Dueling Masculinities in the Go-Ahead Era

Shifting Concepts of Masculinity in the Early Republic, 1790-1850
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"To have shrunk under such circumstances from manly resistance would have been a degradation blasting our best and proudest hopes; it would have struck us from the high rank where the virtuous struggles of our fathers had placed us, and have betrayed the magnificent legacy which we hold in trust for future generations. It would have acknowledged that on the element which forms threefourth of the globe we inhabit, and where all independent nations have equal and common rights, the American people were not an independent people, but colonists and vassals." James Madison, State of the Union (11/4/1812)1

When President Madison reflected on the declaration of the War of 1812 during his annual message to Congress, the U.S. had met only a blundering defeat at Detroit. Justifying the ongoing war, which John Calhoun predicted would be over "in four weeks' time," Madison reflected the opinions of the fiery young war hawk Henry Clay, who stated that resistance to war "had weight with the timid and pusillanimous only."² Madison wrapped up issues of honor and independence into what he called "manly resistance." His gendered statement came at a time when the American nation, which he helped found a generation earlier, was developing into a more singular entity, defined by a specific culture. The young men who had taken up the "magnificent legacy" of republicanism, to which the President referred, were not only shaping the republic, but defining the concept of masculinity for the men who would rule it. Masculine insecurity, arising from these cultural negotiations, would define America's second generation as they struggled to meet the demands of competing archetypes vying to become the definition of



something unknown to history before: American manhood.

Historians have struggled to understand this moment of cultural change because it mostly happens unsaid and within the inner lives of individuals. However, history's cultural turn, which dominated American history in the 1970s, and its focus on finding the hidden histories of disenfranchised people uncovered new revelations about American ethnicity, race, and class consciousness.⁴ Riding this wave in the academy, and inspired by a concurrent active second-wave feminism, women's studies became a small, but influential subfield of American history. Feminist historians argued that gender was a socio-cultural category and not the result of inherent biology.5 This made it the stuff of the cultural turn historians and they poured themselves into study of gender, and women in particular. Foremost among these pioneering feminist historians, Joan Scott argued that gendered history was not only about the description and analysis of exclusively female agents, but also said much about the changing ideas about masculinity. Female gender did not exist in a vacuum, but instead existed and was defined by

¹ James Madison, "Fourth Annual Message (Nov. 4, 1812)," eds. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29454.

² Henry Clay, "Newspaper Editorial (April 14, 1812)," from James Hopkins, ed., Papers of Henry Clay, Volume 1 (Lexington: U of Kentucky Press, 1959), 646; and John C. Calhoun, guoted in Robert Allen Rutland, The Presidency of James Madison (Lawrence: U Press of Kansas, 1990), 105.

³ Madison, "Fourth Annual Message (1812).

⁴ George G. Iggers, *Historiography in the 20th Century* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1997), 98-9.

⁵ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," The American Historical Review 91, no. 5 (Dec., 1986), 1056.

what it was not: male gender. Without examination of masculinity and its relationship to power, she argued, scholars would be unable to quite pinpoint the way women have been left disempowered throughout American history.

When the pioneering feminist historian Joan Scott reminded her fellow historians that gendered history was not simply a synonym for "women's history," she inspired a new sub-field of gender studies in American history that purposefully examined the role of masculinity in history. These masculinity scholars have had an impact across the social sciences and have found the revolutionary experimentation that marked America's second generation to be a focal point for understanding the relationship between hegemonic masculinity, its changing face, and its relationship to power.

Taking Scott's cue, historians found a useful framework in the thoughts of sociologist R.W. Connell. Early in the development of masculinity studies, Connell argued that gender roles are in constant flux and are "subject to historical change." ⁸ This change makes gender a legitimate subject worthy of the historical scrutiny, less as a subject with a history of its own, but as a structure that changes to suit changing social needs and goals.⁹ The opportunity for revolutionary change that followed the American Revolution and the formation of the early republic provides the changing social structure that might trigger Connell's predicted changes in gender expectations. Part of establishing a nation, particularly one in which power would be held by masses of men, would be to establish gender roles.

An example of changing gender roles in the early republic can be found in women's history. Women were not always "hostage to their homes," as Barbara Welter contended, in what may the first

look into gender in the early republic. 10 During the era of the American Revolution and colonial periods, women were tentatively considered political beings, only to find that the new republic was to be a patriarchy, manipulated by men for the benefit of men in the public sphere. Meanwhile. women were relegated as private beings. 11 The hardening of patriarchy in post-Revolutionary America is made most clear by historians looking at the example of women's suffrage in New Jersey. Since the heady revolutionary days of 1776, single women enjoyed voting rights in New Jersey, but as time went on, and as local politics dictated, the franchise for single women was revoked in 1807.¹² As men gained a public voice with the slow but steady march toward the universal white male suffrage that defined the Jacksonian era, women saw a retreat from public life. Jefferson congratulated women who "had the good sense to value domestic happiness" and who did not "wrinkle their foreheads with politics." To be a full participant in the American political republic was to be a voter; and to be a voter, one should be a masculine man. But was masculinity merely a means to marginalize women?

The Founding Fathers not only fashion a nation, but also a national masculinity

What made a man masculine was in flux during the post-Revolutionary nation-forming period. The words of the "Founding Fathers," from Thomas Paine to Benjamin Franklin to John Adams pushed the ideal of a republic ruled by virtuous "manly" men. 14 Qualities such as honor, force, and independence were generally desired, but a synthesis of sources prove that there was not one

⁶ Ibid., 1056.

⁷ Ibid., 1063.

⁸ R.W. Connell, "Theorising Gender," Sociology 19, no. 2 (May, 1985), 258.

⁹ Timothy Carrigan and R.W. Connell, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," *Theory and* Society 14, no. 5 (Sep., 1985), 589.

