

INTRODUCTION

Revolutionary Violence in the Atlantic World

We live, my Friends, in an age of revolution and disorganization.
 – Simeon Doggett, *An Oration, Delivered at Taunton,*
on the 4th of July, 1799

In the fall of 1792, reports of revolutionary bloodshed in France electrified the American atmosphere. News of the September Massacres rolled like black storm clouds across the Atlantic, bristling North American shores with potential energy and polarizing the body politic.¹ Newspaper reportage swiftly condemned “the hellish faction of Robertspierre, Marat, [and] Chabot,” blaming the leaders of the Jacobin political club in Paris for purportedly designing the mass slaughter of prisoners and priests.² Rumors that the Jacobins planned more violence held readers’ attention into the next year; subscribers to the *Charleston City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* read anxiously in January 1793 that “the sanguinary faction” of Robespierre and Danton was “planning another bleeding,” and that Marat “wished to see 260,000 heads fall at his feet.”³ Accounts of the events in France preceded

¹ “Intelligence from France,” *Diary or Loudon’s Register*, Nov. 1, 1792; “Monday, September 3,” *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, Nov. 1, 1792; “Arrived at Philadelphia,” *Baltimore Evening Post*, Nov. 2, 1792; “Massacre at Paris. Extract of a Letter from Paris, Dated September 3,” *Essex Journal*, Nov. 21, 1792; “Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman Belonging to This Town,” *Salem (Mass.) Gazette*, Nov. 13, 1792; “France. Paris, Sept. 7,” *Columbian Centinel*, Nov. 14, 1792; “Extract of a Letter from Paris, Sept. 17,” *New-Hampshire Gazette, and General Advertiser*, Nov. 14, 1792; “By Capt. Rich, Arrived at Boston in 36 Days from Bristol,” *United States Chronicle*, Nov. 15, 1792; “Extract of a Letter from Paris, September 17,” *The Mirrour*, Dec. 3, 1792; “Paris, Sunday Morning. From the French Gazette,” *Virginia Chronicle and Norfolk and Portsmouth General Advertiser*, Dec. 8, 1792.

² “Foreign Intelligence. Paris, September 17,” *The Mail; or, Claypoole’s Daily Advertiser*, Nov. 14, 1792. The Jacobins were named after the former convent in which they met.

³ “France. National Convention, Tuesday October 30,” *City Gazette (Charleston, S.C.) and Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 24, 1793. Early national sources frequently misspelled the names of Robespierre, Dumouriez, and other French revolutionaries; the variation Robertspierre appeared in multiple sources.

local affairs in the news columns as editors provided eager readers with details of the increasing bloodshed of the incipient Reign of Terror.⁴ During the summer of 1793, the Jacobin faction seized control of the French National Convention and began to purge perceived state enemies. Over the following year at least thirty thousand French citizens were executed by the guillotine or died in prisons; the vast majority of those were commoners. Meanwhile, the French Republican army fought wars against Britain, Austria, and Prussia, and combated a civil war in the Vendée, which took more than one hundred thousand lives (many by massacre).⁵ Throughout these events, the violence of the French Revolution, in all its bloody iterations – massacres, guillotines, foreign wars, civil wars, cannibalism, mass drownings, patricides, and infanticides – kept American readers transfixed.

For seven decades, from the rise to power of the radical Jacobin club in 1792 until the fall of the southern Confederacy in 1865, French Revolutionary discourse pervaded American newspapers, religious literature, political orations, broadsides, private letters, fiction, poetry, pedagogy, drama, and periodicals. Readers were bombarded by countless narratives of violent Jacobinism, a catchall term that Americans used incorrectly to capture every stage of the revolution in France – from the Reign of Terror through the Directory, even to the Napoleonic era.⁶ Americans also extended the term *Jacobinism* geographically, to describe violent political radicals in Ireland, Continental Europe, the Caribbean, and the United States. The literature describing the violence of what R. R. Palmer has famously described as “the age of democratic revolution” is best understood as anti-Jacobin, because descriptions of bloodshed were almost always used to demonstrate the revolutions’ failures.⁷ (Although for a brief window in 1793 some American Francophiles used depictions of French violence to argue that revolution was divine punishment for the Bourbon monarchs’ crimes.) Why did Americans

⁴ Judah Adelson, “The Vermont Press and the French Revolution, 1789–1799” (Ph.D., New York University, 1961); Beatrice F. Hyslop, “American Press Reports of the French Revolution, 1789–1794,” *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 42 (Oct. 1958); Davis R. Dewey, “The News of the French Revolution in America,” *New England Magazine* 7 (Sept. 1889).

