lessen the role of print culture, see Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1966); Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to Fully-Formed Nation," in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Galakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996), 78–97. For the American context, see David D. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

[18] Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 90. (Emphasis mine.) Jon Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8 (December 2008): 536–563. For gender, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 352–389. For race, see Paul Gilroy, "One Nation under a Groove: The Politics of 'Race' and Racism in Britain," in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 263–282.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

exploitation, occupation, or domination – the recently emerging literature on "settler societies" is relevant to American history. Defined as societies settled and still populated by Europeans, often in conflict with indigenous peoples and resulting in heterogeneous communities, settler societies have several characteristics: the continued dominance of institutions of European inheritance, the perpetuation of cultural and social forms, the tensions implicit among those who were once colonized but are now colonizers themselves, and the importance of provincial polities and identities. Rather than an abrupt break with past colonial conditions, postcolonial theory emphasizes resilience in cultural, social, and political structures, and often points to the power and privilege bequeathed to descendants from their colonizing ancestors. Previous systems, prejudices, and ideas are "absorbed" into newly constructed "myths of origin and national metaphors," even if little change has actually taken place. This often means acknowledging a fractured response within new nations, as various communities are left to interpret, absorb, and perpetuate nationalist tensions according to lived realities.[19]

Taken together, recent scholarship on nationalism has pushed for a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to nationalist formations: a framework that focuses on the practice, not the perceived end-result, of nationalism; an engagement with the culture that preceded nationalist print culture; and an acknowledgement of continuity within new national structures and the perpetuation of cultural, societal, and political norms, particularly as experienced at the local level. These are important lessons for American historians because they help make sense of national tensions that emerged in the late eighteenth century and continued thereafter.

Recent works on American nationalism quickly adapted these new theoretical tools. Previously, the "idea" of America was treated as a cogent and shared principle that spanned time and place, especially in

[19] Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Introduction: Beyond Dichotomies – Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class in Settler Societies," in Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 1–38, p. 8. For postcolonialism, see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998); Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 2002). For settler societies, see Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, eds., *Unsettling Settler Societies*. For the persistence of localist interpretations within the colonial setting, see Michael Warner, "What's Colonial about Colonial America?" in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 49–70.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the early republican period. Even recently, one historian has written that American nationalism was "an independent variable" detached from historical contexts. The abstract notion of what it meant to be "American" was widely assumed to be a homogenous principle that could be interpreted and analyzed. Yet the last generation of scholarship has done much to challenge this ideal. One of the more prevalent examples of this development took place in American political history. Starting in the early 1990s, historians problematized the traditional American "character" by highlighting the contested political ideas of the early republic. James Kloppenberg, for example, presented the American democratic tradition as filled with paradoxes and ironies, and mostly void of a linear development, clear pathway, or dominant identity. By demonstrating the contested nature of early American politics, then, historians have acknowledged a more diverse culture that experienced competing tensions.[20]

These lessons from political history found their way into studies of American nationalism, which in turn took a much broader and more inclusive approach. Historians have focused on public rituals, print culture, oral performance, map production, and the general construction of a cultural "other." Yet throughout this recent scholarship on America, the importance of religion remained notably absent. This is especially ironic given that religion, according to Linda Colley, "colored the way that Britons approached and interpreted their material life," determined "how most Britons viewed their politics," and was "the foundation on which their state was explicitly and unapologetically based." To put it simply, religion "gave the majority of men and women a sense of their place in history and a sense of their worth." But until recently, religion has

[20] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 402. James Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," in Kloppenberg, ed., *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 21–37; Kloppenberg, *Toward Democracy: The Struggle for Self-Rule in European and American Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); see also Alison L. LaCroix, *The Ideological Origins of American Federalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 68–104. For examples of the older framework, see Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (1948; New York: Vintage Books, 1956); Clinton Rossiter, *The American Quest, 1790–1860: An Emerging Nation in Search of Identity, Unity, and Modernity* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971); Paul C. Nagel, *This Sacred Trust: American Nationality, 1798–1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Henry Steele Commanger, *Jefferson, Nationalism and the Enlightenment* (New York: George Braziller, 1975).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

rarely been described as a dominant factor in American identity formation. Many historians have ably pursued how nationalism affected American religions, yet a commensurate approach has not been utilized to determine how religion affected American nationalism.[21]