¹⁰ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-60," American Quarterly 18, no. 2, part 2 (Summer, 1966), 151.

¹¹ Mary Beth Norton, Separated by their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2011).

¹² Judith Apter Klinghofer and Lois Elkins, "'The Petticoat Electors': Women's Suffrage in new Jersey, 1776-1807," *Journal of the Early Republic* 12, no. 2 (Summer, 1992), 159-93. Also see Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Phila.: U Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

¹³ Jefferson quoted by Mark Kann, A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language and Patriarchal Politics (NY: NYU Press, 1998), 43.

¹⁴ Kann, Republic of Men, 30-1, 47.

singular masculine archetype. ¹⁵ The political importance of enfranchisement attached to masculinity in the young republic made it a pressing concern for ambitious men to prove their masculinity. This resulted in a generation of American men defined by a marked gender insecurity and a concern for honor and independence.

To be of the male sex did not mean one was a man, qualified to rule the republic. R.W. Connell not only legitimized masculinity as a framework worth studying for historians, but also explained that there were plural masculinities. ¹⁶ A hegemonic masculinity dominated and vied for political power, while lesser men could not measure up or were not allowed to measure up. 17 It is no surprise that among the criticisms leveled at candidate John Adams by the Republican press in 1800 was that he had "a hideous hermaphroditical character" and lacked "the firmness of a man." Adams may have been a male, but his opponents attacked his qualifications for office by claiming he was not a man, that is that he did not express hegemonic masculinity. The qualities of hegemonic masculinity are usually expressed by unattainable cultural representations (i.e. John Wayne in the 1940s, John Sullivan in the 1880s, or Rambo in the 1980s). These representations caused gender insecurity for white heterosexual men who lived their lives as constant failures. 19 For other men, even striving to attain the qualities of hegemonic masculinity was a pipedream. Masculinity was denied not only to women but to other men, such as racial minorities, homosexuals, foreigners, those perceived as dandies, and others on the political periphery.

Connell's sociological concept of hegemonic masculinity was tested by historian and

political scientist Mark Kann's 1998 work A Republic of Men. Kann made the argument that the founding generation, in fear of "disorderly men," like those whom Daniel Shays represented, were a great threat to an orderly and virtuous republic.²⁰ The Founders, themselves elites, felt the general populace was infected with "democratic distemper" and used a hegemonic masculinity to tame them by promoting a value set that rewarded moderation.²¹ Legally the Founders set laws into place that disqualified women (such as those in New Jersey) and non-whites from the vote, and then negotiated which white men were invested enough in a stable society to participate in democracy. Because of this many states barred non-propertied, and thereby nonindependent, men from polling places. 22 The debate over universal white male suffrage continued under America's second generation, who took very seriously how they would wear the mantle of republicanism into a changing future. In fact, Joyce Appleby argued that this was the defining characteristic of this generation.²³

Kann argued that the Founders firstly saw a certain masculine archetype as a requirement for citizenship in a republic. They used a hegemonic masculinity, defined by the public image of George Washington, to measure up these masses of new Americans. A man was to be independent and to value self-restraint. He was in control at all times. He was a patriarch and ruler of his own world, governing women and minorities who depended on him as a neo-classical *paterfamilias*. The least manly figure was the lowly and lonely "bachelor," who was perceived as the greatest danger to the republic because he was unattached to subordinates

¹⁵ R.W. Connell and James Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (Dec., 2005), 835.

¹⁶ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: U California Press, 1995).

¹⁷ Ibid., 55-57.

¹⁸ James Callender, *The Prospect before Us* (Richmond, Virginia, 1800-1801), v. 2 pt. 2, p. 57; from "Hideous hermaphroditical character...," *Monticello.org* https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/hideous-hermaphroditical-character-spurious-quotation

¹⁹ Scott Sandage, Born Losers: A History of Failure in America (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005).

²⁰ Kann, Republic of Men, 50.

²¹ Ibid., 1.

²² Ibid., 2-3.

²³ Joyce Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001), 19

²⁴ Kann, Republic of Men, 2.

²⁵ Ibid., 79-82.

and thereby dedicated to himself.²⁶ A real man's fatherly concern for those under his wing mattered more than those concerns for profit that dominated the egos of middling traveling merchants.²⁷ The fever and passion of political parties and demonstration were not suitable for masculine men. It is no surprise then that Washington, Adams, and Jefferson allowed others to campaign on their behalf as they acted as reluctant candidates, as modern-day Cincinnati. These candidates displayed self-sacrifice for the republic, the only virtuous path to fame.²⁸

Considering that Kann approached this subject in the 1990s, it is no surprise to see him relying on rhetorical and linguistic evidence taken from the writings of the Founding Fathers. It was believed by post-modern historians that diction could open doors previously closed to history and act as sources that might give scholars a peek into the inner lives of historical agents. Kann dedicates major portions of his work to the analysis and "reading between the lines" of grammar and word choice.²⁹ For example, Kann argued that the Founders believed their generation to be one of fertility, which "procreated a republic" and which nurtured it.³⁰ Kann argued that this proves men did not give much weight to "female reproductive powers," and thereby points to the inner thoughts of the authors on women that might otherwise not have been gained.³¹ In this particular example, Kann reflects Joan Scott's point that any study of one gender helps the scholar gain insight into the position of the other.³² While Kann shows women dispossessed of a nurturing role, Barbara Welter shows that role returned to women and denied to men by the next generation of Americans.³³

Even though Joan Scott argued that masculinity is more of a historical lens than a subject unto itself, works like Kann's carefully treat it as a subject worth the historian's scrutiny.³⁴ Coming from the same school of thought as Kann, Michael S. Kimmel begins his book Manhood in America: A Cultural History with the bold phrase, "American men have no history" and makes the argument Connell made: that masculinity is a changing subject worthy of historical study.³⁵ Kimmel's book is considered the seminal work on American masculinity as its central subject, even while it borrows techniques and methodologies borrowed from feminist history.³⁶ Kimmel's source material consists of plays, letters, speeches, and other popular media. While Kann looks at masculinity and its implications from the perspective of the Revolutionary generation, Kimmel carries the subject throughout American history to the present. What the reader is left with is a framework that demands testing via more specific historic analyses.