⁵ William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1989), 258–9. Although the seventeen thousand lives taken by the guillotine may seem low by modern standards, it represented “almost twice as many lives as the United States lost in all the battles of the War of Independence and the War of 1812 combined.” David Brion Davis, *Revolutions: Reflections on American Equality and Foreign Liberations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 31.

⁶ Searches in digital databases for terms such as *Jacobin*, *Robespierre*, and *Bastille* produce hundreds of thousands of hits (many of which, of course, overlap). When sources such as nonpublished sermons or orations, foreign prints, private letters, and live performances are taken into consideration, it is probably fair to say that people in the United States were exposed to millions of anti-Jacobin narratives between 1792 and 1865. See the appendix.

⁷ R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J., 1959).

write and read so much about the violence of Jacobinism, and what effects did that discourse produce? Pro-French radicalism is broadly understood to have made an important contribution to democratic ideas during the early national era. What ideological consequences resulted from concerns about French Revolutionary violence?

Although the question of Americans' reactions to the violence of the French Revolution may seem antiquarian in light of U.S. global dominance today, the structure of geopolitics in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries gave events in France a transforming significance for American political culture.⁸ Americans' fascination with the French Revolution reflected their immersion in the late-eighteenth-century Atlantic World. Early national citizens viewed themselves as participants in a transnational community, drawn together by sinews of trade, migration, and information. Americans saw the Atlantic Ocean not as a barrier that cut them off from Europe but as a concourse that connected them to the Old World. In the late eighteenth century, the United States' population still hugged the continent's eastern shore; as of 1790, less than 5 percent of the nation's nonnative population lived west of the Appalachian Mountains. The great cities were port cities, and their busiest streets were by the docks. Ships arrived and departed daily, traveling across the ocean, traveling between American ports, traveling to and from the Caribbean Sea. When American readers sought out the news from France, they were seeking news of their own world. The streets of Paris led directly to the streets outside their doors.⁹

Those streets, the narrow walkways of the growing cities and villages of the early republic, were unquiet in the fall of 1792. The creation of a new national government in 1789, far from securing consensus among the nation's citizens, had opened a new era of political conflict. The impulse and resistance to democratic politics that had caused conflicts during the 1780s prompted renewed battles following the ratification of the Constitution.¹⁰

⁸ Matthew Rainbow Hale, "'Many Who Wandered in Darkness': The Contest over American National Identity, 1795–1798," *Early American Studies* 1 (2003). Lloyd S. Kramer, "The French Revolution and the Creation of American Political Culture," in *The Global Ramifications of the French Revolution*, ed. Joseph Klaitis and Michael H. Haltzel (Washington, D.C., 1994).

⁹ For theoretical and historiographical treatments of the Atlantic World, see Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *American Historical Review* 111 (June 2006); Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, 2005); David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York, 2002); Nicholas Canny, "Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America," *Journal of American History* 86 (1999); Aaron Fogleman, "The Atlantic World, 1492–1860s: Definition, Theory, and Boundaries," in *Soundings in Atlantic History*, ed. Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge, forthcoming).

¹⁰ Alfred F. Young, *Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution* (New York, 2006); Woody Holton, "An 'Excess of Democracy' – or a Shortage?" *Journal of the Early*

The 1790s have famously been described as an age of passion: a time when paranoia and emotionalism fractured American politics.¹¹ The American streets routinely boiled over with political conflict during the early 1790s, heightened by the connections between domestic affairs and international politics. Democratic American supporters of the French Revolution demonstrated their continuing commitment to politics out of doors by gathering in the streets to celebrate French accomplishments and to protest the federal administration. Federalist opponents of the French Revolution sought to enforce a model of republicanism that limited political participation to voting and speech, by attacking the Democratic-Republicans rhetorically, legally, and with arms.