An increasing number of historians have recently utilized the tools of postcolonial theory in their approach to early America. Kariann Yokota, for instance, demonstrated how a cultural anxiety was central to early American cultural practices. Similarly, Trish Loughran challenged previous articulations of the early republic being "bound" by print, and argued instead that "there was no 'nationalized' print public sphere in the years just before and just after the Revolution," but that "a proliferating variety of local and regional reading publics [was] scattered across a vast and diverse geographical space." While "fragmented pieces of text circulated haphazardly and unevenly" during the period, this was "a world still largely dominated by the limits of the locale." Even the mindset for most politicians failed to exceed local political borders. The American government during its first decade, according to David Hendrickson, "constituted not a body politic but an association of bodies politic," and that in practice they were "far from constituting a unified nation"; though they feigned national connectedness, their experience "confirmed the distinctive interests and deep-rooted particularism of the several states." Jack P. Greene has similarly noted that a "localist perspective should be extended into the national era" due to the parochial experiences and provincial views dominated the early republic. "What did it mean for

[21] Colley, *Britons*, 18, 54. For the French context, see Bell, *Cult of the Nation of France*. The exceptions to this trend of lack of religion in nationalist discourse are recent: Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607–1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Sam Haselby, *The Origins of American Religious Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Amanda Porterfield, *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). For public rituals, see Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*; Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*. For print culture, see Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011). For oral performance, see Carolyn Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public after the Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Michael P. Kramer, *Imagining Language in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). For maps, see Brückner, *Geographic Revolution in Early America*. For "others," see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

people to have parallel state and national collective identities?" Greene aptly asked. It is a good question, and digging into comparative regions provides at least some answers.[22]

Yet historians of American nationalism and identity have typically retained a larger framework that downplays region-based identities. David Waldstreicher's landmark study, for instance, while still noting how "local, regional, and national identities existed simultaneously," has maintained that a regionalist focus "draw[s] our attention away from cultural and political phenomena that transcend and transformed the local." Kariann Yokota similarly emphasized postcolonial tensions that "transcend state or other provincial boundaries" instead of focusing on either "regional, national, or even Atlantic and transnational communities." While these are important lessons that are crucial for understanding the period, they do not tell the whole story. Indeed, the recent historiographical trend against regionalism overlooks an important point: regions *mattered* to residents of early America. In short, rather than solely focusing on the whole in order better to understand the parts, it might also prove beneficial to focus on the parts in order better to understand the whole.[23]

This does not make the study of nationalism any less important, however. Nationalisms do not need be embraced by an entire nation in order to be a form of nationalism. These locally imagined nationalisms, while loosely connected through a fragmented print culture, demonstrate the process of conceptualizing divergent and at times competing forms of

[22] Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8–9. Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), xix. David C. Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003), 26–27, 257–258. Jack P. Greene, "Colonial History and National History: Reflections on a Continuing Problem," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64 (April 2007): 235–250, p. 235, 243, 246, 250. See also Robert Blair St. George, ed., *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Malini Johar Schueller and Edward Watts, eds., *Messy Beginnings: Postcoloniality and Early American Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Richard C. King, ed., *Postcolonial America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt, eds., *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000).

[23] Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 6, 10. Kariann Yokota, "Postcolonialism and Material Culture in the Early United States," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (April 2007): 263–270, p. 266. For the importance of regions in European nationalist discourse at the time, see Maiken Umbach, "Nation and Region," in Baycroft and Hewitson, eds., *What Is a Nation?*, 63–80.