Kimmel suggests that three male archetypes competed during the era of America's second generation: that of the genteel patriarch, the heroic artisan, and the self-made man. Of course, the concept of masculinity espoused by the worried Founding Fathers remained a fixture. Kimmel describes it as the "genteel patriarch," a man who soberly checked his desires and thought of his subordinates before himself.³⁷ This refined and European-rooted archetype for many men of the second generation, did not suit modern times and uniquely American situations. The genteel patriarch was looked at by many men "on the go," participating in the fast paced economy of the

Changing times and the antebellum war for masculine hegemony

²⁶ Ibid., 52.

²⁷ Ibid., 2, 14.

²⁸ Ibid., 45.

²⁹ For some examples see Kann, *Republic of Men*, 18, 30-34.

³⁰ Kann, Republic of Men, 47.

³¹ Ibid., 49.

³² Scott, 1056.

³³ Welter, 171-3.

³⁴ Scott, 1056.

³⁵ Michael S. Kimmel, Manhood in America: A Cultural History, 3rd ed. (NY: Oxford UP, 2001), 1, 5.

³⁶ Ibid., 3.

³⁷ Ibid., 16.

Market Revolution, as an old-fashioned, stale dandy. 38 Jacksonian Americans looked down on Jefferson and Madison and Monroe in their stately mansions as much as Jefferson and Madison and Monroe looked down on their younger profit-focused, mostly bachelor countrymen as dangerous. 39 The genteel patriarch was not only un-American, but may be corrupted by his decadence. It is no wonder a vibrant anti-Masonic movement swept the nation during the antebellum era. 40 Jeffersonians were accused by the young War Hawks during the years leading up to the War of 1812 of displaying "womanish" attachments to France and England. 41

Joyce Appleby's *Inheriting the Revolution* studied the impact of this generational divide, while expressing reservations about the trap that making such generalizations. 42 Appleby wrote that each generation inherits a sense of self from that which went before it, but then applies and adapts this "inheritance" to changing times. She found the period of the young republic to be one of dramatic changes in opportunities from a growing cotton trade to industrialization, to westward expansion.⁴³ As the second generation experienced the quickly changing economic conditions, institutions naturally disappeared or collapsed. 44 While the family did not collapse, concepts of masculinity and femininity were among the many cultural markers that did, indeed, shift according to Kimmel. This caused a battle between the three competing masculine archetypes for hegemonic dominance.⁴⁵

The generation gap widened as the market revolution intensified. Young men left the farms

and shops of their fathers to strike out on their own. The relationship of these men with their fathers was particularly fraught with conflict.⁴⁶ Kann argued that this was the result of growing egalitarianism, a son was technically the equal of his father.⁴⁷ Until the time of the Revolution, a father's role was one of paternal authority. All decisions made by members of his family were to meet a father's consent. This was considered the atom of the colonial state, in which authority worked its way top down. 48 Republican egalitarianism, though, led to a weakening of this fatherly authority. All a father could do was hope that his sons be open to his father's influence. Confusion about this shift sometimes led to a father ignoring his son completely. 49 A famous example can be found in the life of Abraham Lincoln, who left his father's home for Springfield as an ambitious 22 year-old and thought very little of his distant father when he reflected back on his life as President.⁵⁰ In the new economy, bachelors like Lincoln no longer felt the need for a patriarch to supervise their decisions.⁵¹ Merchants who hired these bachelors and roomed them unsupervised in boarding houses *did* make efforts to guide the young men working for them with moralistic pamphlets and lectures, but most did not, leaving the "Go-Ahead" generation on their own to develop new concepts of masculinity.⁵²

What developed was what Kimmel claims was the eventually victorious archetype of the antebellum era, that of the self-made man. "Self-made man" was a phrase taken from the mouth of Henry Clay, promoter of the American System, which he meant to boost business and expand

³⁸ Ibid., 16.

³⁹ Ibid., 38-9.

⁴⁰ Harry Watson, Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America (NY: Hill & Wang, 1990), 180-2.

⁴¹ Kimmel, 27.

⁴² Appleby, 18-9.

⁴³ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁴ Appleby, 19, says that "cultural institutions rest on a particular economic base, and when that base shifts or disappears, venerable institutions can collapse without warning."

⁴⁵ Kimmel, 27.

⁴⁶ Kimmel, 52; and Appleby, 170-4.

⁴⁷ Kann, Republic of Men, 9.

⁴⁸ Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers* (NY: Knopf, 1996), 298-322.

⁴⁹ Kann, Republic of Men, 9.

⁵⁰ Kenneth Winkle, "Abraham Lincoln: Self-Made Man," Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association 21, no. 2 (Summer, 2000), 11-13.

⁵¹ Appleby 4

⁵² Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett* (NY: Knopf, 1998), 10-1; and Kimmel, 45.

markets.⁵³ Unlike the heroic artisan or genteel patriarch, both which can be traced back to Europe, the self-made man was a uniquely American invention. He was a man of the market revolution.⁵⁴ He was a competitive businessman searching for profit and success, without much regard for any underlings or fellows. Traveler Benjamin Latrobe observed that Americans' "business is to make money" and that they were in "an eternal bustle, their limbs, their heads, and their hearts move to that sole object."55 The self-made man who succeeded was a man who overcame his humble origins and took advantage of the opportunities of the new national economy to build a fortune. The archetype pacified the insecurities inherent in capitalism and the worry that capitalism might crush men and turn them to mindless automatons or failures. Various self-help books promoted the image with their "rags to riches" stories. 56 Success was his primary virtue.