In the United States, news of the French Revolution encountered a passionately interested, and passionately divided, audience. Deeply embedded in the Atlantic World, Americans viewed the French Revolution from its beginning as a local as well as an international event. As W. M. Verhoeven has argued, “the many revolutions that produced the national ideologies, identities, and ideas of state of present-day America and Europe” were shaped by a “trialogue (between France and Britain and America).”¹² If anything, Verhoeven is understating how multivectored the revolutionary spirit of the late eighteenth century was. The revolutionary Atlantic included far more places than Britain, France, and the United States. To Americans, the French Revolution involved not only the political activities of men and women in Paris, London, and Philadelphia but also the legislative wranglings, visionary theories, and brutal warfare of men and women in Ireland, Geneva, Saint Domingue, Guadeloupe, and beyond. Radicalism and repression in Ireland, and slave rebellions and suppression in the Caribbean, furthermore drove thousands of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary migrants to the

Republic 25 (Fall 2005); Woody Holton, “Did Democracy Cause the Recession That Led to the Constitution?” *Journal of American History* 92 (2005); Paul Douglas Newman, *Fries Rebellion: The Enduring Struggle for the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, Pa., 2004); Leonard L. Richards, *Shays’s Rebellion: The American Revolution’s Final Battle* (Philadelphia, 2002); Terry Bouton, “A Road Closed: Rural Insurgency in Post-Independence Pennsylvania,” *Journal of American History* 87 (2000).

¹¹ For classic statements of this argument, see John R. Howe, “Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s,” *American Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1967); Marshall Smelser, “The Jacobin Phrenzy: The Menace of Monarchy, Plutocracy, and Anglophilia, 1789–1798,” *Review of Politics* 21 (1959); Marshall Smelser, “The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion,” *American Quarterly* 10 (1958); Marshall Smelser, “The Jacobin Phrenzy: Federalism and the Menace of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” *Review of Politics* 13 (Oct. 1951).

¹² W. M. Verhoeven, ed., *Revolutionary Histories: Transatlantic Cultural Nationalism, 1775–1815*, Romanticism in Perspective (New York, 2002), 3. See also Andrew W. Robertson, “‘Look on This Picture . . . And on This!’ Nationalism, Localism, and Partisan Images of Otherness in the United States, 1787–1820,” *American Historical Review* 106 (Oct. 2001).

United States.¹³ Early national audiences treated the French Revolution as an event of profound local significance.

When news of the September Massacres crossed the Atlantic, American conservatives immediately questioned what implications the violence had for the United States. In Massachusetts, Abigail Adams received newspaper accounts of the violence in early December, soon after the roads had been cleared from a bad snowstorm. In Adams's next letter to her husband, Vice President John Adams, she expressed the hope that Republicans in the House of Representatives would "not follow the French example and Lop of Heads." Perhaps she had in mind the reported September 3 assault on the Princess de Lamballe, Marie Antoinette's close friend, whom a Parisian mob had reportedly gang-raped and mutilated, by cutting off her breasts, before they impaled her decapitated head on a pike and paraded it in front of the queen's window. When John Adams received his wife's letter in early January, he wrote back from the capital, agreeing that "Danton Robertspiere, Marat &c. are Furies," and warning, in humor cut with fear, "We have our Robertspierres and Marats."¹⁴ By "our Robertspierres and Marats," Adams probably had in mind his most powerful political enemies in the executive and legislative branches of the national government: Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state, and James Madison, leader of the emerging opposition party in the House of Representatives. Both Virginia Republicans continued to praise the French Revolution throughout the 1790s, despite its purported violence. Adams may also have been referring to the democratic opposition within his own state, some of whom openly identified with the French Revolutionaries.

James Sullivan, a Republican political leader in Massachusetts, assumed the French nom de plume "Citoyen de Novion" in a pamphlet defending France from the charge of excessive bloodshed. Sullivan explained that "excess is the carrying the means beyond what is necessary to obtain the end" and exculpated France by asking, "But have we yet obtained our end?"

¹³ Susan Branson and Leslie Patrick, "Étrangers dans un pays étrange: Saint-Domingan Refugees of Color in Philadelphia," in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. David Patrick Geggus (Columbia, S.C., 2001); R. Darrell Meadows, "Engineering Exile: Social Networks and the French Atlantic Community, 1789–1809," *French Historical Studies* 23 (Winter 2000); David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1998); Gary Nash, "Reverberations of Haiti in the American North: Black Saint Domingans in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History* 65 (1998); Michael Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals and the Early American Republic* (Lawrence, Kan., 1997); Richard J. Twomey, "Jacobins and Jeffersonians: Anglo-American Radicalism in the United States, 1790–1820" (Ph.D., Northern Illinois University, 1974).