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nationalism. Indeed, the separation of nationalism from the nation-state is a crucial element in understanding early American political culture. David Potter long ago noted that the historian "knows that there is great difference between the nation and the political state, but in a world where all the states claim to be nations and all the nations try to be states, it is difficult for him to remember that they are two things." That is, historians often consider nationalism only as it relates to the broader federal institution, rather than, to borrow again from Potter, "a tendency, an impulse, an attitude of mind." In short, nationalism was a "form of group loyalty [that] is not generically different from other forms of group loyalty." These "forms of group loyalty" were dynamic, malleable, and mutable throughout the early republic, as Americans' sense of allegiance shifted in response to evolving contexts. The study of local cultivation, then, focuses on how nationalism was practiced long before the nation-state was the dominant factor in American life.[24]

If one is to focus on the local cultivations of nationalism, it is important to choose local cultures that represent these broader anxieties. There were numerous states and regions in the early republic that witnessed robust nationalist discourse, but this book will focus on Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, for several reasons. First and foremost, they provide the opportunity to examine three dynamic and diverse regions. For instance, though South Carolina was far from representative of the South, it eventually came to the forefront of creating a Southern political discourse. Second, each state provides different types of cultures and social structures based on their lived realities and discursive communities. Third, each region has produced a proud tradition of characteristics closely tethered to their sense of identities – that is, a focus on how these particular state-based cultural practices developed revises traditional ideas of the nation as a whole. And finally, each state encountered a period in which a sizeable number of their inhabitants reevaluated what it meant to be part of the American union.[25]

[24] David M. Potter, "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," *American Historical Review* 67, no. 4 (July 1962): 924–950, p. 925, 926, 928. See also Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 134, which defines the nation as "the body which legitimizes the state."

[25] Overviews of the general period include Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009);

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These three states should not be considered the most important political bodies in the nation, let alone the most representative within their own region. In the South, Virginia quickly became the dominant state power when it came to federal representation, as residents from the state held the presidential office for thirty-two of the first thirty-six years, and many of the other states, especially in New England, grew increasingly worried about a Virginian dynasty. In the mid-Atlantic, New York quickly evolved into a financial and cultural center for the broader federal body, and many political policies were geared to aid its interests. Indeed, many of the most prominent nationalist thinkers – for example, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison – came from Virginia and New York. Yet their ensconced position within the Union was precisely what triggered worry from citizens in competing states, and the political cultures within New York and Virginia rarely reached the same crisis regarding federal union as in the states chosen for this study. By focusing on Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, then, this project examines how citizens and communities reacted to being in the shadow of other states' interests, an anxiety that prompted more salient nationalist constructions.

Despite all three states taking part in the same revolutionary ferment and creating state constitutions at around the same time, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina each produced differing political cultures that in turn influenced how local citizens both understood and

Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Stanly Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Specific treatments of individual regions include the following. For South Carolina, see Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760–1808* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Lacy K. Ford, Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). For Pennsylvania, see John Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers: The Making of a Creole Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Andrew Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy: The Struggle to Fuse Egalitarianism and Capitalism in Jeffersonian Pennsylvania* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Albrecht Koschnik, *"Let a Common Interest Bind Us Together": Associations, Partisanship, and Culture in Philadelphia, 1775–1840* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007). For Massachusetts, see Stephanie Kermes, *Creating an American Identity: New England, 1789–1825* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Johann N. Neem, *Creating a Nation of Joiners: Democracy and Civil Society in Early National Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

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experienced their provincial and national identities. As Michal Rozbicki has noted, notions like "liberty" and "citizenship" were conditioned by cultural preconceptions and constructions, and thus diverged based on different settings. In Massachusetts, for instance, the influence of traditions like town participation forced the state's constitution to include an idea of democratic sovereignty and a requirement of popular approval. In South Carolina, the emphasis on land and property placed greater emphasis on ownership and representative authority. And unlike the other two states, Pennsylvania originally claimed the most radical state constitution that only became more conservative in later decades – a reversal compared to the constitutional trajectories of Massachusetts and South Carolina. Such government structures affected how local residents imagined citizenship and political union. While state – and national – legislatures were not fully representative of their constituents, they, to a large degree, constructed the boundaries in which all local residents experienced, understood, and practiced nationalism. Yet even within each state, serious disagreements and diversity remained, much to the chagrin of those who wished otherwise.[26]