But success was hard to come by for the "Go Ahead" generation. Failure was seen as evidence of a lack of virility. Most men who encountered the market revolution were bankrupted by it, despite their great ambitions and timeconsuming efforts. 57 Scott Sandage's Born Losers goes beyond the archetype to show the men who failed to measure up. While the successful selfmade man was "individualism's favorite son... the failure was individualism incarnate" since he was certainly on his own. The pressure to succeed was intense and gendered. Failure was not worn gracefully. After the Panic of 1837, Emerson complained that "the land stinks with suicide."58 Speculation and the making of a quick buck, while it consumed the clerks who left home on the farm

for the big city markets like New York, often proved to be their downfall.

The new clerk class were most criticized for their bachelorhood. As women found themselves relegated to the private sphere of home life, they were charged with educating children with republican virtues. ⁵⁹ Barbara Welter's foundational "Cult of True Womanhood" study depicts women as a depository of republican virtue, since men had abandoned that role in their busy quest to "chase the dollar." ⁶⁰ Without the restraint women could provide, these men would fall prey to vices such as alcoholism or sexual sins like masturbation, homosexuality, or sex out of wedlock. ⁶¹

The self-made man was not the only new American masculine archetype. Kimmel names the other the "heroic artisan," an honest self-reliant craftsman who cut the figure of the patriot apronwearing silversmith Paul Revere. 62 The 1840 "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" campaign of Harrison fits snugly into this archetype. Harrison's boosters were quick to point out their opponent Van Buren, known as a fashionable dresser, as a foppish, out-of-touch elite who didn't know the meaning of hard work.⁶³ This same sort of archetype was displayed in the image of "Honest Abe" in 1860, as Republican boosters spoke of their candidate, a corporate attorney, as a plain-clothed, plain-speaking railsplitter.⁶⁴ The archetype was strengthened by Jefferson's belief that "yeoman farmers" were the depository of American virtue and honor because virtue came from "producerism."65

But here too was an archetype inherited from the Old World and one that seemed out of date in the age of the market revolution and burgeoning industrialism. One could not make it on their own as

⁵³ Kimmel, 26.

⁵⁴ Kimmel, 17.

⁵⁵ Latrobe, quoted by Appleby, 252.

⁵⁶ Appleby, 26.

⁵⁷ Sandage, 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 276.

⁵⁹ Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill: U North Carolina Press, 1980), 199-200.

⁶⁰ Welter, 172.

⁶¹ Kimmel, 54.

⁶² Kimmel, 16.

⁶³ Watson, 215, 217 and Kimmel, 36-7.

⁶⁴ Owen Edwards, "The Legend of Lincoln's Rail Fence," Smithsonian Magazine (Feb., 2011).

⁶⁵ Kimmel, 28-9.

self-reliant craftsmen or Jeffersonian yeoman farmer in the modern world's big factories and offices. Young men learning to push papers did not require much apprenticeship and did not expend physical labor. Weren't these unattached young men flush with income also men?

. If "clothing makes the man," as the saying goes, it certainly was symbolic of the shifting values during the early republic. Michael Zakim's Ready-Made Democracy, a book that documents the earliest of American industries, the textile industry, also seems to fit into Kimmel's periodization.⁶⁶ What Zakim seems to document is the waning of Kimmel's "heroic artisan" archetype. The powdered wigs and silk of the 18th century were seen as not only old-fashioned, but also unpatriotic and unmanly.⁶⁷ The heroic artisan aesthetic favored homespun clothing, as a conscious political statement about the virtues of republican independence from European imports and decadence.⁶⁸ Simple homespun clothing was thought to link the family unit and the men wore it to democracy.⁶⁹ But eventually factory produced ready-made clothing, as simple as the homespun clothing, became the uniform of the American man.

The simple black coats and paper collars of the urban clerk class became synonymous with a new sense of masculinity that invested less in the home and more in the capitalist world that dawned with the market revolution. These clerks roaming the streets, Zakim noted, were a source of frustration for those who saw them as boys "trapped between monkeyhood and manhood." These men mourned the loss of ground to "idle, scheming citizens who sits perpetually behind his counter, like a spider in the web, watching his commodities." Zakim's artisan-class characters, who are the

composite of his research into popular media sources and letters, worry about the future of a country where a developing decadent bourgeoisie seems to tear at the masculine character of the producerism republic. These self-made men seemed to cultural critics like William Gilmore Simms as "human grubs," with no honor since they were so driven by mere profit.⁷²

The artisans were being replaced by machines and each panic and depression threw more of them out of work. It seemed to them, as Kimmel wrote, that "the sons of liberty were becoming mere machines of labor," as they were forced to subordinate their independence to capitalists, landlords, and banks. 73 As they lost independence to Zakim's self-made "spiders." these men closed ranks and doubled down on conservatism, turning to positions of exclusive racial politics and xenophobia.⁷⁴ Their fear and anxieties about the seeming transfer of power to a sudden rise of "voluptuous and effeminate" capitalist elites were reflected by Andrew Jackson and his own political anxieties about "Mother Bank," the "hydra monster." 75

Jackson, Douglass, and the fight between martial men and restrained men.

Presenting a different perspective of the three-archetype model of Kimmel, Amy Greenberg argued that there were actually two hegemonic masculine expressions competing for the attention of the nation-forming second generation of American men; that of the "martial man" and that of the "restrained man." The restrained man was the epitome of Whig Protestant morals who bravely battled for success in the fields of trade, religion, and politics.⁷⁶ Attached to institutions, he would be

⁶⁶ Michael Zakim, Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860 (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁶⁷ Kimmel, 27 and Zakim, 24.