¹⁴ Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, Nov. 26, 1792; Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, Dec. 4, 1792; Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, Jan. 14, 1793 (electronic edition). *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>.

By identifying himself as Citoyen de Novion, Sullivan both located himself at the center of the Revolution (Novion-Porcien is a French district north of Paris) and slyly winked at his true American identity (his name suggests “citizen of the new place”). By asking his American audience “But have we yet obtained our end?” Sullivan described the French Revolution as a transnational event, occurring simultaneously in France and the United States, and he identified himself as a member of the radical party pushing for more democracy despite the costs. American Republicans’ willingness to identify themselves with French Revolutionaries, even after the Reign of Terror devoured its own leaders, fueled Adams’s and other conservatives’ fears of American Robespierres. Both anti-Jacobins and Francophiles shared an understanding of the French Revolution as a transatlantic event that directly involved the United States.¹⁵

The transatlantic sensibility of the 1790s made the French Revolution a turning point in American political culture, with profound effects on national attitudes toward democracy, violence, slavery, and war. Yet regional factors strongly shaped the national reaction to the French Revolution. The American response followed a sectional and political logic, which pitted anti-French northeastern political and religious conservatives against a pro-French cross-sectional coalition of democrats and religious dissenters, led by southern elites. Historical Francophobia in New England, stemming from Puritanism’s fervent anti-Catholicism and from the region’s long involvement in Britain’s imperial wars against New France, fueled northeastern antipathies toward Jacobinism.¹⁶ In addition, northeastern conservative elites faced contemporary political and religious challenges from local democratic opponents, which sensitized them to the threat of disorder abroad and at home. When American democrats linked their cause to France, it prompted northeastern conservatives’ historical fears of French violence and their contemporary concerns about democratic political challenges to fuse into a hideous chimera that haunted them for decades.¹⁷

In the southern states, where Anglophobia was more pronounced than Francophobia as a result of planters’ indebtedness to British merchants, as

¹⁵ James Sullivan, *The Altar of Baal Thrown Down; or, The French Nation Defended, against the Pulpit Slander of David Osgood, A. M. Pastor of the Church in Medford: A Sermon* (Stockbridge, Mass., 1795), 23.

¹⁶ Francis D. Cogliano, *No King, No Popery: Anti-Catholicism in Revolutionary New England*, Contributions in American History (Westport, Conn., 1995), 23–35; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, Conn., 1992); Nathan O. Hatch, “The Origins of Civil Millennialism in America: New England Clergymen, War with France, and the Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 31 (July 1974); Kerry Arnold Trask, “In the Pursuit of Shadows: A Study of Collective Hope and Despair in Provincial Massachusetts during the Era of the Seven Years War, 1748 to 1764” (1971).

¹⁷ Paul Douglas Newman, “The Federalists’ Cold War: The Fries Rebellion, National Security, and the State, 1787–1800,” *Pennsylvania History* 67 (2000).

well as to British efforts to foment slave rebellion, elites welcomed the French Revolution. In addition, the local elites continued to sustain a powerful deference from the lower classes during the 1790s that made democratic politics a less significant challenge to their local power. Consequently, democratic southern elites continued to support the French Revolution throughout the 1790s. In South Carolina, where backcountry democrats posed a strong challenge to coastal elites, Charleston Federalists turned against the French Revolution in the early 1790s. But not until the turn of the century did anxieties about slave rebellions in the Caribbean and at home finally turn most southern whites against Jacobinism.¹⁸

Religious beliefs also played an important role in dividing opponents from supporters of the French Revolution. Many Americans interpreted news of French Revolutionary violence in a religious framework. During its first years, enthusiastic Protestant ministers had greeted the French Revolution as a providential event that brought retribution on the bloodstained Catholic Bourbon monarchy. Prophetic ministers, such as Joseph Eckley of Boston, believed that France's struggle represented the breaking of the "sixth vial" and the beginning of the "reign of virtue."¹⁹ However, the dechristianization measures of the Jacobin era, accompanied by its seemingly anarchic violence, problematized that prophetic vision. The radical revolutionaries who ascended to power in France in late 1792 complemented their use of terror with an assault on religion. More than two hundred priests were killed in the September Massacres, and during 1793 radical French Revolutionaries sought to institute a cult of reason to take the place of Christianity. In 1793, a law passed condemning all suspected priests to death, and in the years following thousands more were executed or fled the nation.