The most foundational differences within the individual states is found when comparing rural and urban centers. Though political debates at the state level were meant to account for the interests of all their citizens, the reality was that the major port cities served as a hub for most of the political discussion. Communities in the backcountry were often forced to take radical action to gain an audience and invoke change. The cultures bequeathed by Puritan communities in Massachusetts and the religious and ethnically diverse populations in Pennsylvania were just as influential as the slave societies that buttressed South Carolina. While this book spends a lot of time on the political elites located in towns like Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston, the presence of these rural conflicts often cast a lasting shadow over these ideas.[27]

[26] Michal Jan Rozbicki, *Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

[27] For Pennsylvania, see John Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*; Billy Gordon Smith, *The Lower Sort: Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750–1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Ronald Schultz, *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720–1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). For South Carolina, see S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North

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Perhaps the most obvious difference in lived realities between these three states was the presence of enslaved African Americans. According to the 1790 census, there were 107,094 slaves in South Carolina compared to 3,707 in Pennsylvania. Massachusetts had abolished slavery in 1780. And while still small, there were growing communities of free African Americans in the Northern states. Not only did the very presence of blacks influence how others conceptualized American society, but black authors also added to this discourse by conceptualizing their own understandings of the nation. In South Carolina, slaveholding became a linchpin of their provincial identity, and blacks were invoked throughout the country as an ideological "other" in imaginative constructions of an American citizen. In Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, on the other hand, individuals like Richard Allen and Prince Hall worked to carve a form of nationalism for freed slaves. These local interactions shaped how Americans viewed themselves, their community, and their nation.[28]

Many creators of nationalism in early America utilized the growing – if still fragmented – print culture of the period. Newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, plays, and sermons were published with increasing frequency and often claimed a new, national voice. Philadelphia's *American Museum* and Massachusetts's *Boston Magazine*, for example, aimed to be representative of the entire nation by seeking both authors and readers throughout the states, yet their content, approach, and reach reflected regional conditions. In South Carolina, social clubs like the Society of the Cincinnati – an organization that was found throughout the nation, yet was much more active in the South – retained an aristocratic and hierarchical form of patriotism, while the Democratic-Republican societies that sprung up in Pennsylvania often envisioned a more egalitarian future. And though popular organizations like Freemasonry were found throughout all the states, the presentation and understanding of its roles were conditioned by local sensibilities.[29]

Carolina Press, 1953). For Massachusetts, see J. M. Opal, *Beyond the Farm: National Ambitions in Rural New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

[28] For slavery and American nationalism, see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation* (New York: Knopf, 2014); Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

[29] For magazines, see Robb K. Haberman, "Provincial Nationalism: Civic Rivalry in Postrevolutionary American Magazines," *Early American Studies* 10 (Winter 2012): 163–193. For social organizations, see Roland M. Baumann, "The Democratic-Republicans of Philadelphia: The Origins, 1776–1797" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1970); Steven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the*

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And finally, religion flourished in every region, but in different ways. While religious freedom was pronounced throughout America, Massachusetts maintained state support for the Congregationalist Church until 1818. And though South Carolina was once a stronghold for the Anglicans, and Pennsylvania was a refuge for Quakers, both states saw a dramatic increase in upstart, charismatic, and democratic religions like the Baptists and Methodists, though their success lagged in South Carolina. These religions experienced different receptions and adaptations in every region yet played an important role throughout the country in understanding what it meant to be "American." For many citizens, their American identities were formed in the pews as much as they were in the voting box.[30]

None of these states were completely representative of their particular regions, however. While New England is typically seen as a heterogeneous community, various factors led to Massachusetts producing unique concerns that separated them from neighboring states. Even more distinct was the separation between South Carolina and other Southern states. William Freehling decades ago described the "many Souths" model for Southern history during the antebellum period. More than just regional partitions – the delta, tidewater, black belt, etc. – the South in the early republic contained competing ideological, racial, and economic diversities – moderates and extremists, despots and democrats, elitists and commoners. Further, diversity within local communities exterminated the chance for unity even at the state level. Therefore, while *American Nationalisms* will trace the divergences between states, as well as maintain that there were dominant majority cultures to which most participants responded, it will also highlight the competitions within those states and the commonalities among them.[31]

All of these divergent tensions led to competing provincial cultures and, in turn, varied nationalist expressions. This book traces the various

Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730–1840 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*.