⁶⁸ Zakim, 1-2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 3, 110, 114-5.

⁷¹ Ibid., 115.

⁷² John Mayfield, "The Soul of a Man': William Gilmore Simms and the Myths of Southern Manhood," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no. 3 (Fall, 1995), 495.

⁷³ Zakim, 31.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 34-6.

⁷⁶ Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2005), 17.

"repulsed by violent blood sports" and sexual immorality of any kind. The martial man ignored these Victorian restraints and preferred to express himself with brute strength and the ability to dominate underlings, especially women, in aggressive acts of supposed chivalry. These seem to be less archetypes than they are temperatures of Kimmel's "self-made man' archetype, and Greenberg admits as much in the introduction to her seminal work *Manifest Manhood*, when she claimed a "whole range of masculinities" actually competed for "men's allegiances."

The battle between the restrained man and the martial man was fought in national politics and became the basis of the second party system. The martial man was exemplified by General Andrew Jackson, whose legendary exploits in New Orleans and in the Creek and Seminole Wars consisted of brute strength and domination of people seen as inferior to the Anglo American. Typifying the restrained man, Clay refused to accept Old Hickory's unsanctioned conquest of Florida and moved to censure the general on the basis of principle. "If they carry him [Jackson] triumphantly through this house," Clay said, "it will be a triumph of the principle of insubordination—a triumph of the military over the civil authority."80 Here Clay demonstrated his restrained sense of manhood by championing order and traditional sources of authority like the Constitution.

Jackson, an experienced dueler, challenged Clay, calling his foe a "villain" and took his case directly to the people of the West, who he was sure would see Clay "skinned" and "roasted." The West, home to both Clay and Jackson, was also the scene of frequent tests of manhood in the form of

duels, which historian Ryan Dearinger argued, proved yet another setting for competing visions of masculinity. Restrained men saw value in the defense of honor and ritual that the duel offered, while martial men found themselves enamored with the violence and blood of the duel. Be Despite Clay's warnings, Jackson was "carried through the house" and championed by the martial men of the second American generation as the ultimate hero, as much as Clay continued to resonate with those who tended toward the restrained model.

The Jacksonians saw their swash-buckling hero dueling against primitive manhood (the Seminoles and Creeks) and decadence (capitalists and the National Bank), in kind.⁸⁴ The general's aggressive and course ways resonated with men who saw the market revolution and industrialization as a threat to their livelihoods. 85 Men who championed Kimmel's "heroic artisan" archetype were just as attracted to Jackson's display of aggression as were the bachelor paper collar types on the streets of New York. Like Jackson, these clerks were, as I've written, fatherless sons who were "terrified of infantilization." 86 Jackson was celebrated in Tammany Hall and lifted up in the West as a true champion, comparable to the Founding Fathers. 87 Clay's political economy was seen to benefit only men of new wealth, those who relied on his National Bank and "internal improvements." Their dependence on government was seen by Jacksonians as yet another symptom of America's decline into "effeminacy."88

Much of this gendered animosity, historian Harry Watson argued was fueled by the development of universal white male suffrage. When wealth and property no longer set the bar for

⁷⁷ Ibid., 11-2.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 12-3.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 10-11.

⁸⁰ Robert Remini, Andrew Jackson (NY: Harper Collins, 1999), 91.

⁸¹ Ibid., 92.

⁸² Ryan Dearinger, "Violence, Masculinity, Image and Reality on the American Frontier," *Indiana Magazine of History* 100, no. 1 (March, 2004). 29.

⁸³ Still today a small portrait of Henry Clay hangs above Lincoln's bed in his Springfield home, where the future president worked as a corporate railroad attorney.

⁸⁴ Kimmel, 34.

⁸⁵ Kimmel, 29-31.

⁸⁶ Kimmel, 34.

⁸⁷ Remini, 93-6.

⁸⁸ Kimmel, 34.

who could participate in the republic fully via suffrage, "republicans looked to other means to mark these differences."89 Men of color, immigrants, and women were not seen to possess the "aggressive qualities necessary for a proper defense of liberty from power."90 Thus, the unique republican character that defined the American nation was threatened by miscegenation and the mere presence of inferior classes of men.⁹¹ The martial man, it was seen, should defend the purity of white women and the republic by dominating and directing inferior men.⁹² This cultural ideology was especially embraced by men in the Southwest whose lives were built upon the cotton that slaves produced. The heroes of romantic literature popular in the South gave shape to the chivalrous qualities of manhood as a gallant protector of women against outsiders.⁹³ This concept, though, was also powerful among craftsmen in the North, who formed trade unions that banned membership and, thereby, access to capital to Irish immigrants and other minorities.⁹⁴

The Jacksonians jealously blocked any effort of racial minorities from participating in the universal male suffrage they championed. Minorities could not participate in a republic ruled by men because they were meant to be wards of men and were subject to the pity of both white enslavers and white abolitionists. White men might fancy themselves protectors of minorities, and even measured their virtue by how well they treated minorities, but would never see themselves as equal. ⁹⁵ Since African Americans could not attain

full citizenship, they also could not truly fail. African American men were not under the same pressure as the self-made men in Sandage's account of failure. Enslaved men in particular were people with a price on their head and were treated not as men, but as livestock and investment products. ⁹⁶

The breakdown of the black family, broken apart by the slave coffles of the internal slave trade, it has been argued emasculated black men who were unable to perform the manly role of father. ⁹⁷ Their children, after all, were owned by another man. But, as Eugene Genovese argued, as disempowered as enslaved men were, they still had opportunities to exercise masculinity. ⁹⁸ They had opportunities on days off to provide for their families and when at work, division of labor between the sexes, provided other opportunities for men to be men. ⁹⁹ But these exercises of traditional masculinity would be merely episodic.