Orthodox ministers in the United States, especially Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers in New England who shared a conservative political orientation based in a fear of human depravity, responded to accounts of Jacobin violence and dechristianization with horror and began to preach against the Revolution in the fall of 1792. The Reverend Samuel Williams, a Congregationalist minister in Rutland, Vermont, who later became a newspaper editor, preached an election sermon in October 1792, arguing that humans were fallen creatures who needed the restraints of a strong government in order to avoid violence and savagery. When religion degenerated,

¹⁸ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York, 2005), chap. 1, Simon Newman, "American Political Culture and the French and Haitian Revolutions," in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. David Patrick Geggus (Columbia, S.C., 2001), Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760–1808* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1990), chap. 7.

¹⁹ Joseph Eckley, *A Sermon, Preached at the Request of the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, June 4, 1792 Being the Anniversary of Their Election of Officers* (Boston, Mass., 1792), 16–20.

Williams warned, “it produces a fierce and savage spirit, which aims to please God by the abuses, cruelties, and murders it entails on men.” That Williams had seen evidence of such degeneration in France is evident from his rueful reflection that corrupt men too often sought revolution “through war and slaughter; a fearful combination of evils and miseries, and the collected curses of mobs, and murders.” By fall 1792, the word *mob* was becoming shorthand for Jacobin violence. Religious conservatives like Samuel Williams avidly consumed accounts of violence in France because it conformed to their Calvinistic worldview and illustrated the necessity of religion. Williams treated the French Revolution as a reason to uphold religious orthodoxy in the United States.²⁰ Certain northeastern dissenting ministers, on the other hand, viewed the disestablishment of the Catholic Church in France as a victory for religious freedom that portended the crumbling of religious tyranny at home.

Whether from a religious or a political worldview, Americans of the early 1790s reacted to the French Revolution in terms that revealed their identification with the conflict. The *Oxford English Dictionary* dates the first transference of the word *Jacobin* – its use to describe a person who shared traits with the Jacobins in France, yet was not actually a member of the Jacobin Club – to a letter written by Edmund Burke in Britain in 1793. But the transference of the word *Jacobin* to articulate the violent threat posed by domestic insurgents began at least the year before in the United States.²¹ At a fall 1792 political gathering in New York City, “a large Company mixed of Federalists and Antis, Whigs and Tories, Clintonians and Jaysites” entered into a heated discussion about the recent turn in French affairs. Initially, all who attended the New York meeting “condemned and execrated” the violence, until one “Jaysite” declared, “We had Jacobins in this Country who were pursuing objects as pernicious by means as unwarrantable as those of France.”²² The conversation quickly dissolved into furious disagreement. The September Massacres had polarized American political culture. In the years following, Federalists described the French Revolution as an immediate domestic danger imperiling the American republic, while Republicans repudiated Federalist criticism of French democracy as a betrayal of the American Revolution.

Most historians have assumed that anti-Jacobinism was a British argot, which conservatives in the United States cynically adopted to disguise their

²⁰ Samuel Williams, *The Love of Our Country Represented and Urged: In a Discourse Delivered October 21, 1792, at Rutland, in the State of Vermont* (Rutland, Vt., 1792), 3, 9, 20.

²¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Jacobin.” There are likely earlier examples to be found in Britain as well.

²² Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, Dec. 7, 1792 (electronic edition). *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>.

domestic agenda for a brief window during the late 1790s.²³ Even the most recent scholarship has accepted the dictum of Vernon Parrington, who argued that American anti-Jacobinism “was little more than an echo of the old-world debate.”²⁴ Yet only by taking seriously the domestic significance and domestic authorship of American anti-Jacobin propaganda can we begin to understand the impact that French Revolutionary violence had on the United States. The Atlantic context gave anti-Jacobinism powerful local significance. For seven decades, graphic images of Jacobin cannibalism, corpse mutilation, and decapitation pervaded American literature. Even in the face of the unparalleled bloodshed at Antietam and Gettysburg, Americans called on the memory of the French Revolution to understand their suffering.²⁵ These pervasive and persistent images of bloodshed deeply affected American beliefs about the legitimacy of violence within American politics and society.