[30] See Jonathan D. Sassi, *Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Christine Leigh Heyman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997); Monica Najar, *Evangelizing the South: A Social History of Church and State in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Haselby, *The Origins of American Religious Nationalism*.

[31] See the discussion of "many Souths" in William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Volume 1: Secessionists at Bay, 1776–1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), viii.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108333290.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

trajectories of each state through America's first five decades, and in doing so documents particularly potent moments of nationalist crisis. It points to commonalities as well as divergences. At different points, citizens in both Massachusetts and South Carolina threatened to radically alter the federal compact during the Hartford Convention and the Nullification Crisis, respectively, and each state prompted different nationalist courses: for Massachusetts, they transitioned their national allegiance away from New England and toward the federal body, whereas those in South Carolina increasingly came to understand their own state as a sovereign nation itself. Yet the focus on South Carolina's much later move toward secession overshadows the fact that New England contained the first proponents for states' rights. And while many of America's biggest national events took place in Philadelphia, a number of Pennsylvanians' conceptions of the national union were tested as debates over slavery became more strident.

In order to capture the variegated nature of these tensions, this book focuses on a different element of cultural nationalism in each chapter; and though all three states will remain in conversation, a single state will take center stage at varying times. Further, at particular moments in each chapter, one or two individual writers receive special attention. These case studies were chosen not because they were the most influential, or even that their ideas were most representative, but because they aptly embodied relevant cultural tensions and left a robust written record of those struggles. Most importantly, they engaged nationalist issues that made them think beyond their local circumstances, whatever those circumstances may have been. Even if they failed to speak for their fellow citizens, they often wrote as if they did. Frequently, it was in their *divergences* from their contemporary society that made their ideas most potent, even as society provided their cultural tools in the first place. They are poignant examples of the process of conceptualizing nationalism in the age of political experimentation.

The book is separated into two parts. The first part examines how individuals in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts originally imagined new frameworks for nationalist belonging, with those in South Carolina playing a supplemental role. Chapter 1 begins with the debates surrounding the Constitutional Convention and ratification process in 1787–1788 as the origins of American nationality. In an era when nations and states were acknowledged as products of human innovation, Americans believed that governments worked best when they matched the culture of the governed. Thus, state formation was an act of cultural invention,

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and debates revolved around how different states envisioned a national union. People during this period began to think nationally, but their diverging perceptions were masked by an amorphous political language. Even the term "nation" during this period was in transition, as it could mean a body of like-minded people in a particular state, a sense of belonging to a specific region, or, increasingly, an attachment to a federal institution that bound the states together. This etymological ambivalence embodied broader cultural tension. This wasn't just an American phenomenon, either, as debates over political union, federal allegiance, and national culture took place in Europe as well. Indeed, this was a moment of democratic awakenings across the Atlantic that witnessed a new birth for nationalist debates.

In Chapter 2, the discussion then moves to local ministers in the 1790s in order to examine how divergent religious contexts cultivated different frameworks for thinking about the nation. Specifically, it looks at thanksgiving sermons in Massachusetts as a case study in local appropriation: proclamations were decreed from the president and then received, interpreted, and preached in different ways by different ministers depending on their denominational traditions and theological beliefs. The preaching, in turn, both reinforced and expanded the way in which congregants interpreted the nation. And while the interchange between religious and political ideas concerning religion was an Atlantic phenomenon, the lack of a national religion made America's experiment different from that in Britain and France. The global threat of religious radicalism and skepticism challenged traditional understandings and forced new theological defenses. In Massachusetts, ministers cultivated a political theology of unionism that tethered the nation to a particular divine covenant, which ironically provided religious and cultural foundations for regional schism and dissent.