An enslaved man had no control over even their own bodies. The story of slave Charles Ball, highlighted by Edward Baptist's indictment of capitalism and slavery, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, is illustrative. Baptist depicts slave owners almost as cannibals, tearing apart the bodies of other men. His controversial book is broken up into chapters that take the name of these body parts: left hand, right hand, feet, backs, heart. Charles Ball was traded to the cotton fields and experienced industrialized slavery where he had no name and where he saw his own hands furiously picking cotton, even as he consciously urged for

⁸⁹ Watson, 52.

⁹⁰ Kimmel, 32; Watson, 52-3.

⁹¹ Watson sees this as a cause for Indian Removal, 53.

⁹² Welter, 159.

⁹³ John Mayfield, "The Soul of a Man': William Gilmore Simms and the Myths of Southern Manhood," Journal of the Early Republic 15, no. 3 (Fall, 1995), 479-80.

⁹⁴ Kimmel, 33.

⁹⁵ Lacy K. Ford, "Making the 'White Man's Country' White: Race, Slavery, and State-Building in the Jacksonian South," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, no. 4 (Winter, 1999), 715-6; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 112.

⁹⁶ For ideas about being a person with "a price on their heads," see Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back*. (NY: Oxford UP, 2005); and Sharon Ann Murphy, "Securing Human Property: Slavery, Life Insurance, and Industrialization in the Upper South," Journal of the Early Republic 25, no. 4 (Winter, 2005), 615-52.

⁹⁷ Deyle, 219-20.

⁹⁸ Eugene Genovese, "Husbands and Fathers," from Pleck, Elizabeth and Joseph Pleck, eds., *The American Man* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), 174.

⁹⁹ Genovese, 176-7, 179.

¹⁰⁰ Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told* (NY: Basic, 2014).

¹⁰¹ Ibid.. vii-viii.

resistance.¹⁰² He was subject to the innovations of violence called the "pushing system" by slave drivers in the Cotton Kingdom.¹⁰³ Enslaved black men, it can be argued then, even if they couldn't lose the game being played by white men, felt the changing pressures of industrialism and the market forces even more than white men. White men may lose their fortunes to forces outside their control, but black men were losing their *very* bodies to forces outside their control.

This is why Frederick Douglass, who made his company with restrained men, was held up as much a Jacksonian hero (at least by abolitionists) as any white man. Douglass, like Jackson, purified a martial masculinity through violence against Covey, the man hired to push him. "He thought he had me," Douglass remembered, "and could do as he pleased."104 Douglass took Covey by his throat at that instant, and remembered that he was treated with respect after he seized control over his own body. 105 "You have seen," the abolitionist wrote as he introduced the Covey story," how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man."106 Abolitionists reveled in the martial manhood of their hero since they were often accused of being agents of feminization by Southerners who measured their masculine virtue on the paternalism exhibited in slave owning. 107

Running away from women and the escape from gender expectations

An explicit, focused study into male types that did not (or could not) strive for the hegemonic masculine archetype, such as homosexuals, does not exist for this era. There is no ground-breaking work like George Chauncey's *Gay New York* for the

antebellum period of U.S. history. 108 Considering the competing masculine archetypes that marked the era, such a study could be not only insightful, but foundational. Even Chauncey admits as much. In a defense of his periodization, which began in the 1890s, he posited that there is an underlying history that needs to be uncovered and that this discovery can only be attained by cultural turn historical practices. 109 James Madison warned friends to avoid doing business with the "fops that abound in every city." The concept of the "fairy," Chauncey contends, was not something new to the late 19th century, as much as the development of a "heterohomosexual binary."111 Before the establishment of this sexual line in the sand and based on Chauncey's depiction of gay life in the late 19th century, it can be assumed that homosexuals were as much ignored by the bourgeois elite as they were quietly tolerated from a distance; but research into this era is lacking, probably due to the limited sources that would be available. 112

There has been suggestion, even if no serious academic study, that the line between hetero and homosexual behavior was not as well defined as it is today. Men were encouraged to share intimate, but not sexual relations, with other men of the republic. A study of the life of James Buchanan, an ardent supporter of Jackson and leader among Appleby's second generation, might be a starting place to explore hetero/homosexuality during the antebellum era. It has long been rumored that Buchanan's close relationship with housemate William Rufus King was one of a sexual nature, an idea recently espoused by James Loewen in his

¹⁰² Baptist, 115, 122-3,

¹⁰³ Ibid., 116.

¹⁰⁴ Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (Boston: Anti-slavery Office, 1849), 71.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 72.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 65-6.

¹⁰⁷ Kimmel, 72.

¹⁰⁸ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

¹⁰⁹ Chauncey, 26-7.

¹¹⁰ Madison, quoted by Kann, Republic of Men, 58.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 22-3, 32.

¹¹² Sources on sexuality are difficult to find for this era, per Appleby, 164.

¹¹³ Sexual intercourse between men, it was argued by Kimmel, would ruin the chaste bond between men that was required by the republic, see Kimmel, 66-7.

best-selling *Lies across America*. 114 Loewen notes that President Polk referred to King as Buchanan's "better half" and "wife." 115 Psychologist and Alfred Kinsey disciple, C.A. Tripp, has also made the claim that Abraham Lincoln shared an intimate relationship with Joshua Speed based on heartfelt letters between the two lawyers. 116 Both Tripp and Loewen speculate and infer more than posit theses that can withstand scrutiny, but considering for argument's sake, that these relationships were intimate and loving in nature only strengthens arguments made by Mark Kann that intimate homosocial relationships was part of the early 19th century masculine ethos, while bachelorhood (such as that of Buchanan's) was considered suspect. 117 Critics would have seized upon the bachelorhood more than the close friendship with other men. Perhaps, *this* is the reason for portrayals of Buchanan in contemporary political cartoons not so subtly wearing a woman's dress. 118 Even if the masculinity of single men was subject to question by their fellow men, the question remains whether homosexuality could co-exist with Jacksonian masculinity. Kimmel seems to doubt this, arguing that homosexual relationships would not only be hidden by Victorian mores (and, thus, hard to prove), but any such relationship would prove the man a failure to achieve sexual self-control, a central aim of the self-made man archetype. 119