The onslaught of bloody French Revolutionary narratives following the September Massacres heightened awareness of the dangers that violence posed to the new American republic. Americans who avidly produced and consumed anti-Jacobin literature developed a suspicion of bloodshed during the 1790s, which led them to attack institutions of violence within American society. The French Revolution became an example of how uncontrolled bloodshed could propel a republic into anarchy. Anti-Jacobinism problematized violent actions by private citizens, and ultimately violent actions by the state, as dangerous to social order. Counterrevolutionary ideology served as a critical lens that focused American awareness of violence and inspired a new opposition to the bloodshed caused by slavery, war, and ignorance. This book rediscovers the vital role that the fear of democratic violence played in the genesis of abolitionism, the antiwar movement, and support for public education.

Anti-Jacobinism was both a stimulus and a conduit for the humanitarian sensibility that revolutionized transatlantic attitudes toward pain and suffering in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Norbert Elias’s

²³ Seth Cotlar, “The Federalists’ Transatlantic Cultural Offensive of 1798 and the Moderation of American Democratic Discourse,” in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*, ed. David Waldstreicher, Andrew W. Robertson, and Jeffrey L. Pasley (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2004); Michael Lienesch, “The Illusion of the Illuminati: The Counterconspiratorial Origins of Post-Revolutionary Conservatism,” in *Revolutionary Histories: Transatlantic Cultural Nationalism, 1775–1815*, ed. W. M. Verhoeven, *Romanticism in Perspective* (New York, 2002).

²⁴ Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought: An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginning to 1920* (New York, 1939), 324.

²⁵ Frank P. Blair, “The Jacobins of Missouri and Maryland,” *Congressional Globe*, House of Representatives, 38th Cong., 1st Sess., appendix, 46–7; Republican Party, *McClellan and the People!* (1864) *American Broad-sides and Ephemera*, Series I, no. 11780. See also James M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York, 1991), 7.

wonderfully funny and vastly influential treatise *The Civilizing Process* (1939) argues that beginning in the Middle Ages and proceeding over many centuries, everyday violence in Europe lessened as a consequence of a changing political structure that produced a new emotional style of self-control.²⁶ Such a vast narrative of social progress has inevitably stimulated a wide range of dissent, both by historians critical of the statistical evidence for declining violence and by historians suspicious of a grand theory that fails to take into account the “complexity of emotional life” as constructed in specific communities and places.²⁷ Yet Elias’s argument for declining rates of personal violence does seem to hold true for Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries.²⁸ Moreover, the circumscription of everyday violence coincided with a new ethical awareness of the need to remediate human suffering. The cultural nexus of restraining violence and correcting suffering that manifested most dramatically in the early nineteenth century is often described as humanitarianism.

Historians have identified many different origins and principles of nineteenth-century humanitarianism, and abolitionism in particular. Scholars of Quakerism have located the origin of humanitarianism in the Quaker reformation of the 1750s.²⁹ Another important literature within Anglo-American historiography traces the emergence of a humanitarian sensibility to the Scottish school of common sense, which taught an increased empathy for other people’s suffering and provided a rationale for criticizing physical violence and cruelty.³⁰ Other historians have emphasized the Universalist origins of humanitarianism; the rejection of the Calvinist doctrine of innate depravity seems to have logically led people to experience greater

²⁶ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, rev. ed., trans. Edmund Jephcott (Malden, Mass., 2000), 369–374.

²⁷ Randolph Roth, *American Homicide* (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming); Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions in History,” *American Historical Review* 107 (June 2002).

²⁸ For recent treatments that support Elias, see Martin J. Weiner, *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness, and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* (New York, 2004), 10–12; Eric Monkkoen, “Homicide: Explaining America’s Exceptionalism,” *American Historical Review* 111 (Feb. 2006); Pieter Spierenburg, “Democracy Came Too Early: A Tentative Explanation for the Problem of American Homicide,” *American Historical Review* 111 (Feb. 2006).

²⁹ Sydney V. James, *A People among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963); Jack D. Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748–1783* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1984).

³⁰ Philip Gould, *Barbaric Traffic: Commerce and Antislavery in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 2003); Andrew Burstein, *Sentimental Democracy: The Evolution of America’s Romantic Self-Image* (New York, 1999); Karen Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture,” *American Historical Review* 100 (Apr. 1995); G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, Ill., 1992); Norman Fiering, “Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37 (1976).