The second part of the book deals with how Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina each came to reconsider the terms and limits of unionism in response to competing national crises. First, in Chapter 3, we examine the buildup to and aftermath of the War of 1812, a period in which a fleeting idea of a patriotic, unified, postcolonial America was presented as the nation's future, only to fracture as debates over slavery became central components to nationalist rhetoric. As the country began to look westward with expansionist tendencies, citizens debated the implications of this expansive vision for nationalist expression. Dissecting the orations that were given on patriotic holidays, for instance, provides a lens through which to explore evolving notions of

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national belonging in a country whose borders were rapidly expanding. This anxiety was set against a broader context where war was seen as an increasingly global event that restructured conceptions of nations throughout Europe. It is crucial, then, to situate America's wartime nationalist rhetoric within this Napoleonic world. Ironically, politicians from New England dared to imagine a new form of ethnic and state-based nationalism that would lay the foundation for later factional debates.

War and expansion were not the only foundational events taking place in the early republic that impacted nationalist politics. Perhaps even more crucial was the debate over slavery, which had become a driving wedge between states. This was especially true in Pennsylvania, a state that had previously served as a mediating presence in America's nationalist discourse. Anti-slavery activists, including white colonizationists like Thomas Branagan and black abolitionists like James Forten, argued for new racialized notions of union that further ruptured the nationalist links between Northern and Southern states. Importantly, these debates took place at the same time that Britain was attempting to abolish slavery from its empire, which requires a comparison between these two nations and how they conceptualized slavery's role in a union. Chapter 4 examines how racial belonging became a paramount issue during a nascent age of democratic governance.

These conflicts over slavery pushed Southern states to imagine new modes of federal governance. The first climax of this divisive trajectory occurred in the 1820s and 1830s as South Carolina, for the first time, examined the possibility of nullification. As slavery and the slave economy came to dominate national discourse, Americans once again grappled with how a federal government and imagined national culture could handle such divergent interests. This tension played out on several levels, which included politicians who fought over the power and limits of a centralized government, local citizens who were left to understand how they fit into an increasingly fractured nation, and literary authors who explored issues of union and nullification through poetry and prose. In an important way, this crisis was the apex of the cultural debates concerning nationalism that had taken place in the previous five decades. Chapter 5, then, examines how politicians and authors in South Carolina appropriated nationalist myths and ideas, including the incorporation of European ideas of romantic nationalism, in their quest to validate their state as a sovereign nation. Though the crisis ended without a political severance, it laid the cultural groundwork for disunion and secession.

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No individual state, throughout this entire process, ever constructed a coherent and homogenous nationalist vision, let alone a systematic political culture. Divergences remained in each community, and individuals, though they presented themselves otherwise, never stood as representative for the larger body. Neither did the events and arguments outlined here prove determinative for the decades that followed. Nationalist discourse is much too unstable for such a neat trajectory. However, these intercommunity, interstate, and intranational debates created discursive communities in which various words, arguments, and assumptions acquired specific meanings. And despite the vastly different political cultures within each states, common anxieties spread throughout. How specific individuals appropriated these ideas as they struggled to address national concerns and construct a national identity is the focus of this book. It is in *that* struggle over paradoxical meanings that the cultivation of nationalism is most revealing.

Understanding how ideas of nationalism were constructed is crucial to understanding early American political culture. From people in Massachusetts who transitioned from seeing their region as its own nation to understanding their state as the center of a broader nation, and from individuals in South Carolina who came to see their own state as a nation in and of itself, this is a story of shifting views of "nation," "Union," and "America." *American Nationalisms* examines tensions and anxieties over allegiance, patriotism, and power through a variety of sources and from a variety of perspectives. The desired result is not to recreate a homogenous nationalist discourse, but to reveal the contested and multivocal atmosphere of early American political culture during the Age of Revolutions. Charting this dynamic process offers insights into American culture in particular and cultural belonging in general.

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