Religious institutions sought to control men, but their focus was less on sexual morality as it was on temperance. The bottle was frequently the topic of the often rumor-filled credit reports during the era. 120 Alcohol could block a man from actualizing control over his body and his destiny. The alcoholic was a man out of control. 121 Even as the crusade against the bottle was peaking, alcoholism was raging during the antebellum era, Kimmel suspects, because men were trying to ward off fears of failure and insecurity. 122 Churches worked hard to control the vice among its congregants and to provide discipline to the general public. 123 Self-help books flooded the markets and were the stuff of popular performances. 124 But martial men seemed to reject the institutional churches, controlled by "effeminate" restrained men, and instead found solace outside the walls of the church in the revolutionary spirit of the Second Great Awakening. 125 They sought to control their own destiny, or as reformed drunkard sailor Horace Lane wrote in 1839, to become "master of my ship and cargo."126 Without this control, Lane noted that he was "a boy and not a man." 127

Sobriety could almost be guaranteed by a healthy home life, it was argued by self-help books, with a nod to the suspicion of bachelors that permeated thoughts on masculinity. A man might escape the pressures of masculinity and its relentless pressure to succeed in the public sphere and find refuge in the home, the sphere dominated by the wife who acted as a saving anchor, moral restraint, and nurse for their weary husbands. ¹²⁸ While a man might be embarrassed by failures in

¹¹⁴ James Loewen, Lies across America: What our Historic Sites Get Wrong (NY: New Press, 1999), 367-70.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 367.

¹¹⁶ C.A. Tripp, *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln* (NY: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006).

¹¹⁷ Mark Kann, *Taming the Passion for Public Good: Policing Sex in the Early Republic* (NY: NYU Press, 2013), 74; and Kann, *Republic of Men*, 57

^{118 &}quot;Old Mother Buchanan at Wheatland," Harper's Weekly (Nov. 29, 1862), 768.

¹¹⁹ Kimmel, 45.

¹²⁰ Sandage, 150-1.

¹²¹ Kimmel, 59.

¹²² Kimmel, 49; Appleby, 206-11.

¹²³ Kimmel., 46-8

¹²⁴ Myra C. Glynn, "Troubled Manhood in the Early Republic: The Life and Autobiography of Sailor Horace Lane," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26, no. 1 (Spring, 2006), 87.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 90, 91.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 89.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 62.

¹²⁸ Welter, 156-7; Kimmel, 54; Appleby, 169.

the public sphere, at home he was the king and could expect to be treated with respect. 129

But the modern nuclear family as a form of social control proved a source of further insecurity for many men. The 19th century home had become, what Kimmel called "a virtual feminine theme park." Considering the work of Betty Friedan, many women might not have appreciated the term "theme park." Women picked the curtains and the furniture, and being trapped in the domestic sphere, poured much effort into controlling home life and maintaining the nuclear family. The home was a harbor and a place of inaction.

Henry David Thoreau, the famous bachelor who left home and the security of his father's pencil factory for the woods and waters of Walden Pond was by all accounts a failure with no ambition, the "captain of a huckleberry party," according to his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thoreau wrote of the home as "a prison in which [civilized man] finds himself oppressed and confined, not sheltered and protected. His muscles are never relaxed. It is rare that he overcomes the house and learns to sit at home in it." The best course of action, according to Thoreau, was to run away from it all into the roofless wilderness where market competition would be replaced by self-actualization.

The roofless, womanless wilderness was a tonic for the pressures brought on by the expectations of hegemonic masculinity. Noncompetitive homosocial intimacy was a goal for many of these men on the run from the nuclear family. Diana Strazdes's study of the Hudson River school painters, also disciples of Emerson,

and their quest for "one eternal Sabbath" in the wilds illustrates the goals of men on the run. 135 Strazdes' subjects hike for weeks into the Adirondacks sketching subjects for paintings that celebrate the wide expanse and possibilities of the American landscape. The homosocial bonding of these bourgeoisie men surrounded fishing, camping, and sketching. Their trips away from home inspired the artists who painted what amounted to an aspirational, but imaginary American Eden. Their landscape paintings captured every minute detail of the natural world, but if they encountered any sign of tourism or industry (i.e. logging roads), they went unrecorded. 136 They preferred scenes of "unspoiled" nature to the busyness of the allconsuming market revolution which turned America into a place of "venal concerns." 137

Their guru Ralph Waldo Emerson gained popularity by elevating a similar idea of manhood in the face of the "booming, buzzing confusion" of the American Go-Ahead generation. 138 Emerson valued "self-reliance" and the power of the individual and he did this during a time when identical black-suit wearing men stood like soldiers of the Market Revolution. 139 Emerson turned to the lecture circuit because he found a receptive audience amongst men seeking virtue and individualism in the face of the machine overtaking the attention of the nation's men. 140 Emerson flipped the hegemonic view of masculinity, seeing the men of the markets as lazy and ignorant and the age as one of "fops and toys."141 They lived unexamined lives and Emerson worked with the passion of an evangelist on the lecture circuit to get to them so that they might

¹²⁹ Kimmel, 55.

¹³⁰ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (NY: Norton, 1963).

¹³¹ Sandage, 1-2.

¹³² Henry David Thoreau, journal entry "April 26, 1841, at R.W.E.'s," from Laurence Stapleton, ed., *H.D. Thoreau: A Writer's* Journal (NY: Dover, 1960), 6.

¹³³ Kimmel, 59.

¹³⁴ Kimmel, 59.

¹³⁵ Diana Strazdes, "'Wilderness and Its Waters': A Professional Identity for the Hudson River School," *Early American Studies* 7, no. 2 (Fall, 2009), 353, 341.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 339, 349.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 358-9.

¹³⁸ Peter Field, "'The Transformation of Genius into Practical Power': Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Public Lecture," *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 4 (Autumn, 2001), 468.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 469.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 472-3.

¹⁴¹ Field, 479-80; Kimmel, 73.

"speak of the signs of that which is the sequel of trade." Like the Hudson school artists, he looked for beauty and valued nature as a place where it could be found, and he reveled in the opportunity of wilderness and the West. 143

New opportunities to "go ahead" existed far from the home or even the playgrounds of bourgeoisie tourist in the Adirondacks. Westward expansion into and across the Plains was a great opportunity to test one's grit and ability to bend the landscape to one's will. This was especially alluring for the mechanics and artisans who found their independence crushed by the market forces that transformed America in the early 19th century. 144 The frontiers, far away from the accounting houses of New York banks, proved a field where men might reclaim their masculinity and reinvent themselves (and their country) as something virile, vital, and free. 145 Men travelled the trails west and answered the call of Horace Greeley to "Go West, young man," Kimmel argued, partly because of feelings of masculine inferiority. 146 It seems this would appeal to only martial men, but restrained men also took to expansion. Instead of conquering by force, they simply conquered via their businesses and missions. 147

Greenberg's *Manifest Manhood* treats this subject as well as the exploits of filibusters like William Walker and Narcisco Perez, both heroes of martial manhood. Greenberg suggests that martial manhood was also an escape from the pressures of the self-made archetype and one in which men measured themselves squarely against the people they conquered. Mexican men were described by these filibusters as effeminate and childish who lacked bravery, work ethic, and intelligence. Women in Latin America were seen as "lovely, fertile, and ready to be bought" by conquering

Americans who could exercise their frustrated sexual energies in Latin America without the social cost they might have to pay back home. 149 Greenberg noted that "even clothed women appeared virtually nude" in the reminiscences of western conquerors. 150 It was argued that Latinas were open to American men because Latin men were so effeminate. American women who accompanied the filibusters, notably also played with their gender expectations far from home, often wearing pants and participating in past times considered reserved for men. 151 The presence of American women irked men trying to "regenerate their manhood" in these foreign settings.

The end of the self-made man and the resurgence of muscular manhood

Despite efforts to run from it or muscularize it, the self-made man concept, due to its connections with the market revolution and industrialization, continued to be the dominant archetype for the second generation of American men. Whether he be a martial self-made man or a restrained self-made man, the focus on personal success in the burgeoning markets was what mattered most. The post-bellum era saw a strengthening of this ethos, as martial manhood took a backseat to the restrained self-made man. Men's magazines seemed to reject the muscular body type of the laborer and martial man and embraced the thin and graceful physique and fashion sense of the industrious clerk. 152 Horatio Alger novels filled the bookshelves and imaginations of American men who dreamed of their own "rags to riches" story, despite the crushing reality that personal agency was waning. Many of them paid to write their own biographies of success in the popular local histories published in the late 19th century. 153

¹⁴² Field, 486.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 487.

¹⁴⁴ Greenberg, 13.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

¹⁴⁶ Kimmel, 61.

¹⁴⁷ Greenberg, 14, 17.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 101, 108.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 113-4.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 116.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 216.

¹⁵² Kimmel, 28.

¹⁵³ Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 11-2.

Emerson's position that the manliest of virtues was that of "psychic held sovereignty" also grew dim in the ever quickening and nationalized economy of the late 19th century, an economy made possible by the widening role of government in the economy. ¹⁵⁴ Government-backed "internal improvements" like the railroad saw to it that by the end of the century, the Western frontier seemed closed to the infinite tests of manhood it once promised. ¹⁵⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, who once saw the West as an escape to a free life, in 1893 famously declared the closing of the frontier. ¹⁵⁶ Once rollicking, wild towns like Dodge City and Deadwood were now under the firm control of the state and its agents.

The only way to make one's mark was by submitting to the leviathan, hoping for luck, and working ever upward until one could attain a modicum of independence. The hard luck letters at the end of Sandage's *Born Losers* show one broken man after another begging the few who could claim they were truly self-made men (like Carnegie and J.P. Morgan) for handouts and assistance. ¹⁵⁷ Soon even the successful self-made men of the mid-19th century, scions of the local markets, had trouble competing in the new nationalized economy and folded when confronted with corporate competition. ¹⁵⁸

As corporations saw the demise of even self-made success stories, masculinity was again subject to re-evaluation in America. Theodore Roosevelt in some ways became the new Andrew Jackson, a reactionary example of a new virility for a new age. 159 His trust-busting, love of wilderness, filibustering, and firm belief in having "the right stuff" was a reaction against the disempowerment men felt in their new corporate reality. And the reawakening of a muscular and martial concept of manhood was beneficial to a vigorous, healthy state. Roosevelt called on men to lead "strenuous"

lives."¹⁶⁰ As the economic base shifted, cultural institutions like gender archetypes shifted, just as Appleby predicted when she examined the crucial second American generation struggling to create a national identity for their young republic of men. ¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁴ Kimmel, 28.

¹⁵⁵ Richard White, Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America (NY: Norton, 2011).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵⁷ Sandage, 247-52.

¹⁵⁸ Olivier Zunz, Making America Corporate, 1870-1920 (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1990), 12-3.

¹⁵⁹ Greenberg, 17.

¹⁶⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," from Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (NY: The DeVinne Press, 1900; rpt), from http://www.bartleby.com/58/1.html

¹⁶¹ Appleby, 17.